

# His Majesty calls for the development of economic zones and major projects



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# Continuous growth of special economic zones and free zones

The special economic zones and free zones play a significant role in the Sultanate's development plans. In the fifth five-year plan, Al Mazunah Free Zone was established and was officially inaugurated in 1999, followed by the launch of Salalah Free Zone in 2006. Then, the establishment of Sohar Free Zone came in 2010. At the onset of the eighth five-year plan, the Special Economic Zone at Duqm (SEZAD) was established. In view of that, the year 2020 witnessed a commendable facelift in this field through the establishment of the Public Authority for Special Economic Zones and Free Zones (OPAZ), which supervises these zones and works to achieve their integration.

At the operations front, several achievements were marked in 2020. The Special Economic Zone at Duqm (SEZAD), for instance, witnessed the completion of many packages at the Port of Duqm, which is ready for integrated commercial operations. Moreover, the buildings of Duqm Port and the customs station were handed over to the concerned parties, which will start operating these buildings this year. This will enable the Port to increase the volume of goods handled and make it easier for importers and exporters to manage customs clearance and release of goods as soon as possible through the Port.

Simultaneously, the Public Authority for Special Economic Zones and Free Zones (OPAZ) has worked on developing the Fishing Port. OPAZ is currently taking into consideration converting the Port into a multi-purpose port, which will not be limited to receiving fishing vessels, but going even beyond, so it can handle other related activities. This move is expected to have a positive impact on the Special Economic Zone at Duqm through the establishment of different factories in the fisheries and food industries zone, attached to the Port.

Likewise, we, at the Public Authority for Special Economic Zones and Free Zones, aspire to have the agreement signed by SEZAD and the Fisheries Development Oman (FDO) contribute to professionally develop and manage the Fishing Port. Accordingly, this would increase the value of the fisheries sector in Duqm.

The free zones in Al Mazunah, Salalah and Sohar are witnessing a remarkable growth with many achievements have been recorded over the past years, marking it an attractive destination for investors from within and outside Oman. OPAZ plan for this year includes increasing the gains to the national economy from these zones that are witnessing continuous growth.



**Eng. Ahmed bin Hassan  
Al Dheeb**  
General Supervisor



**The free zones in Al Mazunah, Salalah and Sohar are witnessing a remarkable growth with many achievements have been recorded over the past years, marking it an attractive destination for investors from within and outside Oman.**



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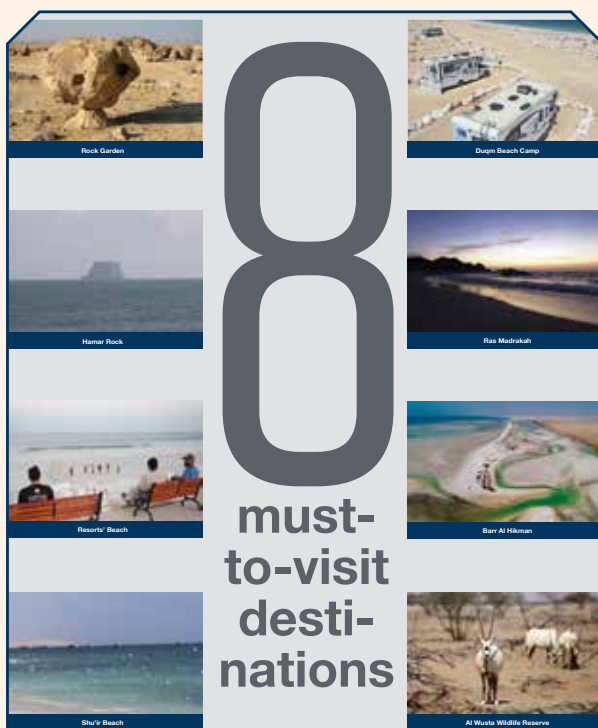
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# Launching Oman Future Vision 2040



## His Majesty calls for the development of economic zones and major projects

*His Majesty underlines government's keenness to achieve all goals and priorities of Oman Vision 2040*

### Muscat - :

His Majesty Sultan Haitham Bin Tariq called for the development of economic zones and the implementation of major projects in the Sultanate as one of the national priorities on which Oman Vision 2040 is based.

In his meeting with the Council of Ministers on 15 December 2020, His Majesty the Sultan approved the launching of Oman Future Vision 2040 to be implemented from the

beginning of 2021 till the end of 2040, noting that the vision is the outcome of national efforts and societal harmony and its success is the responsibility of all each in their area, without exception.

### National priorities

Based on national priorities on which Oman Vision 2040 is based, His Majesty the Sultan called for channelling all efforts and resources for the realisation of goals and fiscal balance programmes, the development of investment legislations, and acceleration





His Majesty the Sultan pointed out that the 10th Five- Year plan constitute a cornerstone for the sustainability of economic and social stability

His Majesty reaffirmed that employment of Omanis is a top national priority

of government services, the development of economic zones and the implementation of major projects, along with upgrading national expertise—and link all of these efforts with the employment of Omanis, being a top national priority.

In this context, His Majesty the Sultan underlined the Government's constant keenness to pursue five-year plans aimed at achieving the goals and priorities of Oman Vision 2040

#### 10th Five- Year Plan

His Majesty the Sultan said that he followed up, with great attention, the stages of preparation of the 10th Five Year Plan (2021-2025), as well as the State's General Budget for Fiscal Year 2021, which is considered the first executive plan of Oman Vision 2040 and pointed out that the Fiscal Plan 2021 is compatible with financial conditions being experienced by the Sultanate and that emphasis is laid on maintaining fiscal sustainability through rationalisation of spending and aug-

menting of revenue. The Five Year Plan and the Budget projects will constitute a cornerstone for the sustainability of economic and social stability and the realisation of good, consistent development rates, His Majesty the Sultan said.

#### Speeding up procedures

Within the context of the Royal attention to continue boosting digital competence and preparedness and to accelerate the pace of e-government transformation, His Majesty the Sultan reaffirmed his constant follow-up of the efforts exerted by the Government in this field. The overall aim is to speed up procedures for the realisation of aspirations of citizens, residents, entrepreneurs and investors and to empower the strategic, economic and developmental sectors in the Sultanate.

His Majesty the Sultan also gave directives to expedite the implementation of the National Unified E-Government Portal to serve as a composite platform incorporating all government services.

Putting emphasis on the development of legislations related to investment and the streamlining and acceleration of government services



Channelling all efforts and resources for the realisation of goals and programmes of fiscal balance

## In its first meeting

*The Public Authority for Special Economic Zones and Free Zones decides to:*

# Conduct a study for converting the Fishing Port at Duqm to a multipurpose port



**Approved the mechanism for attracting clean energy projects and green hydrogen**

**Discussed scaling up the one-stop shops services in the zones and preparing a unified environmental regulation**

### Muscat - :

The Board of Directors of the Public Authority for Special Economic Zones and Free Zones (OPAZ) decided to conduct a study to convert the Fishing Port at Duqm to multipurpose port that receives fish, vegetables, fruits and meat and to convert the Fishery Industries Complex which is located nearby the Port to a Foodstuff Complex which include fishery industries.

These decisions came as part of the first meeting of the newly formed Board of Directors chaired by His Excellency Dr. Ali bin Masoud Al Sunaidy, Chairman of OPAZ.

### Scaling up the one-stop shop services

Within the meeting held in 9 december 2020, the Board of Directors touched on ways of maximising benefits of the competences granted to the Authority which help in scaling up the services of the one-stop shop in the Special Economic Zone at Duqm (SEZAD) and the free zones of Salalah, Sohar and Al Mazunah.

The Board of Directors also discussed OPAZ draft organisational structure and the legislations organising economic and free zones and decided to continue working in accordance to the regulations organising the activities of the Authority

in the coming stage until the issuance of the organisational structure.

### Attracting clean energy production projects

During the meeting, the Board of Directors approved the mechanism for attracting clean energy production projects to be used locally and to produce green hydrogen for export purposes in SEZAD, and the Free Zone of Sohar besides increasing the area designated for the project in Duqm by 50 sqkm to become 150 sqkm.

### Fishing, fish processing and manufacture project

The Board of Directors in its meeting also touched on the plan of one of the companies under Oman Investment Authority to set up a project in the field of fishing, fish processing and manufacture, to be implemented on an area of 100,000 sq.m approximately at the Fishing Port at Duqm, with implementation to commence in the second half of 2021.

### Unified environmental regulation

The Board also discussed environmental affairs regulation which include the controls for issuing environmental permits in special economic zones and free zones.

It is worth a mention that OPAZ was established hereby Royal Decree No 105/2020, and supervises four zones: the Special Economic Zone at Duqm, and the free zones of: Sohar, Salalah and Al Mazunah.





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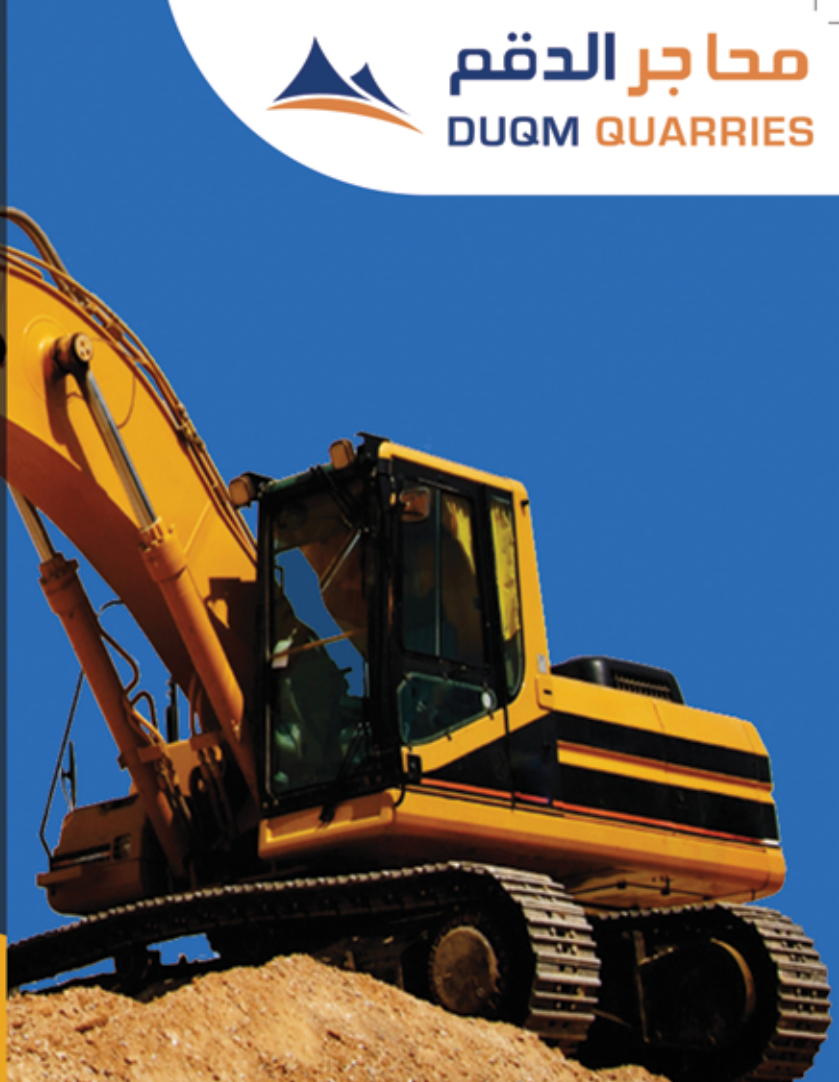
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# Oman – International consortium wins the project Signing agreement for the development, management and operation of the multipurpose Fishing Port at Duqm



**The consortium invests OMR 50 million to develop, manage and operate the multipurpose Fishing Port**

## Duqm - :

The Special Economic Zone at Duqm (SEZAD) signed on 21st of November, the agreement for the development, management and operation of the multipurpose Fishing Port and the related projects at the Zone. The agreement was signed with a strategic consortium of Oman and international companies led by Fisheries Development Oman, a state-owned Group supervised by Oman Investment Fund.

Together with Fisheries Development Oman (FDO), the winning consortium includes Al Wusta Fisheries Company, Oman Food Investment Holding Company, Oman Fisheries Company and Port of Duqm along with Lorient Keroman SEM, which manages

one of the major fishing ports in Europe.

Fisheries Development Oman also inked a land usufruct development agreement with Al Wusta Fisheries Industries LLC. The Fishing Port is ideally situated in the vicinity of food industries zone occupying an area of 7 square kilometres designed to meet the basic needs of investments set to be localised.

The agreement for the development, management and operation of the Fishing Port was signed by Eng. Yahya bin Khamis Al Zadjali, In-Charge of Managing Operations of SEZAD, while Eng. Dawood bin Sulaiman Al Wahaibi, CEO of Al Wusta Fisheries Industries LLC, signed the usufruct agreement. The Fisheries Development Oman was represented by its CEO, Khalid





Yahya Al Zadjali signs the agreement for managing and developing the Fishing Port with Fisheries Development Oman Group

bin Ali Al Yahmadi on signing both agreements.

The two agreements were signed under the auspices of His Excellency Dr. Saud bin Hamoud Al Habsi, Minister of Agricultural Wealth, Fisheries and Water Resources. The signing ceremony was attended by Dr. Ali bin Masoud Al Sunaidy, Chairman of the Public Authority for Special Economic Zones and Free Zones (OPAZ), His Excellency Abdulsalam bin Mohammed Al Mursidi, Chairman of Oman Investment Authority (OIA), and a number of CEOs and SEZAD officials.

#### Attracting local and international investments

Eng. Yahya Al Zadjali pointed out that both agreements come within SEZAD's strategy to attract local and international investments and benefit from modern infra-

structure at the Special Economic Zone at Duqm and incentives and facilities offered to investors.

"The fisheries and food industries sector is one of the promising sectors in the Special Economic Zone at Duqm (SEZAD) due to the quantity and quality of fish stock in the Zone. Therefore, the government has paid a great attention to this sector as all the infrastructure facilities of the port and food industries zone have been established with high standards in terms of their suitability for fish, food and tourism activities. As well, it has been taken into account the future expansions within the port docks and reserving large areas for the food industries zone", Al Zadjali explained.

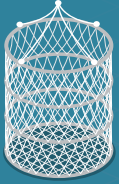
"SEZAD has so far attracted a number of investments to the tune of RO 135 million in fisheries industries and superstructures", said Eng. Yahya, adding that more investments could unveil after the start of opera-

**Yahya Al Zadjali: Attracting investments with value of RO 135 million in fisheries industries and superstructures**

**The agreement extends for 28 years and aims to promote fishing industries**



# Features of the Fishing Port



Area allocated for services facilities: 248,931 m<sup>2</sup>

Main breakwater: 2,2 km long

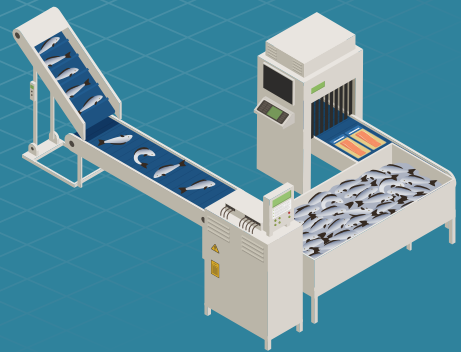
Port's depth: 10 metres

Tourism services provided at tourism berth, stretching over 75000 m<sup>2</sup>

Total length of Jetties: 1.2 Km long

Establishing area for fisheries and food industries complex connected to the Port

Secondary breakwater: is 1,1 km long



**The consortium will be evaluated based on KPIs included in the bidding**

**The Port serves local fishermen, commercial fishing ships, livestock ships and ships designated for transporting foodstuff**

tions of the multipurpose Fishing Port.

## Investment of OMR 50

The consortium will invest an amount of OMR 50 million to develop, manage and operate the multipurpose Fishing Port, with the potential of expanding the facilities and services to include several operational and services aspects. The signed agreement stipulates that the consortium pays 15 % of the annual net profits to OPAZ for the management and operation of the port starting from the beginning of the third year from signing the agreement, in addition to paying the fees for the land usufruct.

The consortium shall also commit to include all related contracts signed in the future a provision for assigning 10 % of the works to SMEs and commit to Omanisation percentage as set forth in the implemented regulations of the Port's future comprehensive concept.

## Comprehensive concept of the port's future

On the other hand, Eng. Dawood bin Sulaiman Al Wahaibi, CEO of Al Wusta Fisheries Industries LLC, remarked that a masterplan is being sketched for the Fishing Port and that a comprehensive concept will be formulated over the next three months about the future growth of the facility, in particular, and the fisheries resources sector in general.

## Performance evaluation

Hereby the agreement, extending for

28 years, the consortium will be evaluated based on the Key Performance Indicators (KPIs) in light of the action plan provided within the bid of the land usufruct and the agreement of the development, management and operation of the Port signed with the Public Authority for Special Economic Zones and Free Zones to achieve the set objectives of the project.

## Various projects

Meanwhile, Khalid bin Ali Al Yahmadi, CEO of Fisheries Development Oman Company, noted that the Fishing Port's management project caps up the schema of projects that the Fisheries Development Oman started in Muscat Governorate. "The projects include a sea bream fish farming project in the Wilayat of Qurayat, which has an output of 3,000 tonnes and two shrimp projects in South A'Sharqiyah having an output of 9,000 tonnes as a first phase that can be expanded to 15,000 tonnes", he added.

Al Yahmadi also stated that Fisheries Development Oman currently has an output of 63,000 tonnes from three main projects in fish farming and commercial fishing. "The company's projects in Al Wusta Governorate will be in the Wilayat of Al Jazir. There will be a shrimp project with a capacity of 24,000 metric tonnes per annum (to come up in two phases 14,000+10,000 tonnes)", said Al Yahmadi, adding that Al Wusta will host most of the company's projects in future.

"The largest project of Fisheries Devel-





Khalid Al Yahmadi and Dawood Al Wahaibi exchange agreement's document

oment Oman is situated at Barr Al Hikman, where a fish farming unit will produce initially about 215,000 tonnes of shrimps in a fish culture area of 40 square metres. Following this experience, more added value projects will be set up in the Wilayat of Duqm", Al Yahmadi said.

He added that two companies were incorporated into the Fisheries Development Oman, which were Oman Fisheries Company and Sea Products International, and that the move gives a fillip to the operations of the Fisheries Development Oman, which, along with its subsidiary firms, envisages an output of 600,000 tonnes by 2035.

#### Features of the port:

The multipurpose Fishing Port is 10 metres deep and works are currently progressing to connect it to the road network and service facilities. It also includes main breakwater, which is 2.2 Km long and another 1.1 Km long secondary breakwater. The total length of the Jetties is around 1.2 Km long, while the area allocated for the service facilities is 248,931 m<sup>2</sup>. The Port is also equipped with tourism berth, stretching over 75000 m<sup>2</sup> that will provide its services for tourism ships within the plan of the project.

#### Fisheries and food industries complex

As for the facilities complementing the multipurpose Fishing Port, it includes fisheries and food industries complex connected to the main road and internal roads, which are 5.2 Km long. The Port will shortly provide its services to local fishermen, commercial fishing ships, livestock ships and ships designated for transporting foodstuff in addition to some tourism facilities and other service facilities.

#### Making the most of fisheries

It is worth noting that the multipurpose Fishing Port is one of the key projects of the Special Economic Zone at Duqm that seeks to enhance the Zone's capacity to take advantage of the fisheries available in Duqm and the surrounding areas, as well as to utilise the distinctive location of Duqm in general at the Arabian Sea. The fisheries complex of the Port will further enhance the use of Duqm Airport services through the cargo terminal, promote re-export sector, create job opportunities and contribute in activating fisheries sector in the Sultanate with the objective of diversifying the economy, enhancing food safety, transferring modern global technologies to the Sultanate and creating added values to fisheries.



Factories at the fisheries and food industries zone connected to the Port

**Dawood Al Wahaibi:**  
*Formulating a comprehensive concept for the Port's future growth over the next three months*


**Khalid Al Yahmadi:**  
*More added value projects will be set up in Duqm*

## Duqm welcomes renewable energy projects and allocates 150 square kilometres for investments



Panels of the solar photovoltaic project at Sohar Free Zone, being implemented by Qabas, the solar energy arm of Shell Oman. Phase 1 of the project produces 25 megawatts of electricity.

## OQ & DEME Concessions kick off HYPOR Duqm Green Hydrogen Project

  
The project contributes to meeting the global demand for green hydrogen and its derivatives



**Dr. Ali Al Sunaidy:**  
*The project is a key step for placing Duqm as hub in the Hydrogen value chain*



**Alain Bernard:**  
*We are thrilled to engage with OQ and this is a major step in both our collaboration with the Omani Authorities*

### Muscat -

OQ & DEME Concessions (DEME) are proud to announce the start of a joint project to develop a world leading green hydrogen plant in the Special Economic Zone at Duqm (SEZAD), in collaboration with the Public Authority for Special Economic Zones and Free Zones (OPAZ). The project fits well in the Sultanate's renewable energy strategy fostering investments in renewable and alternative energy resources, also contributing in achieving the renewable energy targets of

the Oman Vision 2040.

The Special Economic Zone at Duqm provides a strategic and competitive location to develop large scale green hydrogen production, given its centrality to global trade, the favourable wind and solar resources, the existing large port facilities and the proximity to a booming industrial zone.

The facility will significantly contribute to the decarbonisation of the regional industry in Oman, as well as providing green hydrogen and/or derivatives (such as green ammonia) to international customers. The envisaged





**Salim Al Huthaili:**

*The prefeasibility study has demonstrated potential for a green hydrogen project in Duqm using solar and wind resources*



**Jalal Al Lawati:**

*Evaluating a number of investment requests in this field in Duqm and Sohar*

electrolyser capacity for a first phase is estimated between 250 and 500 MW.

The Public Authority for Special Economic Zones and Free Zones (OPAZ) is extending its full support in facilitating the implementation of the project in SEZAD. A site has been reserved with OPAZ to allow the installation of a solar and wind park. In addition, OPAZ is coordinating with all the government related entities to allow for a smart usage of the infrastructure that is being set up in the Special Economic Zone at Duqm. This includes access to high voltage power lines, access to the sea water intake for the generation of demineralised water and access to the Duqm Port for the export of green hydrogen and its derivatives.

#### **Allocating 150 square km**

On the Project, His Excellency Dr. Ali bin Masoud Al Sunaidy, Chairman of the Public Authority for Special Economic Zones and Free Zones (OPAZ), commented: "The start of this cooperation between DEME and OQ is very important, not only for the project, but towards the biggest cause of placing Duqm as hub in the Hydrogen value chain. The step is also complementing the recently announced decision of OPAZ to dedicate 150 square km of land for green energy projects in the Special Economic Zone at Duqm, in line with Oman Vision 2040".

#### **Strategic partnership**

Salim Al Huthaili, CEO Alternative Energy at OQ, pointed out: "Oman is blessed with solar and wind resources and their potential for renewable energy are amongst the world's best. OQ always looks to maximise the resources available to us, and our utilisation of these renewable resources is just beginning.

The prefeasibility study has demonstrated potential for a green hydrogen project in Duqm using solar and wind resources. This has enabled the decision for OQ to enter jointly with DEME into the engineering and design phase of the Project."

#### **Major step**

Alain Bernard, Executive Chairman DEME Concessions NV and Deputy Chairman Port of Duqm Company, said: "We are thrilled to engage with OQ Alternative Energy into the next step of the ambitious HYPOR Duqm Green Hydrogen Project. It is a major step in both our collaboration with the Omani Authorities as well as a partner with the Port of Antwerp in the development of the Port of Duqm and related industrial and shipping activities."

#### **International interest**

This project comes in response to the interest expressed by a group of international companies to invest in clean hydrogen projects in the special economic zones and free zones in the Sultanate. Jalal bin Abdulkarim Al Lawati, from the Public Authority for Special Economic Zones and Free Zones (OPAZ), said that the Public Authority for Special Economic Zones and Free Zones started evaluating a number of investment requests in this field.

Those companies are showing interest to invest in the Special Economic Zone at Duqm (SEZAD) and Sohar Free Zone to produce electricity from solar and wind energy as great sources to produce green hydrogen for export. Furthermore, OPAZ is coordinating with other concerned government bodies to allocate an area in Sohar for expansion in producing solar energy.

*The envisaged electrolyser capacity for a first phase starts at 250 MW*

*Great efforts to access high voltage power lines and sea water intake for the generation of demineralised water to produce green hydrogen*



One of the international renewable energy projects

# Duqm

**Duqm – Mohammed bin Ahmed Al Shezawi**

Duqm marks an attractive tourism icon amid a huge number of investment projects in various economic sectors. The key projects include an airport, a multipurpose commercial and industrial port, oil refinery and a multipurpose fishing port that will serve the fishing and food industries in Duqm. Additionally, there are many other industrial, commercial, tourism, real estate and logistic projects, which collectively contribute to increasing the demand for recreation and tourist landmarks in Duqm.

Duqm, being located on the Arabian Sea and on the banks of the ocean, gains a tourist advantage that is equivalent to its economic advantages for it is being a special economic zone. It has been equipped with a range of tourism projects such as hotels, resorts, hotel apartments, parks and many other facilities that will be set up over the 18-km long coast. This maps a promising future for tourism in Duqm.

Not far from Duqm is the beach of Bar Al Hakman, which attracts flocks of birds from various parts of earth. Hence, it is classified to be among the top 25 sites for migratory birds in the Middle East during winter in the migration path to Asia and East Africa. About 142 km from Duqm comes Al Wusta Wildlife Reserve, which observed the settlement of the Arabian Oryx in the Sultanate.

As well, alongside the beaches, extending from the wilayats of Mahout, Duqm and Al Jazir, there are many tourist sites that can be reached within less than two hours by car after spending a pleasant night at Crowne Plaza Hotel or Park Inn Resort Duqm located adjacent to Duqm beach.

Moreover, Duqm embraces a variety of many other natural jewels, such as the Rock Garden, where a visitor or a resident of Duqm can spend hours observing its rare formations. The desert of Duqm allows visitors and residents to enjoy a moonlit night away from the hustle and bustle of the city. Likewise, tourists and residents can have a cruising trip for recreation, fishing or diving. Duqm is full of diverse tourism activities.

The tourism jewels of Duqm are many and varied. They are not ten or twenty, but Duqm has many more, which are difficult to count. However, we have only selected 8 jewels that we trust will create unforgettable memories for the visitors.

**a tourist  
icon amid a  
number of  
investment  
projects**





Rock Garden



Duqm Beach Camp



Hamar Rock



Ras Madrasah



Resorts' Beach



Barr Al Hikman



Shu'ir Beach



Al Wusta Wildlife Reserve

# must- to-visit desti- nations

## Rock Garden



The Rock Garden is located at the centre of Duqm, about one kilometre from Duqm Wali office. It is considered one of the most significant geological sites in the Sultanate and a prominent natural treasure at Duqm.



The Garden, which covers an area of about 6.1 square kilometres, includes unique rock formations lined up in the form of statues from sandstone and limestone. These stones were formed by wind, water, ice and other natural elements over millions of years ago.

As well, these rock formations consist of limestone fragments that were formed about 40 million years back and covered by a solid layer. The corrosion processes caused by wind and water have contributed in carving these rocks in the form of natural sculptures."

Source: Geotourism Guide issued by the Ministry of Tourism (No date).





## Hamar Rock



Hamar Rock or pebble, as called by the local community, is a big rock surrounded by seawater from all sides and located around 6 km from the beach of Nafoun in the Wilayat of Duqm.

This Rock marks a one-of-a kind geological landmark, with other rocks in the nearby showing fossils dating back millions of years. The Wilayat of Duqm has taken this Rock as its landmark due to its tourism and geological importance, as well as its significance for fishermen who usually recognise their proximity to land when they see this Rock.

This Hamar Rock is regarded a destination for migratory birds of different kinds, most notably the Socotra cormorant. The number of birds that come to the Rock is about 70 species due to the rich biodiversity around the Rock.



# 3

## Resorts' Beach



Lined up along the resorts' beach is a group of hotels and tourist projects, some of which have been completed in past years, including Crowne Plaza Hotel and Park Inn Duqm Resort. Other projects that are still under construction include the Real Estate City and Little India Village with other projects currently in the design stage.

Visitors can spend the afternoon until sunset at the Park Inn Duqm Resort, where they can have tea or coffee while enjoying the cool breeze off the coast of Duqm. Visitors can also dine at the open-air Crowne Plaza Hotel, or have a barbecue evening with family or friends at the Duqm Beach Camp.







## Shu'ir Beach



Shu'ir Beach is located near Park Inn Duqm Resort Beach Camp. The beach is distinguished by its golden sand, where visitors can have a walk on the beach, while enjoy watching the flocks of birds.







## Duqm Beach Camp

The Special Economic Zone at Duqm (SEZAD), in cooperation with Oman Company for the Development of the Special Economic Zone at Duqm (Tatweer), has created a leisure and camping site on the coast of Duqm. The camp provides its visitors with an enjoyable atmosphere off the Arabian Sea, where they can enjoy seeing the blue sea, birds and passing ships, or playing football or volleyball on the beach, or having a barbecue in the designated spots.

The camp was built on an area stretching over 38 thousand square metres to accommodate various sports and recreational activities. It contains a number of facilities including barbecue area, football and volleyball field, children's playground, activities corner, in addition to car parks and toilets.

The camp also provides many other facilities for camping enthusiasts and motor homes owners (caravans) or those wish to set up their tents on the camp, which offers 8 parking lots for motor homes and 8 camping sites.





## Ras Madrasah



Ras Madrasah is a coastal village in the Wilayat of Duqm, located about 80 kilometres from the centre of Duqm. It stands as one of the important spots for fishing in Duqm, where hump-back whales and many types of birds can be seen.


Ras Madrasah is characterised by the dark coloured cliffs of ophiolite rocks overlooking a beautiful beach with its soft white sands. The area is known as one of the tourist sites, especially in the summer due to its moderate weather and wonderful location nearby the sea. This attracts many people to visit the area for camping.





## Bar Al Hakman

Photos by Ahmed Al Toqi



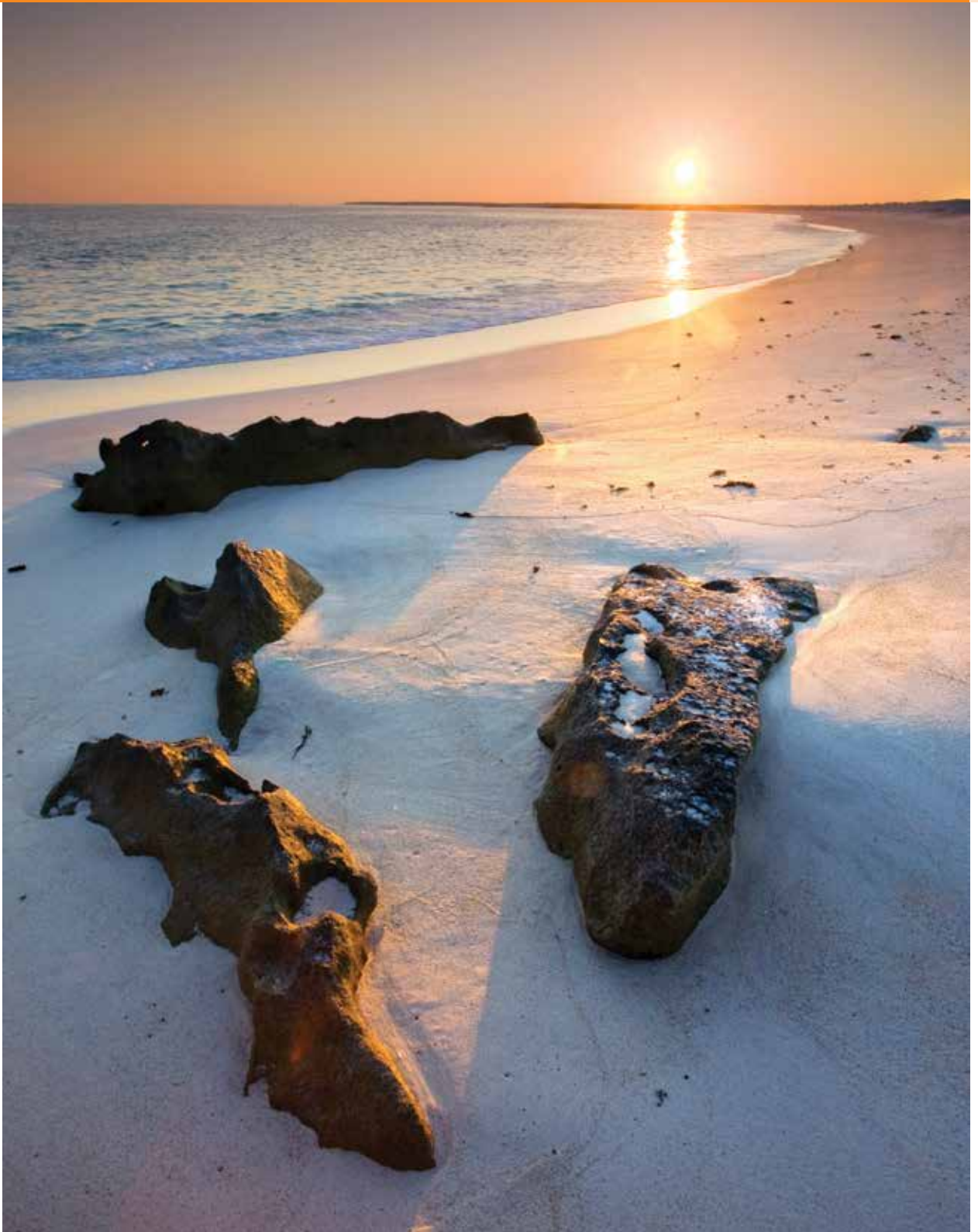
Bar Al Hakman Beach is considered one of the most prominent tourist locations in the Sultanate. Bar Al Hakman Peninsula occupies a large part of the wetland reserve area of 2,621 square kilometres.

The beach of Bar Al Hakman can be reached from the Wilayat of Duqm towards the Wilayat of Mahout (Falam District), and it takes around two hours drive (about 170 km from Duqm).

Bar Al Hakman Peninsula consists of coastal and inland plains of salt, huge areas of landfill and some salt-water lakes, which mark unique natural and geological significance. Bar Al Hakman overlooks the western coast of Masirah Island.

Bar Al Hakman includes a huge wetland of salt, silt and sand deposits collected by the floods, extending about 30 km in the Arabian Sea (southeast of Hajj in the Wilayat of Mahout). During the high tides in some areas, the seawater exceeds a few hundred metres, leaving shallow





lakes that may quickly evaporate in the summer. This evaporation leaves behind salt deposits that are suitable for commercial use and are usually collected for various uses.


A study conducted by researchers from the Royal Netherlands Institute for Sea Research and Sultan Qaboos University confirmed that the mud flats in Bar Al Hakman Reserve are home to nearly 30 species of crabs.

The Wetland Reserve (including Bar Al Hakman)


is a natural conservation area of national and regional importance for being a significant habitat for birds. It is classified among the top 25 sites for migratory birds in the Middle East during winter in the migration path to Asia and East Africa. The Reserve includes a number of islands and mangrove forests. One can enjoy the atmosphere by camping on the beaches during summer, while watching the flocks of birds at dawn and sunset.




## Al Wusta Wildlife Reserve



The Reserve was established in 1994 with the aim of resettling and preserving the Arabian Oryx. The Reserve is also concerned with preserving the biodiversity of other endangered creatures living in the desert, some of which are Reem Gazelle, Arabian Deer, Nubian ibex, Lynx, Wild Rabbit, Hedgehog and many other species. The Reserve enjoys a unique diversity of wildlife, including plants, insects, water and geological resources. Besides, the Reserve is home to many wild animals, in addition to other 39 species of wild plants and 50 different bird species.



The Reserve is located between the Wilayat of Haima, Duqm and Mahout in Al Wusta Governorate. It is about 140 km away from Duqm and could be reached within a 2-hour drive.





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## Tourism and planning the future

Despite the great impacts of the Coronavirus pandemic on tourism, aviation and hospitality sectors, which are what concerns us here, it can be said that this challenge represents a real opportunity for those sectors, far from any theories. The pandemic gave those in charge of managing these sectors another chance, which might not be available until years later to revisit the nature and structure of the sectors and how it prepares itself to meet future changes.

Coronavirus has led to a strong intensification of the current technology-led changes, so that the transportation will not remain as it used to be. Changes will also influence the types or mixes of fuel, the train cabins, the designs of the flight seats and the means of protecting passengers and crews, the departure and arrival procedures, and the services that are served in hotels, as all these things will undergo radical changes to satisfy and attract more customers.

In the details, I refer to some scenes to bring the picture closer to the minds. The people concerned about tourism worldwide are currently discussing how to meet the emerging demand for a "residence" of a different kind, which an American or European citizen; perhaps the Japanese and the South Korean people too may reconsider.

Else, probably they have actually started looking for other housing options in light of working from home, whose features have crystallised greatly these days. This creates great possibilities for many to seek accommodation units in hotels or resorts in distant countries, preferring them as a permanent residence, where he can work from.

As we can see, this is something different than what a foreign expert was doing when he comes on a mission for weeks or months and chose a housing unit in the capital to live in until he completes his mission. We can imagine what the customers of such "residences" will need when they stay for years in a hotel or any other place of residence in a country other than their own. The basic infrastructure and various services just to name a few, so that they can enjoy their lives.

Similarly, the means of booking an accommodation and trips and canceling them, contracting for additional services and connecting flights with other internal or external flights will all witness dramatic developments due to political, technological and geographical factors that are taking place.

As am highlighting all these aspects, I intend to direct the attention to the exciting transformation that took place in the Sultanate lately with the issue of the Royal Decree No. (105/2020) establishing the Public Authority for Special Economic Zones and Free Zones (OPAZ). The newly established government entity is a supervisory body for the Special Economic Zone at Duqm (SEZAD) and the other three well-established free zones

and any other new zones.

The new regulation opens up broad prospects for an integrated tourism development. The tourism component was and still very essential for Duqm, and of course it is of great importance for the free zones, their investors and foreign workers, and for the whole country. Tourism is an activity that might witness a dramatic growth in the era of artificial intelligence, work from home and emergence of robots, with the predictability to reduce working hours in response to these changes in all activities.

Accordingly, leisure time will increase and the appetite for exploration and cultural exchanges will increase among millions of people every year. In view of that, Duqm has a big opportunity, and it has prepared and is still preparing its tourism infrastructure to grab a decent bite from the new tourist cake, in addition to the traditional tourism. This depends on what the Sultanate has and what Duqm enjoys of unique advantages, beauty and harmony with the requirements of a clean environment.


The necessity to accord significance on tourism not only stems from the need to diversify national income, which is important too even in non-oil countries, but also comes from the perspective that the success of tourism is key for the progress and development of a country, its attractiveness and influence in the regional front and worldwide.

Therefore, tourism will be the biggest driver of what a late Egyptian intellectual called the "Cross-pollination of cultures" between nations and peoples. Digitisation in other words and its consequences, such as reducing human work, working remotely, and living in the virtual world for a long time, are matched with certainty and necessity an increase in the need for a real human meeting, regardless of their interests and backgrounds. Thus, the most important way to achieve this is transportation and tourism.


In conclusion, I would like to shed light to the establishment of the Royal Opera House, which was not established out of a personal interest of the late His Majesty Sultan Qaboos to support the presence of fine arts in the Sultanate as we have seen it. However, it was a visionary aspiration to the future, in which the Opera House will be like a new or an alternative cinema because going to the cinema is about to be an old fashion practice as show will be performed on stage.

However, the Royal Opera House will not accept having just shows on stage. Attending its concerts is a complete human, cultural and emotional experience starting from design of the building itself, to the seats, the wood, the curtains, the banners, the lighting, the traditions to other aspects. That is why the establishing opera houses becomes a competition.

Tourism with its new look marks the gold of the next era, which will not go off as long as the innovations in providing services and developing new ones is going on.

Yahya Al Zadjali for 

# SEZAD's objectives are in line with Oman Vision 2040


 Duqm - 

Eng. Yahya bin Khamis Al Zadjali, In-Charge of Managing Operations of the Special Economic Zone at Duqm (SEZAD), declared that the Zone is working on implementing a number of development plans for the Zone and striving to attract more investments.

In an exclusive interview with Duqm Economist, Al Zadjali said: "We have many plans, some of which we have already started implementing in Q3 of 2020. These plans include changing the lifestyle in Duqm, finding tourist sites and entertainment activities for recreation to keep pace with the increasing population in Duqm, as well as establishing a residential city that could accommodate around 67,000 people by 2025".

"We are also executing a marketing plan to encourage people to visit the Zone and enjoy its pleasant weather and its various tourist landmarks. Likewise, we work on attracting more investments to Duqm, including investment in the field of clean energy. In this regard, studies have indicated that Duqm is a good place for clean energy investments. Thus, this is what we will work on in coordination and cooperation with the Public Authority for Special Economic Zones and Free Zones (OPAZ)", Al Zadjali added.



  
*Changing the lifestyle in Duqm, finding tourist sites and entertainment activities for recreation*



Duqm Refinery, a key engine for heavy industries in SEZAD

Jan 2021 





### Oman Vision 2040

Al Zadjali stressed that the Special Economic Zone at Duqm marks one of the strategic projects that the government has paid great attention to in all economic and planning aspects related to infrastructure facilities, given its great economic return to the Sultanate. He also affirmed that the objectives of SEZAD are in line with Oman Vision 2040, which is based on key pillars that are society, economy, development, environment, and governance.

### Completing infrastructure facilities

Eng. Yahya Al Zadjali praised the efforts made by the government to complete the infrastructure facilities in the Zone and government investments in a number of projects, especially in the heavy industries and petrochemical sector. He also confirmed the readiness of the investment environment in the Zone to attract investors to Duqm, standing as a global gateway for diversified investments.

In view of that, he highlighted the specious area of the Zone, covering 2000 square kilometres, which have been prepared to accommodate various projects in all economic sectors, whether industrial, tourism, commercial, logistics or others.

"SEZAD has all the success factors to attract investments as it includes many key essential facilities such as Duqm Airport, Port of Duqm, Dry Dock, multi-purpose Fishing Port,

Duqm Refinery, a diverse network of single and dual roads, and many other amenities" Al Zadjali commented.

### Integration between economic zones and free zones

Commending the issuance of the Royal Decree No.(105/2020), establishing the Public Authority for Special Economic Zones and Free Zones (OPAZ), Eng. Al Zadjali pointed out: "The establishment of OPAZ to oversee the special economic zones and free zones has given a significant attention to the zones. Since establishment, OPAZ has focused on developing special strategies for these zones and preparing incentives, laws, regulations and legislation that will contribute to attracting more local and international investments".

"While the Special Economic Zone at Duqm (SEZAD) and the free zones carry out its operations, OPAZ supervises those actions in terms of legislative, promotional and policies, stressing that the Royal Decree stems from a strategic thinking to achieve integration between special economic zones and free zones in the Sultanate and signify its value" Al Zadjali added.

### Port of Duqm

Eng. Yahya Al Zadjali touched on the Port of Duqm, highlighting its economic importance. "The Port of Duqm is the main engine of the

*Executing a marketing plan to encourage people to visit the Zone and enjoy its pleasant weather and various tourist landmarks*

*Working to attract more investments including clean energy*

*Duqm Airport, Port of Duqm, Drydock, multi-purpose Fishing Port, Duqm Refinery are success factors for Duqm to attract investments*





Security gates at Port of Duqm facilitate the flow of import and export traffic through the Port

**Establishing OPAZ to oversee special economic zones and free zones signifies its value and achieves integration**

**Building commercial berths prepares Port of Duqm for oil export, container handling, mining and quarrying activities**

**Multipurpose fishing port has great potentials for developing the associated fisheries and food industries**

Special Economic Zone at Duqm. Being full-fledged with all infrastructure facilities, commercial berths have been established, along the main breakwater, specialised in commercial activities related to container handling, transporting trucks, cars and equipment. The Port includes a 300-metre berth that has been designated to provide services to friendly countries and military ships. Besides, there is another 300-metre long berth dedicated for materials related to mining and quarrying, while the oil berth, adjacent to the secondary breakwater, comes as one of the largest berths in the Middle East in terms of its capabilities. The berth is stretching over to 4.6 km long. The Duqm Refinery is the first to benefit from the oil berth by which the refinery products will be exported", Al Zadjali explained.

Moreover, he noted that the Port of Duqm also includes a government berth of about 1,000 metres long and 200 metres wide. The berth has been designated for government purposes related to several security bodies. There are also other lands reserved for future tourism activities, and next to the government berth is the drydock project, which started operation in 2011. Stressing on the Port's significance, Al Zadjali remarked, "The Port of Duqm is a strategic port in terms of its location, efficiency, planning and distribution of its activities".

#### **Multipurpose fishing port**

Al Zadjali admired the consortium, which consists of local and international companies to develop, manage and operate the multi-

purpose fishing port and related projects in SEZAD. He stated that "The agreement was signed after a long process of conducting research and technical studies regarding the selection of the technically and financially qualified company to manage and operate this port. The Fishing Port is 10 metres deep and stands as the largest port of its kind in the Sultanate, having great potentials for developing the associated fisheries and food industries".

Expressing his confidence, Al Zadjali highly believes in the capability of the consortium, led by Fisheries Development Oman (FDO), one of the state-owned groups supervised by Oman Investment Authority, to succeed in managing, developing and operating the Port.

#### **Economic return for the Zone**

Eng. Yahya Al Zadjali, In-Charge of Managing Operations of the Special Economic Zone at Duqm, commented that the Port will bring economic return to SEZAD, which in turn will be reflected in the national economy. It will also contribute to rapidly increase the incomes of the economy in the Zone. "The consortium will pay usufruct fees with an annual value of OMR 630,000 for using 550,000 sqm of lands (Port's superstructure). The agreement specified that there will be an economic return for the Zone, which represents 15% of the net profit of investment operations in the Port. As well, there are also other gains for the project including in country value, promoting SMEs and providing services to fishermen" Al Zadjali explained.



One of the real estate investment projects in Duqm



## Construction of a 6 km-long camel race track

# Capital shares of new projects in Duqm to be allocated for local community companies



During the meeting

### Duqm - :

Oman Company for Development of Special Economic Zone at Duqm "Tatweer" and Iskan Oman Investment Company SAOC announced their plan to allocate capital shares of their new projects in Duqm for the local community companies.

This was during the coordinating meeting held at the headquarter of the Special Economic Zone at Duqm chaired by Eng. Yahya bin Khamis Al Zadjali, In-Charge of Managing Operations of the Special Economic Zone at Duqm (SEZAD), with a number of local companies and representatives of Tatweer and Iskan companies.

During the meeting, several projects were discussed some of which is the accommodation project for employees who are working in the Special Economic Zone at Duqm (SEZAD). Accordingly, about 20% of the big projects' capital, which are pro-


viding housing solutions in Duqm, will be allocated for the local community companies.


This comes to promote the provision of long-term usufruct for 90 years as a gesture introduced by the Public Authority for Special Economic Zones and Free Zones to encourage Omani youth to work and live in Duqm.

### Camel race track

At the same level and as part of the initiatives carried out by the management of the Special Economic Zone At Duqm with the assistance of the Public Authority for Special Economic Zones and Free Zones, the groundwork began for the establishment of a camel race track in the Wilayat of Duqm which will be 6 Km long, over an area of 4.8 million m<sup>2</sup>.

The location was designated by the Ministry of Housing and Urban Planning at the behest of the local community and other stakeholders interested in camel racing in the Wilayat.

  
**Several steps to encourage Omani youth to work and live in Duqm**

  
**Introducing long-term usufruct for 90 years**



Part of the race track before completion

## Assarain starts operations of first factory in Duqm



**Khalid Al Wahaibi:**

**We strive to keep pace with the urban development in Duqm and to provide the requirements for infrastructure projects**

**The factory's products are very well received**

### Duqm - :

Assarain Group of Companies started, in Q3 of 2020, production from its new factory located in the Special Economic Zone at Duqm (SEZAD), which is managed by Assarain Concrete Products – Duqm.

Khalid bin Said Al Wahaibi, Managing Director at Assarain Group of Companies, commended the success achieved by the Group in Duqm since 2012 as it started supplying products to roads and infrastructure projects as well as to other corporates in the Special Economic Zone at Duqm.

During his interview with Duqm Economist Magazine, Al Wahaibi said: "The interest which our products received in Duqm urged the Group to establish Assarain Concrete Products

– Duqm to keep pace with the urban development in Duqm, increasing number of projects and to provide the requirements for infrastructure projects faster than usual".

Business of Assarain Group of Companies focuses mainly on the field of manufacturing concrete products. Thus, the Group has established factories in Muscat, Sohar and Dubai in addition to the one in Duqm, which is stretching over 60,000 thousand square metres in the industrial zone that is managed by Duqm Industrial Land Company, a subsidiary of Duqm Port.

### Integrated factory

Khalid bin Said Al Wahaibi pointed out: "Assarain Group of Companies realised that the Special Economic Zone at Duqm is growing at a very rapid pace. This was the motive for the Group to start its investment in the Zone by







**Building an integrated factory over 60,000 sqm**

establishing a large, integrated and technically advanced factory to mark a new addition there. The factory brings products of high quality and specifications including interlocking tiles, concrete blocks, retaining wall blocks, and cable tiles. These products are very well received by locals of Al Wusta Governorate, government bodies, contracting companies and investors too".

"Likewise, it also provides many smart building solutions and we are always striving to bring the best and sustain excellence in construction", Al Wahaibi added.

#### Various products

Al Wahaibi commended the capabilities of Assarain Concrete Products – Duqm and its ability to meet the increasing demand for concrete products in Duqm. "The company has a great capacity to produce about 5 million bricks and 1 million square metres of interlocking tiles (interlocks) annually. All are produced by a factory with multipurpose German technology. The products are distinguished by its high quality, innovation and designs with varied and harmonious colours as well as produced with highest industry standards".

**Producing 5 million bricks and 1 million square metres of interlocks annually**



# Implementing a unified system for one-stop shops in all special economic zones and free zones



Officials from OPAZ and Salalah Free Zone discussing the services that can be provided through the one-stop shop

**Saleh Al Hasani:**  
The unified system aims to turn the zones into leading investment destinations at the local and global levels

Activating labour and visa related permits and the competences of "Invest Easy"

## Muscat -

The Public Authority for Special Economic Zones and Free Zones (OPAZ) has completed the first phase of implementing the unified system of the One-stop shop (OSS) that includes the Special Economic Zone at Duqm and the free zones of Sohar, Salalah and Al Mazunah.

This step reflects the efforts of OPAZ in accelerating the completion of commercial registration works and permits required by investment projects and companies operating in these zones, reflecting on the Royal Decree No (105/2020), which stipulated the implementation of the one stop shop system in special economic zones and free zones, and granted

OPAZ the competences of issuing all types of licenses, approvals and certificates involving activities of special economic zones and free zone.

### Enhancing the performance of the zones

In this regard, Saleh bin Humood Al Hasani said the establishment of the integrated one-stop shop (OSS) aimed at enhancing the performance of the special economic zones and free zones in localising national investments, attracting foreign investment and turning the zones into leading investment destinations at the local and global levels.

Al Hasani pointed out that OPAZ is building upon the experience of the Special Economic Zones at Duqm which offers integrated services through an electronic system that com-



Saleh Al Hasani presents Duqm experience at Al Mazunah Free Zone





During the training programme organised for the one-stop shop employees at Sohar Free Zone

prises all of the services required by investors starting from submitting land usufruct application, company registration and up to signing the usufruct agreement. He explained further that the services offered by SEZAD, which has currently been applied in the free zones, include a group of services provided during the implementation phase of the projects and other services provided after commencing the commercial operations of the project.

#### Applying the system in the Zones

The Free Zone of Salalah, Sohar and Al Mazunah started the implementation of the one-stop shop in the fourth quarter of 2020. Al Hasani pointed out that the first phases included providing employees with training, particularly the one-stop shop front-line employees, activating some competences of "Invest Easy" as well as labour and visas related permits for investors and companies which has yielded positive results for both investors and employees.

#### The Second phase

He pointed out that the second phase which

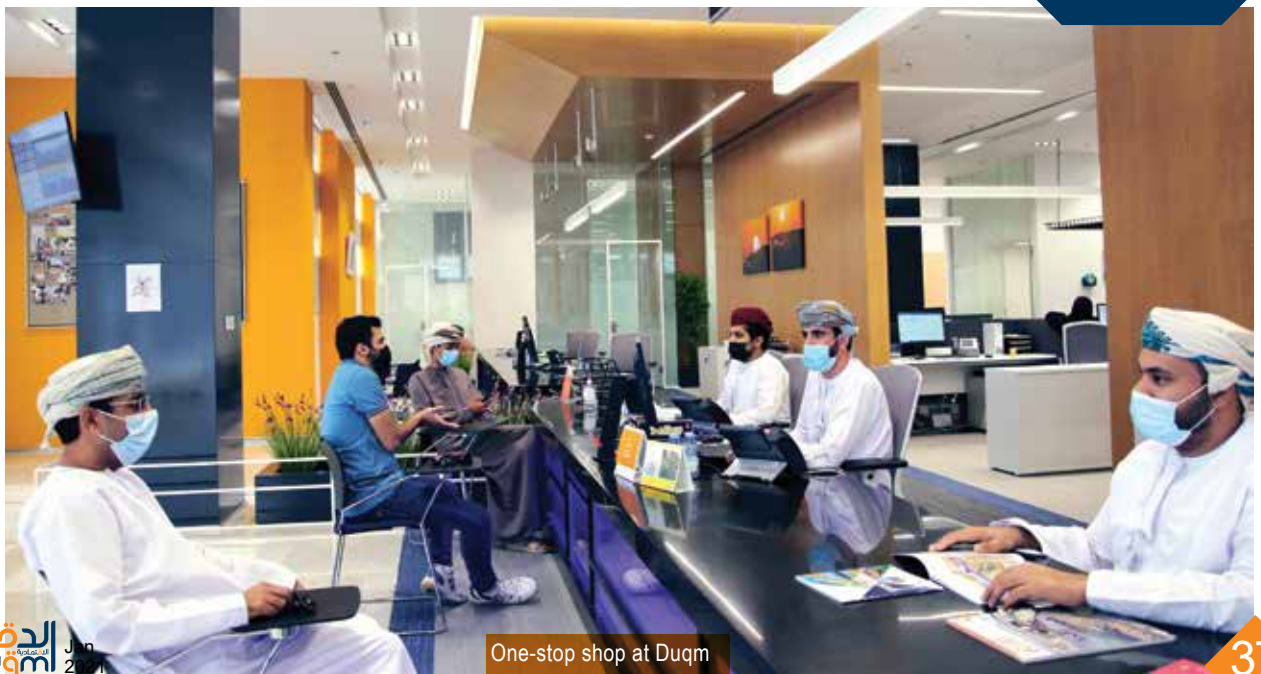
will be implemented in the coming period includes electronic connectivity, providing the services through the electronic platform, and activating payment and collection, in addition to monitoring the progress of services delivery in accordance with the regulations adapted by OPAZ, taking international standards into consideration.

#### Preliminary Visits

His Excellency Eng. Ahmed bin Hassan Al Deeb, Deputy Chairman of the Public Authority for Special Economic Zones and Free Zones had paid a visit to the free zones of Salalah, Al Mazunah and Sohar to discuss work integration procedures and the unification of the one-stop shops services in the zones. During this visit, His Excellency listened to some proposals from the officials in the Zones. In this regard, Saleh bin Hamood Al Hasani, presented Duqm One-stop shop experience and Ahmed bin Saleh Al Farsi demonstrated the electronic systems that will be applied in the services of one-stop shop and their role in accelerating work and completing the services offered to investors.

*The second phase includes electronic connectivity, providing services over the electronic platform and activating payment and collection*

*OPAZ follow up services delivery in the zones in accordance with the adapted regulations*



One-stop shop at Duqm

# Phase 2 of infrastructure development at Al Mazunah Free Zone records 90% completion



Commendable commercial activities are taking place in Al Mazunah Free Zone

**Launching services and facilities building and commencing new expansion in the Zone**

## Al Mazunah - المزنه :

Al Mazunah Free Zone has completed 90% of the infrastructure development project (phase 2), which will enable the zone to attract and accommodate more companies.

Al Mazunah Free Zone, being operated by the Public Establishment for Industrial Estates (Madayn), was established in November 24, 1999 as the first of its kind free zone in the Sultanate. Stretching over an area of 14.5 square kilometres, the Zone is located close to the Omani-Yemeni borders. The strategic location of the zone makes it the Gulf gateway for transit trading to the Republic of Yemen and the countries of East Africa.

### Launching facilities building project

During the year 2020, the Management of Al Mazunah Free Zone launched the services and facilities building project, which costs over OMR 3 million. The building includes offices, shops and showrooms, and it is expected to be completed by mid-2022.

### New expansion

The year also witnessed commencing the design phase of the expansion project (phase 4), stretching over an area of 3 million square metres. In addition, the tender

for the security system project in the Zone was awarded, including construction of a security fence with special specifications and standards, provision of advanced surveillance cameras and the establishment of control and monitoring rooms. As well, during 2020, an agreement was signed with the City Logistics Company to operate and manage the customs yard in the Zone, which includes activities for handling operations.

### Growth indicators

Al Mazunah Free Zone marked a remarkable growth during 2020. The total value of goods received in the Zone during first half of 2020 was about OMR 334.4 million, compared to OMR 143.4 million in the same period in 2019. Likewise, the volume of goods, which got into the Zone increased from 129,000 tonnes to more than 210,000 tonnes, while the number of vehicles entering has doubled to 19,384 vehicles, compared to 945 vehicles during the same period in 2019.

This growth is a reflection of the facilities and advantages provided by "Madayn" in Al Mazunah Free Zone. Another reason is attributed to the well-prepared infrastructure in the Zone. Moreover, the recently signed agreements contributed to encouraging business growth in the Zone and the increase in number of dealers with Al Mazunah Free Zone.

**Receiving goods with value of OMR 334.4 during the first half of 2020**



One of the factories in Al Mazunah Free Zone





## Following its success in attracting 44 industrial projects SOHAR Freezone launches Phase 2 of expansion

**Sohar -  :**

SOHAR Freezone has attracted a total of 44 industrial projects, encompassing various sectors by the end of the last year. In line with the growing demand for investment, the zone launched Phase 2 of the expansion, which include an additional 5 million square metres of land ready for lease.

The first phase has been developed, with over 63% of the 5 million square metres leased out and home to warehouses, office spaces, industrial and logistics service providers, as well as cold-storage solutions to serve food exporters and importers.

SOHAR Freezone stated that for the upcoming years, the primary focus will be on onboarding companies within the plastic and food industries, as well as those involved in mining, iron and steel, vehicle spare parts and renewable energy projects and activities. Attracting these projects to the Freezone is of vital importance for the local business community. This is because their presence will offer several opportunities for various companies, including those related to the financing, construction and operation sectors, as well as many others conducting their activities within the Sul-

tanate. This, in turn, will enhance the local environment and create added value for the economy.

Through the implementation of the Secured Bonded Corridors facilities in 2020, clients in SOHAR Freezone can clear customs and transport containers to the Port (and vice versa) within a short timeframe. This enhances the operational efficiency of logistics companies in the Freezone, especially those that transport perishable goods.

### Enhancing integration between free zones

With the establishment of the Public Authority for Special Economic Zones and Free Zones and its tireless efforts to facilitate the procedures to serve new investors through the one-stop shop, integration is expected to strengthen between free zones in the Sultanate to achieve higher rates of growth in the upcoming years.

SOHAR Port and Freezone aims to position itself as an integrated logistics hub that offers the latest global technologies, while maintaining the highest standards of sustainability for all its activities. This makes it aligned with Oman's Vision 2040 and the Oman Logistics Strategy 2040 (SOLS 2040), which is supervised and implemented by ASYAD Group, Oman's integrated logistics provider.

**Focus will be on renewable energy projects, plastic, food and mining industries in the upcoming phase**

**The implementation of the Secured Bonded Corridors facilities enhances the operational efficiency of logistics companies in the Freezone**



# Built over 7200sqm of land Beladi Development is gearing up to launch first project in Duqm



## Duqm - :

Beladi Development Company is getting ready to launch its first project, the Business Centre, in the Special Economic Zone at Duqm (SEZAD). The Centre has been built in an area stretching over 7200 sqm and is located next to SEZAD's headquarter on Sultan Qaboos Road.

Eng. Omar Abdullah Al Totonji, CEO of Beladi Development Company, said that setting up this project in Duqm reflects the confidence of the Company's Board of Directors in the promising future of the Zone, which is distinguished by its location on the Arabian Sea and near the international shipping routes.

As well, the excellent infrastructure and legislations qualify the Zone to attract various investments, which are expected to positively reflect on different sectors. In particular, Beladi Development Company focused on the commercial sector.

### A global investment destination

In an interview with Duqm Economist, Eng. Omar Al Totonji stressed on the economic importance of Duqm, and said: "The Zone has witnessed major changes over the past years as this qualifies it to be a global investment destination. Through the different investment zones, SEZAD will be able to accommodate several economic activities such as industries of various types, tourism and commercial activities as well as logistics services. The Compa-

**Omar Al Totonji:**

***Duqm stands as a global investment destination and we urge corporates to invest in it***

ny's investment in the real estate - commercial sector comes in line with the Zone's objectives to be a suitable location to live and work in".

### Various services

Commenting on the official opening of the Centre, the CEO of Beladi Development Company, said: "Our target is to open during the first half of this year, and since the last months of 2020, we have started marketing the Centre to attract a selected group of corporates. We have been targeting these corporates that are willing to display their trademarks in a commercial complex characterised by a number of services that meet the aspirations of its customers".

### Attracting renowned brands

Al Totonji explained that Beladi Business

**Strived to  
meet the  
aspirations  
of Duqm  
community,  
investors and  
residents**





Beladi Business Centre overlooking Sultan Qaboos Road and adjacent to SEZAD building

Centre consists of two adjacent parts: Building (A), which is designed to be a commercial complex, and Building (B), which is built to be a complex for offices. "The company was keen that the commercial complex, which is the first of its kind in the Zone, meets the aspirations of Duqm community, investors and residents too. The marketing plan of the Centre focuses on keeping the centre in line with the expectations of Duqm community. It is formed to meet their commercial anticipations related to attracting local and international brands in different sectors. In the business wise, it serves to provide space and services for banks, large companies and small and medium enterprises once they decide to use the complex as a location, where they can offer their services to the public.

#### Restaurants and exhibition spaces

In his interview, the CEO highlighted the features and facilities of the commercial complex (Building A), stating: "This building has been constructed to include a group of restaurants, cafes, a dining hall that can accommodate around 350 people, and an open hall covering 180 sqm to host promotional exhibitions. It also brings an open space that can be converted into a restaurant or used as an office. In addition, there is an open-air seating area connected to a cafe on the

ground floor and many other facilities.

As for the offices complex, which is built over an area of 3450 sqm, it consists of a ground floor and another five floors. It also contains an open space on the ground floor that can be used as a bank or a showroom. The other floors are designed to meet the requirements of large companies in terms of requiring open spaces. Moreover, it has been taken into account the needs of SMES, willing to have offices in the building. Some floors have been prepared to be well-equipped business centres with all relevant services.

#### Confidence in the future of Duqm

On a concluding note, Eng. Omar Al Totonji expressed his delight on the project for reaching its final stages after a difficult year, due to lockdown as an impact of COVID-19 pandemic. This affected factories, traders and suppliers worldwide. "Despite the challenges that the global economy faced during the past year, we start this year 2021 with greater confidence that the global economy will overcome these challenges and recover again", stated Al Totonji. Confirming his confidence in Duqm and its promising future, he stressed: "Duqm is set to be a global investment destination and we urge companies to invest in Duqm".

**Company's investment in the commercial sector is in line with the objectives of SEZAD to be a suitable place to live and work in**

**The marketing plan focuses on attracting local and international brands**



Illustration image of the restaurants court in the Centre

# In preparation for commencing full commercial operations of the Port

A number of buildings in the custom station

## Handing over main buildings in the Custom Station and the One- Stop Shop services to Port of Duqm

**Yahya Al Zadjali: The Infrastructure facilities of the custom station have been designed according to the latest international specifications**

**The custom station is compatible with "Bayan" custom system, and provides several services for exporters and importers through the Port**

### Duqm - :

The Special Economic Zone at Duqm (SEZAD) handed over the main buildings in the custom station and the one- stop shop building in the Port of Duqm to the parties concerned with the commercial operations of the Port after completing their construction as part of the Port's infrastructure phases.

This step comes as part of the commitment of SEZAD to complete all infrastructure facilities according to the master plan of the Port in preparation for commencing

the full commercial operation and to enable the competent parties provide their services to importers and exporters through the Port in consistency with (Bayan) custom system.

The custom station comprises a group of buildings of the Port of Duqm Company (PDC) including, vehicle registration building, one- stop shop building, fisheries and water resources building, and a clinic of the Ministry of Health.

These buildings provide many services to importers and exporters through the Port of Duqm, most notably custom inspection operations on goods imported and export-



Clinic at the Port of Duqm





Chairman of the Public Authority for Special Economic Zones and Free Zones (OPAZ) on a visit to custom station buildings

ed through in the same location and re-lease agriculture and fisheries cargos.

#### The latest International specifications

Eng. Yahya bin Khamis Al Zadjali, In-Charge of Managing Operations of the Special Economic Zone at Duqm, confirmed that all infrastructure facilities of the customs station have been designed according to the latest international specifications of ports, taking into account the future expansion of import and export activities at the Port of Duqm, as well as the compatibility of those facilities to the customs clearance system (Bayan) to facilitate the process of customs inspection for importers and exporters across the commercial berth in the Port of Duqm.

D. Ibrahim bin Hilal Al Mahrouqi, Acting General Manager of Health Services in Al Wusta Governorate, said: The clinic will provide all health and medical services to all arrivals through the Port, and emergency services for the local people if necessary.

The clinic includes several specialised clinics, an emergency unit, inpatient care unit with 15 beds capacity, a pharmacy, laboratories, treatment rooms, prelim exam units, waiting rooms and other meet-



**D. Ibrahim Al Muharoqi: The Clinic is set to provide distinctive medical & health services for passengers arriving through the Port**

ing rooms, in addition to other services facilities. The clinic was constructed over an area of 2100 square metres.

The agricultural and fisheries building consists of several equipment for inspecting agricultural and fisheries products and to carry out veterinary quarantine work.

Conducting custom inspection operations on imported and exported goods in the same location



Officials from the Ministry of Health (MOH) and the Special Economic Zone at Duqm (SEZAD) during the handover of the clinic.

## Salalah Free Zone:

# Attracting new investments in the flourmills and animal feed sectors

**Mazaya Logistics Station records 57% completion rate**

**Intensifying meetings with investors and first forum for Omani businesspersons promotes investment opportunities in the Zone**



Signing the agreement of flourmills project

### Salalah - :

During the year 2020, Salalah Free Zone (SFZ) attracted a number of investments, the most prominent of which is a project in the flourmills sector and animal feed and fish factories. Last November, the Zone signed a usufruct agreement to establish the project on a land of 51,000 thousand sqm.

The investments of this project are projected at US\$48 million for the first phase. The production capacity of the project in advanced stages will reach 700 tonnes per day. It is ex-

pected that the project's construction works will start at the end of this year.

The flourmills project comes at a time when Salalah Free Zone has intensified its meetings with investors, aiming to encourage them to invest in the Zone and promoting the investment opportunities available.

The last quarter of last year witnessed the organisation of the first forum for Omani businesspersons. During the forum, a number of projects were promoted, including Mazaya Logistics Station, in which the completion rate reached 57% by the end of last year and is expected to be ready in Q1 of this year.



Headquarter of Salalah Free Zone





Providing an attractive environment for investments marks one of the most significant gains of the electricity grid connection project

# Connecting Duqm to the main high-voltage electricity grid

Duqm -  :

The Special Economic Zone at Duqm (SEZAD) hosted the coordination meeting, with Oman Electricity Transmission Company and Tanweer Company, which was aimed to facilitate the procedures of connecting the Zone to the Sultanate's main high-voltage grid with 400 kV.

Eng. Said Bani Oraba from the Department of Electricity and Water Regulation in the Special Economic Zone at Duqm said that the project comes with the aim of strengthening the infrastructure in the energy sector to provide safe, stable and reliable electricity to the Zone.

In an interview with Duqm Economist Magazine, he stated: "The planned electricity connection includes connecting Oman Electricity Transmission Company in the north of the Sultanate to the PDO electricity network, Tanweer network in Al Wusta Governorate and the electricity network in the Special Economic Zone at Duqm. This project will double the efficiency and integration of the electricity grid in the Sultanate and will play a key role in enhancing the reliability and safety of electricity in the Zone. It will also contribute to attracting the investments of high electricity consumption to the Zone. This project is managed by Oman Electricity Transmission Company and is expected to be completed in 2023".

## Increasing power capacity

On the importance of this project to the Special Economic Zone at Duqm (SEZAD), Eng. Said Bani Oraba noted that the project will supply electrical capacity of no less than 500 megawatts in 2023 compared to 75 megawatts now. As well, it marks a major infrastructure to increase the electrical capacity to about 2000 megawatts whenever required.

**Said Bani Oraba:**  
*The project will supply electrical capacity of no less than 500 megawatts in 2023*



This will lead to attracting investments and investors and encouraging local and international capital for having a strong economic base in SEZAD.

## Supporting renewable energy

In his interview, Eng. Said stressed on the importance of this project in the field of exploiting the unused renewable energy available in the different spacious areas in the middle of Oman and the areas designated for renewable energy in SEZAD. In addition, the project will contribute to the possibility of transferring the produced energy from the renewable energy stations to the areas where consumers are, whether within or outside SEZAD. Accordingly, this will contribute to achieving the government's aspirations through Oman Vision 2040, which aims to produce energy with 20% from renewable sources by 2030.

"Upon completion, the project will enable the Special Economic Zone at Duqm (SEZAD) to dispense with the existing diesel power plant. This will have a great impact on reducing the cost of electricity in the Zone and will also contribute to reducing the environmental impact of the diesel power plant", Eng. Said Bani Oraba explained.

**Facilitating the transfer of produced energy from the renewable energy stations to the areas where consumers are**

**Enhancing reliability of power energy in Duqm and attracting investments are expected benefits for the project**



During the meeting



With community assistance and the support of the public and private sectors

# Duqm launches a new project to increase the green area in the Zone



Planting trees in front of SEZAD building

## Duqm -

The management of the Special Economic Zone at Duqm (SEZAD) launched an afforestation event to be implemented on phases with the aim of expanding the green area in the Zone. The event involved planting some types of trees that studies have proven to be suitable for the climate of Duqm. The event was carried out in four locations, under the auspices of His Excellency Eng. Ahmed bin Hassan Al Dheeb, Deputy Chairman of the Public Authority for Special Economic Zones and Free Zones (OPAZ), with the attendance of His Excellency Dr. Abdullah bin Ali Al Amri, Chairman of Environment Authority, Deputy Wali of Duqm, representative of Duqm in the Shure Council, and representative of Duqm in the Municipal Council, with the contribution of



*Choosing four locations to plant some types of trees, that studies have proven to be suitable for the climate at Duqm*



Alongside Say road





a number of Government parties and companies operating at the Special Economic Zone at Duqm and the assistance of the local people of Duqm.

Eng. Yahya bin Khamis Al Zadjali, In-Charge of Managing Operations of the Special Economic Zone at Duqm, gave a welcome speech and expressed his thanks to all of the participants for the efforts made in this aspect, appreciating the interest of the companies operating in the Zone in afforestation and horticulture in their work locations and their activities in the Zone.

#### 4 Locations

Participants were divided into four teams, the first team planted seedlings in front of SEZAD building, the second team planted seedlings beside the street that leads to the

city center, the third is in front of the Renaissance Village, and the fourth planted seedlings in front of Duqm frontier Town.

The afforestation event involved planting different types of trees such as Ghaf trees, Sider, Poinciana, Tamarind Vicks Ntida, Bottle Brush, Casuarina and other trees characterised by their tolerance to temperatures, drought and salinity.

It is worth noting that SEZAD management is working in cooperation with government and private sector parties to increase the green space in the Zone. Over the past years, it has carried out a number of projects to expand the green cover in the Zone, as a contribution for improving the environment and climate at Duqm, and adding an aesthetic character to the city general view and a breather for the city residents.



*Expanding the green space in the zone and contributing to the improvement of the environment and climate*





First project in China-Oman Industrial Park at Duqm

# Duqm Hongtong Piping Factory to start production by Q2 of 2021



Duqm Hongtong Piping Factory

**Duqm is a promising investment destination attracting Chinese companies**

**Interviewed by Abdulaziz Al Jahdhami:**

The construction works of Duqm Hongtong Piping factory for manufacturing Reinforced Thermopolyethylene Pipes (RTP) in the Special Economic Zone at Duqm (SEZAD) is approaching full completion. With around 95 per cent of construction is already complete, the factory is expected to start operations by Q2 of 2021. Upon completion, the factory will be the first project coming up in the China-Oman Industrial Park at Duqm.

To shed light more on this project, being Oman's first of its kind factory, Duqm Economist Magazine met with Dr. Shao Longnan, General Manager of Duqm Hongtong Piping and Dawood bin Sulaiman Al Farsi, Director of Technical Affairs, Technology Research and Marketing at Duqm Hongtong Piping Company. Both expressed delight for the factory is almost completed and production will start in the coming few months.

## **Exemplary investment in Duqm**

Commenting on this investment, Dr. Shao Longnan, General Manager of Duqm Hong-



**Dr. Shao Longnan:**  
*The project is an Omani-Chinese partnership reflecting the bilateral relations between both countries*

tong Piping, said: "The project comes as an outstanding Omani-Chinese partnership reflecting the bilateral relations between both countries. Through this partnership, we came up with Duqm Hongtong Piping Factory specialised in manufacturing the non-metallic pipes, which are made of Reinforced Thermopolyethylene. The project marks the



Equipment delivered to the factory





**Dawood Al Farsi:**  
*The factory is designed to produce annually up to 1200 km of pipes and capable to double production*

first project in the China-Oman Industrial Park in Duqm with a total investment value of \$ 6 million for the first phase".

"We have decided to invest in Duqm, as a promising investment destination in Oman, to serve the special economic zone and the oil and gas companies in the nearby concession areas. Another good reason to bring our investment in Oman is the strategic geographical location of Duqm, proximity to the GCC and African markets," commented Dr. Shao.

"The promising future of SEZAD and its potential status regionally and internationally play a key role to attract more businesses and projects particularly the ones from China. We have observed a strong interest of Chinese corporates to bring their investments to the Sultanate. This reflects the significance and uniqueness of the Zone and what it offers to investors" he remarked.

#### **Production to start in Q2 of 2021**

Dawood bin Sulaiman Al Farsi, Director of Technical Affairs, Technology Research and Marketing at Duqm Hongtong Piping, expressed satisfaction of the progress achieved in developing the project so far. "Construction of the factory, over an area of 60,000 thousand sqm, started in November 2019, but had a slight delay due to the recent worldwide circumstances of Coronavirus pandemic, which is affecting everyone else. However, we are pushing to complete the construction and start our operations by the second quarter of this year", he explained.

"The factory is designed to be capable to produce annually up to 1200 km of Reinforced Thermopolyethylene Pipes (RTP). However, its capability is to operate three times more than initial start based on market's demand. The main products will be the pipes with 4" & 6" diameters of size, while planning to produce new products for oil and gas industry," Al Farsi added.

Bringing up this type of pipes to the market came in response to the increasing local and international demand for such kind of unique products. However, at the initial stage, the factory's products will serve the local market, while afterward will be promoted and supplied to other regional and international markets whenever required.

#### **Thriving oil and gas industry in Oman**

Introducing the distinctive products of the factory to the local market is aimed at sharing expertise and contributing to the development of oil and gas sector in the Sultanate. In view of this, Dr. Shao Longnan, General Manager of Duqm Hongtong Piping, pointed out: "Since the planning stage, we have been exchanging knowledge and expertise with a number of local corporates including the Ministry of Energy and Minerals, represented by the In Country Value support team for their endorsement to this project and Petroleum Development Oman, represented by the assets integrity management team. Likewise, the In Country Value and Planning team from Occidental Oman has been working closely with the project's team to support in overcoming the technical challenges of producing this type of pipes".

"We are pleased to bring this new technology for manufacturing Reinforced Thermopolyethylene Pipes from China. This technology will definitely thrive the oil and gas industry in the Sultanate with a cost effective solution that will meet the demand for such heavy-duty pipes in Oman and the region. It is predicated that shipping the pipes from overseas to the Sultanate will cost around 40% of the budget required for the operations. However, having the reinforced thermopolyethylene pipes produced here in Oman will help businesses to save that amount from the budget," explained Dr. Shao.

"Our project came in response to the local and international growing demand for non-metallic pipes, which are used for oil and gas piping networks. Once operational, the factory is expected to supply around 15% of the overall demand in the local market. The factory is designed to be compliant to the technical specifications of the local oil and gas industrial standards and ultimately to the American Petroleum Institute standards", commented Dawood Al Farsi.

#### **Contributing to Oman's economy & ICV**

Highlighting the In Country Value (ICV) initiatives of the project, Dawood Al Farsi, Director of Technical Affairs, Technology Research and Marketing at Duqm Hongtong Piping, stated: "The project places a high significance towards promoting the in country value. We are offering various business opportunities for SMEs and entrepreneurs in the Sultanate. Case in a point, we have signed a Memorandum of Understanding with a local agent, who will be managing the installation process of our products as we are just supplying the thermopolyethylene pipes. Another deal was made with a local supplier to manufacture interface steel connectors for the pipes."

"Reflecting our confidence in the locally-made products, we are contracting with Oman Oil and Orpic Group (OQ) to supply raw material from Liwa Plastics Industries Complex for manufacturing the reinforced thermopolyethylene pipes. Hence, the project's ICV content is expected to reach 90% of the supply chain once these materials are delivered by OQ", added Al Farsi.

*Increasing international demand for these pipes and we aim to serve the local market initially*

*Project's ICV contribution is expected to reach 90% of the supply chain*

The major projects, population growth and urbanisation create a supportive environment for entrepreneurs

# SME entrepreneurs at Duqm recount their successes stories

Setting up successful companies requires conducting a thorough study of the market before starting up projects



The economic growth at Duqm provides multiple opportunities for small and medium-sized enterprises

**Duqm - الدقم :**

Duqm is a success story for many entrepreneurs and owners of small and medium-sized enterprises who have benefited from the urbanisation, population growth as well as the major projects being developed in the Special Economic Zone at Duqm (SEZAD), besides the support these enterprises receive from the Public Authority for Special Economic Zone and Free Zones (OPAZ), and the management of the Special Economic Zone at Duqm and the legislations set to support SMEs.

## Success opportunities available

Ayman bin Subaih Al Junaibi from Al Rimah Al logistia Enterprise believes that there are many opportunities for the success of small and medium-sized enterprises at Duqm. He started his business at Duqm in 2011 by purchasing one water tanker and renting another and obtained a contract for water delivery with the executing company of the first phase of Duqm Airport. Eventually, he was able to purchase another water tanker and lay off the rented one.

Aymen further explained the reasons of his success: "I was following up work progress and supervising my business in person. Thus, I have gained experience and learned negotiation and management skills, which helped me develop and broaden my knowledge, additionally I invested my profits in the development of the enterprise which helped it grow faster.



**Ayman Al Junaibi:**  
I entered "entrepreneurship" through First Phase of Duqm Airport

## The beginning was not easy

Despite the success achieved by Ayman Al Junaibi and his colleagues, owners of small and medium - sized enterprises, Ayman pointed out that the beginning was not easy but they held on patience, hard work and persistence. As for the challenges he faced at the beginning of his business he said: At that period of time, Duqm lack many basic services for example tankers repair services and spare parts were not available at that time, therefore we had to travel long distances for tankers repair.

## Avoid loans

Today, with this success achieved by Aymen, he believes that there are many opportunities available at Duqm for SMEs to grow. Duqm has experienced significant development, with this development, comes more opportunities for SMEs. Ayman calls upon those interested in





Duqm Airport is one of the government projects which provided good opportunities for entrepreneurs



#### Salim Al Junaibi:

Personal follow up of work details and investing profits in project development are the key reasons of business success



#### Khalifa Al Junaibi:

Challenges are opportunities for working better

working in this sector to learn from experts and specialist's advice and avoid rushing, be diligent, avoid loans and focus on working according to the available resources.

#### Efforts and diligence

Ayman had achieved success in the transport and logistics sector, similarly Khalifa bin Saeed Al Junaibi from Bawabat Duqm Al Haditha, recounts his experience in running several activities at Duqm. Describing his experience, he says: My entrepreneurship journey began in 2011 by setting up an enterprise involved in transportation particularly sewage water transport. The beginning was tough due to the lack of cash flow but I put in double efforts and bought my own vehicle for sewage water transport. Then I moved into a broader field in the transport sector purchasing Tipper Truck. I worked on the truck long enough before I was able to expand my business activity purchasing potable water tanker with 10 galloon capacity. After that, I attempted adding new business activity in the contracting field. I always seek to develop myself through diligence, hard work and experience and widen the range of my research.

#### Challenges

Khalifa touched on the challenges that face entrepreneurship, he said "The major challenges facing en-

trepreneurs include the lack of financial resources and the difficulty of obtaining business contracts due to the intensity of competition with major companies. I was able to overcome these challenges and I found these challenges as opportunities for better and stronger performance."

#### Multiple activities

Talking with entrepreneurs at Duqm bring us to Salim bin Juma Al Junaibi, who established his project earlier, he said describing his experience "I set up a private enterprise in 1987 and started in the field of land transport and contracting. I worked in these two activities as there had been no jobs available in that time. In 1997 I opened Dhia Shams AlWusta which comprise three activities including: contracting, transport, buildings sanitation. I worked very hard until I have achieved considerable success and build a reputation for my company. My previous experience has helped me achieve this success.

Salem Al Junaibi stressed that entrepreneurs have many opportunities for success in the Special Economic Zone at Duqm. He believes that the key factors of success are: integrity, adhering with the guidelines of the zones, sharpening the expertise through training courses, counselling experts, personal follow up of work details and investing profits in project development.



Residential – commercial buildings offered many business opportunities for SMEs

# SMEs take part in road mapping development in Duqm

Duqm - Abdulaziz bin Ahmed Al Jahdhami

Abdulaziz bin Mohammed Al Hinai, from the Partnership and Development Department at the Special Economic Zone at Duqm (SEZAD), pointed out: “The total cumulative value of contracts assigned to SMEs across the different governorates over the period from 2016 to Q3 2020 recorded over RO 61 million. Moreover, the total value of contracts assigned to SMEs in Duqm during the same period was RO 11.9 million, standing at 19% of the total amount of contracts directed to SMEs from the projects developed in Duqm”.



**Abdulaziz Al Hinai:**  
*RO 61 million is cumulative value of contracts assigned to SMEs in Duqm since 2017*

**Implementing transparency when awarding contracts for SMEs and e-Tendering Portal System launched**

**The number of SMEs registered with SEZAD has been steadily rising and reached 771 SMEs as of September 2020**

“Awarding these contracts reflects the high attention and efforts accorded to promote the critical role of SMEs in contributing to the different projects being developed in SEZAD”, added Al Hinai.

#### **Offering business opportunities in Duqm**

The Partnership and Development Department at SEZAD was established with the mandate of building strategic partnerships with key stakeholders, managing community development and social responsibility projects and providing SMEs with a better access to business opportunities in Duqm. In this regard, a wide range of policies, initiatives and projects has been implemented in order to strengthen the contribution of SMEs to the economic and social infrastructure of Duqm.

Since its establishment, the Department has focused on developing a strong framework for the allocation of contracts to SMEs. The Department accordingly requires all its contractors to award at least 10% of their contracts to SMEs and submit monthly progress reports with details on the types and values of activities

allocated to SMEs.

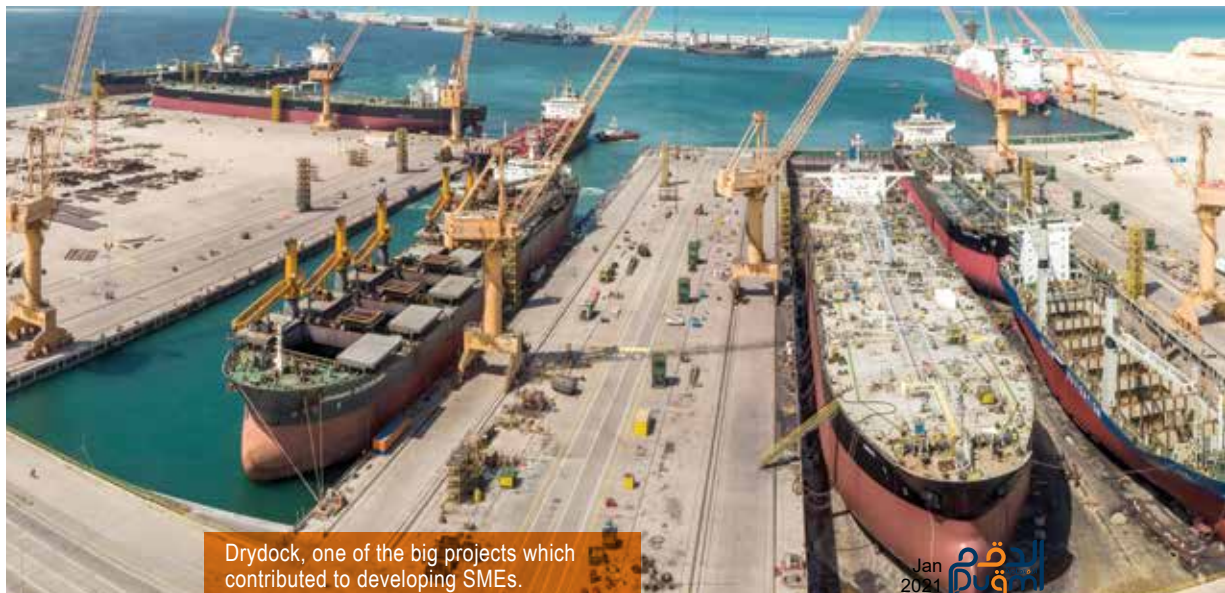
“SMEs are now categorically chosen depending on the registered economic activities of their business when bidding for tenders or contracts and are requested to submit their bids using the Joint Supplier Registration System (JSRS). Additionally, the Department has embarked on creating an SME ecosystem aimed at boosting the creation of new SMEs in Duqm as well as supporting the growth of the existing ones” Al Hinai pointed out.

#### **E-Tendering Portal System**

In 2019, SEZAD launched the e-Tendering Portal System and Certification mechanism on JSRS, which allows for better governance and greater transparency in the allocation of contracts to SMEs. The certification applies to all Omani SMEs, which are already registered with SEZAD or are seeking to register to work and have access to tenders floated by SEZAD.

#### **Competitive incentives for SMEs in Duqm**

Abdulaziz Al Hinai addressed: “In order to encourage SMEs to start their business-



Drydock, one of the big projects which contributed to developing SMEs.





SMEs are progressing well in Duqm



es in Duqm, SEZAD introduced a package of incentives aimed at facilitating the process of launching a business in Duqm. A number of government bodies have set up their offices in Duqm to support SMEs including the Public Authority for Small and Medium Enterprises Development (Riyada). This year will witness opening outlets and offices for other parties concerned with supporting SMEs".

#### Comprehensive database

The number of SMEs registered with SEZAD as of September 2020 has reached around 771 SMEs, most of which 84 SMEs are from Duqm. Around 125 SMEs registered with SEZAD are from Al Wusta Governorate. "The number of SMEs registered with SEZAD has been steadily rising. In order to map the SMEs registered in various wilayats of Al Wusta, SEZAD embarked on developing a comprehensive database of all registered SMEs and their registered activities in order to assess the gaps in the local market in terms of overserved and underserved economic sectors. This will in turn help identify potential opportunities for SMEs. On the other hand, the Partnership and

Development Department is currently developing an online platform whereby SMEs will be allowed to register online as well as access all tenders and business opportunities offered by various stakeholders in the Zone" Al Hinai explained.

#### Upcoming plans for 2021

"We are hopeful that 2021 will be a more promising year and will hold better opportunities for SMEs to thrive. This year will witness implementing different plans by SEZAD to attract SMEs to the Zone. In view of this, SEZAD has been working closely with a number of incubators in the ecosystem and is soon to launch a business centre for SMEs in Duqm. The centre will offer subsidised office space, administrative and logistical support, networking opportunities and access to investors in addition to consultations and other business advisory services. Moreover, SEZAD is striving to organise various training programmes focusing on crisis management for SMEs. In addition, a number of investment opportunities in the tourism sector where SMEs have a key role to play is included in the 2021 plan", Abdulaziz Al Hinai commented.



**Developing a comprehensive database of all registered SMEs and their registered activities**

**Developing an online platform whereby SMEs will be allowed to register online and establishing business centre**

**2021 plan promotes the role of SMEs in tourism sector**

# Muhra Al Junaibi: My self-employment decision has proved success and today I run four shops in foodstuff sector

She succeeded in competing with big companies and won tenders in the public and private sectors

The future provides more opportunities for entrepreneurs to grow in Duqm



Following up work progress in one of the shops

### Duqm - :

Muhra bint Mohsen Al Junaibi never expected quitting her government job to start her own business, however the change witnessed at Duqm which transformed it within few years into vibrant city teeming with economic activities, encouraged Muhra to resign and manage her own enterprise which was established in 2017 under the name "Al Asda Al Alamiya Trade".

Muhra Al Junaibi now is full time self employed and works on the development of her own project. She describes her resignation decision and self-employment as a tough decision in the beginning but over time, the decision has proved success.

Muhra Al Junaibi is one of the successful entrepreneurs who was able to develop her project within a short period of time. In 2017, she opened her first project in the foodstuff



Muhra Al Junaibi in her office at the Rock Garden district

sector, but today she runs four shops in this sector. Her interest is not limited to her commercial project but she contributes in enriching female entrepreneurs with her knowledge to develop their abilities being the head of fe-



One of the foodstuff shops managed by Muhra Al Junaibi





Commercial growth opens business opportunities for SMEs

**Working in facility management and real estate management & investing in establishing commercial and residential buildings**

male entrepreneurs' committee of the Chambers of Commerce and Industry at Al Wusta Governorate.

#### **Ambition and participating in Tenders**

In her interview with Duqm Economist, Muhra seemed more ambitious than ever. Although she had succeeded in obtaining a number of tenders from government bodies and private sector companies in official uniforms tailoring and interlock installation in the main roads at Duqm. Nevertheless, she believes that there are greater opportunities for future growth as she was able to establish solid ground for her projects which were not only limited to foodstuff sector but also she entered into a group of other projects such as construction and real estate management. At the time of this interview, in the first half of December 2020, Muhra was gearing up to invest in establishing commercial residential building in the Special Economic Zone at Duqm which comprises apartments and shops.

#### **Family and employees are the reasons for success**

Muhra Al Junaibi did not forget her family's support when establishing her projects, expressing her gratitude and appreciation for the encouragement she received since she took her first steps in small and medium enterprise. She didn't forget her dedicated employees, adding that she avoided reducing the number of her employees or cutting their pays during the crises of the Coronavirus pandemic, appreciating their efforts in "Al Asda Al Alamiya Trade".

In her concluding note, Muhra Al Junaibi called on entrepreneurs at Duqm to conduct a thorough study of the market before starting their projects to achieve the aspired success. She added that entrepreneurs will go through a rough batch, but they should hold onto persistence, patience and diligence, emphasising that Duqm has become a global economic and investment city with many opportunities for entrepreneurs to exploit.

**Many challenges are facing entrepreneurs but they have to be diligent, persistent and patient**



One of the buildings managed by Muhra al Junaibi

## General Manager of Crowne Plaza Duqm:

# Duqm is gearing up for tourism growth and expecting high demand for tourist and hotel facilities



Maher Bahsoun

**Launching a package of recreational activities to keep pace with tourism boom in Duqm**

**We focus on promoting internal tourism and attracting families**

### Duqm - :

Maher Bahsoun, General Manager of Crowne Plaza Duqm Hotel, commended the growth achieved by the Special Economic Zone at Duqm (SEZAD) in the past years. He stressed that the hotel is working to keep pace with this growth by meeting the demand for more rooms and hotel services from those visiting the Zone, including investors, tourists, government bodies and corporates. The increasing demand is attributed to the various services and facilities on offer at the hotel for holding conferences, seminars, and meetings.

In an interview with Duqm Economist Magazine, the General Manager is expecting a tourism growth on the way, coming in parallel with the ambitious plans of SEZAD. These plans are aimed to bring about positive remarkable changes in the lifestyle of Duqm and to keep pace with the increasing demand for tourist and hotel facilities.

"The 2021 plans of Crowne Plaza Duqm include launching a package of recreational







activities, which would contribute to making a change in the concept of tourism in Duqm. We are working, with a specialised company, to allocate kids fun corner with a set of other recreational activities for adults including watersports”, he explained.

#### Promoting internal tourism

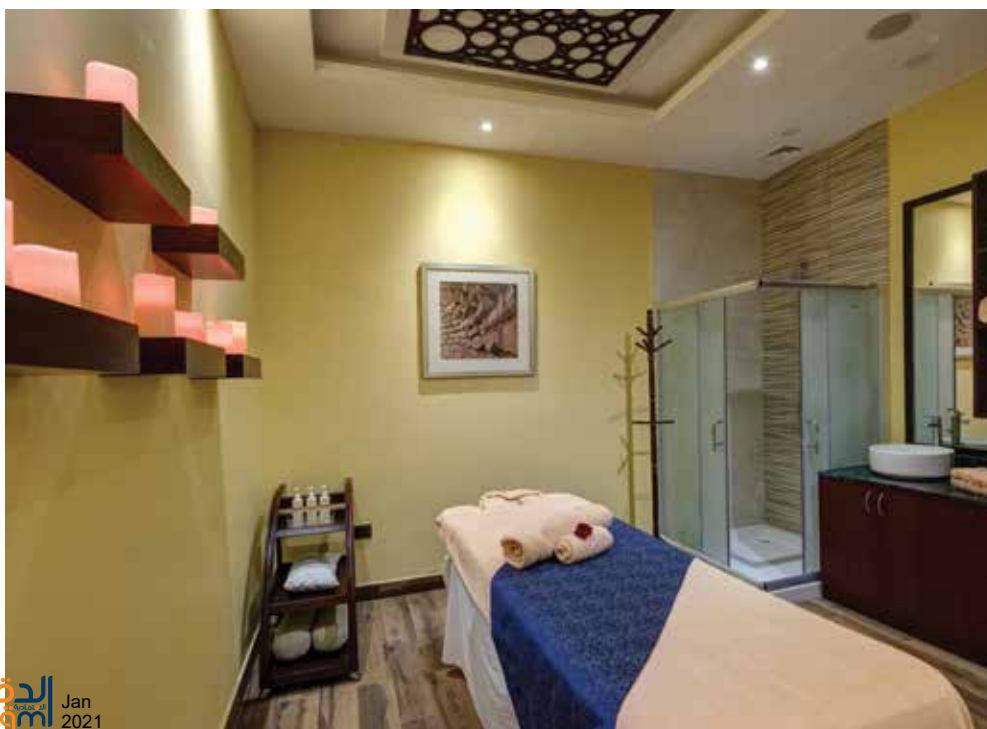
The hotel’s plans also include a high focus on promoting internal tourism. Commenting on this, the General Manager of Crowne Plaza Duqm pointed out: “Although most of our customers are businessmen, employees and investors in Duqm, we believe that the hotel has the potential to attract families as the hotel witnessed a good turnout of families during the summer and weekends in 2020. Being a member hotel of Omran Group, Crowne Plaza Duqm Hotel was part of the summer promo-

tional campaign “Within Oman”, which was organized by the Group and continued until December 20, 2020. This campaign was very well received by families who are very interested to visit Duqm”.

#### Good returns

Maher Bahsoun, General Manager of Crowne Plaza Duqm, expressed his delight at the hotel’s success achieved in 2020, despite the impacts of the Coronavirus pandemic on the hospitality sector locally and globally.

He stressed that the hotel has achieved its objectives related to revenues and occupancy rates last year. The hotel received its customers amid strict precautionary measures to maintain the safety of employees and visitors alike. It also fulfilled its commitments towards its own employees.



**We achieved the objectives related to revenues and occupancy rates of 2020**

**Implemented strict precautionary measures to maintain safety of visitors**



Mohammed bin Ahmed  
Al Shezawi  
Editor-in-chief



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## A spotlight on economic and free zones

Since we first started issuing Duqm Economist Magazine in 2015, the objective was not just to focus on Duqm, but rather to be an open platform for all economic and free zones in the Sultanate. However, the drive of Duqm was the most prominent despite the success achieved by other zones. Thus, we had already started communicating with some of these zones, but we have been postponing the actual visit from a day to another.

Today, with the Royal Decree No. (105/2020) establishing the Public Authority for Special Economic Zones and Free Zones (OPAZ), we dedicate a bigger space in the Magazine to shed light on these zones. We strive to share the milestones of Sohar, Salalah and Al Mazunah with the readers. This reflects our intent to integrate Duqm with the free zones and any other upcoming economic or free zone. The integration between all these zones enhances the Sultanate's position and its role in attracting investments.

This issue highlights some of the projects and achievements made at the free zones in Al Mazunah, Salalah and Sohar. However, we look forward to feature full profiles for these zones based on our field visits, which will mirror the productiveness and development of these zones. This signifies that these zones are of high importance too like the Special Economic Zone at Duqm.

These observations lead us to a more important aspect, which is the resettlement of investments in the Sultanate. Investors are very often get confused where to invest. Shall they invest in Sohar, or Duqm, or Salalah, or Al Mazunah? What does each zone offer to investors? What are the infrastructure supporting their investments in this or that zone?

Although any investor must have certain concerns and options before approaching any investment zone, whether in the Sultanate or other countries, there are many incentives that attract investors to choose one zone over another. In view of that, we find that Duqm, Sohar, Salalah and Al Mazunah have the potential to attract different investments, whether from within or outside the Sultanate.

This is attributed to the set of competitive incentives and advantages that these zones provide to investors, as well as the legislations that are regularly updated to keep pace with the aspirations of investors.

From the standpoint of having integration between Duqm and the free zones in the Sultanate, Duqm Economist Magazine, in future issues, will update its readers from investors, businesspersons and researchers about the characteristics, investment environment, and the most prominent projects of these zones. This comes as an initiative from "Duqm Economist" to spread awareness about investment destinations that mark a key pillar for economic diversification in the Sultanate.