

Intelligent transportation for the Middle East

Inspired by the requirement to provide better transportation infrastructure in time for the FIFA 2022 World Cup, Qatar is leading the way in ITS development in the Middle East. Indeed, Qatar's Public Works Authority is currently investing US\$1bn in 32 multimillion-dollar, five-year projects covering more than 1,000km (620 miles) of roads.

Husam Musharbash, CEO of Traffic Tech, one of Qatar's leading ITS firms, believes this systematic approach is unique in the Middle East. "Qatar has developed ambitious plans for ITS architecture and standards for the whole country," he says. "Other parts of the Middle East are doing bits and pieces, but they are not planning the entire process and setting standards for the work before it begins."

Many contractors from Europe, Canada, Australia, the USA, Japan and Korea have applied for prequalification to bid on the lucrative contracts, but Musharbash believes that Traffic Tech's local advantages place it in a strong position. Since he founded the company in Amman, Jordan, 29 years ago, it has grown to become a one-stop shop for traffic solutions in the Middle East. Traffic Tech also has offices in Jordan and the UAE.

(Above center)

The modern traffic control room in Doha

(Above right) **EVPS equipment for the Doha project**
(Right) **Husam Musharbash, CEO of Traffic Tech**



Need to know

Local knowledge and ITS expertise will combine to accelerate growth in Qatar

- > Traffic Tech's Salwa Truck Weigh Stations project won the Infrastructure Project for Improving Road Safety Award at the 2011 Gulf Traffic Conference in Dubai
- > The company's Central Traffic Management System project won the Innovation in Transport Traffic Management Award at the 2009 Gulf Traffic event

"We are the only company in the region with a singular focus on ITS and we have a big advantage being headquartered in Qatar," says Musharbash. "Although dozens of foreign companies are working here, the scale of our local resources means we're able to fast-track the work, which is the name of the game with these projects. We expect to be awarded some of the work, but we've also been contacted by rival companies keen to subcontract work to us."

Proven success

Traffic Tech's reputation as a major ITS supplier was sealed this year when two of its systems jointly won the 'Most Innovative ITS Implementation' award at the 2014 ITS and Road Safety Awards. Both projects highlighted the company's capacity to deliver highly technical solutions in record time. The contracts were earned in 2013, but they were fast-tracked and the systems became fully operational in early 2014.

The first project, the Duhail over-height vehicle detection system (OVDS), includes variable message signs, CCTV surveillance, control room equipment and integration with Doha's SCATS urban traffic control system.

The second award winner was the first phase of the Doha

Emergency Vehicle Preemption System (EVPS) project, for which Traffic Tech installed equipment at 25 intersections and five roundabouts, as well as preemption transmitters on 30 emergency vehicles. Traffic Tech is bidding to complete the larger second phase, which will add 50 more intersections.

Future prospects

Despite the company's ongoing success, Musharbash says that working on Qatar's plans will take Traffic Tech's knowledge of ITS to the next level.

"By the time the ITS systems are installed across Qatar, we'll have even greater expertise," he explains. "We'll have developed superior knowledge of systems integration, as well as the assembly and manufacturing of ITS equipment. "Qatar will be our major focus for the next few years as there's so much work here, but the lessons we learn will eventually benefit other regions in the Middle East, many of which have been at war and will begin rebuilding their transport infrastructure." ○



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