



Bechtel is known worldwide for its ability to complete projects too remote and challenging for other engineering and construction companies. In the late 1940s and early '50s, two ambitious pipeline projects helped cement that reputation.

In 1947, work began on the Trans-Arabian pipeline, designed to replace tanker ships that carried oil from the Arabian Gulf to the Mediterranean Sea.

Bechtel built more than 800 miles (1,287 kilometers) of the pipeline, across vast expanses of desert from the Abqaiq oil field in Saudi Arabia to Jordan. The project spawned a number of innovations, including the first over-water use of a cableway skyhook to unload ships anchored offshore.

In 1952, Bechtel undertook a project that presented challenges 180 degrees

different from what it had faced in the Middle East. This time, the goal was to build the Trans Mountain Pipeline to carry crude oil from Alberta to Vancouver on Canada's Pacific Coast. The 700-mile (1,127-kilometer) route crossed the rugged Canadian Rockies, peaking at an elevation of 3,600 feet (1,097 meters), and passed through rock-walled canyons, cascading rivers, and slide-prone cliffs. Despite the

obstacles, the first delivery of oil was made in the fall of 1953.

The Trans Mountain Pipeline was the first major project on which Bechtel had overall responsibility for engineering, procurement, and construction management—the company's bread and butter to this day.