

الدوق الاقتصادية Dubai Economist

40th Issue - July 2025

A Quarterly magazine issued by the Public Authority
for Special Economic Zones and Free Zones



**HH Sayyid Theyazin and Dubai Crown Prince preside over signing
of Al-Rawdah Special Economic Zone development agreement**



Duqm Economic Forum 2025 Next October

منتدى الدقم الاقتصادي 2025 أكتوبر المقبل



The second edition of the Duqm Economic Forum will be held with the participation of a distinguished group of speakers and experts. The forum will focus on three main themes:

تنطلق النسخة الثانية من منتدى الدقم الاقتصادي بمشاركة نخبة من المتحدثين والمختصين، حيث يركّز المنتدى على ثلاثة محاور رئيسة:

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Words of Wisdom



In light of the rapid global developments in advanced technologies and their applications, including artificial intelligence, and the opportunities they offer to enhance productivity and efficiency across a wide range of sectors, and stemming from our awareness of the importance of diversifying income sources based on technology, knowledge, and innovation, we are determined to make the digital economy a priority and a key contributor to the national economy. We have also directed the preparation of a national programme to implement and localise artificial intelligence technologies, along with expediting the development of legislation that will help position these technologies as key enablers and drivers across various sectors.

Royal Speech

HM Sultan Haitham bin Tarik

– May Allah protect and preserve him –

بوابات الجمال والفرص Gateways to Beauty and Opportunity

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The design for the Administrative and Commercial Buildings Complex within the Integrated Economic Zone at Al Dhahirah – Package Four – has been envisioned in partnership with an Omani-Saudi consortium. The project comprises a central plaza for the zone, a business centre, an administrative building, a commercial centre, a hotel and a health centre.

Ambitious vision for sustainable growth and investment

The Public Authority for Special Economic Zones and Free Zones (OPAZ) is confidently advancing its role as a strategic driver of economic growth in the Sultanate of Oman, guided by an ambitious vision that positions these zones as the preferred destination for local and international investment. Royal Decree No. 38/2025, issuing the Law of Special Economic Zones and Free Zones, marks a significant milestone in this journey, unifying the legislative and regulatory framework while integrating incentives, exemptions, and facilitation measures for investment activities and projects.

OPAZ aims to develop a sustainable economic environment that actively supports national economic growth and enhances In-Country Value (ICV). Its approach is anchored in core pillars: fostering an enabling regulatory framework, achieving institutional excellence, developing advanced infrastructure, and building strategic partnerships across the public and private sectors to attract high-impact, long-term investments.

Guided by a forward-looking vision aligned with Oman Vision 2040, the Authority plans and develops economic zones in line with national sectoral priorities. Its focus is on ensuring balanced growth across key sectors, including industry, logistics, renewable energy, tourism, and emerging technologies.

To drive performance and track outcomes, OPAZ adopts a robust system of strategic indicators. It also embraces digital governance to uphold transparency and offers streamlined investor services through its digital portal and one-stop platform, enhancing efficiency and service quality.

The Authority oversees an integrated supervisory system that ensures alignment between zone development plans and Oman's broader strategic goals. It promotes a flexible, investor-friendly legislative environment in coordination with relevant stakeholders, advancing cohesive economic policy at both national and international levels.

To strengthen institutional responsiveness, OPAZ invests in an agile organisational structure, operational efficiency through modern technologies, and comprehensive performance evaluation. It also delivers targeted training to build national capacity and embeds a culture of excellence and innovation across its operations.

In support of sustainable development, the Authority enforces strict environmental standards, deploys smart monitoring tools, and adopts clean technologies to minimise environmental impact, striking a critical balance between economic ambition and resource preservation.

With a proactive mindset, OPAZ continues to advance its strategic agenda through the launch of transformative projects, strategic partnerships, and active participation in national and global initiatives. These efforts unlock promising investment opportunities, reinforce the zones' contribution to GDP, and position OPAZ as a model of integrated development, driving regional prosperity and aligning with the ambitions of Oman's leadership.

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the magazine are those of
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The magazine welcomes
specialised researches
and academic studies



14 Al Sunaidy issues ministerial decision Amending
Regulation Governing Urban Planning and Building
Permits in SEZAD



18 H.E. Dr Hilal Al Sabti: 8 pharmaceutical factories operate
in free zones and industrial cities as we work to reduce
import reliance



28 Duqm leads global green energy transition with
establishment of first export corridor for hydrogen from
Oman to Europe



38 SFZ hosts 97 projects with
investments over RO 4.74 billion

Guided by a
forward-looking
vision aligned
with Oman Vision
2040, the Authority
plans and develops
economic zones in
line with national
sectoral priorities

Attended by HH Sayyid Theyazin bin Haitham Al Said
and HH Sheikh Hamdan bin Mohammed Al Maktoum



Oman and UAE sign agreement to develop and operate first phase of Al-Rawdah Special Economic Zone

Muscat -

In a bold investment step that reflects the deep economic ties between the Sultanate of Oman and the United Arab Emirates (UAE), and aligns with the goals of Oman Vision 2040 to diversify the economy and attract high-quality investments, the Public Authority for Special Economic Zones and Free Zones (OPAZ) signed an agreement with Mahdah Development Company, an Oman-UAE partnership, to develop and operate the first phase of the Al-Rawdah Special Economic Zone in Wilayat Mahdah, Al Buraimi Governorate. The investment is estimated at around \$2 billion.

The agreement was signed in the presence of HH Sayyid Theyazin bin Haitham Al Said, Minister of Culture, Sports and Youth, and HH Sheikh Hamdan bin Mohammed bin Rashid Al Maktoum, Crown Prince of Dubai, Deputy Prime Minister and Minister of Defence of the UAE, along with a number of dignitaries, senior officials and representatives from both the public and private sectors of the two brotherly nations.

The agreement was signed on behalf of OPAZ by HE Eng. Ahmed bin Hassan Al Dheeb, Deputy Chairman of OPAZ, and on behalf of Mahdah Development Company by HE Sultan Ahmed bin Sulayem, Group Chairman and CEO of DP World.



Agreement term and development plan

Under the usufruct agreement, the developer has been allocated 14 square kilometres for the first phase, with the potential to expand to 25 square kilometres in a second phase, based on the submitted development plan. The agreement spans 50 years, and the zone will benefit from its connectivity to both Sohar Port and Jebel Ali Port in Dubai.

The agreement stipulates that the developer will establish public utilities and infrastructure such as roads, water supply networks, sewage systems, and other essential services, in addition to preparing the master plan, environmental studies, and the initial concept for the allocated area.

In the first phase, the developer will focus on attracting investments in key sectors including manufacturing, logistics, warehousing, pharmaceuticals, medical industries, plastics, mining, food industries, as well as safety and security services and the provision of one-stop-shop services.

Incentives, facilitation and investment opportunities enhancement

The zone benefits from a range of incentives,

exemptions, and facilitations, including customs duty exemptions for imports, exports, and goods storage, as well as access to all permits and licences through a one-stop-shop. Investors also enjoy full repatriation of profits, 100% foreign ownership, and single-window approval for establishing and operating strategic projects, among other advantages.

Al-Rawdah Special Economic Zone represents a strategic initiative aimed at leveraging the area's prime location, boosting investment opportunities in supply and logistics chains, and developing re-export hubs between Oman, the UAE, and regional and international markets. It also seeks to enhance quality of life, promote residential and tourism-related economic activities, diversify economic sectors in Wilayat Mahdah, Al Buraimi, and create job opportunities for individuals and SMEs.

Development goals and strategic location

In his remarks, HE Eng. Ahmed bin Hassan Al Dheeb affirmed that the Al-Rawdah Special Economic Zone was designed to achieve priority development goals, including job creation, the

Investment in the first phase of the zone amounts to approximately

2
\$ billion



Signing of an agreement

to develop and operate Phase One of Al Rawdah Special Economic Zone – Wilayat of Mahdah, between the Public Authority for Special Economic Zones and Free Zones and Mahdah Development Company

(Omani-Emirati Partnership)

Agreement duration is

50

years, with the option to renew



DP WORLD

DP World will develop and operate Phase One (14 square kilometres) through Mahdah Development Company



Mahdah Development Company is an Omani-Emirati partnership registered in the Sultanate of Oman and represented by DP World, its investment arm



Total area of Al Rawdah Special Economic Zone in Wilayat Mahdah, Al Buraimi Governorate, is 56.8 square kilometres



Strategically located near the Oman-UAE border



It benefits from direct connectivity with both Sohar Port in Oman and Jebel Ali Port in Dubai



Governed by the Special Economic Zones and Free Zones Law issued under Royal Decree No. 38/2025



Oman's ASYAD Group will manage the zone's dry port

The zone benefits from the incentives, exemptions and facilities outlined in the Special Economic Zones and Free Zones Law:



Exemption from income tax for 10 years, renewable for two similar periods

1



Exemption from customs duties on imports, exports, and storage of goods

2



Access to all licences and permits through the one-stop shop

3



Full freedom to transfer capital abroad without restrictions

4



100% foreign ownership permitted

5

Phase One targets the following activities:



HE Eng. Ahmed bin Hassan Al Dheeb:
The zone enjoys a strategic location and is connected to the ports of Sohar and Jebel Ali, enabling logistics providers, manufacturers, and commercial companies to efficiently and competitively access markets in the Gulf, Asia and Africa

attraction of knowledge and advanced technologies, and the provision of a business-friendly environment that supports sustainable development, goals that align with Oman Vision 2040.

He highlighted that the zone, located in Wilayat Mahdah, Al Buraimi Governorate, enjoys a strategic position between Oman and the UAE, with direct links to Sohar Port and Jebel Ali Port. This location enables logistics providers, manufacturers, and commercial enterprises to access markets across the Gulf, Asia, and Africa efficiently and cost-effectively.

Economic partnership and joint cooperation

HE Sultan Ahmed bin Sulayem, Group Chairman and CEO of DP World, stated during the signing ceremony, "The Al-Rawdah Special Economic Zone marks a new chapter in the economic relationship between the Sultanate of Oman and the United Arab Emirates. Through our collaboration with the Public Authority for Special Economic Zones and Free Zones and our Omani partners, this zone will strengthen our close trade ties and reflects our shared ambition to achieve sustainable and diversified economic growth. At DP World, we are committed to developing a world-class platform that will create new opportunities for growth, enhance trade connectivity, and deliver long-term economic value for both Oman and the UAE."

He added that the project represents a land-

mark investment valued at approximately \$ 2 billion, and is being developed in well-planned phases under a comprehensive work plan. He noted that once operations begin, the zone is expected to make a significant contribution to GDP, create numerous job opportunities, and boost bilateral trade, while enhancing the resilience of supply chains in both countries, supporting deeper economic integration between Oman and the UAE.

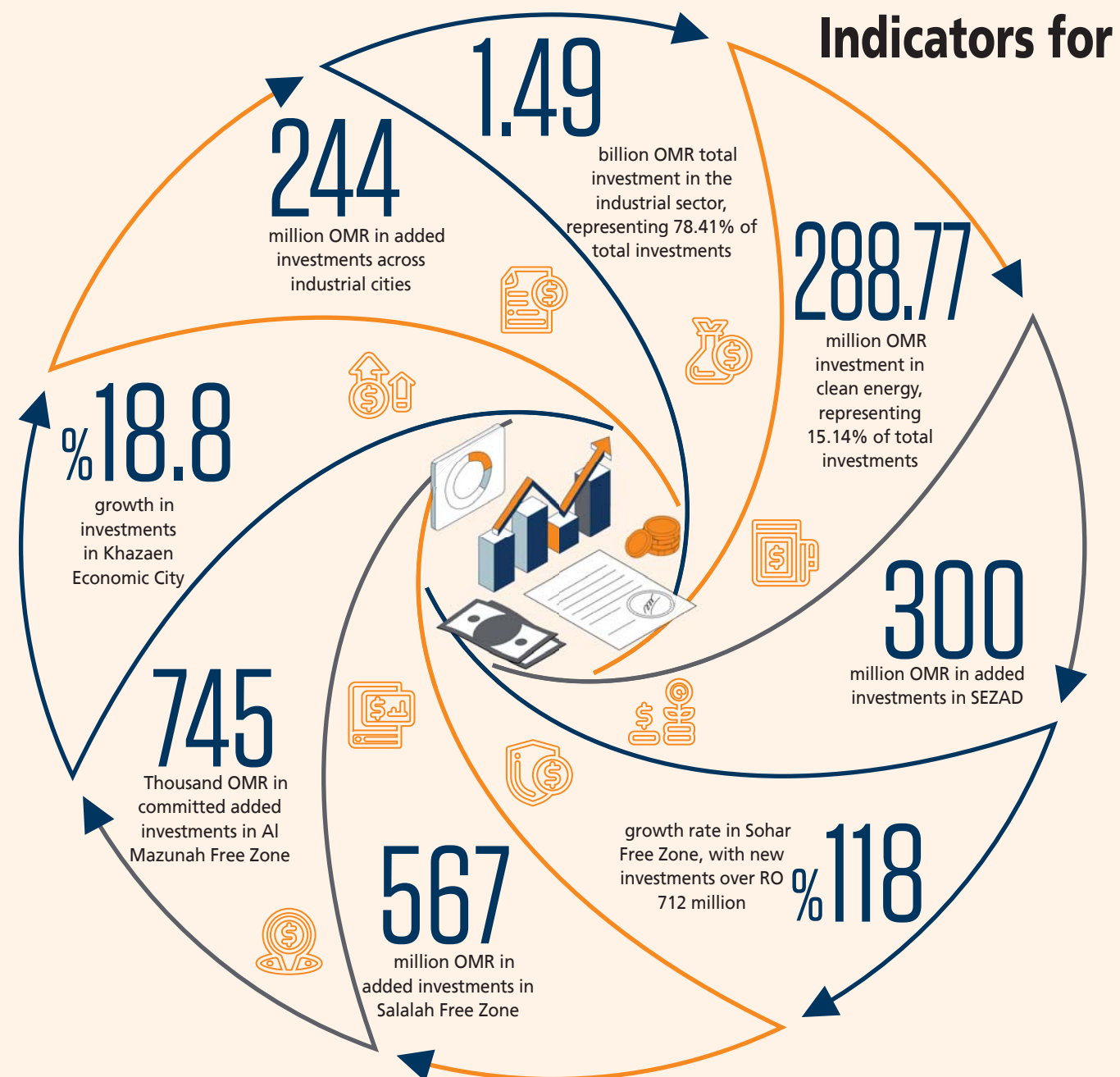
He highlighted that the zone will cater to the needs of logistics companies, light industry manufacturers, and traders, with a focus on sectors such as food and beverage processing, chemicals, rubber, plastics, and manufactured metals.

He projected that infrastructure works will be completed by the end of 2027, with facilities delivered in phases between 2028 and 2030.

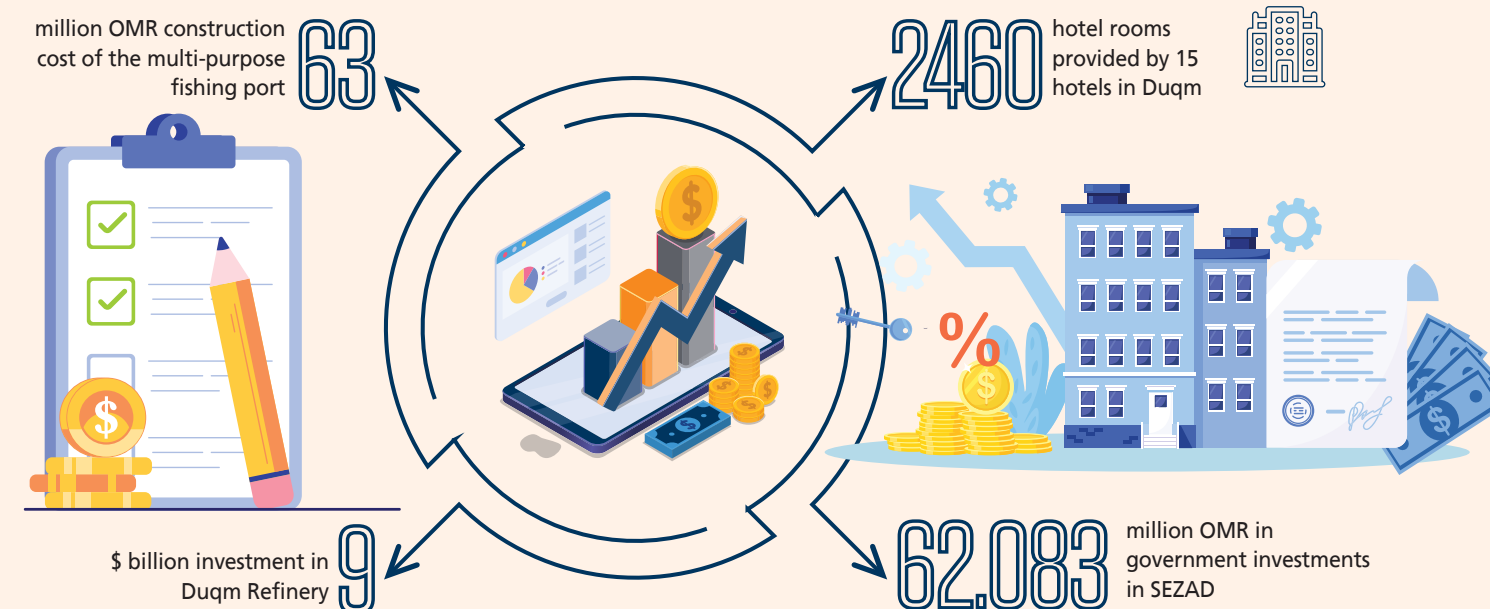
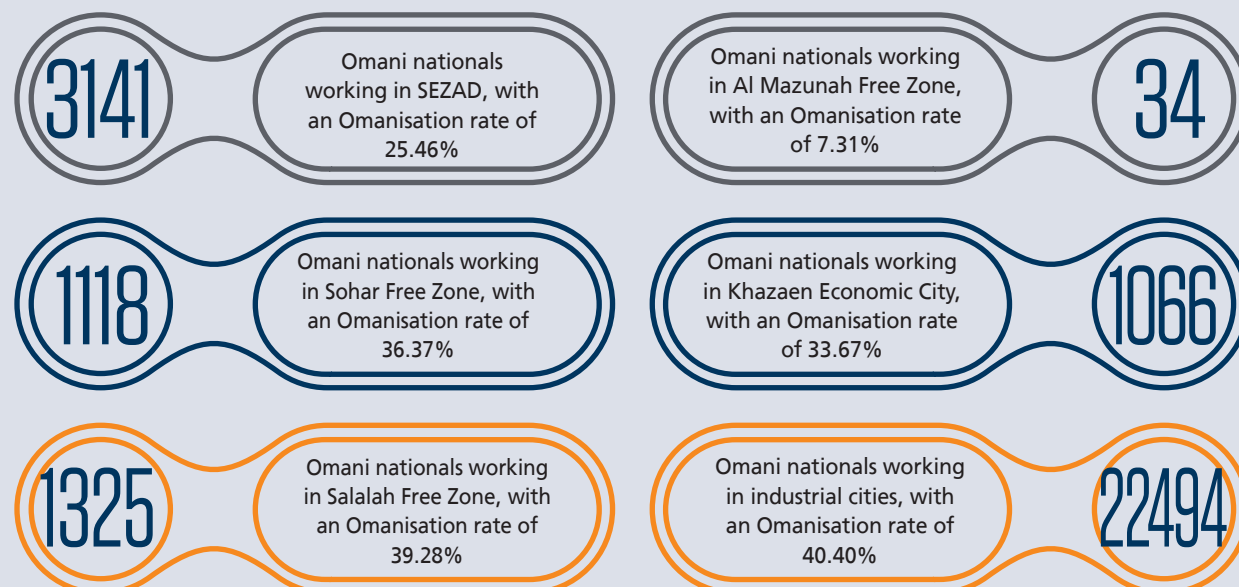
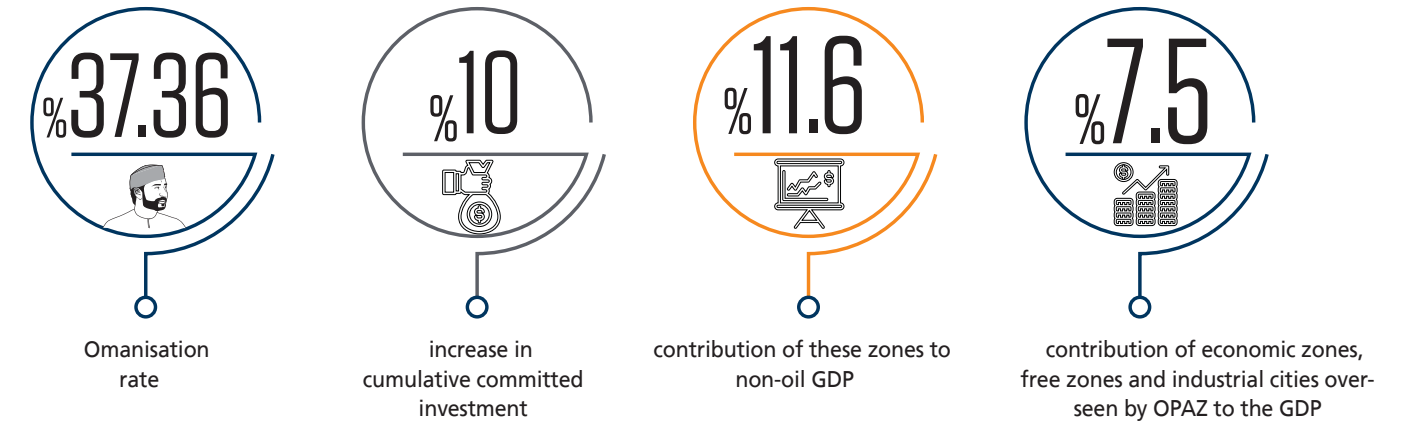
Economic leap

Regarding the benefits to Al Buraimi Governorate, HE Sayyid Dr. Hamad bin Ahmed Al Busaidi, Governor of Al Buraimi, affirmed that the Al-Rawdah Special Economic Zone will bring about an economic transformation in Wilayat Mahdah in particular and Al Buraimi Governorate as a whole. The project is expected to attract global companies and manufacturing plants, creating employment opportunities in Mahdah and other wilayats across the governorate.

HE Sultan Ahmed bin Sulayem:
Al-Rawdah marks a new chapter in the economic partnership between Oman and the UAE, it will strengthen our close trade ties and reflects the shared ambition of both nations to achieve sustainable and diversified economic growth




economic zones, free zones and industrial cities in 2024





Al Sunaidy issues ministerial decision Amending Regulation Governing Urban Planning and Building Permits in SEZAD

Muscat - :

HE Sheikh Dr. Ali bin Masoud bin Ali Al Sunaidy, Chairman of Public Authority for Special Economic Zones and Free Zones (OPAZ), has issued Ministerial Decision No. (34/2025) amending certain provisions of the Regulation Governing Urban Planning and Building Permits in the Special Economic Zone at Duqm (SEZAD).

This decision is issued based on Royal Decree No. (105/2020), which established the Public Authority for Special Economic Zones and Free Zones and defined its competencies, as well as the Regulation issued by Decision No. (322/2015). It also follows the approval of the Authority's Board of Directors and the Ministry of Finance, and in alignment with the public interest.

Article One of the decisions stipulates the implementation of the attached amendments to the provisions of the Regulation Governing Urban Planning and Building Permits in SEZAD.

Article Two states that building permits issued prior to the enforcement of these amendments shall remain valid until the end of their designated period.

Article Three annuls any provision that contradicts or conflicts with the attached amendments.

Amendments to certain provision of Regulation Governing Urban Planning and Building Permits in SEZAD



Administrative penalties include warnings, fines, suspension, or cancellation of permits for violators

Article (1)

Articles (22) and (28) of the Regulation Governing Urban Planning and Building Permits in the Special Economic Zone at Duqm shall be replaced with the following:

Article (22)

- The building permit shall be valid for three (3) years, renewable for similar periods, upon request by the concerned party accompanied by proof of payment of the prescribed fee.
- If construction does not commence within six (6) months from the date of issuance of the permit, the permit shall be deemed cancelled.
- An application for renewal must be submitted at least 30 days before the permit expires.

Article (28)

- No building may be occupied without first obtaining a Building Completion Certificate from the Authority. This certificate shall only be issued after verifying the following:
- Full completion of the building in accordance with the approved permit and drawings.
- Removal of all construction waste and proper site leveling.
- Complete removal of workers' housing, offices, storage units, and temporary fences from the site, and cancellation of any temporary utility connections, if applicable.
- Installation and operation of elevators in accordance with the approved drawings and technical specifications.
- Submission of detailed as-built drawings and landscaping plans in the format approved by the Authority.
- A certificate from the supervising engineering office or consultancy confirming compliance with the permit conditions and approved specifications.
- A certificate from the Civil Defence and Ambulance Authority.
- The Authority may issue a Partial Building Completion Certificate for one or more completed sections of a building, provided they are in full compliance with the permit. The owner may occupy any section(s) covered by such a certificate.

Article (2)

New Articles (2) repeated, (21) repeated, and (31) repeated shall be added to the Regulation as follows:

Article (2) Repeated

- Construction works in the zone may be carried out using 3D printing technology in accordance with engineering standards approved by the Authority.

Article (21) Repeated

- Before starting construction, the contractor must submit a bank guarantee to the Authority amounting to RO 1 per square metre, with a minimum of RO 200 and a maximum of RO 10,000.
- The guarantee must be issued in favour of the Authority by an approved bank in Oman, and must include terms and conditions set or accepted by the Authority.
- It must remain valid throughout the permit's duration and will only be refunded six (6) months after the Building Completion Certificate is issued.
- The Authority may deduct from the guarantee to cover any liabilities, and if any deduction occurs, the contractor must replenish the guarantee amount within 30 days of notification.

Article (31) Repeated

In case of violations of the Regulation, the Authority may impose one or more of the following administrative penalties:

- Warning, with the obligation to rectify the violation within 15 days from the date of notice.
- Administrative fine ranging from RO 100 to RO 10,000 for each violation. The fine may be doubled if the same violation is repeated within one year.
- Suspension of the permit for 20 days until the cause of the violation is removed.
- Revocation of the permit.

Article (3)

- Article (26) of the Regulation Governing Urban Planning and Building Permits in the Special Economic Zone at Duqm shall be repealed.

A building permit is valid for **3** years and can be renewed, the permit will be cancelled if construction does not begin within 6 months

Occupancy of buildings is prohibited before obtaining a completion certificate from the Authority

Use of 3D printing technology in construction is permitted in accordance with approved requirements

Contractors must provide a bank guarantee to ensure compliance with building conditions



Signing of development and land agreements for Phases 2 and 3 of ACME's green hydrogen project

Muscat - **الدوقم** :

Hydrom (Hydrogen Oman), the Public Authority for Special Economic Zones and Free Zones (OPAZ), and ACME Group have signed project development and land usufruct agreements for phases 2 and 3 of ACME's green hydrogen and green ammonia project in the Special Economic Zone at Duqm (SEZAD).

The signing marks the project's formal inclusion under Hydrom's regulatory framework, supporting the integration of major commercial hydrogen developments and paving the way for the next phase of execution.

The agreements were signed by H.E. Eng. Salim bin Nasser Al Auqi, Minister of Energy and Minerals and Chairman of Hydrom; H.E. Sheikh Dr. Ali bin Masoud Al Sunaidy, Chairman of OPAZ; and Gursharan Jassal, Country Manager for ACME in Oman.

Phases 2 and 3 of the project span 80 square kilometres, with an expected annual output of around 71,000 tonnes of green hydrogen and 400,000 tonnes of green ammonia per phase. The signing follows the launch of the project's initial phase, which targets an annual production of 100,000 tonnes of green ammonia and is backed by an offtake agreement with Yara International. Upon completion of all phases, ACME aims to achieve a total production capacity of 0.9 million tonnes of green ammonia per year.

Eng. Abdulaziz Al Shidhani, Managing Director of Hydrom, stated, "This signing marks another pivotal step in Hydrom's roadmap to expand a fully integrated portfolio of green hydrogen projects in the Sultanate of Oman. It formalises the incorporation of one of the country's earliest hydrogen projects, previously classified under legacy initiatives, into the national framework overseen by Hydrom. This not only aligns past initiatives with the regulatory structure but also reaffirms Hydrom's commitment to structured, scalable development, while boosting investor confidence and strengthening Oman's

position in the global hydrogen market."

He added that the signing comes at a time when Oman's hydrogen sector is advancing rapidly, led by Hydrom's third land allocation bidding round currently underway. With the national hydrogen portfolio taking shape and continued progress in regulation, infrastructure, and human capital, the sector is steadily moving forward to meet global demand and solidify Oman's role as a reliable long-term supplier of green hydrogen.

Eng. Ahmed bin Ali Akaak, CEO of SEZAD, said, "The signing reflects SEZAD's success in attracting green hydrogen and green ammonia projects. It also underscores the growing strategic importance of the green hydrogen sector within the zone's 2025-2030 strategy, as we work to adopt green industrial initiatives aligned with Oman Vision 2040 and the national strategy for achieving net-zero carbon emissions by 2050."

Gursharan Jassal, Country Manager for ACME in Oman, added, "These agreements for the next phase of our green ammonia project in Duqm represent a major step forward in supporting Oman's efforts to build a sustainable energy future. This collaboration reflects our shared commitment to contributing to the goals of Oman Vision 2040 and strengthening the Sultanate's role in the global green hydrogen economy."

Following this signing, the total number of green hydrogen projects awarded by Hydrom in the Al Wusta and Dhofar governorates has risen to nine, with a combined investment value exceeding \$50 billion and a projected production capacity of approximately 1.5 million tonnes of green hydrogen annually by 2030. These projects will rely on nearly 35 gigawatts of renewable energy and are structured under a unified national framework designed to enable large-scale implementation in line with growing global demand. Through its expanding portfolio, Hydrom continues to position the Sultanate of Oman as one of the world's most advanced and investment-ready green hydrogen ecosystems.

Phases 2 and 3 of the project cover 80 square kilometres, with each phase expected to produce approximately 71,000 tonnes of green hydrogen and 400,000 tonnes of green ammonia annually



With 1,000 megawatts annual capacity

Wind turbine plant in Duqm with over RO 70 million investment

Muscat - **الدوقم** :

The Special Economic Zone at Duqm (SEZAD) has witnessed the inauguration of the first phase of a specialised wind turbine plant developed by Mawarid Turbine Company, with an annual production capacity of 1,000 megawatts and an investment over RO 70 million (approximately \$200 million).

Commercial operations of the plant are expected to begin in 2026, positioning it as the foundation of wind turbine manufacturing in the Sultanate of Oman and supporting efforts to localise renewable energy technologies.

The project is also set to generate around 1,080 job opportunities.

His Excellency Eng. Salim bin Nasser Al Auqi, Minister of Energy and Minerals, stated that the factory will support upcoming wind energy projects scheduled over the next two years, with sufficient capacity to meet the needs of ambitious developments in the sector. He noted that production from the first phase is expected to commence by the end of 2025.

He added that the project aims to utilise the plant's capacity to supply wind power stations planned from mid-2026 onward, while also reinforcing Oman's localisation efforts and creating employment opportunities for Omani youth. This reflects the country's broader shift toward renewable and clean energy.

Mustafa bin Mohammed Al Hinai, CEO of Mawarid Turbine, described the project as a major leap and a foundation for an integrated wind turbine manufacturing industry. He highlighted that the facility will reduce logistics costs and provide high-efficiency products for local and international markets, while also creating opportunities to export both knowledge and Omani-made products.

Al Hinai emphasised the project's focus on enhancing local content and increasing in-country value, in addition to building strategic partnerships rooted in industrial integration, innovation, and knowledge transfer.

Wei Li, Chairman of Shanghai Electric Group, stated that the project reflects the deep ties between the Sultanate of Oman and




The project reflects Oman's shift towards renewable and clean energy


the People's Republic of China. He added that it will contribute to the transfer of advanced technology and the attraction of quality investments to Oman, in line with the country's transition to sustainable energy.

The inauguration ceremony also included the signing of several agreements and memoranda of cooperation. Notably, two agreements were signed with Shanghai Electric Group, covering technology licensing, the establishment of a research and design centre, and the supply of turbines for pilot stations. In addition, a detailed design contract for the plant was signed with CID (Gulf).



H.E. Dr Hilal Al Sabti speaks exclusively to the .

8 pharmaceutical factories operate in free zones and industrial cities as we work to reduce import reliance


Muscat - .

H.E. Dr Hilal bin Ali Al Sabti, Minister of Health, revealed that eight pharmaceutical factories are currently operating in the Sultanate of Oman. These include five fully integrated drug production facilities, two plants manufacturing active pharmaceutical ingredients (APIs) for human medicines, and one factory focused on secondary packaging as an initial phase in the production chain.

While the factories are distributed between industrial cities and free zones, the majority are located within industrial cities due to their advanced technical infrastructure and integrated support services, factors that contribute to improved manufacturing quality and faster product availability in the local market.

Measures are in place to support factories in obtaining international accreditations such as GMP and ISO. Oman has a clear future vision to boost pharmaceutical exports to regional and global markets, in line with Oman Vision 2040.



Speaking exclusively to the , Dr Al Sabti, affirmed that the Ministry of Health is pursuing a strategic policy to promote investment in the pharmaceutical industry. This sector is considered a key pillar for achieving drug security, enhancing self-sufficiency, and contributing to both national economic growth and the development of the healthcare sector.

Ensuring production quality and safety

The Minister stressed that to ensure quality production and safe manufacturing, pharmaceutical factories must be established within economic zones, free zones, or industrial cities. These locations offer a conducive environment with advanced technical infrastructure, effective regulatory systems, and integrated support services, all aligned with internationally recognised standards.

Dr Al Sabti highlighted that industrial cities and special economic and free zones are attractive investment environments due to the financial incentives and regulatory facilitations they offer, including customs and tax exemptions. These advantages help lower production costs and boost competitiveness.

Within this framework, the Ministry is actively encouraging foreign direct investment in the pharmaceutical sector and promoting strategic partnerships with leading international firms to transfer technology and expertise and to localise the industry. The Ministry also plays a role in facilitating registration and licensing procedures and supports public-private partnerships to develop an integrated pharmaceutical manufacturing ecosystem that ensures sustainability, fosters innovation, and provides high-quality, efficient medical products.

Pharmaceutical investment and drug security

Speaking on the role of investment in enhancing drug security and reducing import dependence, Dr Al Sabti emphasised that investment in the pharmaceutical industry is a fundamental pillar in strengthening national health security. These investments play a pivotal role in achieving drug

security by reducing reliance on imports through support for local production and the development of manufacturing capabilities that can meet domestic demand, particularly in exceptional circumstances such as global health crises and pandemics.

He added that such investments help stabilise supply chains and support the transfer of technology and knowledge, which in turn contributes to gradually achieving self-sufficiency, lowering costs, and improving the quality and sustainability of healthcare services across the Sultanate of Oman.

Coordination and integration of efforts

The Minister of Health affirmed the existence of ongoing coordination between the Ministry of Health and the authorities overseeing special economic zones, free zones, and industrial cities. This coordination takes place on multiple regulatory and technical levels, with the aim of integrating efforts and facilitating investment in the pharmaceutical sector, recognised as one of Oman's vital industries.

Key features of this coordination include:

Alignment of Regulatory Requirements:

The Ministry of Health works in collaboration with relevant authorities to align technical and environmental requirements specific to the pharmaceutical industry. This ensures compli-

Pharmaceutical factories must be located in economic zones, free zones or industrial cities to ensure production quality and manufacturing safety



International partnerships are in place to transfer knowledge and localise pharmaceutical technology, supported by government coordination to facilitate investment



The Ministry is implementing a strategic policy to promote pharmaceutical investments as a key pillar of drug security and self-sufficiency



Strict oversight ensures compliance with global standards, with regular inspections and efforts to streamline registration procedures for locally made medicines



Financial allocations have been dedicated to pharmaceutical research, in collaboration with higher education institutions, innovation incubators, and qualified Omani talent

ance with Good Manufacturing Practices (GMP) and global health standards, guaranteeing the quality and safety of locally produced pharmaceutical products.

Facilitation of Licensing and Registration Procedures:

In coordination with the Drug Safety Centre, the authority responsible for technical oversight, projects are monitored from the initial approval and design review phase through to the final licensing for factory operations, ensuring adherence to international standards for operational and product quality.

Allocation of Suitable Land and Facilities:

Relevant entities cooperate to allocate appropriate land and infrastructure for establishing pharmaceutical factories in designated industrial locations, taking into account the necessary technical requirements such as water treatment systems and medical waste disposal.

Provision of Investment Incentives:

Special economic zones and free zones offer integrated investment incentives, including customs and tax exemptions. Meanwhile, the Ministry of Health contributes to fostering an attractive investment climate by providing a clear regulatory framework and supportive health policies, strengthening investor confidence in the viability of this vital sector.

Ensuring pharmaceutical product quality

Dr Al Sabti, Minister of Health, affirmed that the Ministry of Health, in coordination with supervisory authorities, sets environmental and health standards for pharmaceutical manufacturing facilities to ensure compliance with international quality benchmarks. The Ministry conducts periodic inspections during all stages, design, construction, and operation, to verify adherence

to health and environmental requirements, particularly regarding safe disposal of medical waste.

Dr Al Sabti added that the Ministry is actively working to streamline the registration of locally produced medicines through a fast-track system, ensuring their timely availability in the Omani market. This is supported by technical guidance to manufacturers throughout the registration process, along with rapid quality testing and analysis to guarantee safety and compliance.

Government support for pharmaceutical sector

On government support, the Minister stated, "Recognising the critical role of this sector in ensuring drug security and self-sufficiency, the Ministry has developed a robust regulatory framework aligned with international standards. Through the Drug Safety Centre, we provide ongoing technical support, reviewing plans, offering guidance during planning, execution, and licensing stages, to ensure that facilities meet health requirements. We also prioritise locally produced medicines in registration and evaluation processes."

Support for research and development

On R&D, Dr Al Sabti highlighted the Ministry's readiness to support innovation in pharmaceutical industries, noting the presence of qualified



national talent with accumulated expertise. He pointed to designated financial allocations for research, in collaboration with the Ministry of Higher Education, Research and Innovation. Additionally, the Ministry seeks to expand partnerships with entities that manage innovation incubators and accelerators, turning promising ideas into high-value projects.

Statistics and outlook

Dr Al Sabti projected notable growth in Oman's pharmaceutical sector, driven by upcoming strategic projects aimed at localising production and reducing import dependency. Key areas of focus include sterile medicines, oncology treatments, and vaccines.

Despite current challenges, the domestic pharmaceutical share reached only 4.6% of total medicine purchases in 2023 (compared to 95.4% for imported products), but this reflects steady progress from 1.8% in 2021, to 4.7% in 2022, and now 4.6% in 2023 in volume, with an increase in total local procurement value.

The Ministry has a clear strategic direction to close this gap by empowering local manufacturers, easing registration and procurement procedures, and encouraging Omani factories to expand production in high-demand areas such as chronic illness treatments and biologics.

Future aspirations

In conclusion, the Minister of Health affirmed that the Sultanate of Oman possesses a clear future vision to boost pharmaceutical exports to regional and international markets, in line with Oman Vision 2040, which aims to diversify the economy and increase the contribution of high value-added industrial sectors.

Dr Al Sabti explained that the Ministry plays a key enabling role in this effort by creating a supportive regulatory and legislative environment

and addressing all challenges that may face local and international investors seeking to direct their production toward export.

The Ministry is working to facilitate manufacturers' access to international certifications, such as Good Manufacturing Practices (GMP) and ISO quality standards. It is also easing the registration procedures for pharmaceutical products in GCC markets and those with free trade agreements, enabling investors to expand regionally and globally. In addition, the Ministry contributes by accelerating regulatory pathways, clarifying technical regulations, and supporting market access efforts through coordination with trade promotion entities.

He added that the Ministry is coordinating with economic authorities to allocate technically equipped industrial land and offer supportive financial and customs incentives. These measures aim to establish an industrial base capable of hosting pharmaceutical production lines geared for export, thereby enhancing the sector's global competitiveness.

In this way, the Ministry of Health's role centres on empowering the pharmaceutical industry to achieve export readiness and opening opportunities for investors to lead in foreign markets, driven by an integrated health and industrial ecosystem within the Sultanate of Oman.



As of 2023, local pharmaceuticals represent only 4.6% of the market, plans are underway to expand into cancer treatments and vaccines



Investment in the pharmaceutical sector is essential for strengthening national health security



Fast-track pathways are in place for registering locally produced drugs, with priority given to domestic manufacturers

Economic and free zones law aims to enhance Oman's investment environment



To view the law, scan the barcode.

Muscat - :

The Law of Special Economic Zones and Free Zones, issued under Royal Decree No. 38/2025, marks a crucial step in enhancing the legislative framework for investment in the Sultanate of Oman. The law provides a unified legal structure that improves procedural efficiency, standardises incentives and benefits, and strengthens Oman's competitiveness in attracting high-quality investments. It aligns with the objectives of Oman Vision 2040, which emphasises income diversification, private sector empowerment, and the positioning of economic and free zones as key drivers of sustainable economic growth.

H.E. Eng. Ahmed bin Hassan Al Dheeb, Deputy Chairman of the Public Authority for Special Economic Zones and Free Zones (OPAZ), affirmed that the new law embodies one of the core pillars in realising the priorities of Oman Vision 2040, particularly in the areas of economic diversification, fiscal sustainability, investment promotion, and governance of the state administrative apparatus.

Enhancing investment environment

His Excellency affirmed that the law reflects the government's ongoing

efforts to enhance the investment climate and strengthen investor confidence, both local and international, through an integrated package of incentives and facilitations that support the growth of economic projects. The law aims to standardise the benefits and guarantees offered within special economic and free zones, while allowing for additional incentives to be granted to strategic projects and emerging zones.

He added that the law grants strategic



H.E. Eng. Ahmed bin Hassan Al Dheeb:
The law unifies the incentives, exemptions, and facilities granted to economic activities across all zones.

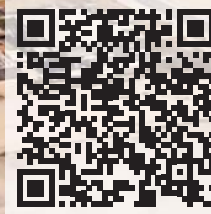
projects a single comprehensive approval covering establishment, operation, and management, without the need for additional procedures or licences. Exceptional facilitations may also be granted, as specified in the executive regulations.

His Excellency noted that the law introduces a dedicated framework for real estate development projects, allowing for freehold ownership of residential units. This is expected to stimulate population growth and service activity within special economic zones. The law is designed to enhance the investment environment, promote sustainability and economic growth, and position these zones as investment gateways that contribute to income diversification, job creation, export growth, and support for small and medium enterprises.

He also emphasised that the law grants the Authority effective regulatory and oversight powers and supports its vision of making the zones under its supervision attractive investment destinations. A key feature is the One Stop Shop, which simplifies procedures and provides all necessary services and licences to investors efficiently.

Unified legislative framework

Mahmood bin Hamoud Al Rawahi, General Manager of Planning and



To view the explanatory note, scan the barcode

Information Technology at OPAZ, stated that the law was developed after reviewing similar legislation in other countries. He explained that the focus was on incorporating investor-friendly facilitation measures that enhance confidence by establishing a unified legislative framework for all special economic and free zones under a single law. This ensures alignment across legal and regulatory provisions governing the investment environment in these zones.

He added that the law lays out the regulatory foundations for project establishment, licensing procedures, required approvals, and clearly defines the rights and obligations of investors.

Driving growth and localising new projects

Chief executives of the zones under the Authority's supervision confirmed that Royal Decree No. 38/2025, issuing the Law of Special Economic Zones and Free Zones, is a qualitative addition to Oman's investment framework and a foundational pillar in promoting growth, localising new projects, and achieving economic diversification and employment targets.

They highlighted that the law strengthens the business environment by unifying legislative frameworks, simplifying procedures, and offering flexible incentives, thus attracting high-quality investments and strategic projects while supporting sustainable development.

They further noted that the law directly supports the goals of Oman Vision 2040 in areas such as economic diversification, fiscal sustainability, investment attraction, and strengthening the role of the private sector.

In this context, they view the law

as a key factor in enhancing Oman's regional and international competitiveness. It paves the way for long-term strategic partnerships with major global companies, solidifying Oman's position as a gateway for global trade and building a diverse and sustainable economy for future generations.

Additional incentives and facilitations

Eng. Ahmed bin Ali Akaak, CEO of the Special Economic Zone at Duqm (SEZAD), stated that the new law offers added facilitations and incentives that bolster the investment environment and enhance Duqm's position on both local and global investment maps. He emphasised that these advantages will positively impact several sectors, especially renewable energy and green industries. The law also introduces regulations for real estate development, including provisions for freehold

ownership, which will stimulate economic activity, attract residents, and encourage infrastructure and service development.

Major shift in business environment

Mohammed bin Ali Al Shizawi, Acting CEO of SOHAR Freezone, described the law as a pivotal step in strengthening the investment climate and improving Sohar Freezone's readiness, capitalising on its strategic location along global trade routes. The law simplifies processes through a One Stop Shop and offers full foreign ownership, as well as tax and customs exemptions of up to 25 years, positioning Sohar as an attractive destination for global firms. He highlighted the law's support for manufacturing and logistics industries, citing the example of the \$1.3 billion United Solar polysilicon project. The law also allows flexible employment policies, encourages Omanisation, and promotes training programmes to devel-



Mahmood Al Rawahi:
The law contributes to the development of income tax exemption policies, making them more attractive for strategic projects



Eng. Ahmed Akaak:
The law supports Duqm's position as a competitive destination on both the local and international investment map

Law of Special Economic Zones and Free Zones
issued by Royal Decree No. 38/2025



Facilitations and Procedures:

- One Stop Shop for all investor services
- Expedited issuance of work permits for expatriates (within 5 working days)
- Temporary import and export of materials and goods
- Transparent allocation of land and real estate

Regulatory Aspects

- Creation of an electronic registry for each zone
- Granting the Authority administrative penal powers
- Flexibility in transferring projects between zones
- Defined timelines for project implementation

Objectives of the Law:

- Enhance the investment environment and increase its attractiveness
- Empower OPAZ to regulate and monitor the investment ecosystem
- Build investor confidence through unified legislative frameworks
- Simplify procedures via the One Stop Shop
- Standardise incentives, exemptions, and benefits across all zones
- Offer additional advantages for strategic projects
- Link tax exemptions to the achievement of specific economic goals
- Regulate real estate development projects within special economic zones

Key Benefits of the Law:

- Comprehensive approvals for strategic projects
- Tax exemptions tied to economic performance
- Full foreign ownership for investors
- Permission to establish commercial representative offices within Oman
- Possibility of creating free zones within special economic zones
- Establishment of customs and immigration offices within the zones

op national talent. Al Shizawi noted the importance of integration between Sohar Port and the Freezone, which enables cargo transfer within 14 minutes without duplicate customs clearance. The zone remains committed to sustainability, hosting environmentally friendly projects such as a battery recycling plant and a waste processing facility. The law, he added, unifies the legislative system, increases investor confidence, and enhances Sohar’s competitiveness, supporting key sectors like petrochemicals, metals, chemicals, and logistics in alignment with Oman Vision 2040.

Alignment with modern investment trends
Dr. Ali bin Mohammed Tabouk, CEO of Salalah Free Zone, said the law marks a qualitative shift that enhances the zone’s readiness to accommodate evolving investment trends. By unifying the legal and regulatory framework, the law strengthens legislative stability and investor con-

fidence. It maintains existing incentives for current projects and expands the Authority’s powers to improve efficiency. The law also activates the One Stop Shop and permits freehold

residential sales, helping to establish an integrated urban environment for workers and investors. Dr. Tabouk explained that the law supports temporary storage oper-



Dr. Ali Tabouk: The law provides a new framework for the growth of industrial, commercial, and logistics sectors in the Salalah Free Zone



Mohammed Al Shizawi: The new law represents a pivotal step in strengthening the exceptional readiness of the Sohar Free Zone



ations through customs and tax exemptions for goods intended for re-export or distribution, positioning Salalah as a logistics hub. Strategic projects receive comprehensive approvals to expedite implementation, and tax exemptions are tied to national economic goals like employment and local content. The legal stability offered by the law paves the way for long-term global partnerships and opens up promising opportunities in real estate investment.

Meeting future economic aspirations
Eng. Ahmed bin Khamis Al Kasbi, Director General of Al Mazunah Free Zone, stated that Royal Decree 38/2025 arrives at a crucial time to strengthen investment promotion efforts. The law establishes a unified legislative framework and an integrated regulatory system that enhances the appeal of investment zones and aligns with Oman’s renewed economic vision. Al Kasbi highlighted the law’s emphasis on transparency and governance, par-

ticularly in freehold property regulation, which supports investors’ expansion plans. He added that the law provides Al Mazunah—Oman’s strategic trade gateway with Yemen, with tailored incentives for trade, re-export, and logistics services. The zone is now better positioned to attract quality investments, especially with rising interest in real estate ownership. The law also enables seamless project relocation between zones (Article 15) and allows the creation of free zones within special economic zones (Article 21), fostering integrated commercial and industrial activity.

Supporting development and expansion plans
Eng. Salem bin Sulaiman Al Dhahli, CEO of Khazaen Economic City, said the new law marks a turning point that supports the city’s development, especially in service integration and infrastructure advancement. It enhances procedural efficiency, unifies regulatory frameworks, and accel-

ates project implementation, aligning with Khazaen’s vision of becoming a fully integrated investment and logistics hub. Al Dhahli pointed out that the law allows Khazaen to offer competitive incentives and streamlined licensing and ownership processes, boosting its regional and global appeal. The city is now better prepared to host major projects in light industries, logistics, trade, and technology, thanks to the law’s customs and tax exemptions, smart services, and modern infrastructure. Its strategic location facilitates access to both regional and international markets.

Enhancing free zone competitiveness
Faisal bin Ali Al Balushi, Senior Manager of the Muscat Airport Free Zone (under Asyad Group), said the law gives the zone greater flexibility to attract quality investments in vital sectors such as air transport, logistics, and e-commerce, supporting Asyad’s vision of positioning Oman as a global logistics hub. The law also strengthens alignment between the Muscat Airport Free Zone and other free and border zones, helping build an interconnected network that supports trade and investment. He noted that the new legal framework opens broader opportunities for investors by expanding licensable business activities and providing specialised services in areas such as logistics, re-export, pharmaceuticals, and distribution centres. This, he said, reinforces Oman’s role as a central node in global trade and transport networks.



Eng. Salem Al Dhahli: The law enhances procedural efficiency, unifies legislative and regulatory frameworks, creates an investor-friendly environment, and accelerates project implementation



Eng. Ahmed Al Kasbi: The law will boost the ability of the Al Mazunah Free Zone to attract high-quality investments



Faisal Al Balushi: The law opens broad horizons for investors by expanding the types of licensable investment activities

Speaking to **الدوقم**, Eng. Nasser Al Kindi, CEO of Invest Oman, said :

Invest Oman platform processes **90** projects worth nearly RO 4.9 billion



26 investment transactions completed and 9 projects localised in special economic zones, free zones and industrial cities with a total value of RO 68.3 million.

Industrial and food security sectors lead the investment landscape in special economic zones and free zones.

40 projects localised across various sectors with a combined value of RO 1.8 billion, reflecting growing confidence in Oman's investment climate.

Muscat - **الدوقم** :

The special economic zones, free zones and industrial cities in the Sultanate of Oman have witnessed growing interest from both local and international investors in recent months. This surge is attributed to the country's investor-friendly environment, offered incentives, advanced infrastructure, and Oman's strategic location as a logistics and trade hub connecting Asia, Africa, and Europe.

In an exclusive interview with Duqm Economist, Eng. Nasser bin Khalifa Al Kindi, CEO of Invest Oman, revealed that a total of 26 investment transactions have been completed through the platform across special economic zones, free zones and industrial cities. These resulted in the localisation of 9 projects across various sectors, with a total investment value of approximately RO 68.37 million. This, he noted, reflects the platform's ability to convert investment opportunities into tangible projects and attract both local and foreign capital to high-value sectors.

Streamlining investment procedures

Speaking to Duqm Economist, Eng. Nasser Al Kindi, CEO of Invest Oman, highlighted the platform's crucial role in accelerating investment procedures within special economic zones, free zones and industrial cities. He explained that the platform provides an integrated suite of digital services that significantly shorten the time required for approvals and reduce the administrative complexities that previously hindered investors. The presence of permanent representatives from relevant entities within the Invest Oman team enables investors to complete most procedures under one roof, facilitating faster decision-making and turning opportunities into tangible projects. The platform also offers dedicated fast-track channels for major and high-value investments requiring immediate processing.

Key entities within Invest Oman platform

Al Kindi added that Invest Oman operates in collaboration with 22 government and private sector entities. Key participants include the Public Authority for Special Economic Zones and Free Zones (OPAZ), the Royal Oman Police, the Ministry of Housing and Urban Planning, the Ministry of Heritage and Tourism, the Ministry of Health, the Ministry of Labour, the Ministry of Transport, Communications and Information Technology, Muscat Municipality, the Environment Authority, the Public Establishment for Industrial Estates (Madayn), the Oman Chamber of Commerce and Industry, and Sohar International Bank. He emphasised that Invest Oman is the official, integrated gateway for promoting and facilitating investment in the Sultanate of Oman. Supervised by the Ministry of Commerce, Industry and Investment Promotion, the platform serves as a unified station for enabling strategic investments and attracting global companies, with a focus on priority sectors such as renewable energy, technology, sustainable tourism, circular economy, food security and mining, all in line with the objectives of Oman Vision 2040.

Proactive investment promotion

Al Kindi explained that Invest Oman plays a strategic role in strengthening Oman's position as a promising international investment destination. This is achieved by adopting a proactive approach in presenting investment opportunities and leveraging digital platforms and global forums to promote Oman's competitive advantages, while attracting investment in high-potential sectors. The platform also enhances Oman's presence at international events and exhibitions through specialised technical and negotiation teams that present well-structured investment proposals based on international best practices.

He added that Invest Oman offers an integrated business environment that includes an invest-

ment opportunity map, specialised teams for project analysis and evaluation, and competitive incentives. The digital platform serves as a unified electronic gateway, enabling both local and international investors to launch their projects and complete related procedures online, while also providing comprehensive data and information on the investment climate, legislation, and various business pathways.

Investor selection criteria

Eng. Nasser Al Kindi explained that the selection of investors is based on a set of qualitative and quantitative factors, most notably financial solvency, the investor's experience in the targeted sector, and the project's ability to generate added value for the national economy. Additionally, the project's alignment with sustainable growth standards is considered. Feasibility studies, both economic and technical, are thoroughly evaluated to ensure alignment with Oman's national development priorities and overall strategic direction.

Figures and indicators

Regarding the number of investment projects processed, Al Kindi revealed that nearly 90 investment proposals have been received and processed through the Invest Oman platform, with a total value of approximately RO 4.9 billion. Of these, 40 projects have been localised across various economic sectors, with a combined value of about RO 1.8 billion. He emphasised that these figures reflect the growing confidence in Oman's investment climate and highlight the platform's efforts to transform opportunities into real projects that contribute to economic diversification, job creation, and enhanced public-private sector partnerships.

Enabling environment and growing investments

Al Kindi added that the success of Invest Oman is supported by several key enablers, including sustained economic recovery, continuous improvement in Oman's credit ratings, and a notable increase in foreign direct investment inflows. The cumulative value of foreign investments in the Sultanate of Oman reached approximately RO 160.693 billion from 2019 to the third quarter of 2024. In Q3 of 2024 alone, foreign investments stood at RO 26.677 billion, marking a 16% increase. Notably, the manufacturing sector accounted for 51% of these investments, underscoring Oman's success in positioning itself as a competitive global investment hub, underpinned by advanced infrastructure, strategic in-

itiatives, and high-value incentives.

Leading investor countries

Al Kindi noted that the majority of investors came from within the Sultanate of Oman, followed by major economic powers such as India, China and Egypt, reflecting growing regional and international confidence in Oman's investment environment.

Top sectors for investment

The industrial sector topped the list of attractive investment areas, driven by high-potential opportunities and integrated projects that support local manufacturing and exports. The food security sector has also gained momentum, particularly amid national efforts to achieve self-sufficiency and enhance food resilience. Additionally, the healthcare sector has emerged as a promising area for investment, propelled by qualitative expansion in medical services and technologies and growing demand for modern health infrastructure.

Investment map functionality

Al Kindi highlighted that the investment map available through the Invest Oman platform is an innovative, interactive tool that enables investors to explore opportunities based on geographical location, economic sector, and each region's comparative advantages. The map provides detailed information such as the location of investment land, area size, investment value, surrounding infrastructure, and the targeted sector. It also supplies supporting data to facilitate decision-making, including proximity to logistics gateways, availability of public services, and incentives available in economic zones and free zones.

Platform enhancements and user engagement

Al Kindi pointed out that Invest Oman has witnessed increasing engagement from both local and international investors, underscoring its effectiveness in addressing investor needs and simplifying business start-up procedures. The platform has already launched a comprehensive development project to enhance the digital experience by redesigning the interface in line with best practices in user experience (UX). The goal of these updates is to offer a more user-friendly and efficient interface, while expanding the scope of digital services to include more integrated procedures. These improvements are intended to enhance the overall investor experience, making it more flexible and transparent.

Invest Oman is a unified platform that brings together 22 public and private entities to streamline investor procedures.

Investment Map is an interactive tool for identifying opportunities by location, sector and comparative advantages.

Industry remains the top-performing sector, with China, India and Egypt leading among international investors.



With a substantial investment of \$49 billion

Duqm

leads global green energy transition with establishment of first export corridor for hydrogen from Oman to Europe

Muscat - :

In a strategic shift that reinforces the Sultanate of Oman's position as a global hub for clean energy, Oman signed a historic agreement on 15 April with both the Netherlands and Germany to establish the world's first commercial corridor for the export of liquefied hydrogen.

This corridor will connect Duqm Port to the Port of Amsterdam and extend to major logistics hubs in Germany, most notably the Port of Duisburg, before reaching multiple European markets. The project strengthens Oman's role in the emerging hydrogen economy and contributes to global energy security.

The corridor also aims to export liquefied hydrogen in compliance with the European Union's renewable fuel standards, marking a transformative milestone for Oman's economy.

Strategic leap

The corridor is the first of its kind in the world for exporting liquefied hydrogen, a pioneering step that positions the Sultanate of Oman at the forefront of clean energy producers. It is also expected to attract further large-scale investments and strategic partnerships.

Hydrom, Oman's national hydrogen company, will be responsible for aligning production with national plans and ensuring the project's integration with existing infrastructure and the sector's overarching strategy. OQ will develop the liquefied hydrogen plant and associated facilities, including storage and export terminals.

The rapid growth of green hydrogen projects in the Duqm area will enhance the readiness of the corridor and its ability to support national targets. It will also leverage the integrated infrastructure of the Special Economic Zone at Duqm (SEZAD) and the strategic location of its port.

The export of hydrogen will rely on specialised vessels equipped with advanced technologies, being developed by the German company ECOLOG, to ensure efficient transport of liquefied hydrogen.

On the European side, the corridor will involve the development of facilities at the Port of Amsterdam to convert liquefied hydrogen back into its gaseous state. From there, hydrogen will be delivered to industrial sectors in the Netherlands and Germany via gas pipeline networks, railways, and inland waterways.

Strategic move

His Excellency Eng. Salim bin Nasser Al Aufi, Minister of Energy and Minerals (MEM) and Chairman of Hydrom, stated that this international cooperation is a strategic step in Oman's journey toward building a hydrogen-based economy. It links Oman's production capabilities to global markets and strengthens Oman's readiness to lead the sector.

His Excellency added that the importance of this agreement is not limited to laying the groundwork for establishing a corridor to export green hydrogen from Oman to Europe; rather, it affirms that the Sultanate of Oman is confidently moving forward in implementing its ambitious green hydrogen strategy. The participation of eleven companies from three countries across the entire value chain, from hydrogen production and liquefaction to transportation, storage, regasification, and delivery to end-users, underscores the confidence Hydrom has earned in forming high-quality strategic partnerships both within and outside the Sultanate. This supports its efforts to build an integrated national ecosystem and create sustainable economic and developmental opportunities, whether through sector-related industries, infrastructure development, or providing employment and training opportunities for promising Omani talent.

Important milestone

Sophie Hermans, Minister for Climate and Green Growth of the Netherlands, said that this agreement "represents an important milestone in the cooperation between the Sultanate of Oman and the Netherlands in the field

Corridor will link Port of Duqm to the Port of Amsterdam and extend to key logistics hubs in Germany, most notably the Port of Duisburg, before reaching multiple European markets.

Initiative marks a strategic step in establishing the Sultanate of Oman as a leading global exporter of green hydrogen.

Specialised vessels equipped with advanced technologies, being developed by the German company ECOLOG, will be used to ensure efficient transportation of liquefied hydrogen.

Corridor represents the first practical implementation of the "production-export integration" principle at the heart of Oman's renewable energy strategy.

of clean energy."

She indicated that "this project will contribute to linking Omani green hydrogen production with European markets, supporting strategic efforts to diversify energy sources and enhance long-term energy security."

Hermans noted that "contracts have been awarded for green hydrogen projects to alliances that include 22 global companies, which have begun development work in Al Wusta and Dhofar governorates."

Acquisition and production

The green liquefied hydrogen sector in the Sultanate of Oman is witnessing remarkable development, as the Sultanate of Oman aims, according to the International Energy Agency, to acquire a share of the hydrogen export market, targeting a production capacity of 1.25 million tonnes annually by 2030 through investments amounting to \$49 billion.

Cooperation and understanding

Dr Firas Al Abduwani, Director General of Renewable Energy and Hydrogen at MEM, explained that cooperation between the Sultanate of Oman and the Kingdom of the Netherlands began with the signing of a memorandum of understanding between the Ministry of Energy and Minerals and its Dutch counterpart at COP27 in Sharm El Sheikh in 2022. The MoU focused on key areas, most notably the possibility of establishing hydrogen transport corridors between the two countries, with the Netherlands serving as a main gateway for supplying Western Europe with renewable energy, as well as fostering cooperation and integration in areas expected to drive the development of the energy and hydrogen sectors.

He stated that the memorandum of understanding to establish a commercial hydrogen corridor, from the zone being developed at Duqm Port to the Port of Amsterdam, was reached following the agreement signed at COP28, which laid the foundation for a preliminary technical and economic feasibility study of a green hydrogen corridor. This was followed by a specialised consultancy study and culminated in the recent agreement signed in the Netherlands, which involved several private companies across the supply chain, from the hydrogen liquefaction plant and storage/

export facilities at Port of Duqm, to specialised vessels transporting liquefied hydrogen, to the regasification terminals at the Port of Amsterdam, and finally the hydrogen distribution network to end-users. The agreement also includes a commitment to deepening the scope of the study to explore further potential for hydrogen transport from Oman, according to the Oman News Agency.

Dr. Al Abduwani affirmed that all involved parties, despite being aware of the global challenges related to energy transition and net-zero goals, particularly regarding low-emission and green hydrogen, are united in their belief in the importance of carbon neutrality and the need to advance solutions through constructive cooperation.

Strategic leap forward

Eng. Abdulaziz bin Said Al Shidhani, Managing Director of Hydrom, explained that the corridor is a strategic step toward positioning the Sultanate of Oman as a leading global exporter of green hydrogen. It also effectively translates Oman's efforts to leverage its geographic location as a key link between East and West in the clean energy market.

He pointed out that, according to the approved timeline, the first shipment of liquefied hydrogen produced in Oman is expected to depart for Europe by 2029. Engineering studies, development of central facilities at Port of Duqm, and coordination with European partners are currently underway to ensure infrastructure readiness along the entire corridor.

Al Shidhani noted that this target reflects the commitment of all parties to advancing the project and achieving a transformative leap in linking production with international demand through the world's first integrated export corridor of its kind.

Economic importance

He stated that the economic importance of the corridor lies in opening the door for major investments along the value chain, from production to infrastructure, to shipping and distribution. It will also stimulate the growth of related industries, create job opportunities, and enhance in-country value. Internationally, it serves as a comprehensive model for cross-border cooperation and strengthens European market confidence in

Oman's ability to deliver secure and sustainable energy solutions.

He added that the corridor represents the first practical implementation of the "production-export integration" principle that underpins Oman's renewable energy strategy. It not only ensures hydrogen production but also links it directly to a ready and targeted market, maximising the utilisation of Oman's natural and human resources. The corridor is not merely a transport infrastructure project; it is an economic and strategic pillar that enhances global energy security and reinforces Oman's standing as a regional and international hub for clean energy.

Export route

Eng. Al Shidhani explained that the corridor brings clarity to demand, which is one of the critical factors in accelerating production. When producers have a defined export route, operators, and end-users, they are more willing to fast-track their investments and project development stages. The presence of international partnerships of this scale also facilitates access to financing and accelerates the connection between local production and global markets. He affirmed that the corridor is a direct catalyst for expediting project execution and achieving Oman's production targets by 2030.

Duqm as a global energy hub

Ashraf bin Hamed Al Mamari, CEO of OQ Group, stated that this partnership marks the beginning of Duqm's transformation into a globally competitive energy hub. He noted that the global expertise of Vopak would create new opportunities for strategic investment in infrastructure, enhancing Oman's position on the global energy flows map and driving energy sector transformation for the long-term benefit of Oman's economy and future generations.

Dick Richelle, CEO of Royal Vopak, expressed his pleasure at the strategic partnership with OQ Group in Duqm. He affirmed that combining efforts and leveraging both companies' infrastructure development strengths would pave the way for establishing a leading regional hub for energy and chemicals, serving a broad range of industrial beneficiaries.

Richelle emphasised that this strategic partner-

ship will be a key factor in building confidence, attracting global talent and expertise, securing international financing, aligning strategic goals with investments, and facilitating engagement with top global professionals.

Historic agreement

Amer Al Shoubaki, economist and specialist in oil and energy affairs, described the agreement for the transport and export of liquefied hydrogen between Oman, the Netherlands, and Germany as "historic." Speaking to Gulf Online, he noted:

The agreement is a strategic step that enhances Oman's position as a global centre for the production and export of green hydrogen.

Oman aims, through this and other projects, to produce 1 million tonnes of renewable hydrogen annually by 2030.

This level of production would qualify Oman to become the world's sixth-largest hydrogen exporter and the leading one in the Middle East.

It will also boost Oman's energy economy, diversify income sources, and reduce reliance on oil and gas, thereby enhancing economic stability, aligning with Oman Vision 2040, and attracting investment.

The project is expected to attract investments totalling \$8 billion, led by major global companies.

It will provide Oman with experience and expertise in electrolysis and green hydrogen production and create new job opportunities in renewable energy and technology sectors.

Oman is positioning itself at the forefront of global green hydrogen exporters, reinforcing its role in supporting the global transition to sustainable energy.

However, the high cost of green hydrogen, currently around four times more than hydrogen produced from gas or oil, may pose a challenge to investment.

Oman as an energy pivot

Forecasts suggest that the value of the liquefied or green hydrogen market will reach approximately \$1.6 trillion by 2050, driven by the global shift toward clean energy, according to Al Shoubaki.

According to Haneen Yassin, economist, the agreement between Oman and the Netherlands marks a significant strategic turning point in

Coordinated logistics framework in Europe will facilitate the reception and distribution of Omani hydrogen to industrial markets across the continent.

According to the International Energy Agency (IEA), Oman aims to capture a share of the hydrogen export market with an annual production capacity of 1.25 million tonnes by 2030

First shipment of liquefied hydrogen produced in Oman is expected to depart for Europe by 2029

Oman's path toward a competitive green economy. Speaking to Gulf Online, she noted:

The agreement lays the foundation for a new phase of international cooperation, transitioning from a fossil-fuel-based economy to one driven by renewable energy, specifically green hydrogen, which is set to be the clean fuel of the future.

The creation of the world's first commercial corridor for liquefied hydrogen, linking Port of Duqm with Amsterdam and passing through logistics hubs in Germany, directly strengthens Oman's position as a new energy hub and a key supplier of hydrogen to Europe.

The project also comes at a time when EU countries are striving to reduce dependence on Russian gas and accelerate the shift to green energy sources.

This step will not be limited to exports alone, but will generate a series of positive economic impacts locally, such as attracting foreign direct investment, expanding green energy-related in-

dustries, improving infrastructure in special economic zones like Duqm, and creating quality employment opportunities.

Previous projects

In recent years, Oman has signed numerous agreements related to green hydrogen development.

In late April 2024, Hydrom signed two agreements for project development and land use in Dhofar governorate, with a total investment of \$11 billion.

During the Green Hydrogen Summit Oman (GHSO) held in Muscat in 2023, six world-class hydrogen projects were agreed upon, with an estimated value of \$38 billion in Al Wusta and Dhofar governorates.

Oman is scheduled to host the GHSO between 18-20 December 2025, with expected participation from leading industry figures, policymakers, and global investors in this vital sector.

Oman on track to become one of the world's largest hydrogen exporters



Paris - الدوحة :

A joint report by the Ministry of Energy and Minerals (MEM) and the International Energy Agency (IEA) confirms that the Sultanate of Oman is on course to become one of the world's leading hydrogen exporters by 2030.

The report highlights Oman's competitive potential in renewable energy and hydrogen production. It was presented during a visit by an Omani delegation led by H.E. Eng. Salim bin Nasser Al Auqi, Minister of Energy and Minerals, to the IEA headquarters in Paris.

The Sultanate of Oman has allocated over 50,000 square kilometres across Al Wusta and Dhofar governorates for green hydrogen projects to be offered in phases, in addition to 15,000 square kilometres in other



regions for clean energy initiatives. The country aims to produce over one million tonnes of green hydrogen by 2030, targeting nearly 8 million tonnes by 2050, utilising 30% of the allocated land. The estimated investment value for these projects is \$140 billion.

In recent years, Oman has taken sig-

nificant steps to align with global energy transitions and climate priorities. These include a national commitment to achieve net-zero carbon emissions by 2050, unveiling the green hydrogen strategy, completing regulatory and legal framework reviews, and developing policies to advance green energy transformation.

Khalfan bin Salim Al Rahbi
Writer specialising in economic affairs



Strategic vision and effective relations

From The Hague to Moscow, and from Algiers to the Omani ports, the Sultanate of Oman is drawing new lines on its economic map, based on a clear vision that national transformation cannot be separated from international presence, and that the economy is no longer merely a domestic matter, but a sphere in which relationships and interests are managed through visits, meetings, and agreements.

The recent visits by His Majesty Sultan Haitham bin Tarik to the Netherlands, Russia and Algeria were not mere protocol events but calculated moves within a broader framework of economic diplomacy that Oman is adopting in the current phase. These visits serve as practical translations of the pillars of Oman Vision 2040, which emphasises the importance of global openness, attracting investments, and enhancing sustainable economic partnerships to build a competitive economy integrated with the world.

The most significant transformation was evident during the visit to the Netherlands, where Oman's ambitions aligned with Europe's advanced infrastructure, resulting in agreements that transcend the conventional and open non-traditional horizons. Among these agreements, the Green Hydrogen Corridor project, linking Duqm with Amsterdam and Duisburg, stands out as a living example of Oman's ability to transform its geographical location into a competitive advantage and its climate plans into executable projects.

This new corridor is not merely a line for exporting hydrogen but a strategic infrastructure integrating stages of production, liquefaction, transportation, conversion, and distribution, benefiting from the geographical location of Duqm Port and its surrounding advanced industrial infrastructure. The project reflects the maturity of the legislative and regulatory framework adopted by Oman in the clean energy sector, with Hydrom, government company coordinating production operations, and OQ Group developing liquefaction, storage, and export facilities, in technical and logistical partnership with specialised global companies.

This corridor is expected to contribute to redefining Oman's position on the global energy map, not only as a reliable source but as a strategic partner for Europe. Economically, the project is anticipated to bolster Oman's economic diversification path by attracting quality investments and establishing a new industrial ecosystem that includes equipment manufacturing, engineering services, and supporting technologies, in addition to generating high-value job opportunities. The project also demonstrates Oman's ability to integrate into global energy value chains, leveraging its geographical location and balanced approach in building multi-directional economic relations.

This project is part of a broader Omani strategy aiming to produce 1.25 million tonnes of green hydrogen annually by 2030, with initial project contracts awarded in the Al Wusta and Dhofar governorates to alliances comprising more than 22 international companies.

These efforts are complemented by advanced investment infrastructure in Oman, including special economic zones and free zones that provide an ideal environment for investors, thanks to their industrial in-

tegration, deep seaports, modern transport networks, and strategic location connecting Asian and African markets. This infrastructure is supported by flexible legislation, attractive incentives, and streamlined procedures, collectively forming a competitive investment platform in the region.

The Public Authority for Special Economic Zones and Free Zones (OPAZ) serves as the executive arm of this system, playing an active role in globally promoting Oman as a promising investment and logistics centre. Through international participation and providing quality facilities, the authority works to attract quality investments, localise production chains, and build long-term strategic partnerships. These efforts also contribute to enhancing Oman's position as a gateway to regional and global markets and realising the objectives of Oman Vision 2040 towards a diversified and sustainable economy capable of adapting to global transformations in energy, technology and supply chains.

Recognising that development is not built solely through government agreements, a notable aspect of the Netherlands visit was the meeting with investors and discussions on partnership opportunities between the private sectors of both countries. The message is clear: the next phase will not be confined to official initiatives but will revolve around the ability of entrepreneurs to capitalise on these transformations and convert them into projects, factories, and job opportunities.

In this context, the importance of empowering national competencies and developing technical and vocational education to meet the needs of future industries, particularly those related to hydrogen and clean energy, becomes evident. The success of these major projects does not stop at signing agreements or commencing construction but hinges on the ability to operate them efficiently, manage them flexibly, and develop them intelligently, necessitating parallel investment in the Omani human capital.

As Oman proceeds with implementing these directions, there is a clear political will to translate the outcomes of these visits and agreements into executive programmes that contribute to achieving national goals and enhancing the Omani economy in line with the aspirations of Oman Vision 2040, solidifying the Sultanate's position as a regional centre for economic integration and sustainable development.

Oman's foreign policy, long known for wisdom and moderation, is now entering a new arena no less important than political mediation: economic mediation. The Sultanate once again succeeds in positioning itself as a balanced, cooperative, and attractive entity that asserts itself not through loud voices but through quiet presence and profound impact.

In conclusion, what is happening today is more than mere diplomacy or economics. It is a gradual and deliberate transition from a phase of stability to one of actual growth, from a state preparing for the future to one actively shaping it. The future holds even more promise if this calm and ambitious approach continues, proving that Oman—through its tranquility and steadfastness—knows well where it is heading and why.

The Sultanate of Oman activates economic diplomacy tools to strengthen cross-border partnerships, solidify its position as a regional hub for sustainable investment, and build alliances with a quiet voice and lasting impact, reinforcing its global presence in the fields of energy, technology and logistics

It received 44 requests by the end of last May OPAZ engages with the community via 'Tajawob' platform

Muscat - :

The Public Authority for Special Economic Zones and Free Zones (OPAZ) engaged with several suggestions, complaints, reports and inquiries submitted via the national platform 'Tajawob' until the end of May. A total of 44 requests were received, including 12 suggestions, 10 complaints, 20 inquiries and 2 reports, reflecting a growing interaction aimed at enhancing public participation tools.

Dr. Ahmed bin Saif Al Mamari, Acting Director of Customer Services Department at OPAZ, confirmed that all requests received via the platform have been given due attention since its launch in late February. Complaints were handled within record timeframes, with the shortest response time recorded at under 10 minutes and the longest at two days. Most inquiries focused on investment procedures, company registration and investor visas. Complaints, meanwhile, were referred to the relevant departments for resolution.

He stated that the received sugges-



Dr. Ahmed Al Mamari:
confirmed that all requests received via 'Tajawob' have been given due attention since its launch in late February. Complaints were handled within record timeframes

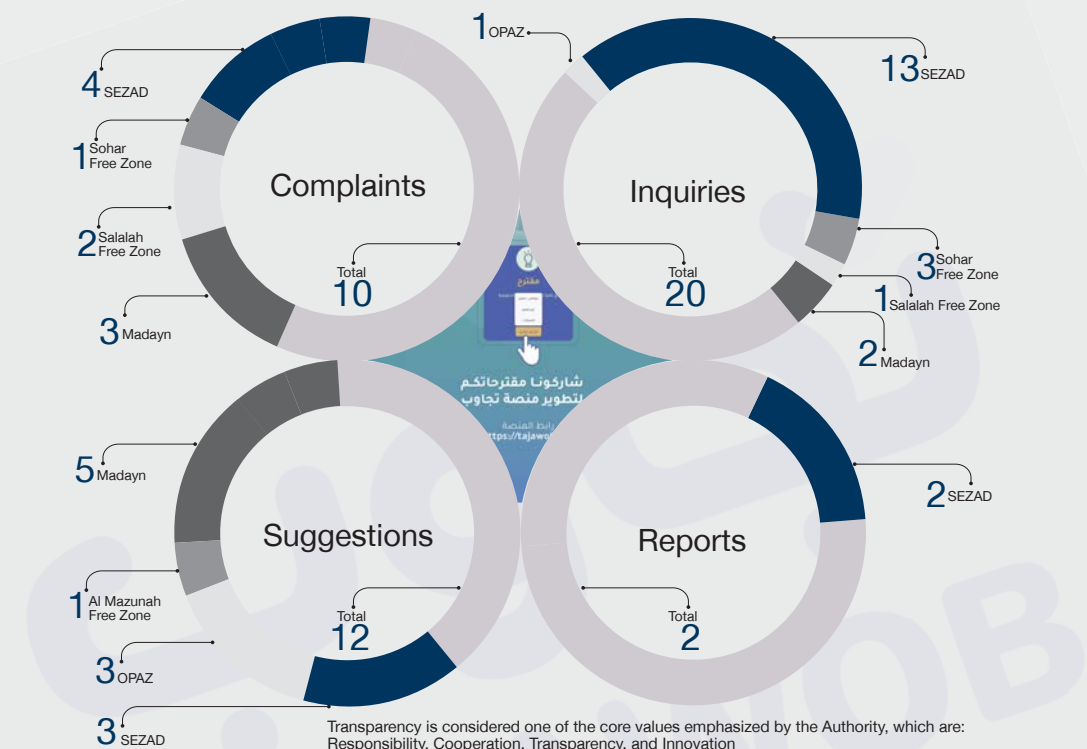
tions were diverse, including the development of incubators in industrial cities, enhancement of the tourism front in the Special Economic Zone at

Duqm (SEZAD), and the renaming of certain industrial cities under the Public Establishment for Industrial Estates (Madayn). All suggestions have been referred to the relevant departments within the Authority and the zones it supervises for study and evaluation.

Al Mamari also mentioned that some of the submissions received via the platform included innovative proposals, reflecting the level of public engagement with global technological and scientific advancements. One notable suggestion involved utilising the advancements in drone technology for the transport sector, which was referred to a specialised consultancy, while technical experts in the zone provided their input directly to the proposer.

The Public Authority for Special Economic Zones and Free Zones affirmed that the national platform for suggestions, complaints, reports and inquiries, will contribute to strengthening community partnership and effective communication, as well as improving the business environment through continuous engagement, high transparency and prompt responsiveness.

Suggestions, complaints, reports, and inquiries received by the Authority through the "TAJAWOB" platform by the end of May 2025

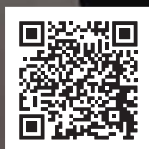


OPAZ = Oman Public Authority for Special Economic Zones and Free Zones
SEZAD : The Special Economic Zone at Duqm

Madayn= Public Establishment for Industrial Estates

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Researcher and Academic Dr. Abdullah Baabood to **الدوقم**: **Political ties boost Oman's economy and investment prospects**

Muscat - **الدوقم :**

Dr Abdullah bin Saleh Baabood, an academic specialising in international relations, Gulf, and Middle Eastern affairs, affirmed that bilateral and multilateral political relations play a significant role in boosting foreign direct investment. He stated that stability and cordiality in political relations, particularly with regional powers and major global players, enhance foreign investor confidence in the Sultanate of Oman.

He pointed out that Oman benefits from its balanced relations with the Gulf countries, Iran, India and China in attracting investment in promising sectors such as renewable energy, logistics and tourism.

Speaking to Duqm Economist, Dr Baabood explained that political cooperation with major powers could support the diversification of Oman's economy and reduce its reliance on oil, especially if such cooperation translates into strategic partnerships in non-oil sectors. Examples include port development with China and India, and technology collaboration with European countries. These partnerships would reinforce Oman's economic diversification plans and contribute to achieving sustainable growth in line with Oman Vision 2040.

Positive neutrality as a platform for strategic partnerships

Dr Baabood explained that Oman's policy of positive neutrality allows it to build balanced relations with competing international powers, such as the Islamic Republic of Iran and the Kingdom of Saudi Arabia, or the United States and the People's Republic of China. This approach enables the Sultanate of Oman to benefit from global power competition and open multiple channels for economic partnership without being tied to any particular alliance.

Collective agreements and economic impact

He pointed out that the political and economic agreements signed by the Gulf Cooperation Council (GCC) with other countries and blocs, some of which are still under negotiation, have a significant positive impact. These agreements strengthen collective bargaining power and support the bloc's objectives as a unified entity. Through these agreements, each country, includ-



**Oman's foreign policy
enhances economic security
through stable regional and
international relations**

ing Oman, can unlock new opportunities for trade, investment, and technology transfer, particularly with Asian nations such as China, India, South Korea, Japan, and ASEAN countries.

Duqm as a gateway for global ties

Dr Baabood emphasised the close connection between politics and economics, especially regarding major strategic projects such as the Special Economic Zone at Duqm. He stated that such projects benefit from Oman's strong political ties with both East and West—particularly China (via the Belt and Road Initiative), India, Japan, South Korea, the United States, and the European Union, in attracting investments, transferring technology, and establishing advanced industrial and infrastructure facilities.

Secure economy, stable relations

He affirmed that Oman's foreign policy enhances economic security, both developmental and fiscal, by ensuring stability in its regional and international relations. This, in turn, protects trade routes and oil and gas flows from geopolitical threats and supports financial sustainability through diversified partnerships and resource development.

Dr Baabood added that economies reliant on a primary resource such as oil and gas remain vulnerable to energy price fluctuations and other challenges, including regional and international tensions. These include US-Iranian and

Gulf-Iranian disputes, the war in Yemen, and conflicts in the Red Sea and the Horn of Africa, as well as the effects of sanctions on economic partners. He warned that these dynamics can undermine investor confidence and disrupt supply chains.

Oman as a neutral economic and logistics hub

Baabood noted that Oman is well-positioned to emerge as a neutral economic and logistical hub linking Asia, Africa, and Europe through its ports and economic zones and free zones in Duqm, Salalah, and Suhar, especially as alternative trade routes to the Strait of Hormuz and the Suez Canal grow in importance.

Economic diplomacy as an investment tool

He highlighted that diplomacy has historically been driven by economic motives and remains so today. He recommended enhancing economic diplomacy by activating commercial offices and dynamic diplomatic missions, which serve as effective tools for attracting quality investment, transferring technology, and opening new markets for Omani products.

Future vision: Policy meets economy

Dr Baabood stressed that political relations are key to achieving peace and stability, fundamental prerequisites for successful development plans. He noted that Oman Vision 2040 aims to position the Sultanate as a global logistics and tourism hub, which requires a stable political environment and strategic international partnerships that translate into financing, knowledge, and investment.

He identified several promising sectors that Oman can focus on in the coming phase, including renewable energy, green industries, education and human capital development, ICT, logistics, tourism, and culture. He described these as strategic areas that could reinforce Oman's role as an economic and political mediator.

He concluded by stating that enhancing the integration of politics and economics requires aligning foreign policy with economic goals, such as appointing specialised economic missions and empowering the private sector to participate in shaping international trade policy.



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Mahmoud Said Al Aufi
Economic journalist

Al Rawdah: an Oman-UAE platform for economic integration

Al Rawdah Special Economic Zone (SEZ) stands as an advanced model of economic integration between the Sultanate of Oman and the United Arab Emirates, offering promising investment opportunities and developmental impacts that extend to the national economies of both countries. It enhances the region's competitiveness in supply chains, manufacturing, and re-export activities.

This joint project, developed through a strategic partnership between the Public Authority for Special Economic Zones and Free Zones (OPAZ) and the company 'Mahdah Development', embodies an economic vision that transcends geographical boundaries. It aims to establish an integrated infrastructure that facilitates trade flow and opens new horizons for bilateral cooperation in vital sectors such as logistics, manufacturing, pharmaceuticals, plastics, and mining.

The project is not merely an economic zone but a shared economic vision that reflects the convergence of both countries' aspirations to strengthen quality partnerships, attract international investment, and achieve sustainable development. It aligns with Oman Vision 2040 and the UAE's economic diversification strategy.

The zone has been designed to serve as an economic catalyst, thanks to its strategic location in the Wilayat of Mahdah in Al Buraimi Governorate and its direct connection to the Ports of Sohar and Jebel Ali. This positioning provides investors with a multi-directional access platform to GCC, Asian and African markets with operational efficiency and low logistical costs.

Oman-UAE integration in this project goes beyond infrastructure and legislative facilitation. It extends to shared roles in market development, knowledge exchange, and the creation of a joint economic model that serves the development interests of both sides. It will also offer significant opportunities for localising value chains, boosting re-export activities, and creating thousands of direct and indirect jobs, particularly in logistics and support services, thereby strengthening the role of SMEs in the wilayat and the governorate.

Al Rawdah SEZ offers a comprehensive package of incentives and exemptions, including customs duty exemptions, 100% foreign ownership, free profit repatriation, and a one-stop-shop licensing platform. These factors make it one of the most attractive zones for investors in the region.

The first phase of the project is estimated at around \$2 billion, with development works to be carried out over an area of 14 square kilometres, expandable in future phases as part of a comprehensive development plan that meets international standards and investor expectations.

The project's significance goes beyond its economic returns. It also contributes to community and population development through commercial, service, and residential activities that will positively impact the quality of life in the Wilayat of Mahdah and help create an appealing environment for living and investment.

Undoubtedly, the SEZ marks a qualitative leap in the trajectory of Oman-UAE economic relations and a shift from traditional cooperation to integrative partnership based on launching strategic projects that share benefits and deliver added value for both countries.

In conclusion, Al Rawdah is not just a new economic zone, it is a meeting point between two economic visions and two development ambitions. It is a living example that bilateral cooperation, when built on mutual interests and strategic integration, can bring about real transformation in the regional and global economic landscape.

Al Rawdah Special Economic Zone represents a qualitative leap in the course of Oman-UAE economic relations, marking a shift from traditional cooperation to integrative partnership, one built on establishing strategic projects that share benefits and create added value for both sides

SFZ hosts 97 projects with investments over RO 4.74 billion

Salalah - :

As of the end of April this year, the total number of projects in Salalah Free Zone (SFZ) reached 97, spanning 15 economic sectors, with total investments over RO 4.74 billion.

The petrochemicals sector leads in investment volume with approximately RO 3.01 billion, followed by chemical industries at RO 747 million, and data processing at over RO 327 million.

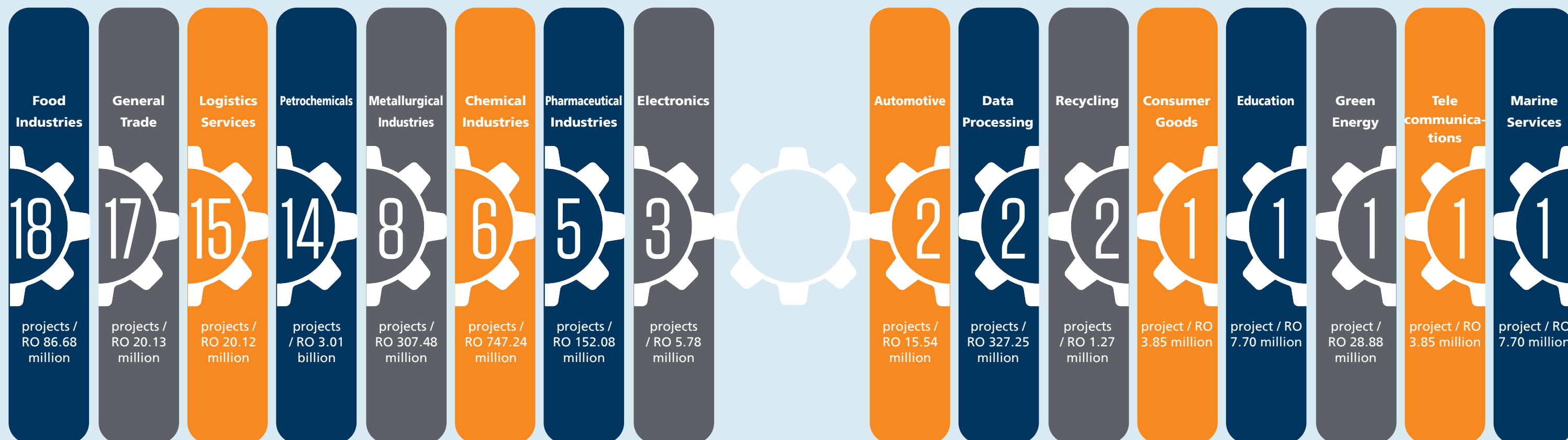
In terms of project count, the food industries sector tops the list with 18 projects, followed by general trade with 17 projects, and logistics services with 15 projects, reflecting the sectoral diversity of the investment landscape in the zone.

Other active sectors include petrochemicals (14 projects), metallurgical industries (8 projects), chemical industries (6 projects), pharmaceuticals (5 projects), electronics (3 projects), and 2 projects each in automotive, data processing and recycling.

Sectors with a single project include green energy, education, telecommunications, marine services and consumer goods.

These figures reflect ongoing efforts to enhance infrastructure and investor support, affirming SFZ's appeal as a prime destination for both local and foreign investment, with high value-added contributions to the national economy.

SFZ projects and investments



With strategic digital transformation plans

Bank Muscat: A Pioneer in Offering State-of-the-art and Innovative Services and Solutions for Corporate Banking

Muscat -  :

Ilham Murtadha Al Hamaid, General Manager of Corporate Banking at Bank Muscat, emphasized that the Bank remains at the forefront of corporate banking in the Sultanate of Oman, demonstrated by unwavering commitment to delivering innovative banking services and solutions. This commitment is driven by a focus on digital transformation and dedication to addressing the evolving needs of customers, aligning with Oman Vision 2040.

For more details, see the following interview:

What were the key drivers behind Bank Muscat's focus on corporate banking innovation?

As the leading financial services provider in the Sultanate of Oman, Bank Muscat has had a successful track record of achievements and successes in corporate banking throughout its journey spanning over 42 years. The Bank's focus on corporate banking innovation is fundamentally driven by its strategic vision to remain at the forefront of financial services in a rapidly evolving economic landscape. As the Sultanate of Oman continues to diversify its economy under Vision 2040, the Bank has identified innovation as a critical enabler to support the country's corporate sector in navigating new opportunities and challenges.

One of the primary drivers has been the changing needs of corporate customers, who are increasingly seeking faster, more efficient, and digitally integrated financial solutions. Whether it's real-time transaction capabilities, streamlined trade finance, or tailored cash management services, the Bank recognizes that innovation is essential to meet the expectations of today's dynamic business environment. In response, Bank Muscat has invested significantly in technology platforms and digital transformation to deliver intelligent, scalable, and client-centric solutions.

Another key factor is the competitive regional banking landscape, where in-

novation is no longer optional but a necessity for differentiation. Bank Muscat has embraced this reality by fostering a culture of continuous improvement and collaboration, working closely with customers, fintech partners, and regulatory bodies to co-create solutions that deliver tangible value. This approach not only strengthens customer relationships but also reinforces the Bank's reputation as a trusted advisor and innovator.

The Bank has expanded its network of corporate branches currently standing at 5 modern and spacious branches across the Sultanate. These branches are equipped with latest technologies and supported by a highly qualified team of relationship managers who offer advisory services and assist customers with transactions like account opening, insurance products, remote check deposits, and direct debit services. The Bank also places special attention to SMEs, recognizing their significant role in the country's economic growth.

Recently, Bank Muscat launched its Corporate Banking new campaign, "Ambition Delivered", which underscores the Bank's role as a trusted



Ilham Al Hamaid : The Bank has launched a digital portal for international trade services (DigiTrade) for its corporate and institutional clients, as part of its commitment to implement its digital transformation strategy in alignment with Oman Vision 2040

enabler of progress for its corporate customers. It signifies the Bank's unwavering commitment to understanding the unique aspirations of its customers and transforming them into tangible achievements.

Can you provide specific examples of innovative products or services that Bank Muscat has introduced for its corporate customers?

We, at Bank Muscat, believe that our excellence lies on us serving the needs of our valued customers. Throughout its journey of progress, the Bank has been committed to providing a diverse range of Banking facilities and services that cater to the needs of corporates. The Bank offers products and services that help our large corporate customers with their complex banking needs; facilitating services that include corporate loans, cards, digital solutions and global trade. At the Bank, we view ourselves as partners in the success and progress of these institutions.

The Bank is one of the first in the region to adopt strategic digital transformation initiatives, which have redefined operational efficiency of customers. By integrating the latest technologies into Bank Muscat's offerings, the Bank ensures that corporate customers can seamlessly manage their businesses, allowing them to focus on growth and expansion. Bank Muscat remains committed to innovation, ensuring this commitment empowers the Bank's customers to navigate the evolving landscape confidently.

In this regard, the Bank launched a digital portal for trade services (DigiTrade) for corporate and institutional customers. The platform contributes to facilitating trade transactions and showcasing the Bank's commitment to implementing the digital transformation strategy in line Oman Vision 2040. The Bank also offers the 'Integrated Transaction Banking' platform to government entities, corporates, and SMEs. It provides a wide range of online capabilities, including payments, a consolidated dashboard of bank accounts across all banks, di-



rect debit solutions, liquidity solutions, and trade services. Further to that, the Bank has also introduced an online corporate banking platform and a Business-to-Business (B2B) payment system to facilitate secure employee payroll.

We also offer a comprehensive suite of both conventional and Islamic trade finance products and services, tailored to meet the diverse needs of our customers. Our focus on innovation ensures that businesses have access to digital platforms, allowing seamless initiation of transaction requests online. This convenience empowers businesses to manage their trade transactions with ease and efficiency, ensuring that they stay ahead in a competitive market.

Bank Muscat has also been pioneering in Project & Structured Finance and its roles in this field resulted from implementing deep sectoral expertise, innovative structuring solutions and sound due diligence techniques. We aim to cater to the long-term financing requirements of various projects executed by key sectors across the Sultanate, such as Oil and Gas, Petrochemicals, Renewable Energy, Manufacturing, Telecom Real Estate, Aviation and Power and Water.

What is Bank Muscat's long-term vision for corporate banking in Oman? What future innovations are you exploring?

Bank Muscat envisions a future where corporate banking serves as a powerful enabler of sustainable economic growth, digital transformation, and financial inclusion in Oman. As the country accelerates its progress under Vision 2040, the Bank is committed to playing a catalytic role in empowering businesses,

both large enterprises and emerging firms, to thrive in a competitive, technology-driven global economy. The vision is centered on building strong, long-term partnerships with corporate clients, providing them with agile financial solutions that support innovation, resilience, and value creation.

Looking ahead, Bank Muscat is exploring a wide range of future-focused innovations. These include the adoption of artificial intelligence and machine learning to enhance risk assessment and credit decisioning, as well as the development of blockchain-enabled solutions for secure and efficient trade transactions. The bank is also assessing opportunities in sustainability-linked finance, helping corporate clients transition to greener operations by offering customized products tied to ESG performance indicators.

Moreover, Bank Muscat remains committed to fostering innovation through collaboration. By engaging with fintech startups, industry partners, and regulatory bodies, the bank is building an ecosystem that encourages co-creation of new services tailored to Oman's evolving business environment. This proactive, forward-looking approach ensures that Bank Muscat remains not only a leader in corporate banking but also a trusted partner in driving national development.

Bank Muscat's leadership in corporate banking has been recognized with several prestigious awards, including the Infosys Finacle Innovation Award for Innovation in Corporate Banking, the Best Corporate Bank Award from Oman Economic Review, and the Best Digital Bank for Corporates in Oman from Global Finance. The Bank has also been listed amongst Forbes Middle East's Most Valuable Banks.

5
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spacious branches
across various
governorates of
the Sultanate
are dedicated to
serve corporate
clients

Philex Pharmaceuticals in SFZ reaches full capacity with over 100 products



Salalah - :

The Philex Pharmaceuticals plant in the Salalah Free Zone (SFZ) is a promising regional investment project with a total value of approximately \$150 million (equivalent to RO 58 million). In 2024, the facility successfully reached full manufacturing capacity across all production lines, now covering over 100 pharmaceutical products across various therapeutic areas, marking a major milestone in a development journey that began in 2020.

The company's industrial complex spans a total area of 110,000 square metres, while the current facility, representing the first phase of the project, covers 30,000 square metres. This plant has been equipped in line with the highest international standards (cGMP), reflecting Philex's commitment to quality, excellence, and global competitiveness.

Manufacturing milestones

Philex began operations in 2020 with the launch of its secondary packaging unit and the receipt of its Good Manufacturing Practices (GMP) certification. By 2022, the construction of the main facility and supporting infrastructure was completed, followed by the issuance of the official GMP certification. In 2023, the plant became fully operational, aligned with regulatory approvals from the Gulf Cooperation Council (GCC).

Diverse products and expanding markets

In an exclusive interview with Duqm



Economist, Dr. Waseem Hamad, CEO of Philex Pharmaceuticals, stated that the company offers a broad portfolio of products across several therapeutic areas, including pain management, cardiology, diabetes, urology, respiratory care, vaccines, and injectable formulations. He also revealed plans to begin producing oncology medicines and, starting this year, veterinary pharmaceuticals and vaccines through strategic partnerships, opening new avenues for growth and product diversification.

Strategic partnerships and market reach

Dr. Hamad highlighted a strategic partnership signed in June with leading Algerian pharmaceutical firms to transfer technology for the production of insulin and ophthalmic solutions. This move not only strengthens Philex's regional footprint but also paves the way for enhanced pharmaceutical collaboration.

He noted that Philex has successfully expanded its presence in the GCC,



Dr. Waseem Hamad: "Philex has successfully expanded into Gulf, Middle Eastern and North African markets, and this year, the company will enter the field of veterinary medicine and vaccine production through strategic partnerships."

Middle East, and East Africa, currently serving markets such as Oman, Qatar, Kuwait, Iraq, Yemen and Libya. This growing regional reach, he said, reflects the company's commitment to delivering innovative pharmaceutical solutions that support healthcare systems and reinforce drug security across the region.

Ambitious plans for 2025

Dr. Hamad also unveiled an ambitious roadmap for 2025, which includes:

Launching a new production line for biologics in collaboration with international partners.

Entering new markets in North Africa and Southeast Asia.

Increasing R&D investment by 30% to support the development of innovative, Oman-made pharmaceuticals.

Strengthening partnerships in existing markets.

Expanding the employment of national talent as part of the company's Omanisation efforts, with a goal to increase the proportion of Omani workforce.

Commitment to pharmaceutical security

He reaffirmed Philex's commitment to sustainable growth and advancing pharmaceutical security in Oman and the wider region. The company's expansion strategy aligns with Oman Vision 2040, aiming to reduce dependency on pharmaceutical imports and increase the share of locally produced medicines and medical supplies from 7% to 20% by 2025.



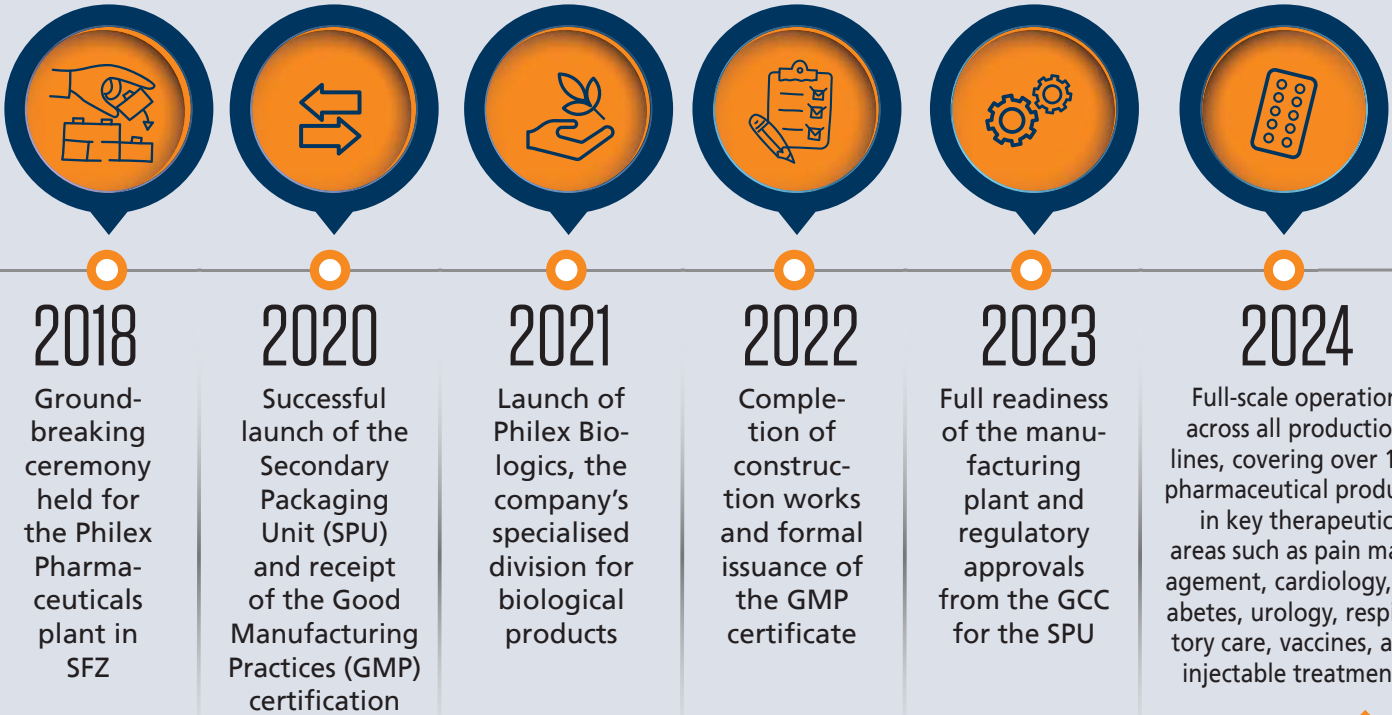
The total investment amounts to approximately \$150 million, with the company's industrial complex spanning a total area of 110,000 square metres

The current manufacturing facility, representing the first phase of the project, covers 30,000 square metres, with an investment of \$75 million

Philex has signed a strategic partnership with leading Algerian pharmaceutical companies to transfer technology for the production of insulin and eye drops

Key milestones in Philex's journey

Dr. Hamad highlighted the most crucial stages in the company's development since its inception, noting that each represented a turning point in its growth:



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JA Solar in Sohar Free Zone for RO 217.3 million

Sohar - الدقم

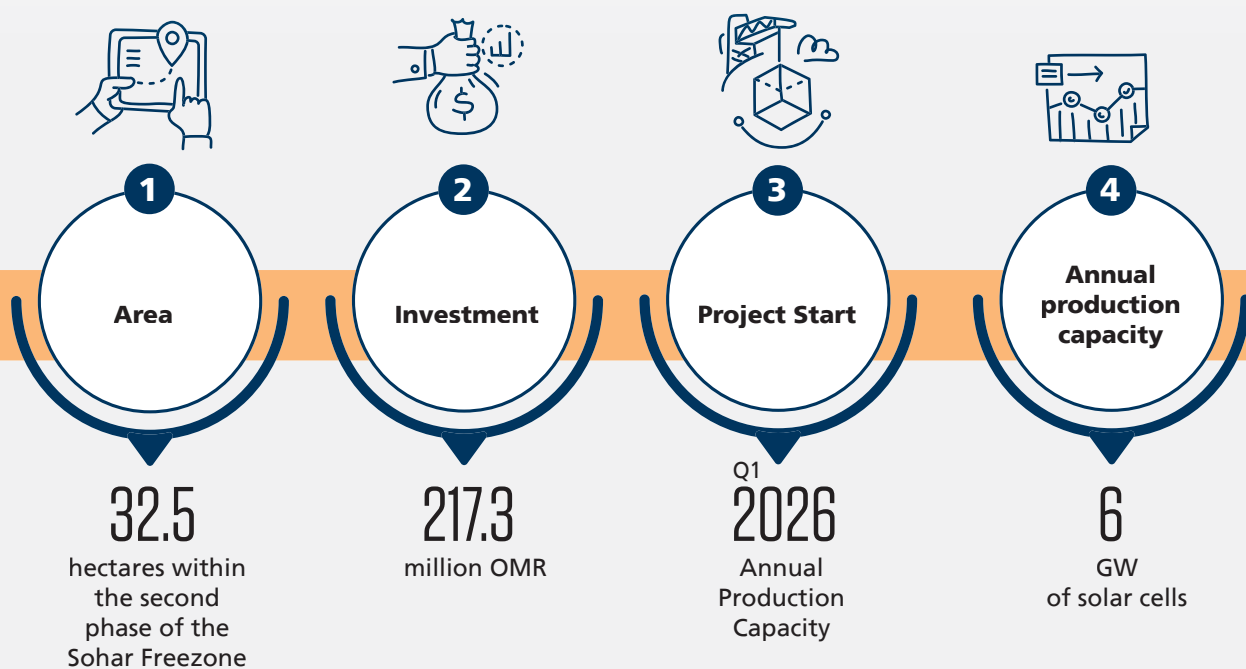
Sohar Free Zone has signed a land lease agreement with JA Solar OM for the establishment of an advanced factory to manufacture solar cells and modules. The total investment for the project amounts to RO 217.3 million, covering an area of 32.5 hectares within the sec-

ond phase of the Sohar Freezone.

This project marks a major milestone in enhancing the Oman's capabilities in renewable energy production. It aims to produce 6 gigawatts of solar cells and 3 gigawatts of solar modules annually. Operations are expected to commence in the first quarter of 2026, significantly contributing to the transition towards clean energy and reinforcing the goals

of Oman Vision 2040 in achieving sustainable development.

The project further strengthens the strategic role of Sohar Port and Free Zone as a hub for sustainable industrial growth. It also reflects the zone's commitment to advancing Oman's future energy ambitions by promoting energy independence and reducing reliance on conventional energy sources.



Global spending on artificial intelligence systems is projected to reach around \$300 billion by 2026.

The world is cautiously watching developments in the AI race, as those who lead it will shape the course of the Fifth Industrial Revolution.



Dr. Khaled Walid Mahmoud
Specialist in Cyber Politics

AI is more than just a technological marvel

There is no doubt that Artificial Intelligence (AI) has become a top priority for most advanced governments, driven by the recognition that the world stands at the dawn of a new era, one that will fundamentally transform human life and reshape the way people live and work across countless sectors. Yet, this transformative potential comes with largely uncharted risks.

It is no exaggeration to say that the world has entered a new phase defined by a global race to advance AI technologies. Without clear regulatory frameworks, however, this race risks spiralling out of control, threatening global stability amid rising concerns over security and ethical implications stemming from increasing reliance on AI.

The expansive applications of AI also signal the emergence of a subtle, yet profound, conflict between humans and machines. The resignation of Geoffrey Hinton, widely known as the 'Godfather of AI', from Google in May 2023 can be seen as a stark warning to humanity about the dangers ahead.

Current estimates indicate that up to 800 million people may lose their jobs in the coming years, as tech giants develop a new generation of digital humans capable of outperforming both workers and professionals. Some scientists even forecast that AI could replace up to 99% of human jobs within the next two decades.

It is well known that AI is not merely an economic issue, nor is it just the friendly robot, or Alexa from Amazon, that assists you at home, helps your children with their multiplication tables, powers breakthroughs in medicine, education, and industry, or enables self-driving cars. AI is also a tool for control, dominance, and the projection of influence.

It is no coincidence that the largest investments in AI are being made by the two global rivals, the United States and China, with a focus on this very field. The entire world recognises tech giants like Google, Microsoft, and Amazon, while only a few are equally familiar with their Chinese counterparts Alibaba, Baidu, and Tencent, which are just as significant. This is not to mention the advanced research centres affiliated with them.

Two decades ago, discussions about AI and robots replacing human intelligence, or at the very least training machines to perform the tasks of workers and professionals, were often dismissed by non-specialists as far-fetched or exaggerated. Even among experts, many viewed the concept as little more than science fiction or Hollywood fantasy.

Today, however, the world is watching developments in AI with caution. The reason is clear: whoever leads in this field will hold the reins of the Fifth Industrial Revolution.

As we approach the beginning of a new era, the future of AI is emerging with vast potential and deep complexity. In this rapidly evolving landscape, AI is no longer just a technological marvel, it has become a critical pillar of a future that once existed only in science fiction.

From the advanced algorithms that shape our daily digital interactions to the emerging realms of autonomous vehicles and sophisticated robotics, AI is reshaping our world in unprecedented ways. Rather than merely showcasing technological capabilities, the future of AI represents a complex interaction of innovation, societal impact, and ethical responsibility.

Within this swiftly changing context, and amid projections that global spending on AI systems will reach around \$300 billion by 2026, AI is no longer a futuristic novelty but rather a central architect of tomorrow's world.

At the same time, a massive boom in AI technologies and applications is triggering rapid shifts in labour markets and fuelling growing concerns over human-machine competition. This is playing out in a fierce race among major tech corporations to develop cutting-edge solutions that can further the ongoing AI-driven transformation of the global economy.


And so, the pressing question remains: Where do we stand in this picture?

Regrettably, many Arab countries still show hesitation in embracing AI, behaving as if detached from current realities on multiple levels.

The economy of the future is a knowledge-based one, technological and digital at its core. Nations that remain distant from advancements in AI and its applications risk becoming isolated from the ongoing developments of the Fourth Industrial Revolution.



Speaking to , Mohammed Ambusaidi, Environmental Lead at Sohar Port and Freezone : Carbon emissions cut by over 10% as we adopt European environmental standards

Sohar - :

Mohammed bin Khalfan Ambusaidi, Environmental Lead at Sohar Port and Freezone, affirmed that both the port and freezone are working on developing several initiatives in the field of environmental sustainability, starting with the adoption of the European environmental regulatory framework to ensure all facilities comply with the highest possible international standards for environmental protection.

In an exclusive interview with Duqm Economist, Ambusaidi explained that these standards are incorporated as essential requirements within environmental permits, with compliance ensured through advanced environmental monitoring networks that track various environmental elements to safeguard surrounding quality.

He noted that a carbon reduction plan has recently been adopted for the coming years, alongside the implementation of several projects that have already helped reduce the carbon footprint. These efforts have successfully cut more than 10% of emissions resulting from port and freezone operations.

Ambusaidi also highlighted that the port and freezone have advanced their Environmental, Social, and Governance (ESG) practices through an ambitious five-year plan aimed at improving environmental performance and promoting sustainability, while also attracting green industrial transformation projects. Key initiatives include:

Marsa LNG Project, powered by solar energy, with an investment of \$1.6 billion. This positions the port and freezone as a leader in delivering clean energy solutions for maritime transport.

United Solar Polysilicon Plant, with an investment of \$1.35 billion. This value-added industrial investment reflects the fast-paced growth of the industrial sector in Sohar and focuses on producing high-quality polysilicon.

Elite Solutions for Hazardous Waste Management, a new project currently under development to establish a specialised plant for hazardous waste treat-



Mohammed Ambusaidi:
A specialised team for environmental inspection and monitoring at Sohar Port and Freezone to ensure compliance with top international standards

ment. The facility, with an initial capacity of 40 tonnes per day and a total investment of \$3.5 million, supports Oman's circular economy goals and strengthens Sohar Freezone's position as a hub for sustainable industrial solutions, ensuring compliance with both local and international environmental regulations.

Commitment to highest international standards

The Environmental Lead at Sohar Port and Freezone explained that a specialised inspection and monitoring team is in place to conduct regular audits of factories and facilities operating within the zone, ensuring full compliance with approved environmental standards. He noted that monitoring efforts go beyond field visits, encompassing in-depth evaluations of environmental studies submitted by both new and existing projects.

The team thoroughly analyses these studies to assess their alignment with international best practices, the adequacy of their environmental impact assessments, and the effectiveness of proposed mitigation measures.

He added that Sohar Port and Freezone follows a strict policy of not granting final approval for any project within its boundaries unless all local and international environmental requirements are fully and transparently met. The adoption of the best available environmental technologies is strongly encouraged, in line with the European Union's regulatory framework, widely regarded as a global benchmark in environmental protection.

Ambitious strategies to boost environmental sustainability at Sohar Freezone



He affirmed that this proactive approach ensures that industrial development at Sohar Port and Freezone remains in harmony with environmental sustainability principles, safeguarding natural resources and preserving the environment for future generations.

Accelerated steps toward a green economy

Ambusaidi highlighted the proactive measures being taken to reduce environmental impact, affirming that Sohar Port and Freezone are committed to supporting the transition to a green economy. This is achieved through industrial integration among existing industries and the establishment of an effective circular economy that focuses on resource reuse and the recovery of secondary materials.

He added that a comprehensive circular economy vision has been developed to promote recycling industries in the area, particularly in lead batteries, metals, and plastics, alongside the implementation of several flagship renewable energy projects, including:

Leading Green Hydrogen Production Hub: The freezone is working to position itself as a key player in green hydrogen production, a central pillar in the global shift toward clean energy. This aligns with Oman's vision for economic diversification and reduced reliance on fossil fuels.

Circular Economy and Waste Management: As part of its sustainability drive, the foundation stone has been laid for the Elite Solutions hazardous waste treatment plant, with an initial capacity of 40 tonnes per day. This supports Oman's circular economy goals and strengthens Sohar's

role as a hub for sustainable industrial solutions.

Green Manufacturing: The freezone actively supports environmentally friendly manufacturing initiatives, including the Mac Sohar Chemical Industries project for producing polymers and engineering compounds, and Najmat Shams Sohar, a facility dedicated to recycling lead-acid batteries. These projects contribute to sustainability goals and help minimise environmental impact.

Environmental and Occupational Safety: Reinforcing its ongoing commitment to environmental and professional standards, Sohar Freezone has partnered with the Royal Society for the Prevention of Accidents (RoSPA) to enhance occupational safety training, promote a strong safety culture among employees and tenants, and ensure a safe, sustainable work environment.

Ambusaidi confirmed that these efforts form a cornerstone of Sohar Port and Freezone's journey toward sustainability and clean energy transition, in line with Oman's ambition to achieve net-zero carbon emissions by 2050.

Comprehensive guide for industrial waste management

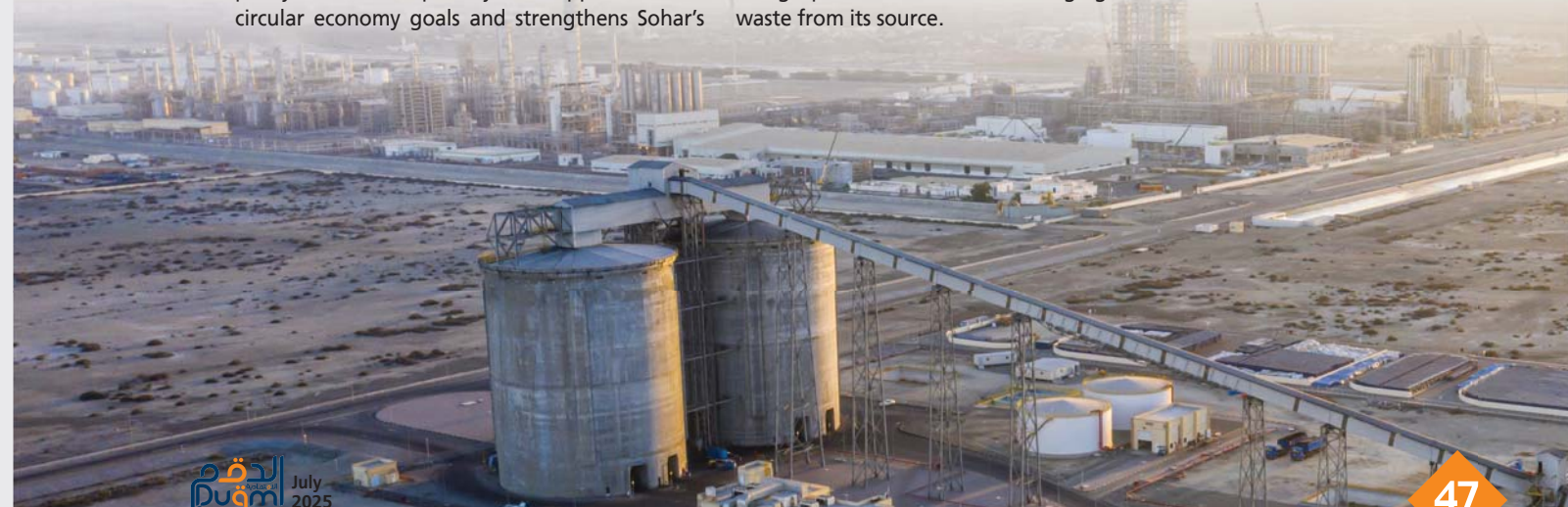
Ambusaidi spoke about the mechanisms in place for managing industrial waste and emissions from companies operating within the zone. He affirmed the port and freezone's commitment to applying best environmental practices and promoting the principles of a circular economy.

He explained that the administration has developed a comprehensive guide for investors, outlining optimal methods for managing industrial waste from its source.

A specialised team for environmental inspection and monitoring at Sohar Port and Freezone to ensure compliance with top international standards

Advancing clean energy and recycling projects in line with Oman's goal of achieving net-zero carbon emissions by 2050

A comprehensive guideline for industrial waste management at Sohar Port and Freezone



Al Maskan Village in Khazaen Economic City is one of solutions for sustainability



Barka - البركا:

Al Maskan Village in Khazaen Economic City is the first fully integrated village in the Sultanate of Oman, and one of the city's flagship projects supporting sustainability. The village provides a comprehensive and secure living environment for employees and workers within the city and represents a modern residential solution that supports investors while enhancing the social and economic fabric of Khazaen Economic City.

The project covers an area exceeding 55,000 square metres, with an estimated investment of around RO 25 million.

Project components

The village consists of high-specification residential complexes for workers, built over an area of 25,000 square metres, providing a safe and comfortable living environment. It also includes a fully integrated service complex occupying 30,000 square metres, offering a wide range of essential facilities such as



Eng. Salim Al Dhuhli: Al Maskan Village project marks a new step in Khazaen's efforts to provide an integrated investment environment through healthy, safe and sustainable residential solutions

retail shops, restaurants, banks, gyms, sports fields, a mosque, a medical clinic, a health lab, a pharmacy, and other supporting services that cater to residents' daily needs.

Capacity and livability

The village is designed to accommodate over 3,000 employees and workers, offering all necessary services to enhance quality of life and foster a productive and stable working environment within the economic city.

- project goals and location
- The project aims to achieve several strategic goals, including:
- Supporting sustainability efforts by establishing a safe, healthy and integrated living environment.
- Offering advanced residential solutions that attract local and foreign investments.

Enhancing the social and economic infrastructure under the concept of sustainable cities that integrate living, working and recreation.

Reducing transportation needs and

vehicle movement, thereby lowering carbon emissions and contributing to national net-zero efforts while alleviating traffic congestion.

The village enjoys a central location within Khazaen Economic City, just an 8-minute walk from major developments such as Food City, the Silal Central Market, Khazaen Dry Port, and Medicine City, adding significant value and enhancing its integration within the city's broader ecosystem.

Healthy, safe and sustainable environment

Engineer Salim bin Sulaiman Al Dhuhli, CEO of Khazaen Economic City, stated that the Al Maskan Village is a new step in Khazaen's drive to provide a fully integrated investment environ-

ment, through residential solutions that promote health, safety and sustainability, while reinforcing the social infrastructure in line with modern city concepts that blend living, working and leisure.

He pointed out that the village's residential complexes were designed to meet the highest standards to ensure the comfort and well-being of workers. The project includes a service complex that now covers 35,000 square metres, complementing the residential zone.

It is worth noting that the project was developed by the private sector, specifically by Al Adrak Trade and Contracting Co LLC, demonstrating the growing role of the private sector in advancing Oman's economic development.

The project spans over

55

Thousand square metres, with estimated investments of around RO 25 million





Maintaining top manufacturing and quality standards

General Leather manufacturing company strengthens leadership with expanded production and global market reach

Muscat -  :

The General Leather manufacturing company, based in Al Rusayl Industrial City, stands as a continuous success story over the years, having established itself as one of the leading leather manufacturing enterprises in the Sultanate of Oman and the region.

Driven by a bold vision and carefully planned strategic investments, the company has grown from a modest workshop into a fully integrated factory producing high-quality leather goods that rival international brands.

Today, the company stands tall as a model of Omani industrial excellence, strengthening its presence in regional and global markets through products that combine traditional craftsmanship with the latest industrial technologies.

Its ongoing commitment to quality standards and innovation has opened new horizons for expansion and growth, enabling it to confidently meet local market demands and achieve continued success in exporting to GCC and international markets.

The company's products are available in various branches of Al Khamis Shoes, which operates around 20 outlets across the Sultanate of Oman, further enhancing the local reach of its offerings.



Eng. Khamis Al Alawi:
The company began as a workshop in Ruwi, Muscat, before relocating in 1991 to Al Rusayl Industrial City, establishing itself as an Omani brand in both local and international markets



Expansion and production journey

The company began its journey with specialised workshops producing leather goods such as shoes and other items to meet the needs of the local market in the Sultanate of Oman. It later advanced with confidence and efficiency into regional and international markets.

An investment of around RO 500,000 was made to establish its second factory in Al Rusayl Industrial City, aimed at expanding production lines, meeting growing demand, and keeping pace with increased export orders to GCC countries.

Founded in 1989, the company offers a wide range of leather products, including men's and women's shoes, orthopaedic footwear, wallets, and bags.

Omani brand

Eng. Khamis bin Mohammed Al Alawi, General Manager of the General Leather manufacturing company, explained that the company started as a workshop in the Ruwi area of Muscat before moving in 1991 to Al Rusayl Industrial City, establishing itself as an Omani brand in both local and international markets. The company caters to all tastes and needs while adhering to the highest global quality standards.

He stated that the company currently operates five production lines under registered trademarks with the Ministry of Commerce, Industry

and Investment Promotion, such as Gazala, Tiger, Dana, Gleamco, and Burken Ortho. Among these, Gazala stands out as the flagship brand, with a 30-year production history.

Al Alawi affirmed the company's commitment to serving GCC market demands by offering high-quality, handmade products crafted from the finest imported natural leather.

Sustainable innovation and manufacturing quality

He pointed out that the company focuses on sustainable innovation and production expansion through the use of modern technologies and continuous workforce development. The company gives great importance to ongoing training for its more than 90 employees and workers, ensuring adherence to top manufacturing and quality standards.

He added that the company continues to invest in upgrading its infrastructure to expand export capacity, enabling it to enter not only GCC markets but also countries such as Japan and France.

Regarding future plans, the General Manager revealed that the company is preparing to enter new production fields, including sports footwear and luxury leather products for hotels and offices. These efforts form part of a broader strategy to pursue further innovation, expansion, and enhance the company's competitive edge in global markets.

Established in 1989, the company's leather products include men's and women's shoes, orthopaedic footwear, wallets, and bags

The company invested around RO 500,000 in its second factory, which was inaugurated in Al Rusayl Industrial City

The company places strong emphasis on continuous training for over 90 employees and workers

The products are available at various Al Khamis Shoes, which number around 20 branches across the Sultanate of Oman




One of the company's leading brands is 'Gazala,' with a production history spanning

30
years

\$1.3 billion investment in polysilicon project at Sohar Free Zone

It is the first factory of its kind in the Middle East to produce polysilicon, a key material used in solar panel manufacturing

Sohar - 

In a step that reinforces Oman's shift toward a green economy and income diversification, United Solar Polysilicon (FZC) SPC has launched its flagship industrial project in Sohar Free Zone, the first factory of its kind in the Middle East to produce polysilicon, a key material used in the manufacturing of solar panels.

With an annual production capacity of 100,000 tonnes, the new plant lays the foundation for an integrated solar energy supply chain and supports Oman's efforts to achieve net-zero carbon emissions by 2050. The project also strengthens Oman's position as a regional hub for renewable energy while offering promising investment, industrial and employment opportunities.

Strategic and economic dimensions

The selection of the Sultanate of Oman as the location for the project was based on its strategic geographic position, advanced industrial infrastructure, and strong government support for the development of renewable energy sectors. Through this project, the company aims to contribute to the localisation of advanced industries, particularly those related to solar energy, by transferring knowledge and creating quality job opportunities for Omani talent.

The project is expected to help reduce the cost of solar panel production locally, thereby encouraging investments in renewable energy projects within Oman and abroad. It will also support related industries such as solar cell and module manufacturing, enhancing the overall added value to the national economy.

Key driver of industrial development

The United Solar Polysilicon plant is anticipated to play a major role in stimulating industrial growth within the renewable energy value chain. It is expected to attract new investments in solar component and photovoltaic unit manufacturing.

The project represents a transformative leap in localising technology and offers training and capacity-building opportunities for Omani professionals in technology and energy fields, paving the way for building a national base capable of keeping pace with global developments in the

clean energy sector.

Major investment and strategic scale

The project spans 96 hectares in Sohar Free Zone, with investments estimated at around \$1.3 billion. It targets an annual production of 100,000 tonnes of polysilicon, with an advanced future production capacity reaching 250,000 tonnes per year across various products.

Raw material sources

The plant's operations rely on raw material supplies from several countries including Oman, the United States, Brazil, Norway, and France, ensuring a sustainable supply chain and the high quality of the final product.

Product applications

The plant produces polysilicon, a primary raw material used in the manufacturing of solar panels. It is also utilised in various electronic and electrical industries, enhancing its importance and application across different industrial sectors.

International expertise leading the project

The project is led by a management and technical team comprising over 50 international experts in the solar energy sector. This reinforces the project's reliability and execution quality, granting Oman a competitive edge in the region and globally in the field of clean energy.

The project spans

96

hectares in Sohar Free Zone and offers promising investment, industrial, and employment opportunities

The plant has an annual production capacity of 100,000 tonnes of polysilicon, with future capacity expected to reach 250,000 tonnes across various products

IEA forecasts lower EV impact on oil demand by 2030

Paris -  :

The International Energy Agency (IEA) has revised its forecast for the impact of electric vehicles (EVs) on oil demand by the end of this decade (2030), lowering its estimate by 1 million barrels per day (bpd). The adjustment comes amid global trade disruptions and slower EV adoption in Europe.

According to the agency's latest report, EVs are now expected to displace 5 million bpd of diesel and petrol demand by 2030, down from a previous estimate of 6 million bpd.

China alone is projected to account for half of this displacement, driven by rapid EV adoption and strong production momentum.

While increased EV penetration is generally associated with reduced oil demand, some analyses suggest that the link may not be as direct or significant as previously indicated.

Separately, the IEA expects global EV sales to grow by 25% this year, surpassing 20 million vehicles. By 2030, EVs are projected to account for more than 40% of total global vehicle sales.

IEA forecasts oil demand decline as EV adoption grows

IEA expects global oil demand to continue declining, driven largely by the growing adoption of EVs. The agency's projections are based on the core assumption that EV uptake will play a decisive role in pushing global oil demand to its peak by the end of this decade.

According to the report, EVs displaced more than 1.3 million bpd of global oil demand in 2023, a 30% increase compared to the previous year. This volume is equivalent to the entire oil demand from Japan's transport sector.

By 2030, the IEA estimates that light-duty electric vehicles will remain central to this transformation, currently accounting for 80% of displaced demand, or about 1.06 million bpd. This share is expected to slightly decline to 77% by the end of the decade, equivalent to 4.01 million bpd. The shift is partly due to the increasing contribution from electric trucks and buses, which are expected to displace an additional 1 million bpd as battery technologies improve and charging infrastructure expands.

However, the IEA warned that global economic slowdowns and trade disruptions are impeding EV adoption, posing a challenge for policymakers trying to make these vehicles more appealing to consumers. In Europe,

EV sales have slowed notably, while hybrid vehicles have gained popularity, delaying timelines for phasing out petrol-powered cars.

Given current macroeconomic headwinds, the IEA has revised down its oil demand growth forecasts for 2025 and 2026. This could result in a supply surplus of up to 1 million bpd by 2026.

EV sales hit record highs despite headwinds

Despite challenges, EV sales continue to break records globally. In 2025, electric vehicles are expected to represent more than one-quarter of all new car sales worldwide.

Sales exceeded 17 million units in 2024, pushing EV market share past 20% for the first time. This momentum carried into the first quarter of 2025, with a 35% year-on-year surge and record sales across all major markets.

The IEA projects continued growth this year, with EV sales expected to surpass 20 million units, a 25% increase over 2024, driven primarily by China.

While economic and policy uncertainties may affect the market, EVs are still projected to account for over 40% of global vehicle sales by 2030.

In Q1 2025 alone, EV sales surpassed 4 million vehicles, exceeding figures from the same period in the past two years. This marks an increase of over 1 million vehicles sold in just three months (January to March), according to Energy Research Unit data.

China led the market with more than 2.5 million EVs sold in Q1, averaging around 875,000 units per month. Europe recorded over 900,000 sales, including 625,000 within the EU, where EVs accounted for one in every four cars sold. The UK market reached a 30% EV share.

In the United States, sales exceeded 360,000 vehicles, marking a 10% year-on-year increase, with EVs maintaining a 10% market share.

Emerging markets also showed notable growth. Brazil recorded over 30,000 EV sales, up 40%, while India saw a 45% jump, nearing 35,000 units sold.

According to IEA projections, China will continue to drive global momentum, with expected sales of over 14 million EVs in 2025, more than total global sales in 2023. The country's EV market share could approach 60%.

Hormuz Marine plans first marine fuel station at the dry dock in Duqm

Muscat -  :

Sulaiman Al Hadhrami, CEO of Hormuz Marine, stated that the company is currently working on a plan to implement a landmark project to build the first marine fuel supply station at the dry dock in the Special Economic Zone at Duqm, the first of its kind in the Sultanate of Oman. The project will strengthen the port's infrastructure and enhance its readiness to provide continuous and reliable service.

He added, "This project reflects our commitment to advancing maritime development by investing in vital assets and modern field technologies."

More details in the following interview...

How does Hormuz Marine contribute to establishing Oman's position as a global bunkering hub?

Over the past five years, Hormuz Marine has played an active role in reinforcing Oman's status as a leading regional and global centre for ship bunkering. This has been achieved by developing an integrated national system that includes advanced infrastructure such as floating marine fuel stations, port-based fuel storage tanks, and land-based tanker trucks.

The company has adopted a flexible operational approach that caters to the needs of both transiting vessels and those calling at Omani ports. This responsiveness has helped attract a growing number of international shipowners and operators to Oman and sustainably expanded the company's customer base.

What role does Hormuz Marine play in enhancing bunkering services at Sohar Port, and how have these services improved the port's efficiency and regional competitiveness?

Hormuz Marine plays a central role in developing bunkering services at Sohar Port, where it became the first company to supply biofuel, positioning Sohar as a pioneer in responding to global environmental standards and sustainability trends.

We operate a marine fuel station and storage tanks around the clock, reducing vessel waiting times and improving service efficiency. This has made Sohar Port a preferred choice for many regional and international operators. Additionally, we have succeeded in narrowing the price gap with nearby ports like Fujairah, enhancing the port's competitiveness and attracting more vessel



traffic and refuelling operations.

Our contribution also extends to knowledge transfer and the development of national capabilities, enabling Omani professionals to efficiently manage bunkering operations. This strengthens the port's role in Oman's integrated logistics ecosystem and solidifies its position as a key maritime supply chain hub in the region.

After obtaining the operating license at Duqm Port, how is Hormuz Marine supporting Oman's ambitions to become a global maritime services hub?

Hormuz Marine operates on the ground at Duqm Port as an authorised bunkering service provider. Our operations are managed by skilled Omani professionals and supported by an integrat-

ed logistics framework, ensuring reliable and high-quality fuel services.

Thanks to our operational experience across Omani ports and our flexible, efficient approach, we have attracted international vessels to Duqm by offering competitive pricing and services that meet global quality and safety standards.

We are currently working on a unique project to build the first marine fuel supply station at the dry dock in the Special Economic Zone at Duqm, the first of its kind in Oman. This will strengthen the port's infrastructure and boost its readiness to provide continuous, stable services. The project is part of our commitment to maritime advancement through investment in vital assets and modern field technologies.

With an Omanisation rate exceeding 85%, how do you view the role of national talent in achieving this success?

We take pride in being an Omani-owned and managed company driven by young, capable national talent. In truth, Omani youth are the cornerstone of our success, they manage operations, liaise with international partners, represent us in regional and global forums, and lead our technical and logistical development.

We believe that investing in national talent is the foundation for any future expansion. Accordingly, we have strengthened our partnerships with Oman Maritime College and Sultan Qaboos University to recruit and train graduates through hands-on experience in real operational settings. This enables them to sharpen their technical and leadership skills in bunkering and marine logistics, as we firmly believe that equipping today's youth with strong knowledge is the key to tomorrow's progress.



Sulaiman Al Hadhrami:
This project reflects our commitment to advancing maritime development by investing in vital assets and modern field technologies



Saleh Nabhan Al Maamari
Editor-in-Chief of Duqm Economist Magazine

One-stop shop services in Khazaen Economic City

Barka -  :

The one-stop shop provides a unified window that enables investors to complete various permits, licences and transactions related to their activities under one roof

The operation of the one-stop shop aims to enhance the investment environment in Khazaen Economic City and elevate its competitive position both locally and internationally

To facilitate procedures and accelerate the completion of transactions electronically with ease and convenience, Asyad Group has introduced the one stop shop services in Khazaen Economic City, in coordination with the Public Authority for Special Economic Zones and Free Zones (OPAZ) and Khazaen Economic City. The initiative aims to enhance the business environment and attract investment.

This step represents a key pillar in positioning the city as an integrated investment hub capable of meeting investor aspirations and supporting the path of sustainable economic growth through simplified processes and expedited services.

The one-stop shop offers a unified service window that enables investors to complete various permits, licences and transactions related to their activities under one roof. This contributes to improving service efficiency and reducing the time required to complete procedures.

The services provided include commercial registration and updates, issuance and renewal of economic activity permits, management and registration of lease contracts and land usufruct rights, approval of urban planning schemes, as well as the issuance of building permits, environmental clearances, and the facilitation of foreign labour and investor visas.

These services have been developed in collaboration with a number of government entities, including the Royal Oman Police, the Ministry of Commerce, Industry and Investment Promotion, the Ministry of Labour, the Ministry of

Housing and Urban Planning, the Oman Chamber of Commerce and Industry, among others, all of which play a vital role in supporting the investment environment and enabling the integrated service system delivered through the one-stop shop.

The Public Authority for Special Economic Zones and Free Zones has ensured that the one-stop shop staff are qualified and trained, granting them the necessary authorisations to carry out their duties efficiently and proficiently. Specialised training programmes have been conducted to improve the quality of services provided, positively impacting the overall investor experience.

The operation of the one-stop shop reflects Asyad Group's vision to enhance the investment environment in Khazaen Economic City and elevate its competitive standing both locally and internationally.

Asyad Group also manages and operates similar stations in the Sohar Free Zone and the Salalah Free Zone, highlighting its extensive expertise in this field and reinforcing its operational readiness to deliver high-quality services in line with the highest standards.



Law with integrated benefits and unified incentives

The Law of Special Economic Zones and Free Zones, issued under Royal Decree No. 38/2025, reflects the national vision of creating a more flexible and stable business environment that supports growth and enhances investment appeal. This law marks the culmination of an ambitious legislative journey that aligns with Oman's forward-looking aspirations and offers practical solutions to the challenges faced by local and international investments.

What sets this law apart is that it goes beyond merely reorganising special economic or free zones in isolation. Instead, it establishes a unified legislative framework that brings both under one umbrella, standardising incentives, benefits, exemptions, and facilities within a comprehensive legal system. This provides investors with greater clarity and confidence in the business environment.

These incentives and facilitations have been carefully designed to serve strategic objectives directly tied to economic diversification, value-added growth, and the promotion of entrepreneurship, in full alignment with the goals of Oman Vision 2040.

At the heart of this law lies the principle of fairness, as all zones and investment projects are treated according to unified standards, without compromising the flexibility to offer additional incentives for projects of strategic importance. This approach paves the way for high-quality investments that contribute to knowledge transfer, foster innovation, and create skilled job opportunities for citizens. The provision of incentives and exemptions is directly tied to achieving measurable economic outcomes, an intelligent step that links legislation with development, establishing a mutually beneficial relationship between the state and the investor while ensuring alignment between vision and execution.

The Public Authority for Special Economic Zones and Free Zones (OPAZ) plays a central role in this framework through its regulatory and supervisory functions. Its implementation of the unified registry system and one-stop station contributes to reducing bureaucracy and expediting procedures, reflecting a deep understanding of investor needs in a fast-paced and competitive environment.

The law also recognises the importance of flexibility and realistic implementation. It allows investors to move between zones, extend licence durations, and receive incentives tailored to each zone's characteristics. It also safeguards the rights of existing projects by maintaining their current exemptions and benefits until expiration, sending a clear message of legal continuity and strengthening Oman's credibility among current and potential investors.

The philosophy behind this law transcends administrative organisation; it reflects a national vision that sees investors not merely as clients, but as partners in development. Thus, the significance of this law lies not only in its role as a tool for attracting investment, but in its nature as a reliable and integrated framework in which legislation and national ambition go hand in hand.

With this renewed legislative spirit, Oman moves forward with confidence, opening wide horizons for both local and international investment, using its land as a launchpad to diverse markets under the umbrella of a modern, flexible, disciplined, and just law that offers equal opportunities for success and reinforces Oman's position as a trusted economic hub in the region.

The Law of Special Economic Zones and Free Zones shows a unified legislative framework and standardizes benefits, incentives, and exemptions to ensure a clear and stable business environment for investors

2nd edition of Duqm Economic Forum titled Duqm Leading the Change

The Special Economic Zone at Duqm (SEZAD) has emerged as a prominent investment destination, successfully attracting and establishing strategic economic partnerships across key sectors such as renewable energy, green hydrogen, green industries, fisheries and petrochemicals, in addition to drawing diverse investments in various other fields.

The second edition of the Duqm Economic Forum comes following the launch of SEZAD's 2025–2030 strategy last March. The strategy is built around five key pillars, localisation of investments, efficient operation and management, development of a balanced lifestyle, attraction of tourists and partners, and institutional excellence.

منتدى الدقم الاقتصادي 2025 في نسخته الثانية – الدقم تقود التغيير

أصبحت المنطقة الاقتصادية الخاصة بالدقم واجهة استثمارية جاذبة إذ نجحت في استقطاب وإقامة شركات اقتصادية استراتيجية في عدة مجالات رئيسية كالطاقة المتجددة والهيدروجين الأخضر والصناعات الخضراء والصناعات السمكية والصناعات البتروكيمياوية وجذب استثمارات متنوعة في قطاعات متعددة أخرى.

وتأتي النسخة الثانية من منتدى الدقم الاقتصادي بعد أن أطلقت المنطقة الاقتصادية الخاصة بالدقم في مارس الماضي استراتيجيتها للفترة من 2025 إلى 2030 والتي تركز على 5 مرتكزات رئيسية تتضمن توطيد الاستثمارات، والتشغيل والإدارة الفعالة، وتطوير نمط حياة متوازن، وجذب السياح والشركاء، والتميز المؤسسي.

أهداف المنتدى: Forum objectives

تأكيد مكانة الدقم كمحرك رئيسي للتنوع الاقتصادي في سلطنة عُمان
Affirm Duqm's position as a key driver of economic diversification in Oman

دعم جهود سلطنة عُمان لتحقيق الحياد الصفري الكربوني
Review progress achieved since the first edition of the forum in October 2023



متابعة ما تحقق منذ النسخة الأولى للمنتدى في أكتوبر 2023
Review progress achieved since the first edition of the forum in October 2023

إبراز مشاريع الطاقة المتجددة والاستثمارات في الهيدروجين الأخضر والأمونيا
Support Oman's efforts to achieve net-zero carbon emissions

عرض مبادرات التوظيف والتشغيل الفعال
Present initiatives for investment localisation and efficient employment

49 مليار دولار استثمارات متوقعة في مشاريع الطاقة المتجددة والهيدروجين الأخضر والأمونيا
Highlight the expected \$49 billion in investments in renewable energy, green hydrogen and ammonia projects



الترويج للدقم كوجهة جاذبة للسياح والمستثمرين
Promote Duqm as an attractive destination for tourists and investors

تعزيز مكانة سلطنة عُمان كمركز إقليمي للطاقة النظيفة
Strengthen Oman's position as a regional hub for clean energy

عرض استراتيجية الدقم 2025 – 2030 وخططها الطموحة
Present the Duqm Strategy 2025–2030 and its ambitious plans

مناقشة تطوير السياحة وبناء مدن ذكية مستدامة
Discuss tourism development and the creation of sustainable smart cities

جذب مستثمرين وشركاء جدد في القطاعات الواعدة
Attract new investors and partners in promising sectors



تسليط الضوء على الصناعات الخضراء والتمويل المستدام
Highlight green industries and sustainable finance

استعراض حلول الذكاء الاصطناعي في الصناعة والمدن الذكية
Explore AI solutions in industry and smart urban development

تحفيز الاستثمارات في الاقتصاد الأخضر والتقنيات الحديثة
Stimulate investment in the green economy and advanced technologies

إبراز تنافسية المنطقة الاقتصادية الخاصة بالدقم على المستوى الإقليمي والعالمي
Reinforce the regional and global competitiveness of SEZAD

إيجاد بيئة حوار مباشر بين صناع القرار والمستثمرين والخبراء
Create a platform for direct dialogue among decision-makers, investors, and experts



إبراز الشراكات الاقتصادية الاستراتيجية التي تم بناؤها في الدقم
Highlight strategic economic partnerships established in Duqm

عرض فرص الاستثمار في الصناعات السمكية والبتروكيمياوية والموانئ
Showcase investment opportunities in fisheries, petrochemicals, and port industries

تعزيز البنية الأساسية الذكية لدعم التحول الرقمي
Enhance smart infrastructure to support digital transformation

مرتكزات رئيسية في استراتيجية الدقم 2025 – 2030

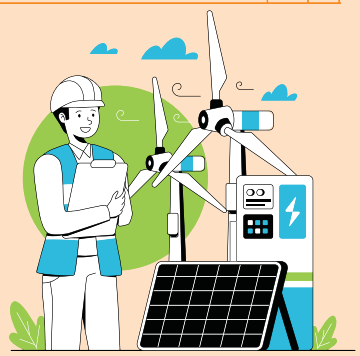
- توطيد الاستثمارات
- التشغيل والإدارة الفعالة
- تطوير نمط حياة متوازن
- جذب السياح والشركاء
- التميز المؤسسي

Key pillars of Duqm Strategy 2025–2030

- Localisation of investments
- Efficient operation and management
- Development of a balanced lifestyle
- Attraction of tourists and partners
- Institutional excellence

محاور رئيسية في جدول أعمال المنتدى

- الصناعات الخضراء والتمويل
- السياحة والمدن الذكية
- حلول الذكاء الاصطناعي



Main forum themes

- Green industries and sustainable finance
- Tourism and smart cities
- Artificial intelligence solutions