

A Quarterly magazine issued by the Public Authority for Special  
Economic Zones and Free Zones **32<sup>nd</sup> Issue - July 2023**

الدوقم  
الاقتصادية  
Duqm  
Economist



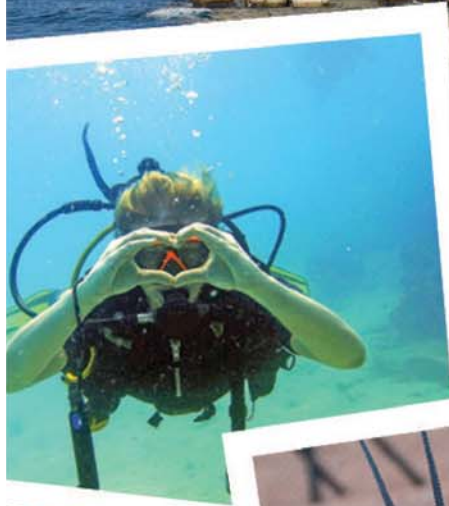
Enjoy summer in  
**Duqm**





Discover

# Duqm



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# Duqm... more than just a stopover

Duqm is of high interest to Salam Air. To us, it is more than just a landing and take-off destination, but a tourist city, which we are working, in cooperation with the Public Authority for Special Economic Zones and Free Zones and our partners in the tourism sector, to make it a thriving tourist city.

Over the past years, Duqm has witnessed many developments that reflected its identity in investment and tourism as Duqm cannot achieve its investment growth without the presence of tourism components that drive this growth forward.

Those who visit Duqm today will find a number of hotels and many aesthetic touches of a tourist nature. Duqm's climate, nature, beaches, geography, monuments and strategic location on the Arabian Sea and the Indian Ocean all form an aesthetic palette that attracts tourists to various tourist styles, whether diving, surfing, fishing, enjoying tours in the Rock Garden, the Arabian Oryx Reserve or visiting the beaches of Duqm, Ras Madraka and other touristic sites.

This tourist wealth encouraged us at Salam Air to take the initiative to organise short tourist programmes for those who want to visit Duqm on the weekend. This initiative was welcomed by hotels and tourist companies and contributed to attracting many citizens and residents of the Sultanate of Oman to visit Duqm and spend a good time there.

We believe that Duqm still needs more hotels and beach resorts of 4-star levels. The beaches of Duqm with soft golden sand are beaches with a special charm that attracts tourists. We have had an experience in running casual charter flights between the Czech Republic and Salalah, which was a success and has gained turnout. In our opinion, Duqm can be a successful station for this type of flights if more resorts and hotels overlooking the sea are available. This would make it an important tourist hub for European tourists, alongside with other tourist hubs in the Middle East.

The ever-growing Salam Air network places Duqm among its most successful terminals. While Salam Air is witnessing the opening of more international destinations, we find that there are great possibilities to connect our passengers through Duqm terminal to our other international destinations. We also have another ambition to operate direct international flights from Duqm to multiple destinations, as we did with Salalah and Sohar, which were connected by international direct lines.

In conclusion, we are pleased to express our thanks and appreciation to the Public Authority for Special Economic Zones and Free Zones, the Civil Aviation Authority and Oman Airports for the facilities provided to us to make Duqm one of our successful destinations. We would like to extend our thanks and gratitude to passengers via the Muscat - Duqm line for their support to us and we promise them to provide the best services. We invite them to explore our other destinations within the rapidly growing Salam Air network.



Captain Mohammed  
Ahmed  
CEO of Salam Air



**Our ambition is to operate direct international flights from Duqm to multiple destinations, as we have done with Salalah and Sohar, which are connected by international direct lines.**

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### General Supervisor

Eng. Ahmed bin Hassan Al Dheeb

### Editor-in-Chief

Saleh bin Nabhan Al Ma'amari

### Editor:

Abdulaziz bin Ahmed Al Jahdhami

### Design & Prepration

Fekrah for  
media services  
@fekrahmedia22

Correspondence and  
advertising to be sent to  
the Editor-in-Chief :

P.O. Box: 25  
Postal Code: 103,  
Bareeq Al-Shatti, Oman

Tel:  
0096824507572  
/0096824507540

Fax:  
0096824587400

Email:  
magazine@duqm.gov.om

Website:  
www.duqm.gov.om  
www.opaz.gov.om

+ 968 71144433

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omanopaz

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## In this issue:



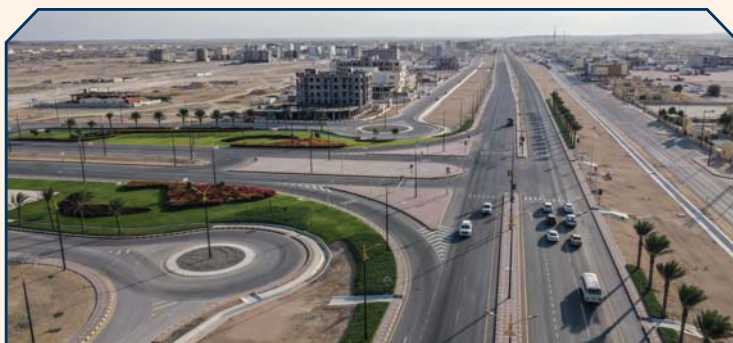
Royal Decree establishing  
Khazaen Economic City

6



The first Duqm Economic Forum reviews the most  
prominent investment opportunities in SEZAD

19



Developing a new road network stretching over  
168 km in the Special Economic Zone at Duqm

26





**Michael Kuhn: The economic growth thrives hotel scene and we expect a successful season**

**46**



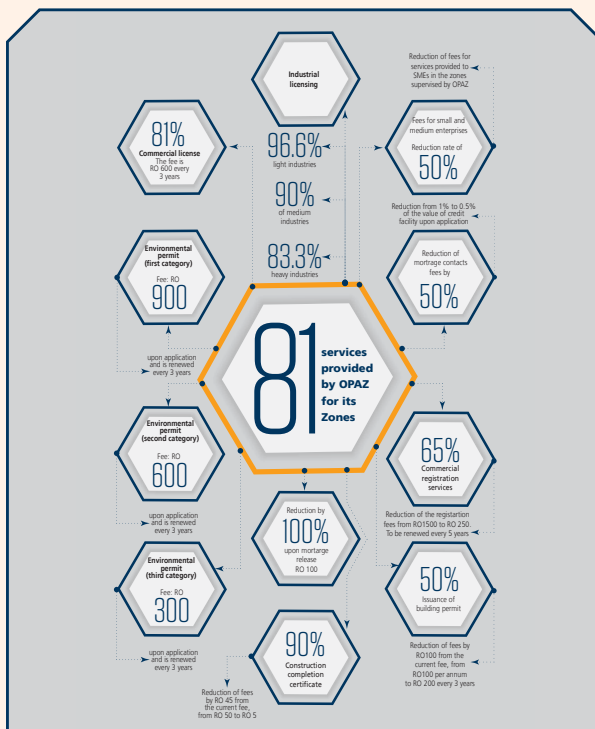
**Nasser Al Mabsali: 28 projects to start investing in the city**

**35**



**Said Al Sarhani: 'Marafiq' implements new expansions in the water sector in the Special Economic Zone at Duqm**

**31**



**13**

**New incentives for investment in economic and free zones and industrial cities**



**34**

**Construction of new plants in Sohar Freezone**



**41**

**SalamAir upgrades seating capacity on Muscat-Duqm line**




**38**

**Duqm... an exceptional tourist destination**



# His Majesty issues a Royal Decree establishing Khazaen Economic City with two free zones

**OPAZ to issue the necessary regulations and decisions to implement the provisions of the attached system**

**Muscat -  :**

His Majesty Sultan Haitham bin Tarik issued the Royal Decree No. (44/2023) establishing the Khazaen Economic City and promulgating its system to be the newest economic zone entrusted with the task of supervision by the Public Authority for Special Economic Zones and Free Zones (OPAZ).

The first article stipulates that an economic city in the Governorate of Al Batinah South named “Khazaen Economic City” is hereby established and shall be subject to the supervision of the Public Authority for Special Economic Zones and Free Zones. While the second article stipulates that two free zones are hereby established in Khazaen Economic City.



**Khazaen  
Company to  
develop the  
City... Oman  
Logistics to  
operate it**

Salem bin Sulaiman Al Thuhli, CEO of Khazaen Economic City, said that the first free zone will be dedicated to light and medium industries and logistics activities, while the second zone will be concerned with the business and trade sector.

The Royal Decree approved the development and usufruct agreements, and also stipulated that Oman logistics Company shall be the operator of Khazaen Economic City and the two free zones located therein. Also, it stated that Khazaen Economic City Company shall be the developer of Khazaen Economic City and its two free zones.

According to the Decree, the Chairman of the Board of Directors of the Public Authority for Special Economic Zones and Free Zones to issue the necessary regulations and decisions to implement the provisions of the attached system.

Khazaen Economic City expands over an area of 52 million sqm and includes a number of logistics and industrial projects, most notably is Khazaen land port and Khazaen central vegetable and fruit market. During the past period, the City witnessed the signing of 100

agreements with an investment volume estimated at RO 300 million. The City is located on Al Batinah expressway, about 30 minutes from Muscat International Airport and two hours from Sohar Port.

## **The attached system**

The system attached to the Royal Decree is divided into 4 chapters and 19 articles on which the tasks of the operator, the tasks of the developer, the Omanisation rates, incentives, benefits and facilities provided in Khazaen Economic City and the two free zones are defined.

## **Tasks of the operator**

The operator is to review the plans and programmes for the development and management of the City and submit them to OPAZ for approval, as well as to review the draft regulations, rules and controls of the City and submit them to OPAZ for issuance. It is also to operate the one-stop system in accordance with the rules, regulations and procedures issued by OPAZ, determine the fees for services provided to the developer and operating



# ROYAL DECREE 44/2023 ESTABLISHING KHAZAEN ECONOMIC CITY AND PROMULGATING ITS SYSTEM

**We, Haitham bin Tarik, the Sultan of Oman**

after perusal of the Basic Statute of the State,  
Royal Decree 2/98 Promulgating the Real Estate Register System,  
the Law of Free Zones promulgated by Royal Decree 56/2002,  
Royal Decree 67/2003 Applying the Unified Customs Law of the Cooperation Council for the Arab States of the Gulf,  
the Income Tax Law promulgated by Royal Decree 28/2009,  
Royal Decree 93/2020 Amending the Name of the Ministry of Housing to the Ministry of Housing and Urban Planning, Determining Its Competences, and Adopting Its Organisational Structure,  
and Royal Decree 105/2020 Establishing the Public Authority for Special Economic Zones and Free Zones and Determining Its Competences,  
and in pursuance of public interest,

**have decreed as follows**

## **Article 1**

An economic city in the Governorate of Batinah South named "Khazaen Economic City" is hereby established on the area of land specified in accordance with the attached masterplan. It shall be subject to the supervision of the Public Authority for Special Economic Zones and Free Zones, and the attached system shall apply to it.

## **Article 2**

Two free zones are hereby established in the Khazaen Economic City on the area of land specified in accordance with the attached masterplan and which are specified in the development agreement referred to in the attached system.

## **Article 3**

The development agreement and usufruct agreement for the Khazaen Economic City stipulated in the attached system are hereby approved.

## **Article 4**

Oman Logistics Company LLC shall be the operator of Khazaen Economic City and the two free zones in it, and Khazaen Economic City LLC shall be the developer of Khazaen Economic City and the two free zones in it.

## **Article 5**

The Chairman of the Board of Directors of the Public Authority for Special Economic Zones and Free Zones shall issue the necessary regulations and decisions to implement the provisions of the attached system.

## **Article 6**

This decree shall be published in the Official Gazette, and comes into force on the day following the date of its publication.

**Issued on: 15 Dhu Al-Hijja 1444**

**Corresponding to: 3 July 2023**

**Haitham bin Tarik  
Sultan of Oman**

- Published in Official Gazette (150) issued on 9 July 2023.
- To view the Royal Decree and the system attached to it, please scan the QR code.



<https://www.mjla.gov.om/legislation/decrees/details.aspx?Id=1548&type=L>

*The City is located on an area of 52 million sqm and is 30 minutes from Muscat International Airport*

*The volume of current investments in the city stands at RO 300 million*

*The operator is to provide the necessary services for the operating companies through the one-stop shop*





The future vision of Khazaen Economic City post completing its development projects

**The developer is to propose plans and programmes to develop and manage the city**

companies after the approval of OPAZ, and to approve the masterplan of the City and any amendments thereto.

The system also stipulates that the operator shall provide all the necessary services to the companies operating through the one-stop system, and shall establish an electronic portal through which all information and data related to the City and the investment opportunities available in it are provided, in coordination with OPAZ.

#### Tasks of the developer

With regard to the tasks of the developer, the system attached to the Royal Decree stipulates that the developer is responsible for the management and development of the City, and in particular it has to propose plans and programmes for the development and management of the City, propose draft regulations, rules and controls for the operation and management of the City. It also states that the de-

veloper to determine the fees for services provided to operating companies, determine land uses within the City, grant usufruct and lease rights, grant the right of sale to real estate units of residential and commercial use in accordance with the provisions of the development and usufruct agreements. Also, to approve investment activities that operating companies or the free zone companies in the City wishing to practice in accordance with the masterplan of the City, in addition to attracting local and foreign investments to the City.

The system stipulates that the developer and the companies operating in the City alone determine the prices of their products and services.

#### Fulfilling safety requirements

The Khazaen Economic City system stresses the need for the developer to coordinate with the units of the competent administrative apparatus – through OPAZ – to achieve the



Khazaen Land Port





safety requirements for individuals, operating companies, facilities, and goods within the City, and to cooperate with OPAZ to observe the established rules for environmental safety and maintaining security.

#### Issuance of work licenses

As for the facilities related to the workforce in the City, the system attached to the Royal Decree stipulates that an administrative division should be established by a decision of the Minister of Labour regarding the necessary licenses to the non-Omani workforce in accordance with fast and efficient procedures to be issued by a decision of OPAZ after coordination with the Ministry of Labour.

#### Real estate register

The system stipulates that a real estate register should be established in the City, which follows the Secretariat of the Real Estate Registry at the Ministry of Housing and Urban Planning, through which all rights and dispositions of land and real estate within the City are registered and documented in accordance with the rules determined by the Ministry of Housing and Urban Planning, in coordination with OPAZ.

#### Saving electricity

The attached system addresses the provision of electricity in Khazaen Economic City, stressing the need for the company licensed

to distribute electricity in the Governorate of South Al Batinah to provide electricity up to the boundaries of each plot of land within the City within the framework of a contractual relationship between it and the developer specifying the rights and obligations of each party.

#### Banks and financial institutions

The system stresses the need for all operations carried out by banks and financial institutions operating in the City to be subject to the Anti-Money Laundering and Terrorist Financing Law issued by Royal Decree No. 30/2016 and all applicable laws in the Sultanate of Oman related to banks and financial institutions.

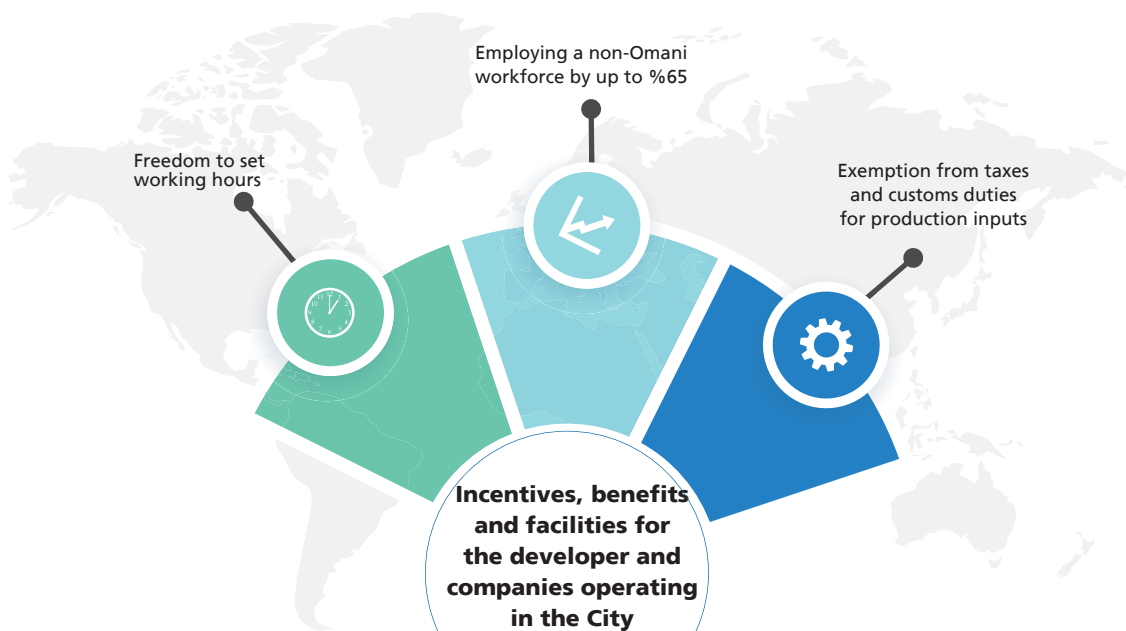
It explains that the funds and activities of the operator, the developer and the companies operating in the City are not subject to any nationalisation procedures except under a law and for fair compensation. It is not permissible to seize their assets or confiscate or impose custody on them unless under a judicial ruling.

#### Incentives and advantages in the City

The system attached to the Royal Decree touches upon the incentives, benefits and facilities provided in Khazaen Economic City, confirming that the developer and companies operating in the City are granted freedom to set working hours, and employ a non-Omani workforce by up to 65%. It also exempts the developer and companies operating in the City from taxes and customs duties for production inputs.

**The Company licensed to distribute electricity to provide electricity up to the limits of each piece of land within the City**

**The developer and companies operating in the City exempted from taxes and customs duties for production inputs**



## Incentives and benefits in the two free zones

The developer, the operator and the operating companies are free to transfer their profits and investments outside the two free zones

Operating companies may import all types of goods within the two free zones in the City without obtaining any prior permit or license, except for goods prohibited for import under the laws in force in the Sultanate of Oman, or goods classified as explosives or chemicals for which obtaining a certain permit is required

Granting the developer and operating companies the incentives, benefits and facilities provided for in the Free Zones Law issued by Royal Decree No. 56/2002

Exemption of the developer and operating companies from income tax for a period not exceeding 15 years for each project, renewable for another 5 years

### Incentives and benefits in the free zones

The system touches upon the incentives and benefits provided in the two free zones, confirming that both the developer and the companies operating in the two free zones in the City were granted the incentives, benefits and facilities provided for in the Free Zones Law issued by Royal Decree No. 56/2002.

It points out that the developer and operating companies are exempt from income tax for a period of no more than 15 years for each project renewable for another 5 years. This exemption does not apply to banks, financial institutions, insurance and reinsurance companies and projects engaged in the provision of telecommunications services, road transport and contracting.

The developer, operator and operating

companies are also free to transfer their profits and investments outside the two free zones.

The system stresses that the Omanisation rate for companies operating in the two free zones in the City should not be less than 15%, and also stresses the need for the developer, operator and operating companies to submit an annual tax return to the Tax Authority.

The system allows operating companies to import all types of goods within the two free zones in the City without obtaining any prior permit or license, except for goods prohibited for import under the laws in force in the Sultanate of Oman, or goods classified as explosives or chemicals, the import of which requires obtaining a certain permit.

**Companies operating in the two free zones to have an Omanisation rate of at least 15%**



*In its second meeting for the year 2023*

# OPAZ Board of Directors values the Royal Decree establishing Khazaen Economic City



Board members during the meeting

## Muscat -

The Board of Directors of the Public Authority for Special Economic Zones and Free Zones (OPAZ) held its second meeting in (July 5, 2023) for the year 2023, chaired by H.E Dr. Ali bin Masoud Al Sunaidy, Chairman of the Board, at the Authority's headquarters in Muscat. During the meeting, the Board valued the Royal Decree No. (44/2023) establishing Khazaen Economic City, which will be overseen by OPAZ.

The Board stressed that the City will serve enhancing the business environment and creating new investment opportunities in Al Batinah South Governorate, along with other economic zones, free zones, and the existing and under construction industrial cities in the various governorates.

### New economic and free zones

During the meeting, the Board touched on the current progress of the masterplans of the Economic Zone in Al Rowdah in the Wilayat of Mahdah in Al Buraimi Governorate. In this regard, the Board discussed the protection alternatives from potential flood risks, in addition to highlighting the opportunities for direct connection between the Zone and the roads leading to the ports of Sohar and Shinas. The Board was briefed on the existing coordination, through the Omani-Saudi joint Executive Committee, on the project for the Integrated Economic Zone in Al Dhahirah Governorate. In addition, the meeting included discussing the linking locations with the road leading to the Empty Quarter borders. Furthermore, the Board approved the incentives for the usufruct agreement and stressed continuing the cooperation with the governors' offices in the two zones.

With regards to the free zone project at Muscat International Airport, OPAZ Board of Directors approved extending the concession agreement for the operating company (ASYAD) for a period

of 50 years, in addition to the other advantages of the agreement.

### Digital transformation

On the other hand, the Board commended the progressive results achieved by the various departments of OPAZ in the field of automating procedures and digital transformation in line with the government evaluation system for digital transformation, and highly-prised the steps taken to combat the use of paper transactions within and outside OPAZ by none sending and receiving paper documents except of correspondences of a special nature, starting from July 1st, 2023.

OPAZ Board of Directors was familiarised with the initial results of using artificial intelligence technologies and introducing employees' qualification programmes. Hence, the Board directed to increase adopting new technologies and providing more spatial information to investors, artificial intelligence techniques and business intelligence in line with converting electronic basic environment systems to locally approved cloud platforms, and continue enhancing and updating information security software and systems.

Moreover, the Board was also briefed on the future programmes aimed at improving and speeding up the transactions between the economic zones, free zones and industrial cities, including the central services portal and the system for managing shipments and goods between the zones affiliated with OPAZ, in cooperation with the Ministry of Transport, Communications and Information Technology and the Royal Oman Police.

It is worth mentioning that the Public Authority for Special Economic Zones and Free Zones was established by Royal Decree No. (105/2020) on August 18, 2020. It oversees 14 economic zones, free zones, and industrial cities. It also supervises the establishment of a group of new economic zones, free zones, and industrial cities.

*The Board reviews the executive plans of the Economic Zone at Al Rowdah project*

*Duration of the concession agreement for the free zone operating at Muscat International Airport approved*

*Expanding the introduction of new technologies in systems and applications and making spatial information available to investors*



# Exploring Irish experience in managing and developing economic zones and industrial cities

**Focus on enhancing the role of zones in attracting strategic industries**

**Tapping into programmes of harmonisation between industrial zones and enhancing their productivity**

## Dublin -

His Excellency Dr. Ali bin Masoud Al Sunaidy, Chairman of the Public Authority for Special Economic and Free Zones (OPAZ) met with His Excellency Dara Calleary TD, Minister of State for Trade Promotion Digital and Company Regulation, responsible for regulating economic zones, issuing laws and regulations related to investment, and developing supportive electronic systems. The meeting was held in Ireland.

His Excellency the Chairman of OPAZ led a delegation consisting of officials from OPAZ, the Special Economic Zone at Duqm, and the Public Establishment for Industrial Estates (Madayn), as part of OPAZ's institutional transformation plan. Since the beginning of the year, OPAZ has started a transformation programme in association with International Development Ireland (IDI) benefiting from the Irish expertise in managing and developing economic zones. The cooperation

aims to enhance the Authority's ability to attract strategic industrial projects and to link supply chains between local and international manufacturers and to empower small and medium size enterprises, and to promote the use of digital platforms and applications.

During the visit, the delegation also met with the CEO of the Irish Investment Promotion agency "IDA Ireland", the CEO of Enterprise Ireland and the Chair of the National Competitiveness and Productivity Council in Ireland. The delegation visited several economic zones, manufacturers and the Centre for Bioprocessing and Training, and discussed the methods of harmonisation between different industrial zones, enhancing productivity, and increasing integration between them.

The delegation explored existing programmes to enhance job opportunities and raise worker efficiency, and skills development, and professional competence and discussed possibilities of collaboration in developing industrial clusters in the various zones in the Sultanate of Oman.





# Fees of 81 services were merged and reduced



## Muscat - :

The Public Authority for Special Economic Zones and Free Zones (OPAZ) announced the reduction of fees for services it provides to investors in the special economic zones and free zones it oversees in a step to enhance the local investment and business environment, stimulate economic growth, attract foreign investments, support small and medium enterprises and support the business sector in general.


During a press conference, held on July 4, 2023, OPAZ revealed the details of the decision issued, on June 12, 2023, by H.E. Dr. Ali bin Masoud Al Sunaidy, Chairman of OPAZ, on specifying the fees provided by the Authority, which is planned to come into force starting

from August 1, 2023.

Said bin Khalifa Al Quraini, General Manager of the Investment Development Sector at OPAZ, said that the decision, which included the unification and reduction of fees for services and activities provided to investors and institutions, applies to all zones supervised by the OPAZ, whether the existing ones or those to be established in the future.

### Review of fees for 258 services

He said at the press conference, which was attended by officials from the zones, supervised by OPAZ, that the last period witnessed a review of fees for 258 services provided to investors in various zones, which resulted in merging a number of these services, cancel some and introduce others, bringing the num-

  
**50% reduction  
for the new  
services  
provided to  
SMEs**







Dr. Said Al Quraini briefs attendees about the new decision

**Dr. Said Al Quraini: The decision applies on all zones and comes into force from August 2023**

ber of services provided to investors to 81 services. He explained that the fees for services provided to small and medium enterprises have been reduced by 50% of the total new fees.

Also, he stated that the review conducted by OPAZ resulted in reducing the number of certificates and forms related to the services provided. A number of 26 certificates and 50 forms were reduced to only one certificate and only one form. He pointed out that this action comes as a result of the efforts made by OPAZ and the zones it supervises in the field of digital transformation and also to improve and re-engineer processes and speed up business pace.

#### Reduced fees

The reduced fees approved by OPAZ in the special economic zones and free zones included those related to the procedures for commercial register, registration of contracts, licenses and permits related to conducting some business and commercial, industrial and tourism activities, investor work permits, environmental permits, urban planning services, construction and engineering affairs permits, and the issuance of certificates and documents, permits for

service suppliers, government fees related to operation and investment, and others.

The new amendments included reduction of the commercial register fees for the first time from RO 1500 to RO 250 to be renewed every 5 years, reduction of registration fees of mortgage contracts from 1% to 0.5% of credit facilities and no more than RO 10,000, and amendment of tourist activity license fees for 5-star hotels from RO 3000 per year to RO 3200 every 5 years.

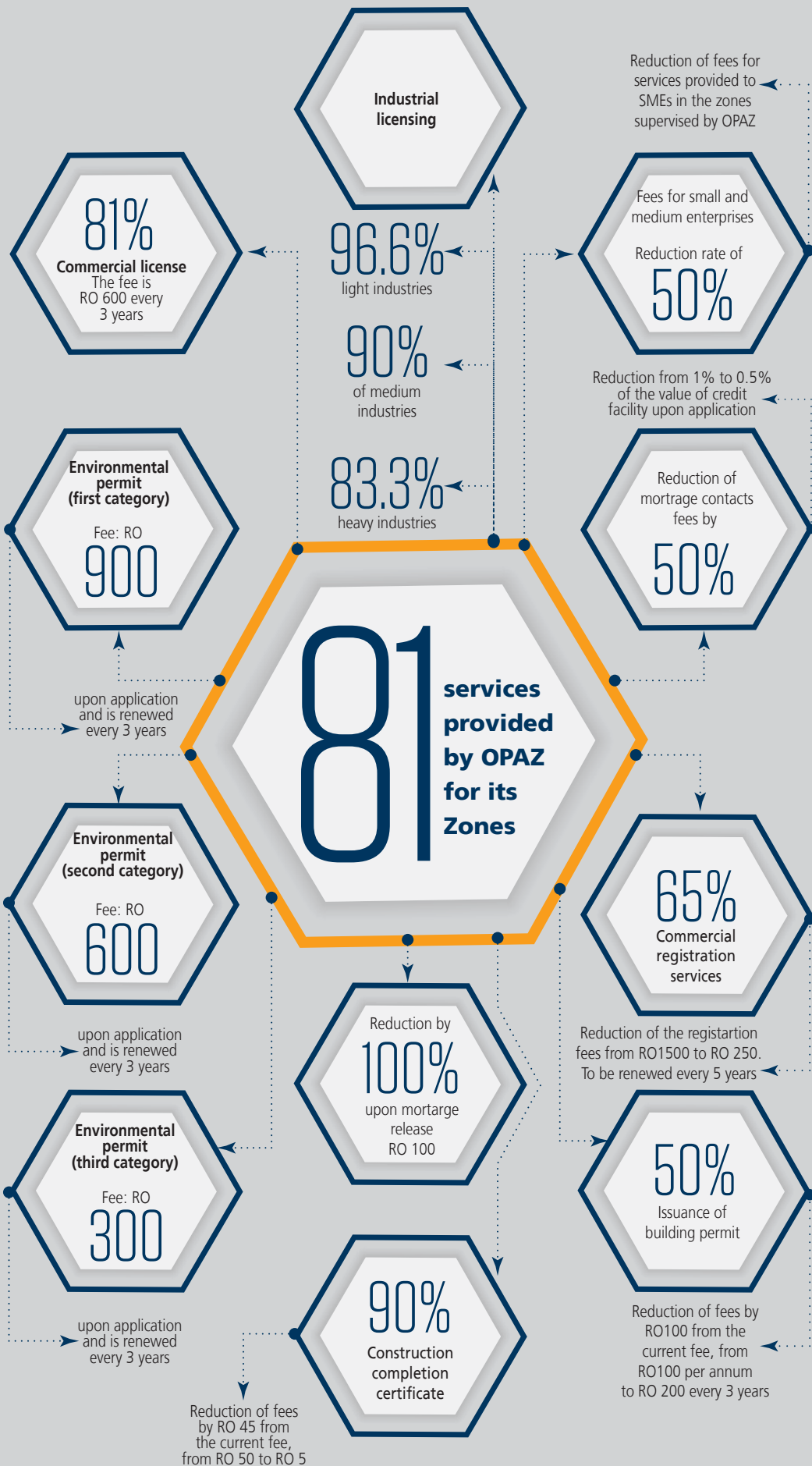
The license of 4-star hotels was also amended from RO 2500 annually to RO 3200 every 5 years. The new amendments included reducing the industrial license fees from RO 1500 annually to RO 150 for light industries every 3 years, RO 450 for medium industries every 3 years, and RO 750 for heavy industries every 3 years. Also, mining license fees were reduced from RO 2000 plus an annual rent of RO 1000 for each square kilometre or part of it to RO 500 per mining site.

#### Improving business environment

Said bin Khalifa Al Quraini said that the new facilities package reflects OPAZ continuous







**Speeding up businesses, enhancing investment, stimulating economic growth and attracting investments are the most notable objectives**

**Continuous review for services and activities to ensure fast and efficient services**

**Focus on minimising challenges faced by new investments and maximising the participation of the local and foreign private sector**

efforts to improve the business environment, achieve sustainable economic growth, and enhance economic competitiveness and the relative value of the zones. Therefore, this will contribute to increasing the growth of investments and SMEs in the zones and their integration in line with the needs of existing and upcoming projects and to achieve sustainable development in the special economic zones and free zones.

#### Review of services and activities fees

Al Quraini stressed the continuous endeavour of the Public Authority for Special Economic Zones and Free Zones to review and improve the fees for services and activities provided by the various zones, as well as to ensure providing fast and efficient services. In addition, OPAZ strives to provide a set of advantages, incentives and facilities, and creating an attractive business environment for investments that

enables SMEs to benefit from them. It works to facilitate registration procedures for SMEs' commercial records and establishing their projects, in an effort by OPAZ to ensure the efficiency of its various electronic services.

He said that the review and unification of fees comes with the aim of integrating with national efforts aimed at economic diversification, attracting foreign and local investment, maximising the role of small and medium-sized enterprises in establishing projects that play a vital role in supporting the local economy, providing job opportunities, promoting innovation, sustainable economic development and financial stability in special economic zones and free zones. This is done in line with Oman's Vision 2040, by reducing challenges before the investing companies, maximising the participation of the local and foreign private sector, and improving the competitiveness of the investment environment in the Sultanate of Oman.

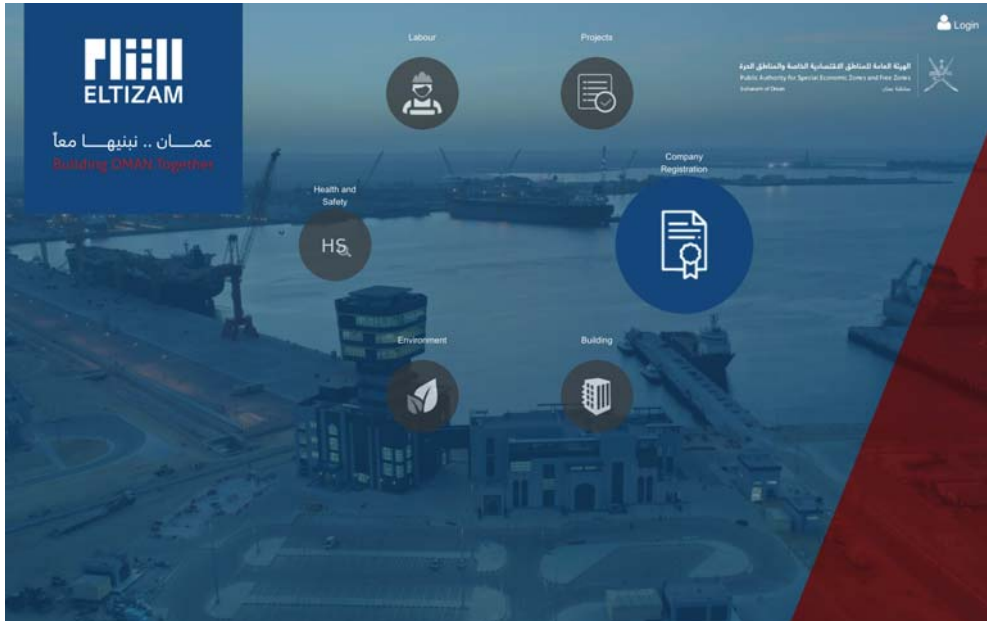
### New incentives for investment in special economic, free and industrial zones





Applied in SEZAD as a first phase

# OPAZ launches Centralised Compliance System «Eltizam»



**Facilitating field visits and following up on the corporates' compliance with laws**

## Muscat - :

The Public Authority for Special Economic Zones and Free Zones (OPAZ) inaugurated, on the sidelines of the Oman's Official Technology Show (COMEX 2023), the Centralised Compliance System "Eltizam", under the patronage of HE Dr. Ali bin Amer Al Shidhani, Undersecretary of the Ministry of Transport, Communications and Information Technology for Communications and Information Technology, and with the presence of a number of other dignitaries.

Launching "Eltizam" system is aimed at automating follow-up procedures and practices in the field of control and compliance, most notably environmental and labour control and inspection of buildings and projects, monitoring, compliance, and issuance of violations and reports, in addition to providing the system with another feature of e-payment through the system.

The Centralised Compliance System will be implemented in the Special Economic Zone at Duqm (SEZAD) as a first phase in order to automate the various follow-up procedures, which include procedures for following up on environmental compliance, pollution control, waste and hazardous materials management, projects control, labour control, and building control. This system also targets other categories of end users as it is not only used by inspectors, but representatives of companies, consultants and contractors can also use the system via tablets or mobile phones.

Through the system, users can schedule field visits, distribute compliance follow-up tasks electronically, specify exact inspection sites, prepare field visit reports and add attachments and images directly on site without having to go back to the office. It is also possible via Eltizam to communicate directly between the inspection team and follow-up team and companies to follow up on inspections, in addition to the ability for companies to send inspection requests according to the projects' stages.

In this regard, Mohammed bin Abdulmajeed Al Hooti, In-charge of Managing the Digital Transformation Programme at the Public Authority for Special Economic Zones and Free Zones (OPAZ), stated, "The Centralised Compliance System comes within OPAZ plan towards digital transformation and its continuous efforts to re-engineer the procedures in force in the Special Economic Zone at Duqm (SEZAD) in which the system was implemented as a first phase. However, at a later phase, the follow-up procedures in the zones affiliated with OPAZ will be unified according to this system as the scenarios is in the Special Economic Zone at Duqm and in a manner commensurate with the nature of business and requirements in other zones".

Al Hooti added, "The Public Authority for Special Economic Zones and Free Zones is continuing to develop the digital environment by unifying procedures in all its affiliated zones. This comes in an effort to enhance its constant efforts to speed up and complete all transactions and facilitate the practice of economic activities and convert them from paper transactions to electronic transactions, as well as promoting digital transformation. Further, this system reflects its commitment towards achieving transparency and flexibility in providing all its services to investors".

**Monitoring environmental compliance, pollution control, waste and hazardous materials management and project control**



Mohammed Al-Hooti elaborates on «Eltizam» system during the launch

Construction of commercial building in 35 hours, residential unit in 12 hours

# OPAZ won 3D Printing Award at COMEX 2023 Awards



Receiving the Award  
during the ceremony

## Muscat -


The Public Authority for Special Economic Zones and Free Zones (OPAZ) won the 3D Printing Award at COMEX Technology Show Awards 2023. This Award was received for using the 3D printing technology to build a commercial café with its facilities, and a residential unit with its facilities in the fishermen's village in the Tourist Zone in the Special Economic Zone at Duqm (SEZAD).

Winning the 3D Printing Award marks an acknowledgment for OPAZ excellence in providing pioneering digital services in the investment sector and serving investors. Likewise, it is a tribute to its tremendous efforts towards digital transformation through introducing various electronic programmes and online applications, as well as adopting artificial intelligence technologies. All these tools have been presented to simplify procedures and provide fast, safe and comprehensive services to investors.

Therefore, OPAZ is working on a strategic digital transformation plan that reflects its

constant interest in innovation, development, and the use of modern technologies to improve the experience of investors and beneficiaries of the services it provides. In addition, OPAZ always strives to follow best practices to improve its services, and thrive the special economic and free zones, and industrial cities, which it supervises.

The Public Authority for Special Economic Zones and Free Zones (OPAZ) won this award for using the 3D printing technology in building the café, which was built over an area of 101 sqm in about 35 hours only, while the residential unit was built over 72 sqm of land, with the construction process took only 12 hours. Such projects stand as a remarkable milestone in the world of construction compared to the traditional construction method. Further, the 3D printing technology is distinguished by the standard construction speediness as construction does not requires using concrete bases and columns when building the structure. Instead, the 3D printing technology is based on converting the concrete material of this technology into an integrated structure using an automatic printer.

  
**Digital  
transformation  
strategy  
reflects  
OPAZ's  
interest in  
innovation**



The café constructed  
by 3D printing





## The first Duqm Economic Forum reviews the most prominent investment opportunities in SEZAD

### Duqm - :

The Special Economic Zone at Duqm (SEZAD) will organise the first Duqm Economic Forum on 16th of October. The aim of the Forum is to highlight the investment opportunities available in the Zone, which is witnessing rapid economic and urban growth.

Organising this Forum comes within the efforts of the Public Authority for Special Economic Zones and Free Zones (OPAZ) and a number of other government bodies to attract more investments to SEZAD.

The Forum discusses many issues related to investment in SEZAD, most notably investment in green industries, renewable energy projects, and other industries.

The Forum, which will highlight the growth opportunities available to small and medium enterprises, is expected to witness the signing of a number of agreements and memorandums of understanding.

The Forum will allow investors to close-

ly view the economic projects in SEZAD, learn about the investment opportunities available, and the possible areas of partnership.

Many major local and international companies are expected to participate in the Forum to showcase their capabilities, key projects and experiences in various economic sectors.

It is noteworthy that SEZAD has recently emerged as a hub for renewable energy, green hydrogen and green iron projects.

SEZAD currently includes a variety of investment projects with an investment volume of about RO 3.6 billion, most notably: Duqm Refinery, Ras Markaz Terminal, ship dry dock, integrated power and water plant, and many projects in the industrial, tourism, commercial, real estate development, logistics, transportation and services sectors.

The Zone also has high quality infrastructure project such as Duqm Airport, Duqm Port, and a multi-purpose Fishing Port.

  
*Discussing investment in green industries, renewable energy projects and other industries*

To promote environmental sustainability

## OPAZ installs chargers for electric vehicles in its premises in Muscat



**Abdulmajeed Al Ansari:**  
*The service encourages employees to own electric vehicles*

### Muscat -

The Public Authority for Special Economic Zones and Free Zones (OPAZ) installed charging devices for electric vehicles, as a new service for investors who visit the premises and to encourage employees to own electric vehicles. This endeavour comes in line with the government's efforts to reduce carbon emissions and to compliment the incentives announced recently in this regard.

Abdulmajeed bin Abdullah Al Ansari, General Manager of Support Services Sector at the Public Authority for Special Economic Zones and Free Zones, said, "As a first phase, OPAZ installed a charging device for electric vehicles in the designated parking lots in OPAZ premises in Muscat. This comes as part of a gradual initiative that includes in-

creasing the number of devices in the buildings in Muscat and of the Special Economic Zone at Duqm. Further, OPAZ will make the electric vehicles charging service available in all the existing and under development free and economic zones and industrial cities that are affiliated with OPAZ."

"As the demand for the service is expected to increase in light of the incentive package recently announced by the government for those who purchase electric vehicles, OPAZ will respond to the commendable demand for this service, whether by visitors or employees. OPAZ is always seeking to keep abreast of the various technical developments by providing an advanced infrastructure to support the use

of modern technologies. In this regard, it has already started using artificial intelligence techniques in its premises post using these technologies in Duqm. It adopted a central monitoring from its office in Muscat to reduce over consumption of energy and water in buildings", Al Ansari added.

He further explained, "Bringing the electric vehicles chargers marks a new addition, reflecting OPAZ plan to own some electric vehicles for official use in Muscat and Duqm on an experimental basis. Moreover, this serves spreading the culture of environmental sustainability in particular among employees and visitors as there is a high interest from the economic zones and free zones to produce solar and wind energy. Thus, the move towards using electric vehicles requires a change in the culture".



## OPAZ launches an electronic reporting system for improper conduct and violations of laws and regulations in the economic and free zones

### Muscat -

The Public Authority for Special Economic Zones and Free Zones (OPAZ) has established an electronic window through which all parties with an interest can provide information or data to reveal an incident that violates laws and regulations, including OPAZ employees, members of the Board of Directors, consultants, contractors, suppliers who have contracts with OPAZ, former OPAZ employees, and consultants. The window enables creating a line of communication with officials in charge to maintain confidentiality and offer the

necessary assurances to finish the reporting procedure, and safeguard the individual submitting the report.

The new electronic window, which is accessible through the OPAZ website (opaz.gov.om), aims to strengthen the OPAZ efforts towards preserving its positive image, enhancing its reputation, and improving the quality of its services. The electronic window also adheres to the fundamental principles of transparency, integrity, neutrality, and fairness, while following the best practices in asset preservation and efficiency enhancement.

Any individual working or dealing with OPAZ can report any wrongful

practices that violate the laws, regulations, and systems currently in place. The electronic window ensures the protection of the whistleblower's identity while providing a high level of confidence in the reporting process.

It is worth noting that this policy applies to a wide range of individuals, including employees, board members, consultants, contractors, suppliers contracted with OPAZ, and former employees. The scope of reporting covered by this policy includes acts, violations, improper behaviours, and actions that violate the laws, regulations, and rules in force in OPAZ and committed by employees, whether inside or outside OPAZ.



# Construction and operation of a bunkering station for ships at the Fishing Port in Duqm



## Duqm - :

O Bunkering signed in May 2023 an agreement with Marsa Al Duqm Investments (MAR-SA), a subsidiary of Fisheries Development Oman (FDO), to build and operate a bunkering station at the multi-purpose Fishing Port at the Special Economic Zone at Duqm (SEZAD).

Ali bin Amur Al Shaibani, CEO of O Bunkering said that this agreement represents a significant success and a big step for the company, explaining that the Company will design and build the bunkering station at the Fishing Port at Duqm in line with international standards, to ensure the highest levels of safety and reliability. He added that the Company aims to provide exceptional services in the field of refueling ships with bunker fuel, expressing confidence that the new station will contribute to enhancing the local and international fishing industries that benefit from the services available at the Port.

He added that the project is an important addition to the fisheries sector in the Special Economic Zone at Duqm and it will provide various oil products needed by ships, fishing boats and others, pointing out that works on the construction will begin three months after the date of signing the agreement.


## Revitalisation of sea freight traffic

Ali bin Amur Al Shaibani, CEO of O Bunkering, expected that the station will contribute to the revitalisation of commercial traffic and sea freight traffic, in addition to creating job opportunities for a large group of fishermen.

Duqm Fishing Port is the largest fishing port in the Sultanate of Oman as it has a great depth that allows to receive large fishing vessels. Its yards are designated for commercial and tourism purposes, and direct services needed by fishermen. It is associated with the largest zone for fisheries industries in the Sultanate of Oman. This strategic location makes the port a destination for many ships and boats.

The number of traditional fishing vessels and boats using the port's services is currently estimated at about 400 vessels per week. The number is expected to increase even more in the future with the opening of new projects in the fish and food industries area.

Ali bin Amur Al Shaibani said that the port's marine fuel consumption is expected to increase from 400 thousand liters per month to 700 thousand or one million liters per month, coinciding with the increase in the number of ships and fishing boats that will benefit from the port's services.

  
**Ali Al Shibani:**  
*Exceptional services to be provided in the field of bunkering. The station to be constructed in accordance with international standards*



The project is constructed on 6.7km at the Port of Duqm

## «Vale»: Constructing an integrated industrial complex for green steel in SEZAD



**The Complex consists of three plants for iron ore concentration, briquetting and reduced iron**

**«Marafiq» supplies the complex with electricity, power and other services**

### Muscat -

Vale Company signed a land reservation agreement with the Port of Duqm Company and a Memorandum of Understanding (MoU) with Marafiq to establish an integrated industrial complex (Mega Hub) to produce low-carbon products to the steelmaking industry in the Special Economic Zone at Duqm (SEZAD).

The agreement and the MoU were signed by Eduardo Bartolomeo, Vale's CEO, Reggy Vermeulen, Port of Duqm's CEO and Eng. Abdullah Mohammed Al Hashimi, Managing Director of Marafiq.

The land reservation agreement commissions joint studies to build a Mega Hub in Oman. Meanwhile, the memorandum aims to provide the project with access to all the util-

ities and services required for its operations, while promoting the use of clean energy and green hydrogen at the Port of Duqm.

The agreement and the MoU were signed on the 22nd of May, 2023 at «Invest in Oman» hall, in presence of H.E Eng. Ahmed Hassan Al Dheeb, Deputy Chairman of the Public Authority for Special Economic Zones and Free Zones, H.E Dr. Mansoor bin Talib Al Hinai, Chairman of the Public Services Regulatory Authority, and H.E Ibtisam bint Ahmed Al Faroojia, Undersecretary of the Ministry of Commerce, Industry and Investment Promotion for Investment Promotion.

### Three plants

The Complex will consist of three plants for iron ore concentration, briquetting and reduced iron.

H.E Eng. Ahmed Hassan Al Dheeb, Depu-



Signing the MoU with Marafiq





Vale's CEO (on the right), and Port of Duqm's CEO post signing the agreement

ty Chairman of the Public Authority for Special Economic Zones and Free Zones said that the project is expected to produce raw materials for steel industries. All parties involved in the project, he pointed out, take keen interest in enhancing the use of clean energy and green hydrogen in the facilities that will be established.

Eduardo Bartolomeo, Vale's CEO said, "Signing these agreements marks a significant milestone in establishing Vale as a leader in sustainable mining."

He added, «We are thrilled about the prospects of the planned Mega Hub, which will support the steel industry's drive towards greener operations. The Port of Duqm, a growing key industrial hub in the Sultanate of Oman, is perfectly positioned to support our expansion plans, and we are excited to demonstrate the potential of Oman and Duqm as an attractive proposition for foreign direct investment.»

#### The green port

Further, Reggy Vermeulen, CEO of Port of Duqm said, «We are pleased that the Mega Hub will be established in the Port of Duqm. The strategic location of our port on key international trade routes, its proximity to large regional markets, and its world-class infrastructure make it an ideal location to establish such major industrial projects.»

"The Port of Duqm is also set to be a future hub for green hydrogen and its derivatives," Vermeulen added. "We are optimistic that it will quickly emerge as a destination of choice for green steel manufacturing and we are proud to call ourselves 'the green port'.

#### Provision of utility services

Meanwhile, Marafiq's Managing Director Eng. Abdullah Mohammed Al Hashimi stated that Marafiq will provide the project with vital utilities services, including power.

#### Reduction of emissions

The Mega Hub initiative contributes to Vale's commitment to reduce 15% of net Scope 3 emissions by 2035. Additionally, Vale seeks to reduce its Scope 1 and 2 emissions by 33% by 2030 and achieve net-zero by 2050.

The development of the Mega Hub project is expected to produce HBI and steel products to supply both the local and export markets, while significantly reducing CO2 emissions. The production of HBI using natural gas emits around 60% less CO2 when compared to more traditional methods. In the future, the replacement of natural gas with hydrogen and the usage of renewable energy could eliminate CO2 emissions.

#### Building of ore concentration and briquetting plants

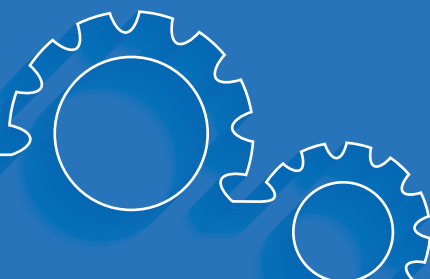
Vale is expected to build and operate iron ore concentration and briquetting plants within the hubs, securing the supply of high-grade agglomerated products. Local parties are expected to promote the construction of the required logistics infrastructure. Investors and/or clients are expected to construct and operate the direct reduction plants and be off-takers of HBI for either the export or domestic markets. These Mega Hubs shall supply different markets across the globe, supporting the decarbonisation of the steelmaking industry.

**Commitment to reducing the level of carbon dioxide emissions and adoption of renewable energy and hydrogen fuel in the future**

**The new factories to export their products to world markets and support the decarbonisation of the steel-making industry**

### The project to be built on 6.7km at the Port of Duqm

The plants to be constructed within the project are:



# Oman towards a sustainable green future

Climate change poses a challenge to humanity in general, and to countries that have built their economies on fossil fuels in particular. It is a must to reduce global warming and greenhouse gas emissions as they are a priority for most of the world's countries that aim to reach zero neutrality through restructuring all aspects of economic and development sectors. Rising of sea levels, hurricanes and the increase of dangerous weather phenomena are among the direct effects of climate change that have begun to throw its weight on the world.

Zero neutrality and climate change are related to all national development plans, and it is one of the most important components of national sectoral strategies, including the industrial strategy, urban planning, energy strategies, agriculture, health and others.

The achievement of Oman's Vision 2040, especially the priority of environment and natural resources, is linked to achieving a balance between the requirements of sustainable development and the sustainable use of natural resources for the growth of the national economy and reducing the effects of climate change through the procedures required.

The Sultanate of Oman is one of the first countries to exert sustainable efforts in all issues related to sustainability, environmental performance, climate affairs and energy security. It is keen to support international solidarity to address the problem of climate change and its negative effects. The Sultanate of Oman has ratified international conventions on climate affairs, and has actively participated in meetings, studies and the projects concerned with this issue. In addition, it signed the Paris agreement on climate change in April of 2016.

However, Oman's dependence on fossil fuels to power local industry and produce electric energy through increasing energy demand and industrial growth has contributed to the increase of emissions. Moreover, the dependence of the economy on foreign markets is one of the causes of carbon emissions, because this contributed to an increase in industrial activity such as the petrochemical industry, cement, iron and aluminum industries in exports. That in turn contributed to an increase in energy consumption, especially with the presence of local industries that have not reached the appropriate technological level to reduce emissions. This points to the importance of supporting economic growth through economic diversification, the development of non-oil sectors, and the shift towards renewable energy.

Therefore, having a plan and a clear path to achieve zero neutrality, the implementation of national and international obligations in international agreements, as well as facing the repercussions of the negative effects of climate change on the Sultanate of Oman is a must. This requires clear and organised national policies, procedures and regulatory frameworks for all sectors that can provide initiatives and projects that support the zero-neutrality plan through the compatibility of development plans and enable their economic diversification.

Among its Vision 2040 plans, the Sultanate of Oman has included improving environmental performance, mitigating the effects of climate change and transitioning towards a sustainable «green and circular» economy. It intends to achieve

## A map showing the global trend towards achieving zero carbon neutrality



The source:

Climate Watch platform on the website:

<https://www.climatewatchdata.org/>

The yellow colour indicates countries / territories that have set the year 2050 a goal to achieve zero neutrality, blue colour for countries before 2050, orange for countries after 2050, and gray for countries / territories that have not announced their plans for zero neutrality

this through economic diversification on one hand and adaptation to the phenomenon of climate change on the other hand, taking into account that the economic transition, which consists of attracting foreign investments and economic diversification, requires balancing emissions reduction with the determinants of economic growth. Since the economy of the Sultanate of Oman is based on hydrocarbons, achieving this goal is a challenge which will most likely lead to an economic impact on the long term if not optimally planned to achieve from now on.

One of the expected challenges in case of non-progress towards zero neutrality is to weaken the competitiveness of the Sultanate of Oman in the field of investment in light of the global trend to a circular carbon economy and negatively affect the needs of financing, interest and loans from external financial institutions due to the introduction of climate change indicators in the activities of these institutions.

The growing political consensus to reach zero neutrality in 2050 is a reason for great optimism about the progress that



**Eng. Faiza Mohamed Al Harthy**  
Head of Environment and Natural Resource  
Oman Vision 2040 Implementation and Follow Up Unit



the world can make. There is a great deal of work is needed to turn aspirations into reality for a sustainable and flexible clean energy system that will bring great benefits to human prosperity and well-being. The great economic opportunities provided by the path towards zero neutrality directly support the unification of efforts to build a better economy and align them with the priorities of sustainable economic growth in the Sultanate of Oman. They are also in line with Oman's efforts aimed at diversifying natural resources, environmental sustainability and building a knowledge economy the transition towards a green economy, the application of the circular economy system, attracting foreign direct investments, and developing human resource competencies and expertise in areas of future growth.

The supreme directives of His Majesty Sultan Haitham bin Tarik have decreed the adoption of the year 2050 to reach zero carbon neutrality and the establishment of the Oman Center for Sustainability; based on the outputs of the carbon management laboratory through (The National Strategy of the Sultanate of Oman for an orderly transition to the zero neutrality plan) as a roadmap to achieve zero carbon neutrality by 2050 with specific objectives and a clear executive plan that will enable the Sultanate of Oman in the following aspects:

- Achieving the objectives of the environment and natural resources priority related to enhancing environmental performance and achieving energy security by raising the contribution of renewable energy, slowing the growth of greenhouse gas emissions and reducing the repercussions of the negative effects of climate change.
- Implementing the obligations of the Sultanate of Oman in international agreements and highlighting its efforts exerted in preserving the environment through the reports issued in this regard, thereby enhancing its status and reputation in this field.
- Enhancing the competitiveness of the Sultanate of Oman in the field of attracting investment and developing exports in foreign markets and facilitating the procedures for obtaining financing from various international institutions and funds, as environmental performance is one of the criteria that has been stressed recently and linked to these aspects.
- Linking the national efforts, programmes and projects related to climate change and carried out by various

entities to achieve complementarity between them and maximise the added value of them in addition to reducing the cost as much as possible.

- Stimulating a sustainable economy through the development and implementation of packages of promising investment projects and initiatives that contribute to accelerating the economic diversification of the Sultanate of Oman.
- Developing clear and organised national policies, procedures and regulatory frameworks for all sectors that can provide initiatives and projects that support the zero-neutrality plan through the compatibility of development plans and enabling their economic diversification.

#### Countries' experiences with zero-neutrality plans

The experiences of countries and institutions varied with regard to their contribution to reducing carbon emissions. For example, the kingdom of Saudi Arabia has adopted a carbon circular economy policy in order to maximise its benefits either by reducing its emissions using advanced technologies in this field and then recycling it with new industries, or disposing of it naturally through mangrove forests. The same is the case for the United Arab Emirates. It declared the year of 2023 to be the year of sustainability coinciding with its hosting of the Conference of the Parties to the UN Framework Convention on Climate Change (COP28). It prepared a framework with green performance indicators to be a global and successful model towards a carbon-free economy. In addition, the UAE has established the Dubai Carbon Center of Excellence with the launch of many initiatives that ensure a qualitative leap in reducing carbon dioxide emissions.

In general, several countries in the world and some GCC countries have announced their commitment to reach zero climate neutrality over the next few decades.

#### Targets of the GCC countries in the reduction of emissions and zero neutrality plan

Country	Objectives of Nationally Determined Contributions	zero neutrality plan
Sultanate of Oman	7% by 2030	2050
United Arab Emirates	31% by 2030	2050
Kingdom of Saudi Arabia	278 million tonnes of carbon dioxide equivalent by 2030	2060
Qatar	25% by 2030	None
Kingdom of Bahrain		2060
Kuwait	7.4% by 2035	Outline of the low-emission development strategy for 2060

# Developing a new road network stretching over 168 km in the Special Economic Zone at Duqm



Sultan Said bin Taimur Road in downtown Duqm

**Focus on connecting new investment districts with the centre of Duqm, activating commercial traffic and encouraging tourism**

**Road specifications include achieving smooth traffic flow even in rainy times**

## Duqm -

The Special Economic Zone at Duqm (SEZAD) currently witnesses the development of a new network of roads, which stretch over 168 km.

Eng. Saif bin Nasser Al Busaidi, Infrastructure Projects Manager at the Oman Company for Development of the Special Economic Zone at Duqm (Tatweer) said: "Developing the new projects comes within the plan of the Public Authority for Special Economic Zones and Free Zones (OPAZ) to complete roads network in the Special Economic Zone at Duqm, increase its efficiency, boost the competitiveness of the zone and enable it to attract new investment projects. The plan also looks into achieving smooth traffic flow in the Zone, connecting new investment districts



**Saif Al Busaidi: The new projects boost the competitiveness of the zone and enable it to attract new investments**



During the implementation of a section within the main road in Duqm





to the centre of Duqm, activating commercial traffic, as well as activating touristic aspect of the zone which is characterised by many tourist components”.

Speaking to Duqm Economist, he added that the new projects are planned to keep abreast with the economic growth in the zone and the increase in the number of investment projects, urban and population growth. He stressed that Tatweer is keen to implement these new schemes in accordance with the latest trends in the roads sector especially in the field of traffic safety, confirming that the road specifications include achieving smooth traffic flow even in times of rainfall through an integrated system for water drainage, whether through box culverts, bridges or lifting the road tracks from the streams of wadis while providing the necessary protections for them.

Tatweer stands as the investment arm of the Public Authority for Special Economic Zones and Free Zones (OPAZ) and is fully-owned by the Authority. The company implements infrastructure projects in SEZAD on behalf of the Authority and runs different assets and infrastructure of the Authority in Duqm.

### Three projects on the main road

Eng. Saif Al Busaidi said that the new plan includes three projects on the main road inside the economic zone that connects Duqm with Muscat from the North, and Duqm with Dhofar

from the South. It is the national road No. (32) extending from wilayats of Sinaw and Mahout to Dhofar, and wilayats of Haima and Al Jazir in Al Wusta. He indicated that the national road No. (32) which passes through the center of Duqm city and is known as Sultan Said bin Taimur road, is a vital project in the Special Economic Zone at Duqm. Parts of this road have been implemented over the past years. The new projects include completing the implementation of the duplication of the road starting from the entrance to the SEZAD and to Sultan Qaboos Road near Duqm Airport.

He pointed out that the first project is the “first phase of the national road 32 duplication” and includes the construction of a three-lane dual carriageway with a length of 15.3 km, a service street with a length of 22 km, 3 bridges to be built on the main channels to discharge rainwater from the protection dams, namely the Sai, Jarf and wadi Dangert canals.

The second one, however, is the “the second phase of the national road 32 duplication project” and includes the construction of a three-lane dual carriageway in each direction, starting from Duqm sewage treatment plant intersection to the northern border of the Duqm Special Economic Zone. It connects with the Sinaw-Mahout-Duqm road with a length of about 11 km.

Al Busaidi said that the third project is the “duplication of Sultan Said bin Taimur Road in Duqm (NR - 32 Southwards), which includes the

**Completion of Sultan Said bin Taimur road dualisation with 3 lanes in each side**

**Construction of modern roads to connect the crude oil storage terminal to Duqm Airport and downtown**



**The internal road network in the commercial district is equipped with smart city systems in the field of lighting**



construction of a main road with a length of 10 km, pointing out that the new road will serve the areas between Saay village and the exhibition roundabout near the Royal Oman Police building. In addition to a dual link road with a length of 4.4 km to connect it with Sultan Qaboos Road at the authority roundabout.

#### **Crude oil storage terminal road**

Eng. Saif bin Nasser Al Busaidi touched upon a number of other road projects that are being implemented in the Special Economic Zone at Duqm, which are expected to be completed within the next two years. He said that the new roads projects also include the construction of routes with a length of about 51.2 km from Duqm Airport roundabout to the crude oil storage terminal in Ras Markaz.

According to Al Busaidi, there is currently a road to the oil storage terminal in Ras Markaz, but it is incomplete, a single and non-double. He explained that the goal of establishing the new road is to raise the efficiency of the road network in the Special Economic Zone at Duqm and connect investment districts with each other. Al Busaidi continued that this road passes a number of villages in the Special Economic Zone at Duqm and thus contributes to facilitating the movement of citizens between the center of Duqm and the villages where they live. It also contributes to facilitating the movement of workers in the oil storage station and workers in the green hydrogen investments planned to be established in that area.

"The project consists of a dual carriageway with a length of 42.7 km with two lanes in each side. The width of each lane is 3.75 m. It includes the construction of a dual carriageway with a length of 2.5 km with two lanes in each direction, with a width of 3.65m for each lane. The efficiency of the road has been raised to withstand the discharge of wadis waters during severe rains,

as 34 box culverts will be constructed to discharge waters along the route. The project also includes the construction of a single road with a length of about 6 km with a width of 3.5 m in each side" he added.

#### **The internal road network in the commercial district**

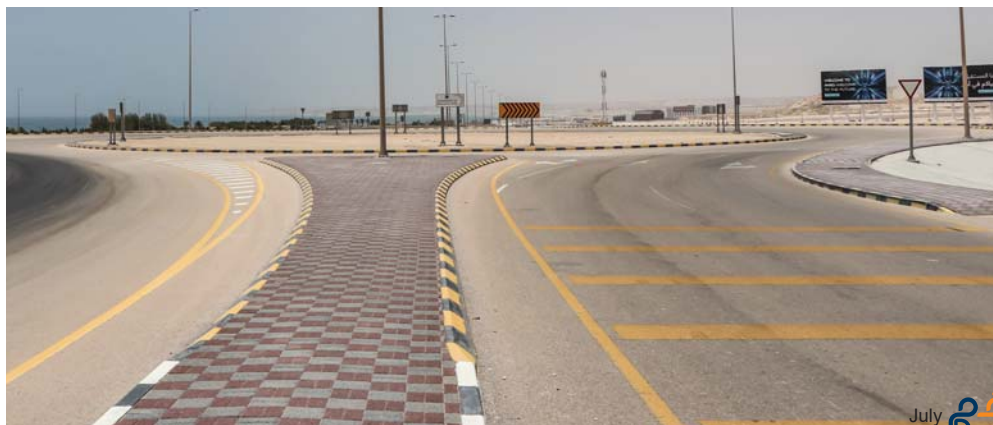
Eng. Saif Al Busaidi said that the new road projects include the construction of an internal road network in the commercial district (Saay district in downtown Duqm), explaining that it includes the construction of dual roads with a length of 4 km two lanes in each side and the construction of single roads with a length of 9 km one lane in each side. There will be also the construction of 10 connections linking the internal road network to the main roads adjacent to the commercial district. Moreover, the project contains 7 intersections with traffic lights and lighting, equipped with smart city systems, a pedestrian crossing and bicycles path along the road.

#### **Two projects under award**

Regarding the projects under award, Al Busaidi said that there are two. The first includes the construction of a coastal road with a length of 14 km connecting the existing resorts with the multipurpose fishing port and the fishery industrial zone. The second includes the implementation of the road network in light and medium industries zones with a length of 27.3 km, 13.6 km of which will be in the medium industries area, and 12.4 km in the light industries zone. In addition, there will be the duplication of the road passing over the drainage canal with a length of 1.3 km to ensure the smooth flow of traffic to the medium industries zone during the rainy time. The project aims to provide internal and secondary routes including tracks for public utility services such as electricity, water, communications, gas, and surface water drainage system.

**Implementation of bicycles path along the new road in Saay commercial district**

**Construction of a 14-kilometre coastal road connecting the existing resorts with the Fishing Port and the Fisheries Industries Zone**

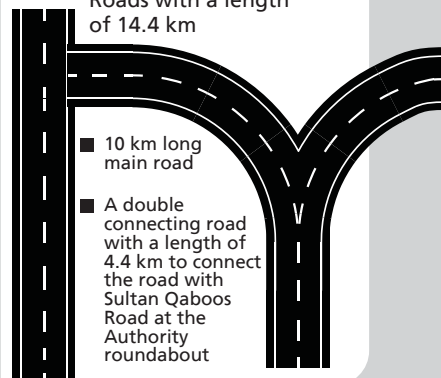




## Projects under award in the road sector in the Special Economic Zone at Duqm

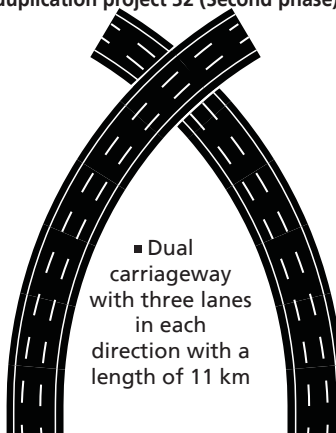
### The Sultan Said bin Taimur road at Duqm (NR- 32 Southwards)

Roads with a length  
of 14.4 km



### The national road duplication project 32 (Second phase)

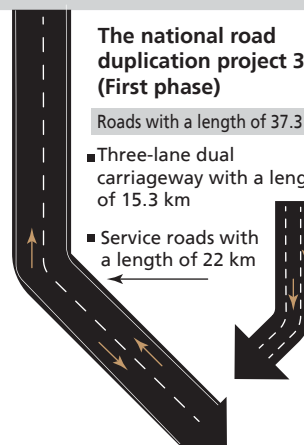
■ Dual  
carriageway  
with three lanes  
in each  
direction with a  
length of 11 km



### The national road duplication project 32 (First phase)

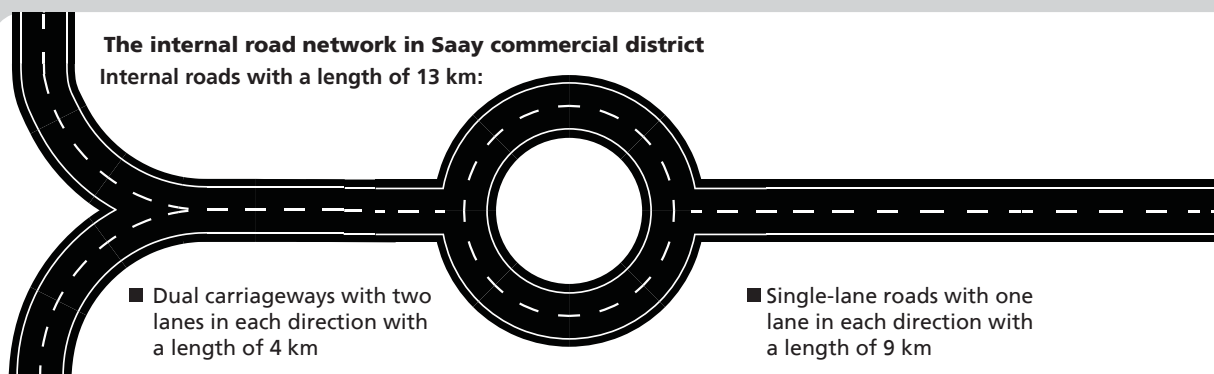
Roads with a length of 37.3 km

- Three-lane dual carriageway with a length of 15.3 km
- Service roads with a length of 22 km



### The internal road network in Saay commercial district

Internal roads with a length of 13 km:



## Projects under award

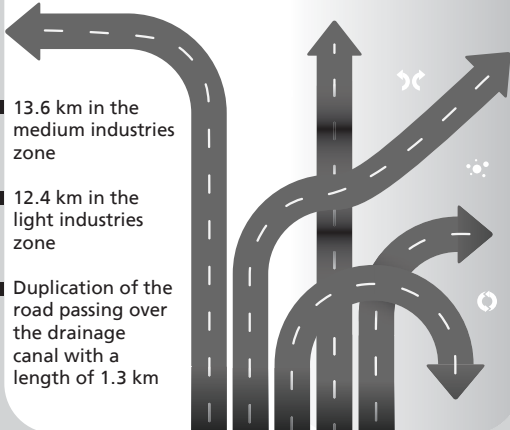
### The coastal road

A 14 km coastal road connects the existing resorts with the sea fishing port and the fishery industrial zone

### The road network in the light and medium industries zones

A 27.3 km long road network consisting of:

- 13.6 km in the medium industries zone
- 12.4 km in the light industries zone
- Duplication of the road passing over the drainage canal with a length of 1.3 km



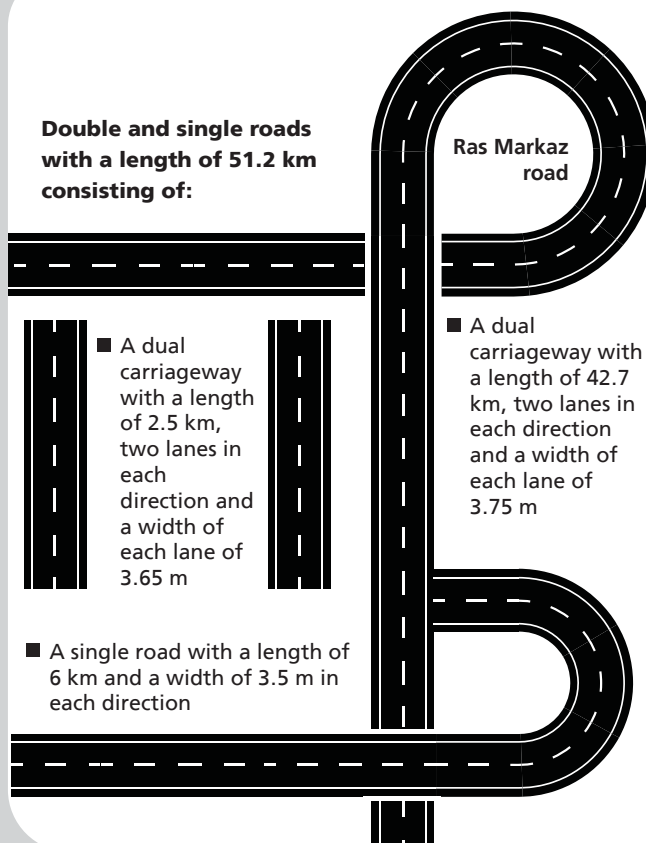
### Double and single roads with a length of 51.2 km consisting of:

- A dual carriageway with a length of 2.5 km, two lanes in each direction and a width of each lane of 3.65 m

- A single road with a length of 6 km and a width of 3.5 m in each direction

### Ras Markaz road

- A dual carriageway with a length of 42.7 km, two lanes in each direction and a width of each lane of 3.75 m



*With an investment of \$20 million*

## SEZAD signs usufruct agreement to establish first aqua feeds project



### Muscat - :

The Special Economic Zone at Duqm (SEZAD) signed a land usufruct agreement with the Blue Feeds Company, a jointly formed company between United Fish LLC and Seapride LLC to establish the first Aqua Feed Manufacturing Unit in the Zone over an area of 20,000 sqm.

*The project targets a production capacity of 60,000 metric tonnes of shrimp and fish feed*

The agreement was signed by Eng. Ahmed bin Ali Akaak, Acting CEO of the Special Economic Zone at Duqm, and Mohammed Ameen, Executive Director of the

Blue Feed Company.

The \$20-million project will be established in the Fisheries and Food Industries Zone, which is located near the multi-purpose Fishing Port in the Special Economic Zone at Duqm, with a production capacity of 60,000 metric tonnes annually of shrimp and fish feed for the project's first phase, which can be increased in the future.

## OPAZ invites bids for constructing entertainment centre in Duqm

### Muscat - :

The Public Authority for Special Economic Zones and Free Zones (OPAZ) has invited experienced local companies to bid for the design and construction of an entertainment center in the Special Economic Zone at Duqm (SEZAD), scheduling August 14, 2023 a date to open tender bids.

It urged bidders to submit their bids through the electronic tender platform (Esnad).

The tender comes as part of OPAZ's efforts to develop social amenities, enhance lifestyle and entertainment in the region, and reinforce the presence of Duqm on the domestic tourism map.

The project focuses on the development of a park with entertainment and comfort facilities and dedicated places that can be visited by all community members, residents, the business community and hotel guests.

The entertainment centre is planned to have a multi-use complex, parking lots, a children's play area, and pedestrian walkways leading to



the coast. The area allocated for the project is about 15,000 sqm.

The design requirements include that the project is in harmony with the topography of the place, that the design takes advantage of the landscape and wind movement in

SEZAD, and that the design allows everyone to enjoy the surrounding landscapes while paying attention to the Omani culture in Duqm mixed with a global touch reflected in the design of the site, building and content.



# 'Marafiq' implements new expansions in the water sector in the Special Economic Zone at Duqm

Duqm -  :

The Centralized Utilities Company (Marafiq) currently implements three new projects in the water sector in the Special Economic Zone at Duqm (SEZAD) with a total cost of \$8.9 million. Eng. Said Al Sarhani, Acting Chief Operations Officer at Marafiq, said that the new projects come in light of the urban growth in the zone and the increasing number of investment projects, stressing that the company is keen to keep up with the demand for water in the zone in coordination with the Public Authority for Special Economic Zones and Free Zones (OPAZ) and the management of the Special Economic Zone at Duqm (SEZAD).

## Water supply for the Fisheries Industries Zone

In his interview with Duqm Economist, Al Sarhani added that the drinking water supply project for the Fisheries Industries Zone is one of the most prominent projects implemented by the company at the moment in the water sector in the SEZAD, explaining that the project includes the construction and installation of a pumping station and a water tank to meet the needs of factories for drinking water in the Fisheries Industries Zone, which is about 35 km from Duqm. He pointed out that the project is expected to be completed by the end of this year.

## Construction of an upper water tank

He also said that the new projects launched during the current year include the construction of an upper water storage tank with its accessories for the distribution of potable water in the industrial zone managed by the Port of Duqm Company. He explained that the tank capacity is 500 cubic metres, and the implementation of the project came to meet the demand for water in the zone.

## Expansion of water network

Speaking about the company's efforts in expanding the water network in the Special Economic Zone at Duqm, Al Sarhani said that Marafiq executed the water network expansion



**Said Al Sarhani: The new projects keep pace with urban growth and increasing demand**

sion project in July 2023 in parts of Sai district (schemes 55, 54 and 53) with a length of 15 km. last year, the company completed a project to expand the water network in Sai commercial area with a length of 19 km, which contributed to reducing dependence on drinking water transportation tanks.

Eng. Said Al Sarhani confirmed that the company will continue to implement many projects in the water sector in conjunction with the high demand.

The Centralized Utilities Company (Marafiq) is responsible for all operations related to drinking water sector in the Special Economic Zone at Duqm starting from water production, transmission, distribution, billing, collection and customers service.

In 2019, the company obtained a license for a period of 25 years to produce, transmit and distribute potable water in SEZAD. Since then, it implemented a number of projects that doubled the production capacity of potable water to reach about 9000 cubic metres per day, by the end of December 2022, and increasing the storage capacity to about 22,000 cubic metres.

**Water supply for the Fisheries Industries Zone and new network expansions executed**

**Construction of an upper water tank in the industrial area of Duqm Port**



Dams are designed to hold **50** million cubic metres of water

The dams succeeded to store big quantity of water during Hikka Cyclone, which supported protecting the infrastructure projects in Duqm

**Construction of 3 main channels for water drainage to the sea with a length of 32 km**

#### Duqm - :

Since the establishment of the Special Economic Zone at Duqm (SEZAD), the Sultanate of Oman realised the importance of setting up an integrated system to protect the projects being implemented in the zone from the risks of floods caused by cyclones and heavy rains. This system has proved its efficiency in the climatic conditions witnessed in Duqm in 2019 when cyclone Hikka crossed the zone with heavy rains of 116 mm. The protection dams succeeded to hold about 24 million cubic metres of water, which is almost half of the storage capacity that these dams were designed to accommodate, which is about 50 million cubic metres.

#### Protection dams

The protection system comprises of two dams and a group of drainage channels that extend for 32km from dams and wadis to the sea. The first dam is the Wadi Jarf dam, which

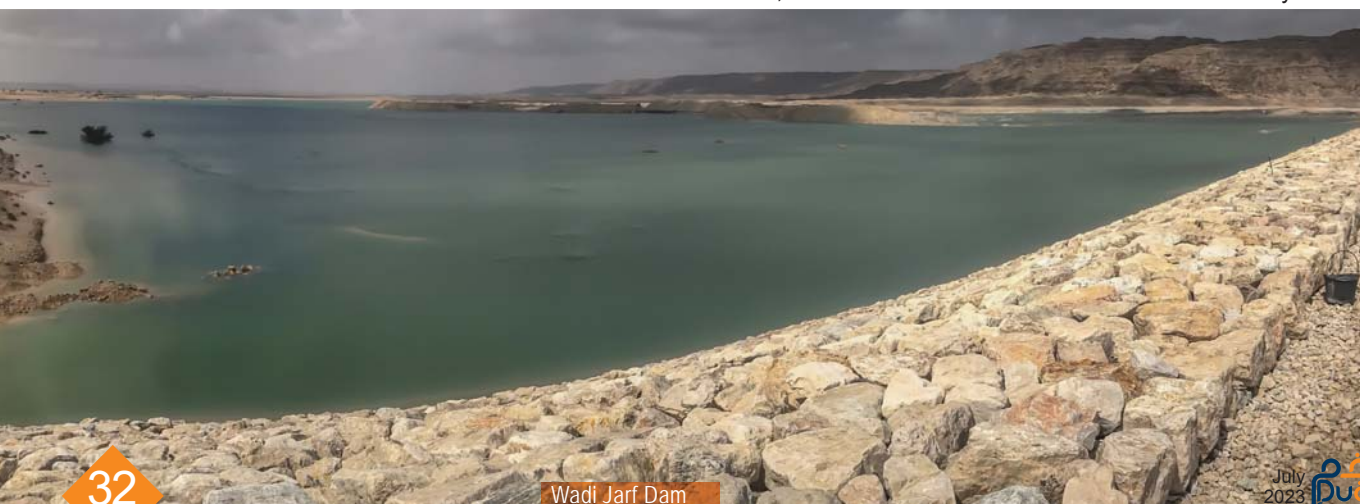
has a height of about 19.4 metres and a length of 1600 metres. The width at the base of the dam is about 100 metres and the thickness of it decreases towards the top to reach a width of 8 metres. The dam lake can reserve a storage capacity of about 32.8 million cubic metres of water.

The second dam is Wadi Saay. Its height is about 16.4 metres and its length extends to 3665 metres while its width at the base is 100 metres. The dam lake is designed to accommodate about 17 million cubic metres of water.

#### Three channels for water drainage

The protection system also includes three channels for safe water drainage from the dams to the sea. The protection dams are designed to detain the water of wadis to a certain height inside the dam lake and then discharge it through box culverts and a concrete spillway to the channels that discharge water in a safe way to the sea.

The tracking of the natural drainage of the canals and the collection of secondary chan-







Wadi Saay Dam

nels for rainwater have been taken into account in a way that does not contradict with the scheme of the Special Economic Zone at Duqm.

The locations of the drainage channels have been carefully selected and designed in accordance with the surface runoff of the wadis and the amount of flow from the dam surpluses and sub-wadis that drain into the main wadis below the dam areas. The three canals are: Wadi Dangert, the Wadi Jarf, and Wadi Saay.

Wadi Dangert canal is about 11 km long, 40 metres wide from the top and 100 metres wide at the mouth by the sea. A number of box culverts have been established at the top of the canal and on the highway (Mahout-Duqm).

The Saay canal, however, is located south-west of Saay district. Several entrances or estuaries to the canal have been implemented in order to accommodate as much water as possible and provide the greatest protection for Saay and strategic projects below the wadi streams. At the same time, those estuaries were built with consideration to preserving the nature of the place and taking into account environmental aspects as much as possible. The length of Wadi Saay canal is about 9 km and its

width ranges from 160 metres at the top to 320 metres at the confluence with the Jarf canal.

Flowing from the West, the Jarf Canal serves as a catchment area for the waters of Wadi Jarf, Wadi Ashnan and some other small streams and reefs located west of the Special Economic Zone of Duqm. These waters are discharged then to the sea. The length of the canal is about 12 km and its width varies between 450 metres at the top and 750 metres at the mouth by the shore of the Arabian Sea.

#### Subchannels

SEZAD protection system has a number of sub-channels, most of which are located in the Port of Duqm, the dry dock and the wharf of liquid and bulk materials, in order to provide the highest degree of protection for strategic projects in SEZAD.

Not limited to strategic projects, the system also includes other projects, commercial and residential neighbourhoods. Water drainage networks have been established in most of the new neighborhoods. At the same time, water drainage channels are being established in all roads that are being built in the Special Economic Zone at Duqm.

**Providing the highest degree of protection for strategic projects in the zone**

**Construction of drainage networks in most new neighbourhoods**

### Protection system against floods

Channels				
	Wadi Dangert	Wadi Sai	Wadi Jarf	
Length (km)	11	9	12	
Width (m)	100 - 40	320 - 160	750 - 450	

Dams				
	Wadi Sai	Wadi Jarf		
Height (m)	16.4	19.4		
Length (km)	3.6	1.6		
Width (m)	100	100		
Storage capacity (million cubic metres of water)	17	32.2		





Officials of Sohar Free Zone and Elite Company after signing the agreement

### *Sohar Free Zone attracts new investments*

## Construction of two plants for chemicals and hazardous waste treatment

**Omar Al Mahrizi:**  
*Boosting Sohar Free Zone as a leading hub for business, innovation and sustainable development*

#### **Sohar -**

Sohar Free Zone has attracted a number of new investments this year. SOHAR Freezone, a leading industrial hub in the region, announced a strategic partnership with Nasim Chemicals SFZ LLC, a prominent player in the chemical industry. This collaboration will witness the establishment of Dioctyl Phthalate and Dioctyl Terephthalate Plant within SOHAR Freezone, aimed at catering to the growing demand for high-quality chemical products in the GCC, India, and African markets.

With a total investment of \$10.4 million, the plant covers an area of 5,000 sqm and will boast a production capacity of 30,000 tonnes, reinforcing the region's industrial capabilities. The partnership will significantly boost the logistics movement and elevate the throughput levels with more than 2000 TEUs annually.

Omar Al Mahrizi, CEO SOHAR Freezone, DCEO SOHAR Port said: "We are

thrilled to partner with Nasim Chemicals SFZ LLC in this significant agreement. The establishment of the Dioctyl Phthalate and Dioctyl Terephthalate Plant further strengthens SOHAR Freezone's position as a key industrial player for business and innovation in the region. This collaboration aligns perfectly with our vision of fostering economic growth and attracting strategic investments to the Sultanate of Oman."

The plant will create downstream opportunities including the production of PVC products as plastic film and sheets, wire and cable insulation, and flooring and wall coverings. It will be developed in two phases, with construction commencing by the end of this year. Production is estimated to commence by the end of 2024.

#### **Hazardous Waste Treatment Plant**

SOHAR Port and Freezone signed a land lease agreement with Elite Hazardous Waste Management Solution (FZC), to set-up a Hazardous Waste Treatment Plant in SOHAR Freezone. The agreement aims to enhance waste management practices in the region, while promoting sustainability and enhancing the circular economy cluster in SOHAR Port and Freezone.

With a total investment of \$3.5 million, the plant-with an area of 10,000 sqm, designed to treat industrial waste, will ensure compliance with local and international regulations for a pollution-free environment. The plant's produced end products will include heavy oil for utilisation in slow-moving machines, as well as low-contamination carbon dust suitable for cement and road construction industries.

With an initial production capacity of 40 tonnes per day, projected to increase to 80 tonnes per day within one year.



During the signing ceremony with Nasim Chemicals



# Ibri Industrial City attracts investments of RO 10 million



Aerial image of Ibri Industrial City

## Ibri - :

Eng. Nasser bin Hamoud Al Mabsali, Director General of Ibri Industrial City, said that the city is currently home for 28 projects with a total investment value of RO 10 million, stressing that these projects are being implemented on an area of 270,000 sqm.

Ibri Industrial City is one of the cities managed by the Public Establishment for Industrial Estates "Madayn", and is under the supervision of the Public Authority for Special Economic Zones and Free Zones (OPAZ).

The Director General of Ibri Industrial City explained that the City has attracted a number of projects in the sectors of building materials, oil and gas, food, manufacturing industries, in addition to warehousing, and service and commercial activities, explaining that some factories have already started production. He expected that other factories will start commercial operations during the next period.

### Business opportunities for SMEs

Eng. Nasser bin Hamoud Al Mabsali stressed that during 2023, Ibri Industrial City provided a number of business opportunities for small and medium-sized enterprises in addition to direct and indirect job opportunities. He added that the city, which is newly established, is still to give more opportunities in conjunction with the increasing investments and operations of facilities, projects and plants operating in the City.

### Development of the first phase

The area of Ibri Industrial City is estimated at 10 million sqm and the project has been under development since 2020. Eng. Nasser Al Mabsali said that the first phase of the city's infrastructure is currently being developed and it covers 3 million sqm, while its completion rate has reached about 80%. The project includes establishment of infrastructure that consists of roads, service networks such as water, com-



**Nasser Al Mabsali: 28 projects to start investing in the city**

munications, sewage, rainwater drainage and control systems. He also indicated that sustainable alternative energy has been used in the lighting poles with 300 solar-powered poles, pointing out that the project is currently in the final stages of roads paving. However, work is underway on completing the rest of the services to become fully available for use by investors.

Ibri Industrial City is located on the road leading to the Empty Quarter border, which connects the Sultanate of Oman with the Kingdom of Saudi Arabia. It is 20 km from the centre of Ibri and 130 km from the Empty Quarter border.

Eng. Nasser said that the Public Establishment for Industrial Estates "Madayn", signed an agreement to establish an integrated station with an area of 40,000 sqm. The project, which will be implemented over phases, includes a petrol station, a rest stop and a service station for trucks and cars. He explained that the project will serve investors in Ibri Industrial City as well as users of the international road leading to Saudi Arabia through the Empty Quarter border.

**Investments attracted in the fields of building materials, oil and gas, food and manufacturing industries**

**Phase 1 infrastructure records 80% completion**

**Mesbah Kotb**  
An Egyptian writer specialised in  
economic affairs  
mesbahkotb@gmail.com



## Oil storage between necessities, opportunities and risks

The oil storage industry, in its comprehensive concept, is the result of the shock of cutting off Arab oil supplies during the October War in 1973. Also, establishment of the International Energy Agency, and later on, the US Department of Energy in 1977 in America, the largest global consumer; were associated with that Arab boycotting incident.

Prior to that, storage was related to operational, practical and not strategic factors, in the sense that its size, presence and time span depended on the conditions of transportation, ports sending and receiving crude (or refined) oil, and storage conditions in consuming companies and entities. The idea of the strategic stock of countries, with its rules, conditions and definitions, had not yet arisen.

It is a very exciting coincidence that I learned during the preparation of writing this article, and from a veteran Egyptian engineer, who led the task team at the time, that Egypt thought about storing oil before 1973 inside Jabal Al Jalalah by the Red Sea, in order to avoid any surprises that the country might suffer, if existing warehouses were hit. But with the start of disengagement talks between Egypt and Israel, and the conclusion of a peace treaty later, the project stalled.

The aforementioned engineer worked for Aramco, Sonatrach, and Libya Oil, as well as in the (SUMED) pipeline connecting the Egyptian Ain Sokhna on the Red Sea, which has an energy storage area of more than 20 million barrels, to Sidi Kerir on the Mediterranean Sea which has a similar storage capacity. He told me that underground storage is expensive and requires specific conditions in the soil, the level and quality of groundwater, and depth, which prevents or reduces loss. Also, maintenance and operation of underground storage is expensive.

Developments in the oil storage sector continued until the US inventory figure, which reaches a maximum capacity of about 700 million barrels, became a clear influencing factor in oil markets and prices.

Over time, the oil storage industry has been expanding to keep pace with changes in production and consumption centers, oil lines and pipelines, developments in the shipbuilding industry and floating storage, and to achieve the highest level of safety for the country and its industrial companies and power plants, which still run on fossil fuels, in all conditions.

Meanwhile, investors from the government and private sectors, large speculators and port and airport management companies, have found opportunities to invest in this area, build or rent various storage spaces. The published forecasts indicate that the oil storage market is growing at a compound rate of 2% per annum, a rate doomed to the growth of production and ultimately consumption, where tweeting too far away from it poses high risks.

Procedurally, in the case of betting that the oil price is low now and that it will rise to «so» in a certain time range, the investor calculates the expected gain from each barrel compared to the cost incurred for storage

and makes his decision accordingly. However, if prices are expected to fall, the trend is to sell, or contract to sell, the largest possible quantities of inventory, and refill when prices fall.

The success factors of investing in oil storage depend on the suitability of global production and consumption for the investment decision, low prices, and the degree of stability of global supply chains. The Russian-Ukrainian war, for example, forced several countries to expand or plan to expand their storage capacities by governments or in cooperation with local or foreign private investment, or by building reliable alliances for the same purpose.

There are other factors; the most important of which are the proximity to various global shipping lines, the impact of the development of technology on the tanker and pipeline industry on the one hand, and the result of this development on oil refining industry, which in turn has repercussions on storage on the other hand.

Technology has made it possible, for example, to extract heavy oil that was considered among the world reserves, theoretically. No one used to be eager to extract it because it needs complex and expensive refining transactions. Currently, it has become affordable, and therefore this imported oil needs storage spaces, whether in refineries or ports, etc... Before the war in Ukraine, another emerging factor emerged, that is; Western sanctions, which prompted various countries to seek or build storage capacities from others.

In light of all the above, it is possible to look at the giant oil storage project in «Ras Markaz», which is about 80 kilometres away from the heart of Duqm, overlooking the Arabian Sea. Ras Markaz was annexed to the Special Economic Zone at Duqm by a Royal Decree in January 2016. This storage project aims to store 25 million barrels at the end of the first phase, which will double in a few years according to demand. Studies are being completed to link it to oil fields in central areas of Oman. It is hoped that the project will also be an additional window for exporting Omani oil through Mina Al Fahal.

Despite the relative proximity of Ras Markaz to similar projects in the oil storage sector, the Omani project is based on clear foundations; served by the vital location, its practical goals for the country, and its various commercial purposes ranging from export or re-export and ships supply. It also serves as a guarantee to ensure the continuity of supplies to the oil refinery, and to the upcoming large industrial and urban expansions in Duqm.

To conclude, the diversification of the portfolio of objectives is also the most important guarantor to enable the project to face market fluctuations and geostrategic risks. There is another advantage in the project's design; it includes towing to and from ships by a sea pipe, with floating platforms, supplemented by another land pipe. In the reverse journey, pumping to the export ships is done without the need for pumps because the major reservoirs of the project are located in a place rising above sea level by about 110 meters.



# Enjoy summer in Duqm



**Duqm -  :**

Every summer, people look for tourist destinations with a cool weather to travel to. Added to other tourist sites in the Sultanate of Oman, whether in Dhofar Governorate, the willayats located on the coastal strip overlooking the Arabian Sea, or Al Jabal Al Akhdhar, Jebel Shams and other tourist landmarks too, Duqm Economist Magazine urges citizens and residents to choose Duqm to spend a unique summer in.

Duqm has a distinctive location on the Arabian Sea that overlooks the Indian Ocean. Thus, it acquires tourist and economic importance. When temperatures rise above 40 degrees Celsius in the North of the Sultanate of Oman and many parts of the GCC countries, Duqm enjoys a pleasant atmosphere as it receives cold air breezes coming from the Indian Ocean to keep temperatures at 20 degrees Celsius levels.

Duqm is also distinguished by its great tourist richness. It serves as an open-air museum on ancient historical epochs; of which the rock garden is its most prominent sign. Duqm is also located about halfway between Muscat and Salalah, which makes it a stopover for travellers to or from Salalah.

In the following file, we selected some of the tourism components to highlight in Duqm, noting that the transformation that Duqm has witnessed in recent years since the opening of Duqm Airport, the implementation of an integrated network of world-class roads, the construction of hotels, hotel apartments, restaurants and cafes that are spread in the Special Economic Zone at Duqm, the growth of the transport and logistics sector and the opening of more car rental offices, reflected positively on the tourist movement in Duqm, which seeks to satisfy its tourists as much as to develop investment projects every year.







**The Rock Garden**  
... a magical beauty going back millions of years

**Hamar Rock... a geological landmark being developed into a site for diving enthusiasts**

# Duqm... an exceptional

## Duqm - **الدقم**:

Duqm allows you to practice many tourist, recreational and sports activities. The Rock Garden, located in the centre of Duqm and at a distance of about one kilometre from Sultan Said bin Taimur Road, takes you back to very ancient historical eras as you see rocks of various shapes believed to be about 46 million years old. This park is truly a site for meditation.

Hamar Rock, a small mountainous island in the sea off the village of Nufoon, a unique geological landmark. It was taken as the emblem of Duqm. Nearby, there are many rocks bearing fossils dating

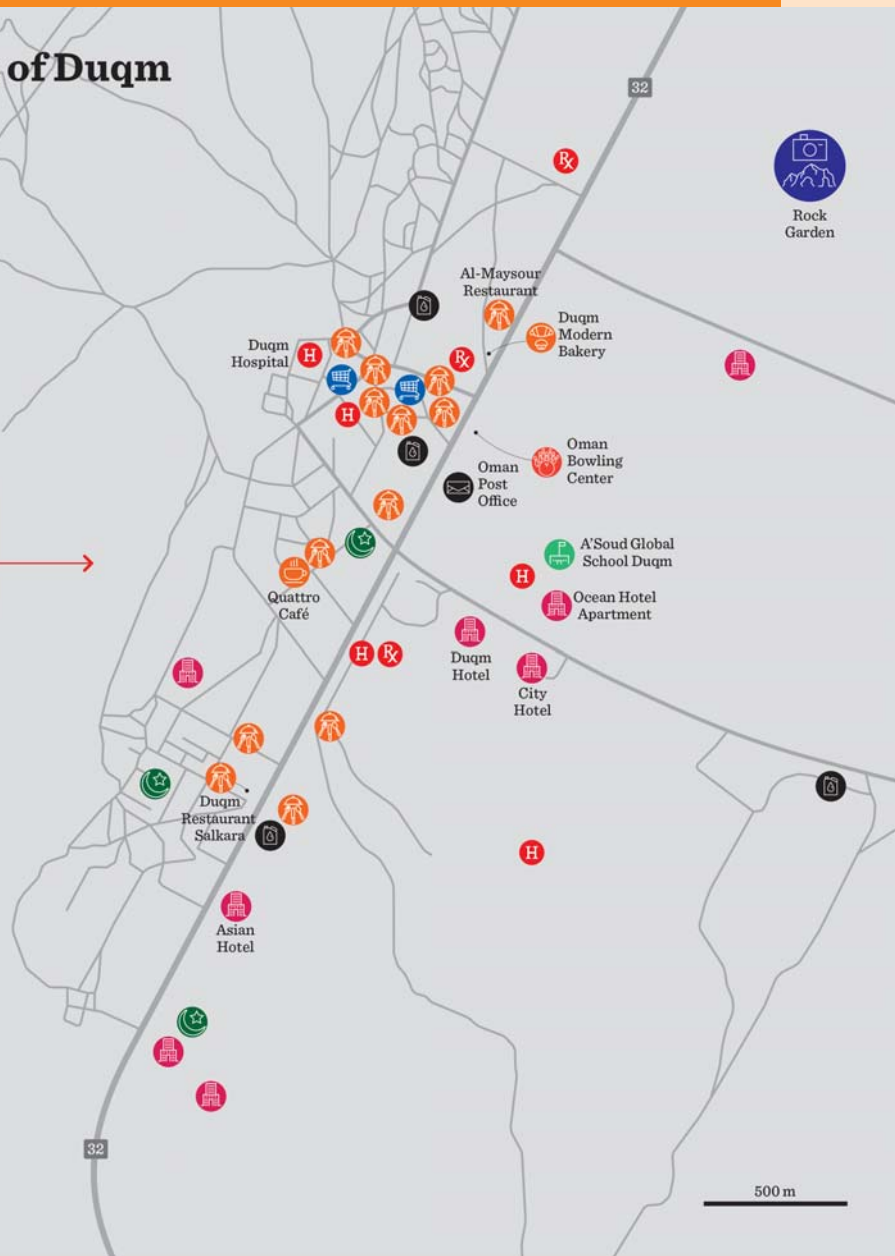
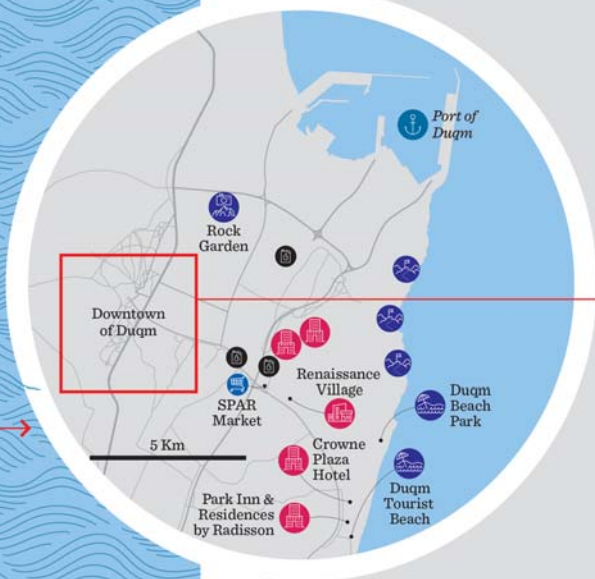
back millions of years and they can be reached by small boats. It is also possible to dive next to the island, which is being developed into a place for diving enthusiasts.

## Many beaches

Duqm is famous for many beaches such as Shuair beach near modern hotels and resorts, Ras Markaz beach, located at the bottom of a high hill of rocky hills near the village of Dhahr, and Ras Mudraka beach, located about 80 kilometres from the centre of Duqm, and is one of the beaches that tourists go to for camping activities.



## The Downtown of Duqm



# tourist destination

*Diverse beaches embraced by migratory birds*

*Duqm Beach Park provides sailing experience in the blue waters of the Arabian Sea*



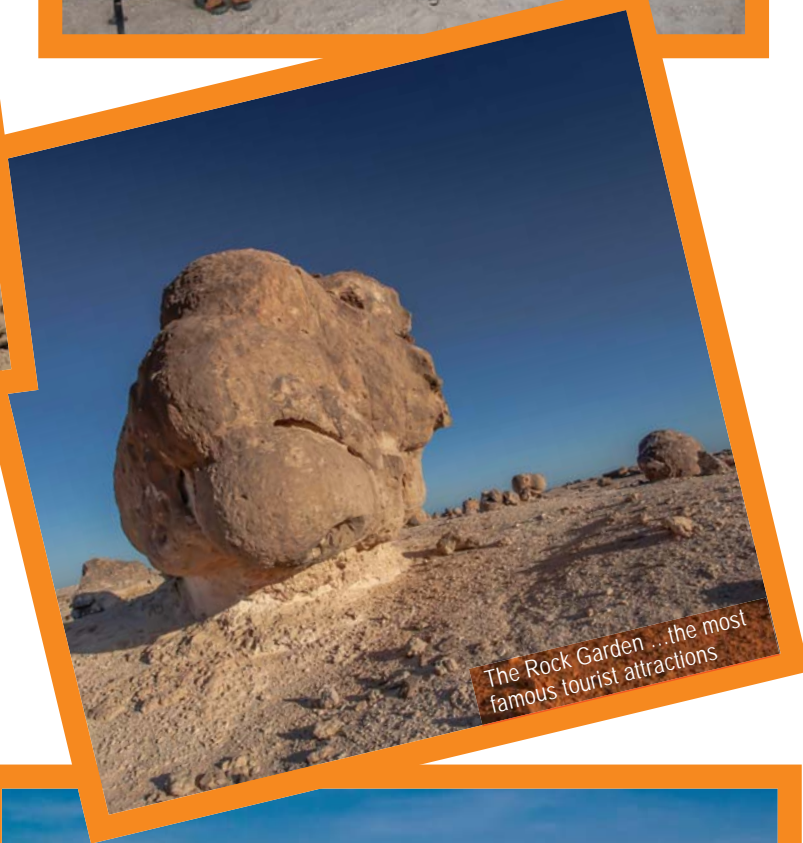




Visiting Duqm... an opportunity to learn about Bedouin lifestyles



Arabian Oryx Reserve ... a tourist site near Duqm



The Rock Garden ... the most famous tourist attractions

The beaches of Duqm are characterised by the spread of migratory birds that gather constituting a wonderful aesthetic artwork. About two years ago, the Duqm Beach Park was established on the waterfront of SEZAD where visitors can watch migratory birds, enjoy sailing in the blue waters of the Arabian Sea, and also have unique, unforgettable experiences. The park was prepared for camping and mobile caravans.

#### Numerous tourist sites

There are a lot of other tourist sites near Duqm, such as the Sugar beach in the village of Khaluf, 180 km from Duqm. It is considered one of the most beautiful coastal tourist destinations for camping and relaxation lovers or fishing and riding sand dunes enthusiasts.

Also, there is the Bar Al Hakman, mudflats located on the south-eastern coast of the Wusta governorate. This place is characterised by its pristine nature and biodiversity, and is considered one of the most prominent tourist destinations in the Sultanate of Oman. It is home to about 30 species of crabs and a unique site for watching migratory birds.

Besides, the Arabian Oryx Reserve is not far from Duqm, and you can go there in the morning and return the same evening after spending an unparalleled experience watching the Arabian oryx, gazelles and a variety of wildlife elements.

#### Various hobbies and activities

In Duqm, you can practice many other hobbies and activities such as boat cruises, diving, fishing, photography, enjoying coffee, drinking fresh milk or sunbathing and having dinner at the «Izbit Al Maha» in the open air. Also, Oman Bowling Centre provides unique experiences through its various games. It is currently undergoing a new development phase.



Bar al Hakman ... one of the tourist areas easily accessible from Duqm



Captain Mohammed Ahmed to  :

## We were able to turn Duqm terminal into a profitable line with no government support



### Duqm - :

Captain Mohammed Ahmed, CEO of SalamAir, confirmed that the company was able to turn the Muscat – Duqm line into a profitable line after it was a government-supported line. In his interview with Duqm Economist, he said that the Muscat - Duqm line has become one of the profitable lines within the rapidly growing SalamAir Network, explaining that the company is planning to increase the number of flights on days that witness high demand from one flight per day to two flights. He pointed out that the implementation of this step depends on the level of demand on the line.

He indicated that the company has many plans to activate Duqm tourism, including operating charter flights directly from Europe to Duqm. He also stressed that SalamAir is working to keep pace with the aspirations of customers as well as travel and tourism companies and to avoid any delays in the take-off of its flights, pointing out that the fleet is now up to 19 aircraft by the end of this year, which allows the company to expand its network and achieve more customer satisfaction.

Captain Mohammed Ahmed has more than 30 years of experience in the aviation sector. He was appointed the CEO of SalamAir in 2017. Speaking to Duqm Economist Magazine, he expressed the company's ambition to achieve greater successes in the coming period after it managed to achieve record results over the past two years and became one of the fastest growing airlines at Muscat International Airport.

### Duqm - :

**A profitable line without government support**  
*SalamAir started operating flights between Muscat and Duqm in October 2022, how do you assess the line's performance during the last period?*

There are many achievements that we have been able to accomplish on the Muscat – Duqm line, perhaps the most notable of which is turning the line into a profitable line without any government support.

When we first received the Duqm terminal, the main problem was that there were few passengers using the line, although many people said that they can't find seats when trying to book. This is true because the demand for travelling to Duqm is usually at the beginning of the week while the demand for travelling from Duqm to Muscat is at the end of the week. That is, the heavy traffic is in one direction at the beginning of the week for the Muscat-Duqm flight or at the end of the week for the Duqm-Muscat flight.

To solve this problem, we found it appropriate to market Duqm as a tourist destination capable of attracting tourists, especially on weekends, so that the tourist goes to Duqm on Thursday or Wednesday and returns to Muscat on Saturday or Sunday morning. In

order to achieve success of this initiative, we approached hotels to offer discounted prices to our customers. For our part, we have reduced ticket fees within an attractive tourist package. This initiative has achieved positive results and good demand and we were able to increase the number of travellers and activate the line, and at the same time, market Duqm as a distinctive tourist destination.


**Increasing seating capacity**  
*What are the other achievements SalamAir recorded on the Muscat - Duqm line?*

Our flights operating between Muscat and Duqm accommodate 180 passengers on normal days and between 212 and 220 passengers on weekends, which means that we have increased the available seating capacity on this line by about 20 percent. The occupancy rate is about 60 percent, up from 40 percent to 50 percent previously, and we look forward to increasing this percentage in the future.

**Plan to increase the number of flights**  
*Is there any intention to increase the number of flights during the coming period?*

This is one of the topics that the company is currently studying. The implementation of the idea depends on the level of turnout. If we find that there is a turnout on specific days, we will

  
*Pleased to run flights to Duqm and consider it a tourist city par excellence*

  
*Fishing for tourist purposes is one of the activities expected to be successful in Duqm*



Seating capacity on the Muscat - Duqm line increased by 20% and occupancy rate stands at 60%

We are considering increasing the number of flights to Duqm to meet high demand

No scheduled flight to Duqm was cancelled, We have taken steps to avoid delays in take-off

increase the number of flights accordingly from one flight to two flights a day. This will enable travellers to go to Duqm in the morning and return in the evening the same day. It will also contribute to activate the tourist movement in Duqm and promote it as a distinctive tourist destination.

#### Tourist importance of Duqm

*It seems that the tourist importance of the city of Duqm contributed to the activation of the line. From your point of view, what are the elements by which the tourist potential of Duqm can be highlighted?*

We are very pleased to conduct our flights to Duqm, which we consider to be a tourist city par excellence and expect a promising future for it with the presence of many investment and tourism projects for which we see a positive return.

Duqm has multiple natural, heritage and historical tourism components. It also has the potentials to carry out marine tourism activities such as fishing for tourist purposes. These activities are widely sought after by Gulf tourists as well as foreign tourists from Japan, America, Australia and Korea. Duqm has all the ingredients for the success of fishing tourism and other marine tourism activities, especially with the Fishing Port, which can also be considered a tourist port.

#### Avoid delays in take-off

*Despite the successes that you mentioned, some travellers complain about delayed in departure of some flights. What steps have you taken to avoid delays in take-off?*

At the beginning of the inauguration of the line, there were some delays in the take-off of some flights, but I would like to emphasise that no scheduled flights were cancelled. The delay was caused because some of the aircraft, we were flying to Duqm, were linked to external destinations. So, there was some weather con-

ditions occurred that led to flight delays. But we worked to avoid this by separating Duqm flights from destinations where delays may occur. There are also new aircraft that entered service in the second quarter of this year and other aircraft that will be received before the end of this year, bringing the company's fleet to 19 aircraft. This will lead to more regularity in the take-off dates for our various flights.

#### Connecting Duqm to Salalah

*During the past period, you have linked Masirah with Muscat and Duqm. Don't you have such a plan to connect Duqm with Salalah?*

Plans to open new lines depend on their economic feasibility. We have studied this idea and addressed a number of government agencies that have numbers of passengers who can be transported between Salalah and Duqm. There was a good response, yet, the turnout was not at the level that covers the cost of the line. Our seating capacity of 180 passengers is considered high.

But in case we operate an additional flight between Muscat and Duqm, it can then be linked to Salalah. Another option is to operate Embraer aircraft with a seating capacity of 130 passengers, after receiving this type of aircraft later this year.

#### Connecting Duqm to international destinations

*With many nationalities in Duqm, Why don't you connect Duqm to your international destinations?*

Currently there is a connection to Duqm with a number of regional and international destinations such as the GCC countries, India and Bangladesh, for example. We currently have 38 destinations in Oman and abroad. As the number of aircrafts operating in our networks increases, the number of our destinations







nations will increase and therefore the options available to passengers from Duqm will increase.

However, our goal is beyond this. It is to directly connect Duqm with international destinations. We had a good experience of operating direct flights from the Czech Republic to Salalah, and the line has achieved good performance and received great demand. When we look at Duqm, we find that it has great potential to attract European tourists who are looking for the sun and beach in winter. The current problem may be that these tourists on charter flights are fully booked for the season and need about 180 hotel rooms near the beach on a daily basis. This number may not be available currently, but with the opening of hotel projects near the beach in the coming period, it is certainly possible to operate direct lines from Europe to Duqm.

#### **Record profits**

***In light of the challenges facing the aviation, travel and tourism sector, how has SalamAir performed over the past years?***

Over the past two years, the company has achieved record profits and we were one of the first companies to be able to get out of the covid crisis quickly. The company's size is now much larger than we were before covid. SalamAir is one of the fastest growing companies at Muscat International Airport over the past three years.

**Keeping up with market expectations  
What is the reason for this growth?**

Perhaps the biggest reason is due to the way we work, through which we keep pace with the needs of the market. We conduct periodic surveys of travellers, travel and tourism companies to find out the desirable places. There are more than 20 destinations that SalamAir has inaugurated through direct lines as the first airline in the Sultanate of Oman and the region to inaugurate these lines. For example, we have inaugurated Sohar – Salalah, Salalah – Kuwait, Muscat – Trabzon, Muscat – Sarajevo, Muscat – Khartoum, Muscat – Baku, Muscat – Phuket lines and others.

We try to go to places where there is no direct flight from Muscat or from the Sultanate of Oman in general. This plan has paid off, and we even found a number of other airlines that – after our success - operated direct flights to these destinations. There may be a risk in opening some lines, but in general our plan is successful.

#### **20 destinations are ready**

***As you know, some destinations may have certain problems or may prove useless, how to deal with these situations?***

We have 20 destinations that we have studied and are ready to open at any moment. Suspension of any destination for any reason that does not lead to stopping our planes. We review the list of our destinations and choose the appropriate one from this list and conduct flights to it, otherwise resort to increasing the number of flights to the current ones.



***Salalah – Duqm line is among our interests and we are studying suitable alternatives to achieve it***

***Our network provides a partial connection for our passengers from Duqm and our goal is to connect Duqm with international direct lines***

***We achieved record profits over the past two years and have become one of the fastest growing companies at Muscat International Airport***

***We have 20 stations ready and waiting for the right time to launch them***


## Crowne Plaza Hotel Duqm witnesses high occupancy rate

Said Al Handhali speaks to  :

# We invite tourists to explore Duqm and enjoy its exceptional climate



  
*Development of facilities is going on Green spaces, playgrounds for children are added and Jawhara café is opened with modern touches*

  
*Committed to the standards of luxury and quality in services and facilities*

### Duqm - :

Said Al Handhali, Operations Manager, Crowne Plaza Hotel Duqm, confirmed that the hotel occupancy rate increased in the second quarter of this year after it witnessed a lull in the first quarter.

Talking to Duqm Economist, he said that Duqm is characterised by distinctive beaches such as Ras Madraka Beach, Ras Markaz Beach and many others overlooking the Arabian Sea. It is also featured with its mild weather throughout the year, especially in the summer, which makes it a unique tourist destination that has all the touristic advantages.

Al Handhali invited Omanis, residents of the Sultanate of Oman and foreign tourists to visit the hotel and have a wonderful stay, confirming that "Crowne Plaza Duqm meets the aspirations of business-

men and investors. At the same time, it pays great attention to tourists and organises various programmes for them. It occasionally launches attractive packages". He pointed out that the hotel is keen to make Khareef Salalah a success by offering special tourist package for Khareef's visitors as the hotel is a rest stop halfway between Muscat and Salalah where tourists can stop for a day or two before continuing their trip to Salalah or Muscat.

He said: "We invite tourists to explore Duqm and enjoy its exceptional climate and the warm welcome from the management and staff of the Crowne Plaza Hotel Duqm. We have cooperated with tourism companies to organise trips for tourists to the most prominent sites in Duqm or near it. Over the past years, our experience in this regard has proven its success which pushed us to enrich the experience of our customers and add more attractive tourist programmes".



Said Al Handhali







**We started taking steps towards upgrading the hotel's rating to 5 stars**

### Upgrade the rating to 5 stars

The Crowne Plaza Hotel, which was officially opened in 2014, is the first 4-star hotel to open in the Special Economic Zone at Duqm. The hotel is affiliated with Omran Group, while it is managed by the InterContinental Hotels Group. Said Al Handhali said that the hotel is currently working to raise its rating to the 5-Star category and to meet the requirements set by the concerned authorities. He stressed that the hotel is committed to luxury and quality standards in services, facilities and all that it provides to its customers and residents.

### Wonderful view overlooking the Arabian Sea

He pointed out: "Crowne Plaza Hotel has a wonderful view that overlooks the Arabian Sea, a private walkway to the sea and all its rooms overlook the sea as well. The hotel has many facilities that meet the aspirations of customers. This year, it witnessed the opening of Al Jawhara cafe, which offers a variety of juices, coffee, tea, sweets and other side dishes. During the last year, a children's Park was established, green spaces were increased and a cafe was added on the beach for matches watching. This cafe allowed all visitors to watch the World Cup matches in a festive atmosphere, and is still showcasing the most famous Arab, European and international matches permanently while providing its services to all visitors" stressing that there are continuous development of various facilities in the hotel.

Crowne Plaza Hotel Duqm has 213 rooms

and a range of suites suitable for business and senior officials. It also has various restaurants, a fitness club, a swimming pool, a business center, a banquet and conference hall, meeting and conference rooms and facilities and many others.

### Reception of tourists groups

Al Handhali touched upon the future plans that the hotel management is working on in cooperation with Omran Group. He said: "The most prominent of these plans is the reception of tourists groups coming from Europe via charter flights, and we have started to address tourism companies working in this field. We have also finalised the design of a relaxation site on the seashore that meets the needs of European tourists looking for sun and mild weather in winter. The implementation will take place during the coming period. We are looking forward to see this idea a reality in cooperation and coordination with the administration of the Special Economic Zone at Duqm and with tourism companies specialised in this field.

To conclude, said Al Handhali, Operations Manager, Crowne Plaza Hotel Duqm, stressed the economic and tourist importance of Duqm Special Economic Zone, pointing out that the hotel sector is working to keep pace with the growth in the zone and the needs of its visitors. He expressed his confidence in the economic future of the zone, which includes a variety of projects while enjoying an exceptional tourist location.

**Working to overcome challenges of receiving European tourists coming via charter flights**





Michael Kuhn, Cluster GM of the Park Inn Hotels speaks to **الدقم** :

## The economic growth thrives hotel scene and we expect a successful season

The hotel provides excellent accommodation through distinguished services



### Duqm - **الدقم** :

Duqm has not just been a port city and hub of business in the recent years. With development in full swing, key players in Duqm have prioritised bringing a remarkable tourism experience to Duqm's residents and visitors alike.

Michael Kuhn, Cluster General Manager, Park Inn Hotels, Radisson Hotel Group Oman, complemented the authorities in Duqm for their consistent efforts and initiatives to promote Duqm as a one-of-a-kind tourist destination in the Sultanate of Oman. "Park Inn by Radisson Hotel & Residence Duqm has been a must-stay. With its friendly service and feel well stay settings, the hotel has been a beloved home away from home for many who travel to Duqm. The hotel recently added a host of fun-filled activities for all guests and has a variety of exciting offers in the pipeline with the intention to make Duqm a must visit destination for lei-

sure as well as business travellers."

He added that "The upcoming projects in Duqm look very promising and will increase business for all. Duqm has witnessed growth in the past years which was reflected on the hotel and properties sectors' performance. Park Inn Duqm have benefitted greatly from this growth and have achieved good results, thanks to the efforts of the Special Economic Zone at Duqm".

Moreover, the GM of Park Inn Hotels, Radisson Hotel Group Oman, said: "We had a stable occupancy rate during the pandemic, so we comfortably maintained our occupancy rates even in the aftermath of COVID-19. With Oman now being open to all visitors, we are still implementing high safety standards and in-house precautionary measures in our property".

### Expansion plans

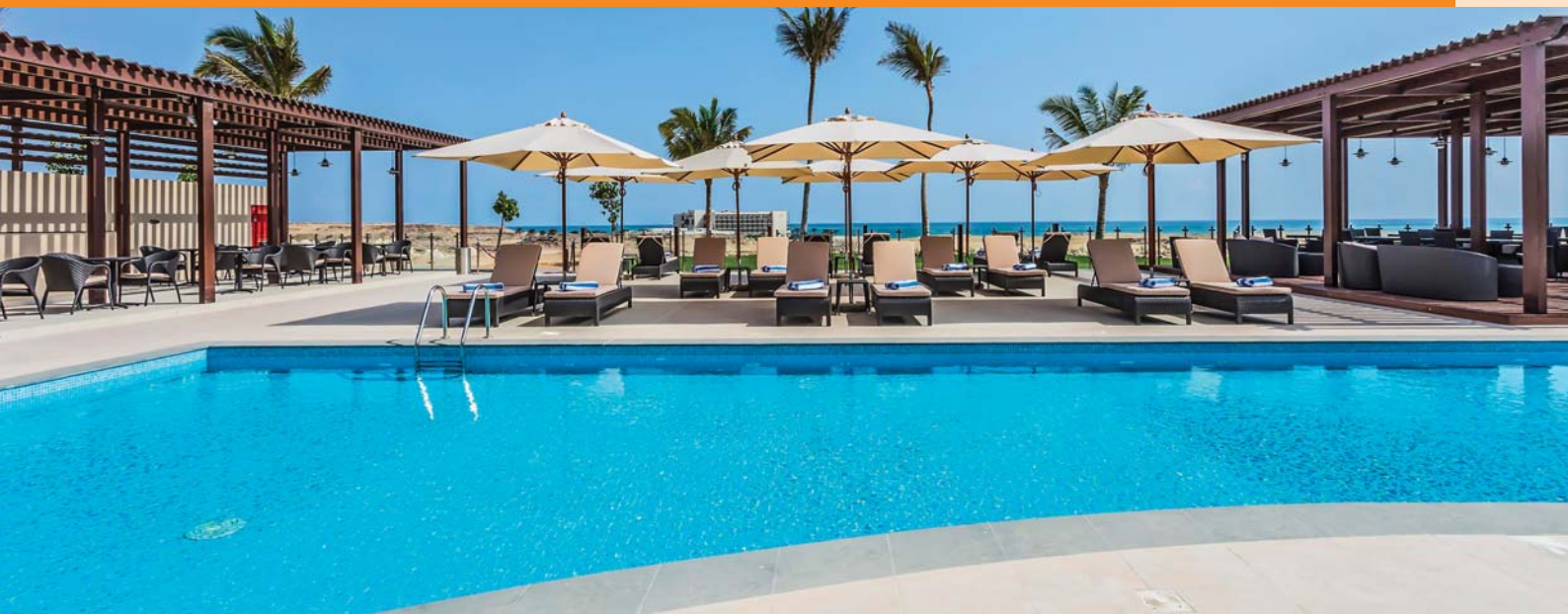
Michael also pointed out: "As a part of the hotel's expansion project, we have successfully added 23 keys, which now makes it 96 keys to meet the



Michael Kuhn







potential increased demand for hotel rooms in Duqm. The management and the hotel owners are committed to contributing to the development of Duqm as a tourist destination and are finalising future expansion plans of the hotel by adding even more rooms and facilities”.

#### Miscellaneous services

“Located between the cities of Salalah and Muscat, our hotel offers direct access to the beach and you can quickly reach businesses and shops as well as popular attractions like the Rock Garden. In addition to this, our 4-star property features 96 vibrant contemporary chalets, apartments, and rooms with amenities like two on-site restaurants and a well-stocked pool lounge. The hotel also includes a swimming pool, gym, tennis court and kids play area” he explained .

#### Leisure activities

About the activities offered by the hotel, Michael elaborated: “There is a growing demand for tourist and leisure activities and facilities to promote Duqm, which led us to introduce several recreational activities like wind and kite surfing, which was a great success and attracted more visitors to enjoy their stay and experience the beauty of Duqm. In addition to this, we are the first to have two padel courts in Duqm”.

He added : “We anticipate and cater to the specific needs of business travellers by offering a comfortable workspace, reliable technology, convenient services, and amenities that promote productivity and relaxation and that create a welcoming environment for business guests. Or if visiting with family, we offer a welcoming and enjoyable experience with our services, amenities and facilities, ensuring that both parents and children have a comfortable

and memorable stay at the hotel”

He asserted that the hotel also caters to guests who require extended accommodations and long stays by offering several features and services specifically tailored to meet their needs. “Whether for business travel, relocation, or other purposes, we aim to create a welcoming and home-like environment for long-term guests” .

He added that Park Inn Duqm provides a feel-good experience and welcoming activities for guests who are on the way to Salalah for the season, making Park Inn the perfect stop-over, inviting all to not to miss out the hotel's special offer for the Khareef season. “Whether visitors are coming for business, a long stay or a family holiday they is something for everyone to enjoy” he confirmed .

#### Environmental Roadmap

On the environment conservation aspect, Michael pointed out that “At RHG, we are committed to a collective vision towards more sustainability. “Creating an environmental roadmap is an ongoing process hence we regularly review and update our strategies to stay aligned with emerging sustainability practices and technologies. By implementing certain measures, our hotel aims to reduce its environmental impact and contribute to a more sustainable future”.

#### Enriching customer experience

Michael Kuhn, Cluster General Manager of the Park Inn Muscat & Park Inn Duqm -Radisson Hotel Group, Oman commented: “We will continue to create memorable and enjoyable experiences for all our guests by providing them quality amenities, engaging activities, personalised touches and exceptional service.”



**The hotel's exciting offers to make Duqm a must to visit destination for leisure and business**

**Future projects in Duqm are promising and will help enriching businesses**

**Final touches on the hotel expansion plans under progress**



# Asian Hotel... an Omani experience with a Korean flavour

*We received tourist groups from Europe... impressions are positive*

## Duqm -

Taking advantage of the economic and urban growth in the Special Economic Zone at Duqm, Asian Hotel was opened in 2021. It occupies a privileged location in the commercial district of Duqm and located directly on Sultan Said bin Taimur road.

Salim bin Humaid Al Araiimi, Founder of Aman Oman Services and Trading, the company owning the hotel, said: "Asian Hotel is the first hotel in the Sultanate of Oman to be managed by a Korean company. Thus, we offer a new global experience for those coming to Duqm, whether investors, tourists, residents of Duqm and the local community. The Korean experience has contributed a lot to attracting tourists through its expertise in the tourism sector. Through the Korean restaurant at the Hotel, we offer the chance to taste various dishes from the Korean cuisine. This experience has been praised by many Omani and Korean official figures who visited the Hotel and expressed their aspiration to open Korean restaurants similar to the hotel's one in Muscat.

### Multiple options

He added: "When we decided to invest in the tourism sector, we found it appropriate to build a 3-star hotel that includes multiple options in the quality of rooms so that it is not limited to single and double bed rooms only, but also includes larger units like room and lounge, or two-room and lounge systems. This gave the Hotel an advantage to attract families."

According to Salim Al Araiimi, the Asian Hotel is an ideal option for families and young people heading to Dhofar Governorate during the khareef season. He said: "We witnessed a successful season last year as we received many families while going to Salalah or returning from



**Salim Al Araiimi: We had a successful season last year and expect the same this summer**

there. We are looking forward to a similar season this year. Duqm is located halfway between Muscat and Salalah and serves as a stopover for relaxation on the one hand and for enjoying Duqm's tourist elements on the other hand".

About the demand for the Hotel, Al Araiimi described it as good. He said: "During the current year, we have received a number of tourist groups coming from Europe. There is also a good demand from investors who visit Duqm from time to time, and their impressions about the Hotel have been positive, which makes us feel proud".

The Hotel has a capacity of 97 beds distributed over a variety of rooms, including 52 double rooms, 8 rooms for two, 4 suites, 10 units with a room and lounge system, and 5 units with a two-room and lounge system.

The Asian Hotel is one of the projects that received funding from the Oman Development Bank. Salim Al Araiimi praised the bank's efforts in supporting Omani companies and empowering them to grow. He further said: "The concerted efforts of various government agencies contributed to achieving our dream of constructing the Asian Hotel, which is a rich and successful experience that pushes us to invest more in the tourism sector".





## Two bus trips to be operated daily from Muscat to Duqm

Badr Al Nadabi, CEO of Mwasalat for  :

# Economic growth in Duqm has contributed to increasing the demand for our buses

### Muscat - :

Mwasalat, one of the Asyad Group Companies, operates two trips daily from Muscat to Duqm via two routes. The first route carries the number (52) from Muscat to Duqm, and the second route is (103) and it passes through Muscat-Haima-Duqm.

Badr bin Mohammed Al Nadabi, CEO of Mwasalat, said that the services provided by the Company are widely sought after by travelers. He added: «We note a significant growth in the number of passengers on our routes, and we believe that the economic growth witnessed by the Special Economic Zone at Duqm has a big role in this. In addition to the fact that many employees in Duqm rely on Mwasalat buses to commute to their workplaces, which indicates their confidence in the service provided by the company».

He stressed that Mwasalat provided a number of commercial services to institutions and corporates that rented buses, like providing maintenance services for their vehicles and training for their employees in the fields of security, safety and preventive driving. This is in order to cater their multiple needs in Duqm. «We have witnessed an unprecedented increase in demand for these services with continuous growth. Mwasalat provides a range of service packages in the fields of transportation, maintenance and specialised training accredited locally and internationally» he confirmed.

### Performance of the Muscat-Duqm line

On the Company's performance on the Muscat – Duqm line, Badr Al Nadabi said that last year Mwasalat transported more than 3 million passengers through the bus service. The number of passengers who ben-

efited from bus services via the Muscat-Duqm route reached more than 50 thousand passengers, while the number of passengers from Muscat to Duqm during the first half of this year reached more than 27,300. He stressed that the company is always striving to provide better and more efficient services to its' customers.

### Connecting Duqm to Salalah


On the Company's plan for khareef Salalah season, Al Nadabi said that Mwasalat has increased the number of trips to Salalah to cover the growing demand during khareef season. He explained: «Duqm is currently being connected to Salalah through the stop station in Haima, through which many routes connecting Haima to the North and South Pass. As for the direct link between Duqm and Salalah, it is a step we may consider in the future, based on the existence of demand and availability of operational capabilities».

### A wide range of services

Badr bin Mohammed Al Nadabi, CEO of Mwasalat, said that the Company provides a wide range of services to make the trip more comfortable and enjoyable, including direct booking via the website, free Wi-Fi, and comfortable seats. Also, the buses are designed with international specifications and equipped with the latest security and safety systems. They have USB ports, and other features aimed at the comfort and safety of the traveler.

He added: «We are always, at Mwasalat, looking for the best ways to improve our services and make transportation more efficient and comfortable for travellers»

  
**50,000**  
**passengers**  
**have**  
**benefited**  
**from our**  
**services on**  
**the Muscat -**  
**Duqm line**

  
**We are**  
**always**  
**looking for**  
**the best**  
**ways to**  
**make trans-**  
**portation**  
**more**  
**efficient and**  
**comfortable**  
**for travellers**



Badr Al Nadabi



# Duqm entices land transport companies to operate regular routes



One of the Happy Line buses operating on the Duqm-Salah route

**Our trips allow easy access to Duqm via regular routes from Muscat and Salah**


**We started with 4 buses and exceeded 20 buses at the peak of our activity**

## Duqm -

The Special Economic Zone at Duqm has been a fertile environment for the growth of transport corporates, which transport passengers and goods through main and sub stations from Muscat to Sinaw to Duqm, and from Duqm to Al Jazir to Thumrait to Salah. This is to keep pace with the increasing number of workers wishing to go to Duqm and other coastal villages by the Arabian Sea and to provide a choice of transportation between Duqm and other wilayats across the Sultanate.

Nasser bin Said Al Hosni, a young Omani who established projects supportive to economic growth in Duqm. He started his journey before SEAZAD's inception in 2011, before the first plane ever landed at Duqm Airport, and before the establishment of Duqm Port in 2007. Nasser's company, established in 2005, was one of the first transportation companies that linked Duqm with Muscat through buses.

**Nasser Al Hosni: Duqm is a central point for Happy Line Transport from which our success story began**

In his interview with , Nasser Al Hosni confirmed that he faced many challenges when he established the company. However, he was able to overcome them and have his project named "The Happy Line" well-established to finally achieve great success.

### Element of Success

Nasser Al Hosni also talked about the reasons that made the company successful saying: "Muscat-Duqm route was the only land line of buses at that time which made our buses crowd-







Nasser Al Hosni during his visit to a bus production factory in China

ed. Yet, we are keen to make our customers satisfied through reasonable ticket prices. We also respect travel timings even if the passengers' number was less than the bus capacity. In addition, we have spare buses that we use if any of our buses breaks down on the lines between Muscat and Duqm or between Duqm and Salalah. Thus, we have maintained our customers' trust and confidence and have been able to survive during crisis".

#### The journey of growth

In the first three years of the establishment of Happy Line Transport Company, trips to Dum were irregular. The company used to run a number of trips to oil production sites in Al Wusta governorate. However, start of work on the construction of the Port of Duqm in 2007, made Nasser Al Hosni transfer Duqm to a central station starting from 2008 via a regular line with one daily trip from Muscat to Sinaw to Mahout to Duqm and finally to Al Jazir.

In 2015, four years after SEZAD was established, Nasser Al Hosni increased the number of trips on Muscat-Duqm route to be two trips per day. The first leaves from Ruwi in Muscat Governorate at 6am and reach Duqm at 2pm in the afternoon. The second leaves from Muscat at 9am and reach Duqm at 5pm, then continues to Al Jazir to reach there at 8pm. In the next morning, the return trip starts from Al Jazir to Duqm then to Muscat.

#### A new route between Duqm and Salalah

With all the growth accompanied with the establishment of Port of Duqm, Nasser Al Hosni launched in 2010 a new route that linked Duqm with Dhofar Governorate with a daily trip from Duqm to Salalah and from Salalah to Duqm at the same time. This new line has given passengers from Duqm, according to Nasser, the choice to reach Salalah and enjoy Khareef season. He said that daily regular trips between Duqm and Salalah contributed to increase demand for this route. Also, goods and baggage transportation service between the two destinations helped to sustain the route continuity even when the number of passengers declines.

#### Renovation of the transport fleet

Speaking to Duqm Economist, Nasser Al Hosani stressed the importance of qual-



One of the Happy Line buses operating Duqm - Salalah route

ity of services. According to him, this pushes him to keep updating the transport fleet more than once and adding new buses to back it up. He said: "We started in 2005 with 4 buses, but reached 22 buses at the peak of our activity. Yet, the challenges imposed by Covid pandemic reduced the volume of business and therefore reduced the number of buses to only 12. However, within this renovation plan, we will add 10 new buses to the fleet".

About the reasons for this renovation he added: "the modernisation of the fleet has become necessary to meet the aspirations of customers, especially in the field of equipping buses with entertainment facilities. This plan will also enable us to launch other lines from Muscat to Shinas, Al Buraimi and Ibri".

#### Visits to bus production factories

He pointed out that the passion for this work prompted him to travel several times to bus production factories in China and South Korea to make direct deals with the producing companies and get acquainted with the progress of work in their factories. While Nasser has begun preparing the new expansion plan, he is looking forward to working with Karwa Motors, which has built a new bus production plant in the Special Economic Zone at Duqm.

Despite all the challenges he faces from competitors who reduce prices insanely, Nasser Al Hosni has been able to survive. On this matter he commented: "These companies could not withstand more than a few months and they quit business after they violated the conditions of fair competition".

"Credibility, quality and customer satisfaction are the most important foundations on which successful companies are built. This is also the same thing that am working to achieve at Happy Line Transport Company", he concluded.

*I visited bus production factory in China and Korea and looking forward to dealing with the Karwa Motors*

*Credibility, quality and customer satisfaction are the most important foundations on which we have built our company*


# Darrbak implements mountain hiking and climbing trails on Turtle Beach in Duqm



Aerial image for one of the sites on the first track

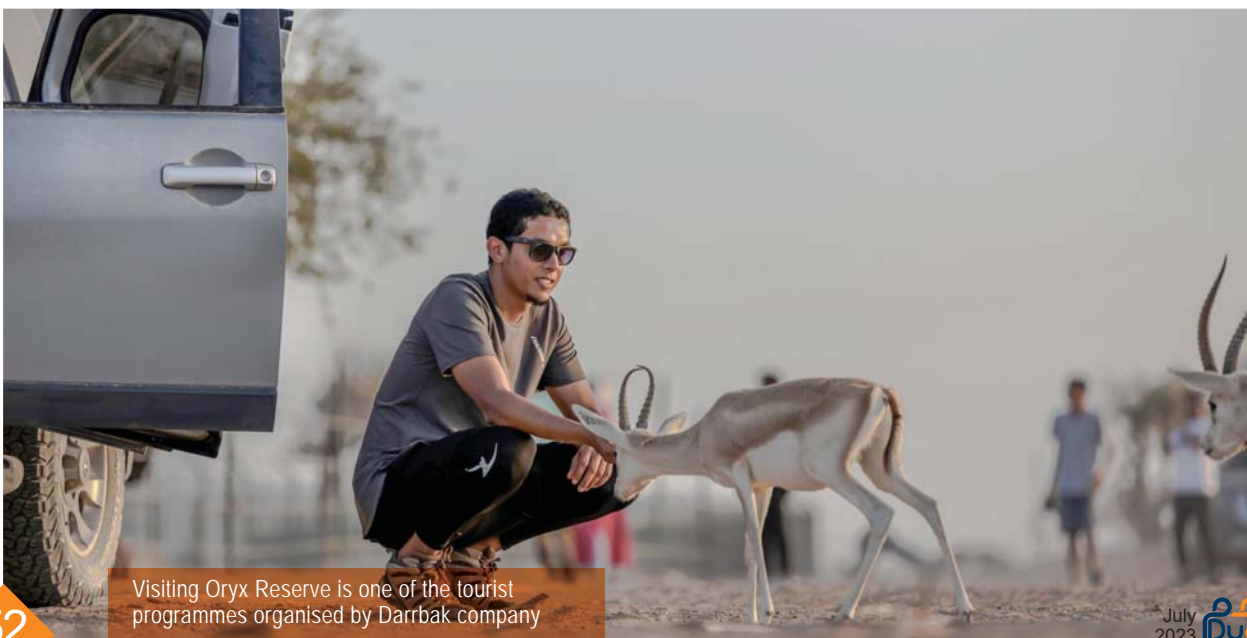
**Duqm provides many tourist activities and sports hobbies to visitors**

**Duqm -  :**

«We have discovered special things about Duqm that we would never imagine. We have had experiences on the ground that made us believe in the economic and tourism role of Duqm in reaching the goals and endeavors of Oman Vision 2040” said Jasim bin Mohammed Al Alawi, CEO of Darrbak, An Omani online platform that connects adventure seekers with adventure companies for an exceptional experience, to . He stressed that Duqm is still an undiscovered tourist treasure where visitors can practice many tourist activities and sports hobbies.



**Jasim Al Alawi: we are impressed by Duqm tourist treasures**



Visiting Oryx Reserve is one of the tourist programmes organised by Darrbak company





Two adventurers contemplate the sea after completing the first track

He said that Darrbak's relationship with Duqm began two years ago through a number of tourism – technical projects, most notably the implementation of mountain hiking and climbing trails. The company also cooperated with the Special Economic Zone at Duqm to implement and manage the (Mur Alyna)-meaning «Stop By» campaign, which aimed to activate tourism in Duqm in August 2022, and targeted those heading to Salalah or returning back during the khareef season in Dhofar.

#### Mountain trails

About the mountain trails, Jasim bin Mohammed Al Alawi said that the company has carried out two trails for hiking between Turtle Beach and the heights overlooking the beach. "The first path is easy or medium and can be cut in 30 to 50 minutes. Its length is 3 km, most of it is flat but it passes a group of excavations and gypsum rocks. This path ends on the heights overlooking Turtle Beach and there is a large chair overlooking the sea which is considered as a break or a reward for those who completed this path. Hikers would have the chance to enjoy staring at the sea and watch its serenity and the blueness of its waters" he explained.

He also pointed out that the second path is 9 km long and needs higher physical fitness. He added "this path is considered difficult because it starts from an elevated area and descends to the beach passing a number of slopes that require experience in how to get down. We have

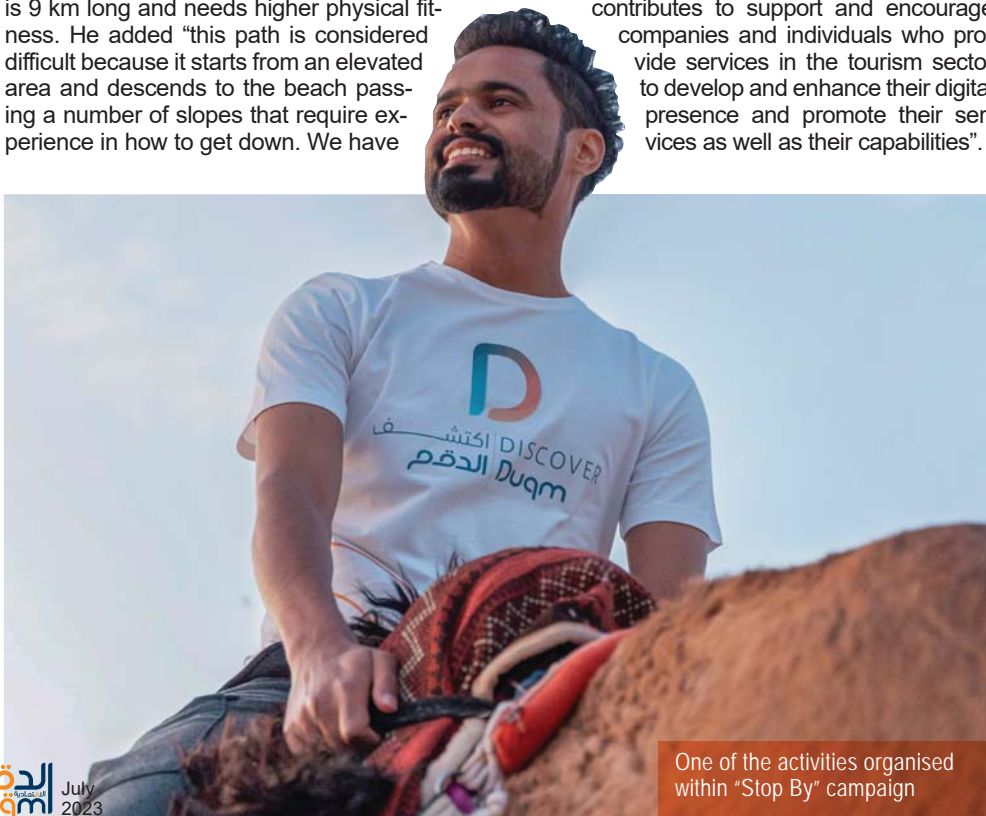
provided all the necessary safety tools, facilities and guidance to make the trip enjoyable".

#### "Stop By" campaign

Al Alawi explained that darrbak, as a technical tourism company specializing in the preparation and innovation of tourist, cultural and sports experiences, employed its expertise in these projects in a way that enhanced the presence of Duqm among many visitors. He indicated that the «Stop By» campaign, organized in the summer of 2022, has more than 70 thousand followers on its Instagram account "Discover-Duqm". The number of engagements with the campaign's posts exceeded 200 thousand. Al Alawi said that many tourist sites in Duqm, hotels and restaurants, cafes, adventure sites, amusement games, were promoted during the campaign period.

#### A successful experience

Jasim Al Alawi confirmed that the company's experience in SEZAD is a success and can be simulated in the coming years, whether in Duqm or in other tourist sites in the Sultanate of Oman. He stressed: "Darrbak is constantly seeking to create exceptional experiences for customers by exploring civilizations and nature and highlighting the possibilities and opportunities through tourism promotion programs. This contributes to support and encourage companies and individuals who provide services in the tourism sector to develop and enhance their digital presence and promote their services as well as their capabilities".



One of the activities organised within "Stop By" campaign

**The "Stop By" campaign has promoted Duqm and gained over 200K engagements on Instagram**

**We strive to create exceptional customer experience by exploring civilizations and nature**

# Duqm car rental offices upgrade their readiness to receive tourists



A number of car rental offices in Duqm


**Offices: We provide a variety of cars and receive our customers at Duqm Airport**

**Economic growth in projects contributed to high demand**

## Duqm -

Car rental offices in the Special Economic Zone at Duqm (SEZAD) have confirmed their readiness to receive tourists who want to spend their summer vacation in the Zone, which is famous for its exceptional climate.

A number of employees in these offices said that the Zone is characterised by a mild climate during the summer, which makes it a promising tourist stop and important hub in Al Wusta Governorate. He pointed out that the economic growth witnessed by Duqm over the past years has reflected positively on the car rental sector, which recorded good growth with the number of offices operating in the Zone to about 10 offices compared to 4 offices 5 years ago.

In a survey for , the employees confirmed that there are a number of factors that contributed to increasing the demand for car rental in Duqm, most notably the increase in the number of projects in the Zone and subsequently the increase in the number of employees working in them. Also, they said that direct flights from Muscat to Duqm at a rate of 6 flights per week made it easier for investors, workers in the Zone and tourists to reach Duqm without having to travel 550 km by road from Muscat to Duqm, stressing that car rental offices work to provide the best services to visitors to Duqm.

### High demand

Ahmed bin Ali Al Junaibi, Customer Service Representative at Thrifty Car Rental Company, said that he has been working at the Company since the opening of its branch in Duqm in

2019, confirming the high level of demand for car rental, especially after the corona pandemic subsided.

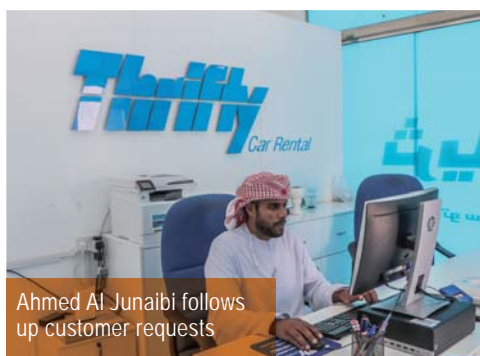
He pointed out that the services provided by the Company are not limited to individuals, but it has annual contracts with companies, which contributed to the growth of this sector in Duqm. He said: "Although we do not have an office at Duqm Airport, our services include receiving customers at the Airport and delivering them the cars they booked in advance".

### A promising zone

Just close to Thrifty Company in Saay commercial district, there were a number of offices working in the same sector. Faraj Yusri Abdulqader from Najm Al Sabah Car Rental described SEZAD as a promising zone and witnessing continuous growth. He pointed out that there has been a significant change witnessed by Duqm since he came to it 3 years ago, and this growth was positively reflected on the car rental offices.

### Keeping up with demand

Munir Mohammed from City Car Rental said that the company's branch in Duqm is its third branch, which was opened due to the growth in demand for car rental services in Duqm. He stressed the company's readiness to meet customer requests of different types of cars, whether small, medium cars or SUVs, pointing out that the prices are similar to the prices offered by the company in its offices in Muscat. "Prices are subject to supply, demand, the number of days, and the quality of the car. Yet, they are good and competitive" Mohammed said.



Ahmed Al Junaibi follows up customer requests



Car rental offices receive arrivals via Duqm Airport





## “Green Duqm” initiatives expand green spaces to over 50,000 sqm<sup>2</sup> by end of 2023

**Duqm -  :**

Currently, a number of initiatives and projects are being implemented in the afforestation sector in the Special Economic Zone at Duqm in order to increase the area of green spaces. Ibrahim bin Zaher Al Rawahi, from the Landscaping and Gardening Department at the Special Economic at Duqm (SEZAD) said: «About 70% of planting 5,000 trees project, planned to be cultivated by the end of 2023 in SEZAD, has been completed”.

He pointed out that green spaces in the Special Economic Zone at Duqm covers an area of twenty-six thousand (26,000 sqm), expecting that, by the end of the current year, this area will expand to cover fifty thousand (50,000 sqm) of diverse trees and soil coverings that are best suited to the climatic conditions of the zone.

Al Rawahi confirmed that Duqm plant nursery, which has an estimated area of 5,000 sqm, is being operated to be an essential source to serve the afforestation plan and to be the basic and main incubator for the production of seedlings and ornamental trees before planting them in gardens, parks and on the shoulders of the streets. It is also projected to be a station for agricultural experiments and



**Ibrahim Al Rawahi: 70% of planting 5000 trees project completed**

an incubator for new types of plants and trees. SEZAD has allocated part of the plant nursery to be operated and managed by one of the emerging small and medium-sized enterprises in the field of afforestation, with the aim of involving and supporting the local community in the development of Duqm.

  
**Plant nursery established on an area of 5000 sqm to support afforestation plan**

## The most prominent initiatives and projects in the "Green Duqm" plan



Plantation of 5000 trees during 2023



Increasing the green spaces to 50,000 sqm<sup>2</sup>



Running Duqm plant nursery to be a source for the implementation of the afforestation plan in the zone



Focusing on planting trees that fits well with the climate nature in Duqm



The project of first phase design and implementation of aesthetic works and afforestation is awarded



Allocation of several investment lands for the establishment of plant nurseries



Allocation of a land to establish a nursery for the propagation of wild plants under the management of Environment Authority



Supporting the initiative of planting 100,000 wild trees in Al Wusta



Launch of "Plant a Tree" initiative



Execution of plants cultivation initiative in conjunction with workers in the zone





Allocating investment lands to establish plants nurseries

### Investment nurseries

In the same context, the management of SEZAD allocated several investment lands for the purpose of establishing plant nurseries in the zone, which will contribute significantly to the production of species suitable for the zone's environment with the minimal costs and thus increasing the green spaces. Besides, the Public Authority for Special Economic Zones and Free Zones (OPAZ), in cooperation with the Environment Authority (EA), has allocated one of these lands to establish a nursery for the propagation of wild plants under the management of the Environment Authority. It will serve the initiative for planting 100,000 wild trees in Al Wusat Governorate and also the national initiative for planting 10 million Omani wild trees.

### A vital project

In the first quarter of 2022, the Public Authority for Special Economic Zones and Free Zones (OPAZ) has assigned a project to design and implement the first phase of agriculture and afforestation works in the Special

Economic Zone at Duqm with an estimated value of over OMR 2.3 million. The project includes the afforestation of several vital sites in the zone, main and service streets with their roundabouts, a number of parks with basic facilities, including green spaces for seating and family gatherings, multi-use game spaces for different age groups, and special paths for playing sports and walking. These spaces are planned to accommodate social and cultural activities, with the use of modern systems for irrigation of trees and plantations.

OPAZ earlier launched a number of initiatives, like "Plant a Tree", and the tree planting in cooperation with the workers in the zone. It also distributed a number of plants to the companies operating in Duqm in cooperation with the Environment Authority. The other initiative it launched was the cultivation of tree seedling inside the nursery with the aim to make the region a model for integrated economic cities that mix commercial, industrial and tourism projects with attention to environmental and health aspects and meeting residents needs of various services.

**Supporting the plan of Environment Authority to plant 100,000 wild trees in Al Wusta Governorate**





Saleh Al Maamari  
Editor-in-chief



*The beauty of the place and its modernity in the region is a reason to visit it , in addition to the clear moderation in the temperature on the sea. Shuair beach is one of the most beautiful beaches in the region*

## Enjoy summer vibes in Duqm

While the very hot and sunny weather prevails in most of the governorates of the Sultanate of Oman in summer, the coasts of Dhofar and Al Wusta governorates have been affected, from time immemorial, by a seasonal climatic phenomenon characterized by moderate temperatures. The two governorates are full of beautiful beaches and terrain that vary between sandy and mountainous, interspersed with wadis and bays. Al Wusta stretches along the Arabian Sea from Ras Al Ruwais in willayat of Mahout, through Duqm to Ras Sawqra in willayat of Al Jazer.

Al Wusta governorate has four willayats namely Mahout, Duqm, Haima and Al Jazer. However, Duqm has the lion 's share of popularity not only because of its relative tourism components, but also because of its proximity to the most beautiful natural tourist attractions such as reserves, sand dunes, wadis, caves, Islands, topography of the land, in addition to its growing service components such as airport, port, roads, strategic projects, modern communications network and commercial services.

In this article, I cannot fail to mention my visit in the summer to a beautiful village in Duqm called Nafun, a coastal village in the north of the SEZAD. At that time, an archaeological expedition from the Institute of Archaeology of the Czech Academy of Sciences found ancient archaeological evidence dating back to the Neolithic era. The place in Nafun has a special charm that takes you by nature to distant worlds. While I was walking on the beach, I reached an end where the sea embraces the mountain. Then I stopped for a moment to look at the harmony of the place and devoted my attention to the topography of the mountain, whose rocks were of warm and harmonious colors. That kind of cohesion between the mountain, the soft sand dunes, and the sea is a cause for reflection and meditation. The stillness of the place truly amazed me. In order to absorb the scene more, I took more time and sat down by the Arabian Sea, open to the world, listening to the comfortable sound of its waves.

The place forces you to visit it many times. The summer in Duqm is ideal for visitors coming by road from the north of the Sultanate of Oman to enjoy khareef season in Dhofar governorate. It is an opportunity to stay in Duqm and see what has been accomplished whether service, commercial, tourism and strategic projects in the Special Economic Zone at Duqm.

The beauty of the place and its modernity in the region is a reason to visit it , in addition to the clear moderation in the temperature on the sea. Shuair beach is one of the most beautiful beaches in the region, and it has a number of hotel facilities and a beautiful park. You can also try fresh seafood and different cuisines provided by restaurants and cafes in Sai commercial district. After taking a break in Duqm, you can take the coastal road passing through Ras Madraka Beach, located about 80 kilometers from the city center. It is one of the popular beaches for tourists who go there to camp enjoying the serenity and calmness of the place. Then you can go by land through the sea road to Ras Sawqra in Al jazer, and from there to Shuwaymiyah, Hasak and Sadah , and eventually enter Dhofar governorate.

Duqm has become a new and renewed destination today, as SEZAD continues to provide the appropriate environment to enable the tourism sector and enhance the lifestyle. Previously, it prepared an urban plan for the development of tourist, commercial and service areas within the urban space of the modern city of Duqm and within the coastal strip to embrace more hotel facilities. Based on this plan, many investment sites with different areas are being prepared in order to double the establishments of hotel facilities and new beach resorts. At the same time, SEZAD is working to improve access to the area to reach all tourist places.