

FSB-led JV wins Batinah Expressway Pkg 5

Partnership of Federici Stirling Batco and Ferrovial Agroman scoops RO 132.6m contract



By Conrad Prabhu

MUSCAT — A joint venture led by Federici Stirling Batco LLC, (FSB) a well-established contractor credited with undertaking an array of prestigious road and bridge schemes in the Sultanate, has been awarded Package 5 of the Batinah Expressway project at a cost of RO 132.6 million.

Federici Stirling Batco partnered with European construction giant Ferrovial Agroman in mounting a successful bid for the keenly contested package, covering a 41-kilometre length of the ambitious carriageway project from Sohar to Liwa.

The JV led a field of 18 firms that bid for the package. Also in the fray were STFA, CCC, L&T (Oman), NUC,

Makyol Gulf, Ozkar Construction, Sarooj Construction, BESCA, Monte Adriano ME, The Arab Contractors Oman, Nagarjuna Construction, Gharbia Enterprises, Ali & Co Trading, Shanfari Trading, Simplex Infrastructures, and Oman Gulf Enterprises.

Billed as among the most important of the six packages that together make up the 265km Batinah Expressway project, Package 5 covers the stretch from the 180-kilometre to the 221-kilometre mark. A total of three major bridges will be constructed across wadis intersecting the alignment along this stretch. With as many as 20 spans of about 40-metres apiece, these wadi bridges constitute a key component of the total project scope covered under this package.

Given the undulating terrain through which Package 5 traverses, the JV will also undertake a staggering 17 million cubic metres of earthworks. Massive quantities of concrete will also be used in the construction of box culverts and embankment walls (140,000 m³), structures (145,000 m³), and girders and special structures (50,000 m³), while around 32,000 tons of reinforced steel will be consumed as well.

Significantly, the contract award pays testimony to the capabilities of Federici Stirling Batco LLC and its Designed Project Director, Engineer S Simonetti, under whose stewardship the company has successfully executed a number of major infrastructure projects in the Sultanate.

A construction sector veteran with 37 years of experience in public works, Eng Simonetti has overseen the implementation of numerous projects, including roads, bridges, dams and tunnels, across the Middle East. This includes 18 bridges constructed at key locations in Oman over the past five years.

According to company officials, the winning JV integrates the unique strength and capabilities of three constituent entities: Federici Stirling International, Batco and Ferrovial Agroman. Federici Stirling itself is the product of the merger of two prestigious firms, Impresa Ing Fortunato Federici of Italy and Stirling International Civil Engineering Ltd of the UK. Their union helped the merged entity to expand its presence beyond Europe into Africa, Asia and Central America.

The company's Middle East activities are wholly owned by shareholders Lebanon-based Batco Holding and Gruppo Simonetta Roma, leading to the incorporation of Federici Stirling Batco LLC in the Sultanate in 2007.

FSB, as it also popularly known, has so far implemented six infrastructure projects in the Sultanate, with a further three in progress. All nine projects contributed a total turnover of \$312 million.

In partnering with Ferrovial Agroman, ranked among the top 10 European heavyweights in the construction, maintenance and operation of infrastructure schemes, Federici Stirling Batco has chosen to significantly ramp up its capabilities with an eye



S Simonetti, Designed Project Director

on other big-ticket projects due to come up for tender in the coming months and years.

Ferrovial Agroman is the construction flagship of Ferrovial, the world's leading private investor in transportation infrastructures, with a workforce of approximately 57,000 employees and operations in more than 25 countries. The Company manages key assets such

as Canada's 407 ETR highway and London's Heathrow Airport, and also provides municipal services to more than 800 cities and towns in Spain. In Oman, the Ferrovial Agroman owned subsidiary Cadagua is already building two water treatment plants for Haya Water.

With the award of Package 5, all but one of the six packages that together comprise the Batinah Expressway, have since been contracted out. Package 2, which was retendered by the Ministry of Transport and Communications — the client for the ambitious project — is expected to be awarded shortly.

When completed tentatively by the year 2016, the Batinah Expressway will serve as a new all-weather, 8-lane superhighway extending from Muscat to Khatmat Malaha on the Sultanate's border with the United Arab Emirates. The project, with an estimated cost of RO 1 billion, will provide strong new impetus to economic investment along the North and South Batinah governorates and the hinterland, as well as drive Oman's ambitions to emerge as a logistics gateway to the Gulf region.

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