

A Quarterly magazine issued by the Public Authority for Special Economic Zones and Free Zones **31st Issue - April 2023**

الدقم
الاقتصادية
Duqm
Economist



RO
15.2

billion investment in
economic and free zones
and industrial cities



Duqm
City of

Life

An eye on tourism
and another on
investment



Salalah Free Zone
A destination of
Pharmaceutical Industries

SULTANATE OF OMAN

The Investment Destination of Choice

Delivering for Today's Investors & Building for the Future

OPAZ In Focus



15,2 BILLION
Cumulative investment volume until the end of 2022



74,663 WORKERS
Manpower in the zones affiliated to OPAZ



2200 KM²
Total area of the zones



130 AGREEMENTS
Signed usufruct agreements in 2022

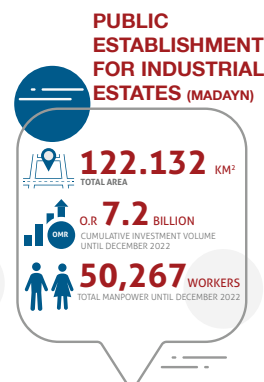
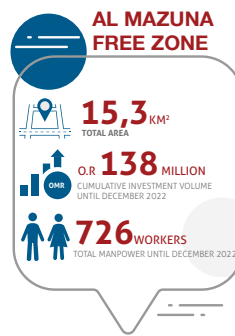
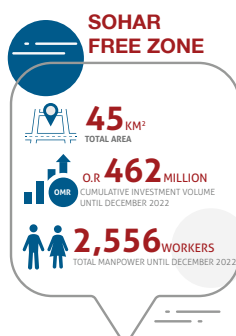
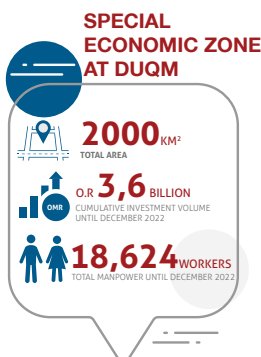


3246 PROJECTS
Number of existing projects



600 REQUESTS
Investment applications in the zones affiliated to OPAZ

ZONES In Focus



ENHANCING OMAN'S INDUSTRIAL INFRASTRUCTURE CAPACITY

INTEGRATED ECONOMIC ZONE AT AL DHAHIRAH GOVERNORATE (EZAD)

388 KM²

THE SPECIAL ECONOMIC ZONE IN AL RAWADHA

56 KM²

FREE ZONE AT MUSCAT INTERNATIONAL AIRPORT

1.7 KM²

5
INDUSTRIAL CITIES

SUSTAINABLE DEVELOPMENT

PARTNER IN OMAN'S HYDROGEN STRATEGY

TRANSITION TO RENEWABLE ENERGY

FOCUS ON GREEN INDUSTRIES

PLANTING THOUSANDS OF TREES IN DIFFERENT ZONES TO EXPAND GREENERY AREA

USING ENVIRONMENT-FRIENDLY LIGHTS

ATTRACTING INTERNATIONAL GREEN HYDROGEN PROJECTS

ALLOCATING AREAS OF CLEAN ENERGY PROJECTS

الهيئة العامة للمناطق الاقتصادية الخاصة والمناطق الحرة
Public Authority for Special Economic Zones and Free Zones
Sultanate of Oman
سلطنة عمان



مجالس
madayn

المستطعة الحرة بالمرزوقه
Sohar Free Zone

المنطقة الحرة بالمرزوقه
Sohar Free Zone

SOHAR

الدقم
Duqm

عمان نبنيها معاً
Building Oman Together

This is why we invested in Duqm

When we decided to expand business of Beladi Development Company in the Sultanate of Oman, we found that the Special Economic Zone at Duqm (SEZAD) is the most appropriate place for establishing Beladi Business Center «Beladi Plaza», one of our key, leading projects.

But why have we chosen Duqm in particular? The answer simply lies in the vision on which SEZAD Development plan is based. We believe that Duqm is a new urban centre that was established, not to be only industrial complex, but to be an integrated city. Gains of growth are not limited to Duqm City Center or the Wilayat of Duqm; its positive effects extend to the nearby areas.

Duqm found the clear vision that serves its objectives, and found the suitable environment for its growth, and found young Omani resources who work on its development. For this reason, Duqm nowadays has various tourist, real estate and retail projects, logistic services and small and medium enterprises. It is not only a city that serves the heavy industries projects.

Beladi Development Company saw Duqm as such. We all remember that cities such as Baghdad, London and Shanghai weren't established to serve narrow geographic areas. They served, and continued to serve, wide regions that made them investment destinations. They bring huge investments and bring together people who have ambitions and visions from all specialties to intermingle in a single crucible that constitutes economic mainstays. What served those cities is that they owners crystalised their visions and initiated implementation of them by choosing certain timings as if they are time gates among civilisations.

What imparts Duqm with its importance and vitality is that it is a city open to local, regional and international cultures. It doesn't depend on local investments, but it attracts all, which qualifies it to play a leading economic role and to effectively contribute to economic diversification.

Our experience in Duqm may be different from many other investment experiences in SEZAD. We have chosen construction of an integrated business centre to be commensurate with the urban growth and movement in Duqm. It has all necessary facilities to be a mall that serves the companies and, at the meantime, to be breathing for families. Accordingly, we focused on the site to be adjacent to SEZAD Building, and to be nearby other sites. In its building, we considered the most accurate details, starting with the spirit of Arab and Islamic civilization, reflecting the spirit of modernism and ending with consideration of the factors of weather, environment and movement of the sun in the city.

In spite of the challenges of Coronavirus Pandemic, and the accompanying economic recession that inflicted all countries worldwide, we found that Duqm did not progressing. It is now a city that has good infrastructure. The major challenges continue to be an attraction of further competences and investments. As investors, we aspire to complete and operate what we believe to be pillars in the city to contribute to bring more investments. We look forward to transform Duqm Airport to an international point, and to effectuate the media campaign of this city. There is no doubt that what is expected of this emerging city will exceed the Sultanate of Oman to generalise its utility to the Arab region and the Middle East overall.



Eng. Omar Abdullah
Al Totonji
CEO of Beladi
Development Company



What imparts Duqm with its importance and vitality is that it is a city open to local, regional and international cultures. It doesn't depend on local investments, but it attracts all

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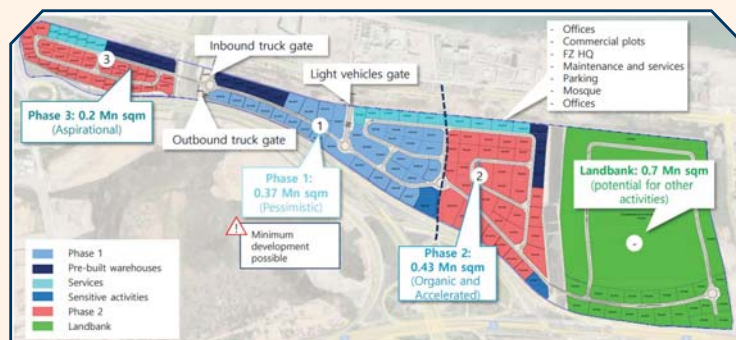
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Said Bani Oraba: We expect operation of the project of Duqm Connection to the main network this year

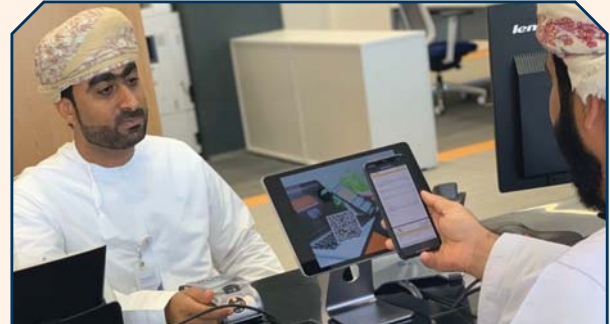
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An eye on tourism and another on investment

In its first meeting for the year 2023 SEZAD allocates an industrial land to «Madayn» in Duqm



During the board meeting

The Board reviewed the proposed amendments project of the bylaw of Urban Planning and Building Permits

Muscat -

The Board of Directors of the Public Authority for Special Economic Zones and Free Zones (OPAZ) held on March 21, 2023 its first meeting for the year 2023, chaired by His Excellency Dr. Ali bin Masoud Al Sunaidy, Chairman of the Board, at the Authority's headquarters in Muscat.

During its meeting, the Board of Directors approved the allocation of industrial land for the Public Establishment for Industrial Estates «Madayn» within the lands of the Special Economic Zone at Duqm (SEZAD). The Board also reviewed the proposed amendments project of the bylaw of Urban Planning and Building Permits, to facilitate investment and ensure the consistency of the overall appearance of existing buildings with the development of this regulation to be applied in new economic zones, free zones and various industrial zones. The Board also discussed the controls, rules and registration of engineering consul-

tancy offices and their classification in SEZAD, to be applied to the rest of the special economic zones, free and industrial zones in the future.

The Board of Directors also approved a mechanism for signing usufruct contract agreements with government entities in the Special Economic Zone at Duqm and unifying the usufruct fees for commercial lands allocated for petrol station projects and their annexes located in the Special Economic Zone at Duqm for a period of five years to come, so that all contracts are evaluated during this period.

It is noteworthy that the Public Authority for Special Economic Zones and Free Zones was established by Royal Decree No. (105/2020) on August 18, 2020 to supervise the Special Economic Zone at Duqm, free zones in Sohar, Salalah, Al Mazuna and any other special economic zone or free zone in the Sultanate of Oman. OPAZ also supervises the Public Establishment for Industrial Estates (Madayn) in accordance with Royal Decree No. (53/2022).



Supplying aeromedical helicopter and transportation to emergency hospital

OPAZ signs MoU to provide rescue and ambulance services in Duqm

Muscat - **الدقم:**

The Public Authority for Special Economic Zones and Free Zones (OPAZ) signed a Memorandum of Understanding with the International Rescue Company for Air Ambulance and Commercial Land and Sea Ambulance. The MoU stipulates areas of cooperation in providing first responder emergency services, rescue and ambulance services in the Special Economic Zone at Duqm (SEZAD).

The MoU was signed by HE Eng. Ahmed bin Hassan Al Dheeb, Deputy Chairman of the Public Authority for Special Economic Zones and Free Zones and Faisal Al Tanaak, Chairman International Rescue Company for Air Ambulance and Commercial Land and Sea Ambulance.

The Memorandum stipulates facilitating the procedures for establishing a company specialised in managing emergency cases in the

Special Economic Zone at Duqm (SEZAD) and shall start operation to provide emergency services. It also includes that the Company provides ambulance services, firefighting systems, marine search and rescue services, Aeromedical helicopter and jet-based rescue and emergency, including third-level injury coverage, and transportation service to an emergency hospital, according to international standards.

The MoU, further, included establishing a training academy to train and certify Omani citizens in emergency-related fields.

It worth mentioning that the International Rescue Company for Air Ambulance and Commercial Land and Sea Ambulance is a consortium includes a number of specialised and professional companies in the fields of rescue, ambulance, firefighting, land, sea and air search and rescue (SAR), emergency medical services (EMS) and accredited training services.


**Establishment
of training
academy for
training and
accreditation
of Omani
citizens in the
emergency-re-
lated fields**


In the first media briefing

OPAZ reviews the efforts made for developing the zones and attracting investments

Development of motivating investment environment that raises competitiveness of zones on the regional and global levels

Muscat - :

The Public Authority for Special Economic Zones and Free Zones (OPAZ) announced the increase of the total investment in the zones supervised by OPAZ by the end of the past year to approximately RO 15.2 billion (\$ 39.5) with a growth rate of 6%, comparing to December 2021.

In the first media briefing organised by Muscat Governorate in presence of H.E. Dr. Ali bin Masoud Al Sunaidy, OPAZ Chairman, and H.E. Ahmed bin Hassan Al Dheeb, OPAZ Deputy Chairman, and CEOs of special, free and industrial economic zones of OPAZ, OPAZ reviewed the key achievements made by OPAZ during the past year. OPAZ also revealed its strategy and targets of its plan for this year, and its initiatives within its efforts to achieve Oman Vision 2040 within its endeavours to enhance the investment opportunities and attract foreign investments to special, free and industrial economic zones, and to develop a motivating investment environment that contributes to regional and global achievement of the zones and maximising the role of small and medium enterprises as a key part for implementation of the public and private projects in those zones. On the following pages,  highlights the key topics discussed in the media briefing.





15.2^{RO}

billion investment in
economic and free zones
and industrial cities

Indicators of economic and free zones and industrial cities

Number of employees

74663

Total area

2200
km²

Number of zones

21

Investments: RO

15.2

Growth rate of
investment between
2021 and 2022

% 6

Investment requests
in 2022

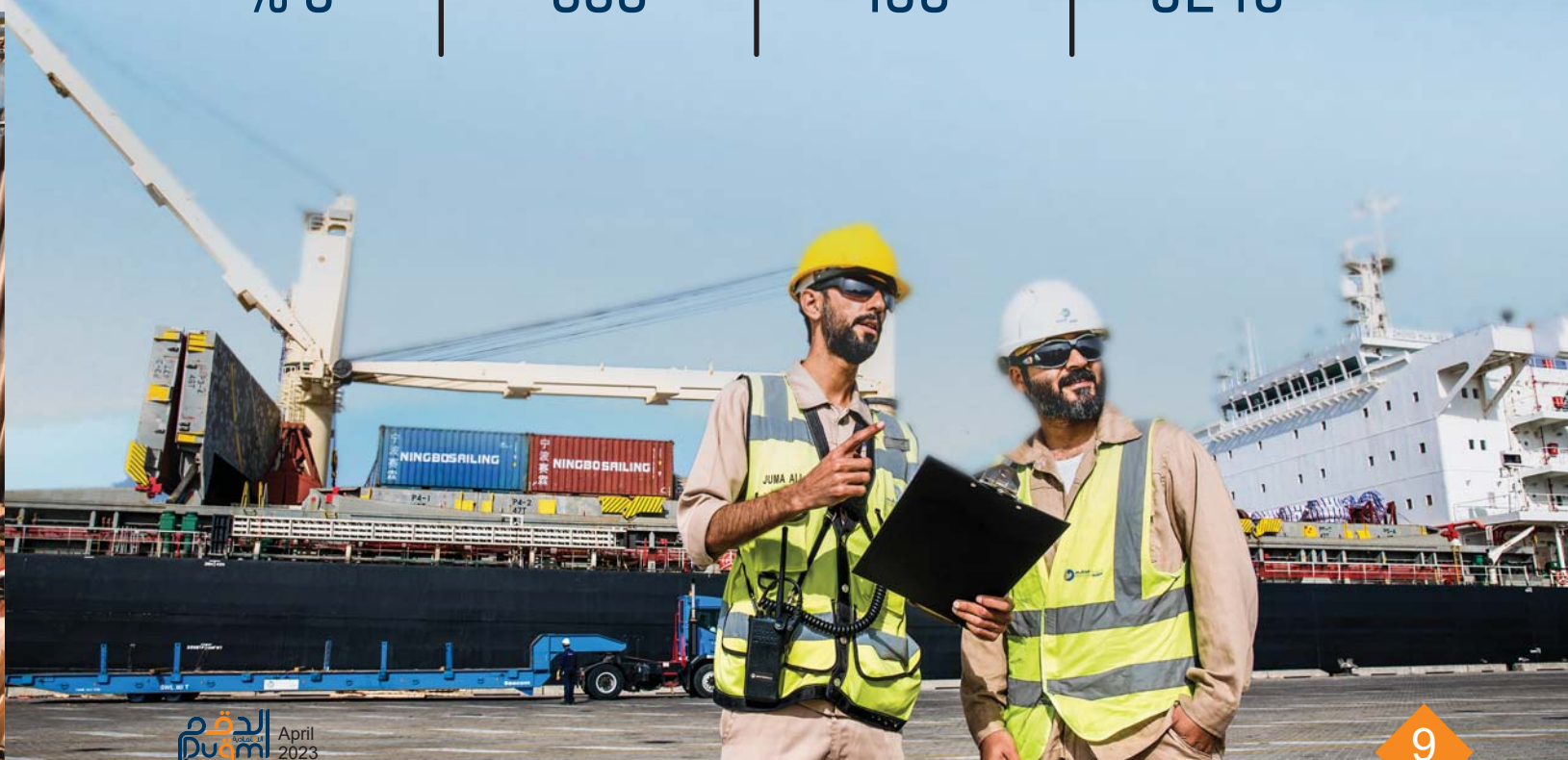
600

Usufruct agreements
signed in 2022

130

Existing projects

3246





In his speech in the media briefing:

Dr. Ali Al Sunaidy:

**We consider
new
applications
for renewable
energy projects**

**We focus
on securing
attractive and
sustainable
investment
environment
that meets the
aspirations of
investors**

**Salalah, Sohar
and Raysut
are attractive
destinations
of pharmaceu-
tical industries
and medical
substances**

Muscat - 

H.E. Dr. Ali bin Masoud Al Sunaidy, Chairman of OPAZ, declared that OPAZ currently considers new applications for the renewable energy projects in coordination with the Ministry of Energy and Minerals. These projects use Duqm for supply of green ammonia products and attraction of mining projects that use renewable energy.

In his speech in the first media briefing that reviews the efforts made to develop the special economic zones and free and industrial zones, he said that OPAZ recently signed agreements


with two specialised green hydrogen producers, namely Hyport Company and ACME Company.

He confirmed that OPAZ presently coordinates with Authority for Public Service Regulation and Electricity Transmission Company by setting a mechanism for approval of the renewable energy use certificates of the factories working in Salalah Free Zone to enable it to export the green products using part of the wind energy generated from Harwil Field and transmitted to Salalah City.

Mineral Projects

He noted that OPAZ signed three MoUs for



April
2023 

establishment of mineral projects in Special Economic Zone at Duqm (SEZAD) with Jindal Shadeed Company and Japanese Mitsui and Kobe Steel Companies. He indicated that those companies will use natural gas in manufacturing operations in principle. However, they will turn to use green hydrogen in the future for production of green steel. In addition, another mining project will be announced soon in Duqm Port within the borders of SEZAD.

Diversification of investments

In his speech, he emphasised the attention paid by OPAZ to diversification of investments in the regions that it supervises, noting in this respect that test production of Felix Pharma Factory in Salalah Free Zone started.

«Salalah Free Zone, Sohar Free Zone and Raysut Industrial Zone are attractive sites for pharmaceutical industries and medical substances, in addition to the subsectors which are targeted in those areas», he said, noting that OPAZ promotes those zones to attract more medical and veterinary industries. At the meantime, he emphasised the pivotal role of Al Mazunah Free Zone to enhance commercial exchange with Yemen.

Safeguarding attractive investment environment

H.E. Dr. Ali bin Masoud Al Sunaidy, OPAZ Chairman, showcased the role of OPAZ in attraction of investments. «From its establishment in August 2020, OPAZ has been working on implementation of its authorities and objectives, noting that OPAZ vision is that the zones under its supervision be the optimal investment destination», he said.

«OPAZ works on developing and regulating the zones under its supervision to secure an attractive and sustainable investment environment that meets the aspirations of investors, so that those areas be considered a source for contribution to achieve economic diversifications and secure new direct and indirect job opportunities, in addition to development of the societies near to those zones, and encourage entrepreneurs to establish their small and medium enterprises to serve the leading projects there», he added, and stated that

«special economic zones, free zones and industrial zones receive considerable attention of investors due to their ability to admit projects of all sizes.»

Unification of legislative system

He confirmed that OPAZ, in 2022, made several efforts to unify the legislative system and complete the law on special economic zones and free zones, and to reprogram the procedures, which are applicable in the one-stop shop in Duqm and the existing efforts to generalise the one stop shop experience in the zones supervised by OPAZ to issue all approvals, licenses and certificates, in addition to OPAZ's efforts in digital transition through several applications for the purpose of facilitation and acceleration of the investor services and effective of «Wusool» Document Management System. OPAZ intends to stop receipt of paper transactions by the end of next June, except for some government communications.

Corporate transformation

In the field of corporate transformation, he said that OPAZ entered into a contract with a specialised Irish expert house and received the first report in March. The report defines the corporate transformation procedures to effectuate OPAZ's role and to promote the capacities OPAZ and its employees to attract further local and foreign investments.

Financial sustainability

He reflected on OPAZ's efforts in the field of financial sustainability, indicating that OPAZ managed to reprogramme the finance agreements and provide the finance coverage to number of infrastructure projects with total RO 46 million with no need to return to the State treasury. In addition, it works on utilisation of the savings of finance agreements after completion of a package of infrastructure projects with a ceiling of RO 50 million by use of the old loans with no need to new loans at present, to utilise the same in coverage of the critical projects that include development of life style in OPAZ to provide the infrastructure services to the renewable energy sector in SEZAD.

Pivotal role of Al Mazunah Free Zone in consolidation of trade exchange with Yemen

Appointment of Irish expert house to supervise the corporate transformation procedures and effectuate the OPAZ's role in attraction of further investments

Reprogramming of the finance agreements and provision of financial coverage of RO 46 million for the infrastructure projects

We focus on development of lifestyle in Duqm and empowerment of the zone by supply of infrastructure services for the renewable energy sector





He emphasised OPAZ's pivotal role in Oman Vision 2040

Ahmed Al Dheeb: We work on unifying the zones and governing the apparatus

**Setting
the zones
to attract
investments
and raise the
economic
value of
Omani exports**

**Provide
regulatory
environment
that supports
business and
creates high
quality service
to support
investors after
localising their
projects**

Muscat - :

H.E. Eng. Ahmed bin Hassan Al Dheeb, Deputy Chairman of OPAZ, confirmed that OPAZ works on finding a unified system for the zones supervised by OPAZ, and governance of OPAZ, noting that this work is part of OPAZ efforts to achieve the priorities of Oman Vision 2040.

«OPAZ plays a key role in five priorities of Oman Vision 2040, being: private sector, investment and international cooperation, economic diversification and financial sustainability, labor and recruitment market, governance of the State's civil service, resources, projects, environment and natural resources», he said in his speech in the media briefing. «There are good indicators of OPAZ's achievement in cooperation with its partners in the zones and companies working in the zones whether in the field of investment attraction or other fields», he added.

Zones are set to attract investments

«OPAZ works in cooperation with its partners on setting the existing zones to attract investments and raise the economic value

of Omani exports. OPAZ and its partners also contribute to the priority of labour and recruitment market. There is permanent coordination between OPAZ and government and other authorities and private sector on securing job opportunities for youth whether in OPAZ or the zones or companies, which are localised in the zones», he elaborated. He indicated that those efforts contributed to increase the number of Omani workers in the zones and raise the percentage of Omanisation in it.

Environment and natural resources

He indicated environment and natural resources are prioritised by OPAZ, noting that, in this respect, OPAZ tends to implement projects driven by clean or green hydrogen energy. He said that lands were allocated to the renewable energy projects in the zones supervised by OPAZ. 250 km² in SEZAD were allocated to the renewable and green hydrogen energy projects, and 2 km² were allocated in Sohar Free Zone for the renewable energy projects.

Infrastructure commensurate with the present and future sectors

«OPAZ works in cooperation with its part-



A project of renewable energy
in Sohar Free Zone

ners in the zones to provide infrastructure that meets the current and future sectors and contribute to maximise the benefit of investors», he said. «We work on securing a regulatory environment that supports businesses in the zones that it supervises», he emphasised. In this context, he referred to the facilities provided to investors and the incentives provided to attract investments.

«OPAZ also works on providing the investor care service after romanization of their projects in the zones supervised by OPAZ», he stated.

«We work with our partners in the zones to establish a high-quality service to care for investors to encourage them to expand their projects for find activities which are based on those projects or identify the obstacles and challenges that they encounter», he said

«OPAZ works with partners on development and completion of the utilities and services and to accelerate operation of the projects», he emphasised.

Infrastructure projects at Duqm

He elaborated the infrastructure projects in SEZAD, and said that cost of the infrastructure projects in SEZAD is more than RO 550 million, including projects under construction for cost of RO 220 million, tendering projects of RO 36 million and future projects of approximately RO 300 million. He added that those projects are established to serve investors and will contribute to enhance the competitiveness of Duqm.

Unification of service fees

«OPAZ completed the service unification project in its zones. The project was referred to the competent authorities for approval and issuance of decision on the same», he said. «There is a regular review of fees by OPAZ to meet the aspirations of investors and beneficiaries of the services which are provided», he added.

«There was recent reduction of the fees of industrial plots in Duqm to contribute to attraction of more investments. Fees of the services delivered to small and medium enterprises in Duqm were reduced to encourage them to participate in the projects that were completed in the zone, whether in the field of services, in-

vestment in industrial sector or delivery of services to the leading projects», he emphasised.

«We also reviewed the electricity and water tariff for the projects in SEZAD, and managed to coordinate with the competent authorities in reduction of those fees to improve Duqm attractiveness to attract projects», he added.

Marketing and attraction of investments

Concerning marketing and attraction of investments, Eng. Ahmed bin Hassan Al Dheeb, said: «We work with the appropriate authorities on enhancement of the investment opportunity to attract new investments. We work in partnership with government authorities to market the zones supervised by OPAZ whether in OPAZ's participations with the Ministry of Commerce, Industry and Investment Promotion or through the Ministry of Foreign Affairs». He noted that OPAZ participated during the past year in 15 various marketing activities in the Sultanate of Oman and abroad to introduce the attractions of the zones and the incentives provided by OPAZ to investors.

Digital transformation programmes

In his speech, he reflected on the digital transformation and smart applications programmes. He said that OPAZ allocated 18 km2 to the artificial intelligence and future technology zone in SEZAD. He indicated that OPAZ is presently in the phase of offering tender for the detailed planning of the zone to be allocated to the future projects and artificial intelligence uses experiments whether in the uses of drones, electric cars or other relevant uses.

«There is a number of digitalisation and smart application programmes approved by OPAZ that contribute to accelerate the works on the one hand, and helped investors, on the other hand, to define their investment destinations, including: System of electronic choice of lands, programme of unified electronic cadastral of the zones supervised by OPAZ and electronic registration of small and medium enterprises as well as the central inspection project», he said.

«OPAZ built the first retail building in the Sultanate of Oman to be built by 3D Printer. The project was implemented in SEZAD», he noted.

**Implementa-
tion of
projects of
more than RO
550 million
SEZAD**

**Completing
the project of
unifying the
service fees
in the zones...
and new fees
that meet the
investors'
expectations**

**A tender to be
floated soon
for detailed
planning of
AI and Future
Technology
Zone at Duqm**





Post signing the MoU between OPAZ and ECZA

OPAZ announces establishment of 8 new investment zones

Muscat- Riyadh -

Investment zones supervised by OPAZ increased to 21 zones

The Public Authority for Special Economic Zones and Free Zones (OPAZ) announced the establishment of 8 new investment zones during the coming period, noting that those zones are currently under development or study.

Speaking during OPAZ first media briefing, HE Dr. Ali bin Masoud Al Sunaidy, OPAZ Chairman, said that, «Post affiliating the Public Establishment for Industrial Estates (Madayn) to OPAZ in June 2022, OPAZ now supervises 13 existing zones being: Special Economic Zone at Duqm (SEZAD), 3 free zones in Sohar, Salalah and Al Mazunah, and 9 existing industrial zones affiliated to «Madayn».

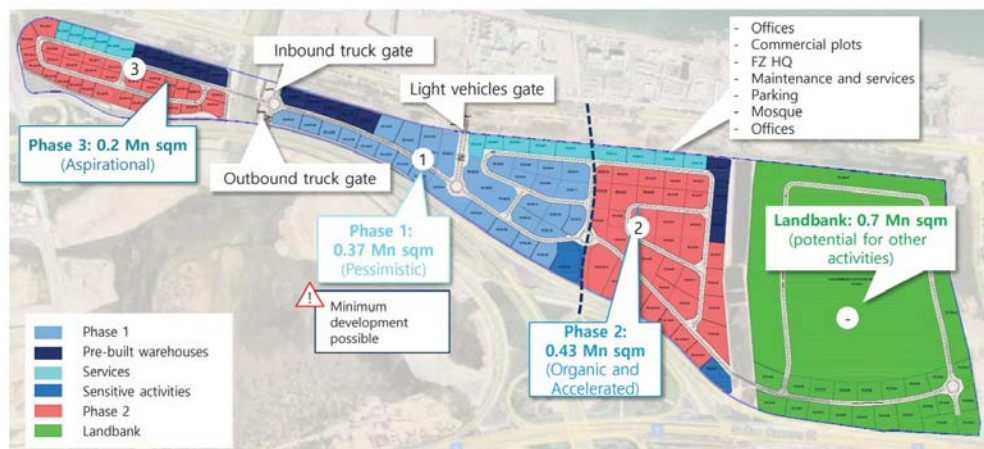
8 New Zones

His Excellency stated that there are 8 new zones under development or study, including the Economic Integrated Zone at Al Dhahirah Governorate (EZAD), which is under development. In addition, OPAZ is completing the masterplan and other studies for the Economic Zone at Al Rawdha in Al Buraimi Governorate. The other zones include the Free Zone in Muscat International Airport, 5 industrial cities to be operated by Madayn being Mahas Industrial City, Ibra Industrial City, Seh Al Sarya Industrial City, Al Mudhaibi Industrial City and Thamarit Industrial City.

Economic Zone at Al Rawdha

HE Eng. Ahmed bin Hassan Al Dheeb, Deputy Chairman of OPAZ, said that the

Establishing 5 industrial zones and one free zone at Muscat International Airport



Zone consists of several lands covering an area of 56 km². The consultant has already been assigned to develop a study on the Zone and its masterplan. The initial study was completed, presenting some components of the Zone of which parts will be allocated to industries and logistic services. Al Dheeb advised that OPAZ is currently discussing with an international developer to develop some lands of the Zone.

Free Zone at Muscat International Airport

HE Eng. Ahmed bin Hassan Al Dheeb pointed out, "The Free Zone at Muscat International Airport covers over 1.7 km² of land. Phase one stretches over 370,000 sqm and is expected to include the import, export, commercial and logistic service products, and some light industry projects. The Zone will be operated by Asyad Group and its studies and masterplan are currently under review.»

Executive Committee of EZAD

In April 2023, OPAZ issued a decision to form an executive committee to oversee the Economic Integrated Zone Project in Al Dhahirah Governorate to be chaired by Eng. Ahmed bin Hassan Al Dheeb, OPAZ Deputy Chairman, and a number of officials from OPAZ in the Sultanate of Oman. From the Saudi side, the committee includes members from the Ministry of Investment, Economic Cities and Special Economic Zones Authority and Saudi Development Fund.

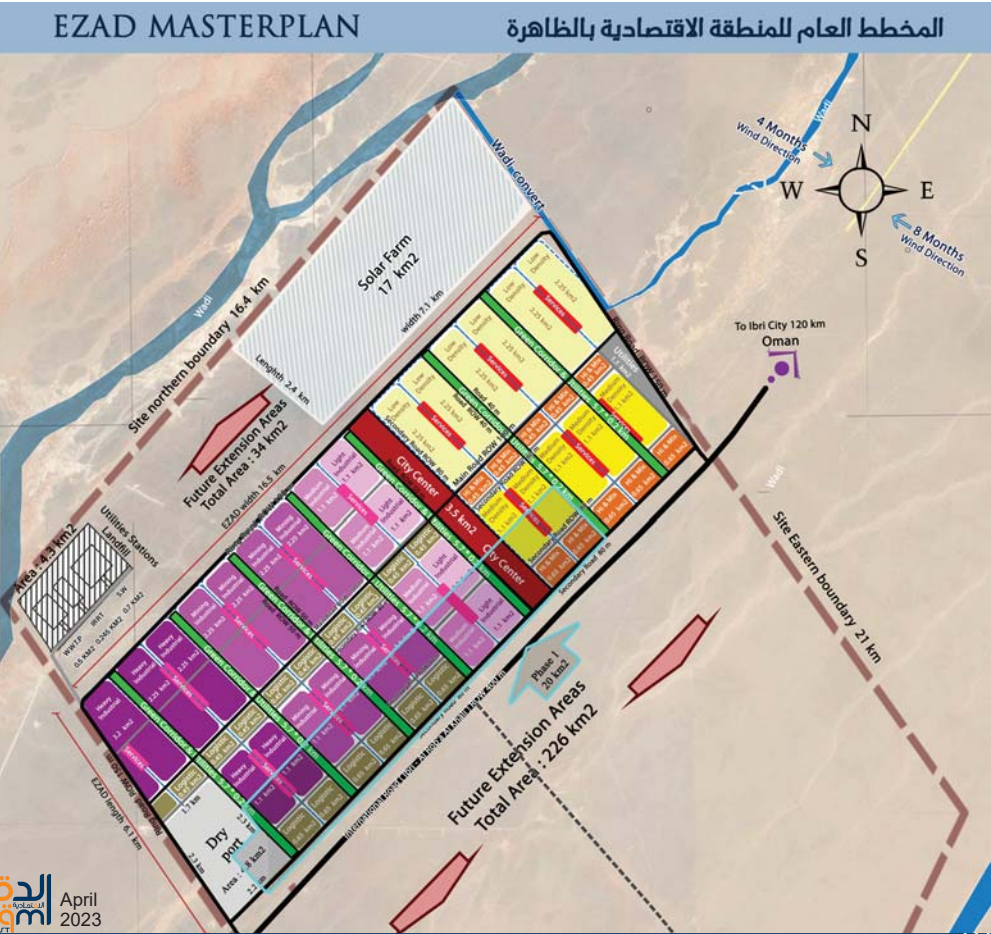
The decision comes after OPAZ completed the consulting studies related to developing the Zone over an area of 388 km², located around 20 km away from the Empty Quarter Border, between the Sultanate of Oman and Kingdom of Saudi Arabia.



Committee’s tasks

The committee undertakes a number of tasks and responsibilities, including supervising the implementation of the memorandum of understanding signed between OPAZ and the Saudi Economic Cities and Special Economic Zones Authority (ECZA), with regards to developing special economic zones and free zones. The committee will also develop a plan for the development, execution and management of the Integrated Economic Zone project in Al Dhahirah Governorate, including all programmes and initiatives, and monitoring their implementation. Additionally, the committee will oversee the establishment of the Omani-Saudi Company that will manage and operate the Economic Integrated Zone in Al Dhahirah Governorate.

The committee will work towards exchanging successful experiences and practices in the management and operation of economic zones between the two countries. It will also coordinate to hold informative workshops for traders and investors about the zone in both countries.



Plans of Economic Zone at Al Rawdha, Al Buraimi Governorate to be completed

Developing first phase of Muscat Airport Free Zone over an area of 370,000sqm



Omani-Saudi Executive Committee formed to supervise the Economic Integrated Zone at Al Dhahirah

MoU with “ECZA”

During its participation in the Omani-Saudi Investment Forum, OPAZ signed, in February 2022, a memorandum of understanding (MoU) with the Saudi Economic Cities and Special Economic Zones Authority (ECZA) in the field of economic development, investment and promotion of competitive advantage of special economic zones and free zones by establishing a general framework for the common activities and tasks, and development of the corporate capacities between both sides to achieve mutual benefits.

The MoU stipulated that detailed studies and plans of the Integrated Economic Zone at Al Dhahira Governorate and common investments in the economic zone shall be completed.

Finance of infrastructure

Earlier this year, the Ministry of Finance and Saudi Development Fund signed a memorandum of understanding to finance the infrastructure of the Zone’s first phase with estimated cost of approximately RO 122 million. This finance will include establishment of infrastructure, roads, electric conduits, water, san-

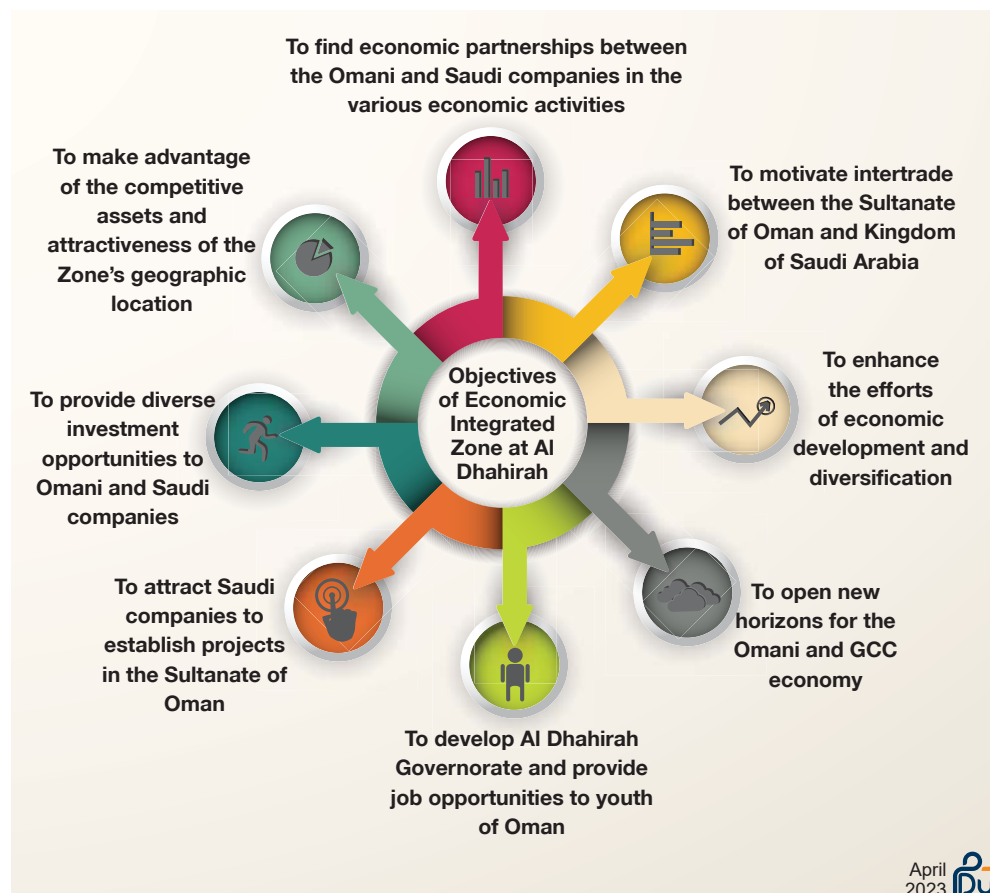
itary sewerage and industrial waste treatment network and necessary facilities of the Zone. It will also provide the engineering consulting services to the project by design and supervision. Works of the first phase will include establishment of land port as well.

Objectives of the Zone

The Zone will be established to motivate intertrade between the Sultanate of Oman and Kingdom of Saudi Arabia, and to enhance the efforts of economic development and diversification. As well, it will open new fields for the Omani and GCC economy, respectively, and to make advantage of the competitive assets and attractiveness of the geographic location of the Zone.

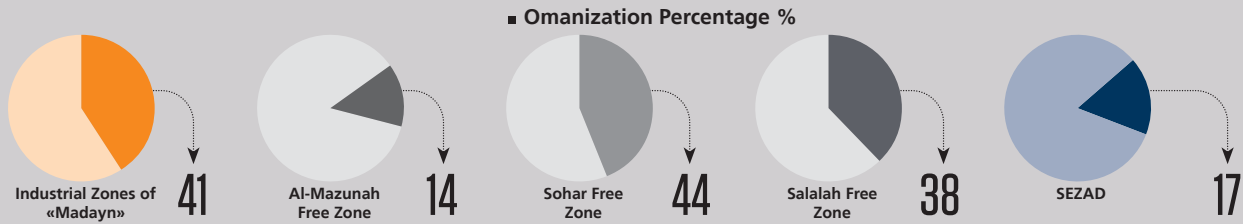
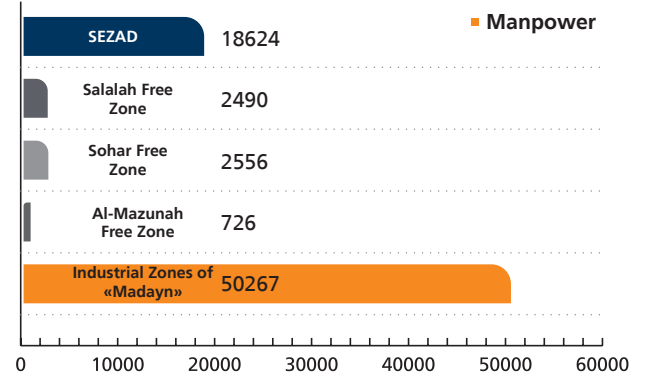
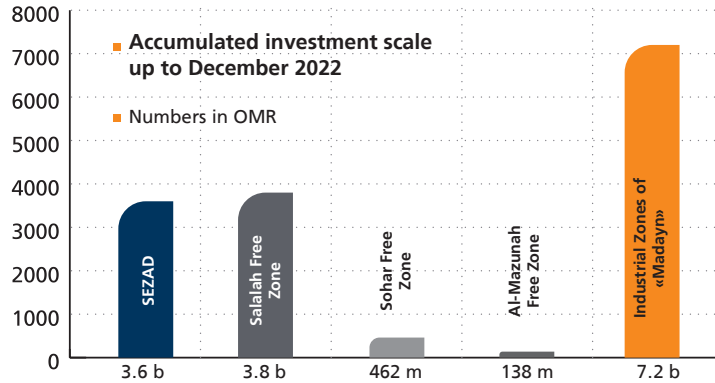
The Integrated Economic Zone at Al Dhahirah (EZAD) is expected to play a key role in maximising the benefit of its geographic location by availing diverse investment opportunities to Omani and Saudi companies. It will also attract Saudi companies to establish projects in the Sultanate of Oman and to find economic partnerships in the various economic activities, in addition to the role of Zone in developing Al Dhahirah Governorate and offering job opportunities to the youth of Oman.

RO 112 million is the expected cost of first phase development of the Economic Integrated Zone at Al Dhahirah



CEOs of zones confirm increase of investment rate:

Unification of work environment contributes to attract new investments



Muscat -

CEOs of economic, free and industrial zones confirmed rise of the scale of investments in the zones supervised by OPAZ. They confirmed the attention to zones by investors.

In the conducted presentations, the CEOs applauded the efforts made by OPAZ in the field of unifying the procedures for regulation of work environment and attraction of more investments.

They confirmed unification of the message delivered to investors and achievement of integration between the zones that contributes to attraction of further investments, noting, at the meantime, the good relations of the Sultanate of Oman with the various countries of the world

and the commercial agreements and incentives delivered by the zones that contributed to raise the scale of investments.

They noted that all zones scored growth of their indicators in the past year, whether in connection with the scale of investment or number of projects and the total workers and percentage of Omanisation.

Total workers in the economic, free and industrial zones by the end of the last year were 74663, including more than 50,000 in the industrial cities managed by Madayn and more than 18,000 in SEZAD. Total number of existing projects was 3246.

In the next pages, SEZAD provides further details on what has been achieved by economic, free and industrial zones during the past year.

More than 74,000 jobs secured by zones by end of last year



RO 7.2 billion investments in industrial cities

2400
projects incubated
in «Madayn»

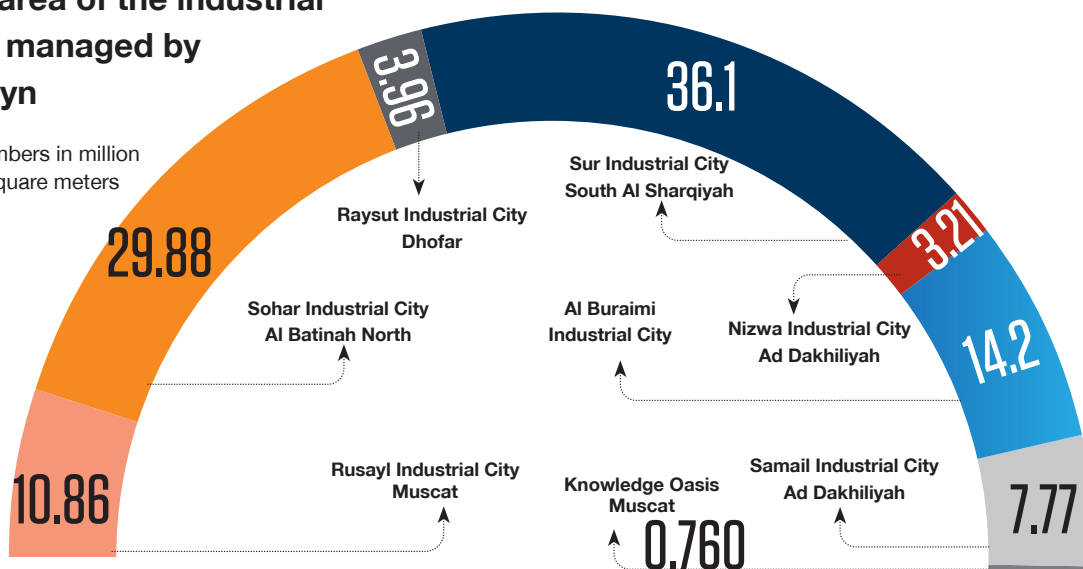
Industrial cities secured 50,000 jobs directly, and Omanisation rate of 41%



Nizwa Industrial City

Total area of the industrial cities managed by Madayn

Numbers in million square meters



Muscat -

The scale of investment in the industrial cities managed by «Madayn» by the end of last year reached RO 7.2 billion. Hamad bin Hamoud Al Qassabi from the Public Establishment for Industrial Estates «Madayn», said that projects in the industrial cities as of last year were approximately 2400.

The current industrial cities are 8; in Muscat, there is Rusayl Industrial City and Knowledge Oasis Muscat. There are other industrial cities in Sohar, Nizwa, Al Buraimi, Sur,

Salalah and Samael. A number of other industrial cities are being developed.

«The industrial cities are characterised by diversity of the investment sectors there», Hamad bin Hamoud Al Qassabi said. «The key sectors that are localised in the industrial cities include cement and building material industries, food industries, chemical industries, pharmaceutical industries, steel and mineral industries, plastic industries and logistic projects related to the industrial sector», he added.

He noted that the total manpower in the industrial cities by the end of the last year were more than 50,000 workers, while Omanisation rate was 41%.

RO 550 million in imported and exported goods through Al Mazunah Free Zone

Ali Al Maashani: Import and export are the key investment sectors in the zone



Muscat -

Eng. Ali bin Salim Al Maashani, Director General of Al Mazunah Free Zone, said that the zone is the first free zone in the Sultanate of Oman. Investment in the zone by the end of December 2022 was approximately RO 138 million. Manpower of the zone reached 726 workers with Omanisation percentage of 14%.

In his presentation, he said that the zone is located in Dhofar Governorate on the Omani-Yemeni borders, so it marks the commercial gateway to the Republic of Yemen. In addition, it is a commercial gateway from Yemen to east African countries.

He noted that imports and exports are the key investment sectors in the zone since it is located close to the Republic of Yemen, noting that goods that were imported and exported through the zone increased during the last year.

«During 2022, goods of more than 286 million tonnes for more than RO 550 million were handled. Vehicles that were imported or exported through the zone in the last year were 5600 vehicles for total value of more than RO 20 million», he said. He noted that there is an increase of more than RO 150 million in the value of goods, which are imported and export-


ed through Al Mazunah Free Zone during the past year, as compared by 2021. He emphasised that this rise is an indicator of the zone's ability of increasing the commercial exchange between the Sultanate of Oman and the Republic of Yemen.

Investment opportunities

On the investment opportunities in Al Mazunah Free Zone, Eng. Ali bin Salim Al Maashani said: Imports and exports are the key activities in the zone. The logistic service sector is largely considered by investors. He indicated that the zone provides public warehouses to investors.

«There are investment opportunities in the field of customs clearing, unloading and handling, and there are investment opportunities in the sector of packing, wrapping and food industries», he added. He indicated that there are existing industries in the zone in the field of bottling drinking water and freezing of fish.

In his presentation, he denoted the capabilities of Al Mazunah Port, and said that the port is internationally accredited and any investor can directly import from anywhere around the world so that his final destination be Al Mazunah Land Port. He confirmed that the port has all facilities and infrastructure required for success of investment in this field, mainly with the one stop shop services.


*International
accreditation
of Al Mazunah
Land Port
allows
investors
to directly
import from
anywhere
around the
world*





OQ Liquefied Petroleum Gas one of the key projects in Salalah Free Zone



RO 3.8 billion investment in Salalah Free Zone

Dr. Ali Tabuk: Various Industrial Projects localised... The zone has become a destination of pharmaceutical industries

New agreements signed with investors from China and Russia

Muscat - :

Dr. Ali bin Mohammed Tabouk, CEO of Salalah Free Zone, confirmed increase of investment in the zone and diversity of its projects.

In his presentation, he said that, by the end of last December, the accumulated investment in Salalah Free Zone was RO 3.8 billion, noting that the zone makes benefit from its location near Salalah Port and integration of operations between the zone and the Port. In addition, the zone makes advantage of its location on the Arabian Sea, which is open to the Indian Ocean and near to the international routes, which contributes to smooth movement of goods from and to the zone.

«The zone managed to localise various industrial projects. In the field of pharmaceutical industries, the zone has Felix Pharma Factory, which established the area as a destination of pharmaceutical industries». In addition, the zone has projects in the sector of petrochemical industries, food industries, storage and logistic sector. He noted that the zone recently signed number of new agreements with investors from China, Russia and number of other countries», he emphasised.

On the number of manpower in the Zone, he said: «We aspire to secure direct jobs to 2490 workers with Omanisation percentage of 38%». He confirmed that the zone has Omani experiences in the various governorates of the Sultanate of Oman. At the meantime, he applauded the quality of Omani outputs.

**Sohar Free Zone attracts
investments of more than RO 462**

**Omar Al Mahrizi:
Numerous options
provided to investors from
all over the world**



Muscat -

Omar bin Mahmood Al Mahrizi, CEO of Sohar Free Zone and Deputy CEO of Sohar Port that the Zone provides several options to investors from all over the world.


He said that the zone is characterised by diversity of the fields of investment, noting that the sectors of cooled and dry logistic stores, petrochemical industries, mining, pharmaceutical and veterinary industries, ceramic industries, building materials and textiles are the key sectors in the Zone at present. He noted that the scale of investment, which is committed in the zone was RO 462 million by the end of the last year. He stated that total manpower of the region reached, by the end of the last year, 2556 workers with Omanisation percentage of 44%.

He said that the list of the top five projects

in the zone include: Strategic Precious Mineral Processing Company, Sanfera Carbon, Sohar Titanium, Penicillin General Integrated Manufacturing Company and National Veterinary Vaccination Company. He noted that those projects contributed to the increase of job opportunities.

In the presentation, he denoted the outstanding location of the zone near to Sohar Port. He said that there is an integration between the port and the zone that makes advantage of the lines directly between Sohar Port and international ports.

«There are many factors that contributed to the growth of investments in the region, including the zone proximity to the port, and the trade agreements between the Sultanate of Oman and the other world countries as well as availability of raw materials near to the Zone or through direct investment from other countries through Sohar Port.»


**Commercial
agreements
and the zone
proximity to
Sohar Port
as well as
availability of
raw materials
are key factors
that contributed
to the growth of
investments**



OPAZ completes new projects in SEZAD

Ahmed Akaak: RO

3.6 billion is the investment committed in the zone



Installation of cranes in Duqm Port

Infrastructure facilities in Duqm Port completed and main cranes in the port installed

Internal gas connection to the industrial blocks in Duqm completed

Muscat -

Within its efforts to set SEZAD for attracting new investment projects, OPAZ announced completion of number of projects in the Special Economic Zone at Duqm (SEZAD) during the last year.

In the first media briefing, SEZAD stated that the key projects completed in the zone during the past year included: Completion of the infrastructure facilities in Duqm Port and supply and installation of the main cranes in the port and delivery of them to the port operator. The multipurpose Fishing Port at Duqm was completed and handed over to the company for operation. SEZAD noted that communication network of SEZAD was strengthened last year.

SEZAD indicated that, during 2022, the number of projects in oil and gas sector was completed. These projects included: reach and operation of gas line from the central fields of the country, and completion of oil transport pipeline from Ras Markaz to Duqm Refinery, while connection of the internal gas

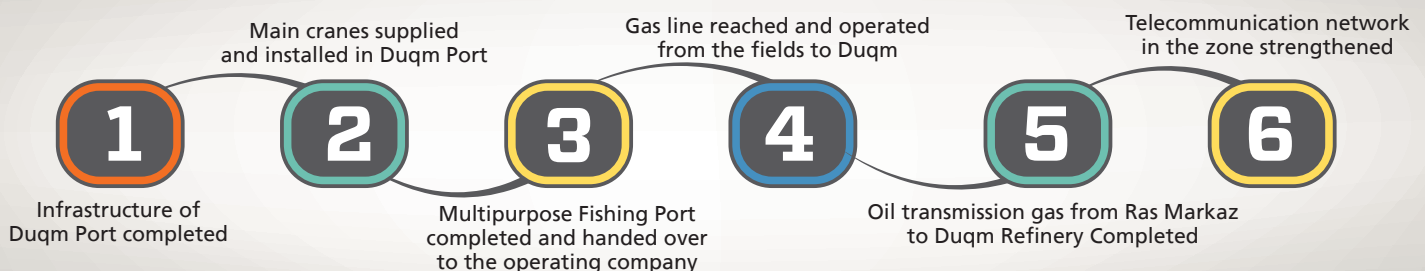
network to the industrial plans at Duqm is presently underway.

Strategic projects

Eng. Ahmed bin Ali Akaak, Acting CEO of SEZAD, said that SEZAD's area is 2000 km², and the total investment committed in SEZAD by the end of last December was RO 3.6 billion, noting that SEZAD incubates strategic projects in various economic sectors, including: logistic sector through Duqm Port, Dry Dock, Duqm Airport, Heavy and Petrochemical Industries Sector, such as Duqm Refinery and Integrated Electricity and Water Plant and renewable energy sector that includes projects in the field of green hydrogen, in addition to the fish industries sector, commercial and industrial sector, tourism sector and real estate development sector.

He indicated that the zone, from its establishment, managed to secure the appropriate job opportunities for Omani youth, and contributed to drive the various activities of small and medium enterprises. He indicated that total workers in SEZAD exceeds 18,000 workers, while Omanisation rate is 17.2%.

Key projects completed in SEZAD in 2022





Salalah Free Zone is a major investment gateway on the Arabian Sea and nearby Salalah Port

Factory of steel alloys and recycled packing paper established in Salalah Free Zone

Salalah - :

Salalah Free Zone, a subsidiary of Asyad Group, signed an agreement to establish a project for processing ferrous alloys and high-quality recycled wrapping paper. The agreement was signed with Chinese silicon industry company Besto Hengda Oman.

The project will be built over an area of 300,000 sqm, with an investment value of \$ 230 million (RO 88.5 million).

In its first phase, its production capacity is scheduled to reach about 90,000 tonnes of ferrosilicon alloys annually. The output will be doubled in the second phase to 180,000

tonnes per annum. The production capacity of recycled wrapping paper in the first phase is about 300,000 tonnes annually and will increase in the second phase to 600,000 tonnes per year.

Ferrosilicon alloys are metal alloys that mainly consist of iron and silicon. The project targets the Asian markets, mainly Japan and South Korea. Pesto Hengda Company is one of the leading Chinese companies. It has ten holding subsidiaries. Its business is distributed in number of Chinese provinces. Its investment in Salalah Free Zone is the first investment of the company outside China.

\$230 million is the investment value. The project is executed by Betso Hengda Company

Producing 90,000 tonnes of ferrosilicon and 300,000 tonnes of packing paper per year in the first phase





HE Dr. Ali Al Sunaidy and officials of the Japanese companies post signing the MoU

With Japanese investments and production capacity of 5 million tonnes annually

Direct Reduced Iron factory to be established in SEZAD

HE Dr. Ali Al Sunaidy:
The project is a valuable addition to the group of international projects under construction at Duqm

The project is expected to start production in 2027 and targeting Asian and European markets

Musacat -

The Public Authority for Special Economic Zones and Free Zones (OPAZ) signed a Memorandum of Understanding (MoU) with Kobe Steel, a Japanese leading steelmaking, and Mitsui & Co., Ltd., a global trading investment company, to develop low CO2 iron metallurgy project in the Special Economic Zone at Duqm (SEZAD). Likewise, Kobe Steel and Mitsui signed a land reservation agreement with Port of Duqm Company and inked another MoU with the Centralized Utilities Company (Marafiq), to supply the project with power and water during the ceremony.

The MoUs were signed on behalf of the Public Authority for Special Economic Zones and Free Zones (OPAZ) by HE Dr. Ali bin Masoud Al Sunaidy, Chairman of OPAZ and on behalf of Kobe Steel and Mitsui by Masahiro Motoyuki, Executive Officer and Head of Engineering Business at Kobe Steel and Tetsuya Fukuda, Executive Managing Officer and Chief Operating Officer of Mineral and Metal Resources Business Unit at Mitsui & Co.

The land reservation agreement was signed by Reggy Vermeulen, CEO Duqm Port, while the MoU with Marafiq was signed by Talal Al Lawati, VP Commercial of Marafiq.

Reduction of CO2

The project is expected to produce five million tonnes of Direct Reduced Iron (DRI) annually through the MIDREX® Process. By using technically and commercially proven production method, Kobe Steel and Mitsui aim to provide a near-term decarbonisation solution to the steelmaking industry. In the long run, the project will aim for further decarbonisation through measures such as replacement of natural gas with hydrogen and carbon capture, utilisation and storage, with a goal to expand production capacity as well.

Further, Kobe Steel and Mitsui will conduct the detailed business study, with an aim to commence low CO2 iron metallurgy production by 2027. The product will be supplied to businesses in Asian including Kobe Steel and other global markets such as Europe.



During the agreement signing with Port of Duqm

April 2023 



Valuable addition

Speaking on the occasion, HE Dr. Ali bin Masoud Al Sunaidy, Chairman of the Public Authority for Special Economic Zones and Free Zones, stated that "Bringing this unique project to the Special Economic Zone at Duqm marks a valuable addition to the already under development list of remarkable international metal and mineral projects and green energy projects in the Zone and will attract other related and supporting industries and businesses". HE Al Sunaidy added that "the project is a great addition to the steelmaking industry in the Sultanate of Oman, as well as it will enhance In-Country Value (ICV) by supporting local Small and Medium-Sized Enterprises (SMEs) and by offering job openings".

Attracting renewable energy projects

On the other hand, Tetsuya Fukuda, Chief Operating Officer of Mineral and Metal Resources Business Unit at Mitsui, said "The Sultanate of Oman is a country rich in natural gas reserves necessary for producing DRI and is also one of the globally outstanding locations for renewable energy, making it a highly suitable area for competitive green hydrogen. Mitsui also has a trusting relationship with the Sultanate of Oman through existing businesses including oil and gas upstream investments, LNG projects, and IPP businesses".

Limiting greenhouse gas emissions

Masahiro Motoyuki, Executive Officer and Head of Engineering Business at Kobe Steel stated, "With combination of our steelmaking experience, our key technologies such as MID-REX® Process, and the collective strength of Mitsui operating global business in the natural resources and energy fields, Kobe and Mitsui will continue to contribute to the reduction of GHG emission within the steelmaking industry with hopes of achieving a carbon-neutral society".

Importance of the project

Reggy Vermeulen, CEO of Port of Duqm, stated, "We are delighted to have Mitsui & Co. and Kobe Steel developing a low CO2 iron metallurgy project at Port of Duqm. Mitsui is a Japanese trading and investment company having global presence and their upcoming project at Port of Duqm immensely strengthens their position in Oman, while Kobe Steel is globally renowned for a Japanese leading steelmaking company and their MIDREX® technology for low carbon DRI process, which is widely considered to be the future of steel making. The project is expected to bring an important foreign direct investment and has the potential to create a significant number of jobs at Duqm".

The event was attended by HE Ibtisam bint Ahmed Al Farooji, Undersecretary of the Ministry of Commerce, Industry and Investment Promotion for Investment Promotion, HE YAMAMOTO Jota, Ambassador of Japan in Muscat, representatives of companies and other dignitaries.

**Tetosoya
Vokoda:**
*Sultanate of
Oman is one
of the inter-
nationally
outstanding
destinations
for
renewable
energy
projects*

**Masahiro
Motoyuki:** *We
aspire to
contribution
to limit the
greenhouse
gas
emissions
related
to steel
industry*



During the agreement signing
with Marafiq Company



OPAZ grants economic and free zones the authorities to issue environmental permits and licenses

Eng. Ahmed bin Harib Al Balushi speaks to 


The new authorities aimed at creating an attractive investment environment

Providing more facilities to the zones and simplifying procedures for investors

Muscat - 

The Public Authority for Special Economic Zones and Free Zones (OPAZ) granted its affiliated zones the authorities to issue and renew environmental permissions and licenses for all projects whether in the heavy, medium or light industries sectors. OPAZ also granted those zones the authority to review the environmental studies and provide its feedback on them before granting the approval.

Eng. Ahmed bin Harib Al Balushi, Manager of Compliance and Environmental Affairs Department at OPAZ, stated that the new authorities come within the framework of OPAZ's efforts to facilitate the procedures and expedite establishment of industrial projects in its affiliated zones. He indicated that the new Decision No. (37/2023) regulating environmental procedures in the special economic zones and free zones comes to complement the controls on regulation and issuance of environmental permits in the special economic zones and free zones promulgated in accordance with Decision No. (17/2021).

Speaking to , he stated that OPAZ decided to provide further facilities to the zones at the time when many training programmes and workshops are held between the environmen-

talists in OPAZ and environmentalists in the zones to discuss the work mechanisms and be updated with the latest development in this critical sector.

Al Balushi noted that the period scheduled for issuing the environmental permits and licenses is a maximum of 30 business days for the heavy industries projects, 10 years for the medium industries projects, and 5 business days for the light industries projects. Calculation of the mentioned periods shall start from the date of completion of request of all required documents, data and studies, noting that the validity duration of environmental permits is three years renewable for other similar terms.

Environmental studies

Concerning the period specified for reviewing environmental studies, Al Balushi said that the new decisions set for the zones departments stipulates 10 days for reviewing environmental studies such as the study of environmental impact and expression of notes, if any. Then a meeting shall be held with the concerned persons in OPAZ's Compliance and Environment Affairs Department to get it approved within the timeframe stipulated in Decision No. (17/2021) which is a maximum of 30 days, except for the Special Economic Zone at Duqm (SEZAD),

The period specified for issuing and renewing environmental permissions and licenses



This is the maximum and environmental permits and licenses can be issued within a shorter period.

30 business days

Projects of heavy industries



10 business days

Projects of medium industries



5 business days

Projects of light industries



* Validity of environmental license is 3 years renewable



Strict measures are applied by the companies operating in the economic and free zones to protect environment in all production processes

whose approval shall be obtained by SEZAD's management.

Environmental requirements

Eng. Al Balushi indicated that, concerning the medium and light industries, the new authorities also included approving environmental requirements by the zones' departments. Concerning heavy industries projects, the Decision states that the department of each zone must set a draft of the environmental requirements of new projects in such zone and discuss them with the Compliance and Environment Affairs Department. Those requirements shall be approved by the Department, except for the Special Economic Zone at Duqm, where the requirements shall be approved by the zone's management. In addition, the Decision indicated that in case a new or similar project is established whether in the same zone or in another zone, the preapproved requirements shall be applied.

Project control

Concerning control of the projects of special economic zones and free and industrial zones, Eng. Ahmed Al Balushi said that the Decision defined the obligations of OPAZ and zones. He noted that obligations of the zones will include assumption of control and inspection of the projects and continuous follow up to ensure their compliance with the laws, regulations and policies approved by OPAZ and prepare the necessary reports. The Decision stipulated that the Compliance and Environmental Affairs Department in OPAZ shall prepare a unified form for data collection and environment of each zone and evaluate them. In addition, OPAZ will prepare the inspection and field visits form to ensure compliance of the management of each zone with application of the laws, policies, regulations and frameworks approved by OPAZ in completion of its works.

Environmental monitoring

Manager of Compliance and Environmental Affairs Department referred to obligations of zones in respect of the environmental monitoring, which is very important in OPAZ to protect environment in the zones. He stated that the new Decision No. (37/2023) stipulates that management of each zone must comply with its responsibility for setting the requirements of mon-

itoring environmental pollutants in accordance with the environmental requirements, and to follow up the environmental consultant in proper completion of environmental monitoring with assurance of registration and approval of the consultant by the concerned authorities in the Sultanate of Oman. As well, the zones shall receive the reports from the environmental consultants or projects in each zone in accordance with the form prepared by management of each zone.

He explained that obligations of the zones in connection with environmental monitoring included analysis and evaluation of data and information, and the consultant's follow up of the correction plan as well as follow up of projects to implement this plan. He noted that the Decision stipulated that Compliance and Environmental Affairs Department in OPAZ shall prepare a standard form for collecting data and information from each zone and evaluate those data, and to take random samples, if required.

Compliance procedures

Eng. Ahmed referred to the controls defined by the new Decision in respect of compliance of each department of the zones and projects with the new environmental procedures. He said that in case of noncompliance by the zone management with the environmental procedures laid down in the mentioned Decision, Compliance and Environmental Affairs Department will take the legal actions provided for in Decision No. (17/2021), which include issuing a warning as an initial step. In case of noncompliance, and insistence on it, an administrative violation will be issued as indicated in the second attachment of the Decision No. (17/2021). In case of noncompliance of projects in every zone with the mentioned environmental procedures, management of each zone will take the legal action in coordination with the Compliance and Environmental Affairs Department in the Zone, except for the Special Economic Zone at Duqm as management of each zone will take the action.

Eng. Ahmed bin Harib Al Balushi, Manager of Compliance and Environmental Affairs Department, said that the new Decision will have a positive effect on facilitating procedures for investors, saving time and effort, upgrading the work efficiency and distributing the responsibilities and roles between OPAZ and the affiliated zones, and creating an attractive investment environment.

Empowering the zones to approve environmental requirements for medium and light industries

Monitoring environment pollutants in line with the environmental requirements

Zones are required to set environmental pollutants monitoring requirements in line with the environmental standards

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Signs on the «Green» Road

There is certainly something we can learn, or we must learn; as one of the late British experts said: "The Stone Age is over," not because the stone has run out, but because the new war tools are bronze and copper, and iron, later, have become better substitute for it in battles and in everyday uses.

On the other hand, or in other words, the age of fossil fuel will end in no far time, not because oil and coal will run out, but because of new types of energy will dominate and have higher strategic and geopolitical importance.

Fortunately, it happened early in the GCC countries that they perceived British wisdom, and attempts of varying strength and impact to diversify energy sources are underway, which emphasise sustainability, as well as diversification of the sources of national income. There is a clear good competition in this context, and perception that green energy, with achievement of carbon neutrality objectives, has become an issue of destiny, not only a development process.

The Sultanate of Oman was on the line of diversification and greening from the early moment. I believe from coping and identification of experiences of investors in Duqm, and international organisations witness first, that the accumulated achievement of political and executive commitment to maintenance of environment and professional and serious application of all environmental standards in the economic and social activities reached a unique position. At the core of this operation is the considerable attention paid by the Sultanate of Oman to producing green hydrogen, a key and critical component in the future energy mix of any country.

From the Royal Decree in March 2022 to expedite the green hydrogen sector regulatory procedures, much actions were taken and many related events were organised up to declaration of establishment of the first green hydrogen project in Duqm in cooperation with a company affiliated to the Indian «Acme» Company. In June 2022, a land usufruct agreement was signed with the Indian Company and the Norwegian «Skatek» Company.

The essential point here is the power supply to be used in the Arabian Sea water desalination and separation of hydrogen from it to be green. There is a full agreement that the cornerstones for success of green hydrogen as an energy are possible generation of clean energy from the sun or wind to be used in water electrolysis. The second is avoidance of the wide need to storage or transport of hydrogen because it is expensive. Therefore, having regular and intensive navigation lines avails opportunity for supplying ships with the directly produced green hydrogen.

For this reason, the green hydrogen projects, which are planned to be established in Egypt, for example, all focus on the Suez Canal. Fortunately, the elements of success of this energy are brought together in SEZAD where there are: wide desert areas, sun (and wind for studies were conducted to utilise, even if within limits).

There is Duqm Port and other Omani ports on the Arabian Sea through which huge numbers of international vessels pass for the purposes of supply, catering, repair, maintenance and conventional commercial purposes.

To this end, it was noted that the first work done by the Indian company is field studies and installation of fans to measure wind speed in Duqm, in addition to weather observation station. The second thing is signing memorandum of cooperation by the project with the Centralized Utilities Company «Marafiq» to supply the station utilities with electric power beyond the times of use of solar energy. Sun disappears on days or is blocked by sand or wind, so there shall be guarantee for continuous flow of power without fluctuation to desalinate and analyze water.

With this project, SEZAD has also come a long way in order to build the preparation, contracting, organisation, motivation and regulations experiences, which are necessary for this type of knowledge-intensive and recent project in the whole world. It is clear for all who many countries are cautious about investment in this field because of complication of its calculations.

However, he drew attention to the fact that Duqm awaiting in the same spheres the Public Authority for Special Economic Zones and Free Zones (OPAZ) signed MoU with two Japanese companies, «Kobe Steel» and «Mitsui and Partners Ltd.», to establish a factory for reduced iron (i.e. the iron that results from oxygen extraction from iron oxides) in SEZAD with a production capacity estimated at 5 million tonnes annually, and a land has already been reserved with the Port of Duqm Company. Someone might say that the effect of carbon extraction created by the green hydrogen project will be removed by the steel project since the last is a polluting industry? The answer is already known to the industrial and business community in Duqm and to the general community itself, which is that the positive strictness in the application of environmental and even aesthetic regulations in the Sultanate of Oman and Duqm will be the same here and perhaps in a way that exceeds the environmental standards of the IFC that pertain to steel industries. It is not a coincidence that the ministry concerned with both (hydrogen and iron) in Oman is the same, i.e. Ministry of Energy and Minerals. Since there is no such connection in many ministries in the world, and, therefore, the environmental commitments are the same in the Ministry or in Duqm.

We shall not forget that the latter aims to follow a sustainable development approach, which focuses, among other things, on "improving water quality, reducing pollution and chemical emissions, reducing the amount of untreated water and increasing recycling and safe reuse in order to conserve the environment and ensure sustainability for the coming generations." This is the first thing that any visitor to the Duqm website will encounter.

In its first edition

«Rowad Duqm» Programme looks into finding sustainable business opportunities for SMEs



Duqm - :

Organised by the Special Economic Zone at Duqm (SEZAD) in cooperation with Tawasul Foundation, «Rowad Duqm» Programme endeavoured to find sustainable business opportunities for Small and Medium-sized Enterprises (SMEs) and entrepreneurs in SEZAD.

More than 45 public and private foundations and 70 participants of SME owners, entrepreneurs and number of employees of the companies operating in SEZAD participated in the Programme.

Organised in March 2023, the Programme included conducting different workshops highlighting the challenges that encounter SMEs in completion of projects and award of works as well as access to business opportunities. Training courses were organised. Those workshops discussed the requirements for establishment and registration and marketing of SMEs and marketing of their brands.

Further, the Programme identified the key challenges that face SMEs to establish their projects, management of their business and delivery



of their services to companies in SEZAD, in addition to understanding their needs and aspirations.

«Rowad Duqm» Programme came within the efforts of SEZAD to enable SMEs by providing them with various facilities and incentives, including reduction of 50% of the fees of all services provided, and allotment of 10% of the tenders of works and projects to those enterprises, to enhance the local added value and to find a motivating investment environment and competitive advantages to entrepreneurs, and to secure business opportunities to them and enhance the opportunities of their utilisation of the economic growth of the Zone.

Understanding the needs and aspirations to establish SMEs and promote their brands




Duqm drydock marks remarkable records in 2022

Dr. Ibrahim Al Nadhiri:
Capabilities of the drydock and reliability of its services allow it to attract leading operators and companies in the sector



Net profits of RO 12 million and revenues of more than RO 57 million were recorded

Maintenance services provided to over 1,300 vessels from the beginning of operation in 2011

Duqm - 

During the past year, Duqm Drydock made remarkable records. The maintenance projects completed by Asyad Company for the drydock since it was launched in 2011 to the end of last year exceeded 1,300 projects for more than 550 local and international commercial customers from 45 countries.

In a press release, the company stated that, during the past year, it recorded revenues of RO 57 million. The company's net profit was RO 12 million, noting that during the past year, maintenance of 221 ships, including 190 ships for regular maintenance and 31 ships for execution of other projects, was performed. Maintenance services included installation of new equipment and navigation aids that support the maritime industry to make the ship

lifecycle safe, reliable and sustainable.

The company confirmed that it recorded a competitive number in the average period of ship repair and maintenance of 14 days as compared to an average of 18 days in the other regional docks.

Leadership and competitiveness

These results come in the time when Asyad Dry Dock in Duqm imposed leadership and competitiveness in its maritime services and solutions in the Middle East and North Africa to become a global provider in provision of huge vessel maintenance and repair services.

In addition, Asyad Dry Dock added to its work portfolio the shipbuilding service. It managed to provide its services to regional markets by building ships with standard specifications for the various uses, such as shipping and navigation services to meet the growing needs of its customers.

Expansion plan

The company stated that Asyad Group set an expansion plan during the period from 2023 to 2027. This plan aims at supporting Duqm Dry Dock competitiveness and enhancement of its pioneering standing. The plan includes purchase of floating dock and building of new workshops, stores and equipment as well as establishment of a ship manufacturing department. Therefore, Asyad Group invested more than RO 6 million to purchase the



Dr. Ibrahim Al Nadhiri



floating dock that was recently operated and will contribute to raise capacity with an average of 20% for the maintain and repair services of the various sizes and types of ships. The dry dock location and area will allow accommodation of three floating docks in the future.

Competitive advantages

Dr. Ibrahim Bakhit Al Nadhiri, CEO of Asyad Shipping and Drydock, stated that capabilities of the dry dock and reliability of its services allow it to accommodate the leading operators and companies of the sector. He indicated that the competitive advantages of the dock, which include the strategic location, prices, services, time, work quality and adoption of the highest occupational health, safety and environment standards are unique and match the customer requirements and needs. It also markets the high capacities of the dry dock in installation of big devices such as the gas exhaust gases and balance water treatment systems as well as the outstanding technical skills in performance of repairs of the bodies of the vessels that encounter maritime accidents.

The drydock recently managed to change vessel with 600-tonne load of steel within 6 days. The drydock recently added a competitive advantage to its service list by applying silicon paint (nano epoxy) technology in ship maintenance

operations, in line with the sustainability strategy of Asyad Group, and in compliance with customisation of the latest environment-friendly technologies, by approval of unique paint on the regional level to provide many economic and environment-friendly advantages.

Low risk area

Concerning the other competitive advantages of Duqm Drydock, the CEO said: «The drydock is on the itinerary of international maritime shipping lines. It is located in a low risk area according to classification of international insurance companies. The insurance of the vessels arriving at the drydock is lower in cost when compared to other regional docks.»

In-Country Value (ICV)

Dr. Ibrahim Al Nadhiri reflected on Duqm Drydock contribution to the In-Country Value. He said that the drydock marks one of the leading and most empowering companies of private sector and small and medium enterprises in Duqm. Asyad Drydock awarded 60% of the total contracts to local market, including 30% to small and medium enterprises. The company worked on supporting local community and set within its priorities concentration of the main points of the sustainability strategy adopted by the group and based on Oman Vision 2040.



550
commercial
customers
from 45
countries
benefit from
the dry dock
services

**Competitive
numbers
achieved
in average
period of ship
repair and
maintenance**

**Asyad Group
creates an ex-
pansion plan
to support the
dry dock com-
petitiveness
and enhance
its standing**



Building ships with standard specifications for various purposes, such as shipping and navigation services

Floating dock operational and raises capacity by 20%

Occupational safety developed to ensure business sustainability

Promotion of occupational safety

He indicated that the drydock focuses on promoting occupational safety to ensure sustainability of works, noting that, during the past two years, the drydock achieved more than 22 million work hours without lost time injuries. The Drydock focuses on changing the company's status from a subsidised government company to a profit company that generates to the state budget returns that enhance economic diversification, and add other activities to the drydock, such as ship and steel structure manufacturing, in addition to the basic activity of the dock, represented in the ship repair and maintenance services. He noted that Duqm Airport largely contributed to finding solutions to some logistic challenges that previously encountered the drydock.

In addition, there is a continuous line on daily basis between Muscat Governorate and Duqm

to deliver the spare parts and equipment, in addition to the other direct lines that connect the drydock to the countries of the region. He confirmed that 90% of the services provided by the drydock are performed in Duqm Drydock and 10% through the regional offices.

Numerous advantages

Duqm Drydock has a berth of 2800m long and 9 to 10m deep. It has an arm lever and two ship docks that can receive ships with dead load up to 600,000 tonnes. In addition, the drydock is enhanced with the maintenance facilities and modification of use of ships to provide an integrated service package of general ship repair services, including the engineering and electrical works, engine, electrical and mechanical engineering, and the works related to the driving systems, preparation, sanding and painting, and procurement and quality control activities.





Aimed at boosting the In-Country Value

OPAZ signs a cooperation programme with Industrial Innovation Academy

Muscat - 

The Public Authority for Special Economic Zones and Free Zones (OPAZ) signed a cooperation programme with the Industrial Innovation Academy aimed at strengthening cooperation between OPAZ and the Academy. Through this programme, both parties seek to boost the In-Country Value (ICV) in the special economic, free and industrial zones affiliated with OPAZ. As well, they intend to empower the zones with various programmes, which the Academy will conduct along with other endeavours. These programmes will allow OPAZ and the Academy to capitalise on their competences, improve the efficiency of national cadres, and empower existing industries in the different zones.

The programme was signed by HE Eng. Ahmed bin Hassan Al Dheeb, Deputy Chairman of the Public Authority for Special Economic Zones and Free Zones, and Dr. Ayman bin Abdullah Al Fudaili, Acting CEO of the Industrial Innovation Academy.

Implementation of «Rabt» Programme

The programme stipulates that both, OPAZ and the Academy, will implement 'Rabt Pro-

gramme', which aims to connect local products with government tenders and procurement process in the zones. This Programme serves creating a database of products and services of the companies operating in the zones and will be linked to the government tenders and procurement, so such products are given a preference. Thus, the companies that are awarded the tenders are obliged to purchase and supply their projects with local products and industries.

Moreover, the two parties will provide an integrated programme focusing on localisation, training and qualification services for the zones affiliated with OPAZ, by developing and reviewing employment plans for companies requesting additional workforce and submitting proposals in this regard to OPAZ labour licensing employees. In addition, the training and localisation plans will be evaluated to ensure their effectiveness.

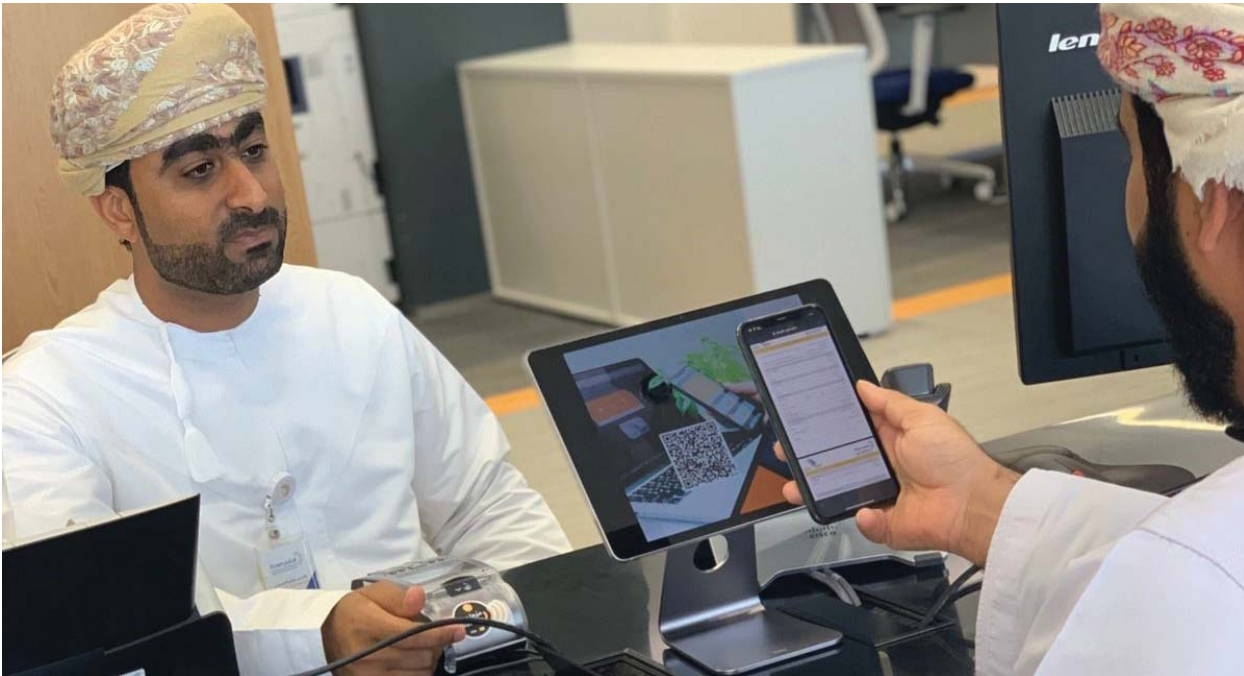
It is worth noting that the cooperation programme will contribute to serving the industrial sector in the Sultanate of Oman by encouraging investments, facilitating procurement at the sector, and boosting its local added value. Further, services of various sectors will be linked together in order to accelerate the pace of achieving economic diversification.

Developing a database of the products and services delivered by the companies operating in the target zones and connecting them to government tenders and procurement

Objectives of the cooperation programme between OPAZ and Industrial Innovation Academy

01	02	03	04
Training and qualifying national resources	Developing a database of the products and services delivered by the companies operating in the target zones and connecting them to government tenders and procurement	Prioritising government tenders for the products and services listed on the database	Developing employment plans to companies that request additional manpower

OPAZ stops paper transactions by end of June 2023



Supporting digital transformation plans and making workplaces environment-friendly

Muscat - **الدقم**:

The Public Authority for Special Economic Zones and Free Zones (OPAZ) has set June 30, 2023 as the last day for receiving and sending paper transactions. This endeavour comes as part to complete its plan towards digital transformation. It, further, reflects OPAZ tireless environment-friendly efforts and initiatives, including its "Paperless" campaign, which aims at reducing the use of paper and having environmentally friendly workplace. On the other hand, it serves accelerating the pace of digital transformation, as this campaign will contribute to automating the services and transactions provided by OPAZ and its affiliated zones to investors; thus, discontinuing paper transactions.

Reflecting on its digital transformation plan, OPAZ had stopped printing and receiving all paper transactions and documents at the one-stop station in the Special Economic Zone at Duqm last year, replaced employee's paper business card with the Near Field Communication (NFC) feature in the employee's ID card and introduced electronic alternatives to transfer and share files, documents and transactions between employees instead of using printed copies. OPAZ implemented the use of internal online portal for employees, File Cloud platform for data storage, issuing the Cadastral Drawing (Krooki) electroni-



Adil Al Raqadi:
Using electronic alternatives and digital platforms instead of printing on paper

cally for investors, as well as activating the document management system and electronic documents (Wusool).

In this regard, Adil bin Saif Al Raqadi, IT Manager at the Public Authority for Special Economic Zones and Free Zones, stated that by end of June 2023, OPAZ will stop receiving paper transactions, accept for some transactions with private entities and others of classified mails to and from government bodies. "The Paperless campaign translates OPAZ efforts and its interest to achieve one of the key objectives of Oman Vision 2040 towards digitalising the transactions and services provid-



ed to investors and beneficiaries, as well as adopting this transformation in our day-to-day activities, especially at workplace. This has been mirrored in using electronic alternatives and digital platforms instead of printing on paper. In order to achieve this direction, the campaign included setting a printing policy for OPAZ employees, which aims to promote the culture of limiting printing on paper through the control of printing practices and reliance on digital platforms for the interactions between employees and those dealing with OPAZ" he explained.

5 minutes to get a license and start your business

Introducing automatic licenses on “Invest Easy” portal in Sohar Free Zone



During the launch of new service

Sohar - الدقم :

The Public Authority for Special Economic Zones and Free Zones (OPAZ) in Sohar Free Zone has launched the service of issuing automatic licenses for economic activities through the “Invest Easy” portal in the Zone. The service was launched in a workshop held with the participation of a number of OPAZ employees and representatives from the Ministry of Commerce, Industry and Investment Promotion, Sohar Free Zone and others from concerned parties.

Launching this service comes as part of OPAZ efforts to harmonise and integrate special, free and industrial zones and central national system & solutions, in order to develop sustainable action plans within the Authority's continuous plans to develop investment through digital transformation. Investors now can obtain a license to start their activities and the environmental permit automatically within only 5 minutes, post digitally signing the terms and controls specified for each type of business.

Besides, OPAZ plan aims to unify the procedures for obtaining the services provided by the special economic zones and free zones through its online portals for investors and other beneficiaries through the one-stop shop.

Further, investors can submit their requests to invest in the special economic zones and free zones through the e-services portal for each zone and follow up the applications too. The portal enables investors to attach the required documents and process the e-payment. Hence, the one-stop-shop employees of each zone receive the applications and process the necessary approvals, starting from receiving the applications until completing the final approval for all transactions.

Unification of one-stop-shop procedures

It is worth noting that the Public Authority for Special Economic Zones and Free Zones (OPAZ) is proceeding with plans to develop the investment environment by unifying the one-stop-shop procedures in the economic and free zones as an endeavour to complement its ongoing efforts to attract various investments in its affiliated zones. This also serves accelerating the process of investors' transactions and facilitates practicing the businesses and converting paper applications to digital transactions. In addition, OPAZ strives to reflect its commitment towards achieving transparency and flexibility in providing all its services. Moreover, OPAZ had earlier introduced the automatic licensing service in the Special Economic Zone at Duqm and Salalah Free Zone.

OPAZ establishes sustainable business plans to attract investments through digital transition and simplifying procedures

Unifying the procedures of access to economic and free zone services through its web portals



Urging employees to use the artificial intelligence technologies

OPAZ introduces Chat GPT



The new service aims at increasing the pace of response to the investors' requests

Providing continuous and immediate support to employees to manage their daily tasks in a faster and more efficient manner

Allowing follow-up and quality control sections to get valuable data on the services delivered by OPAZ

Muscat -

The Public Authority for Special Economic Zones and Free Zones (OPAZ) announced starting using Chat GPT service, reflecting its direction of urging employees to use artificial intelligence techniques. Introducing this service is aimed at improving the quality of services provided by OPAZ and increasing the efficiency of internal operations and employees' performance. This serves uplifting the provided services and expediting processing and completing investors' applications.

Mohammed bin Abdulmajeed Al Hooti, In-Charge of Managing OPAZ Digital Transformation programme, said that OPAZ will allow its employees in the different divisions to use the Chat GPT service in order to improve the quality of services, increase data analysis and provide integrated and innovative experiences for the challenges encountered at work and when processing investors' applications. "Employees will be able to access this service on their desktops and mobiles while getting continuous and immediate support at any time, and from anywhere, to carry out their tasks in a faster and more efficient



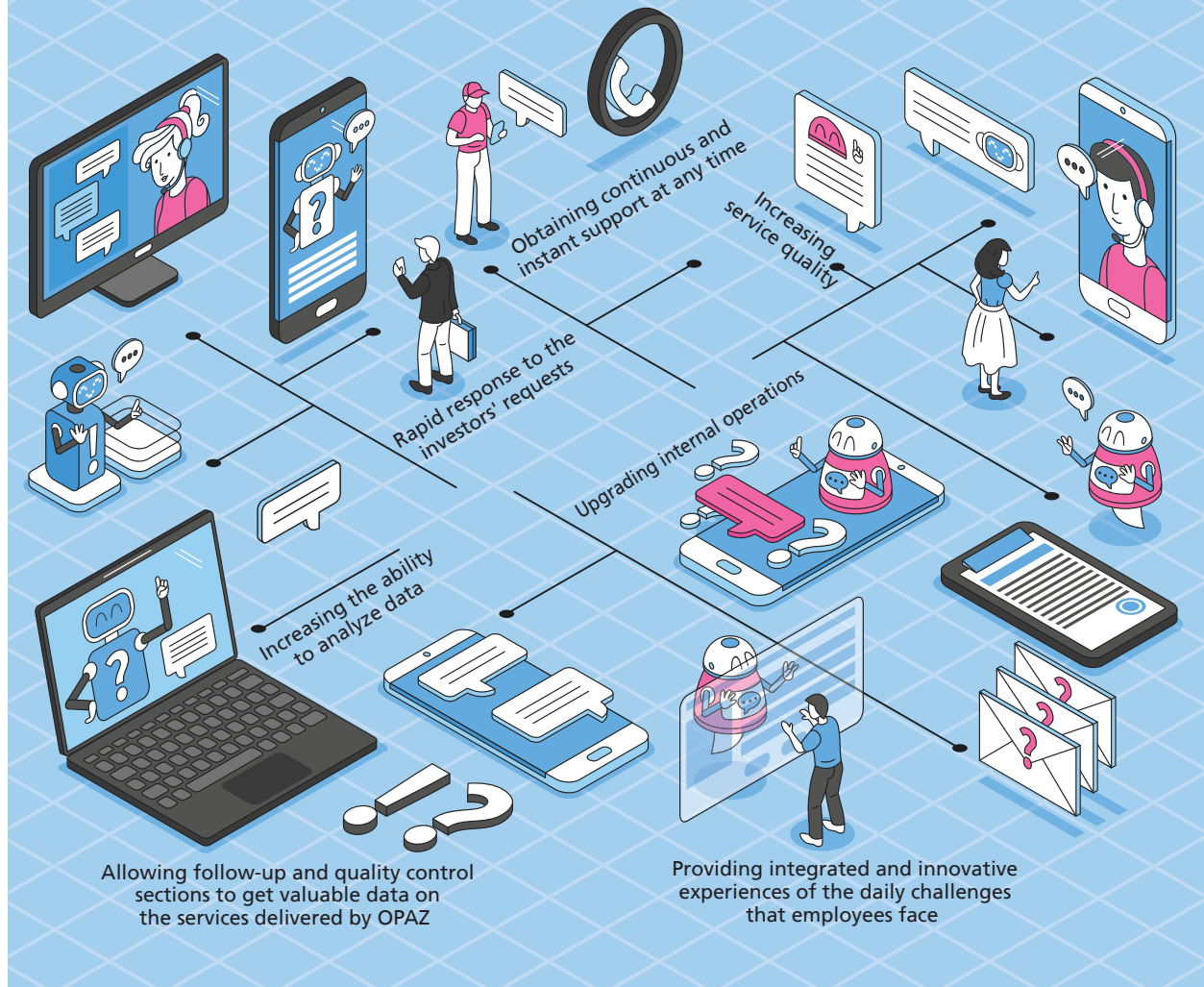
Mohammed Al Hooti:

Improvement of service quality, data analysis and provision of integrated and innovated experiences of daily challenges are key objectives

manner. The service will also improve internal processes within departments, especially for new employees and projects, where new information is required about them, and from multiple resources that can be compared in an immediate manner", Al Hooti explained.

"OPAZ aims to increase efficiency and productivity, and hones employees' communication skills and to make the most of their time. Instead of training a large number of

Key advantages of the Chat GPT service



employees to answer common questions, Chat GPT can be implemented to answer these questions automatically and immediately, and at times when employees are not even on duty” Al Hooti further commented.

Analysis of the data received from investors

Moreover, employees will be able to analyze the data they receive from clients and potential investors more effectively, allowing the follow-up and quality control sections to obtain valuable data about the services provided by OPAZ.

These insights can be used to uplift OPAZ overall performance and implement operations in a more resourceful and effective manner, in addition to the possibility of using Chat GPT to enhance the experience of investors and customers with OPAZ services. Through this new service, investors can get quick and accurate answers to their inquiries related to the services provided, which facilitate their procedures and ensures their satisfaction.

The Chat GPT service is considered one of the artificial intelligence techniques and one of its most important applications, as it allows users to analyze data in a more ac-

curate and effective way. Likewise, problems can be identified and responded to rapidly, a matter that would achieve work efficiency and easier management.

Upgrading internal operation efficiency

Using artificial intelligence technology and Chat GPT service marks a valuable addition to the smart services provided by the Public Authority for Special Economic Zones and Free Zones (OPAZ) and reflects its aspirations to improve the quality of services, increase the efficiency of internal operations, and enhance communication with investors and beneficiaries of its services.

The Public Authority for Special Economic Zones and Free Zones aims to introduce the Chat GPT service in all its affiliated zones in the future as part of its vision to fully benefit from advanced technologies and apply international best practices in managing its zones, being incubators for artificial intelligence technologies.

This comes within OPAZ efforts to achieve its strategic objectives by enhancing the investment environment in the 13 economic, free and industrial zones supervised by OPAZ, in addition to the new under construction zones.

Concentration on upgrading the efficiency of internal operations and enhancing communication with investors and beneficiaries of OPAZ's services

Expanding the use of new service in the zones supervised by OPAZ in the future

Smart seaports and global supply chains

Global economy presently undergoes considerable fluctuations and complicated crises with the uncertainties related to limited resources and conflict over attraction of capitals and investments. Global economy is characterized by a high degree of competitiveness and conflict on markets and clients, by achievement of high level of quality and excellence, and achievement of high level of production and operational efficiency in management of the establishment's assets and control of its financial and cash variables by the best possible means.

Seaports and international trader

In the movement of international trade, maritime transport is the best means of transport in terms of economy. This applies in particular to transport and bulk goods which are moved for long distances where speed, efficiency and service quality are paramount. Considering contemporary maritime transport to make advantage in its operation economics from the successive technology developments of the sizes and speeds of vessels in many modern types and brands, and the seaports that spread on seas and oceans where the maritime transport system is integrated with the other means of transport, maritime transport is the best in terms of geographic coverage.

Being the main link of international trade and maritime transport and, being the key cycle that links vessels, goods, importers and exporters around the world, it represents the cornerstone in global supply chains. This becomes the clearest in the ports of countries of huge economic contribution in the international trade activities.

Management of global supply chains

On the other hand, supply chain management is a process based on design and planning of supply chain activities, and planning, performance and control of those activities for maximization of value, building of competitive infrastructure, utilization of global logistic services, synchronization of supply and demand, and global measurement of performance.

Smart supply chain is distinguished by a network of inter-related digital and technology applications that work on helping the companies better respond to the developing customer requirements and meet their needs so that companies deliver products quickly with better efficiency, and to provide further options and alternatives to customers. Supply chain operations save time, improve quality and reduce the costs and requirements of capital management and increase the profits.

The bigger the organization, the higher their international operations and activities become and the more important the role of global supply chains and flow of their activities and chains and regularity of them will be by dealing with high efficiency and performance ports.

Within this immense pace of developments, seaports, as portals of international trade, developed their capacities and capabilities using modern technology applications. With expanded adoption and use of those applications in the management and operation fields in seaports, the concept of smart ports emerged.

Smart Ports

Smart port is a seaport that uses technology and program applications and modern devices in management and

operation to take the proper work decisions efficiently and effectively. This gives expectation that use of smart technology will increase the port efficiency, improve performance and upgrade competitiveness.

Smart port is a more efficient and effective port in terms of management and operation, and for other sides that include further levels of efficient use of resources, energy saving, and increase of safety and security. Smart ports are characterized by being friendly and more related to the logistic services, urban societies and industrial centers.

Smart ports use smart systems, and are characterized by transparency and sustainability. Managers of those ports are expected to have open innovative mentality which is essentially based on applications of bulk data, artificial intelligence, block chain and other modern e-applications as follows:

Artificial intelligence expresses the computers that can simulate «thinking» by search and analysis of the complicated patterns, processing of data, drawing conclusions and presenting recommendations.

Block chain is a safe and decentralized method for recording and circulation of data with no need to depend on foreign brokers. Bitcoin is the most common application of it.

Computer technology, which is the technology that makes computers smarter with higher performance because it can process bulk amounts of data faster than before. With the appearance of digital cloud, companies were allowed to store their data and safely access to them from any place connected to computer network at any time.

Virtual reality is a technology system that provides examples of digital experiences that simulate and stimulate the real world. Enhanced reality integrates digital and material worlds.

Robotics refers to design, manufacturing and use of computers for personal and commercial use. Technology breakthroughs made computers increasingly more complicated and developed.

Generation, storage and transmission of technology by modern technology means is a growing and motivating market with the decline of renewable energy technology costs.

Technology integration in smart ports

Works of smart seaports are expected to undergo considerable development with the growth of their relations with the navigation companies, shipping agencies, terminals in seaports, vessel traffic organizers and operators of the





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drawing, guidance, trading, handling and storage vessels and movement of goods and containers. This can increase the efficiency of vessel and goods services with circular, not sequential, flow of information.

As a leading experience of technology development in the field of smart ports and smart maritime transport services, Marsk and IBM announced the cooperation initiative for use of block chain technology to transform global supply chains. BSA International Pacific, Pacific International Lines and Antwerp-Bruges conduct supply chain based on the fact that smart vessels need smart ports to utilize their full capabilities by organization of logistic services and improvement of shipping activities.

Those modern technologies their importance and value in smart from day to day. In a modern European port that adopts and applies smart port technologies, which is «Antwerp-Bruges» Port, it intensively uses the «digital twinning» applications of the port, remote sensors, drones and smart cameras to follow up the works and activities, and follows up the vessel arrival and departure as well as the flows and movement of goods and containers from, to and through the port, and follow up the security condition, control the sea, land and air environment safety in the field of the port.

In «Antwerp-Bruges» Port, there are more than 600 cameras for surveillance of the port parts. These smart cameras can better identify objects with advanced electronic optical technology (Advanced Port Information and Control Assistant (APICA)), which is the application master mind. It represents a three dimensional interface that contains information in the real time of the incident.

The most renowned seaports that adopt and use the

smart port concepts and applications include Rotterdam, Hamburg, Antwerp, Singapore, Chinghai, Le Havre, Los Angeles, Copenhagen Malmö, Valencia and Barcelona.

In the Netherlands, Rotterdam port created a team of technology specialists from IBM Company to merge the digital cloud, artificial intelligence, internet of things sensors and smart climate data to work on establishment of a future smart port to be the biggest port in Europe by work on smart presentation programming for collection and processing of communication data, sensors and safe and efficient work and operation system.

In Germany, Hamburg Port works on delivery of smart logistic services through the internet of things (IOT) applications, in cooperation with SAP technology service providers. Using HANA-SAP cloud platform, it can have simultaneous connection with many parties, including the navigation companies, customs, land transport, railways and ports. Smart ports work on upgrade of the efficiency of predictive and preventive maintenance, in addition to traffic, operation and activities in the port.

Concept of Smart City

Beside smart port, there is the smart city. It is the city adjoining the port and is largely connected in its social and functional works and activities with the smart seaport. Their officials coordinate the use of smart applications of the city with the port to work together, mainly in connection with the movement of trucks, lorries, railways, navigation and river passages to the port, which may cross the city or be near to it.

Smart city integrates with the smart ports within the circular economic framework. Quebec Port in Canada, and Le Havre Port in France, Rotterdam Port in the Netherlands, started to install an integrated system for circular economy between the port and the city. For example, smart cities and ports endeavor to rationalize energy in the various supply chain operations in goods and transport from, to and inside the port using modern technology in connection with the various land and maritime means of transport.



In one of the modern European ports that embraces and implements smart port technologies, various applications such as digital twinning, remote sensors, drones, and smart cameras are extensively utilized to monitor and manage business operations and activities. These technologies enable effective tracking of ship arrivals and departures, as well as the movement of cargo and containers within the port.

In return for providing land allocation service electronically OPAZ receives Government Achievements Award at Arab Digital Government Awards 2023

Developing digital applications and solutions to improve the quality of government procedures and provide fast and comprehensive services for investors

Allowing investors to select the plot of land for over 800 economic activities



Dubai - :

The Public Authority for Special Economic Zones and Free Zones (OPAZ) received the Government Achievements Award at Arab Digital Government Awards 2023, which was announced at a ceremony held in Dubai. The Arab Digital Government Award is granted to Arab government entities that stand out for delivering innovative and effective digital applications and solutions to improve the quality of government services, increase customer satisfaction, and enhance transparency.

This award seeks to increase the quality standard of digital government products and services, contribute to enhancing competitiveness to improve the performance of government bodies and facilitate practicing business, as well as adopting international standards in the digital transformation journey. This contributes to uplifting the efficiency of government sector, in addition to stimulating the development and ensuring constantly introducing innovative initiatives. This contributes to improving the quality of services in government institutions.

Winning this award comes as a testament of OPAZ continuous commitment towards promoting innovation, development and the use of modern technologies to improve the experience of investors and beneficiaries of the services provided by OPAZ and its affiliated zones, and adhere to best practices. It also marks an acknowledgement to OPAZ persistent efforts towards digital transformation through its development of electronic applications aimed at simplifying government procedures and providing fast, safe and inclusive services to investors.

Land allocation e-service

The Public Authority for Special Economic Zones and Free Zones (OPAZ) won this award in return for providing the land allocation service electronically to the investors interested to invest in the Special Economic Zone at

Duqm (SEZAD). The service can be accessed through the online portal (eoss.duqm.gov.om) from anywhere around the world to register in OPAZ digital portal and submit a land usufruct request.

This service aims to facilitate and speed up the procedures for investors, save time and effort, and achieve transparency for all investors in SEZAD with smooth selection of the plot of land directly as soon as the investor specifies the type of project and the required plot of land. The system displays the masterplan for the investor, demonstrating the lands available based on the application's data. Through the Geographic Information Systems (GIS), which has become one of the modern technologies used in achieving the governance of procedures, the new service will enable the investor to make the investment decision easier by choosing the appropriate location while providing the investor with a spatial description that enhances his investment decision.

Various features

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 level of 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.

Investors can 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.



Numbers of subscribers grew by over 38% compared to last year


Demand on electricity in SEZAD rises

Duqm -  :

The Special Economic Zone at Duqm (SEZAD) recorded increase of demand on electricity as the numbers of subscribers increased by the end of last December to 6953 subscribers against 5031 subscribers by the end of 2021 recording growth of 38.2%.

«This increase of subscribers reflects the steady development and accelerated investment pace in SEZAD, and the efforts made by OPAZ and the companies working in the sector to expand the electricity network and accelerate connection of electricity to the investment areas», Eng. Saeed bin Ahmed Bani Oraba of SEZAD said.

Meeting demand on electricity

In a statement to , he added that: «The current projects in SEZAD electricity sector aim to meet the steady demand on electricity and meet the needs of society and the existing and future projects to electric power by cooperation with the private partner suppliers in this field,



Said Bani Oraba: We expect operation of the project of Duqm Connection to the main network this year

such as Rural Areas Electricity Company «Tanweer», Oman Electricity Transmission Company and Marafiq Company.»

**Implementa-
tion
of
expansions
of the
electricity
network and
acceleration
of service
delivery
to the
beneficiaries**





Electricity connection to beneficiaries developed without further costs

He confirmed that the projects adopted by SEZAD for implementation of expansions in the electric network in SEZAD, which were completed during the past two years, contributed to expedite delivery of service to the beneficiaries in many sites, mainly in the light, medium and heavy industries areas and fishers and fishing seaport.

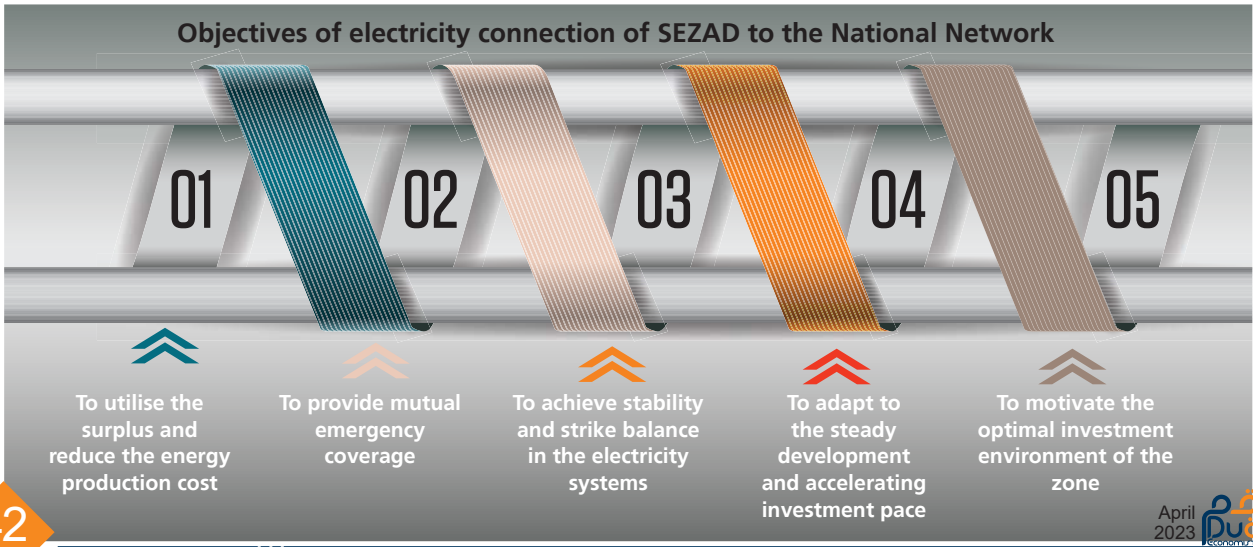
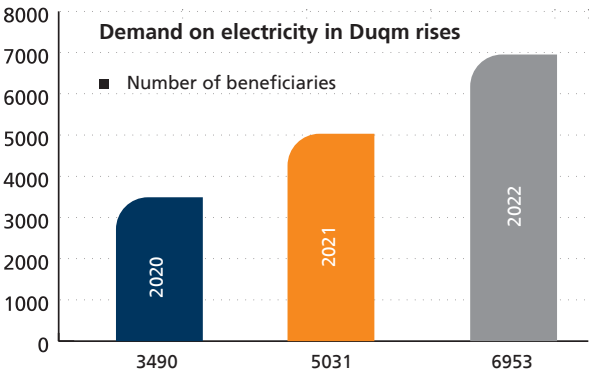
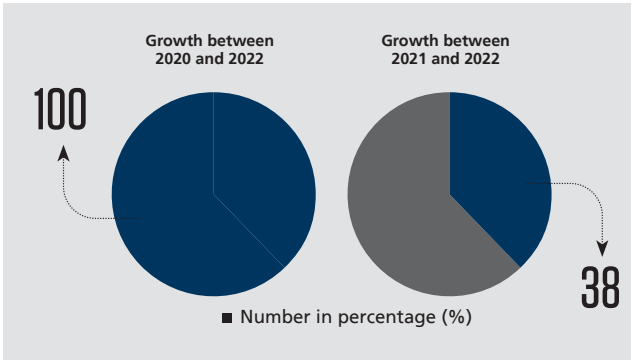
Connection of Duqm to the Main Network

On the project of connection of Duqm to the main national network of 400 KV, Eng. Saeed Bani Oraba said that the project is expected to be operated this year, noting that the project will grant stability and balance of the electric systems and will provide the mutual emergency coverage, utilize the surplus,

reduce the electricity production cost and supply high electric capacities on voltage of 400 KV, 132 KV and 33 KV. Therefore, this will be positively reflected on meeting the needs of various economic projects, which will motivate the optimal investment environment of SEZAD.

Development of electric connection mechanism

In his speech, he referred to the efforts of OPAZ in development of the mechanism of electric connection to the beneficiaries to be more flexible so that the service supplier delivers the service without further costs to the beneficiaries in lien with OPAZ's policy to supply general services in the SEZAD.



Dr. Wassim Hamad, CEO of Philex Company, speaks to **الدعم** :

We started manufacturing medicines, and we seek achieving regional pharmaceutical security



Salalah - **الدعم :**

CEO of Philex pharmaceuticals, Dr. Wassim Hamad, announced beginning of commercial production from the company's new complex in Salalah Free Zone, which was officially opened in the beginning of this year.

«We started manufacturing of medicines from raw materials, after technology transferred to the new factory during the past months», he said in an interview to **الدعم**, adding that «This is the first factory of its kind in the Sultanate of Oman». He indicated that the factory's annual production capacity is one billion pills of medicine.

Production of customised medicines

Speaking to **الدعم**, Dr. Wassim Hamad revealed the priorities of executing the second phase of the company's plan, which is the phase of manufacturing vaccines and producing customised medicines after it recently completed the first phase successfully. The first phase included production of certain types of medicines by the secondary packaging unit that started production in May 2020 with production capacity of approximately 12 million package per year.

«We currently consider transforming the secondary packaging unit to a production unit for manufacturing customised medicines, including the cancer medicines. Earlier this year, the company signed contracts with a leading

international Russian Company (Biocad). Contracts include licenses for packaging and exporting cancer medicines», he said. «We were motivated to study developing the secondary packaging unit for this purpose to be integrated with the production operations of the main factory and add specific abilities of the company for producing customised medicines that meet, at the meantime, the health requirements in this field, which require pharmaceutical companies to separate the cancer medicine production unit from the other production units», he added.

Production of vaccines

«We made a strategic change of the second phase plan to direct it primarily to produce cancer medicines and vaccines. We presented initial plans to the Ministry of Health to establish the first human vaccines factory in the Sultanate of Oman. In the meantime, we work with global partners to register a group of main vaccines that are needed by the Sultanate of Oman and countries of the region. We also study the economic feasibility of Omanisation of vaccine manufacturing to start production within the coming three years», he elaborated.

«The second phase includes building a new factory for producing vaccines on the same plot invested by the company in Salalah Free Zone. The investment cost in this phase is expected to be approximately \$60 million», he added. He noted that the products will target local, Arab and African markets.

Production capacity of the factory is one billion pills of medicine every year

We consider transforming the secondary packaging unit to a production unit for manufacturing customised medicines

Our priorities include production of cancer medicines according to the cooperative agreement with the International Biocad Company



During the official opening in January 2023

◆◆◆
We plan constructing the first factory for producing human vaccines in the Sultanate of Oman and strive to fully transfer technology

◆◆◆
Attracting a major group of pharmaceutical companies in the region and the world

◆◆◆
Our plan includes transforming Philex into a toll manufacturing centre or the regional and international companies

◆◆◆
We started exporting to Qatar, Yemen and Iraq before the end of this year



Secondary packaging unit

He said that producing vaccines is a complicated manufacturing operation that requires high accuracy, noting that the company's capabilities qualify it to this, mainly after the success made by the company in the first phase. This was proven by the high interest received from different countries of the region, as well as the focus of international companies to cooperate with Philex.

He noted that the vaccine production plan undergoes several stages. «We completed those phases in the first quarter of this year. Contract have been concluded with international companies that have the vaccine production technology. We presented files for registration of those vaccines to the concerned authorities in the Sultanate of Oman», he said.

«Our plan also includes focusing on vaccination programmes in the Sultanate of Oman and its priority. The company will produce the main vaccines that this programme needs», he added, expected that manufacturing phase will start within the coming three years.

Achievement of pharmaceutical security

Touching on the company's objectives, Dr. Wassim Hamad, explained that the project is distinguished by the company's vision that exceeds the phase of pharmaceutical manufacturing to achievement of regional medicine security. As a result, the company diversified the production lines and technical and com-

mercial contracts in the manner that achieves the company's objectives to make the factory a regional industrial centre of the region and the neighbouring countries.

«The results achieved so far are promising. The company managed to attract a group of pharmaceutical companies in the region and the world. In this regard, two agreements were signed with the Jordanian Savvy Company and the Egyptian Devart Lab Company for manufacturing a large number of their medicines in Phelix Factory in Salalah Free Zone», he stated.

Manufacturing centre

«We don't focus only on producing Phelix medicines, but manufacturing medicines of international companies so that Phelix can be a toll manufacturing centre for regional and global companies. If medicine doesn't exist in our system, we will work attracting those leading manufacturing companies to allow Phelix Company to manufacture their medicines, which will achieve the regional pharmaceutical security», he added.

Compliance with high quality and innovation

He confirmed that the company is committed to manufacturing high quality medicine and that it holds international certificates in such field, which encouraged the regional and international companies to form commercial partnerships with the company. He noted that Phelix Factory is one of the leading phar-





maceutical factories in the region in terms of space, and the technology and machinery used in pharmaceutical manufacturing is one of the latest technologies in the field of pharmaceutical manufacturing, so Philex Factory reflects the vision of the Sultanate of Oman to achieve pharmaceutical security.

Export and targeted markets

Dr. Wassim showcased the steps adopted by the company for exporting its products, and the key target markets. «We started in April 2023 exporting the first shipment to Qatar from several production lines. We signed agreements for exporting medicines to Iraq and Yemen. We expect to start exporting to Yemen from the third quarter of this year, and Iraq in the fourth quarter. We are in the final stage of registering Philex medicines in GCC Countries», he said.

He pointed out that export plans also include European, African and American markets during the coming three years. «We have plans to register the company in Europe, Canada and United States to benefit from the commercial agreements of the Sultanate of Oman and GCC Countries with those markets. We look forward to be able to enter into the European and American markets by 2027.»

Omanisation of major items

«Although there are promising markets for the company's products in the various regional and global markets, it was confirmed that

the company's main focus is to bridge the local gap in the medicine import balance», he noted. «Sultanate of Oman imports 90% of medicines and we strive to Omanise the 100 basic items that the Sultanate of Oman needs, to be produced in Philex Pharmaceutical Factory during the coming three years», he said.

Development of human talents

Dr. Wassim Hamad, CEO of Philex Pharmaceutical, emphasised the attention paid by the company to Omani youth. He said that Phelix is distinguished by focusing on developing human talents. The company developed the skills and abilities of national employees; they currently hold major positions in the company and effectively contribute to the commercial and technical agreements and experimental scientific research, which are conducted by the company to develop some of its products in the European research centres.

«We effectively participate in the educational sector through our membership in some relevant committees. We also revise the curricula of the colleges of pharmacy and strive to jointly cooperate with those colleges to focus on industrial pharmacy to graduate industrial pharmacists. We also contribute to training of graduates and open the factory doors to regular visits to the educational institutions specialised in the pharmacy sector to grow in this generation their engagement with this industry», he added.



We look forward to penetrate European and American markets by 2027

We focus on bridging the local gap in the balance of medicine import

We aspire to produce 100 medical items during the next three years

Omani youth effectively contributing to the commercial, technical and scientific research agreements for development of medicines

Establishing two projects for operating quarries and manufacturing electric appliances

Signing two investment contracts of RO 20.2 million in Al Buraimi Industrial City



Al Buraimi - البُرَيْم:

Al Buraimi Industrial City, affiliated with the Public Establishment for Industrial Estates (Madayn), signed two investment contracts with a value of RO 20,2 million.

The first contract includes an investment of RO 20 million to establish a project in the quarry operation sector. This project will include marble cutting and will be constructed on 90,000 m2 by Abu El Ezz Al Zaydi Trading Company.

The second contract was signed with Gulf Original Energy and Projects Company. Through this contract, the company will establish a project to manufacture electric appliances to connect, disconnect or protect the electric circuits, such as electric switches, lightning rods, etc. Investment in this project is estimated to be RO 215,000, and it will be constructed over an area of 6000 km2.

Developing infrastructure

The two contracts are signed at the time

when Al Buraimi Industrial City undergoes development in various sectors. «The infrastructure development project records 87% completion», Said bin Abdullah Al Balushi, General Manager of Al Buraimi Industrial City, said. He also noted that the project will include road network, sanitary sewerage network, storm water draining channels and sanitary sewerage plant.

In a meeting organised by Al Buraimi Industrial City with investors, Al Balushi stated that past period witnessed preparing a feasibility study for establishing fruit and vegetable market in «Humaida» area. Moreover, the project of standardising façades of industrial workshops by unified designs based on the business type was completed.

Al Balushi, further, urged investors and business owners to utilise «Masar» Service Center, which is a unified investment window through which investors in Al Buraimi Industrial City obtain, through one stop shop, all approvals, permissions and licenses which are required for their investment projects.

Infrastructure development project records 87% completion

Feasibility study of vegetable and fruit market completed



Biggest investment project between two GCC countries in the refinery and petrochemicals sector


From Duqm to the World

Oil products with international standards



Duqm - :


With its prime location on the international trade lines between the East and West, «Duqm Refinery» in the last quarter of this year receives considerable attention. It is the joint-venture between Omani OQ Group and Kuwaiti International Petroleum Company. Sultanate of Oman looks forward to commissioning the project, which is the first GCC Refinery to depend on imported crude oil in its operations, and the largest investment project in the refinery and petrochemicals sector between two GCC countries. In addition, the refinery is one of the key leading projects established in SEZAD and constitutes a valuable addition and breakthrough in the history of economic projects in the Sultanate of Oman. The project will increase the refinery capacity by approximately half a million barrel of crude oil per day, which will support the national economy and motivate its growth. «Duqm Refinery» will be a new resource for development. It will contribute to maximising the economic benefits of the Omani oil resources and products, and standpoint for bringing the largest industrial and economic centres in the Middle East.

To determine the key developments related to «Duqm Refinery» Project,  met with Eng. Yousuf bin Mohammed Al Jahdhami, General Manager of «Duqm Refinery»



Yousuf Al Jahdhami: First high-sulfur fuel consignments to be exported soon


Commissioning refinery's main processing units


The refinery is the first transboundary investment project in the Middle East in the field of oil refineries

98%
completed,
and commis-
sioning
is expected
to be in Q4
of 2023

Operation of
the refinery
project
support
units
completed

Qualifying
national
workforce to
contribute to
the project

Geographic
location
marks a
gateway
to deliver
products
to global
markets



Commissioning

«First of all, there is considerable expectation of Duqm Refinery Project»... What are the key related developments?

As you know, Duqm Refinery and Petrochemical Industries Project consists of three packages. The first package is concerned with the main processing units of the refinery. The second package consists of the supporting facilities and services of operation process. The third package includes the bulk and liquid petroleum storage and export facilities of the refinery in Ras Markaz.

Concerning the key developments related to the project, we started recently commissioning of the main processing units of the refinery, which constitute the key components of the project. It will include all crude oil processing operations to reach the final products of the project. In addition, we recently received the first shipment of Omani and Kuwaiti crude oil in the strategic oil storage in Ras Markaz, and was successfully pumped through the oil tube to the refinery complex in the Wilayat of Duqm to start commissioning. The first high-sulfur oil consignments, which is one of the secondary products of refineries is usually produced in the commissioning phases before commercial operation of refineries, will be exported soon.

Transboundary investment project

What makes «Duqm Refinery» different from other projects?

From the beginning, «Duqm Refinery» was planned to be distinctive and economically feasible to inure to the benefit the national economy. The project is distinguished by its unique and exceptional geographic location in SEZAD. It overlooks the Arabian Sea and the Indian Ocean that constitute the gateway to the

various continents. In addition, it is the first project of its kind in the Middle East. Through this project, crude oil, which is extracted from other countries, is refined in the Sultanate of Oman in accordance with long-term contracts.

In addition, it is the first transboundary investment project in the Middle East in the field of oil refineries. It is also the first joint-venture between oil companies owned by SEZAD Government. In addition, the refinery was designed to produce broad spectrum of oil derivatives, with hydrocarbon cracking and coaling units that use advanced technologies and with high economic feasibility, supported by advanced technologies licensed by international corporations. This reflects leadership of the project that will work beside all existing economic projects in achieving the prosperity and welfare of the Sultanate of Oman.

Project completion

Can we say that we are near the long-awaited moment of commissioning the refinery's operations?

We are about to complete all structural works of the entire project. The project records 98% completion. In addition, the refinery commissioning exceeded 65%. Commercial operation of the refinery is expected to start in Q4 of 2023.

There is currently assurance of preparedness of the project, which includes the safety, security and preparedness check of mechanical and electrical systems. In addition, qualification of staff is a primary focus of the refinery management. We current continue with qualification of national human resources that will contribute to efficient management of the project a decisive element in continuation of the project success.





We successfully completed operation of the supporting units of the refinery project, which is now ready for providing all necessary services to complete check of operation readiness of the main processing units of the refinery and the external utilities as a part of guarantee to pump crude oil in the crude oil refinery units by the end of this year.

In a step that reflects progress of the operational readiness of the project, we have recently and successfully completed the practical exercise (Level II) of simulation of safety and security procedures on occurrence of accidents with our partners, and achievement of record response time during the exercise. This exercise aims to evaluate the integrated emergency response plan and emergency management system, in addition to evaluation of firefighting, rescue, containment of hazardous materials and applicable security measures.

Promoting refinery products

What is your plan for marketing the refinery products after their commercial operation?

The Strategic and outstanding geographic location of the Sultanate of Oman on the meeting point of global trade plays a pivotal and important role in promoting the refinery products in the future. This location provides a gateway for delivering products to various global markets, such as Northwest Europe, East Africa and Far East of Asia. Duqm Refinery plans to contribute to supply global markets and meet the increasing needs to energy products on the global level with diesel, aircraft, naphtha and other products. Based on utilisation of the strategic location of the Sultanate of Oman and the role that will be played by the marketing companies of the companies that hold shares of investment in the refinery (OQ Trading and Kuwaiti Petroleum Company)

Supporting ICV

As you know, there is considerable attention in the Sultanate of Oman to support «In-Country Value»... To what extent do you focus on this matter? Are there steps taken in this respect?

The project is never overlooked the focus

on this side. The small and medium enterprises are the mainstay of economies of many countries worldwide. Their support is necessary for sustainability and growth of Omani national economy, and improvement of competitiveness of national products. In addition, they contribute to finding job opportunities. 10% of construction works of the project were assigned to small and medium enterprises. The companies working in Al Wusta Governorate were giving a priority. In addition, the companies that construct the three packages of the project were obliged to allocate 20% of the total value of the project procurements to the locally manufactured materials and local suppliers to enhance the In-Country Value (ICV) programme. The amounts allocated to the programme exceeded \$2 billion.

Social investment

Social investment is a key part of social responsibility of companies. How has the project dedicated its capacities in this field?

In addition to our efforts to enrich the In-Country Value, we undoubtedly have a positive role in society, which we consider to be part of our responsibility to which we pay due attention. Duqm Refinery continuously provides package of social responsibility initiatives and programmes to all social categories in the Wilayat of Duqm. We took very important steps in the field of social responsibility. The refinery has been adopting for many years several initiatives, including, the «Refinery Science» initiative. We aim by it to inspire the school students and encourage them to choose the scientific specialties needed by the refinery, such as geometry, mathematics, technology and other sciences that qualify them to work in it in the future. In addition, the refinery conducted the English development programme for Al Wusta Governorate students, which is implemented by the Refinery in cooperation with the British Cultural Center to enhance the English skills and abilities of students as a key skill that prepares them for efficient and proficient entry into labour market.

Marketing companies will work on achieving the best economic returns, financial performance and In-Country Value

\$2 billion allocated to In-Country Value

«Refinery Science» initiative encouraged students to choose the specialties needed for the refinery



Duqm
City of

Life

An eye on tourism
and another on investment



Duqm - :

What draws the attention of the visitor to Duqm after travelling for over 550 km from Muscat is modern lifestyle aspects of the city, reflecting the city's privacy and nature.

Al Izba where people and friends meet at the evening or enjoy a night under the moonlight and the stars brings a different experience from a modern 4-star hotel near to the beach of the Arab Sea. In addition, the Bedouin lifestyle mirrors a distinct image where people enjoy the Omani coffee and dates. Many modern cafés serve various types of coffee and tea and many hot or cold drinks to their visitors who choose whatever drink they like.

Up to recent time, Duqm didn't attract attention of visitors. Its visitors or residents didn't have many options in the fields of recreation, shopping, study, entertainment or sports activities. As well, food and beverages that were served in the restaurant in Duqm were limited too.

Life was simple in Duqm though it is very spacious area. It was only a place to which visitor goes for a limited period and over intermittent periods of time for specific purposes, then they return back.





**A'Soud
Global
School is
a school
community
for Omani,
Arab and
foreign
students**

Diverse cultures

Today, visitor of Duqm can stay there for days and months without feeling that he is missing the modern lifestyle, which he used to in his city. We don't mean a specific city; we mean any city. Duqm today brings together numerous nationalities and diverse cultures and peoples who contribute with the Omani cadres in building a modern city and economic destination that meets the aspirations of its people, visitors and residents. Whoever works in the commercial and tourism sectors in Duqm endeavours to meet the aspirations of those who live in Duqm or its visitors. At the meantime, he meets the aspirations of the people of Duqm who themselves come to manage many businesses.

A'Soud Global School

A'Soud Global School is a key component of Duqm Modern City. The school that started its first academic year three years ago was mainly established to be a modern school community for Omani, Arab and Foreign students. At the meantime, it encourages the engineer who comes from the furthest point in this world to accompany his family to Duqm where his children can pursue their education.

Year on year, the school witnesses an increase of the number of its students and deeply establishes its position in Duqm, driven by its permanent focus on the quality of education and provision of diverse educational, sports, entertainment facilities.



An Omani girl who
decided to work in Duqm



Two children having good moments at the Rock Garden

Expansion of health sector

In a city where workers exceed 18,000, it is necessary to have health facilities that provide them with the health services. Before establishment of SEZAD, the population was limited and Duqm Hospital was serving the purpose. Today, there is an increasing need to boost the health sector in Duqm. Therefore, in an early time of establishing SEZAD, many private health centres have been established to meet the population growth of the city. Today, numbers of those centres increased and they now open their doors around the clock, and their outpatient clinics cover all medical specialties, and supply an integrated group of scan, examination and diagnosis devices.

Key questions

Education and healthcare are the key drivers for people to choose a certain city

to reside in, whether as a permanent or partial residency. In Duqm, which is still in a growing phase and development, most of those interested in investment; the first question to be raised is: Is there an international school to which an employee can transfer his family? The second question is: Does this city have healthcare services? After receiving the thorough answer to these questions, the employee decides to come to Duqm either as an investor, an engineer or an expert who contributes to building the modern city of Duqm.

There are other questions about the airport, hotels, malls, restaurants, cafés and recreation and entertainment facilities. Although Duqm is still in the development phase, many of those ambitions were realised in an early time of developing Duqm.

◆◆◆
A modern city and an economic destination that fulfills the aspirations of its residents, visitors, and investors



◆◆◆
New health centres established to meet the city's population growth



Bawling Hall in Oman Bawling Centre

Oman Bawling Centre meets youth desires to enjoy fulfilled activities

Establishing two paddle courts to promote sports tourism and host local and international championships

Oman Bawling Centre

Said bin Nasser Al Jabri is one of the Omani investors who realised in an early period of SEZAD establishment the importance of having a recreational centre that brings together sports and entertainment and meets the desires of youth to enjoy their time, so he decided to establish Oman Bawling Centre.

The Centre is located in the new commercial district in Duqm, and receives considerable attention of the people of Duqm and tourists from the Sultanate of Oman and abroad, and the residents and families as well. The Centre brings 12 tracks of bawling with high standard and accuracy screens to display the results. The bawling hall has high standards and specifications that enable it to host local and international competitions of bawling.

In addition to the bawling hall, the centre has many other halls of video games, modern electronic games, billiards and snooker. This diversity of the services delivered by the centre to its visitors urged Said bin Nasser Al Jabri, CEO of Oman Sports and Real Estate Investment Center, to expand his projects. «The increasing footfall on the one hand, and



Paddle Courts will be established in the new centre

desire to diversity the sports and entertainment activities in Duqm, on the other, drove us to expand the project by adding three new buildings over 2376 m2 next to Oman Bawling Centre whose total area is 1000 m2. We actually started expanding and reached 8% completion of the first building”.

He notes that the new expansion can make a breakthrough in this sector. He states that the expansion includes addition of cafés, stores, gym and other sports activities beside two paddle tennis courts on area of 400 m2, which will be established on international standards. Through this expansion, we aspire to host the local and international paddle championships and promote sports tourism in SEZAD.



3D image of the new expansion of Oman Bawling Centre



A restaurant hall capable of accommodating over 300 people simultaneously



Beladi Business Centre

Not far from Oman Bowling Centre, Beladi Business Center, which is named «Beladi Plaza», is located. It is a mall and a business centre that was established by an Arab investor. Duqm was found to be the most appropriate option for investment. This Centre is next to the Headquarters of SEZAD. Next to it, there is another group of malls that draw a modern architectural façade of Duqm City.

The total built area of Beladi Business Centre is 7200 m2. The Centre consists of two adjacent parts: Building (A) that was designed to be a mall, and building (B) that was designed to be an office complex. The marketing cam-

paign of the centre focuses on attracting local and international brands in various sectors or in the field of business.

The center's investor aspires to make Beladi Plaza Centre a new and outstanding addition to SEZAD being the first centre of its kind in Duqm to provide services to the commercial and corporate sectors. Investors in the project confirm that the centre is a suitable location for organising various exhibitions and events, which are organised in Duqm due to existence of a big hall that can host many commercial and marketing exhibitions and events and, accordingly, promote this critical sector.

«Belady Plaza», a new centre aspiring to host commercial and marketing exhibitions and events

New commercial buildings reflect modern architectural façade of Duqm City





Asian Hotel, one of the new hotels in Duqm

Wide two-way streets

Duqm is distinguished by wide two-way streets. Sutlan Qaboos Road that consists of 3 lanes that connect Duqm Airport with the port, and passes through many investment areas, provides smooth and easy transfer of those who come through Duqm Airport and travellers. In addition, it contributes to facilitate the movement of goods between the airport and the port.

Said bin Taimur Road, which is in the centre of Duqm City, is a new urban landmark in Duqm. It is not only a road that connects Duqm to the various wilayats of the Sultanate of Oman. The tourist road that passes near to the Arabian Sea is also remarkable. If you arrive by Duqm Airport and desire to go to your place of residence in Crown Plaza Hotel or Park Resort, this road is the most suitable for you through its

charming view on beach.

There are many roads that connect the various investment zones and projects. At present, new roads have been constructed and main roads that were started last year are completed.

Numerous hotel options

Three years before, hotel options were limited to three hotels. Today, we have more than 12 hotel options that include four-star hotels that overlook the sea, and other three-star or two-star hotels that have outstanding location in the Central Duqm. Accordingly, the hotel options are not limited to the type of residence, they include the site, services and view. Hotel rooms are currently more than 1100, which is a good number that meets the increasing demand on hotel options in Duqm.

Double and spacious roads established to constitute new urban landmarks in Duqm





The Arabian Oryx Reserve is among the tourist attractions that can be visited from Duqm

Main option of investment and tourism

This helps Duqm to be a key option for those who come to Oman from abroad, whether for the purpose of investment or tourism. It is also a suitable option for many Omani families that desire to spend happy holiday on a picturesque clean beach. It is also an important site for those interested in practicing fishing, diving or other sports hobbies. In addition, it is an optimal site for those interested in visiting Arabian Oryx Reserve or visit Bur Al Hickman or other tourist landmarks in Al Wus-ta Governorate.

Investment and tourist identity

In spite of its investment identity, Duqm can meet your passion for tourism, entertainment and enjoyment of flying in the beauty of Oman, which is engraved in the Rock Garden and Duqm Desert. It is prominent for all at Arabian Sea Beach where the wave coming from the far ocean talks to those who enjoy the breach spheres in the early morning or at sunset. Duqm weather continues to keep temperatures within the twenties even in the flare of summer, which is an attraction that distinguishes Duqm on the summer tourism map in Oman.

**Tourism at-
tractions and
investment
advantages
that fulfill
your passion
to tourism,
entertain-
ment and
investment**



Audience of one of the events held in Duqm, affirming the zone's capacity to host diverse gatherings and occasions



Saleh Al Maamari
Editor-in-chief



**OPAZ key priorities
of 2023, focus on
achieving financial
sustainability and
improving the digital
transformation
efficiency**

Annual media symposium

The Public Authority for Special Economic Zones and Free Zones (OPAZ) organised the first edition of its media briefing since established in August 2020. Through that symposium, it reviewed the roadmap under its supervision, which are thirteen existing zones being the Special Economic Zone at Duqm, three free zones in Sohar, Salalah and Al Mazunah, and nine existing industrial cities being operate by the Public Establishment for Industrial Estates «Madayn». In addition, there are eight new various zones under development or under study. The total area of the existing zones is approximately 2200 km².

The annual media briefing attracted a number of local and international media and OPAZ clearly revealed the total local and foreign investments in all its affiliated zones, reaching approximately RO 15.2 billion as of end of 2022, equivalent to \$39.5 billion. It recorded investment business growth of 6% compared to 2021. The special economic zones, free zones and industrial cities in the Sultanate of Oman witness increasing attention from investors. This is attributed to the fact that they have solid infrastructure that the government developed, and the enabling legislation, relative advantages and competitiveness. The zones, supervised by OPAZ, include approximately 3246 existing economic projects while approximately 73197 workers come from various nationalities, including Omanis.

OPAZ key priorities of 2023, focus on achieving financial sustainability and improving the digital transformation efficiency, which include transformation of transactions and procedures to electronic transactions to facilitate the services delivered to beneficiaries. As well, priorities include attracting local and international investments to the zones and to develop the national capacities. OPAZ set specific goals, such as developing the infrastructure utilities and maximising the benefits of Duqm in partnership with the private sector through its infrastructures, and to keep abreast the economic development by expanding the economic, free and industrial zones and developing corporate performance and governance. Further, other priorities include completing the legislative system, increasing local added value, developing lifestyle in Duqm, measuring the contribution of «Madayn» in the balance of trade, increasing the competitiveness of zones and raising the efficiency of investments. General objectives were laid to enhance the expenditure efficiency and improve the standard of quality of the services delivered to the public and investors and to improve OPAZ's human resources efficiency.

OPAZ currently focuses on localising many major sectors targeted in the industrial, economic and free zones, mainly plastic and mining industries, renewable energy and storage of chemicals and logistic services. Secondary sectors that are targeted by OPAZ include tourism and real estate investment, fisheries, recycling, pharmaceuticals and medical equipment. There are sectors under development, such as vehicles and financial and life services.

There is no doubt that such media events are very important to showcase the achievements that were made during the past years, and providing its present and future plans in local and international media. This media briefing, which was organised by communication and media department come to enhance and promote transparency in government work and achievement of continuous and effective communication between OPAZ and society.