



2007 was again a year of growth for all First Q Companies, with a consolidated turnover 16% above that of 2006 and an increase in personnel of 13% to a total of 666. It also marked a return to activities outside the natural borders of the companies, with projects commissioned in Romania, Kazakhstan, Libya and Oman, the latter consisting of a particularly challenging project, the Oman Botanic Garden, which is this Newsletter's featured project.

Some of First Q companies have advanced in the diversification of services and are now active in Facilities Management Consulting. This is a logical evolution from the previous step into Maintenance Management, where some companies have been active for over a decade.

On the application of sustainability criteria to the built environment, the activities in Low Carbon Consulting, Building Energy Certification and Numerical Simulation have seen a significant increase within the Group.

With the expected slow-down in most countries in Europe, First Q has increased its efforts in Eastern Europe, the Middle East and Africa, where new companies have been formed in Cape Verde and in Angola.

**Luis Burnay**  
First Q General Manager

### A sample of our projects



**Spain:**  
Viladecans Business Park



**Ireland:**  
Imaginosity



**Netherlands:** Shopping Mall  
Hovenpassage



**Italy:** Editoriale  
Bresciana Tower

### Feature Project

#### The Oman Botanic Garden



First Q's Madrid office is the MEP and energy consultant for the Oman Botanic Garden (OBG), integrating the design team led by OBM International and Alatec. Laid on 410 hectares near Masqat, the OBG has as its most singular features two "biomes" where the Northern and Southern climates and habitats of Oman will be replicated. It also comprises a field study and research facilities, a nursery, a visitor's orientation centre, a heritage village and a 5 star hotel. The design of the "biomes", where temperatures as low as 20°C will be needed even when outside temperatures reach well into the high 40's, is a world apart from that of similar facilities built in temperate climates, and includes the recreation of the foggy conditions of the Khareef that occurs in the Southern region of Dhofar.

Renewable energy harvesting (solar PV and thermal), water management and energy use optimization are key elements of the project. With sustainability being one of the dominating themes, including the LEED certification of its main buildings, this ambitious and visionary project promoted by the Diwan of the Royal Court presents some unique engineering challenges. First Q's London office is supporting the Madrid team with client and local liaisons in Oman.

### Around the Companies

#### Facilities Management in Spain

First Q's Spanish company Grupo JG has established a new company in December 2007: PROCOS ESPAÑA FM, dedicated to Facilities Management. The new business is a partnership between Test Tecnología de Sistemas, a subsidiary of Grupo JG, PROCOS Portugal (of which First Q's Portuguese company is also a member), PROCOS Belgium and B/SV architects.

#### Acquisitions in Finland

The largest structural engineering company in Finland, Finnmap Consulting Oy, acquired 70% of the shares of First Q's Finnish Company Insinööritoimisto Niemi & Co Oy and its subsidiaries in November 2007. The companies will continue their operations as individual units.

This acquisition, which complements that of AIRIX Talotekniikka Oy earlier in 2007, will allow the parent company FMC Group to increase its operations in building engineering design, thus providing significant added value to clients as a provider of extensive services with significant experience and resources.

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### **Merger in Greece**

First Q's Greek company TEBEKA has consolidated its operations and assets with its sister company ANTEM. The merging of the two companies is expected to streamline the operations and clarify the companies' position in the Greek market, where they will now trade solely as ANTEM.

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### **The Irish outlook for 2008**

First Q's Irish Associate, Ethos Engineering Ltd, has spun-off its outsourcing services and formed Ethos Project Management, whose core business is the placement of engineers on site as outsourced resources. The recently secured Co-located Private Hospitals, an IBM Data Centre project, a prison project and a number of private school projects have resulted in an effective compensation for the expected delays on the back log of mix-use and residential projects currently in planning stage, as a result of the current credit crunch crisis.

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### **Relevant projects in Italy**

Italy's First Q company, Manens Intertecnica, continues to strengthen its portfolio of prestigious projects. Besides the Editoriale Bresciana Tower pictured above, Manens' most significant projects in 2007 include the EUROMA2 – Europarco Shopping Center in Rome with Chapman Taylor as the architect, and the renovation of 97.000 m2 in 9 buildings in the "ex Michelin" area in Trento, where the client is Iniziative Urbane S.p.A. and the architect is Renzo Piano Building Workshop.

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### **Numerical simulation and project management in the Netherlands**

Numerical simulation has seen a marked increase for First Q's Dutch company Smits van Burgst, due in part to sustainability assessments under BREEAM, LEED and the Dutch Green Calq systems. With the imminent formation of the Dutch Green Building Council, it is expected that activities in this sector will continue to grow. Smits van Burgst has recently signed a contract for the complete Project Management of the multi-million euro refurbishment of the SER (Social and Economic Council) headquarters in the Netherlands.

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### **New services and markets in Portugal**

With energy audits and building certifications being currently the most relevant components for permit applications in Portugal, Sustainability Strategy Consultancy is gaining importance and becoming a relevant business component for First Q's Portuguese company LMSA. New geographical markets are also being approached in Africa, with the creation of two new companies: LMAZ in Angola's capital Luanda and LMCV in Cape Verde. LMAZ has already been involved in the design of 6 hotels and office buildings.

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### **Market influences in Sweden**

For First Q's Swedish company Sisu Stockholm, the real estate sector is still strong in most areas, although a slow down is expected this year as a result of the global difficulties affecting the financial industry. However, it is anticipated that this will be more than compensated for with the many requests from Korea to develop concept designs for HVAC installations with a strong focus on energy efficiency, environmental impact and BMS strategy.

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### **"Vigor" is created in the United Kingdom**

First Q UK-based company EDCM Consulting continues to expand its resources, services and geographic location. Besides an increase in staff to cope with the current and projected activity and the opening of its Manchester office, the company added services to its portfolio with the creation of EDCM Vigor to respond to the growing demand for advice in sustainability, renewable energy, low carbon design and BREEAM. Vigor has registered Low Carbon Consultants, Domestic and non-domestic Energy Assessors (EPCs) and BREEAM Assessors amongst its staff. Recent contracts cover a wide spectrum of areas: Blackburn College (designed to BREEAM "Excellent" ), Priory and Canon House, Birmingham (30,000 m2 office refurbishment), Ribber Castle (Listed building conversion to luxury apartments) and Chesterfield Hospital.

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