Kansas City – To help rebuild and reunite its country, Iraq has embarked on a plan to create a nationwide network of internationally competitive athletic venues.

For assistance, the country has turned to the design-build team of Anwar Soura General Contracting Company and 360 Architecture, along with its global team of consultants.

The Anwar Soura/360 Architecture team is now working on three separate sports projects in Iraq. It was recently selected by the country’s Ministry of Youth and Sport to deliver two new 30,000-seat soccer stadiums with practice facilities – one in Al-Menaa, a suburb of the southern city of Basrah, and the other in the city of Najaf, about 100 miles south of Baghdad.

The team is also working on Basrah Sport City, a multi-use development anchored by a 65,000-seat stadium and a 10,000-seat stadium that are under construction and on schedule to host the 2013 Gulf Cup – a prestigious tournament involving the eight nations of the Gulf.

“We are excited and honored to serve the needs of the Ministry and partner with one of Iraq’s leading builders in Anwar Soura,” said George Heinlein, senior principal at 360 Architecture.

Abdullah Al Jiburi, Anwar Soura’s CEO, said he is pleased to be associated with 360 Architecture and its consultants. “We look forward to creating the new facilities to promote Iraq’s development of world-class athletes and sports programs, and bring pride and unity back to their communities,” he said.

As was the case with the Basrah Sport City project, the Ministry of Youth and Sport selected Anwar Soura and 360 Architecture from an international pool of bids. The estimated construction cost of the Al-Menaa stadium is approximately $86 million USD. The Najaf stadium’s estimated construction cost is $83.75 million USD.

The concept for the Al-Menaa stadium reflects the culture and heritage of Basrah, which has a rich nautical tradition as Iraq’s port city. “The progressive design suggests the city’s historic association with the water,” said designer Ryan Gedney of 360 Architecture. Gedney also noted that it was important for the Al-Menaa stadium to have its own distinct identity, apart from the character of sports city complex to the south of Basrah. While its exterior form stands out, a series of intimate and pedestrian-friendly park and public spaces tie the facility to the surrounding district.

In contrast, the Najaf stadium reflects its location in one of Iraq’s most significant cities. Its features include its square exterior and Islamic influenced latticework, which bear a complimentary resemblance to the sacred the Imam Ali Mosque in the heart of the city. Another important feature, given temperatures in the region, is its use of passive cooling towers – an economical and sustainable way to make the stadium’s concourse more comfortable.
“Though significantly different from each other, the two designs are based on the same philosophy of creating world-class facilities that uniquely fit their function and communities,” Heinlein said. “We believe this approach, combined with the fact that we’ve shown we can work effectively in Iraq, was convincing to the Ministry.”

The new Al-Menaa stadium is scheduled to be completed in October 2013. The Najaf stadium’s completion date is unspecified at this time.

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