

COVERAGE REPORT FOR: DSI - FEATURE - DSI LOOK TO HARNESS ALTERNATIVE ENERGY IN NEW TELECOMS VENTURE		
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Cables & Telecommunications

DSI pursues telecom energy alternatives

DRAKE & Scull International (DSI), which recently announced expansion plans to encompass the design and build of infrastructure for telecommunications, is investing in a new alternative energy prototype for telecommunications infrastructure that will complement its services.

The company has been researching telecommunications and alternative energy sources since the beginning of the year and is currently in discussions with various customers around the region. The key areas the company is looking to develop and implement as energy sources focus on harnessing solar and wind power, or sometimes a combination of the both, as well as geo-thermal sources.



“The race to harness sustainable alternative energy is on, and while developers, governments and service providers continue to look to renewable resources to power infrastructure and developments, it is often left to the to develop construction industry – through mechanical and electrical expertise – and implement the technology,” says Nick Di Marcello, general manager for the telecom division for infrastructure, water and power (IWP), DSI.

While there are some small examples of alternative energy being utilised for the telecommunications industry in the region, it is not a prevalent solution and is not being used to its full potential.

“Alternative energy has been used only in a limited number of cases in the past, mainly due to high costs and general demand. However, the telecom sector now is definitely stepping up the search for alternative options, which is being driven predominantly by the environmental focus, as well as growing expansion into countries and areas where permanent power is not reliable or available,” he says, adding, “Operators are now aggressively looking at countries where there is lack of power or unstable power and alternative sources of energy now present a viable option to conventional methods,”

Additional drivers for the move to alternative energy include high operation execution costs for existing remote sites powered solely by generators and the ever-improving performance of alternative energy products.

The technology for solar and wind generation has been around for many years and is widely used in other industry sectors.

"It has not been commonly utilised within telecoms due to economies of scale and the general practice adopted by the main players in the industry. The main focus has always been on development of telecom equipment and not the supporting infrastructure, which is natural as the companies focus on their core business," says Di Marcello.

As competition increases in the market, operators look for longer-term solutions, which can reduce operational spend and this will align itself with alternative energy solutions.

"As environmental policies change, alternative energy performance improves and operators look at the long-term operational benefits, we will see an increase in the use of alternative energy. The development of a technically superior and cost-effective solution will be paramount and DSI believes that we have achieved this in the solution under development," he adds.

The company will work closely with strategic telecom partners and governments, to develop and manage the design and build of telecommunication infrastructure throughout the region.

The ability of DSI to transition to the telecom sector revolves around its expertise and experience in the wider construction fields, which have seen it grow from a relatively small operation in 1966, to one of the largest MEP (mechanical, electrical and plumbing) contractors in the region today. The IWP division was introduced four years ago and since that time has worked on some of the most ambitious projects in the Gulf, including the district cooling plant for the Jumeirah Beach Residence, the world's largest district cooling plant at the time.

"The principles of construction are no different from market to market, we are widely known and respected within the region and with our expertise, experience and financial strength we have the ability to confidently expand within the telecom sector." Di Marcello says.

DSI executive director of IWP, Tawfiq Abu Soud, says entry into the company's telecommunication industry will diversify the business and contribute to the company's recurring baseline revenue through value propositions, dedication, quality and customer commitment.

DSI's telecom operation will be based at its Dubai head office and services will be offered throughout the Mena (Middle East and North Africa) region, initially focusing on the UAE, Saudi Arabia, Bahrain, Qatar, Kuwait, Jordan, Oman, Egypt, Libya, Sudan and Algeria. The company will offer full turnkey services built around its core strengths in the design, civil, mechanical and electrical fields.

DSI is a leading UAE-based end-to-end service provider of MEP contracting, infrastructure, water and power (IWP) and civil contracting services. On March 16, DSI became the first specialist contracting company to list on the Dubai Financial Market (DFM) and is currently working on projects worth a total of Dh6 billion (\$ 1.63 million) across the Mena region.