

Drees & Sommer launches innovation hub in Dubai to drive industry change

In line with the UAE's Vision 2021 program, Drees & Sommer has launched a Dubai-based innovation centre to support its 3,200 employees to develop and implement disruptive market solutions.

International construction and real estate consultancy Drees & Sommer has announced the launch of Dubai-based innovation hub, as it looks to expand its research and development (R&D) efforts across the Middle East.

The new regional innovation hub provides a collaboration platform to support the company's 3,200 employees and external start-ups by identifying market gaps and devise tangible solutions to everyday challenges faced by the industry in verticals including planning, construction and operations. The idea behind the hub is to bring simplification to processes, cost-effectiveness, process streamlining and solution provision to different challenges.

The Dubai launch follows the successful implementation of regional hubs around the world. In Aachen, Germany's 'Silicon Valley', there is a focus on customised smart buildings, in Stuttgart on start-ups and processes, and in Berlin, the innovation hub specialises in smart cities and smart quarters. In the Netherlands, an innovation hub focuses on wellbeing and sustainable innovation. All hubs link Drees & Sommer to external research institutions and start-up organisations and drive specific initiatives.

Steffen Szeidl, Executive Board Member at Drees & Sommer said: "It has always been part of our corporate culture to promote our own ideas and initiatives. Increasingly, digital transformation and our clients are calling for completely new and disruptive business models. The Innovation Centre is one of our responses to these challenges. All 3,200 staff members can upload their ideas virtually. Promising concepts will be developed, funded and localised for any market which sees the potential.

“Adding the Dubai innovation hub emphasises our status as a global innovation company by being one of the few companies doing R&D in this region.”

Abdulmajid Karanouh, Head of Interdisciplinary Design & Innovation at Drees & Sommer Middle East, heads the Dubai innovation hub. He explained: “There is a huge demand in this market for contextual solutions as most models and systems are imported from abroad with little to no adaptation to the local culture, economy, and environment. As a consequence of this approach, we are facing major challenges related to user-comfort, efficiency, manageability, durability, and overall sustainability and feasibility of the built environment in the region.

“The innovation hub brings together specialists of various disciplines from across the industry as a single interdisciplinary team that advises clients from early feasibility studies all the way to operation and revitalisation of buildings to maximise comfort, efficiency, sustainability, return of investment and overall value. The platform allows for brainstorming ideas, identifying market gaps and needs, adapting existing solutions or/and developing new solutions tailored to the local market and environment.”

The innovation hubs address everything from designing a fully digitalised building with a central Artificial Intelligence brain comprising of thousands of sensors, to optimising performance through data collection, statistical analysis, and operation automation.

“Products like meeting room technologies that meet the demands on analytical data, for example, is something we are currently working on in Aachen, which is our innovation hub focused primarily on IoT product testing and cyber-security. We are undertaking a piece of research that is looking at tech products with different protocols, designed to do the same thing or complement one another to achieve the same goal, across different stages of the build process,” added Szeidl.

Drees & Sommer commenced operations in the Middle East in 2003 by providing innovative solutions to the region’s real estate and hospitality sectors. Globally, the company has developed an impressive track record since it was established nearly 50 years ago and has delivered an extensive portfolio of world-class developments around the world including Dubai, Abu Dhabi, Ras Al Khaimah, Riyadh, Jeddah as well the UK, Germany and Switzerland, amongst others.

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Drees & Sommer: Your Innovative Partner for Consulting, Planning, Construction and Operation

The leading European consulting, planning and project management enterprise, Drees & Sommer has supported private and public clients and investors for almost 50 years in all aspects of real estate and infrastructure – both analog and digital. The result is cost-effective and sustainable buildings, profitable real estate portfolios, people-oriented working environments, and visionary mobility concepts. The company's 3,200 employees in 40 locations around the world work in interdisciplinary teams to provide support for clients from a wide variety of sectors. All the services provided by the partner-run company take into consideration both economic and ecological concerns. Drees & Sommer calls this holistic approach 'the blue way'.

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