

Mövenpick Hotels & Resorts to capitalise on Gulf tourism boom with ambitious 2020 expansion plan.

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Dubai, United Arab Emirates, 29 April 2015 – Mövenpick Hotels & Resorts is to consolidate its position as one of the Middle East’s dominant hospitality firms by confirming plans to ramp up its regional footprint by more than 10 hotels by 2020.

The company, which currently operates 30 hotels and resorts regionally, will increase its portfolio to 40-plus properties over the next five years, focusing on high-growth markets where tourism numbers are forecast to grow exponentially including the UAE, Saudi Arabia, Qatar and Oman.

“Mövenpick Hotels & Resorts has spent the last 20 years working closely with our business partners and hotel owners to build a portfolio of strategically located properties across the Middle East and having established strong brand awareness and a formidable reputation for service and culinary excellence, we are in a good position to further expand our regional footprint,” said Andreas Mattmüller, Chief Operating Officer, Mövenpick Hotels & Resorts, Middle East and Asia.

“Our timing could not be better as the Middle East looks set to embark on an unprecedented growth phase, fuelled by a combination of renewed consumer confidence and increased regional public and private infrastructure investment, in addition to upcoming mega events such as the World Expo 2020 in Dubai and the FIFA World Cup in Qatar, which call for funds to be ploughed into supporting developments.”

Tourism to GCC countries is on track to hit the 64.27 million mark by 2020, according to figures revealed by statistics portal Statista. This compares to nearly 41 million in 2010 and a predicted 53.64 million in 2015.

Saudi Arabia has the lion’s share of the tourism pie, with more than 21 million visitors predicted for 2015, growing to 27.5 million by 2020, driven by the increasing number of pilgrims visiting the kingdom to perform Hajj or Umrah.

The kingdom is on Mövenpick’s pipeline priority list with plans to boost the firm’s KSA portfolio from nine to 13 properties by 2017. Two hotels will open this year, one in Riyadh and the other in Jeddah, while Mövenpick’s third property in Al Khobar, the 270-key Mövenpick Residences Al Khobar, will open next year. This will be followed in 2017 with the opening of the 353-room Mövenpick Hotel Financial District Riyadh, located in King Abdullah Financial District, the city’s new vibrant business hub.

“We are currently in negotiations with various owners with a view to adding five more upscale

properties in various locations across the kingdom”, revealed Mattmüller.

Expansion in the UAE is also high on Mövenpick’s agenda with the company recently announcing plans for two more Dubai properties - the 251-key Mövenpick Hotel Dubai Media City and 246-key Mövenpick Hotel Apartments Downtown Dubai - both of which will open in 2017, taking its portfolio in the emirate from six to eight properties.

“With the number of guests checking into Dubai hotels hitting 11.6 million in 2014 and targeted to reach at least 20 million by 2020, we are also eyeing opportunities to operate properties in the Dubai World Central airport district, close to where the event will be staged,” said Mattmüller.

Other Middle East markets ripe for the picking, he disclosed, were Abu Dhabi, Ras Al Khaimah, Muscat, Salalah and Doha.

With this scale of expansion top of mind, Mövenpick recently appointed Amir Lababedi as Vice-President for Development, Middle East and South Asia. He and other key members of the Mövenpick Hotels & Resorts will be out in force at this year’s Arabian Travel Market (May 4-7) to discuss development and consolidation opportunities with potential investors and trade partners.



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