

MANAGEMENT SYSTEMS AND STUDIES

MANAGEMENT INFORMATION SYSTEMS

In 2008, Solidere successfully finished the pilot project in its newly implemented Document Management System, and proceeded with its implementation in the various divisions and departments. An Enterprise Project Management solution was introduced with the help of Microsoft, to track resource utilization and project costing across multiple projects. The Solidere Portal, an intranet base, was being tested in order to keep Company staff well informed with corporate news and policies.

The Human Capital Management module was initiated within the Company's ERP system, and bases are being set for a new Business Intelligence solution that will be a powerful tool in Management's hands. The Geographic Information System was upgraded and enhanced to accommodate Solidere's specific urban requirements.

A continuous update of hardware, software and networking equipment aims at ensuring that Solidere enjoys the latest in information technology.

URBAN AND STRATEGIC STUDIES

Land use strategy A core concept behind the original Beirut city center Master Plan was to have no land use or zoning plan, but to replace this with regulatory policies that encourage mixed use. The intention was to allow the multiple choices of developers to create a mixed-use city center, replicating the natural city-making process of 100 years or more—the product of thousands of individual market choices—in a period of less than 20 years. To succeed, this concept depends on skilled developers operating in their specialized markets, taking a long term view and working within a well defined development process. In recent years a new type of developer has emerged, treating real estate development primarily as a short term financial operation and bringing together a consortium of cash investors. This has necessitated a more proactive approach on land use by Solidere, with the objective of ensuring adherence to the core objective of a sustainable and balanced mix of uses.

Solidere has recently decided to strengthen its real estate team and move back into development, following the long implementation process of the Souks, Saifi Village, the embassy compound and other projects in Phase One of Beirut city center development. Solidere is currently engaged in market studies and concept designs for some eight new projects in the residential, serviced apartment, hotel and office sectors. A new objective for Solidere is to create the market and control the supply and quality of new development in specific sectors. These include office, conference and exhibition, hotel, serviced apartments and certain categories of residential space. A new land use strategy is being put in place to allow Solidere to control the supply and quality of product in these key new markets. It will

possibly include a more direct control of temporary uses, likely to be a significant component of activity in the New Waterfront District for the next 5-10 years. These are likely to be incubators and testing grounds for new uses that may in time emerge as permanent components of the city center.

Transportation strategy The need for implementing a public transport strategy has been brought into focus in the detailed design of the Martyrs' Square corridor. As required in their project brief, the Greek consultant team included transport planners, and the scheme design features a dedicated public transport right-of-way on the west side of Martyrs' Square continuing southwards through the Beirut Gate development. Increases in density and employment uses in the New Waterfront District confirmed the necessity for mass transit in the near future. In particular, it will not be possible to service the new concentration of employment in the 'special business district' without tram, light rail or bus rapid transit into the city center and connecting onward to a Beirut-wide network. Solidere is currently negotiating with the UK consultants ARUP and local transport consultants SITRAM, the carrying out of such a study, long programmed for Beirut city center within its city-wide context.

Land development strategy The consultancy proposal has been refined and finalized, for Laceco to undertake the design of modern infrastructure networks for the New Waterfront District. Work will start as soon as the new Decree has been issued for Sectors A and D.

Project definition and initiation With international real estate and marketing consultants Jones Lang LaSalle undertaking market research and development advisories for the office and serviced apartment projects in Sector B, Solidere's Developer Design Briefs were prepared and issued to selected architects for these projects. A concept design competition has been launched for the Grand Théâtre boutique hotel and spa. Design competition briefs, massing studies, detailed architectural programs and Developer's Design Briefs have also been prepared for new residential projects in Zokak El Blatt and the western end of Wadi Abou Jamil.