



Drone experiments take off in Duqm



Inside MANATQ Supplement:



High global demand for Oman's carbon ferrochrome products



Oman joins clean antimony industry



4,500 hectares are available for investment at Sohar Free Zone

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Pioneering in Project Management

Oman Company for the Development of the Special Economic Zone at Duqm S.A.O.C (Tatweer) is responsible for managing and implementing all public and development projects in the Zone as specified by the Public Authority for Special Economic Zones and Free Zones (OPAZ), especially the strategic infrastructure projects that support investments within the Zone.



شركة عُمان لتطوير المنطقة الاقتصادية الخاصة بالدقم (ش.م.ع.م)
Oman Company for the Development of Special Economic Zone at Al-Duqm (S.A.O.C)

Our Objectives

- Managing strategic and infrastructure projects in the Special Economic Zone at Duqm
- Ensure timely completion of projects
- Managing In-house Projects– EPC Contracts
- HSE and Quality compliance with the requirements of the Public Authority for Special Economic Zones and Free Zones
- Day to day monitoring and execution of projects
- Regular reporting to Public Authority for Special Economic Zones and Free Zones and other stakeholders
- Reporting all concerns to Public Authority for Special Economic Zones and Free Zones and comply with its decisions

Key Performance Indicators (KPIs)

- Completing projects on time and within budget
- Adherence to quality and HSE requirements

Achievements

- Delivered the Commercial Berth of the Duqm Port, which consists of roads, infrastructure services and buildings.
- Developed roads, infrastructure, buildings, gates and customs station at Port of Duqm.
- Delivered the Liquid and Bulk Berth to Duqm Refinery to develop package (3).
- Completed the EPC contract of the service road at Aman District in Duqm to facilitate the services for the government stakeholders.
- Developed the Fishing Port in Duqm and its entire marine and road related works. OPAZ intends to transform the port into a multi-purpose port to accommodate other commodities such as foodstuff, livestock and animal feed.

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Duqm – Sultanate of Oman

Oman Company for the Development of the Special Economic Zone at Duqm S.A.O.C (Tatweer) is a government company, fully owned by the Public Authority for special economic zones and free zones.

4500

Hectares of
Business Opportunities

صهار
SOHAR
FREEZONE المنطقة الحرة

من هنا البداية
It all starts here



New investment zones

Late last year, the Board of Directors of the Public Authority for Special Economic Zones and Free Zones (OPAZ) allocated a dedicated zone for renewable energy projects in the Special Economic Zone at Duqm (SEZAD), covering 150 square kilometres of area. This decision was aimed to attract related industries and grab the interest of many specialised companies, especially as Duqm has all the success factors for such projects, whether with regard to the space of land required by clean hydrogen projects or what these projects need from non-traditional energy resources such as solar and wind energy.

The third quarter of this year witnessed signing agreements to reserve lands for two projects to produce green hydrogen and ammonia that will be developed in the renewable energy zone. The first agreement was with the Indian company, ACME, while the second was with Hyport Duqm Company, a joint venture in the alternative energy sector between Oman's OQ and Belgium's DEME Group.

By signing these two agreements, OPAZ confirms its interest in alternative energy projects due to its environmental and economic significance and its role in reducing dependence on oil and other fossil fuel resources. The establishment of these projects comes in line with Oman Vision 2040 and the global interest in alternative energy projects.

In view of that, OPAZ accords high attention to projects that support the national economy and contribute to the Sultanate's plans for economic diversification, job creation, and confirmation of the Sultanate's leadership in many industrial projects. In this perspective, we can refer to a number of distinguished projects in Sohar Free Zone such as Sohar Qabs for Solar Energy, Precious and Strategic Minerals Processing Plant. Likewise, the Sultanate enjoys global leadership in clean antimony industry and Sanvira Carbon Factory, the first factory of its kind in the Sultanate for converting petroleum coal to a product of industrial value. In fact, there are many other projects that Duqm Economist Magazine strived to shed light on in Manatq Supplements, featured in this issue.

Further, there are many other similar projects in Salalah and Al Mazunah, reflecting the joint efforts to localise investments in the free zones and contribute to economic diversification. We aspire to work closely with investors in various special economic zones and free zones supervised by OPAZ to increase investments and develop quality projects that thrive the national economy.



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



OPAZ accords high attention to projects that support the national economy and contribute to the Sultanate's plans for economic diversification, job creation, and confirmation of the Sultanate's leadership in many industrial projects

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The magazine welcomes
specialised researches
and academic studies

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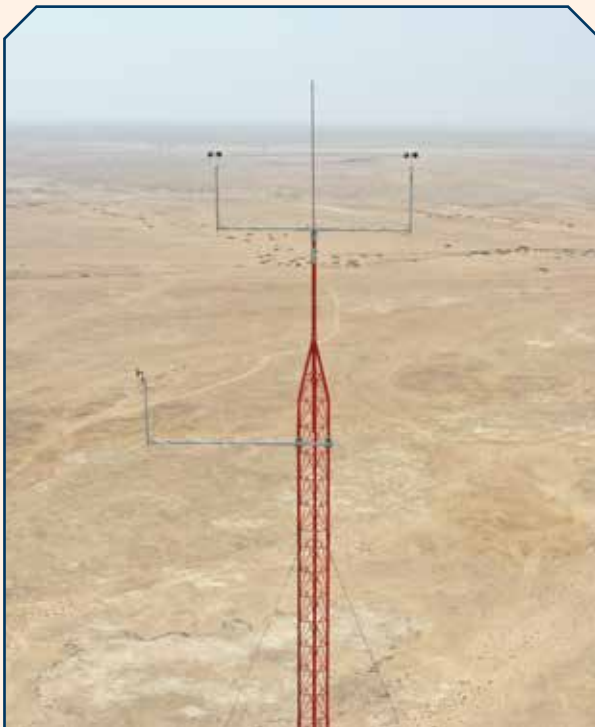
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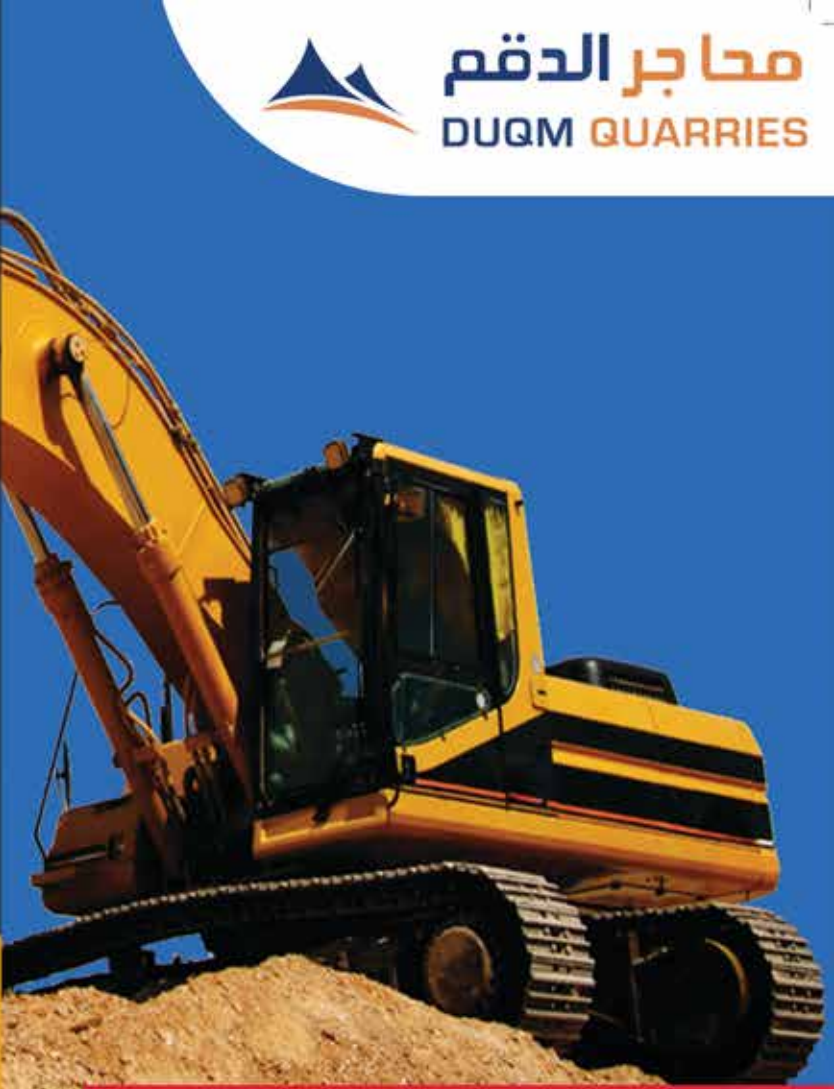
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3rd Board meeting touched on the zone's current investment situation

OPAZ Board of Directors meets with CEOs at Salalah Free Zone




Salalah – 


The Board of Directors of the Public Authority for Special Economic Zones and Free Zones (OPAZ) held a meeting with a number of CEOs of factories at Salalah Free Zone and visited a number of factories specialised in the field of food and chemical and pharmaceutical industries in the Zone. OPAZ Board of Directors held its third meeting for the year 2021 in Salalah, headed by HE Dr. Ali bin Masoud bin Ali Al Sunaidy, Chairman of the Board.

The meeting touched on the current situation of investments at Salalah Free Zone and the direction to localise the projects of

producing medicines and medical supplies in the Zone, where special locations have been already allocated for such projects. Soon the Zone will be home for one of the largest pharmaceutical factories in the Sultanate, which is currently under construction.

The Board of Directors was briefed on the plan developed by Asyad Group to enhance the integration of Salalah Free Zone with the logistics system in the Sultanate. Likewise, the meeting also brought to discussion the different possible ways to maximise the benefits between the special economic zones, free zones and the ports.


Affirming the direction to localise the projects of producing medicines and medical supplies in the Zone


The Board discussed possible ways to maximise the benefits between the special economic zones, free zones and the ports



He foreseen Duqm as an ambitious project that bodes well Saudi Investment Minister: Duqm is an attractive destination for investment



Duqm – :

HE Eng. Khalid bin Abdulaziz Al Falih, Saudi Arabia's Investment Minister, commended the standard of infrastructure and the existing projects in the Special Economic Zone at Duqm (SEZAD).

In a press statement released upon his visit to SEZAD with a high-level economic and investment delegation, he affirmed that the Zone is very attractive for investment. "I'm very pleased with this visit, during which we were briefed on the volume of investment in the Zone. Duqm marks an ambitious project that bodes well and confirms the ability of Omanis to work on the most difficult projects", the Minister commented.

Interest to invest

The Minister pointed out that the Saudi investors, who accompanied him during the visit to Duqm, witnessed the volume of work in SEZAD and they are highly motivated to form partnerships with Omani counterparts and the investment parties in the Sultanate. His Excellency also stressed that the private sector and the investment authorities in both countries will transform the aspirations of the leaderships of the brotherly countries into reality in the near future. Further, His Excellency praised in this regard the results of the royal visit paid by His Majesty Sultan


Haitham bin Tariq to the Kingdom of Saudi Arabia in July 2021, during which the Omani-Saudi Joint Coordination Council was established.

Field visits to developed projects

The visit's programme of His Excellency and his accompanying delegation to Duqm included different presentations conducted to familiarise them on the capabilities of the Special Economic Zone at Duqm and its investment opportunities. Field visits were also organised to a number of projects, including the Oil Storage Park in Ras Markaz, the multi-purpose Fishing Port, Duqm Port and the Dry Dock.

Discussing cooperation opportunities

The visit of the Saudi delegation to the Sultanate, paid in August 2021, witnessed the organisation of the Omani-Saudi Investment Forum, which was organised by the Ministry of Commerce, Industry and Investment Promotion in cooperation with Oman Investment Authority (OIA), Public Authority for Special Economic Zones and Free Zones (OPAZ) and Oman Chamber of Commerce and Industry. During the forum, opportunities for mutual cooperation in the economic and investment fields and access to strategic agreements and partnerships between Omani and Saudi companies were brought to discussion.


Saudi investors are motivated to partner with Omanis and investment bodies in the Sultanate


Saudi delegation got familiarised with the capabilities of Duqm Port and Oil Storage Park in Ras Markaz

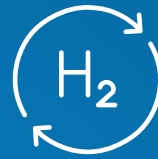


Briefing Saudi Minister on SEZAD Masterplan

Duqm, a global centre for green hydrogen production

Duqm –  :

Duqm marks one of the destinations that can attract green hydrogen and ammonia projects due to the availability of solar and wind energy throughout the year. Other potentials include having a port that facilitate the easy import and export, in addition to the spacious areas of land allocated for renewable energy projects, covering 150 square kilometres. Allocating the clean energy zone brings a new addition to the Special Economic Zone at Duqm (SEZAD), which has all the success factors for such projects.



Key features of investment in green hydrogen sector in Duqm



- Availability of solar and wind energy all year round
- Having a port in the zone to facilitate import and export operations
- Establishment of a clean energy zone over an area of 150 sqkm

Important milestones

1

December 9, 2020

The Board of Directors of the Public Authority for Special Economic Zones and Free Zones decided to increase the area allocated for clean energy in Duqm from 100 sqkm to 150 sqkm.

2

December 9, 2020

The Board of Directors approves negotiation mechanism to attract clean energy production projects for local use and green hydrogen production for export purposes in both the Special Economic Zone at Duqm and Sohar Free Zone.

3

August 23, 2021

Signing land reservation agreement for the green hydrogen and ammonia project that will be developed by the Indian company ACME in the Special Economic Zone at Duqm.

4

September 27, 2021

Signing land reservation agreement for the Hyport Duqm green hydrogen project, a joint venture in the alternative energy sector between OQ and the Belgian DEME Group.

Reflecting OPAZ efforts to attract investments in clean energy

ACME signs land reservation agreement for green hydrogen and ammonia project in Duqm




Muscat - Delhi - 

The Public Authority for Special Economic Zones and Free Zones (OPAZ) signed land reservation agreement with ACME Group to set up green hydrogen and ammonia project in the Special Economic Zone at Duqm. The agreement was signed by HE Dr. Ali bin Masoud Al Sunaidy, Chairman of the Public Authority for Special Economic Zones and Free Zones and Manoj Upadhyay, Chairperson of ACME & Gursharan Jassal – GM business developer of ACME. Eng. Yahya bin Khamis Al Zadjali, In charge of Managing Operations of the Special Economic Zone at Duqm (SEZAD) said that under this agreement ACME Company will be conducting filed studies of the project

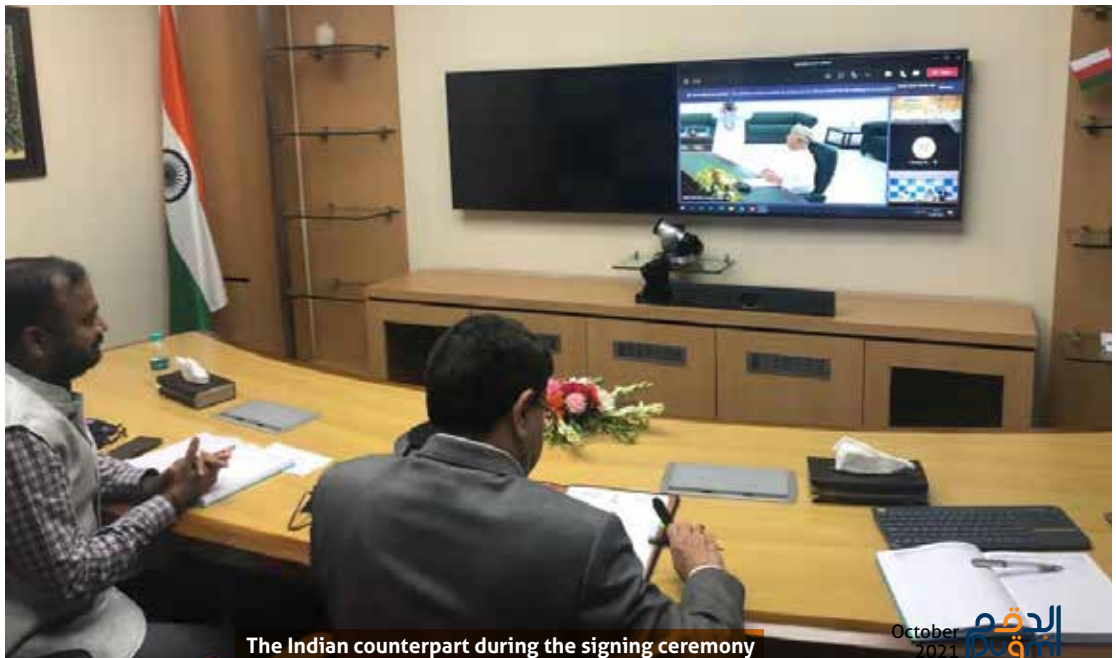
in the first phase that include installing anemometers to measure wind speed in Duqm and weather station for the purpose of surveys and data collection.

Promoting investment in clean energy Signing this agreement comes in line with OPAZ plan to promote investment in the field of clean energy through the production of green hydrogen and ammonia from renewable energy, and to enhance its use in various fields such as transportation and manufacturing sector along with other energy resources in the Special Economic Zone at Duqm.

ACME is the largest solar energy operator in India, as it operates solar power plant with a capacity of 3 GW, in addition to 3 GW under construction plant.


First phase includes installing anemometers to measure wind speed and weather station


ACME is the largest solar energy operator in India



The Indian counterpart during the signing ceremony

October 2021 

Aimed to strengthen cooperation for Hyport Duqm project Oman and Belgium sign a cooperation programme in green energy



During the signing ceremony

Muscat –  :

A cooperation programme, in the field of green energy, was signed on September 26, 2021 between Oman and Belgium, reflecting the interest of both countries to enhance the collaboration, especially in green hydrogen. This programme came to build on the bilateral relations between the Sultanate and the Kingdom of Belgium, and to mark an endeavour towards achieving the objectives of Oman Vision 2040.

The programme stipulates strengthening the cooperation related to the strategic project HYPORT Duqm, and supporting the efforts accorded by Omani and Belgian companies to build an international alliance to produce

and import green hydrogen for the Kingdom of Belgium and its neighbouring countries.

Localising clean hydrogen industry in Duqm

In this regard, HE Dr. Ali bin Masoud Al Sunaidy, Chairman of the Public Authority for Special Economic Zones and Free Zones (OPAZ), had discussed with HE Tinne Van der Straeten, Minister of Energy of Belgium, the localisation of clean hydrogen and ammonia industry in the Special Economic Zone at Duqm (SEZAD).

The meeting, held on September 20, 2021, touched on ways to ensure the entry of clean hydrogen and green ammonia products that will be produced in Duqm to European Union countries through the Belgian market.


Discussing localisation of the clean hydrogen and ammonia industry in SEZAD


Supporting efforts of companies in both countries to build an international alliance to produce and export green hydrogen to Belgium and European Union



 October 2021

The meeting between OPAZ Chairman and the Belgian Minister

A joint project between OQ and the Belgian DEME

OPAZ and HYPORT Duqm sign land reservation agreement for green hydrogen project



Ahmed Al Dheeb: We aspire to be one of the pioneering projects in producing green hydrogen and green Ammonia in the Sultanate



Alain Bernard: The project will form an integral part of SEZAD's ambitious growth


The company will start the preparative engineering works and site data collection

Muscat – 

The Public Authority for Special Economic Zones and Free Zones (OPAZ) signed a land reservation agreement for the green hydrogen project of Hyport Duqm Company, a joint project of alternative energy between OQ and Belgian DEME Concessions. Hyport Duqm will now start the preparative engineering works and site data collection to establish a green hydrogen and ammonia project in the Special Economic Zone at Duqm (SEZAD).

The agreement was signed by HE Dr. Ali Masoud Al Sunaidy, Chairman OPAZ and Dr. Salim Al Huthaili, OQ Alternative Energy CEO and Chairman of Hyport Duqm Company and Alain Bernard, Chairman and Managing Director of DEME Concessions.

The project will cover part of the 150-sqkm land allocated for renewable energy projects. This land will accommodate both an onshore wind and solar PV farm with a

combined capacity of 1.3 GW, which will be developed in subsequent expandable project phases.

Field works

Hyport Duqm is currently completing the installation and commissioning of 4 meteorological wind masts and 2 meteorological solar stations within the site in order to confirm Duqm's excellent solar and wind conditions which, are available throughout the year. Hyport Duqm project fits well in the Sultanate's strategy of developing Al Wusta Governorate, while achieving renewable energy and other objectives of Oman Vision 2040.

Pioneering project

HE Eng. Ahmed bin Hassan Al Dheeb, Deputy Chairman of OPAZ, pointed out: "OPAZ welcomes this project in SEZAD, which is expected to be a pioneer in introducing green hydrogen and green ammonia



One of the wind masts developed by Hyport Duqm Project



Dr. Salim Al Huthaili: OQ and Oman Investment Authority continue to support this project and company's strategy to grow this important sector

to the country. Further, it will lead the diversification beyond hydrocarbons efforts and contributing to Vision 2040".

Global centre

Dr. Salim Al Huthaili, CEO Alternative Energy at OQ, commented: "The agreement is yet another milestone in the development of this important project. SEZAD will be a global green hydrogen hub combining power, manufacturing and logistics activities while focusing on the decarbonisation and electrification."

"The excellent renewable resources and the existing infrastructures along with the upcoming national grid connection makes Duqm an attractive and competitive destination for renewable projects. Oman continues to be a global leader in delivering clean energy projects to accelerate the energy transition effort. OQ and our shareholders Oman Investment Authority continue to support this project and our strategy to grow this important sector", he added.

Promising renewable energy project

Alain Bernard, Executive Chairman DEME Concessions, stated: "Our flagship green hydrogen project strikes another important milestone, which underwrites DEME Concessions' strong commitment in making the necessary project progress. HYPOR Duqm will form an integral part of SEZAD's ambitious growth. This milestone strengthens DEME Concession's sustainable, long-term presence in SEZAD".


The project accommodates both an onshore wind and solar PV farm with a combined capacity of 1.3 GW


Installing 2 meteorological solar stations in order to confirm Duqm's excellent solar condition



Dr. Khalil Al Hanashi
Sustainable Energy Technology Expert
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Clean Hydrogen.. Energy for the future and the future of energy

The traditional energy trilemma of availability, security and affordability of energy had a fourth dimension added to it in recent years, that is decarbonisation. Following Paris Climate agreement and in the build up to the United Nation climate change conference, COP26, which will be held in November this year, the decarbonisation agenda dominated many energy discussions and clean hydrogen surfaced as one of the promising clean energy carriers that only emits water vapour when its energy is extracted back unlike fossil fuel that is associated with CO2 and methane emissions.

As of 2018, the size of the existing hydrogen market, which is mainly produced from natural gas and coal, is about 9% of the size of the natural gas market. With the expected high growth in Hydrogen demand, expected to double in 2022, clean hydrogen will play a central role in new hydrogen demand and demand replacement for decarbonisation.

Today, we see 4 main pillars on which hydrogen positions itself as a player in the future of global energy use. First, hydrogen can tackle the emission from hard to decarbonise industries, such as steel and cement industries that require vast amounts of heat. Such industries currently rely on fossil fuels to produce the required heat. The recent announcement of SAAB, the Swedish car manufacturer, to buy green steel (steel made using hydrogen heat) demonstrated for the first time that steel smelters can run 100% on Hydrogen. Such a move will position green steel at a premium for those who care about the carbon footprint of their products.

Second, Hydrogen could maximise the value of renewable resources especially in places where natural gas resources are depleting, but ample renewable resources are available. Such an opportunity is very relevant to Oman and will allow for the excess renewable energy to be used to produce hydrogen as a replacement of natural gas. Green hydrogen is produced using renewable

electricity to split water into its basic components, Hydrogen and Oxygen, which can then be stored, transported and used anywhere to address the issue of renewables intermittency and natural gas resource depletion.

Third, Hydrogen presents itself with interesting versatility, from being used as feedstock to chemical industry like ammonia to an agent to run many processes like the desulfurisation of crude oil in refineries. Oman's local consumption of hydrogen, mainly from natural gas, marks about 1 million tonnes per year. Therefore, the potential for local production and consumption of clean hydrogen exist in addition to the export opportunity to capitalise on Oman's long history in energy as an energy exporting nation.

Fourth, hydrogen could provide energy security in two dimensions; one against the intermittency of renewables and another as a replacement for declining natural gas resources in countries that rely on natural gas and have built natural gas infrastructures.

The recent announcement of the world's largest green hydrogen project in Oman to be located in Al Wusta Governorate highlighted the great momentum and the promising future for clean hydrogen in Oman. The coordinated plans for the future hydrogen industry in Oman was also consolidated by the formation of the National Hydrogen Alliance (Hy-Fly). The National Hydrogen Alliance with its 13 members representing the energy players at policy making, regulation, and energy companies in addition to research and development centres will push forward the hydrogen agenda in Oman.

As well, it will ensure Oman is well positioned in an emerging energy market and promising energy diversification vector where the ample renewable resources are not only used for electrification, but become exportable and locally used in many industries.

Tatweer

backs its services for investors in the Special Economic Zone at Duqm

Duqm – :

The Oman Company for the Development of the Special Economic Zone at Duqm "Tatweer" seeks to play a commendable role to attract investments in Duqm, serving as a local investment partner for other investors and developers to increase their confidence in the development projects taking place in Duqm.

In addition to the projects assigned to the Company, it always works to facilitate and deliver many other services to investors, especially those who have already started their projects. Among these works are building and paving roads for investors, which contributes to facilitating movement and access to the invested lands. Recently, a number of internal roads were paved in the Commercial District and the Medium Industries Zone. Other paved roads included the one for the Knowledge Village in Nafoon, and the Artificial Intelligence Village in Shuair.

Protection from rainwater

In the field of rainwater protection, Tatweer Company built rainwater drainage channels to protect the existing facilities in SEZAD. Water channels were built and directed to the main channels to protect the developed facilities in the Medium Industries Zone, and a dam was built to protect the Zone from the floods in the area opposite the Chinese Village.

Tourism projects

Further, the Company is also working on establishing tourist landmarks that help in attracting tourists to the Special Economic Zone at Duqm. It has established a tourist camp on Duqm Beach to attract camping enthusiasts, and it has constructed internal corridors to organise the movement of vehicles and visitors inside the Rock Garden, in addition to providing toilets in the Rock Garden too.

Maintaining public facilities

In the field of public utilities maintenance, Tatweer constantly cleans water channels in order to facilitate the flow of valleys and protect public and private facilities. It also assists the local community in cleaning sewage networks in Al Sa'ada neighbourhood, which includes 150 housing units. Moreover, Tatweer contributes to cleaning roads from dust post the rainwater, in addition to suctioning rain water and discharging it in the water treatment plants. Tatweer Company is the investment arm of the Public Authority for Special Economic Zones and Free Zones and is 100% owned by the Authority. The Company manages the various assets and infrastructure of the Authority in Duqm through a safe and effective facility management operations, in addition to its role in attracting investments to the zone and establishing the infrastructure.


Delivering services to investors and constructing internal roads and rainwater drainage channels


Establishing a tourist camp on Duqm Beach to attract camping enthusiasts



Built over an area of 42,000 sqm

Establishing an integrated facility for customs clearance in Salalah Free Zone



Establishing a new customs clearance facility, reflecting the cooperation between the free zone, Port of Salalah and Raysut Industrial city

Developing the services provided and accelerating the completion of importers and exporters' transactions are the most prominent objectives

The design takes into account the highest standards of quality and efficiency

Salalah – :

Reflecting the commendable cooperation between the concerned parties, It has been decided to establish an integrated facility for customs clearance in Salalah Free Zone to include an inspection yard, a customs clearance gate, and many other services and amenities.

The new facility will be built over an area of about 42,000 sqm and will be located close to Salalah Free Zone, Port of Salalah and Raysut Industrial City. Hence, it will serve the companies operating in those locations, including importers and exporters and will accordingly contribute to facilitating the passing of goods and vehicles.

Establishing this project comes within the plan of the Public Authority for Special Economic Zones and Free Zones (OPAZ) to

develop the services provided to companies investing in Salalah Free Zone. The project is being developed in collaboration between OPAZ, Royal Oman Police (ROP), Office of State Minister and Governor of Dhofar, Ministry of Transport, Communications and Information Technology, Port of Salalah, Raysut Industrial City and Asyad Group.

was advised that the concerned parties have already started developing the plan to kick off developing the project. Accordingly, the construction tender will be floated early next year, provided that the project will be developed within 8 months post awarding the project. This project has been efficiently designed to accelerate the completion of importers and exporters' transactions through high standard services.



4,500 hectares are available for investment at Sohar Free Zone in phases

By Mohammed bin
Ahmed Al Shezawi

Photos by Saleh bin
Nabhan Al Maamari

Over the past years, Sohar Free Zone has been able to settle its local and global standing as one of the free zones established by the Sultanate to attract local and foreign capitals, increase the added value of local raw materials, provide more job opportunities for citizens, develop the local economy and contribute to economic diversification.

The Zone covers 4,500 hectares and is being developed in phases. The Zone was established on December 20, 2010 by the Royal Decree No. (123/2010), and is located within the geographical boundaries of Sohar Port.

In this portfolio, **MANATQ** Supplement lists the most prominent projects in the Zone and the incentives and advantages offered to investors.





CEO of Sohar Free Zone for **MANATQ**: \$918 million is the value of existing projects and \$200 million for the under construction projects



Omar bin Mahmoud Al Mahrizi

We focus on attracting foreign investments that support economic growth

Sohar – **MANATQ:**

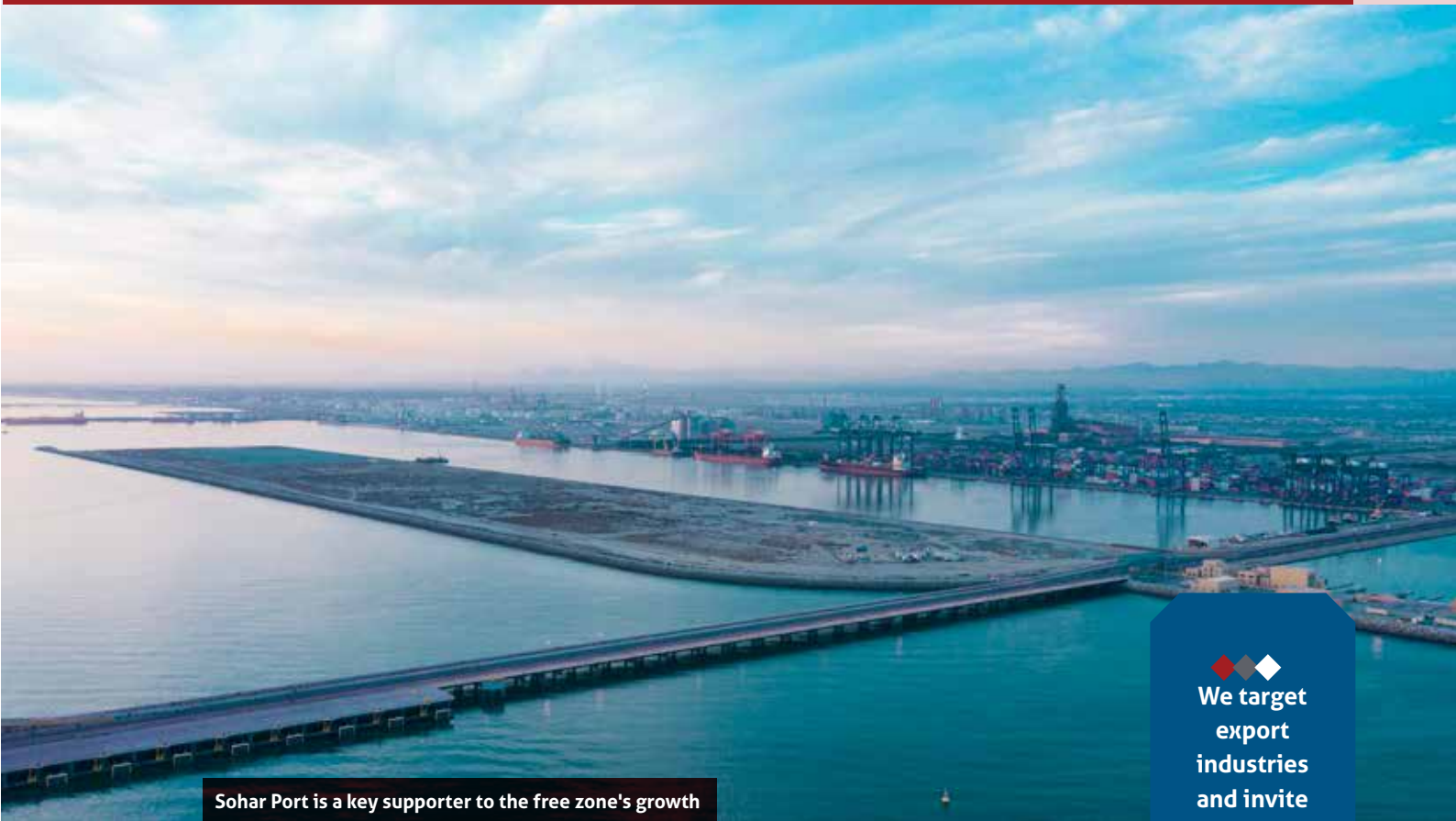
Omar bin Mahmoud Al Mahrizi, CEO of Sohar Free Zone, remarked that the investments volume in the existing projects stands at RO 353 million (equivalent to \$918 million), excluding the investments spared for establishing and improving the Zone's infrastructure.

In an interview with Manatq, he pointed out that the total number of existing projects in Sohar Free Zone is 44 industrial projects in various sectors such as minerals, petrochemicals, food industries, and others. The Zone also includes a number of companies leasing warehouses and offices, which are provided by the Zone as a competitive advantage.

Al Mahrizi touched on the under construction projects, including Al Hosun cold storages, Sohar Qabas Solar Power Plant, truck

restrooms, Quartz and Mineral Products Factory, in addition to Sanvira Carbon Factory. "The volume of investment in these projects is RO 76, 5 million (equivalent to approximately \$200 million). This year the Zone signed a leasing agreement with Eagle Ceramics to establish an advanced factory for producing ceramics over an area of 20,000 sqm with a cost of \$1.2 million".

"We recently signed an agreement to establish a factory for producing titanium dioxide, covering over 120,000 sqm, bringing a production capacity of 150,000 tonnes annually, at a cost of RO 43 million. Our facilities, services and infrastructure will contribute to meeting the requirements of the project by providing raw materials and export of the final product due to the port's proximity to the target markets. There are also more projects in the minerals sector that will be developed in the near future", Al Mahrizi explained.



Sohar Port is a key supporter to the free zone's growth

Diversity of projects

The CEO of Sohar Free Zone emphasised that the Zone enjoys a diversity of existing projects, where many sectors flourish, such as logistics, clean energy, iron, steel and minerals, chemicals and textiles. He noted that the Zone is rich with the diversity of investors' nationalities from the Sultanate, GCC countries, Europe, India, and South and East Asia.

Positive impacts

Al Mahrizi pointed out, "Attracting these projects is of great importance to the local business community of all kinds, creating business opportunities for local companies in financing and construction. As well, they provide operational services, which could be supplied by the companies operating in the Sultanate. This will definitely enhance the local economy cycle and local added value. Similarly, the Zone targets Omani industrialists and businesspersons to start their business from Sohar in order to maximise their benefit from the direct connection with the port, as well as the Zone's leading infrastructure and competitive rates".

Development phases

Regarding the Zone's development phases, Al Mahrizi explained, "The Zone, established in 2010, stretches over 4,500 hectares and has been divided into 5 phases. During the past years, most of the area was leased out

in the first phase, which prompted us to launch the second phase, which includes 516 hectares".

"The Zone was designed based on the system of specialised and integrated industrial complexes, where companies and factories are scattered in a manner that ensures highest level of flexibility in business. These complexes provide infrastructure and modern network of roads, water and electricity supply in the developed phases. Work has also been done to provide ideal warehouses and offices for businesses, industries and logistics service providers. The design of the free zone took into account all environmental standards that guarantee preserving environment and minimising emissions", he stressed.

Supporting facilities from Sohar Port

The CEO of Sohar Free Zone, who is also the Deputy CEO of Sohar Port, touched on the facilities and services offered by Sohar Port to investors in the Zone. "The Port is qualified to play a vital role in connecting the Sultanate with global markets, deriving strength from its strategic location in the centre of global trade routes between Asia and Europe. Another strength is reflected in the services, advantages and incentives provided to investors at a competitive rate, backed by infrastructure that enhances operational efficiency of projects. All these factors will serve attracting local and foreign investments alike".

We target export industries and invite

Local business community to take advantage of the opportunities

We are working to attract the biggest names in industry worldwide

We have strategic and marketing plans that enhance the growth and development of Sohar Port and Free Zone

Booming iron, steel, metals, textiles and clean energy sectors

We invite Omani industrialists and businesspersons to start their business from Sohar and maximise their benefit from the direct connection with the port

The zone is designed based on the system of specialised industrial complexes to ensure the highest level of integration between the investing companies

We started developing the second phase with the high demand for investment in the zone



High potentials of the free zone to store goods upon arrival in the Sultanate

"We offer promising investment opportunities in Sohar Port and Free Zone to potential investors. With a number of projects under construction, and operation of Qabas Solar Energy project, we strive to achieving further expansion and benefiting from regional and global markets, which will enable us to enhance our role in achieving the objectives of Oman Vision 2040 and promote logistics sector in the Sultanate", Al Mahrizi explained.

He also stressed, "Sohar Port and Free Zone offer an integrated list of advantages for major companies in the sector, including energy supply, abundance of raw materials, and world-class logistics services, complemented by multiple incentives for local and international partners. Additionally, there is a single centre and system for completing and processing government and regulatory procedures".

Promotional and marketing efforts

Sohar Free Zone is making great efforts in promoting its capabilities in order to accommodate various investment projects. Omar bin Mahmoud Al Mahrizi commented, "Our marketing plans focus on attracting investors from different countries. We recently launched five virtual seminars in cooperation with the Federation of Indian Chambers of Commerce and Industry, titled "Industrial and Logistics Solutions to Enhance Your Expansion Plans".

The first seminar, held last July, highlighted the advantages and strategic components of the free zone for Indian companies and ways to promote them to Gulf, African and American markets. It also shed light on the competitive cost of the free zone, the attractive incentives offered, rich resources of raw materials and the advantages of the free trade agreement between the Sultanate and USA.

The second seminar showcased the promising investment opportunities in the Food Industries Complex for Indian companies. In view of that, three local success stories of Sohar Mills Company, Omani Oil-Grain Milling Company and Al Hosun Company for Logistics and Storage Services were presented.

Contributing to economic diversification

Al Mahrizi explained the contributions of Sohar Free Zone in strengthening national economy and economic diversification. "Sohar Port and Free Zone contribute about 2.7% to the Sultanate's Gross Domestic Product (GDP) and award 13% of contracts to local companies, with most have been awarded to SMEs. The Zone was able to provide thousands of direct and indirect jobs and support youth training plans. On the social front, Al Mahrizi remarked that social responsibility marks a priority and key to a successful future. Our social



Storage sector, one of the active sectors in Sohar Free Zone

October 2021





One of the existing projects using local raw materials in its industries

responsibility efforts are based on three pillars: sustainability, commitment and transparency, reflected in supporting education and vocational training by providing scholars and development programmes for students, health and sports programmes for schools.

Future plans

Touching on the Zone's aspirations and future plans, Al Mahrizi stated, "The Zone will focus in the coming years on plastic and food industries, vehicle spare parts, renewable energy projects, mining, iron and steel, and circular economy projects. The Zone attracts downstream integrated projects that offer opportunities to establish projects that benefit from the products of existing factories".

"The Zone is currently working on attracting industries that depend on polyethylene product, which will be produced in Liwa Plastic Industries Complex. It targets industries that seek exporting their products and benefiting from the integrated logistics system of the port and free zone as one entity. The Zone attracts factories that export their products to GCC or India, so they establish their businesses in Sohar to get closer to the target consumer

markets. Accordingly, the Zone offers them competitive advantages, or invites businesspersons in these markets to visit Sohar", he added.

Sohar 2040

Al Mahrizi shed light on the future vision "Sohar 2040", stressing that its goal is to form an integrated logistics and industrial centre that to employ latest global technologies and follow highest standards of sustainability in various activities. He said that the logistics sector is one of the most prominent strengths and promising sectors contributing to diversifying national economy.

Enhancing zone's potentials

The CEO of Sohar Free Zone and Deputy CEO of Sohar Port confirmed, "There is a close cooperation between the Sohar Free Zone and the Public Authority for Special Economic Zones and Free Zones (OPAZ). We have been collaborating to enhance the Zone's potentials, one-stop shop services in Sohar and digital transformation to attract investments, accelerate the completion of investor transactions, facilitate the exercise of economic activities, and transform them into e-transactions".

Providing infrastructure, modern network of roads, and water and electricity supplies in the developed phases

Plastic industries, spare parts and renewable energy within our future plans

Sohar Port and Free Zone offer an integrated list of benefits and contribute 2.7% to the GDP

We focus on integrated projects for downstream that present opportunities to establish projects based on the products of existing factories



Potentials of Sohar Free Zone to attract investments

01

It is directly linked to the port under one administration, which is positively reflected in facilitating import and export operations.

02

Designing the zone according to the system of specialised and integrated industrial complexes, where factories are distributed among these complexes in a way that ensures the highest level of smoothness in their business.

03

Availability of energy and water resources at competitive rates regionally.

04

Competitive rates for logistics and construction costs.

05

Flexible and high-quality office space for rent at reduced rates.

06

Providing ready-made warehouses and refrigerated warehouses to serve various industries.

07

Digital transformation allows investors, suppliers and service providers to submit their applications through the "Tas'heel" platform and obtain their permits at record time. They can also submit land lease applications or register companies through digital platforms.

08

Handling and warehousing solutions make the zone an important logistic gateway for the transportation of goods in the GCC region.

09

Providing easy access to raw materials.

10

Allowing food packaging companies to benefit from aluminum and plastic production companies in the zone.

Providing integrated services to investors through one-stop shop



Fahad Al Esaei: Allocating an employee for each operating company to accelerate establishing projects and overcoming challenges



Sohar – مَانَاتِق:

Fahad bin Ali Al Esaei, Acting Director of Investors Services in Sohar Free Zone, confirmed that the zone provides integrated services to investors starting from the moment of registration and continues beyond commercial operation. "Once an investor is received, the front office employees at the one-stop shop start briefing him on the investment steps to establish a successful project in Sohar Free Zone", he explained.

"We are working to encourage our investors by allocating an employee for each company operating or wishing to work in the zone. This employee follows up on all aspects of each company and supports on overcoming any problem or challenge that comes across. This has led to increase the investors' confidence on the Zone", he added.

He pointed out that the one-stop shop also includes a Government Relations Department whose mission is to

communicate with these authorities and find solutions to the challenges facing companies.

Accelerating the exercise of economic activity

Al Esaei stressed that the facilities provided by Sohar Free Zone backed the acceleration of starting economic activity. Issuing the commercial registration of the company takes place within less than an hour, after which the investor can start the business.

"The Zone provides office rental services through a company that has been awarded to provide a comfortable office environment, in which investors can start their investment activities. The Zone also brings a range of warehouses, including cold stores, which investors can rent and start their businesses. As for the investors wishing to obtain lands for investment, they can submit their request to the one-stop shop in the Zone, through which they obtain the appropriate lands for their projects", Al Esaei remarked.

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Providing office and warehouse rental services and introducing investors to the steps of establishing a successful project



An office building established by one of the companies investing in the zone



Said Al Hajri, Partner in Sanvira Carbon, speaks to **MANATQ**:
We are aiming to convert petroleum coal, produced from refineries, into a product of high industrial value



The production volume is 600,000 tonnes of calcined petroleum coal annually and the GCC demand is about 1.5 million tonnes

Sohar – MANATQ:

Sanvira Carbon Company announced that it is gearing up for the soft operational opening of its factory, located in Sohar Free Zone. It is regarded the first factory of its kind in the Sultanate to work on converting petroleum coal into a product of industrial value. The Company's investment in the project is projected at around \$150 million. Said bin Salim Al Hajri, a partner in Sanvira Carbon Company, remarked that the factory will convert the petroleum coal, produced from refineries, into a product of high industrial value that is used in aluminum industries and other industrial and mining uses. Though, this petroleum coal is considered a difficult waste in oil refining processes.

Sanvira Carbon Company is one of the companies operating in the petrochemical industries sector and was established by

Oman Investment Authority (OIA), United Business Company and the Indian company, Sanvira Industries Limited, which operates similar factories in the United States and India and owns over 40 years of experience in this industry.

Production volume

The Company works in the field of producing calcined petroleum coal, which is specialised in extracting impurities from aluminum to get it pure. The Company's production volume of calcined petroleum coal reaches about 600,000 tonnes annually, while the demand in the GCC for the product is estimated at 1.5 million tonnes.

Said bin Salim Al Hajri, who also holds the CEO position of United Business Company, said: "The GCC countries have the largest aluminum smelters in the world due to having gas. For that reason, the factory has been established in Sohar Free Zone to get



Company's factory was still under construction when visited by مَانَاتِق

the easy access to the aluminum producers in GCC on one hand and to have the factory nearby Sohar Refinery, which supplies the required raw materials.

Valuable addition to Omani industries

The CEO of United Business Company stressed that the factory is a valuable addition to the Omani industries. It highly contributes to increasing the economic value of the petroleum coal produced by Sohar Refinery, which is exported as a raw material outside the Sultanate. The refinery produces it and thus brings good returns to the national economy.

Target markets

In regards to the markets that the Company focuses on, Said bin Salim Al Hajri, noted: "We are targeting the local market through Sohar Aluminum Company, as well as the GCC and European markets. Therefore, the Company has signed a memoranda of cooperation with several companies in Qatar, UAE and Saudi Arabia, in addition to

BP in France. The Company also intends to export its products to a number of other European countries".

Gains for Omani companies

Al Hajri highlighted the Company's role in motivating local companies to benefit from this project. "During the construction period, we relied heavily on Omani companies. We are also focusing on qualifying Omanis to work in the Company, so we could increase the number of employees to 200 and left up Omanisation rate to 50% during the next five years. In addition to this, the factory will produce approximately 24 megawatts of electricity every year through the steam produced during the calcination process. This energy will be available to companies operating in Sohar Free Zone at a cost lower than the usual electricity cost. The Company also plans to establish a limestone factory through the Minerals Development Oman Company, with which we discussed this project and look forward to bring the project out to reality in the next few years".



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The factory is a valuable addition to Omani industries and raises the economic value of petroleum coal

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Establishing the factory in Sohar facilitates the access to aluminum producers in GCC

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We target the local, GCC and European markets and we have signed memoranda of cooperation with them

Strategic and Precious Metals Processing Plant (SPMP) becomes a global pioneer Oman joins clean antimony industry

Sohar – مَافَاتِق:

Two years ago, in October 2019, the first shipment of clean antimony metal was released from Sohar Free Zone to international markets, placing the Sultanate of Oman among the first countries to produce antimony. Furthermore, on 18 November of the same year the first shipment of semi-pure gold bullion (gold doré) was exported from the same factory, confirming its success in this important industry, globally. Today, as the factory commemorates its third year, it confirms its ability to produce clean-source antimony with a purity rank standing at 99.8%.

The Strategic and Precious Metals Processing Plant (SPMP), located in Sohar Free Zone, is the world's first clean-source antimony factory and the largest of its kind outside of China. The factory is built over an area of 15,000 sqm, with a production capacity of 20,000 tonnes of antimony products.





Ali Al Balushi: Our objective is to make a positive impact on antimony industry globally and supply it with multiple and sustainable options

Within the SPMP plant, around 200 employees from 13 different countries gather to share their expertise in this important industry. According to Ali Al Balushi, Manager of HR and Administrative Resources, all SPMP employees are striving to achieve common objectives, and this is making a positive impact in the antimony industry at the global level. SPMP provides multiple clean-source antimony options, while producing the product according to the highest standards of occupational and environmental safety, starting from importing the resources, to disposal of industrial waste.

Strategic partnership

The SPMP factory was established in 2014, in partnership between Oman Investment Authority, the British company Tri Star Resources and DNR Industries Ltd, a subsidiary of Datco Group in Dubai. The idea behind establishing the factory dates back to 2012 when the shareholders had been stimulated by the technological development in the sector to establish a modern factory with international specifications for roasting antimony. The idea was backed by the shareholders' interest to take advantage of the paradigm shift brought about by technology and innovation in this important industry.



Abdulaziz Al Ghatrifi: We use innovative techniques and methods to ensure producing antimony at the highest environmental standards

Production

The factory converts primary sulfide concentrates into cleaner and more sustainable antimony, which is exported to regional and international markets. The Company's Chief Operating Officer, David Fourie, pointed out that the biggest applications and uses of metallic antimony are in alloying with lead and tin. Examples of antimony uses include the lead antimony plates required for lead-acid batteries, new generation batteries (liquid metal) and lithium-ion batteries. In addition, antimony is widely used as a flame retardant material, and in the plastics industry for items such as printed circuit boards, electrical appliances and electronics.

Additional products

Clean-source antimony is the Company's main product, in addition to other products, as Abdulaziz Al Ghatrifi, the Production Manager, explained. "The factory also produces semi-pure gold bars, which are bars of copper and gold alloys, in addition to environmentally-beneficial gypsum as a secondary product. Clean antimony production is achieved through the Company's willingness to import raw materials from clean resources, and through its use of innovative techniques and methods to ensure the product is produced

Antimony is widely used in plastics and other industries as a flame retardant material

By-products include impure gold bars and gypsum



Antimony alloy

Oman's strategic location enables the minerals and metals markets to access the Company's products



Kenneth Yeboah: Committed to international environmental standards and regulations and ensuring a more sustainable future for environment

with the highest environmental, health and occupational safety standards. This ensures the least possible impact on environment and society, compared to traditional methods."

Perfect location

Commenting on the selection of Sohar Free Zone for the location of the SPMP plant, David Fourie added: "Our objective is to make the most of the Free Zone's advantages such as the availability of modern logistical infrastructure and easy access to global trade routes through Sohar Port. This will allow the Company to achieve greater connectivity to its business and increase its growth and expansion opportunities. Sohar Free Zone also offers a single window service in addition to many key services under one roof. All of this provides us with an opportunity to work more efficiently and effectively and provide high quality services to customers and partners. The strategic location of the Sultanate of Oman also urges the Company to compete globally by offering a more diversified and reliable supply of clean antimony to many international markets."

Compliance with environmental standards

Kenneth Yeboah, HSE Manager, confirmed that SPMP is ensuring a more sustainable environmental future for the Sultanate, as it fully complies with global environmental



David Fourie: Being located at Sohar Free Zone allows the company to achieve greater connectivity to its business

standards and regulations, including the standards of the US Environmental Protection Agency and the European Environment Agency – as well as the guidelines and laws of the Environment Authority of the Sultanate.

Marketing products locally or internationally

David Fourie also touched on the Company's efforts to market its products locally and internationally. "The Company keeps pace with regional and global development through its commitment to establish economic relations with major foreign markets, and seeks to provide solutions focused on customers in particular. In addition, it strives to provide distinguished service and encouragement for conducting the right practices towards the environment. On the local front, the Company's production of minerals is in line with the efforts of the Sultanate's Government to strengthen the economy and make it more diversified and less dependent on oil and gas."

Building strong relations with partners

Laila Al Rashidiya, Supply Chain Manager at SPMP, spoke about the Company benefitting from the facilities available in the Sohar Free Zone and Port. She explained, "Sohar Free Zone is characterised by the availability of modern facilities and infrastructure, in addition to its proximity to the international logistics centre of Sohar Port, which enables

Granting SMEs preferential rates to enable them to participate in floated tenders



Furnace operator taking samples of metal



Laila Al Rashidiya: Creating favourable work environment for SMEs and developing small businesses in the Sultanate

the Company to perform its mission effectively and efficiently. The Company's location in Sohar Free Zone contributes to our building strong relationships with local partners in the industry. It also provides tax and custom exemption benefits. Additionally, the services provided by the free zone such as clearance services, transportation, logistics, 24/7 security services, storage facilities, and many other advantages, are also plus points for the Company."

Target markets

Abdulaziz Al Ghatrifi also highlighted SPMP's readiness to serve its target markets, due to its prime location: "The strategic location of the Sultanate of Oman between East and West allows many markets for strategic minerals and metals to access the Company's products. The Company is keen to establish mutually beneficial economic relations with all markets."

Omanisation

On the topic of Omanisation, Ali Al Balushi, explained: "The Company is committed to employ Omani youth to benefit from the expertise available in the company. We have about 200 employees, and as an Omani

company, we – with pride – always strive to achieve the nation's Omanisation strategy." Al Balushi added, "We have so far recorded an Omanisation rate of 44% and this is expected to reach 50% by Q1 of 2022. In addition, the Company has sought to attract global and local leaders and expertise as this ensures a real investment in building skilled employees by ensuring the transfer of knowledge from employees with industrial experience and advanced competencies to the new cadres in this industry. Also, the Company is always working on developing the competencies of Omani graduates and young professionals as well as qualifying them to work in the field of processing and producing precious metals."

Contributing to the national economy

On the Company's contribution to the national economy, Laila Al Rashidiya, remarked: "We at SPMP pride ourselves for the effective role played to achieve Oman Vision 2040 agenda, which aims to build a more productive and diversified economy, while providing opportunities to enhance economic competitiveness and stimulate economic growth. The percentage of domestic spending on goods and services, excluding raw antimony, has reached about 69% since the beginning of this year until the third quarter."

Supporting SMEs

Laila Al Rashidiya affirmed that the Company is committed to facilitating and creating favourable work environment for SMEs, while developing small businesses in the Sultanate through all its upstream and downstream operations. She added that the Company benefits from the services of SMEs in the areas of transportation, mobile phone services, workers' personal protection equipment, general supplies, and other requirements. She also emphasised that the Company grants SMEs preferential rates to enable them to participate in floated tenders.

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The company plans to increase Omanisation rate to 50% by Q1 of 2022

Al Tamman Indsil Ferrochrome: Production volume records 60,000 tonnes

High global demand for Oman's carbon ferrochrome products



Ahmed Al Moqbali: China, USA and European Union stand as the major target markets



Sohar – **MANATQ**:

Ahmed bin Said Al Moqbali, Human Resources Director at Al Tamman Indsil Ferrochrome Company, said that the Company's high Carbon ferrochrome products are receiving a strong demand in the global markets. In an interview with Manatq, he noted that the Company's products are well received in the global markets, reflecting the Company's keenness to deliver products of high quality. "China, USA and the European Union countries are at the forefront of the markets targeted by the Company, in addition to Japan, South Korea, Canada, Brazil, India, Egypt and the Middle East," he explained. The high carbon ferrochrome is used in the manufacture of stainless steel, which gives it the usual appearance and properties. It is also used in the manufacture of tool steels

and steel alloys, as well as many other heavy industries. The Company owns two furnaces for smelting metals used in the manufacture of high Carbon ferrochrome, which are powered by electric power.

Production volume

"The Company's factory, located in Sohar Free Zone, produces 60,000 tonnes annually of high Carbon ferrochrome. The Company has a plan to increase the production to 120,000 tonnes in the future to keep pace with the increasing demand for its products," Al Moqbali stated.

Many achievements

Al Moqbali added that the factory, which began commercial production in 2014, places the Sultanate on the global map

We provide the world with high-quality products and share RO 25 million to the GDP annually



of high Carbon ferrochrome producing and exporting countries, and the first country in the GCC and MENA to produce and manufacture this product. It also contributes to strengthening the Omani industry by providing countries with high quality products.

Promoting quarrying sector

He remarked that the Company relies heavily on the raw materials available in the Sultanate, and its establishment contributed to promoting the quarries that produce the raw materials used in producing iron ferrochrome, most notably chrome, which is a major source of production. He stressed, "The Company, through its manufacture of Omani chrome, contributes to increasing its

purity and economic value".

Economic gains

Al Moqbali confirmed, "The establishing the Company achieved many economic gains and contributed to market the Sultanate as an investment destination specialised in many heavy industries. In addition to its key role in promoting the quarrying sector, the Company exports its products overseas and contributes to attracting foreign exchange to the Sultanate. The Company's contribution to the country's GDP stands at RO 25 million annually. Further, the Company awards annually many contracts to SMEs and plays a prominent role in providing job opportunities for Omanis and qualifying them to work in this vital sector".

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Promoting quarrying sector, attracting foreign exchange and providing job opportunities mark the most prominent economic gains

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Omani chrome is the main source for producing ferrochrome and we work on increasing its economic value



During metal smelting



The furnace is being fed with raw materials



Misbah Qutb

An Egyptian writer specialised in economic affairs

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Manufacturing prospects in Sohar

It is not difficult, for those looking at the map of the Sultanate of Oman, to realise the strategic value of the triangle whose head is Sohar, overlooking the Sea of Oman, and its base is Salalah and Duqm, overlooking the Arabian Sea and opposite the Indian Ocean, either for the Sultanate, the region or its surroundings and beyond.

More can also be spotlighted about the great importance of Oman's location, historically and at present. The current economic, commercial and investment developments and the international alliances, interactions and conflicts between East and West have increased the strength and dependence of the Omani location and its influential logistical sites on the scales of all parties, and across the back and forth lines to and from Asia, as well as the GCC.

The standing of Sohar and other Omani ports and free zones will increase after creating more connections with other GCC countries and establishing the railway network. However, by the logic of geography at all times, the place and location bring different challenges more than presenting opportunities. The current challenges include providing financing for ambitious development plans, flexible dealing with oil price fluctuations, preparing and completing modern infrastructure in all cities, ports and regions of the Sultanate, reflecting the wise Omani approach when dealing with the regional tensions, confusions of transport and shipping and their stormy transformations with and maybe after Corona Pandemic.

In such situations and scenarios, the value of industry and manufacturing is more prominent than ever before. Beyond the traditional and necessary talk about diversifying the Sultanate's economy, making an appropriate aspect of the country's basic needs is a life necessity. This was presented by the lessons of the pandemic where international transport movement can stop all of a sudden, making a good use of the country's resources and maximising their value in a way that supports the well-being of its people; none has any value, but with the industry.

In this context, with all realistic and future calculations, the starting point for the industry in Oman is the triangle that we talked about, especially in Sohar. It is one of the oldest and most important cities in the Sultanate. It constitutes

a multi-purpose global port connecting the Gulf ports and the ports of India and China. Its location on a point that makes it almost as close to Dubai as it is to Muscat, the diversity of its geography between coastal, plain and mountainous and its tourist and commercial strength, as well as its proximity to areas of oil production and high minerals such as copper, chrome, zinc and gypsum are all making Sohar very promising.

Likewise, it has already established its position in industries with high added value, such as petrochemicals, aluminum, refining and energy, with the food and mining industries, and not all of this came out of nowhere, but stands behind it administrative, technical and organisational efforts at the highest level. In fact, this what attracted huge investments to its free zone, but the foreign investor in the non-aggregate industry in particular, does not come to the abundance of raw materials, nor the advantages, incentives and modern infrastructure, but most importantly of all, the existence of a comprehensive industrial policy.

Such policy in which inputs and outputs are integrated at the country level, and a minimum limit of active internal demand, and governmental and societal willingness to support the manufacturer at the time of non-commercial or irregular risks. As well, there must be a special incentive linked to the added value of the manufacturer who uses 100% local raw materials, and the incentive decreases whenever the value decreases. Actually, the public usually shows gratitude to the manufacturer who exploits local inputs and raw materials, whether foreign or national, and to those who employ the largest number of national employees and seek the help of foreigners just whenever necessary.

As they also say, "The great is great." Sohar has already established industrial partnerships with giant companies and will continue on this path with other major ones. However, some mining industries for quarry materials, in particular, may not need huge companies and here comes the role of the national manufacturer.

For the raw materials will not be manufactured in all its phases within the free zone, it is also important that the integration between what is outside and inside the zone is based on sustainable foundations.

With the gradual return of economic activities and recovery from the Covid-19 impacts

Al Mazunah Free Zone records a remarkable growth

Said Al Balushi: The number of investment projects, workers and vehicles coming to the zone has increased



Al Mazunah – :

Said bin Abdullah Al Balushi, Director General of Al Mazunah Free Zone, said that the Zone is witnessing an active commercial traffic currently with the gradual return of economic activities and recovery from the impacts of Covid-19 Pandemic.

He commented in a press statement that the Zone recorded a remarkable growth in a number of digital indicators, as the total number of vehicles received during August 2021 grew by 111% compared to the same month of 2020. The Zone also recorded during the same period a growth of 126% in the number of projects, while the number of Omani employees increased by 61%.

Investment projects

Commenting on the investment projects in Al Mazunah Free Zone, Said bin Abdullah Al Balushi, said: "The Zone recently witnessed the official opening of a plastic factory, while the services and facilities building has reached its final stages, with the expected distribution of its units before the end of this year. The Zone's Management is working on a tender for designing the building's fourth floor, which will be dedicated for

the Management and the Unified Services Centre. The project's total investment cost exceeds RO 3 million, and it will be built over an area of 11,000 sqm, bringing offices, shops and showrooms".

Research challenges

The Management of Al Mazunah Free Zone held a meeting with the owners of the investing companies and a number of officials and representatives of companies and customs clearance offices in the Zone. The meeting was aimed to discuss the challenges facing investors and operating companies, as well as to strengthen the joint efforts to develop the business and investment environment. Further, it was intended to introduce the current and future projects, which the Public Establishment for Industrial Estates, Madayn, is developing in the Zone.

It is noteworthy that Al Mazunah Free Zone, managed and operated by the Public Establishment for Industrial Estates - Madayn, was opened on November 24, 1999 as the first zone of its kind in the Sultanate. The Zone is located in the far Southwest of the Sultanate, standing as the Gulf gateway for transit trade to the Republic of Yemen and from there to East African countries.

Plastic factory is opened and services building is reaching final stages

The Zone's Management discusses key challenges facing business owners and investors


They confirmed their keenness to promote Duqm as a key investment destination

Sultanate's ambassadors speak to : Duqm is an integrated global economic gateway



High potentials for Duqm Port in facilitating trade traffic between East and West

Duqm –

A number of Oman's ambassadors to brotherly and friendly countries affirmed their keenness to promote the Special Economic Zone at Duqm (SEZAD) as a key investment destination in the Sultanate. In separate notes stated to  they expressed their pride in the achievements witnessed in Duqm. Also, they visited the Port of Duqm, Drydock, Duqm Airport, multi-purpose Fishing Port and other investment projects. The ambassadors emphasised that the Zone's spacious area, the strategic geographical location and the attractive investment environment serve promoting Duqm.

During the 2-day visit, organised in August 2021 by the Ministry of Foreign Affairs, in cooperation with the Public Authority for Special Economic Zones and Free Zones, the ambassadors were introduced to different investment opportunities in SEZAD. They visited a number of key projects in the Zone, including dry dock, port of Duqm, Say commercial district, Heavy Industries Zone, Duqm Refinery, Karwa Motors, Fishing Port, Fisheries and Food Industries Zone, Tourist



Saleh Al Harthi: Promoting SEZAD as an integrated economic destination for foreign investors in Kenya

Zone and the Rock Garden.

Global economic gateway

HE Saleh bin Suleiman Al Harthi, the Sultanate's Ambassador to the Republic of Kenya and the Sultanate's Permanent Representative to the United Nations Environment Programme, said: "We were pleased with the commendable efforts accorded to develop Duqm. The Zone marks an integrated global economic gateway, which is home for a large strategic port,


Ambassadors express their interest to promote SEZAD to place it on the global economic map



The ambassadors are being briefed on SEZAD masterplan

serving shipping and trade routes from the East to the West”.

"As key partners in supporting the Omani economy overseas, our visits are important and will open up new horizons for communication and cooperation, aimed at promoting this promising zone to be placed on the global economic map", he added.

An integrated economic destination

Al Harthi stated, "We are working to promote Duqm as an integrated economic, industrial, tourism and commercial destination for foreign investors in Kenya and neighbouring countries by organising direct meetings and mutual visits. Kenya is a destination for many foreign businesspersons and investors”.

He added that the Republic of Kenya - through its location on the Indian Ocean - stands as the main trade gateway to closed countries such as Uganda, Rwanda, South Sudan and Democratic Republic of Congo. Its port is only two days away from the Port of Salalah and the Port of Duqm, so it is important to focus on investors and businesspersons in Kenya and its neighbouring countries through direct meetings.

Visiting target countries

HE the Ambassador, Idris bin Abdulrahman Al Khanjari, the Sultanate's Permanent Representative to the United Nations and International Organizations in Geneva, stressed on the importance of increasing visits to the targeted countries to introduce SEZAD and its components, as well as presenting the incentives and opportunities available.



Idris Al Khanjari: Promotional visits contribute to attracting more investments

He emphasised on the significance of intensifying efforts to communicate with most countries through coordination with Ministry of Foreign Affairs, the Sultanate's missions abroad, and Oman Chamber of Commerce and Industry, which has good ties with the joint Arab Chambers of Commerce in many countries worldwide. Through these platforms, we can market SEZAD at the global level and organise regular and continuous seminars and programmes.

Suitable environment for investment

HE Dr. Saleh bin Amer Al Kharousi, the Sultanate's Ambassador to Kuwait, expressed that SEZAD is a model for the ideal environment for investment; it occupies a spacious area and is considered the largest economic zone in MENA. He commended the strong relations between the Sultanate and Kuwait, and the joint investments in developing Duqm Refinery. "There are great possibilities

Duqm Port is qualified to serve shipping routes between East and West

Ambassadors confirm their keenness to arrange conference meetings between SEZAD management and investors



A group photo of the ambassadors in front of a ship anchored in the dry dock



SEZAD

spacious area, geographical location and investment environment support the promotional efforts of Duqm



Saleh Al Saqri: We will focus on promoting SEZAD to international companies in Vietnam

for Kuwaiti Governmental and private establishments to set up or invest in projects in SEZAD.

Promoting SEZAD to international companies

HE Saleh bin Mohammed Al Saqri, the Sultanate's Ambassador to the Socialist Republic of Vietnam, affirmed that the Embassy will play its role in promoting investment in the Special Economic Zone at Duqm, especially in the logistics field, medium industries and the fisheries sector. "Vietnam's economy is based on foreign investments at a rate of approximately 70%, and the presence of Korean, Japanese and European foreign companies is an opportunity to meet with officials of these companies to promote Duqm. In addition, the promotional package includes the incentives



Dr. Saleh Al Kharusi: There are great potentials for Kuwaiti establishments to invest in Duqm

and facilities provided to foreign investors, especially as Oman enjoys security stability and ports open to various countries of the world", the Ambassador stated.

Conference meetings with investors

Al Saqri added, "SEZAD marks Oman's most promising economic destination. I suggested that the concerned parties shall coordinate through the Ministry of Foreign Affairs and Sultanate's Embassies overseas to organise direct conference meetings with investors and businesspersons in the countries.

"We aspire to authorising Embassies to issue direct visit visas to the Sultanate for foreign investors for a period of two weeks, and this will urge investors to visit the Sultanate and explore the available investment opportunities", Al Saqri said.

An investment of RO 30 million with an annual production capacity of 27,000 tonnes

Establishing a complex for canning tuna, sardines and marine products in Duqm



Muscat –  :

The Public Authority for Special Economic Zones and Free Zones (OPAZ) signed on September 5, 2021 a land usufruct agreement with the International Marine Products Company, which intends to set up a complex for canning tuna, sardines and other marine products over an area of 85,000 square metres.


The agreement was signed by Eng. Yahya bin Khamis Al Zadjali, In Charge of Managing Operations of the Special Economic Zone at Duqm and Eng. Nabil bin Salim Al Ruwaidi, Chairman of International Marine Products. The complex is allocated within the Fisheries and Food Industries Zone, and nearby the multipurpose Fishing Port, with a production capacity of 27,000 tonnes per year, subject to future expansion, with an estimated total cost of RO 30 million.

Maximising the return of fish wealth

Ali bin Nasser Al Rasbi, General Manager of International Marine Products Company, pointed out: "This project is streamlined with Oman's vision 2040, as it will achieve the Sultanate's vision of economic diversification by maximising the return of fish wealth. The factory will promote the domestic product through local supply chains. Hence, it will eventually boost investment opportunities and support job opportunities".

"The Company will launch a training for employment programme to train Omanis in different operations areas of Company's operations, he added.

It is worth noting that International Marine Products Company is one of the companies affiliated with the Fisheries Development Oman (FDO) and will be the manufacturing arm of the holding group.



Ali Al Rasbi:
Maximising the return of fish wealth and increasing the value-added of fish products before export



Renaissance Village Duqm completes Phase 1 of expansion project



Stephen Thomas


CEO of Renaissance Services speaks to : Providing 28,000 beds upon completion of all five expansion phases


RO 50 million
invested in
the 5-phase
expansion
project


The Village is a
cost-effective,
sustainable
and ILO-
compliant
choice

Interviewed by
Abdulaziz bin Ahmed Al Jahdhami

In July 2021, Renaissance Village Duqm (RSVD) marked the completion of the first phase of its expansion project, which started in February 2020. The expansion comes in response to the increasing demand for worker accommodation in the Special Economic Zone at Duqm (SEZAD) that is compliant with the International Labour Organization's (ILO) standards in living facilities and ensures safety, healthcare, nutrition and dignity to residents.

Speaking to , Stephen Thomas, CEO of Renaissance Services Company, pointed out, "The Company allocated an investment of RO 50 million to develop this expansion project, which is intended to increase the capacity of Renaissance Village Duqm to address the demand from the current and upcoming projects in Duqm. Phase 1 covers the bulk of the expansion with an investment of RO30 million. The project will add over 10,000 beds to the Village across five different

phases of expansion. The range of facilities will include accommodation blocks for all workforce categories with both ensuite and dormitory-style options, restaurants, recreation areas, laundry, kitchen, water storage and sewage treatment facilities."

Phase 1 completed

Commenting on the project's progress, the CEO said, "The first phase of expansion was completed in July this year, bringing the total to around 22,500 beds, with additional central facilities. The trigger point for the next phases is being reviewed due to the ongoing pandemic scenario and will be based on the demand projections for the next set of projects in Duqm."

"The project timeline got extended due to pandemic-related restrictions on manpower and resource mobilisation. However, RSVD was able to meet the demand of our clients during this period through a gradual handover of buildings. Work continued at a slower pace, though maintaining all relevant safety protocols enforced by the concerned



authorities," he added.

Occupancy rate

In March 2020, RSVD recorded a commendable occupancy rate of over 70%. In this regard, the CEO commented, "We have been taking all the necessary safety measures. We absorbed all the costs of keeping people safe and our clients and their projects operational. However, due to the impact of COVID-19, our occupancy fell significantly to below 50% and has been rising slowly since. Future expansion will follow as demand increases, so the full capacity will exceed 28,000 beds upon completion of the multi-phase project."

Increasing future demand

Commenting on the expansion project, Stephen Thomas stated, "With high growth potential at Duqm, we foresee an increasing sustainable demand for our accommodation solutions as more projects are opened within SEZAD. Thus, with the Renaissance standards and affordability, we believe that we will continue to be the first choice

for the clients, offering an integrated and comprehensive accommodation and lifestyle services. Also, the authorities are committed to workforces on major projects being housed in compliant accommodation at RSVD." Therefore, residential complexes like RSVD are an outstanding, cost-effective and sustainable choice over labour housing arrangements in local residential neighbourhoods.

The CEO said customer satisfaction is very important for Renaissance Services. "We hold service delivery feedback sessions with our key clients as a matter of routine and are pleased that our clients are consistently delighted by the service we deliver. There will be issues in an operation of this size, but we always seek to respond and correct any shortfall. We regularly consult with all customer communities at RSVD. We also conduct an independent Net Promoter Score (NPS) survey, in which we scored 94 points in 2020. Our intention is to continuously improve on our score each year."



Ensuring safety, healthcare, nutrition and dignity to residents

Offering integrated and comprehensive accommodation and lifestyle services

Scoring a high customer satisfaction rate of 94%

Allocating 18 sqkm for the Artificial Intelligence Zone in Duqm



Ahmed Al Farsi


Head of the Steering Committee for the Artificial Intelligence Zone:
We started promoting the zone to attract investments to the sector

Our plans include artificial intelligence experiments, drones, and Internet of things applications

The Steering Committee reviews the projects developed by companies operating in Duqm and discusses challenges

Muscat – :

The Public Authority for Special Economic Zones and Free Zones has allocated a zone for artificial intelligence experiments, drones and future technologies in Duqm, covering a total area of 18 square kilometres and an altitude of 80 metres above the sea level. The zone is located nearby the fishing industries and clean energy zones, and a steering committee was formed to supervise the works of the zone.

Speaking to , Ahmed bin Saleh Al Farsi, Head of the Steering Committee, pointed out: "The committee, formed in June 2021, includes representatives from several government entities, namely the Ministry of Defense, Royal Omani Police, Ministry of Higher Education, Scientific Research and Innovation, Ministry of Transport, Communications and Information Technology, and Telecommunication Regulatory Authority. In August, the

committee members visited the zone allocated for artificial intelligence experiments and other key projects in the Special Economic Zone at Duqm (SEZAD). The visit aimed to familiarise the committee with the operations of these projects and major artificial intelligence initiatives".

"During the visit, the committee looked into the mechanism of facilitating the procedures of experiments and investment projects and discussed providing the necessary infrastructure, services and coverage for telecommunications network. It also touched on the offices that will be provided in the zone, so they mark and integration of the 3D printing technology and using containers to build offices", he added.

Localising investment opportunities

In this regard, Al Farsi highlighted the committee's objectives explaining that the most important objectives are localising investment opportunities in the field of artificial intelligence, drones experiments,



Committee's members are being briefed on the masterplan of SEZAD

October 2021 

future technology, creating and ensuring the existence of the infrastructure for implementing the e-government strategy and smart cities. Other objectives include finding research opportunities of which the committee shall supervise its implementation and making the most of it for scientific and academic uses, as well as overcoming the challenges facing the implementation of artificial intelligence projects in the zone.

Promoting the zone

He affirmed that promoting this zone has been started with the aim of attracting investments in artificial intelligence experiments by local and international companies in this field to start conducting research and experimental projects. "In line with the efforts to make this project a success, a number of exemptions and facilities will be provided to all those interested as the committee focuses on attracting investments in artificial intelligence projects, drones, and Internet of things applications", Al Farsi explained. "The committee's plan includes implementing an aerial survey for the multi-purpose Fishing Port, a geographical survey for inspection purposes to detect illegal waste and random landfill in SEZAD, and an experiment to deliver items and postal parcels in cooperation with Oman Post", he commented.

Various activities

Regarding the activities that the committee plans to conduct in the zone, Ahmed bin Saleh Al Farsi noted that the committee will work on different activities, most notably: artificial intelligence experiments, drone experiments, Internet of things applications, and self-driving car experiments.

He confirmed that the committee's plan to attract major projects in the smart cities field in Duqm includes providing telecommunications services in partnership with the Telecommunications Regulatory Authority (TRA), providing offices for companies and individuals wishing to conduct experiments, and providing electricity, water, roads and fiber-optic services in the sites that will be invested in. He also expressed his aspiration for the vision and objective of this project would be achieved. Accordingly, this would enhance business capabilities in all fields, which could be boosted by the attracted foreign investments for being the first of its kind project.



Scan the QR Code to view the masterplan of the Artificial Intelligence Zone

Our objective is to localise investment opportunities in the field of artificial intelligence

We are working on finding research opportunities of which the committee shall supervise its implementation and making the most of it for scientific and academic uses

The main competences of the committee

Establishing controls and policies for artificial intelligence projects, drone experiments, and future technology in the zone in line with Oman Vision 2040.

Localising investment opportunities in the field of artificial intelligence, drones experiments and future technology.

Creating and ensuring the existence of infrastructure for implementing the e-government strategy and smart cities.

Finding research opportunities of which the committee shall supervise its implementation and making the most of it for scientific and academic uses.

Overcoming the challenges and difficulties facing the implementation of artificial intelligence projects, drones and future technology in the zone.

Developing the zone to find opportunities to conduct experiments of modern technologies used locally and internationally before adopting them.

Drone experiments kick off in the Special Economic Zone at Duqm



الدقم
Duqm – **العمان**

The Special Economic Zone at Duqm (SEZAD) witnessed in September 2021 the demonstration of unmanned aircrafts (Drones) experiments, reflecting the interest of the Public Authority for Special Economic Zones and Free Zones (OPAZ) to benefit from such technologies. These drones will be employed for the purposes of mapping, topographical surveying and preparing 3D models for the Zone.

The pilot demonstration, organised by OPAZ and Esbaar Company, included flying drones over Duqm Frontier residential complex with 360 degree filming. Accordingly, all visuals will be automatically converted into a 3D model afterward. This demo marks one of the experiments that will be conducted as planned by the steering committee of the Artificial Intelligence Zone in Duqm, including experiments for inspection, delivering food and postal parcels, providing aerial data and images to develop comprehensive, accurate visions. Introducing this technology serves enhancing the capabilities and techniques used by engineers in construction and maintenance. Likewise, it will improve the implementation of technical operations to ensure a better accuracy, increase productivity and efficiency as well as reducing business interruption.

Activating artificial intelligence techniques

Qusai bin Saif Al Ismaili, Systems Analyst at OPAZ, said: "Organising this first of its kind demo experience reflects OPAZ objective to benefit from artificial intelligence techniques in different activities in the Zone. As well, it is streamlined with OPAZ initiatives to support local companies specialised in artificial intelligence and providing opportunities for Omanis to develop their skills and capabilities in this field".

Fruitful experience

Khalid bin Amer Al Hajri, Drone Operator at Esbaar Company, pointed out: "Profound thanks to OPAZ giving us the opportunity to conduct an experiment in operating drones in Duqm. The exceptional weather and wind speeds enabled us to identify these different conditions from the rest of the Sultanate. This experience marked a valuable addition to our practical know-how, so we were able to study the weather condition, develop a proper work plan and use two types of drones to collect data". Through the steering committee of the Artificial Intelligence Zone, OPAZ is seeking to attract such experiments and resettle them in the Zone. It is worth noting that Esbaar is an Omani company specialised in providing artificial intelligence services and autonomous systems.

Employing information for mapping and topographical survey purposes

Experiments serve implementing artificial intelligence techniques in the zone's activities



Project's team discuss the plan prior the first experiment

October 2021 **الدقم**

In the second phase of drone experiments in SEZAD

Conducting two experiments for delivering postal and food parcels



The drone is landing in front of SEZAD building, delivering postal parcel

Duqm – 

The second phase of drones' experiments focused on the services facilitating daily life necessities. Early October 2021 saw conducting two experiments by the USA-based company, UVL Robotics, specialised in advanced technologies such as artificial intelligence and drones, in cooperation with Azim Technology Company, a local company providing artificial intelligence services and autonomous systems.

In the first experiment, a number of parcels and postal mails were delivered from Oman Post office in Duqm to the building of Special Economic Zone at Duqm. The experiment succeeded in delivering the goods within a few minutes, flying the drone to around 11 km. In the second experiment, a basket of food and beverages was delivered from the "911 Restaurant" to Renaissance Village, flying for about 6 km. The experiment marked a success in delivering food parcels in a record time. During the two experiments, the team employed an electric drone that

can fly 25 km and carry a payload of up to 5 kg.

UVL Robotics provides infrastructure solutions for delivery services by offering drone landing station, coming as a smart box to take over thirty parcels. Being built with the latest technologies in this field, the box includes an electronic screen that makes it easier for the user to make payments and get the postal parcel by putting his interactive code.

Sultan Al Hatali from Azim Technical Company expressed his appreciation to OPAZ for inviting companies to conduct drone experiments in SEZAD. Moosa Al Balushi, Regional Director of UVL Robotics, commented, "The experiment implemented by Company in Duqm confirmed our capabilities in implementing such experiments that contribute to accelerating the transportation of postal and food, parcels and other services that are positively reflected on daily life.



Using a drone that can fly 25km and carry a payload of 5kg


Focus on the gains made in daily life and to avoid traffic jams



To ensure transparency and fairness for all investors in the Zone

Launching land selection e-service for investors in SEZAD

Muscat –  :

The Public Authority for Special Economic Zones and Free Zones (OPAZ) announced today the launch of an electronic land selection service for investors in the Special Economic Zone at Duqm (SEZAD).

Introducing the new service reflects OPAZ efforts to facilitate and expedite procedures for investors in the Special Economic Zone at Duqm, reduce the time and effort, and ensure transparency and fairness for all investors in the Zone. OPAZ plans to extend this service to include other free zones.



Ahmed Al Fazari:
Presenting all vacant lands on interactive maps for all activities


The new service allows investors to select the plot of land directly as they determine the type of project

This service allows investors to select the plot of land directly as soon as an investor determines the type of project and the required space of the plot. Based on the application's details, the system displays the vacant plots in the masterplan for investors via the Geographic Information System (GIS), which has become one of the modern technologies used in achieving governance of procedures. The new service assists the investor to easily make the investment decision by selecting the appropriate location of the land while providing a spatial description that reinforces the decision.

800 economic activities

Moreover, the service is distinguished by allowing investors to select the plot of land in interactive maps for more than 800 different economic activities. It also brings other features, including: the possibility of measuring the distance between the selected land and the key landmarks in the Special Economic Zone at Duqm, providing

accurate information about the land's altitude above sea level, merging joint lands, getting full measurements of lengths and spaces, determining the geographical location coordinates, and sharing the approximate distance of the land from the nearby utilities such as electricity, water, telecommunications, and roads.

Further, investors could also access the service of searching and inquiring about information on interactive maps, printing maps, obtaining modern satellite images of the area, data of the masterplan, public services and nearby landmarks. Likewise, investors can request for a land with different specifications, as concerned employees will act upon the investor's request.

Investors can access the newly launched service through the digital portal (eoss.duqm.gov.om) from all over the world. To obtain the service, they have to register in the portal, submit the usufruct request, pay the fees, and then choose the land, which is appropriate for their projects.


Presenting all vacant lands on interactive maps for all activities



SEZAD backs telecommunication network with 13 new towers



Duqm – :

Oman Tower Company has started installing a number of telecommunication towers in the Special Economic Zone at Duqm (SEZAD), aiming to enhance the performance of the telecommunications network in the Zone and to keep pace with population and urban growth.

Eng. Azzan bin Said Al Hasani from the Public Utilities Department in the Special Economic Zone at Duqm stated that SEZAD had approved and issued sketches to install 13 telecommunication towers distributed over different locations in the Zone. "The locations have been identified post conducting site visits by a team of specialists from the Public Authority for Special Economic Zones and Free Zones (OPAZ), the Special Economic Zone at Duqm, Telecommunications Regulatory Authority (TRA) and the telecommunication service providers. These visits are aimed to study the possible ways to strengthen the telecommunications network in the Zone and prioritise the sites where the towers and fiber-optic network switches are installed. Oman Tower Company has started the construction of the first towers in Al Sa'ada neighbourhood", noted Al Hasani.



Azzan Al Hasani: Studying the possible ways to strengthen telecommunications network and prioritise the sites where the towers are installed

Fiber optics

On the other hand, Oman Broadband Company started connecting a number of fiber optic networks in the commercial district of the Special Economic Zone at Duqm, in line with starting developing the road network in the new commercial district. Al Hasani pointed out, "OPAZ commends the cooperation accorded by the Telecommunications Regulatory Authority (TRA) and the service providers to strengthen the telecommunications network in SEZAD and provide 5G networks in the next phase to keep pace with the Zones requirements".


Providing fiber optic networks in the commercial district and the 5G in the next phase

Post obtaining the required licenses Duqm invites fishing enthusiasts

Duqm –  :

The Special Economic Zone at Duqm (SEZAD) urges individuals coming to the zone to practice the hobby of fishing, but stressed on the requirement to obtain a license from the Ministry of Agriculture, Fisheries Wealth and Water Resources through the following link: <https://www.maf.gov.om/eServices>.

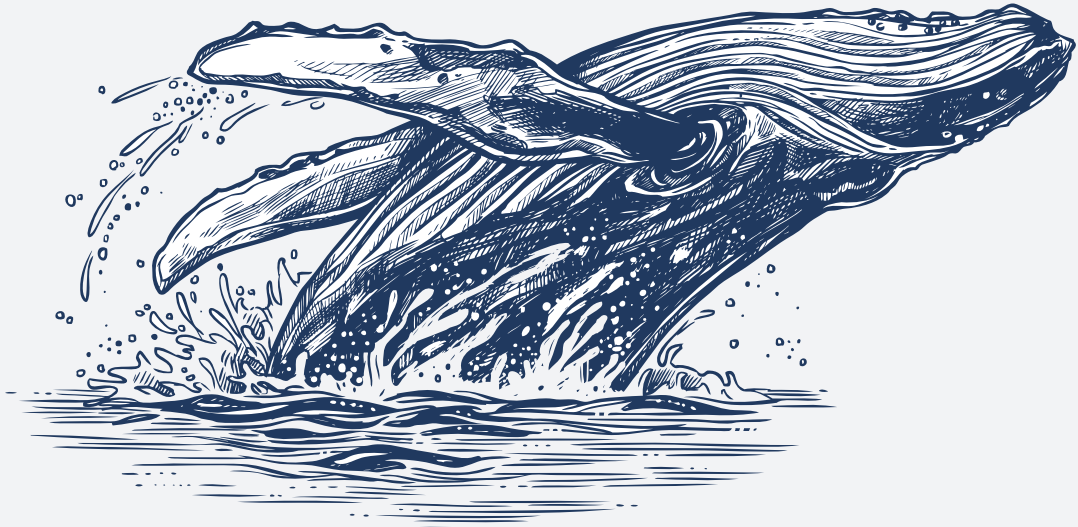
This endeavour reflects the continuous cooperation between the Management of SEZAD and the Department of Fisheries in Al Wusta Governorate. As well, it comes in line with the "Discover Duqm" campaign, which focuses on providing many tourist activities for visitors and residents alike in SEZAD. The link of licenses is featured on the website of the Special Economic Zone at Duqm.

The Ministry of Agriculture, Fisheries Wealth and Water Resources grants two types of

licenses to the fishing enthusiasts, the first is for a period of one day and charges only RO 2, while the second is for a period of one year, with a fees price of RO 30. The product is for personal consumption only and may not be used for commercial purposes, and enthusiasts are not allowed to fish unauthorised marine species such as lobster, shrimp and abalone.

These conditions enable the fishing enthusiasts to practice fishing in an organised and legal manner and without any conflict with the local fishermen in Duqm. The Special Economic Zone at Duqm (SEZAD) enjoys a variety of fisheries and a coast stretching over 90 km long, which can accommodate various types of marine activities.

From here the Humpback whale passed



Discover Duqm documents the most exciting moments in the story of Duqm

Duqm - 

As part of its efforts to introduce the tourism potentials of the Special Economic Zone at Duqm (SEZAD), the "Discover Duqm" team prepared a set of souvenirs for visitors coming to the Zone. Such souvenirs are produced in a bid to document the most exciting moments in Duqm and highlight its tourist attractions. The most prominent of these souvenirs is a picture of a Humpback whale that passed through Duqm in January 2021 and was rescued by a team of specialists. The Humpback whale lives in the Arabian Sea and is regarded among the five most in danger groups of whales.

The "Discover Duqm" team also celebrated the Rock Garden, which ranks among the rarest natural rock gardens worldwide.

Scan here to discover Duqm



1



2



3



6



5



4



1140

Hotel rooms in Duqm

Duqm-Saleh Al Mamari:

◆◆◆
The number of hospitality properties has increased from 3 to 12 different options

◆◆◆
The continuous growth in the number of visitors urges investors to invest in the hospitality sector

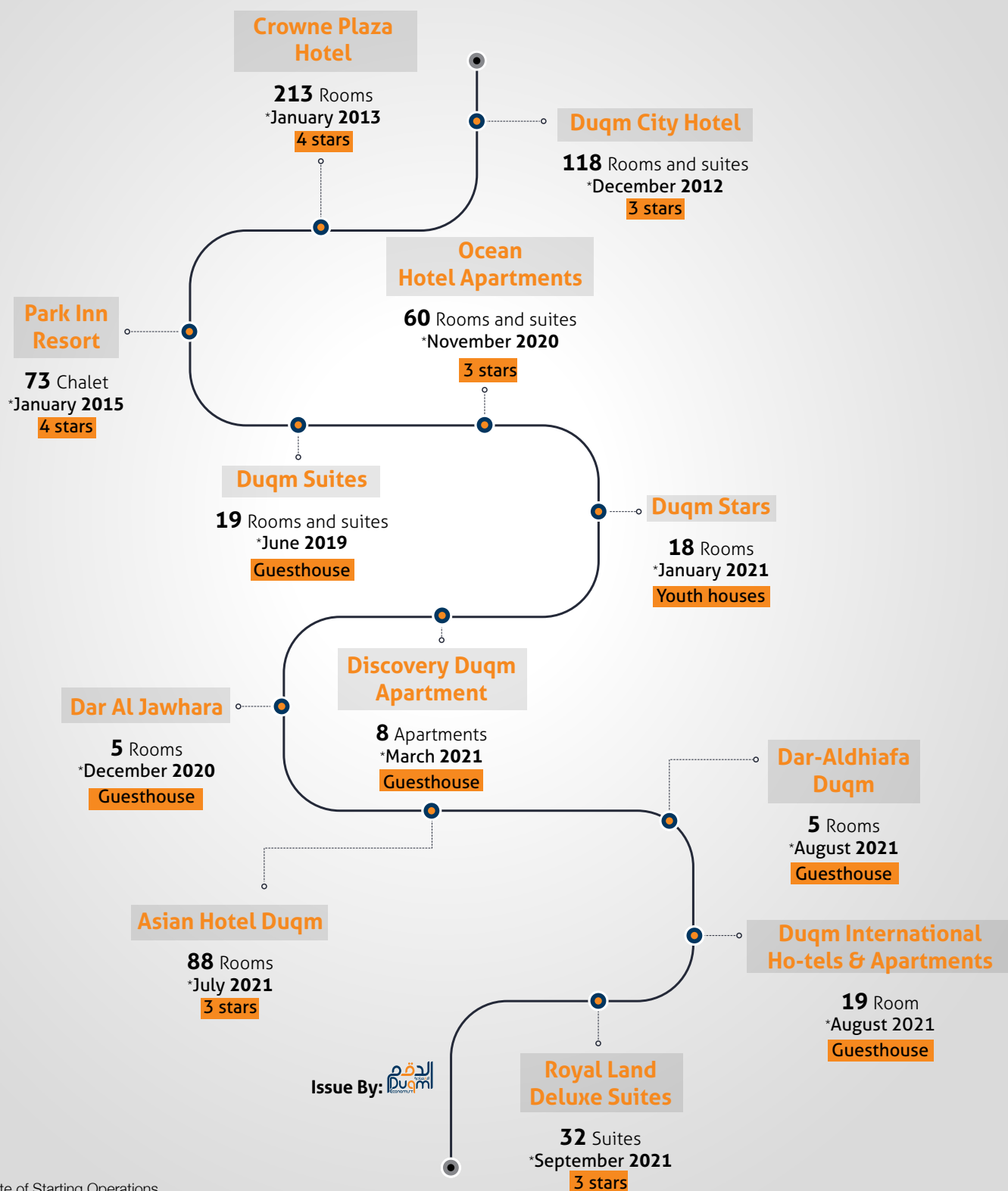
The number of hospitality properties in the Wilayat of Duqm has increased significantly during the last few years. This came as a result of the increase in the number of projects and services as well as the expansion of businesses in the Special Economic Zone at Duqm (SEZAD). Accordingly, this contributed to the increase in the number of visitors to the Zone, coming for business, tourism or residence purposes.

In view of that, the investment rate in the hospitality sector has increased as reflected in the increase in the number of hotel rooms through the operation of 9 new hotel properties; Asian Hotel, Ocean Hotel Apartments, Royal Land Hotel for Deluxe

Suites. In addition, there are other youth houses and guesthouses such as Duqm Stars, Discovery Duqm Apartments, Dar Al Jawhara, Guesthouse, Duqm Suites, and Duqm International Hotels and Apartments. The statistics indicate that Duqm has recorded the highest occupancy rate in the hotel sector in the Sultanate since 2017, due to the lack of supply versus demand. This attracted investors to invest in the hospitality sector, leading to increase the number of hospitality properties from 3 options, namely Crowne Plaza Duqm Hotel, Park Inn Resort, and Duqm City Hotel, to 12 different options offering a total of 1,140 hotel rooms.



► Indicators of the hospitality sector in Duqm until September 2021



* Date of Starting Operations

Crowne Plaza Duqm Hotel

The 4-star Crowne Plaza Hotel Duqm is one of the most important tourism projects in the Special Economic Zone at Duqm. The hotel, which was built by the Omani Tourism Development Company (Omran Group), was opened in January 2013. It features 213 rooms and suites, overlooking the sea. The hotel is located within around 10 km from the commercial district in Duqm. It is also equipped with all the luxury amenities and services that guests are looking for, whether businesspersons, tourists, or those coming for holiday to escape the hustle and bustle of cities.



Park Inn Resort Duqm

Park Inn Resort Duqm offers another option among the ideal staycation options for families in the zone. This 4-star resort, located in the Tourist Zone overlooking the sea, brings 73 chalets with each consists of a one or two bedroom and a hall. It also organises a number of activities during holidays and Eid holidays. It opened its doors for guests in January 2015.

City Hotel Duqm

The 3-star City Hotel Duqm is one of the Sultanate's most occupied hotels in the recent years and has benefited from the economic growth in the Special Economic Zone at Duqm (SEZAD). The hotel was established by Omran Group and opened in 2012, bringing 118 rooms and suites. It is located nearby the commercial district in Say Village.



Asian Hotel

Asian Hotel Duqm opened its doors to serve visitors by mid-year 2021 as an addition to the other 3-star hotels in Duqm. It provides 88 hotel rooms and primarily located close to all commercial services.



Ocean Hotel Apartments

Located in the Special Economic Zone at Duqm, Ocean Hotel Apartments has been providing its hotel services since November 29, 2020. In addition to the rooms, the hotel brings a number of other facilities including a restaurant, fitness centre, a lounge, and free WiFi. This 3-star hotel offers airline tickets reservation service in addition to a package of tourism and leisure services for guests who are wishing to explore the surrounding area.

The hotel includes 60 hotel rooms, including 35 suites, with all units are air-conditioned and featuring a seating area, TV, kitchen, dining area, and a private bathroom with toiletries and a bathtub.

Royal Land Deluxe Suites

Royal Land Deluxe Suites launched its hotel services on September 1, 2021 and contains 32 hotel suites. Eng. Ahmed Abu Al Maati, Hotel Manager, said that the hotel is located behind Badr Al Samaa Hospital, and is distinguished by its location that gives guests a good experience of relaxation at the same time. The hotel is located at the commercial district, featuring free private parking, in addition to a spacious restaurant that offers different types of food and cuisines. Further, work is currently underway to develop other new facilities in the hotel to improve the staying experience of the guests.



Discovery Hotel Apartments

Discovery Hotel Apartment is located in the commercial district near the Rock Garden. Each of the 8 spacious and integrated apartments includes a kitchen with cooking kits, refrigerator, smart TV, ironing facilities, wardrobe and seating area.

A car rental service is available at the hotel apartments, which is 14 km away Duqm Airport, and the property offers a shuttle service to the airport with an additional cost.

Duqm Stars

Duqm Stars offers family rooms within the category of youth hostels and receives guests around the clock. The hotel brings 18 hotel rooms and is located near the commercial district, about 12 km far from Duqm Airport.

Dar-Aldhiafa Duqm

Dar-Aldhiafa Duqm guesthouse is located in the commercial district at Sai in the Wilayat of Duqm. It provides a number of unique services for families who are looking for a special place for their children that gives them more fun and

joy. The guesthouse different seating areas and 5 bedrooms, in addition to swimming pool, billiards and a kitchen.

Dar Al Jawhara

Dar Al Jawhara is among the guesthouses located near the commercial district in Duqm. The property includes family rooms, a guest lounge and 5 hotel rooms, in addition to a 24-hour front desk. Dar Al Jawhara provides tourism services that guests are looking forward.

Duqm Suites

Duqm Suites, which is classified as a guesthouse, is distinguished by its location in the commercial district in the city centre and close to all services. It includes 19 rooms and suites and offers many hotel services to its guests.

Duqm International Hotels and Apartments

Duqm International Hotels and Apartments, classified as guesthouses, contains 10 hotel rooms with a round the clock room service. The hotel, located in the commercial centre in Duqm, started operations in August 2021.

Creating an artificial coral reef park

Duqm

attracts tourists with a unique diving experience

Duqm – :

The Special Economic Zone at Duqm (SEZAD) has started establishing a park for artificial coral reefs, which is aimed at creating an attractive environment for fish and divers and providing an unparalleled diving experience for tourists, residents and people of Duqm. The project is being managed by a group of SEZAD employees. Commenting on the project, Nasser bin Mohammed Al Rahbi said, "This new project comes in line with the "Discover Duqm" Campaign, implemented by SEZAD Management in cooperation with a number of other government bodies and projects operating in the Zone. The Campaign aims at promoting the tourism sector and achieving SEZAD's objectives to be a perfect destination to live, stay and invest in".



Mohammed Al Mahrouqi: Selecting an area nearby Hamar Island to establish the artificial reefs park

He added that the execution plan includes sinking military vehicles consisting of planes and trucks, as well as dropping concrete objects in selected locations in the sea.

Surveys for 5 sites

On the other hand, Mohammed bin Hamed Al Mahrouqi noted, "We have conducted surveys for 5 sites with the collaboration of a team from the Royal Navy of Oman, Public Authority for Special Economic Zones and Free Zones and Gulfar Engineering and Contracting. Based on the environmental



Nasser Al Rahbi: Sinking military vehicles, aircraft and concrete objects in selected locations in the sea

and tourism considerations of the surveys conducted, the team has selected the area nearby Hamar Island to establish the artificial reefs park.

SEZAD team expressed profound thanks and appreciation to all the project's sponsors, namely the Ministry of Defense, Cobra Tadagoa Company, Gulfar Engineering and Contracting Company, Port of Duqm Company and Oman Drydock Company. The team confirmed that the support accorded by the sponsors highly contributed to the success of this project.

Creating an attractive environment for fish and divers, and promoting tourism sector are the key objectives



Divers are getting ready to dive during the site inspection phase



Izbat Al Maha

An ambitious project reflecting and preserving the

Omani traditions

Duqm -  :

A visit to Duqm would not be enjoyed without spending an evening in Izbat Al Maha, which has been set to be a haven for those desert lovers, trying to escape the hustle and bustle of cities and the noise of factories.





Izbat Al Maha welcomes visitors with an Omani coffee



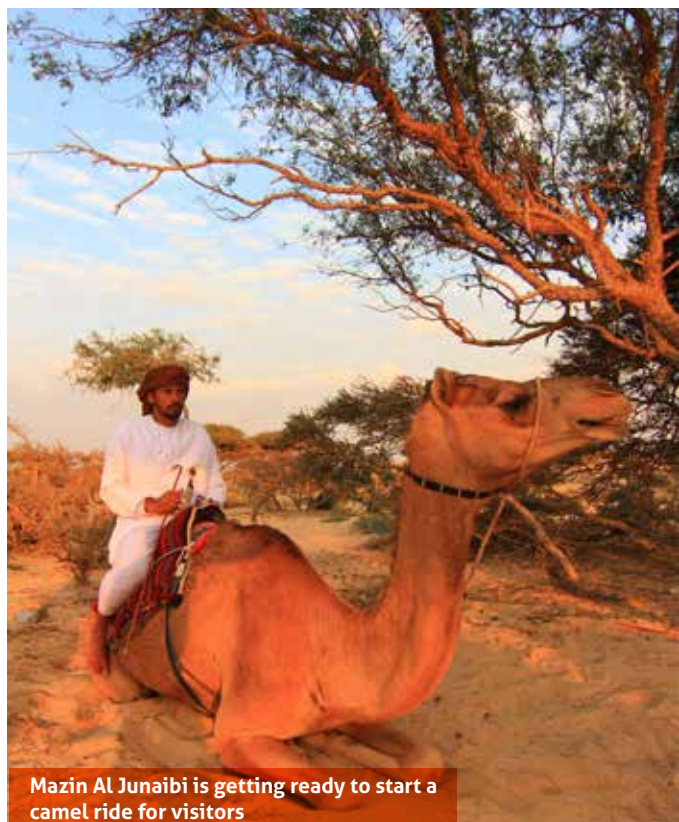
One of the tents prepared for guests

Izbat Al Maha was established in March 2021 by Mazin bin Saad bin Said Al Junaibi. According to Mazin, his objective behind setting up this place is to revive the heritage of Beduin lifestyle and preserve the genuine Omani customs and traditions.

The Omani coffee, which is boiled over charcoal and fresh milk, is the first thing presented to the guests visiting Izbat Al Maha. The Omani cuisines like Arsiya are also offered, in addition to hosting different events and gala dinners for companies at this unique place.

At the beginning of winter tourism season in October 2021, Izbat Al Maha plans to diversify its activities and organise different competitions for visitors, especially in the coming month of Ramadan, in which Iftar parties could be organised too.

Izbat Al Maha allows its visitors to enjoy the sunset and stars watching at a wonderful night. An evening at Izbat Al Maha would not be a perfect experience only with a camel ride before the sunset.



Mazin Al Junaibi is getting ready to start a camel ride for visitors

To find out more about Izbat Al Maha, please scan the QR code:



The free zones are pioneering investment gateways

(1)

In this issue, we released three portfolios, featuring the free zones in the Sultanate. We started with the Al Mazunah Free Zone in April 2021 and then highlighted Salalah Free Zone in July issue of the Magazine. Further, this issue brings the portfolio of Sohar Free Zone, which has been able to attract various investments in different economic sectors over the past years.

(2)

Al Mazunah, located on the Omani-Yemeni borders, it is considered a gateway for the goods exchanged between the Sultanate and Yemen. The goods received by Al Mazunah Free Zone are not limited to the ones only manufactured or produced in both countries, but there are goods that come from different countries to Yemen and others are exported from Yemen to the world. Exporting all these goods takes place; either through the Port of Salalah or other ports in the Sultanate and transported via land roads, connecting Oman with the GCC countries. On both sides of the borders between the two countries, the Zone confirms its ability to develop border areas and thrives them with commercial traffic.

(3)

Salalah Free Zone witnesses another economic diversification represented in the Arab and foreign investors from different countries worldwide who regard the Zone capable of achieving their ambitions and dreams in establishing quality projects. It is reinforced by the incentives that the Zone offers to investors, the mild weather throughout the year, the autumn season that adorns Dhofar Governorate and attracts tourists, and the Port of Salalah with its high capabilities in handling goods imported to or exported from the Zone.

(4)

As for Sohar, the Free Zone was able over the past years to confirm its local and global standing as a pioneering area in increasing the added value of local raw materials such as the minerals available nearby the Zone or Sohar Refinery products. Rather, the Zone succeeded to import raw materials, which are basically not available in the Sultanate, to manufacture it and add economic value to these materials, so it could be exported afterward overseas with the mark trade "Made in the Sultanate of Oman".

(5)

All these three portfolios mark only examples of the different economic projects that we have found in the three zones. However, as we have already spotlighted the zones with their advantages and incentives, we will feature, starting from January 2022, new portfolios featuring other aspects of the free zones in the Sultanate. Likewise, Manatq Supplement will continue shedding light on more treasures that are hidden in the free zones and yet to be discovered.



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