

Middle East 'still a strong market'

Fit-out specialist SAS International sees plenty of room for growth in specialist ceiling sector

Fit-out

Despite the financial downturn the Middle East remains a strong market for MEP and fit-out providers, according to SAS International.

Malcolm Stamper, marketing manager, says that SAS International – which has been supplying the Gulf for some 30 years – has had a number of orders from within the region in the past year for a diverse range of different projects.

"With setting up within the past 12 months we have learnt never to underestimate the current market conditions. Despite the climate, we are still receiving orders for all sizes of projects," Stamper said.

"We've been proud to supply many prestigious projects. The GCC region is rich with many diverse opportunities which must be sought out," he added.

SAS International design and manufacture interior fit-out products, including performance led ceilings and partitioning, for both the public and

private sector. The firm also offers suspended acoustic metal ceilings, fire and acoustic performance partitioning systems, energy efficient chilled ceilings and beams and design and service led architectural metal work.

Stamper pointed out that the firm had already worked on a number of prominent new projects in the GCC, including new Aldar HQ; the main building at the Science & Technology Park, Doha; the Al Shaqab Equestrian Centre, Doha. SAS International also recently invested in a distribution warehouse at Dubai Investment Park.

"We are also pleased with the development of an innovative product for the healthcare sector due to launch later this year in the GCC. It will enable improved service for patients, while providing major benefits to the consultants and contractors involved in a hospital's design and installation," he said.



SAS International's recent work includes the Aldar HQ in Abu Dhabi (top).

Three big years Ready made rooms on tap

Ceramics

Turkishceramics is a branding name set up by The Turkish Ceramics Promotion Group to publicise the country's ceramics industry globally.

The association has recently created a film, launched a catalogue and released advertising campaigns to increase its exports in new markets.

This year, Turkishceramics takes part in The Big 5 Expo for the third time with an information booth at Al Maktoum Hall C141, where it has details about its local ceramic companies and trade conditions.

"In holding one of the world's biggest and most important construction sector expos, Dubai and all the Gulf countries participating in this event will be one of the main business alliances for Turkish ceramic companies," said Bahadır Kayan, president of



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"According to the ceramic sector in the Gulf, the country operates mainly through project based agreements. Since product selection and buying procedures are done very professionally, suppliers' size and quality are very crucial. Although there has been stagnancy for the last six months in this region, especially in Dubai, Gulf Countries will still be a very important market," he said.

Bathroom & kitchen

Unipods provides fully pre-engineered, factory-built wet-rooms for the construction industry. The company designs, manufactures and installs pre-engineered bathroom and kitchen pods, together with washroom solutions for the residential and commercial sector, including hotels, office buildings and large villa projects.

The bathroom and kitchen pods are manufactured in the

company's quality-controlled, 400,000 ft² purpose-built factory in RAK.

Unipods CEO and president Henrik Christiansen explains that the pods are designed and manufactured according to the specifications of the client or the architect.

The pods are then delivered directly to the construction site as completed units – together with showers, hand wash basins, toilets, lights, tiles and mirrors in place, or for kitchen

pods, with cabinets and work tops in place – ready for installation, and therefore a true 'plug-and-play' concept.

Uniboards also provides preplumbed wash rooms ideal for installation in schools, shopping malls and labour accommodation. In addition, Unikitchens provides fully designed, manufactured and installed units that are comparable with traditional on-site kitchen installations. The pod system used by Unipods

is tested and proven, with a strong track record from Europe, where pods have been an integrated part of the building process for more than 40 years. Christiansen says the use of pre-engineered pods reduces construction time on-site by one to two months, depending on the project type. It also reduces the need for on-site labour and management of these critical trades. These benefits together with improved and consistent quality, typically give a cost-saving of 5% to 15%, depending on the scale of the project.

Unipods has successfully executed a high number of high-profile projects for leading contractors and clients in the UAE, Qatar and Saudi Arabia. Based on this success, the company has opened sales office in Abu Dhabi, Jeddah and Riyadh.



Unipods at the Premier Inn Hotel.