

# 40,000 extra hotel rooms set for Mideast, Africa in 2011

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Artist's impression of the 315-room Abu Dhabi Marriott Hotel, set to open in 2014

Nearly 40,000 extra hotel rooms are expected to be available to tourists visiting the Middle East and Africa region during 2011.

So far, 17 hotels offering more than 4,000 rooms have opened in the region, industry data specialists STR Global said.

According to the March 2011 STR Global Construction Pipeline Report, the current Middle East/Africa hotel development pipeline comprised 429 hotels totalling 118,338 rooms.

This was slightly down on the previous month when the pipeline was made up of 432 hotels and 118,454 rooms.

"Overall in 2011, there are 164 more properties comprising 39,682 rooms expected to open," the report said, adding that this would represent a 6.6 percent increase in room supply.

It said that during 2012, the region was likely to see a further 137 projects opening, comprising 35,401 rooms.

During 2013, 67 projects comprising 20,310 rooms are expected to open, it added.

Among the hotel sectors, the luxury sector is expected to open the largest number of rooms during the remainder of 2011 with 39 projects comprising 11,523 rooms, STR Global said.

Earlier this month, it was reported that more than \$6bn worth of hotel projects were due for completion in the Middle East by 2013.

Despite the spectre of a double-dip recession in Europe and the US, as well as unrest in the MENA region, hospitality infrastructure and the associated supplies industry were still witnessing steady growth, Frederique Maurell, exhibition director, The Hotel Show, said.

Last month, STR Global said selected markets in the Middle East hospitality sector would see more than half their current supply of hotels coming online in the next few years.

Elizabeth Randall, managing director of STR Global, said the glut of development in the region could create "challenging market conditions" in the short term.

She said Abu Dhabi was likely to report the largest increase in supply (89.4 percent) if every one of the 13,405 additional rooms in its total active pipeline open