

Gulf Construction

Test runs conducted for Dubai tram system

TRIAL runs were recently conducted in France on the Sufouh Tram system, designed to be an integral part of the Dubai transport network.

Planning and construction of the Al Sufouh Tram network is being undertaken by a consortium of Alstom, Besix and Parsons.

The Al Sufouh Tram system, linking the Dubai Metro and the Palm Monorail, will run along Al Sufouh Road and Jumeirah Beach Road from Mall of the Emirates to the Dubai Marina.

"Al Sufouh Tram system is considered the first of its kind outside Europe fed by ground power cables, with no catenary cables involved," said Mattar Al Tayer, chairman of the board and executive director of the Roads and Transport Authority (RTA), who witnessed the test run of Al Sufouh Tram conducted on a test track in the facilities of Alstom in France.



Al Tayer on board the tram during the test run.

"Once the trams start arriving in Dubai next December, the RTA will commission other trial tests at the track site and these tests will roll on till the official launch of the tram service in November 2014," he added.

Elaborating on the project, Al Tayer said: "Al Sufouh Tramway extends 14.6 km alongside Al Sufouh Road, and the initial phase of the project envisages the construction of a 10.6-km-long track starting from the Dubai Marina and stretching up to the tram depot near the Dubai Police Academy."

"The tram network comprises 17 passenger stations, 11 of which are covered under Phase One and spread across activity and population density areas along the tramway.

"The fleet comprises 11 trams in the initial phase, and 14 trams will be added in Phase Two such that the total number of operating trams will be 25 trams. The tram is expected to lift about 27,000 riders per day at the start of operations in 2014, and is bound to pick up to hit 66,000 riders per day by 2020," Al Tayer said.

The tram system will be the first in the region to be fully powered by an electric system installed in the ground. Power is fed to the tram as it passes above, but stops when it moves away, allowing pedestrians to safely walk in the area. The technology has been in use in France for the past seven years, but is making its debut in the Middle East and North Africa (Mena) region with the new Al Sufouh Tram.

It is also the world's first tramway that uses platform screen doors in passenger stations fully aligned with the tram door's opening and shutting mechanism, providing maximum convenience, safety and security for passengers, and at the same time protecting the efficiency of the air-conditioning in the interior of both stations and carriages.

The Italian brand Nesite was chosen as the supplier of the raised access floors in the various stations where a specific fire resistance and mechanical performance of the floors was required due to the high traffic areas and passenger flow.