

38th Issue - January 2025 A Quarterly magazine issued by the Public Authority for Special Economic Zones and Free Zones



Glorious



The fifth anniversary of His Majesty Sultan Haitham bin Tarik

 may Allah protect and preserve him assuming the reins of power in the Sultanate of Oman



Economic zones, free zones and industrial cities have achieved major accomplishments and investments in the past five years



Dugm Airport serves as a gateway into a region with significant economic, industrial, commercial, and economic potential, primarily handling business traffic.

We extend our heartfelt congratulations and sincere best wishes to His Majesty Sultan Haitham bin Tarik - may God protect him on the anniversary of his accession to the leadership of this beloved nation. We pray to the Almighty to bless His Majesty with continued health, strength, and prosperity, and to guide Oman and its people towards greater progress and development under his visionary leadership.





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مطارات عُمان **Oman Airports**



The industrial cities in the Sultanate of Oman have proven their ability to enhance local manufacturing and develop non-oil economic sectors. These cities have helped achieve integration between major projects and link them to an advanced logistics network that includes ports and airports

Renewed renaissance and continuous achievements

Since His Majesty Sultan Haitham bin Tarik Al Said assumed power on January 11, 2020, the Sultanate of Oman has witnessed a new era of sustainable economic development, manifested in a series of achievements in special economic zones, free zones and industrial cities. These projects were part of Oman Vision 2040, which aims to diversify sources of income and enhance the Sultanate's position as a regional and global investment destination. Special economic zones, free zones and industrial cities have played a pivotal role in attracting investments and promoting economic growth; the Special Economic Zone at Dugm (SEZAD) has witnessed a qualitative development due to giant projects, such as the Duqm Refinery, which is one of the largest oil refineries in the region, in addition to the Port of Dugm, which has become a strategic station for maritime trade. The region has also witnessed an enhancement of the infrastructure to attract industrial and tourism investments.

Focusing on clean industries and advanced technology, these zones have contributed to creating sustainable job opportunities for Omani youth. Free zones are also a major attraction for investors thanks to the facilities provided and the encouraging regulatory environment. Sohar Port and Free Zone have achieved qualitative leaps in heavy industries and logistics, becoming a center for re-export and attracting international companies. Salalah Free Zone has established itself as a global logistics and industrial center, especially in the fields of food and petrochemicals, pharmaceutical industries, and has contributed to supporting Omani exports by providing competitive services.

The industrial cities in the Sultanate of Oman have proven their ability to enhance local manufacturing and develop non-oil economic sectors. These cities have helped achieve integration between major projects and link them to an advanced logistics network that includes ports and airports, which has enhanced the Sultanate's competitiveness in attracting investments.

The wise vision of His Majesty Sultan Haitham bin Tarik - may Allah protect and preserve him - focused on enhancing integration between these regions and linking them to a modern logistics network that includes ports and airports; which enhanced Oman's competitiveness in attracting investments, and gave priority to supporting small and medium enterprises and involving youth in various economic sectors. The achievements made during the past five years represent a starting point towards a more prosperous future, and with the continuation of efforts to achieve the goals of Oman Vision 2040, special economic zones, free zones and industrial cities will remain at the forefront of development projects that contribute to strengthening Oman's position on the global economic scene.

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January 2025 Dugm



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The magazine welcomes specialised researches and academic studies

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work environment of (SMEs) within zones



H.E. Eng. Ahmed Al Dheeb: The Authority seeks to strengthen its role as a key driver of the national economy by implementing projects that contribute to creating an attractive and integrated investment environment



H.E. Dr. Saud Al Habsi: Enhancing food and water security is a strategic goal to ensure resource sustainability and support the national economy



Omantel boosts digital transformation in economic zones, free zones and industrial cities

H.E. Sheikh Dr. Ali bin Masoud Al Sunaidy during 5th panel discussion:

OPAZ has reduced service fees by 50% and its ready to review again to facilitate the work environment of (SMEs) within zones

Muscat - 윤승과 :

H.E. Sheikh Dr. Ali bin Masoud Al Sunaidy, Chairman of the Public Authority for Special Economic Zones and Free Zones (OPAZ), affirmed that OPAZ is fully prepared to review any excessive fees that may hinder the operations of small and medium enterprises (SMEs), with the possibility of offering special arrangements to facilitate their operations and enhance their continuity.

His Excellency highlighted the importance of adhering to principles of governance, precision, and transparency in managing these enterprises to en-

sure the Authority's ability to provide the necessary support and protection while promoting their sustainability. He also called on entrepreneurs to collaborate with the government in supporting the payment of wages for Omani employees in their projects for a period ranging from two to three years. This initiative aims to empower these employees to gain the necessary skills and prepare them to excel in managing entrepreneurial ventures, particularly in fields such as engineering and information technology.

5th Panel Discussion

This was highlighted during the pan-

el discussion organised by the Small and Medium Enterprises Development Authority (SMEDA), which addressed four key themes aimed at enhancing SME investments in economic zones, free zones and industrial cities. These themes included: supportive legislation for SMEs in economic zones, financing and available investment opportunities, enablers supporting the SME sector, and fees and licenses required in the special economic zones, free zones and industrial cities.

During the discussion, several Omani entrepreneurs highlighted challenges they face, such as the high costs of permit issuance and renewal for their



existing projects in industrial zones, and others expressed the successes of their SME projects in a number of sectors operating in the zones..

The session aligns with the ongoing approach of fostering partnership and integration between SMEs and relevant entities, while creating promising opportunities for these enterprises in economic sectors.

According to statistics issued by the Authority, the total number of SMEs in special economic zones and free zones reached 545, with 192 active business activities.

Programmes and projects

In a press statement, Dr. Ayman Al Fudhaili, CEO of Industrial Innovation Academy, stated that the 5th panel discussion addressed a range of challenges faced by SMEs, highlighting the existence of current programmes and projects aimed at addressing these issues. the future.

Challenges and solutions

Dr. Al Fudhaili noted that the session delved into electricity tariffs, one of the major challenges confronting investors in these zones. He mentioned that potential solutions were discussed, such as fixed tariffs or seasonal rates for summer and winter. He also emphasised that some cases face specific challenges, but efforts are ongoing to find appropriate solutions for each scenario, whether for individual cases or those affecting a aroup of SMEs.



He added that the challenges discussed included investment opportunities and exemptions for SMEs in special economic zones and free zones, as well as competitive opportunities that these enterprises could capitalise on in

The session aimed to enhance the

role of SMEs in special economic zones and free zones, integrate them into available business opportunities, and encourage entrepreneurs to present innovative ideas that contribute to the development of economic sectors, improvement of the business environment, and increased attractiveness for SMEs. Additionally, it sought to aid in developing supportive policies for these enterprises.

The panel discussion was organised by the SMEDA and attended by H.E. Halima bint Rashid Al Zariyah, Chairperson of the SMEDA; H.E. Sheikh Dr. Ali bin Masoud Al Sunaidy, Chairman of OPAZ; Dr. Ayman Al Fudhaili, CEO of the Industrial Innovation Academy; Hamad bin Salim Al Harthy, Head of Financing SME Projects at the Oman Development Bank; as well as several officials from relevant entities and SME owners operating in the economic zones and related activities.

Achievements

Significant achievements of special economic zones, free zones and industrial cities in enhancing infrastructure efficiency and attracting investments (2020–2024)

Over the past five years, strategic developments have been achieved, including modernising and upgrading ports and essential facilities, expanding renewable energy projects and implementing modern technologies in construction and investment

H.E. Eng. Ahmed bin Hassan Al Dheeb: The Authority seeks to strengthen its role as a key driver of the national economy by implementing projects that contribute to creating an attractive and integrated investment environment across the various zones it supervises

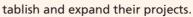
Muscat - 🖧

The special economic zones, free zones and industrial cities supervised by the Public Authority for Special Economic Zones and Free Zones (OPAZ) achieved remarkable accomplishments over the past five years (2020–2024), contributing to sustainable economic development, enhancing infrastructure efficiency, attracting local and foreign investments, and strengthening partnerships with the local community. These years witnessed strategic developments, including the modernisation and upgrading of ports and essential facilities, expansion of renewable energy projects, and the application of modern technologies in construction and investment. These efforts have enhanced Oman's appeal as a regional hub for investment and economic growth.

H.E. Eng. Ahmed bin Hassan Al Dheeb, Deputy Chairman of OPAZ, stated that Oman's economic sectors are undergoing fundamental transformations and are attracting diverse investments. The Authority seeks to strengthen its role as a key driver of the national economy by implementing projects that create an attractive and integrated investment environment across the zones it oversees.

His Excellency added, "Oman Vision 2040 serves as a cornerstone for directing efforts toward building a diversified and sustainable economy that aims to enhance prosperity and ensure well-being for all. This vision focuses on investing in human capital, fostering innovation, and encouraging entrepreneurship, which contribute to creating new job opportunities and stimulating economic growth."

The Authority aims to enhance its role as a key driver of the national economy by implementing ambitious projects that contribute to creating an attractive and integrated investment environment. It focuses on simplifying business procedures through electronic services and digital platforms that facilitate and expedite processes. The Authority works on developing infrastructure and providing high-quality services to elevate Oman's ability to attract diverse investments. It also strives to build strategic partnerships with global and local companies to achieve its goals of promoting economic growth and diversifying income sources, while improving the business environment by updating economic legislation and simplifying procedures, making it easier for local and foreign investors to es-



The year 2020 was marked by a special focus on infrastructure development, with significant projects completed, such as the commercial quay project at Dugm Port and the establishment of new commercial stations. Progress was also made in strategic projects like the Dugm Refinery and the Karwa Bus Factory. This period witnessed intensive efforts to enhance community partnerships through initiatives supporting local communities in addressing health challenges and organising events to strengthen connections between companies and the local population.

In 2021, achievements continued with the launch of pioneering projects, including signing international agreements for green hydrogen and ammonia projects, introducing one-stop-shop services to simplify investor procedures, and inaugurating a solar power station in collaboration with Shell Global. Cooperation with small and medium enterprises (SMEs) increased to integrate them into projects within the Special Economic Zone at Dugm (SEZAD), alongside ongoing infrastructure and road development projects.

volume in

Zone

Key achievements in the Special **Economic Zones** and Free Zones - including (Salalah, Sohar, RO 7.3 billion Dugm and Al investment Mazunah) – during 2020, focusing on SEZAD, Salalah infrastructure Free Zone, development, Sohar Free attracting Zone, and Al investments, Mazunah Free and enhancing community partnership:







Dugm Refinery project achieved 76.7% progress across three packages

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Karwa Bus Factory reached 85% completion, targeting the production of 1,000 buses annually

support initiatives were implemented, such as establishing the "Wadha Café" for the Oman Women's Association in Dugm

Community

In 2022, the Authority focused on promoting environmental sustainability and attracting investments by completing infrastructure projects, implementing afforestation programs, and adopting modern technologies, such as 3D printing in construction, to reduce costs and time. The Sohar Free Zone saw significant developments with the completion of the second phase of infrastructure design to attract more investments.

The year 2023 crowned these efforts with a substantial increase in investment volume, as cumulative investments reached RO 19 billion. Hundreds of agreements were signed, and new strategic projects were launched in the SEZAD and other areas overseen by the Authority.

In 2024, the Authority continued its efforts to increase investments and attract more investors to the 23 investment zones it supervises, eight of which are under development. The Authority received the "Best Institutional Investor Award" for its efforts in digital transformation and facilitating procedures for investors.

Full completio n of the commercia I quay in Port of Dugm (Phases 2 and 3)

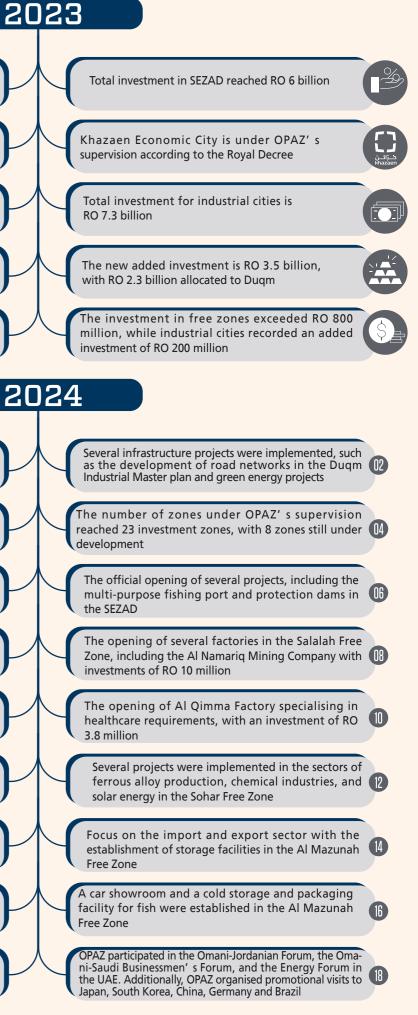
Completion of a commercial terminal and truck registration buildings at a cost of RO 77.2 million Completio n of the liquid (oil) berth at a cost of RO 199.1 million

The "Tawasul" forum was held to coordinate efforts between companies operating in the zone and the local community

Companies in the zones contributed RO 102 thousand to combat the pandemic, in addition to providing medical equipment and field hospitals

Issued 94 work permits and registered 1,320 new investment applications in 2020 in SEZAD





Food security

H.E. Dr. Saud Al Habsi, Minister of Agriculture, Fisheries and Water Resources:

Enhancing food and water security is a strategic goal to ensure resource sustainability and support the national economy

The Sultanate of Oman aims to achieve safe levels of food availability and self-sufficiency for certain locally produced goods

Muscat - 🖧 :

His Excellency Dr. Saud bin Hamoud Al Habsi, Minister of Agriculture, Fisheries and Water Resources, affirmed that the Ministry is working according to a strategic vision aimed at enhancing food and water security in the Sultanate of Oman by ensuring the sustainability of natural resources and developing the agricultural and fisheries sectors.

In an exclusive interview with the Economic Dugm, His Excellency stated that the Ministry seeks to achieve self-sufficiency in many essential commodities and promote private sector investments in agricultural projects and value-added initiatives linked to food security.

He added that achieving food and water security is an integral part of the Ministry's plans to ensure the sustainability of resources for future generations. He pointed out that the ministry's goal in the coming phase is to increase self-sufficiency rates for many locally produced food items and focus on manufacturing and value-added projects for commodities with complete self-sufficiency.



At the outset of the discussion, His Excellency affirmed that the Ministry is harnessing all expertise and resources to achieve its vision of ensuring sustainable food and water security that actively contributes to supporting the national economy. He explained that these efforts rely on the sustainable management and development of agricultural, fishery and water resources, with a focus on ensuring food safety and quality through innovative technologies and regulations aligned with advancements in the food sector, in addition to strengthening partnerships with the community and the private sector.

Self-sufficiency and reducing waste

His Excellency also pointed out that the Ministry encourages investment in food security projects to achieve advanced self-sufficiency rates for essential commodities with a comparative advantage in Oman. He stated that self-sufficiency rates for some commodities have exceeded 75 per cent, such as fish, dates, milk and tomatoes, while reaching more than 40 per cent for other products like poultry, red meat, eggs and watermelon.

He added that strategic plans have been developed for commodities with self-sufficiency rates below 75 per cent in collaboration with partners, particularly the private sector, aiming to maximise the economic return from natural resources such as land and water and to enhance investment in production projects for these commodities. The Sultanate of Oman seeks to strengthen self-sufficiency levels for key locally produced food items to reach safe levels of food availability.

His Excellency highlighted that food imports amounted to approximately RO 1.9 billion, according to data from the National Centre for Statistics and Information, emphasising the importance of raising awareness about reducing food loss and waste to enhance food security. He referenced global statistics indicating that food loss equates to the production of 30 per cent of arable land.

Strategic Goals

On the strategic objectives to ensure food and water security, His Excellency the Minister outlined that the Ministry adopts a set of strategic goals to guarantee the food and water security system in the Sultanate of Oman. He noted that these objectives include the sustainable management of agricultural, fishery and water resources; enhancing food security through effective policies, legislation and programmes; and focusing on optimal resource utilisation using modern technologies and an innovative research system that builds national capacities.

He added that the Ministry is working to ensure the availability of food and water stocks while adhering to food quality and safety regulations. The Ministry also aims to increase investment opportunities in the agricultural, fishery and water sectors, with a focus on enhancing the added value of services related to these sectors.

Investment opportunities via Tatweer platform

As part of current and future projects to enhance food security, His Excellency stated that the Ministry is working on establishing plants for water purification and packaging. Three investment sites have been offered through the Tatweer platform,

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Salalah Free Zone hosts 47 food projects with investments totaling RO 775.6 million, being 16% of total investments

The Ministry is working on strategic projects in special economic zones, free zones and industrial cities to support food security

The Ministry has offered three investment sites for water purification via the Tatweer platform, with an expected investment value of RO 300 thousand per site

with an estimated investment value of approximately RO 300 thousand per site, reflecting the Ministry's commitment to supporting sustainable investments in this vital sector.

Pioneering projects to enhance food security

Speaking about the current and future projects the Ministry aims to implement within economic zones, free zones, and industrial cities to enhance food security, His Excellency affirmed that the Ministry is executing strategic projects in these areas to support the food security system in the Sultanate of Oman. He noted that these zones play a direct role in attracting investments and fostering public-private partnerships.

Khazaen Economic City: Successful partnership model

His Excellency praised Khazaen as a pioneering model for developing and managing economic cities in the Sultanate of Oman. The city has successfully attracted both local and foreign investments in the field of food security, including the following notable projects:

Food Industries Centre Project

by Salalah Mills Company with an investment of RO 18.5 million, this project includes 10 production lines with a capacity of 1.4 million pieces daily in its first phase, along with industrial bakeries and cold and dry storage facilities at a cost of RO 12.5 million.

Omani Bio-Products Company Project

Aiming to establish a factory for the production of animal feed and aquaculture products on a 45,000 square metre area, this project represents an investment of RO 36 million, focusing on circular economy and sustainability.

Coffee Products Factory Project

Developed by Yasmina Al Sharq for Food and Business with an investment of RO 5 million on a 60,000 square metre site, this project utilises advanced technology to ensure the highest quality standards.

Zircon Food Industries Project

This project involves the establishment of an integrated industrial complex for packaging rice, sugar and spices, with an investment of RO 3.8 million and reliance on clean energy.

Dried Food Processing Centre

Executed by the Spices of Arabia and India company with an investment of RO 1.5 million, this project covers 7,500 square metres for processing and distributing dried food products such as pulses and dried fruits.



Salalah Free Zone:

Strong contributor to food security

His Excellency highlighted that the Salalah Free Zone hosts 47 food projects, including 27 direct projects, with investments amounting to RO 775.6 million, representing 16 per cent of the zone's total investments. Key manufactured food products in the zone include milk and dairy products, fish, canned tuna, mineral water and confectionery.

These projects underscore the pivotal role of economic and free zones in enhancing food security and supporting the national economy by attracting high-quality investments.

Fish canning and value-added complex in SEZAD The equipped with state-of-the-art technologies to produce over 100 million cans of tuna annually, equivalent to more than 30,000 tonnes of high-quality raw material. This production is expected to meet local demand and strengthen Oman's position in the global seafood market.

Private sector as a key partner

Discussing how public-private partnerships within economic zones can contribute to developing and sustaining food security projects, His Excellency emphasised that the private sector is a vital partner in building and enhancing the food security system in Oman. He explained that the Ministry works to solidify this partnership by providing incentives and facilities to ensure the success of joint projects at all stages, including production, manufacturing, and marketing.

He added, "The Ministry encourages the private sector to adopt modern technologies to improve production efficiency, which helps double output and maximise the economic return from natural resources such as land and water while optimising the use of production inputs. These partnerships represent an innovative model for enhancing sustainability and ensuring the continuity of food security projects, aligning with the aspirations of Oman Vision 2040.

Encouraging investments and incentives for investors

His Excellency also addressed the Ministry's plans to attract local and foreign investments in the agricultural, fisheries, and water resources sectors. He spoke about specific incentives for investors, saying, "The Ministry is working in coordination with relevant government entities to create an investment-friendly environment for the food security system."

He elaborated that the Ministry welcomes local and foreign companies and institutions to com-

Khazaen **Economic City** is a successful model for attracting local and foreign food investments.

Tatweer platform launched the 'Propose Your Project' window to enable investors to submit

innovative projects.

The Ministry offers incentives including low rental fees, a 5-year grace period, and long-term contracts

In coordination with the Ministry of Housing and Urban Planning,

studies are underway to establish advanced agricultural cities, such as Sohar and Al Najd

pete for investment opportunities offered through the Tatweer platform or the 'Propose Your Project' initiative, which encourages the submission of innovative, high-quality projects.

His Excellency noted that the Ministry provides a range of incentives for investors, including low land rental fees, a grace period of up to five years, and long-term investment contracts.

Launch of 'Propose Your Project' initiative

Regarding measures to encourage local and international investors, His Excellency explained that the Ministry regularly offers investment opportunities through the Tatweer platform, targeting various sectors and governorates. These opportunities include land allocated for future agricultural expansion under the urban strategy and land designated for food security projects in economic, free, and industrial zones. He highlighted the launch of the 'Propose Your Project' initiative on the Tatweer platform, which allows investors to submit proposals for innovative projects based on specific criteria and standards. This initiative enhances the attractiveness of the agricultural and water resources sectors, contributing to sustainable food and water security.

Modern agricultural technologies

In response to a question about attracting investments in modern agricultural technologies, such as smart farms and advanced irrigation systems within economic and industrial zones, His Excellency affirmed that investing in advanced agricultural technologies is a strategic priority for the Ministry. He explained that the 'Propose Your Project' initiative, launched through the Tatweer platform under the Ministry of Housing and Urban Planning, aims to encourage value-added projects, including those focusing on artificial intelligence and advanced agricultural technologies.

Advanced agricultural cities to boost production

His Excellency noted that the Ministry, in coordination with the Ministry of Housing and Urban Planning, is conducting feasibility studies for establishing advanced agricultural cities, such as the Sohar Agricultural City and Al Najd Agricultural City. This also includes Al Najd Agricultural Economic Cluster in partnership with the National Programme for Enhancing Economic Diversification (Tanfeedh). These cities will fully adopt modern management and agricultural production technologies.

He explained that these strategic projects will significantly improve productivity and increase self-sufficiency in crops and agricultural products, aligning with the aspirations of Oman Vision 2040. He also emphasised that integrating modern technologies into these projects will support economic and environmental sustainability, solidifying Oman's position as an attractive destination for investment in the agricultural sector.

Ensuring sustainability of food security projects To ensure the sustainability of food security



projects within economic zones and industrial cities, His Excellency highlighted that the Ministry has developed a comprehensive plan to address challenges such as economic crises and climate events. He pointed out that this plan aligns with the collaborative framework of the National Emergency Management System.

The Ministry, in cooperation with other government entities, has implemented several measures to mitigate the impact of crises and rising prices. These include forming technical committees to monitor the situation and coordinating with food companies to prevent the signing of export contracts for essential commodities. Additionally, export restrictions have been introduced to ensure local availability of goods at stable prices.

Sustainability and investment focus

In the context of investment, His Excellency explained that the Ministry adopts specific criteria focusing on sustainable production, soil suitability, and water consumption rates, while avoiding crops with high water usage. The Ministry also leverages Oman's comparative advantages in producing goods with lower production costs and abundant natural resources, helping to compete with imported products.

His Excellency highlighted efforts to promote the fisheries industry by providing data to investors, regulating project competitiveness, and ensuring the sustainability of marine resources. The Ministry also supports the establishment of fish processing factories by facilitating procedures and granting quality control certifications in line with local and international standards.

Boosting local production

To achieve the objectives of Oman Vision 2040, His Excellency stated that the Ministry is expanding local crop production in collaboration with the Tatweer platform, with a focus on priority crops such as onions, potatoes, and wheat. Current five-year plans aim to increase self-sufficiency rates for crops below 50 per cent to 75 per cent by 2025.

Adopting modern technology and innovation

Regarding the Ministry's role in implementing modern technology and innovation in agriculture and fisheries, His Excellency emphasised the importance of advanced technologies in these sectors. He highlighted the Ministry's efforts to enhance fish processing by organising local and international events and exhibitions, encouraging companies in the fisheries sector to participate in specialised global exhibitions.

He noted that such participation fosters investment deals and builds trade partnerships with investors from leading countries in marine industries. It also facilitates the adoption of modern technologies and benefits from international expertise. His Excellency added that integrating advanced technologies in factories improves production speed and quality, enhances product safety, extends shelf life, and boosts competi-

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The Ministry supports fishery manufacturing technologies and boosts agricultural and fishery exports

A study is underway to determine tariffs for reclaimed water to alleviate pressure on freshwater resources

Plans aim to increase selfsufficiency rates for certain crops to 75% by 2025

The Ministry seeks to open new markets for **Omani fishery** products

tiveness in local and global markets.

Plans to increase Omani agricultural exports On plans to boost Omani agricultural exports, His Excellency stated that the Ministry focuses on crops and products that achieve over 100 per cent self-sufficiency, integrating them into value-added and export-oriented manufacturing industries. He mentioned that the Ministry encourages investors to implement projects that allocate a portion of production for the local market and another for export. This is incorporated into carefully studied production and marketing plans outlined in feasibility studies submitted to the Ministry.

Fisheries sector

His Excellency also elaborated on efforts to develop the fisheries sector, increase fish production, and expand Omani fish exports. He remarked, "The fisheries sector is a cornerstone of Oman's food security system." He noted that expanding exports and increasing their share is a strategic goal for the Ministry.

Opening new markets

His Excellency explained that the Ministry is working to open new markets and facilitate access for Omani fish and seafood products. This includes strengthening relationships with importers, negotiating new export markets, and signing agreements to register local companies in export markets.

In 2023, the Sultanate of Oman signed a protocol with China regarding inspection, guarantine, and veterinary health requirements, leading to China's approval to import aquaculture products from Oman. Omani companies with quality control certifications have begun exporting their products to the Chinese market.

Fisheries export growth

On the numbers, His Excellency revealed that Oman's fisheries sector achieved a significant milestone in 2023, with total fish exports reaching 323,843 tonnes, valued at RO 189.063 million, reflecting a 30 per cent growth compared to 2022. In 2022, exports amounted to 248,805 tonnes, valued at RO 152.336 million, with an annual growth rate of 11 per cent.

These results demonstrate the Ministry's continuous efforts to position the Sultanate of Oman as a leading nation in the fisheries sector, harnessing marine resources to support the national economy and enhance the competitiveness of Omani products in global markets.

Achievements

Nadayn achieves accelerated growth and qualitative milestones over five years (2020–2024)

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The Public Establishment for Industrial Estates (Madayn) witnessed accelerated growth in its digital indicators over the past five years, alongside the completion of a series of vital projects that directly contribute to strengthening the national economy in line with Oman Vision 2040. During the same period, Madayn also launched its future vision, Madayn Vision 2040, aimed at attracting foreign and local investments and providing job opportunities for national talent. In terms of digital indicators, the investment volume increased from RO 6.6 billion at the beginning of 2020 to RO 7.4 billion by the end of the first half of 2024, marking a growth of RO 1 billion over five years. Meanwhile, the total area of industrial cities expanded during the same period from 114,306,724 square metres to 140,327,046 square metres.

Development and establishment of industrial cities

Over the past five years, Madayn has developed all existing industrial cities and established new ones to promote sustainable development and distribute industrial projects across the various governorates of the Sultanate of Oman. The organisation has focused on attracting industrial investments and improving the business environment through advanced infrastructure and value-added services. Among the most notable new industrial cities are:

- Ibri Industrial City: Established on an area of 10 million square metres in Al Dhahirah Governorate at a cost of RO 9 million. Officially inaugurated in February 2024, it targets sectors such as oil, mining, and marble.
- Mahas Industrial City: Located in Musandam Governorate, this city focuses on food industries as well as light and medium industries, with 98 per cent of its infrastruc-

ture completed.

Over the past

five years,

Madayn has

developed

all existing

industrial cities

and established

new ones

During the

same period,

Madayn

launched its

future vision,

"Madayn 2040,"

which aims to

attract foreign

and local

investments

and provide job

opportunities

for national

talent

- Al Suwaiq Industrial City: Spanning an area of 10 million square metres in Al Batinah North Governorate, it targets key sectors such as food and pharmaceutical industries and logistics services.
- Al Mudhaibi Industrial City: Situated in Al Sharqiyah North Governorate, with plans to develop its first phase over an area of 2.5 million square metres.
- Thumrait Industrial City: Located in Dhofar Governorate, it focuses on mining and light industries.

Completion of vital projects

Over the past five years, Madayn has completed a range of vital projects that have contributed to improving the investment environment and developing industrial cities. Among the most notable projects are:

- Sohar Industrial City: Completion of the Phase 7 expansion at a cost over RO 13 million.
- Nizwa Industrial City: Expansion of Phases 3 and 4 at a total cost of RO 5.5 million.
- Sur Industrial City: Infrastructure development with a total investment of over RO 10 million.
- Al Buraimi Industrial City: Implementation of Phases 1 and 2 for infrastructure development at a cost exceeding RO 5 million.
- Knowledge Oasis Muscat (KOM): Construction of the ring road and associated services at a cost of RO 7 million, including stormwater drainage solutions.
- Al Mazunah Free Zone: Infrastructure development for Phase 1 (Package 2) and Phase 2 at a total cost of RO 6 million.
- Samail Industrial City: Infrastructure establishment at a total cost of RO 40 million.
- Raysut Industrial City: Expansion of the Raysut 2 area at a total cost of RO 3 million.

• These projects are part of efforts to enhance infrastructure, meet investor needs, and provide an integrated business environment aligned with Madayn's future plans.

Service buildings (Al Rusayl, Samail, Al Mazunah, Sohar)

In light of the rapid growth of industry in the Sultanate of Oman and in continuation of Madayn's efforts—through its investment arm, Shumookh Investment and Services Company—to develop infrastructure in industrial cities across various governorates, Madayn has ensured the creation of high-quality work, life, and recreational environments. Over the past five years, several service buildings have been constructed and inaugurated in industrial cities:

A service and facilities building in Al Rusayl Industrial City, with an investment cost of RO 6.5 million.

A service and facilities building in Samail Industrial City, with a total cost of RO 4.5 million.

A service and facilities building in Al Mazunah Free Zone, at a total cost of RO 3.5 million.

A service building in Sohar Industrial City, with a total cost of approximately RO 4.5 million.

Masar Service Centre

In 2020, Madayn announced the establishment of the Masar Service Centre, a unified investment window designed to simplify and streamline the process for investors to obtain all necessary approvals, permits, and licenses for their projects in one location within a specified time frame. The Masar project aims to provide an integrated system of services that create a business-friendly environment to attract investments to the Sultanate of Oman.

Industrial Innovation Academy

Madayn launched the Industrial Innovation Academy to implement six strategic programmes, forming a roadmap to enhance Madayn's objectives and ensure their sustainability: Rabt programme: Aims to connect products

and services offered by companies operating in industrial cities with government tenders. Tawreed programme: Focuses on fostering

small and medium enterprises (SMEs) to provide services within supply chains across various economic sectors, with enablers to maximise benefits.

Tatweer programme: Aims to maximise the use of local raw materials and establish downstream industries through industrial complexes.

Estidamah programme: Concentrates on identifying struggling factories in various industrial cities and providing innovative solutions to address their challenges.

Ibtikar programme: Works in synergy with the other four programmes (Tatweer, Tawreed, Rabt and Estidamah) to produce innovative products that compete in local markets.

Ta'meen programme: Focuses on training and qualifying Omani talent to ensure the availability of midand high-level job opportunities.

January 2025 Dugm

RO 1 billion increases in investment volume

Establishment of

new industrial cities:

Ibri Industrial

Mahas Industrial City Al Suwaiq Industrial City Al Mudhaibi Industrial City Thumrait Industrial City

Implementation of infrastructure development projects across all industrial



cities

Establishment of the Masar Service Centre



Nafith System

Madayn has developed the Nafith system to control and manage the entry and exit of vehicles across all current and future industrial cities under its supervision. This system provides comprehensive, efficient, secure, and integrated solutions for organising, managing, and monitoring the movement of trucks, employee vehicles, and visitor vehicles in Madayn's industrial cities. The system is implemented through smart gate mechanisms designed to keep procedures at the gates streamlined, avoiding delays or congestion.

Ladayn Polymer Park

Madayn launched the Ladayn Polymer Park in partnership with OQ Group, in collaboration with the Ministry of Commerce, Industry and Investment Promotion, as well as the Oman National Programme for Private Sector and Foreign Trade Development (Nazdaher). The programme aims to add value by fostering a diversified economy aligned with Oman Vision 2040. So far, it has localised 16 specialised projects in plastics industries, with a total investment over \$150 million.

The programme began localising projects in the Ladayn Polymer Park in Sohar Industrial City and has since expanded to projects outside Madayn's industrial cities. Due to its success, Madayn is now exploring replicating the concept in other sectors, with a dedicated team currently studying the establishment of a specialised aluminium industries complex.

Madayn pioneering complexes

This is one of Madayn's latest value-added initiatives, introduced in collaboration with the Authority for Small and Medium Enterprises Development. The initiative supports entrepreneurs and SMEs in the Sultanate of Oman by offering ready-built modular factory complexes within industrial cities. These facilities aim to empower SMEs and enable their entry into the industrial sector. The project includes complexes in Nizwa and Al Rusayl, as well as the development of two complexes in Musandam Governorate at Mahas and Saih Alwasat. The initiative seeks to enhance productivity and localise investments.

Madayn agricultural projects

The latest of Madayn's value-added initiatives, introduced in collaboration with the Ministry of Agriculture, Fisheries and Water Resources, focuses on the agricultural sector, which is a key priority under Oman Vision 2040's focus on the environment and natural resources. The initiative aims to equip industrial cities with greenhouses to support SMEs and agricultural businesses, supply local markets with agricultural products, bolster food security projects in the Sultanate of Oman, and improve the trade balance by increasing exports and reducing imports.

Al Mazunah Free Zone achieves notable accomplishments over the past five years



These

achievements

underscore

the zone's

commitment

to its role as

a key driver

in achieving

sustainable

development

and diversifying

the economy in

line with Oman

Vision 2040

Al Mazyunah -

Al Mazunah Free Zone has achieved a range of milestones over the past five years (2020-2024). Positioned near the Yemeni border, the zone serves as an economic bridge connecting the Sultanate of Oman to regional and international markets. It plays a strategic role in attracting local and international investments while fostering commercial and industrial activities.

Among the most notable achievements of the zone over the past five years (2020-2024):

The construction of the service building in the zone, at a cost of RO 3 million, has been completed. It now accommodates requests from service companies in sectors such as customs clearance, currency exchange,

handling, and free trade. Additionally, the infrastructure development project, valued at RO 6.5 million, has been finalised. This project included road networks, water systems, sewage networks and rainwater drainage channels.

Investment and economic growth

Eng. Ahmed bin Khamis Al Kasbi, Director General of the Al Mazunah Free Zone, highlighted that the zone has attracted investments over RO 5 million, bringing the total investment to RO 140 million, with 185 lease agreements across various sectors, including 102 projects currently operational. The management aims to attract industrial sector investments to ensure sustainable growth in the zone.

Al Kasbi emphasised the unique advantage of the zone being home to an accredited land port that handles all port-related operations, such as handling, exporting and importing. Over the past five years, the zone has received over two million tonnes of goods, with a 20 per cent increase in commercial activity and cargo movement between 2023 and 2024.

Enhancing infrastructure and logistics services

He added that several projects have recently been completed in the zone, most notably the infrastructure project, which included the implementation of road networks, sewage systems, and rainwater drainage channels. The security fence project was also completed, adhering to the latest security standards.

The infrastructure development has been fully completed 100 per cent encompassing roads, water, and electricity networks, along with facility upgrades to support investment activities. Efforts are ongoing to

> enhance investor-support facilities and expedite ongoing projects.

Additionally, 95 per cent of the surveillance camera project has been completed, and a contract has been awarded to a specialised company to build a water desalination plant, expected to begin operations in the second half of 2025.

Investor facilities via one-stop shop

Al Kasbi highlighted key achievements in improving one-stop shop procedures to streamline administrative and investment processes. Advanced digital systems have been adopted to expedite licensing, reduce processing times, and provide electronic investment maps and environmental permitting services via dedicated applications.

All necessary investor services are offered through the Masar Service Centre or one-stop shop, including services from the Ministry of Foreign Affairs, Ministry of Labour, Ministry of Commerce, Industry and



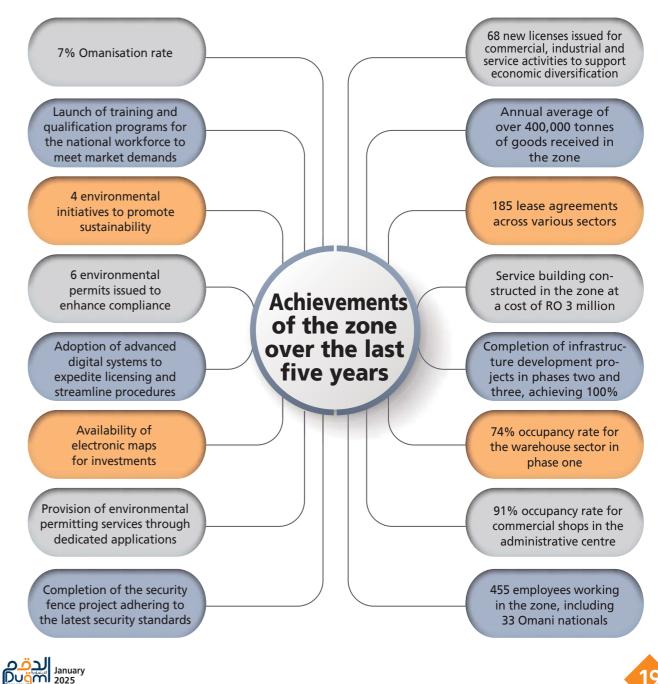
Investment Promotion, Oman Chamber of Commerce Omanisation and workforce development The zone employs 455 workers, including 33 Omaand Industry, Environment Authority, Sanad Services Centres, and labour visa issuance. ni nationals, achieving an Omanisation rate of 7 per Another notable achievement is the introduction cent. Training and qualification programmes have of the Edaa electronic system for managing operabeen launched to equip the national workforce with tions, which won second place in the Best Practices skills to meet market demands.

in Logistics Sector Award, organised by the Ministry of Transport, Communications and Information

These achievements reaffirm the zone's commitment to its role as a key driver of sustainable development and economic diversification in line with Oman Vision Implementation of four environmental initiatives to 2040. The zone offers a range of exclusive incentives and benefits specific to free zones, including an income tax exemption on profits for 30 years without the need to file income declarations, ease of providing, transfer-Strengthening environmental compliance through ring, and exchanging foreign currencies, and exemption from the Commercial Agencies Law and customs duties. Investors are allowed to import all goods per-Providing incentives and support programs tailored mitted for trade in the Sultanate of Oman and enjoy 100 per cent ownership of project capital. Additionally, the Omanisation requirement has been reduced to 20 Issuing 26 commercial licenses and 21 industrial liper cent instead of 30 per cent, certificates of origin are censes in 2023, reflecting the zone's commitment to issued within the zone, and Yemeni workers are per-

Technology. Sustainability and social responsibility enhance sustainability, along with three environmental impact assessment studies the issuance of six environmental permits Supporting SMEs and private sector to small and medium enterprises (SMEs) to enable their growth and expansion

strengthening the private sector mitted to work without the need for work visas.



Significance of Al Mazunah Free Zone

KhazaenEconomic City attracts over RO 385 million in investments in 42 months

project establishment for investors. It also emphasises local value creation, sustainable economic growth, and alignment with Oman Vision 2040, focusing on economic diversification and sustainability.

Highlighted projects in Khazaen

- Silal Fruit and Vegetable Central Market: Enhances food security and reduces agricultural waste to less than 5 per cent by improving supply chains.
- Flag Oman: A Qatari investment to develop advanced logistics infrastructure.
- Jana International Trading Company: A factory producing plastic packaging materials to bolster local industries.
- Omani Bioproducts Company: A plant focused on innovative feed solutions for agriculture and livestock.
- Salalah Mills Company: RO 12 million investment to develop a food industry hub.
- Opal Bio Pharma: A pharmaceutical company manufacturing vaccines and biomedicines to enhance drug security and reduce import dependency.
- Al Maskaan Village: An integrated residential project supporting balanced work-life environments.
- Khazaen Fuel Plant: The world's first biofuel plant powered by solar energy.
- 44.01 Factory: A facility that removes carbon from the atmosphere using innovative technologies.
- National Paper Products Factory: Promotes sustainability by producing recycled materials.

Competitive Advantages

Khazaen enjoys a strategic location near ports, making it an ideal investment hub. It features smart and sustainable infrastructure, offers economic incentives like tax exemptions, and provides various facilities for investors. The city supports the localisation of essential industries, such as pharmaceuticals and vaccines, enhancing self-sufficiency and reducing reliance on imports.



ل<u>د</u>قر Dugm Barka -

Khazaen Economic City has made significant strides in investment and development over the past 42 months, achieving total investments over RO 385 million. Foreign investments reached over RO 224.4 million, while local investments amounted to more than RO 186 million, reflecting a balance between attracting international investors and encouraging national investments.

Khazaen has signed over 130 investment agreements, focusing on six primary sectors as growth drivers. Over 14 small and medium enterprises (SMEs) have benefited from the investment opportunities and services offered by the city, boosting entrepreneurship and supporting the local economy.

The ongoing projects have created over 2000 job opportunities, contributing to Oman's employment and human development efforts. The city has attracted investors from more than 17 nationalities, and currently, 30 projects are under construction, showcasing dynamic growth and continuous expansion.

Awards and recognition

Khazaen has won several local and international awards, including the Dossier Construction Awards (2022, 2023, 2024) and the Economic Vision Award (2023). It

Key projects in Khazaen **Economic City**

Silal Fruit and Vegetable Centra Market Flag Oman <₿ lana International **Trading Company Omani Bioproducts** Company £33 Salalah Mills Company £33

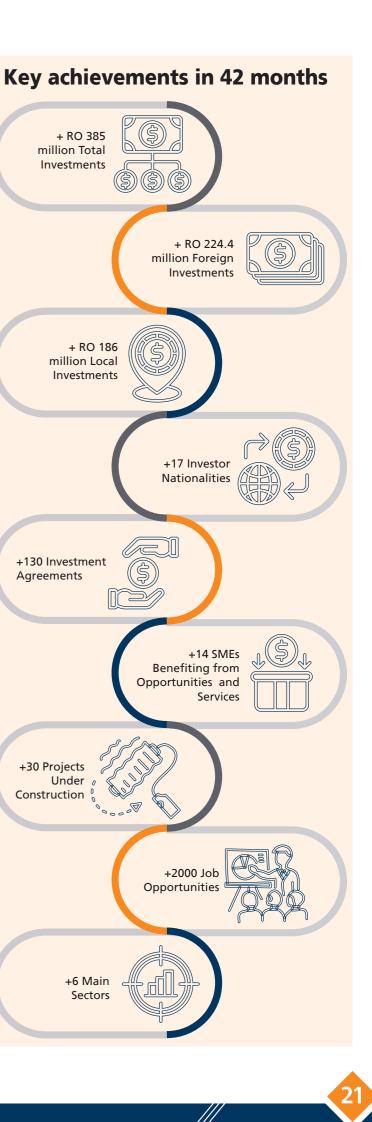
Opal Bio Pharma Al Maskaan Village £33 Khazaen Fuel Plant

44.01 Factory *{*}} National Paper **Products Factory** Financial Award in Dubai as the "Fastest Growing Investment Destination" earlier this year. These accolades highlight Khazaen's global standing as a promising investment hub. Development and partnership Khazaen Economic City was developed

under a Public-Private Partnership (PPP) model, aiming to contribute to Oman's GDP and economic development by attracting both local and foreign investments. It provides commercial opportunities for SMEs and creates jobs for Omani talent.

was also recognised by the International

The city exemplifies an innovative investment environment with robust infrastructure and streamlined processes, simplifying



Five years of giving and achievement

Over the past five years, the Public Authority for Special Economic Zones and Free Zones (OPAZ) has embarked on a journey filled with accomplishments and giving, guided by the wise vision and directives of His Majesty Sultan Haitham bin Tarik - may Allah protect and preserve him. The Authority has demonstrated its efforts and efficiency in establishing special economic zones, free zones and industrial cities as key pillars in supporting economic growth and attracting foreign and domestic investments.

Since its establishment, the Authority has focused on developing advanced infrastructure to meet the needs of investors, contributing to an improved investment climate and enhancing Oman's competitiveness. These efforts include building modern road networks, developing ports, and establishing integrated logistics systems that connect the economic and free zones with regional and global trade hubs.

Additionally, the Authority's initiatives in offering diverse investment incentives, such as tax exemptions, customs facilitation, and expedited licensing procedures, have significantly enhanced investment attraction. These policies have successfully drawn numerous major companies and strategic projects, boosting the gross domestic product (GDP) and creating job opportunities for Omani youth.

In the past five years, the Authority has achieved tangible milestones, including signing numerous investment agreements with global companies and executing large-scale projects in various sectors such as industry, renewable energy, technology and logistics.

For instance, the free zones in Salalah and Sohar have contributed to boosting Omani exports to international markets. Meanwhile, the special economic zones have made remarkable progress in attracting major industrial investments, turning them into regional production and export hubs.

Moreover, industrial cities practice sustainable development by focusing on eco-friendly projects and implementing advanced technologies to minimise environmental impact. These cities also provide an integrated working environment combining manufacturing and services, fostering innovation and diversifying the national economy

As the Authority celebrates its five-year anniversary, it reaffirms its ambitious plans to drive sustainable economic growth by overseeing 23 special economic zones, free zones and industrial cities. With the continued support of His Majesty Sultan Haitham bin Tarik - may Allah protect and preserve him - the coming period is expected to witness further development and innovation in economic zones and free zones projects, strengthening Oman's position as a leading investment destination regionally and globally.

In conclusion, these five years stand as a testament to determination and excellence in fulfilling national aspirations. The special economic zones, free zones and industrial cities remain a witness to Oman's commitment to building a prosperous and sustainable economic future, God willing.

Heartiest Congratulations to

OMAN DATAPARK

His Majesty Sultan Haitham bin Tariq

and the people of Oman on the occasion of the 5th Anniversary of His Majesty's Accession.

May Oman continue to prosper under his visionary leadership.



Since its establishment, the Authority has worked on developing advanced infrastructure to meet the needs of investors, enhancing the investment environment and boost the Sultanate of **Oman's com**petitiveness

Salalah Free Zone: Investment and economic achievements over five years (2020-2024)



Salalah - 윤승과 :

The Salalah Free Zone (SFZ) has witnessed significant development between 2020 and 2024, achieving notable accomplishments in attracting investments, developing infrastructure and diversifying economic sectors. This has strengthened its position as a strategic economic and investment hub in the Sultanate of Oman.

Quality investments and breaking records numbers

The total investment reached RO 1.488 billion over the past five years, with 57 contracts signed and industrial and logistics land occupied exceeding 8.7 million square metres.

The year 2022 was notable, with investments worth RO 411.6 million attracted, while 2023 saw the largest volume of investments, totalling RO 728.4 million, along with a significant increase in the number of contracts in 2024 compared to previous years.

The total number of investment projects in the zone reached 146, distributed as follows:

- 41 commercial projects
- 81 industrial projects
- 24 logistics projects

These figures reflect the outstanding performance in attracting investments and expanding the use of industrial and

logistics land, contributing to enhancing SFZ's position as an economic and investment hub.

Infrastructure

The zone continued to develop its infrastructure through the implementation of strategic projects to enhance its investment readiness over the past five years. These projects included vital developments to improve land and establish and upgrade necessary facilities. Below are the key achievements:

Implemented projects:

Supply and installation of kiosks, security barriers and civil and plumbing works for gates

Land filling, compaction and levelling works

Road entrance works for Al-Okabri Trading and Investment Company

Design and construction of warehouses with an area of 25,000 square metres (Phase 2)

Roadworks:

- Construction of a road in the Raysut area
- Construction of an asphalt road to the OQ factory
- Construction of a box culvert on Road L31A in the Raysut area.
- Construction of a rainwater drainage network for Roads S01 and S02 Completion of detailed designs and tender documents for the Adhan

area (Phase 2)

Completion of the construction and operation of a main water pipeline, 6 kilometres long (diameter 1000 mm), in the Raysut area

Establishment and activation of a temporary customs inspection area at the Salalah Free Zone in cooperation with the Directorate General of Customs.

Building permits

Regarding the number of building permits and completion certificates issued by the SFZ during the past five years (2020-2024), total of 29 building permits were issued. This reflects the successful completion of numerous projects and highlights the zone's efforts in supporting investors and facilitating their projects.

The zone handled over 68.95 million tonnes of goods from 2020 through the first half of 2024.

Increase in job opportunities

Number of employees in the area rose to 3,645 in the first half of 2024, compared to 2,194 in 2020, reflecting the expansion of economic activity and the growing demand for skilled professionals.

These figures and achievements highlight the vital role played by the SFZ in supporting the national economy and attracting strategic investments.



Marsa Al Dugm Investments LLC Company and all its employees express their heartfelt congratulations to

His Majesty Sultan Haitham bin Tarik

and to the people of Omani on the occasion of His Majesty's Accession Day



Investment **Opportunities**

Blue Economy

Sustainable wealth and boundless investment opportunities

Muscat -

The 'Blue Economy' represents a promising investment for enhancing economic diversification and achieving sustainable development in the Sultanate of Oman. This is made possible by its strategic geographical location overlooking the Arabian Sea and the Indian Ocean, along with its rich marine resources and advanced infrastructure in ports and maritime shipping. As global interest in marine and water-based economic activities, such as fisheries,

renewable energy, and marine tourism. The Sultanate of Oman aims to capitalise on these opportunities by developing sustainable policies that encourage investment in this emerging sector. In this context, Al Wusta Governorate stands out as a key economic hub, attracting significant investments in renewable energy, fisheries, and green hydrogen projects. This enhances its role in driving Oman Vision 2040 and supports the country's efforts to diversify income sources and ensure the sustainability of resources for future generations.

Dugm Forum Recommendations

The 5th Dugm Forum 2024 on the Blue Economy, organised by the Oman Chamber of Commerce and Industry (OCCI) in Al Wusta Governorate, in partnership with the Ministry of Foreign Affairs and the Public Authority for Special Economic Zones and Free Zones (OPAZ), held on October 20, 2024, at the Oman Convention and Exhibition Centre in Muscat, put forward several recommendations to enhance this sector. These include the following:

- Enhancing regional and international cooperation: Establishing part-



H.E. Dr. Salem Al Junaibi: Oman possesses a strong infrastructure that makes it a key player in the 'Blue Economy'



nerships for knowledge exchange and developing joint strategies to protect marine resources and achieve sustainable development

- Developing a sustainable legal framework: Creating legislation that supports marine environmental conservation and sets standards for marine economic activities such as aguaculture and tourism

- Promoting education and training: Offering specialised educational programmes to raise environmental awareness and develop skills for the workforce in the blue economy

- Utilising modern technology: Investing in renewable energy tech-

nologies and artificial intelligence to improve the efficiency of marine resource usage and reduce environmental impact

- Encouraging research and innovation: Supporting research on biodiversity and climate change, and developing solutions to environmental challenge

- Developing fisheries sector to boost food security: Focusing on the sustainability of aquaculture to support food security and increase seafood exports

- Promoting sustainable tourism: Establishing tourism projects that focus on environmental sustainability and protecting coral reefs and marine turtles, with incentives for local investments

- Attracting investments and developing financing: Offering investment incentives, such as "Blue Bonds," to support sustainable projects in the



H.E. Sheikh Ahmed Al Kathiri: Al Wusta Governorate is an active economic partner in driving **Oman Vision 2040**



impact

logistics hub

Vision 2040



H.E. Sheikh Khalifa Al Harthy: The 'Blue Economy' holds immense economic potential

blue economy, while monitoring performance indicators to ensure positive environmental and societal

- Raising environmental awareness: Organising awareness campaigns to educate the public on the importance of the blue economy and encourage the protection of marine resources

- Enhancing marine infrastructure: Developing ports and maritime infrastructure to support the blue economy and position Oman as a regional

- Adopting marine-linked renewable energy: Investing in offshore wind and green hydrogen projects to support sustainability and reduce carbon emissions in line with Oman

- Commitment to achieving carbon neutrality by 2032: Attracting companies interested in sustainable investments, particularly in the maritime

transport sector

These recommendations aim to achieve sustainable development in the blue economy and ensure the sustainability of marine resources for future generations.

Strategic location

His Excellency Dr. Salem bin Salim al Junaibi, Member of State Council and Chairman of Al Wusta branch of Oman Chamber of Commerce and Industry, confirmed that the governorate established the first special economic zone, hosting the largest local and international projects and investments. It is distinguished by its strategic location overlooking the Arabian Sea and the Indian Ocean, positioning it as a commercial gateway between the East and the West.

Alternative energy sector

He added, "Oman's extensive coastline, robust port infrastructure, and anticipated growth in the alternative energy sector position it as a key player in blue economy strategies, enabling it to attract significant investment in various related projects. Thus, the fifth edition of this forum aims to outline pathways for establishing a comprehensive and clear strategy for the blue economy, making it a new investment destination for the Sultanate of Oman."

Economic potential

H.E. Sheikh Khalifa Alharthy, Undersecretary for Political Affairs at the Ministry of Foreign Affairs for

Political Affairs, highlighted that the blue economy has been a major research topic in recent decades due to the vast economic potential offered by water bodies of all types and the promising opportunities they provide for diversifying national income sources and improving citizens' living standards. In addition to traditional blue economy activities such as fisheries, maritime transport, and mineral extraction, emerging activities have recently gained prominence, including renewable energy generation, aquatic tourism, and aquaculture. He emphasised that efforts to exploit water resources and wealth must be accompanied by awareness of the importance of preserving these resources in a healthy and environmentally sound state, investing in them wisely and thoughtfully, to ensure benefits for future generations.

Diverse capabilities and resources

H.E. Sheikh Ahmed bin Muslim bin Suhail Jadad Al Kathiri, Governor of Al Wusta, explained that the governorate is one of the key national economic centres and an active partner in achieving the goals of Oman Vision 2040, due to its diverse capabilities and abundant resources. Leading among these is the oil and gas sector, noted for its significant investment value and economic impact across the Sultanate of Oman, as well as its investment opportunities. The governorate is also continuously enhancing the efficiency of developmental projects to support economic resources and improve social welfare by developing infrastructure and public services worth RO 7.5 million, and boosting entertainment projects and tourism activities valued at RO 13 million

He added that the governorate serves as a significant regional hub for the maritime logistics sector in the Wilayat of Duqm, which enjoys a strategic location with broad access to global ports and integrated industrial zones that form a critical pillar in achieving Oman Vision 2040 priorities aimed at enhancing economic diversification and creating sustainable employment opportunities.

Proposed national projects

Al Kathiri said that in the field of renewable energy, the governorate includes five out of eight national projects proposed across the Sultanate of Oman, with an investment value of USD 49 billion in green hydrogen, solar, wind energy and related projects, positioning the Sultanate of Oman in international competition.

Policies and investment plans

Saleh bin Hamoud Al-Hassani, an advisor to the chairman of OPAZ, highlighted the policies and plans being developed by the Authority to grow the blue economy. The Authority plays a vital role in promoting the blue economy through various policies and initiatives, including encouraging sustainable investments, offering incentives for blue economy projects such as aquaculture, renewable energy, and water resource management, promoting innovation, and establishing research and development centres to support innovations in marine technology, such as quality monitoring systems and sustainable fishing techniques. The Authority also focuses on infrastructure development, enhancing ports, and logistics facilities to support trade and transportation related to the blue economy, along with creating and enforcing stringent environmental standards to protect marine biodiversity and reduce pollution.

Growth and investment facilitation

Al-Hassani explained that the Authority's role in expanding the blue economy includes facilitating investment through incentives like tax exemptions and reduced fees, encouraging investors to fund projects such as sustainable fishing, aquaculture, and maritime tourism. The development of infrastructure in special economic zones supports maritime activities through ports and logistics facilities, easing commercial movements and creating a favourable work environment. The Authority also encourages innovation by offering flexible environments for busi-



OPAZ encourages sustainable investments to support the 'Blue Economy' nesses to explore fields like marine technology and clean energy solutions, enhancing water resource sustainability. Additionally, it promotes education and training, developing programmes focused on skills related to maritime industries, thereby improving competency and creating jobs within the sector.

Tax incentives and flexible regulations

Al-Hassani noted that in recent years, the Authority has undergone notable developments, becoming significant investment magnets that stimulate economic growth and job creation by offering tax incentives and flexible regulations that facilitate the operations of local and international businesses. Among its key achievements are economic diversification, increased trade volume, and the development of advanced infrastructure, which supports the movement of goods and services. Furthermore, these zones have fostered the development of new sectors such as renewable energy (green hydrogen), technology, and innovation, reflecting the adaptability of special economic zones and free zones to global economic changes. Additionally, free zones have become integral to national economic strategies.

> لدةم 2025 Dugm



Congratulations and warm wishes to His Majesty Sultan Haitham bin Tarik - may Allah protect him -

and the citizens of Oman on the occasion of the Accession Day



Academics, business owners and economic experts affirm to

Sustainability of projects depends on efficiency, financial policies, diversified funding and innovative solutions



Muscat - الدِقْم :

Strengthening collaboration between the public and private sectors has become an urgent necessity to implement policies and strategies aimed at attracting long-term investments that align with sustainability standards.

This discussion focuses on the role of economic zones and free zones in promoting sustainable development, the challenges projects face in this context, and the best approaches to achieving a balance between profitability and environmental protection.

A group of economic experts, academics, and business leaders emphasised that achieving sustainability in projects within economic zones, free zones, and industrial cities requires the establishment of an integrated framework of supportive policies and the development of infrastructure. Such measures contribute to attracting environmentally and socially responsible investments.

In a survey conducted by Economic Dugm, they highlighted that adopting modern technologies and innovating operational processes directly help reduce emissions and natural resource consumption, enhancing projects' ability to tackle future environmental challenges. The experts also underscored the importance of fostering collaboration between the public and private sectors to develop training and awareness programs that build a culture of sustainability among workers and project owners. They affirmed that this collaboration is a crucial driver for achieving sustainable economic growth and significantly boosting the local economy.

Accounting, financial and economic indicators

Prof. Saeed Al-Muharrami, a mem-



Prof. Saeed Al-Muharrami: Projects that rely on technology can reduce operational costs and increase annual profits

ber of the State Council and Professor of Finance at Sultan Qaboos University (SQU), provides a comprehensive perspective on accounting, financial, and economic indicators that reflect the health and sustainability of economic projects. He stated that several key indicators include:

- Continuous growth in financial • revenues from company operations: Revenue growth is a positive indicator of increased net profits for projects.
- Reduction in direct costs of production operations: Lower direct costs reflect improved operational efficiency.
- Reduction in indirect costs, or overhead expenses: Lower overhead expenses contribute to higher net profits.
- Greater reliance on partners' equity rather than loans: Projects should primarily depend on partners' equity instead of loans, as a higher reliance on costly loans increases the risk of project failure and threatens sustainability.
- Points 1 to 4 lead to increased net profits: These factors also lower risks, enhancing the sustainability and longevity of projects.
- Contribution to GDP and local em-• ployment: Projects that contribute to the GDP, employ citizens and



Integrated approach

Murtadha bin Hassan bin Ali, a businessman and public affairs writer, emphasised that achieving sustainability in economic projects through strengthened public-private sector collaboration requires adopting a comprehensive, integrated approach. He outlined key elements essential for this collaboration:



utilise local resources in their inputs are more sustainable.

- Reduction of imports and increase in exports: Projects should work on reducing imports of similar products and increasing the export of their products abroad.
- Country benefits from these projects: Governments benefit through taxes and fees while also promoting citizen employment and reliance on local raw materials.

Profitability and sustainability

Regarding the relationship between profitability and sustainability, Al-Muharrami highlights the strong connection between increased profits and the sustainability of projects. Profitable projects tend to survive, grow, and expand, often introducing new production lines or opening branches in new areas. Conversely, financially struggling projects that incur losses cannot endure for long and may exit the market in a very short time. Profitable projects continue to contribute to the economy and increase their share in the GDP, while the opposite is true for loss-making projects.

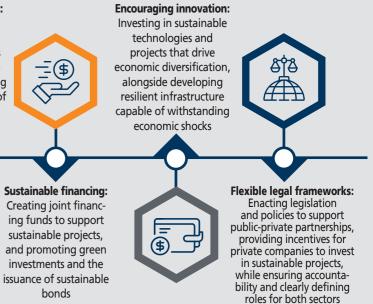
Technological innovation role

January 2025 Dugm

He also highlighted the role of technological innovation in supporting project sustainability, noting that allocating a portion of sales to research and

Murtadha Hassan: Using performance indicators to measure success and evaluate projects, alongside reviewing past experiences, helps leverage successes and avoid failures





development enhances a project's ability to improve efficiency and increase production through the use of technology. This approach reduces operational costs and boosts profits. He added that successful projects often allocate an annual percentage of sales to research and development, which can reach up to 5% for some projects. Continuous investment in research and development allows projects to leverage technology to increase production and improve overall operational efficiency.

He further pointed out that a knowledge-based economy relies on the utilisation of technology to enhance production, subsequently increasing revenues and profits. Projects that integrate technology into their operations can significantly reduce operating costs while increasing annual profits.

Environmental standards commitment

Al-Muharrami emphasised the importance of projects adhering to environmental standards, stressing that economic development should not come at the expense of the environment. He called for clear policies in economic zones, free zones, and industrial cities, urging the exclusion of projects that pose risks to people and nature, while encouraging high-value, environmentally friendly projects.

He highlighted the need for regulatory policies and clear guidelines to minimise negative environmental, social, and economic impacts. These policies, he suggested, should be made publicly accessible through the websites of economic zones, free zones, and industrial cities.

SMEs role in achieving sustainability Regarding the role of small and medi-

um enterprises (SMEs) in achieving sus-

tainability within free zones and industrial cities, Murtadha highlighted the importance of establishing SMEs based on successful global models to play a key role in enhancing sustainability in these zones. He outlined key practices to achieve this:

Adopting sustainable practices: Implementing energy efficiency measures, waste management strategies, and technologies that conserve water resources.

Manufacturing eco-friendly products: Developing biodegradable and recyclable products using sustainable raw materials.

Participating in the circular economy: Collaborating with other companies to exchange resources and reuse industrial waste.

Digital transformation: Leveraging digital technologies to improve efficiency and minimise waste.

Building partnerships to promote sustainability: Collaborating with large companies and participating in collective projects to strengthen sustainable practices.

Complying with environmental standards: Obtaining international certifications like ISO 14001 to enhance environmental credibility.

These practices underline the significant role SMEs can play in fostering sustainability, contributing to the environmental, economic, and social development of free zones and industrial cities.

Investment policies and sustainability

Regarding the alignment of investment policies to fund environmentally and socially sustainable projects, Murtadha highlighted the necessity of adopting a set of integrated measures, including:

Supportive legal framework: Enacting legislation that incentivises investments in renewable energy, recycling, and organic farming.

Establishment of sustainable funding mechanisms: Creating funds to support clean energy projects and technologies that reduce emissions.

Encouraging green investments: Offering tax breaks, grants, and low-interest loans for projects that achieve sustainability goals.

Capacity building: Developing local expertise in green economy concepts and responsible investment practices.

Impact monitoring: Using performance indicators to evaluate the environmental and social impact of projects and issuing regular reports.

Awareness and community engage-



ment: Raising awareness of the benefits of sustainable investment and involving local communities in project implementation.

Murtadha further emphasised that implementing these policies in an integrated manner enhances collaboration between the public and private sectors, striking a balance between economic growth and preserving environmental and social resources. This approach supports sustainable development at both local and global levels.

Building sustainable economy

Dr Rajab bin Ali Al Owaisi, an expert on social and educational studies at the State Council, emphasised that achieving sustainability in economic projects is a strategic choice for Oman, aligned with modern economic trends and the Oman Vision 2040. He noted that sustainability is not merely an economic concept but a comprehensive framework that integrates the economy, environment, and society to



Dr. Rajab Al Owaisi: Strengthening strategic partnerships with regional and global markets can enhance the competitiveness of Omani products

achieve holistic and sustainable development.

Sustainability within Oman Vision 2040

Al Owaisi explained that Oman Vision 2040 places sustainability as a top priority within its development plans, aiming to balance economic growth with environmental protection while preserving resources for future generations. He emphasised that aligning economic pathways with sustainability values supports the stability of the national economy and enhances its resilience to regional and global challenges. He pointed out that this approach requires a qualitative shift in attracting investments and promoting promising, high-value-added industries. He added that an innovation- and knowledge-based economy can significantly boost local content and enhance production efficiency, meeting the needs of both domestic and international markets.

Green economy significance

Al Owaisi highlighted the need to shift towards a green economy, emphasising the importance of adopting clean technologies such as artificial intelligence and digital solutions to minimise negative environmental impacts and enhance industrial efficiency. He stressed that investing in renewable energy technologies and sustainable manufacturing industries can support Oman's goal of achieving carbon neutrality.

He also underscored the importance of leveraging renewable natural resources and recycling industrial waste, considering these as pillars of the circular economy. This approach enhances sustainability by improving resource efficiency and reducing waste.

Role of special economic zones and free zones Al Owaisi emphasised that Oman's



special economic zones and free zones serve as vital platforms for achieving economic sustainability. These zones provide a conducive environment for attracting long-term investments and fostering manufacturing industries that add value to the national economy. He highlighted that strengthening strategic partnerships with regional and global markets can enhance the competitiveness of Omani products. He also called for the development of Oman's ports, transportation networks, and logistics systems to support trade and achieve logistical sustainability, solidifying the position of the Sultanate of Oman as a global economic and logistical hub.

Challenges and future opportunities

Al Owaisi discussed the importance of addressing challenges that may hinder sustainability, such as the need to develop national skills and improve industrial production policies. He emphasised investing in research and development to foster innovation and suggested establishing specialised centres to advance local industries and provide modern technical solutions. Furthermore, he stressed the significance of building human capacities and supporting the national workforce, highlighting the essential role of education and training in preparing skilled individuals for modern economic sectors.

Sustainability as a comprehensive concept

Al Owaisi pointed out that sustainability is not merely an economic element but an integrated system that links the economy, society, and the environment. Achieving sustainable development, he noted, requires collaboration between the public and private sectors, along with raising societal awareness about the importance of sustainability as a means of ensuring long-term prosperity for all.

Financing and regulatory strategies

Mustafa bin Ahmed bin Salman, Chairman and CEO of United Securities, emphasised the pivotal role of financing and regulatory strategies in ensuring the sustainability of projects within free zones. He highlighted the need for clear frameworks and laws to facilitate access to financing and regulate cash flow, thereby improving the success rate of projects. These frameworks, he noted, also enhance the appeal of free zones as trustworthy investment destinations.

He underscored the importance of





adhering to social and environmental standards, particularly for projects managed by foreign entities, cautioning that non-compliance could lead to local disapproval and damage the reputation of free zones. Mustafa advocated for clear guidelines aligned with local values to prevent conflicts and safeguard the zones' status as attractive hubs for investment.

ment policies that focus on: porting the green economy. communities.





Suggestions for enhancing sustainability

Mustafa proposed adopting invest-

Tax incentives and affordable financing for companies investing in clean technology and renewable energy, sup-

Strengthening partnerships with the private sector to invest in projects with social and environmental value and promoting initiatives that benefit local

Mandating environmental and social disclosure requirements, obligating companies to provide transparent re-

Mustafa Ahmed: Ensuring project sustainability requires adopting a comprehensive framework that includes social, environmental, and financial standards

ports on their environmental and social performance, which would boost investor confidence and support sustainable projects.

He noted that global investment institutions rely on Environmental, Social and Governance (ESG) criteria, where companies are scored based on their adherence to these standards. Such evaluations directly impact the financing and investment prospects of companies excelling in this area.

Sustainability metrics

On the key indicators for evaluating project sustainability, Mustafa highlighted the following focus areas:

Environmental performance: Measuring energy and water consumption, waste management, and carbon emissions.

Social responsibility: Assessing the project's impact on local communities in terms of job creation and community development.

Profitability and financial sustainability: Evaluating long-term financial performance and the project's ability to sustain operations without recurrent reliance on external funding.

This comprehensive approach demonstrates a clear pathway for fostering sustainability and enhancing economic growth in Oman's free zones and industrial cities.

Ensuring sustainability and lowering negative impacts

Mustafa bin Ahmed emphasised that ensuring project sustainability requires adopting a comprehensive framework encompassing social, environmental and financial standards. He called for mandating companies to conduct environmental and social feasibility studies before launching new projects, involving local communities to meet their needs and minimise negative impacts. He concluded by stressing that collaboration between businesses and local communities, along with adherence to transparency and environmental and social standards, is the best path to sustainable projects and their longterm success.

Enhancing environmental sustainability

Khalfan Al Touqi, an Omani economic analyst, underlined the importance of environmental sustainability and attracting long-term investments through an integrated "ecosystem" model. He highlighted the need for government incentives, such as competitive pricing for water, electricity, and energy, and the strategic location of industrial cities near ports, airports, or border crossings.

Al Tougi also emphasised the importance of providing comprehensive residential and service facilities, including housing, healthcare, and recreational



essential to monitor factory performance regularly through reports and field visits to identify and address challenges

centres, to enhance worker stability and productivity. He called for fostering industrial environments that can compete with densely populated consumer markets. Additionally, he stressed the role of the private sector in conducting thorough feasibility studies and urged the government to support projects by providing the infrastructure needed for production, distribution and export.

He warned that technological challenges pose significant risks to factories, noting that failure to adopt advanced technologies and artificial intelligence could lead to their exit from the market, harming project owners, the national economy, and the industrial sector as a whole. Al Tougi called for raising awareness and supporting investors to adapt to modern technologies, ensuring project sustainability and achieving sustainable development goals.

Compliance and legislation

Ahmed bin Saleh Al Farsi, General Manager of Compliance and Legislation Sector at the Public Authority for Special Economic Zones and Free Zones (OPAZ), highlighted the Authority's commitment to Oman Vision 2040, aiming to position Oman as a global investment hub. He noted that the Authority's efforts align with its pivotal role in attracting domestic and foreign investments, necessitating a comprehensive legislative system to support a stable business environment and protect investors.

He explained that the Authority continuously updates regulations and legislations to align with global developments, enhancing the appeal of economic, industrial, and free zones as prime investment destinations.

Zones as an ideal investment destination

Al Farsi stated that the Authority envisions making the zones under its supervision the "Ideal investment destination." To achieve this, the Authority adopted an institutional transformation programme, unifying the legislative framework for economic, industrial, and free zones while establishing clear mechanisms for guarantees, benefits, and incentives for economic activities.

The Authority is also working on drafting the "Special Economic Zones and Free Zones Law" to strengthen the legal and regulatory framework for partnerships and investments, attract

foreign investments, create job opportunities, and boost Omani exports. This includes preparing executive requlations to streamline the law's application, providing greater flexibility for future expansion and the establishment of additional economic zones.

Enhancing project sustainability

On project sustainability, Al Farsi reaffirmed the Authority's commitment to providing integrated infrastructure that meets future development needs. The Authority adopts a proactive ap-



Authority is committed to providing sustainable and advanced services, enhancing investment appeal, and achieving comprehensive development in economic zones and free zones

proach to delivering high-guality services, including electricity, water, and gas, through regular field visits to analyse data and assess services. It also provides detailed recommendations to service providers to improve performance and ensure service sustainability based on future growth projections.

He highlighted ongoing efforts to streamline procedures for obtaining renewable energy certifications as an incentive for industrial investments. The Authority also plans renewable energy projects to boost electrical capacity and reduce carbon emissions, aligning with global environmental trends.

Balancing economic growth and environmental protection

Al Farsi added, "To continue the Authority's growing role in balancing economic growth and environmental protection for sustainable development, several environmental impact assessment studies have been reviewed and approved. These include the environmental impact study for the Al Rawdha Economic Zone and the environmental framework study for the Integrated Economic Zone in Al Dhahirah Governorate."

He concluded by reaffirming the Authority's commitment to providing sustainable and advanced services, enhancing investment appeal, and driving comprehensive development in economic zones and free zones, in line with the goals and aspirations of Oman Vision 2040.

January Duom

Investment

The Authority has implemented several qualitative initiatives that have resulted in improved service delivery procedures

Muscat - الدِفْرِم :

Dr. Said bin Khalifa Al Quraini, Director General of Investment Development at the Public Authority for Special Economic Zones and Free Zones (OPAZ), confirmed that the Authority achieved exceptional accomplishments during 2024, reflecting an attractive investment destination. its commitment to enhancing the investment environment and attracting local and international investments, thereby contrib-Initiatives to improve the business environment Regarding initiatives undertaken by the Authority to improve uting to sustainable economic development. He noted that the the business environment in special economic zones, the Direccommitted investment volume in economic zones, free zones and industrial cities exceeded RO 20.10 billion by the end of tor General of Investment Development at OPAZ stated: 2024, representing a 20 per cent increase compared to 2023. "The initiatives implemented by the Public Authority for The number of strategic projects registered on the "Tracking" Special Economic Zones and Free Zones during 2023 to enplatform reached approximately 250 projects across various hance the business environment in its supervised zones have economic sectors, led by the renewable energy and hydrogen achieved significant milestones. These initiatives aim to create production sector with 48 projects, followed by the industrial an investment-friendly climate by addressing economic factors sector with 41 projects. and establishing an attractive investment environment. This, in

In an interview with Economic Dugm, Al Quraini explained turn, boosts investor confidence, encouraging and motivating that the Authority implemented several qualitative initiatives investment in economic zones, free zones, and industrial citthat improved service delivery procedures. The processing time ies in the Sultanate of Oman. The initiatives have focused on for completing procedures was reduced by 80 per cent through attracting investments, offering incentives, streamlining proceautomation and process re-engineering. He added: "We mandures, reviewing legislation, and strengthening marketing and aged to reduce the licensing issuance time

from 15 days to just 30 minutes, and activated an instant online land selection service, reflecting our commitment to providing excellent and efficient services to investors."

He further noted that the Authority addressed challenges for 38 projects in its supervised zones in coordination with relevant entities to ensure their continuity and stability. Additionally, significant efforts were made to support localisation, creating 3,273 job opportunities for Omanis by the end of October 2024.

Investors requests

Al Quraini added that the Authority responded to 4,878 requests from investors, which included services such as residency visas, tax exemptions, and work permits. It also enhanced procedures for registering usufruct agreements and mortgage contracts, reduced container clearance fees, and extended free storage periods. As part of its efforts to promote invest-



ment, he confirmed that the Authority organised 22 domestic promotional campaigns and 6 international campaigns targeting key sectors such as renewable energy, petrochemical industries, pharmaceuticals, and food and fisheries. He noted that these efforts contributed to strengthening Oman's position as

Dr. Said Al Quraini: **OPAZ** intends to launch a programme to attract petrochemical industries in 2025

promotional efforts."

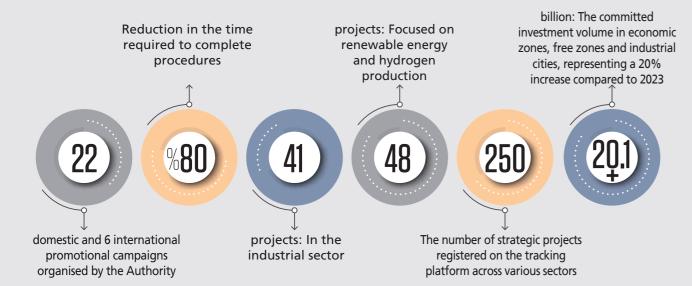
New projects and development plans

Al Quraini also touched on the new projects and development plans currently under implementation. He said, "The Authority is executing strategic projects that support the national economy, including the polysilicon project in the Sohar Free Zone, with investments exceeding RO 520 million. This project aims to develop solar panel manufacturing and support green hydrogen initiatives, in addition to creating direct and indirect job opportunities."

He highlighted the commencement of construction for the ACME project in Duqm, which focuses on producing green hydrogen and ammonia and is considered one of the key projects in the region.

Focus on AI and smart cities

Al Quraini added, "The Authority is working to attract investments in artificial intelligence, including drone technolo-



gies and aquaponics. It is also developing the AI Zone in Duqm to serve as a research hub, contributing to transforming Duqm into a smart city."

Adopting modern technologies

In line with adopting advanced technologies, Al Quraini explained that the Authority has successfully localised cryptocurrency mining investments in coordination with relevant authorities. Additionally, efforts are underway to enhance the value propositions of targeted sectors, aiming to strengthen the investment environment and achieve sustainable development.

Attracting foreign investments

Al Quraini explained that OPAZ focuses on marketing and promoting strategic lands and sites under its supervision to attract new investors and expand the investments of existing companies. This is achieved by leveraging high-quality infrastructure that facilitates the establishment of factories and new facilities.

Special Economic Zone at Duqm (SEZAD): Al Quraini said, "The Special Economic Zone at Duqm (SEZAD) is particularly attractive to both local and international investors. It is one of the largest economic zones in the Middle East and North Africa region, spanning an area of more than 2,000 square kilometres. With its strategic location and advancements in the green energy sector, it has become a prime destination for green industries. In 2023, five international consortia secured land investments in SEZAD and surrounding areas to produce green hydrogen. These consortia committed over \$30 billion to establish solar and wind energy facilities for generating green electricity in the region. Additionally, in 2024, three other green energy projects were approved near the Salalah Free Zone."

Al Quraini added, "The company Hydrom will allocate additional land in northern Oman, near the Sohar Port and Free Zone, for foreign direct investments. These developments are key attractions for international companies aiming to transition their operations to environmentally friendly practices.

The Authority expects the Sultanate of Oman to be promoted as a global destination for green industries in the coming years. Preliminary studies indicate a growing demand for equipment in the green hydrogen production sector, prompting the Authority to attract global manufacturers to establish their projects and production lines in its zones."

Key investment sectors

Al Quraini outlined the main sectors targeted for foreign and local direct investments:

- Food and fisheries industries.
- Petrochemical industries.
- Green steel and iron (downstream)
- Medical and pharmaceutical industries
- Green energy (downstream)

Investment incentives

- The Authority offers a range of incentives for projects within its zones, including:
- Corporate tax exemption for up to 30 years
- No minimum capital requirement for projects
- Full freedom of capital movement in and out of Oman
- Omanisation rates capped at 10%
- Other tailored incentives aligned with project requirements

Workforce development

Al Quraini stressed that programmes are in place to train and upskill Omanis to meet the needs of various projects. These programmes are coordinated between the Authority and the Ministry of Labour, ensuring that foreign direct investment projects requiring specialised skills are supported by qualified Omani workers capable of fulfilling operational roles during the execution phase.

Transition to carbon-free future

Al Quraini highlighted the impact of global economic transitions on investment strategies in the zones supervised by the Authority, stating, "The transition towards a carbon-free future is the primary economic shift currently unfolding on a global scale. The Sultanate of Oman is uniquely positioned to lead this initiative, aligning with global trends and Oman Vision 2040, which aims to achieve net-zero emissions by 2050. This is made possible by Oman's abundant and sustainable natural resources, such as solar and wind energy, which are the key components for producing green energy."

He added that carbon-free electricity generation initiatives enjoy full support from the Government of Oman. Hydrogen Oman (Hydrom), the entity responsible for developing the green hydrogen sector, is actively engaged in allocating and granting lands for green electricity generation projects.

Challenges and development

Regarding how the Authority addresses current challenges in attracting investments and developing special economic zones, free zones and industrial cities to secure a global share of investments, Al Quraini stated, "The Authority analyses global and regional markets and monitors economic indicators using



specialised tools. Based on the analysis results, we track potential investments and engage with them through a targeted outreach plan.

In 2024, the Authority connected with 381 companies. Additionally, it collaborates closely with key entities such as Invest Oman, the Oman Investment Authority, and Omani embassies and consulates worldwide to attract foreign capital and localise investments in zones under the Authority's supervision."

He added, "In 2025, the Authority plans to launch a programme specifically to attract petrochemical industries. As the zones develop in the coming years, we will continue to attract investments in other high-value sectors, such as Information and Communication Technology (ICT), heavy machinery and equipment manufacturing, and recycling industries."

Launch of the infrastructure project of the Integrated Economic Zone at Al Dhahirah

Muscat - الجوم :

The Public Authority for Special Economic Zones and Free Zones (OPAZ) has launched the infrastructure project for the Integrated Economic Zone at Al Dhahirah Governorate (EZAD) as part of its plans to develop vital areas and boost trade with the Kingdom of Saudi Arabia.

The project, funded by the Saudi Fund for Development (SFD), includes constructing a 14.8-kilometre single-lane main road, a 2-kilometre dual-lane road, two roundabouts on the current national road, and five roundabouts on the main road. It also involves building dedicated entrances for the roundabouts, constructing the necessary sidewalks, conducting excavation works, building rainwater drainage channels, implementing protective measures, providing parking facilities, and installing traffic signs, road markings, and other services.

The project also includes constructing a 6.3-kilometre-long and 250-metre-wide wadi channel to mitigate flood risks. This entails excavation and leveling, building protective dams, and constructing box culverts crossing the current national road.

As part of the Integrated Economic Zone development at Al Dhahirah Governorate, the project involves reconstructing a section of the existing nation-

Dugm 2025





Eng. Ibrahim Al Zadjali: "OPAZ will gradually announce tender packages for the remaining phases of infrastructure development in the Zone"

Sustainability and environmental preservation

Al Quraini highlighted the Authority's commitment to supporting sustainability projects through stringent environmental licensing procedures, environmental impact assessments, and encouraging investments in renewable energy. He added that the Authority focuses on attracting investments that rely on clean technology and green manufacturing practices.

In conclusion, Dr Said bin Khalifa Al Quraini, Director General of the Investment Development Sector, emphasised that the Authority works in close coordination with relevant entities to ensure that investment projects align with national development goals. He also reaffirmed the focus on prioritising economic sectors that enhance the national economy and achieve sustainable development.

> al road at the proposed channel crossing. This includes paving dirt roads, protecting the roadway, installing traffic signs and markings, and safeguarding the current gas pipeline according to the approved plan and necessary permits.

Eng. Ibrahim bin Yusuf Al Zadjali, Project Manager for the Integrated Economic Zone at Al Dhahirah, emphasised that this initiative is part of the Authority's plan to develop the area near the Empty Quarter border crossing, linking Oman and Saudi Arabia. This region is being developed in collaboration with Saudi counterparts to enhance bilateral trade between the two nations.

He noted that the project was launched following the awarding of the consultancy services tender for designing and supervising phase one infrastructure to a consortium of an Omani and Saudi company.

Al Zadjali also highlighted that the Public Authority for Special Economic Zones and Free Zones will gradually issue tenders for the remaining infrastructure development phases of the Integrated Economic Zone, which spans 388 square kilometres and is located 20 kilometres from the Empty Quarter border crossing. The Zone is envisioned to open new horizons for the Omani and GCC economies, leveraging the area's competitive advantages and strategic geographic location.

FDI in Sohar Port and Freezone totals RO

Sohar -

Sohar Port and Freezone have achieved remarkable growth in foreign direct investments (FDI), reaching RO 11.5 billion (USD 30 billion), with over RO 1.5 billion (USD 4 billion) in new investments secured during the first nine months of 2024.

Emile Hoogsteden, CEO of Sohar Port highlighted that this growth has led to the signing of 12 new agreements in the Sohar Freezone for the establishment of manufacturing projects, reaffirming the Freezone's vital role in driving national economic growth and development.

The logistics operations at Sohar Port have also seen substantial progress. Container volumes rose by 21 per cent year-on-year, general cargo volumes increased by 45 per cent, ship-to-ship cargo handling grew by 30 per cent, and roll-on/roll-off cargo volumes expanded by 25 per cent. These figures reflect Sohar Port's capabilities to meet the growing demand for logistics services in the shipping and maritime sectors.

In the Freezone, tangible growth continues, with land lease occupancy reaching 85 per cent in Phase 1 and 55 per cent in Phase 2. Additionally, 10 new lease agreements have been signed, showcasing the momentum in commercial and investment activities. Total investment in the Freezone has reached RO 1.266 billion (USD 3.292 billion), highlighting the region's economic expansion and the confidence investors have in the incentives and advantages offered.

Mohammed Al Shizawi, Acting CEO of Sohar Freezone, stated that in 2024 alone, the Freezone attracted new investments worth RO 713 million (USD 1.853 billion). Strategic expansion efforts continue, with the Freezone now hosting companies from 49 different countries. Al-Shizawi also noted an 8.61 per cent increase in warehouse space within the Freezone, driven by rising demand for land and enhanced effi-



billion

Emil Hoogsteden: Signing of 12 new agreements to establish several manufacturing projects.

Mohammed Al Shizawi: The Freezone hosts companies from 49 different countries

ciency in warehouse operations.

Sohar Port and Freezone are committed to maximising local benefits through substantial contributions to in-country value (ICV). By the end of September 2024, the total value of contracts awarded to local companies and projects had increased by 240 per cent compared to the same period in 2023.

The Port and Freezone also remain dedicated to community engagement through social responsibility initiatives focused on education and entrepreneurship. In 2024, they launched 16 initiatives and projects, benefiting over 56,411 members of the local community, underscoring their commitment to sustainable growth and social development.





Total investment in AI Buraimi Industrial City amounts to RO 277 million

Al Buraimi — Economic Dugm Al Buraimi Industrial City has witnessed continuous growth in investments and the number of localised companies. To date, the total investment in the city amounts to approximately RO 277 million, covering various projects established since its inception. The number of active companies in the city is estimated

at over 450, operating in diverse sectors such as manufacturing, storage and logistics. These companies represent a mix of local and foreign enterprises, contributing to the economic diversity of the city.

Saeed bin Abdullah Al Balushi, Director General of Al Buraimi Industrial City, stated that the Masar Service Centre serves as a unified gateway offering investors all necessary permits and licences through an integrated system involving government entities such as the Ministry of Commerce, Industry and Investment Promotion, the Ministry of Labour, and the Oman Chamber of Commerce and Industry. This system accelerates project completion and provides specialised services for each economic sector.

of 14.4 million square metres, of which more than 4.2 million square metres have been developed. It is geographically divided into two separate areas, with an occupancy rate of 47 per cent. The city benefits from a strategic loca-

He noted that the city spans an area

Completion of infrastructure in Ibri Industrial City

lbri - සංකා :

Ibri Industrial City, affiliated with the Public Establishment for Industrial Estates (Madayn), forms an integrated environment for the industrial and logistics sectors in Al Dhahirah Governorate specifically, and the Sultanate of Oman in general. It offers a suitable environment for the private sector to engage in various industrial, commercial, and service activities, establish businesses, and set up companies due to its advantages, incentives, and facilities.

Engineer Hamoud bin Mohammed Al Khalili, Director of Operations at Ibri Industrial City, highlighted that the city's strategic location-about 150 kilometres from the Rub' Al Khali border crossing with Saudi Arabia and about 180 kilometres from the Hafeet border crossing with the United Arab Emirates—presents opportunities for establishing industries linked to the abundant natural resources in Al Dhahirah Governorate, such as gold, gypsum, marble, petroleum and agricultural and animal wealth. The city



Eng. Hamoud Al Khalili: Currently, the integrated station project is being implemented with an estimated investment cost of RO 1.5 million. It includes a fuel filling station, a rest area and a service station for trucks and cars

Dugm 2025

metres. He said that Madayn invested RO 9 million in developing and preparing the infrastructure for the first phase, covering an area of 3 million square metres,



Saeed Al Balushi: The city is divided into two geographically separate areas, with an occupancy rate of 47%

The number of operating companies in Al Buraimi Industrial City is estimated at over 450, covering various sectors

tion on the border with the United Arab Emirates, facilitating access to GCC mar-

kets and providing a significant competitive advantage through nearby highways and ports, such as Sohar Port.

He emphasised that the key sectors and investments in Al Buraimi Industrial City include a variety of industries, such as food industries, manufacturing, logistics and storage services, as well as chemical and plastic industries.

He further stated, "Hafeet Rail offers a comprehensive solution to these challenges, as it will connect the city to the national railway network, enhancing trade and road transport, while reducing logistical costs. This connection will further boost the city's appeal for industrial and commercial investments."

He added that the strategy of the Public Establishment for Industrial Estates (Madayn) for Al Buraimi Industrial City is based on several key pillars to promote foreign investments. These include offering financial incentives and tax exemptions for investors, developing strategic partnerships with international investors, promoting the city at international events and exhibitions, and expanding infrastructure and upgrading service facilities.

spans a total area of 10 million square

which was inaugurated in February 2024 to create a favourable investment environment in Ibri Industrial City. This is achieved by providing all essential services and investment requirements, such as roads, lighting, electricity, water, sewage services and more.

He added that by the end of October 2024, the total investment volume in Ibri Industrial City reached approximately RO 19.6 million, with 15 established projects covering more than 183,000 square metres. These include one project in the production stage, four projects under construction, and ten projects allocated land.

He also mentioned that the integrated station project is currently underway, with an investment cost estimated at RO 1.5 million. It comprises a fuel filling station, a rest area, and a service station for trucks and cars, providing services to companies, workers in the city, and travellers along the international road leading to the Rub' Al Khali border crossing with Saudi Arabia. He confirmed that the infrastructure and services in Ibri Industrial City have been completed at 100 per cent.

Initiatives to improve the health of OPAZ employees

Muscat - දියුවූ :

The Public Authority for Special Economic Zones and Free Zones (OPAZ) places great importance on improving the health and well-being of its employees through a series of initiatives aimed at enhancing public health and welfare.

In 2024, several health initiatives were implemented for employees with the aim of improving performance efficiency, creating suitable workplace conditions, raising awareness on how to handle emergencies and prevent chronic diseases, fostering positive thinking, preparing employees to cope with work pressures, and equipping them with the necessary skills to deal with challenges they may face in their daily work or personal lives.

Abdulmajeed bin Abdullah Al Ansari, General Manager of the Support Services Sector at the OPAZ, stated that these initiatives align with the strategic plan of the Authority as part of the Institutional Excellence Programme. One of its goals is to ensure that the Authority's management takes the necessary measures to guarantee employees enjoy good health and possess skills suited to the nature of the Authority's work and its objectives.

He added that the year 2024 witnessed the implementation of several periodic health examinations to ensure employees' physical health during working hours. Additionally, a series of workshops and initiatives were carried out for Authority employees, including first aid training, proper nutrition guidance, and raising awareness about maintaining general health through the early detection of chronic diseases, God forbid. This included a mental health initiative focused on managing work pressures and adopting a positive outlook on work and life in general. These initiatives were implemented in collaboration with several private hospitals and health centers.

Al Ansari emphasised that the programmes implemented this year included awareness on first aid meth-



ods, both at work and at home, focusing on training employees to handle various emergencies such as burns, fractures, wounds, drowning, head injuries, choking, cardiac arrest and other situations, God forbid, with the aim of providing necessary assistance to those in need at work or home until medical care arrives.

As a parallel administrative step, the Authority's building was equipped to ensure the availability of first aid kits and medical devices for checking blood sugar levels, blood pressure, and temperature. A mini pharmacy was also established, containing medications for seasonal illnesses. Employees were trained and certified as licensed first responders to assist their colleagues, families and friends, as part of a broader community service initiative



Abdulmajeed Al Ansari: Last year saw the implementation of numerous other initiatives aimed at employees, positively impacting the services provided by the Authority to investors

beyond the official work environment.

The Authority also focused on improving employees' awareness of healthy eating habits, emphasising the importance of proper nutrition and its impact on physical and mental health, enhancing energy, productivity, and

protecting against chronic diseases such as obesity, heart disease, diabetes, and hypertension. This initiative included workshops on healthy eating, weight checks with BMI calculations, and nutritional consultations provided by specialists periodically invited by the Authority. The initiative aimed to improve employees' dietary habits, benefiting both them and the Authority by reducing absenteeism due to illness, promoting physical activity, and improving overall physical and mental health.

Under the slogan "Positivity and Well-being," a mental health initiative was launched, featuring various activities, including a workshop on positive thinking and managing early signs of burnout, individual consultations with specialised physicians, health checks for blood sugar, blood pressure, and vision, and a dialogue session conducted in collaboration with a specialised psychological and social counseling center. This initiative was aligned with World Mental Health Day on October 10, 2024, aiming to enhance employees' positive outlook on life, improve mental health, increase productivity, reduce stress, and develop coping skills through tools and strategies that help employees manage daily pressures and challenges.

Al Ansari added that last year also witnessed the implementation of many other initiatives targeted at employees, positively reflecting on the services provided by the Authority to investors in economic zones, free zones and industrial cities. He noted that these initiatives contributed to increased productivity, faster task completion, enhanced social relationships, and the creation of a supportive environment that promotes employee well-being and satisfaction.





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Innovative Project

Zone 88 projects will enhance Oman's position as a leading destination in the space sector and open extensive horizons for foreign investment



Eng. Bahiya Al Shuaibi: The Space Settlement Centre aims to create an environment that simulates living in space, such as on Mars and the Moon, and studies the behaviour of astronauts before joining manned space missions, serving as a training hub and supporter of scientific tourism

Duqm - 윤승과 :

The Zone 88 project, developed by the International Space and Technology Company, stands out as one of the leading projects in the Sultanate of Oman. Situated in Dugm, this scientific and economic hub aims to foster development in the space and advanced



The Global Space and Technology Company recently obtained a license for the Drone Technology Centre from the Civil **Aviation Authority**

technology sectors through a series of ambitious global projects.

Interest and establishment

Eng. Bahiya bint Hilal bin Sultan Al Shuaibi, the Founder and CEO of the Global Space and Technology Company, highlighted to " symbol enhancing the representation of the Sultanate of Oman at international forums through its membership in the Space Advisory Council - that the International Space and Technology Company has focused on contributing to establishing the space sector in the Sultanate. Given the Sultanate's supportive geographic location, political stability, and diverse investment opportunities, the company embraced the idea of establishing platforms for commercial spacecraft launches. This pioneering study has paved the way for a new generation of skilled Omani youth in the space sector and its related fields, high-

January Dugm

Zone 88 area includes 5 global projects

lighting the scientific and economic significance of this sector.

The Company holds a license for the Drone Technology Centre from the Civil Aviation Authority. The Space Settlement Centre project is currently under construction, with a completion rate of 25 per cent.

Comprehensive strategy and global recognition

لدِصْم ₂₀₂₅ January 2025

The Global Space and Technology Company works on a comprehensive strategy to develop global, regional and local projects and capabilities in the space sector. On a global scale, it collaborates with major space and technology institutions, forging partnerships that elevate the Sultanate of Oman as a regional hub for advanced technology development and localisation. Regionally, the Zone 88 projects address growing sector needs, including initiatives like the Space Settlement Centre, commercial launch platform, Drone Technology Centre, and experimentation zone. These efforts are expected to significantly impact the local economy by transferring technology and knowledge, creating diverse job opportunities, and en

COB) in the United States. Promoting innovation and economic development

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Space Settlement Centre: This Centre seeks to create an environment that simulates life in space, such as on Mars and the Moon, studying the behaviour of astronauts before they join manned space missions

Commercial Spacecraft Launch Site: This site is one of the world's most important locations for establishing an investment hub for commercial spacecraft launches

Drone Technology Centre: This centre provides a scientific and applied environment for aerial, terrestrial, and marine drones and their associated systems

Artificial Intelligence (AI) and Advanced Technology Experimentation Zone: This Zone facilitates experimental research and tests linked to space and artificial intelligence for companies and scientific institutions

Ground Transmission and Reception Station: This station provides infrastructure services to global governments and local companies

hancing Oman's reputation as a leader in the space sector, thereby attracting extensive foreign investment.

The company has been awarded the ISO 9001:2015 Quality Management System certification, is a member of the Ejaad platform under the Ministry of Higher Education, Research and Innovation, and has received the Business Excellence Award from the World Confederation of Businesses (WORLD-

Al Shuaibi affirmed the com-

pany's steadfast commitment to boosting the Sultanate of Oman's position in the space and advanced technology sectors through its ambitious projects. With Zone 88, the company aims to establish an integrated environment that fosters innovation and sustainable economic growth.

The Company invites the local community and international partners to join this ambitious journey to build a prosperous future for all, welcoming new partnerships to enhance this vision for the Sultanate of Oman and the broader region.



Ziyad bin Ali Al Balushi - Lawyer

Omani legislation: Pillars of economic sustainability and Oman Vision 2040

Within the framework of its ambitious vision for sustainable economic development, the Sultanate of Oman is working to establish itself as a leading investment destination at both regional and international levels. Through Oman Vision 2040, which focuses on economic diversification and reducing dependence on oil resources, the Sultanate is improving its legislative and administrative framework to support the business environment. These efforts are characterised by flexibility and integration, reflecting Oman's understanding of the importance of a developed legal framework that attracts investors and protects their rights while supporting the national economy.

Foreign Capital Investment Law

Recent Omani legislation clearly highlights this commitment. The Foreign Capital Investment Law of 2019 provides foreign investors with unprecedented opportunities to own 100 per cent of companies in most sectors. In addition, the law enhances transparency and confidence through guarantees such as protection from expropriation except by a fair judicial ruling and the freedom to transfer profits and capital abroad without restrictions. These ambitious steps have enhanced the global perception of Oman's market, making it more competitive within the region.

Additionally, the Public-Private Partnership (PPP) Law is a cornerstone for attracting investments. This law enables the implementation of strategic development projects in partnership with the private sector, reducing financial burdens on the government and enhancing the quality of projects in various sectors, including education, health, transportation, and energy. This has opened up new investment opportunities and revitalised the economy.

Improving the Investment Environment

The Bankruptcy Law has played a pivotal role in improving the investment environment by providing clear mechanisms to address financial challenges faced by companies. It allows struggling companies to restructure their debts or conduct orderly liquidation while preserving the rights of creditors and investors. Such laws are critical in boosting investor confidence in Oman's market, demonstrating the Sultanate's ability to handle financial crises with flexibility.

The real estate sector has also seen significant legislative developments. Notable amendments have allowed foreign investors to own property in designated areas. This adjustment has provided a strong push for real estate investments, encouraging investors to inject new capital into this vital sector, thereby stimulating the economy significantly.

Invest Easy

Reforms have not been limited to enacting legislation but have extended to administrative aspects to ensure these laws are effectively and efficiently implemented. Oman has adopted a more flexible administrative system via Invest Easy platform, which has reduced the time and effort required to register projects and obtain licenses. It has also minimised bureaucratic procedures, making administrative processes more transparent and faster. Other electronic platforms, such as the Ministry of Labour portal, the e-Visa portal, and the Bayan Customs platform, have also contributed to supporting investment and investors, reflecting administrative flexibility and automation.

In terms of government performance, significant progress has been made through decisions and laws aimed at simplifying procedures and advancing digital trans-



formation. Manv traditional requirements and paper-based processes that once burdened individuals and businesses have been eliminated. Additionally, fees associated with various government services have been reduced or eliminated, reflecting the government's commitment to facilitating business and improving the investment environment.

Special Economic Zone at Dugm

Similarly, the Special Economic Zone at Dugm (SEZAD) is a prime example of Oman's success in implementing its economic vision. The zone's management offers a comprehensive package of legal and administrative facilities through a one-stop system. Work is currently underway to issue the Special Economic Zones and Free Zones Law, as the Council of Oman is reviewing the final draft of the law. This legislation aims to attract more investments by offering exceptional incentives such as tax exemptions and customs facilitation. Additionally, the draft law seeks to establish a flexible regulatory environment that supports diverse economic projects and contributes to achieving sustainable development, while ensuring the application of good governance principles that balance the interests of all relevant stakeholders.

Accelerating Dispute Resolution

Recognising the importance of accelerating the resolution of investor disputes, Oman issued the Law on Simplified Litigation Procedures, which aims to expedite rulings on economic cases by reducing procedural steps, leveraging modern technologies, shortening timelines, and establishing maximum timeframes for resolving cases. The law also established specialised judicial circuits to handle investment-related cases swiftly and transparently, further boosting investor confidence.

Given the significance of commercial arbitration as a means of dispute resolution, Oman has prioritised developing this area by establishing the Oman Commercial Arbitration Centre under Royal Decree No. 26/2018. This strategic step aims to enhance

لدِصْم _{January} 2025

the investment and business environment in Oman. The centre offers alternative solutions for resolving commercial disputes efficiently and quickly, distinct from conventional court procedures, focusing on impartiality and integrity. It provides a developed legal and regulatory framework based on international best practices in arbitration, benefiting both local and foreign companies. National Competencies Efforts are not limited to improving leg-

islation and administrative procedures but also include developing national competencies. The Royal Academy of Management, established under Royal Decree No. 2/2022, aims to train and develop promising leaders in both the public and private sectors in alignment with future needs. Through specialised and advanced training programs, the academy contributes to sustainable development in various fields. In conclusion, Omani economic and investment legislation forms a cornerstone for achieving comprehensive development and

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promoting sustainable growth. These laws enhance investor confidence and provide a flexible and innovative business environment. With a focus on simplifying procedures, embracing digital transformation,

and empowering national talent, Oman reaffirms its commitment to building a sustainable and diversified economy that meets future aspirations. These efforts reflect Oman Vision 2040's ambitious goal of creating a globally competitive economy that fosters balanced prosperity and development across various sectors.

SEZAD is a prime example of Oman's success in implementing its economic vision, thanks to an integrated package of legal and administrative facilities provided by the zone's management through its one-stop system

Economic and investment legislation in the Sultanate of Oman serves as a fundamental pillar for achieving comprehensive development and promoting sustainable growth. It boosts investor confidence and provides a flexible and innovative business environment

Ports

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Integrated commercial operation of Duqm Fishery Port will begin in October 2026

Duqm - Duqm :

Engineer Said Al Hinai, Director of Dugm Fishery Port, confirmed that the integrated commercial operation of the Port will begin at the end of 2026, positioning it as a leading regional hub for fishing and a model for green ports. The project spans 7.5 square kilometres and includes modern facilities for processing, packaging, and storing fish products.

In an exclusive interview with the Dugm Economist, Al Hinai explained that the Port is a strategic step aimed at strengthening the fishing sector in the Sultanate of Oman. It aligns with Oman Vision 2040, which seeks to diversify the economy and reduce dependency on oil. He highlighted that the Port features high capacity, allowing it to accommodate commercial fishing vessels due to its 10.5-metre deep entrance channel, which supports the growing fishing activities in the region. Furthermore, it provides extensive investment opportunities to support local SMEs, create new job opportunities, and enhance sustainable economic growth.

Operational Statistics

Regarding operational statistics, Al Hinai said that the Port saw significant activity in supporting the fisheries sector and providing services to vessels in 2023. He explained that vehicle traffic reached 10,134 units, while the Port handled 11,230 trips from traditional fishing vessels and 478 trips from coastal fishing vessels.

Al Hinai highlighted that the Port provided a range of services to sup-



Eng. Said Al Hinai The Port contributes to attracting local and foreign investments through diverse opportunities, including fish processing facilities, cold storage, fish markets, in addition to research areas, fish farming and boat maintenance

port fishing operations, with fish deliveries totalling 52,587 tonnes. In addition, over 3.9 million litres of fuel and 3.3 million gallons of water were supplied to vessels, along with 41,893 tonnes of ice.

He emphasised that these figures reflect the Port's growing role in supporting the local economy and enhancing its ability to provide integrated services for vessels and fishermen, establishing it as a vital hub for fishing activities in the Sultanate of Oman.

Projected growth

Regarding the projected growth, Al Hinai pointed out that the Dugm Fishery Port is on track to become a major hub for fish trade in the region by the end of 2026, with expectations of an increase in the number of vessels and the volume of fish exports. The Port is anticipated to contribute significantly to the growth of the fisheries sector and the development of its related supply chains, supporting economic diversification and contributing to the long-term economic sustainability of the Sultanate of Oman.

Integrated services and investment opportunities

Al Hinai added that the Dugm Fishery Port project aims to provide integrated services, including the supply of fuel,



water, and ice to vessels, as well as ship maintenance and repair facilities. A fish auction hall and a training and development centre will also be established, contributing to the growth of the local fishing community and improving the skills of workers in the sector. He noted that the project will play a key role in attracting both local and international investments, offering a range of investment opportunities, including the establishment of fish processing facilities, cold storage units, and fish markets, as well as opportunities in research and innovation, fish farming, and maintenance and repair services for fishing vessels and boats.

In-Country Value (ICV)

As part of adding In-Country Value, he said "Marsa Al Dugm Investment Company aims to support small and medium-sized enterprises (SMEs) by allocating local business opportunities, in line with the strategy of the Public Authority for Special Economic Zones and Free Zones (OPAZ). The Dugm Fishery Port is an ambitious project that contributes to the development of the fisheries sector and enhances its sustainability, making it one of the key economic drivers in the Sultanate of Oman."

Launch of 'Green Port' initiative

The Director of Dugm Fishery Port, in his statement, announced the launch of the 'Green Port' initiative, aimed at promoting sustainability and preserving the environment within port operations. He explained that the initiative seeks to reduce the environmental impact of port activities by enhancing eco-friendly practices and adopting modern technologies to preserve natural resources.

He stated, "The initiative focuses on several key areas, including:

- Advanced Waste Management Systems: Ensuring safe and sustainable waste disposal.
- Renewable Energy Sources: The port relies on renewable energy to reduce dependence on traditional energy sources.
- Reducing Carbon Emissions: Using energy-efficient technologies to lower carbon emissions resulting from port operations.
- Seawater Treatment: Ensuring the cleanliness and safety of the surrounding marine environment." Al Hinai continued, stating, "Through



this initiative, Dugm Fishery Port aims to be a leading model in applying environmental sustainability standards, contributing to the protection of marine resources and enhancing long-term environmental health in the Sultanate of Oman." He added that these efforts are in line with the Port's commitment to supporting sustainability and innovation, in alignment with Oman Vision 2040.

Supporting the National Economy

Regarding the Port's contribution to supporting the national economy, Al Hinai confirmed that Dugm Fishery Port plays a major role in boosting Oman's economy by attracting both local and foreign investments in the fishing sector. It aims to promote economic growth in the Sultanate of Oman through job creation, support for SMEs and diversifying national income sources.

Al Hinai explained that the Port serves as a strategic hub for attracting investments in several areas, including: Fish processing and packaging: Offering investment opportunities for fish processing, packaging and freezing units to meet both local and global demand for seafood

hancing ICV

markets







Support for SMEs: Providing commercial opportunities for local SMEs, en-

Storage and export facilities development: Establishing cold storage and packing units to help expand fish exports to regional and international

He also added that the Port plays a crucial role in Oman's economic diversi-

fication efforts, aligned with the Oman Vision 2040, by developing infrastructure and strengthening new sectors beyond oil. This project contributes to the growth of the fisheries sector and enhances Oman's position as a major hub for seafood trade, positively impacting the economy of the Sultanate of Oman and supporting long-term economic sustainability.

Strategic goals

Al Hinai explained that the port's strategic objectives focus on achieving sustainable growth and enhancing its contribution to the national economy. in line with Oman Vision 2040. He emphasised that the port aims to become a leading centre in the fisheries sector, making it a key driver of economic development in the region.

The Port's strategic goals include several key areas, such as:

- Economic diversification: Supporting the fisheries sector and providing economic alternatives to reduce reliance on oil as the main source of income

- Attracting investments: Creating an attractive investment environment for local and international companies, with opportunities in infrastructure, fish processing, and storage facilities

- Enhancing ICV: Supporting local SMEs and creating new jobs for the local community, contributing to both economic and social growth

- Environmental sustainability: Through the 'Green Port' initiative, which focuses on promoting environmental sustainability and using advanced technologies in waste management and renewable energy



Communications

Omantel boosts digital transformation in economic zones, free zones and industrial cities

Talal Al Mamari:

Omantel has partnered with several companies in the economic zones and free zones to launch innovative solutions aimed at meeting their needs

Muscat - β_{builden} :

Oman Telecommunications Company Group (Omantel) is contributing to the development of Oman's digital economy by expanding its infrastructure to include economic zones, free zones and industrial cities. Talal bin Said Al Mamari, CEO of Omantel, affirmed that the company offers advanced technologies aligned with global trends, reinforcing its leadership as a key enabler of digital transformation for both government institutions and the private sector. He stated "At Omantel, we work to bring the latest technologies to the market, keeping pace with global developments in the sector, to maintain our leadership as a key enabler of digital transformation for government institutions and the private sector. We rely on robust infrastructure that includes telecommunications services and digital technologies, aiming to solidify our market leadership by transitioning from a telecommunications provider to a comprehensive provider of digital solutions and services. In this context, we have recently entered into strategic partnerships with major global technology companies, such as Amazon and Google, to enhance the digital infrastructure and offer cloud computing and artificial intelligence services."

In an exclusive interview with the Duqm Economist Magazine, Al Mamari highlighted the strategic importance of economic and free zones to Omantel. He explained that the company is investing in infrastructure within these zones to attract more investments and meet the needs of investors and businesses. He also mentioned that Omantel has established data centres in these areas to meet the growing demand from both local and international companies operating there.

Al Mamari emphasised that the economic and free zones today have integrated telecommunications infrastructure, which includes fibre-optic networks, 4G and 5G networks, as well as data centres and other advanced services

Furthermore, he noted that Omantel has collaborated with several companies in these zones to develop innovative solutions tailored to their needs. One of the notable efforts includes the company's collaboration with Port of Dugm to provide customised video surveillance solutions and 5G internet connectivity. Additionally, Omantel worked with Hutchison Port Sohar to improve operational processes in partnership with Huawei.

Investment attraction initiatives

Regarding the initiatives by Omantel to attract more local and foreign in-

The special economic zones, free zones and industrial cities hold strategic importance for Omantel, which is investing in infrastructure within these areas vestments into special economic zones and free zones through enhancing the digital communications infrastructure. Al Mamari explained that Omantel's strategy focuses on promoting digital innovation and providing advanced solutions in areas such as data analytics, cloud computing and other technologies of the Fourth Industrial Revolution. He pointed out that the company's efforts are aimed at transitioning from a telecommunications service provider

to a comprehensive provider of digital solutions and services. Al Mamari also emphasised Omantel's commitment to strengthening the digital communications infrastructure in the Sultanate of Oman, particularly in special economic zones and free zones, to help attract more local and foreign investments.

Among the key initiatives Omantel undertaken to enhance the communications infrastructure and attract further investments:

- Expanding the fibre optic network to provide higher internet speeds, which is a key factor for investors and companies looking to invest in these areas, especially those in tech-driven industries

- Focusing on attracting investments in advanced technology sectors such as Al and IoT, and building partnerships with global telecom companies to improve international connectivity, making Oman an attractive regional hub for global companies expanding into the Middle East

- Establishing strategic partnerships with leading global tech companies like Amazon, Google, Microsoft, and



Huawei to offer innovative solutions for businesses and institutions. Key partnerships include:

- Launching a national cloud with Huawei to host data locally for various entities and private companies

- Partnering with Amazon Web Services to establish a sovereign cloud services center, create an integrated e-commerce platform, and provide solutions for generative AI

- Collaborating with Google to create a first-of-its-kind edge cloud computing center in the MENA region, offering generative AI and data analytics services

- Partnering with MERP to deliver innovative tech solutions and leverage Microsoft's AI tools to enhance digital transformation within Omantel and its subsidiaries

- Partnering with Virtusa for Managed Services to provide tech applications that empower and develop organisations, applying Agile/DevOps methodologies, and enhancing service delivery standards

He added, "We are proud that Omantel is now the main provider of all telecom and IT solutions in the free zones and economic zones, supporting efforts to attract more foreign investment to these areas."

Key partnerships

Regarding the key partnerships Omantel has established with the economic zones, free zones, and industrial cities, and how these partnerships have contributed to improving the investment climate, the CEO of the company stated "For a long time, Omantel has taken responsibility for building many telecommunications infrastructure networks, making significant capital investments. As a result, Omantel now possesses the largest communications infrastructure in the special economic and free zones. These investments include the construction of transmission and fiber optic networks, as well as mobile communication networks using 4G and 5G technologies, in addition to building several data centers to serve government entities

areas.'

He added, "These partnerships are part of the company's commitment to invest in vital projects in the Sultanate of Oman and in response to the government's directives to activate the role of the private sector and enhance its contribution in leading the national economy in the coming period."

Al Mamari mentioned that Omantel possesses significant capabilities, ranging from wide networks and international connectivity to data centres and cloud computing. He highlighted that Omantel's expansion into providing innovative solutions and services is aimed at developing new business opportunities in areas such as smart public infrastructure, smart building management solutions, digital banking services, healthcare infrastructure, high-performance computing, artificial intelligence and machine learning solutions, big data analytics, deep learning and smart contracts. He added that Omantel is leveraging new technologies to provide customised solutions that meet the specific needs of each institution or company. The company has collaborated with several companies, particularly in the Special Economic Zone at Dugm (SEZAD) and Sohar Port, to conduct Proof of Concept (PoC) trials aimed at offering tailored solutions that improve operational processes at ports and enhance communication solutions.

The efforts of the company are focused on transitioning from a telecommunications provider to a comprehensive provider of digital solutions and services

The company is working to attract investments in sectors reliant on advanced technologies such as artificial intelligence and the Internet of Things

and major companies operating in these

Technological advancements

Challenges and solutions

Regarding the main challenges faced by Omantel in supporting these areas and how the company is addressing them. Al Mamari emphasised that Omantel operates in a constantly evolving sector, with new solutions and technologies being innovated daily in the market. He stated, "We find ourselves as a company in a race to keep up with these developments and meet the needs of the local market. This is done either through direct investment, or through national investments where we are partners, in addition to entering into strategic partnerships with international companies directly involved in developing these technologies."

Supporting Economic Diversification

Regarding supporting economic diversification, he pointed out that "Oman Vision 2040 has identified several areas for economic diversification, which are also targeted by Omantel to enhance its offerings and solutions, enabling them to achieve the goals of the vision and the National Programme for Economic Diversification (Tanwea'a),"

He explained that the solutions and services provided cover various sectors targeted by the economic diversification programme, including manufacturing, transport and logistics, tourism and food security. In this context, Omantel has entered into multiple partnerships with key players in these sectors.

Digital transformation and empowering SMEs

Al Mamari concluded, stating "Omantel is the key enabler of digital transformation in Oman and the technical partner for most government entities and businesses in implementing their digital transformation projects. Small and medium-sized enterprises (SMEs) also benefit from Omantel's solutions. The company has developed special packages for SMEs registered with 'Riyada,' offering a 50 per cent discount on telecommunications services and digital solutions."



Necessity of humanizing Duqm for sustainable development

Dugm, located in the Al Wusta Governorate on the eastern coast of the Sultanate of Oman overlooking the Arabian Sea and approximately 600 km south of Muscat, is considered a connection point between Oman and major global markets along the Indian Ocean. It is strategically distant from the Strait of Hormuz, which is always at risk of closure. The Strait of Hormuz is a narrow shipping route in the GCC region that serves as the exit point for its oil to the outside world, often referred to as the "lifeline" of the industrial world. Approximately two-thirds of the world's oil production passes through it, and if it is blocked for any reason, the flow of nearly two-thirds of the oil to global markets would cease.

The Omani government is striving to position Dugm as a safe and stable gateway, anticipating substantial foreign investments to establish industrial and economic projects.

Affirming the strategic importance of the Port of Dugm, it has been developed into an integrated, multimodal logistics hub encompassing sea, land, air, and rail transportation routes.

Duqm enjoys a mild climate year-round and is surrounded by beautiful coastlines. The aim of its establishment is for the economic zone and all surrounding areas to become a keystone for shaping and building the future of the Omani economy and diversifying income sources. To achieve this goal, billions of dollars have been spent on developing infrastructure, including the construction of an airport and a strategic commercial port serving multiple purposes, conveniently located near global shipping routes. The Port of Dugm is designed to accommodate and handle large container ships.

Additionally, a government berth has been constructed, along with a berth for liquid and bulk materials (the oil berth). The capacity of the dry bulk terminal is approximately 5 million metric tons per year, while the capacity of the multipurpose terminal is about 800,000 metric tons per year. Significant efforts have also been made to ensure the security of the port and the entire region, in addition to providing many service facilities that meet international standards.

The government aims to attract a diverse range of economic activities, such as refineries, petrochemical industries, commercial, tourism, and logistics activities, as well as light and medium industries, fisheries, real estate, tourism, and commercial development projects. Other areas of investment include mining, various fisheries and food industries, clean energy production, green hydrogen and ammonia projects, sports facilities, and water tourism.

To achieve these ambitious government objectives, it is essential to offer numerous and diverse investment advantages in the economic zone. The proximity to the Arabian Sea, which opens onto the Indian Ocean, and its location near maior consumer markets in Asia and Africa, further enhance its appeal for export-oriented businesses.

The infrastructure of Dugm is nearly complete; however, for Dugm to become a magnet for investments, a gateway to diversifying income sources, and a creator of various high-value job opportunities, additional strategic decisions are needed. Without such measures, achieving the anticipated objectives will be challenging.

It has become essential to allocate natural gas in terms of [quantities, supply years, and prices] to direct heavy industries to Dugm and to implement a railway line connecting the port to the GCC port network. Additionally, a pipeline for oil export via Ras Markaz instead of Mina Al Fahal should be established, and any tax measures previously taken should be abolished, as this would reduce service costs in the special economic zone.

The Dugm area also needs to increase and double its population density and provide all necessary services to support residents. Currently, Omani workers and employees are still hesitant to move their families to Dugm, or their families are reluctant to relocate due to the need for more recreational facilities, schools, medical services, shopping complexes, etc. Comparatively, the Ras Al Khair area in northern Saudi Ara-



bia, about 210 kilometres from Dammam, provides a reference point. Located to its south is the Shaybah oil field. Saudi citizens also show reluctance to move their families there for similar reasons that prevent Omani workers and employees from relocating their families to Dugm. On the other hand, when the Jubail Industrial City was established in Saudi Arabia in the early 1980s, a well-planned residential city was also developed, which has become a model to emulate. Even today, after more than 35 years since its establishment, it remains a favored location for everyone working in the industrial sector in Jubail, despite ongoing expansion and development in the area. The same applies to Yanbu Industrial City in the north.

Another example is the Al-Suwaig Hospital, which is nearing completion and faces challenges in attracting specialised doctors. According to reports, specialised doctors from Arab and Asian countries, among others, find it difficult to work there due to the hospital's location. The scarcity of private or bilingual schools for their children, as well as a lack of recreational facilities like amusement parks, parks, and restaurants, makes the distance to Sohar and Muscat seem quite far, requiring significant effort and expense. As a result, attracting highly qualified specialists is challenging. If such a challenge exists in Al-Suwaig, it will also be present in Dugm. The only solution is to humanize Duqm.

Commercial and economic activity fundamentally relies on having a good population density. All modern cities with high commercial and residential activity have been designed with smaller land areas and larger populations. One of the reasons for the success of new cities worldwide is their high population density within a limited area, which stimulates economic activity. To

- make Dugm attractive to investors, it needs to enhance services required by residents, such as education, healthcare, and recreational and commercial activities.
- The infrastructure in Dugm has been built, and major investment projects, such as the Dugm Refinery and other projects like the Chinese city, have been established to create a reasonable population density. Therefore, essential services must be provided in Dugm to attract both citizens and residents and to make it a desirable investment area.

"Humanizing cities" means creating an environment that enhances the human dimension within cities, transforming the area into a positive, interactive space derived from urban fabric, where residents can achieve their personal dimensions. It provides a comfortable environ-



neighborhoods, encouraging people to engage in physical activities, and reducing reliance on transportation for daily needs. These cities are attractive for living due to their numerous features that simplify individual life and boost commercial activity in these areas. They benefit from high population density, good infrastructure, and the availability of appropriate services, which encourage investors to invest as they are considered sustainable cities. This also includes providing various educational facilities and establishing places of worship for all residents.

 Improving public spaces to make them more attractive and suitable for social gatherings.

Murtadha Hassan Ali Writer on public affairs

> ment that supports modern lifestyles across various interests and needs.

> Humanizing cities offers numerous benefits, including promoting a modern and healthy lifestyle for all community members and residents, helping build strong social relationships in city

> The government has invested billions of dollars to make Dugm an important economic city that supports the Omani economy, helps diversify income sources, and provides thousands of job opportunities for citizens.

> To achieve this, it is essential to humanize Dugm to ensure it meets all necessary living standards and to design it as a smart city.

> Humanizing cities is a concept aimed at making cities more suitable for people in terms of design, infrastructure, and services. This concept focuses on improving residents' quality of life by providing a comfortable, sustainable, and human-friendly environment.

This includes multiple aspects such as:

Reducing reliance on cars and promoting public transportation, walking, and cycling.

Enhancing safety and environmental sustainability by designing cities in a way that reduces pollution and noise.

Providing green spaces and parks to improve residents' mental and physical health.

Designing buildings and streets to accommodate the needs of all age groups: children, the elderly, and people with disabilities.

Overall, "humanizing cities" aims to make urban life more balanced, with a focus on people rather than machines or cars.

By doing so, the government will achieve its stated goals of attracting investments and creating numerous job opportunities for citizens.

The government has spent billions of dollars to make Dugm an important economic city that supports the Omani economy, helps diversify income sources, and provides thousands of job opportunities for citizens

Humanizing cities is a concept aimed at making cities more suitable for people in terms of design, infrastructure, and services. This concept focuses on improving the quality of life for residents by providing a comfortable. sustainable, and human-friendly environment

ODP achieves various achievements during 2024 to enhance the Sultanate's digital transformation

Muscat - 🔐 :

Oman Data Park (ODP), the Sultanate's first IT-managed and cloud services provider recorded various achievements during the year of 2024, related to the digital transformation and artificial intelligence operations in the Sultanate of Oman, and abroad of the country , whereas these achievements contribute to strength its rank and capabilities in supporting the digital economy as well as contributing to achieving the goals of Oman Vision 2040.

Its achievements included the launch of major data center projects at many areas in the Sultanate of Oman, with an investment value of \$ 29 million , involving into strategic partnerships to implement a number of digital projects in and out of Oman, participating in various events related to its fields , and awarded by a number of awards, when Eng. Magbool Al-Wahaibi, the company's CEO has been awarded the prestigious "Business Leader of the Year - Digital Transformation Award " at the leader Business Summit 2024 in the Sultanate of Oman.

Maqbool bin Salem Al Wahaibi, ODP's CEO , emphasized that, During the year of 2024, ODP had attained landmarks achievements , while it has benefited the Sultanate of Oman's keenness to keep pace with the mutations of the digital transformation, artificial intelligence and cyber security through a clear government direction that aims to rank the Sultanate of Oman as an integral part of this development of the high-tech revolutions ,which will contribute to change the features of life in the world and harness it to serve development of the national economy.

He added : The launch of "Jibreen Smart Infrastructure Solutions", the largest cloud system by Oman Data Park and "ITHCA Group with a new identity in the Sultanate of Oman, is considered one of the most prominent achievements of the company during the year 2024 . This Infrastructure Solutions will contribute to

enhance the provision of advanced systems with artificial intelligence, strengthening the Internet of Things and information security to benefit government entities, banks and companies and enterprises.

He pointed out that, in 2024 ODP signed a number of agreements during its participation in the Comex 2024 events, including an agreement to establish a Farg data center in Nizwa, with a large capacity of 4.5 megawatts and accommodates more than 370 cabins, in order to be a pivotal site for recovering from disaster effects , supporting vital entities in various sectors, as well as ensuring flexibility and continuity in facing emergency climate conditions.

The company also signed agreements with "VFS" Global and Tech Mahindra to provide cloud services. in addition to another agreement with Open Innovation Company to provide artificial intelligence technologies through launching a specialized academy in artificial intelligence in the Sultanate of Oman. In the context, Oman Data Park

involved in a strategic partner-



Magbool Al Wahaibi: During the year of 2024, ODP had attained landmarks achievements, while it has benefited the Sultanate

of Oman's keenness to keep pace with the mutations of the digital transformation, artificial intelligence and cyber security

ship with Omantel to provide digital identity solutions "Okudo", to enhance the identity verification process, digital authentication and biometric detection to reduce the risks of fraud in various applications.

In 2024, Oman Data Park also signed an agreement Oman with Middle East Information Systems Company to set a largest national data center for backup data in the Sultanate , with an investment of approximately \$ 25 million for the first phase.

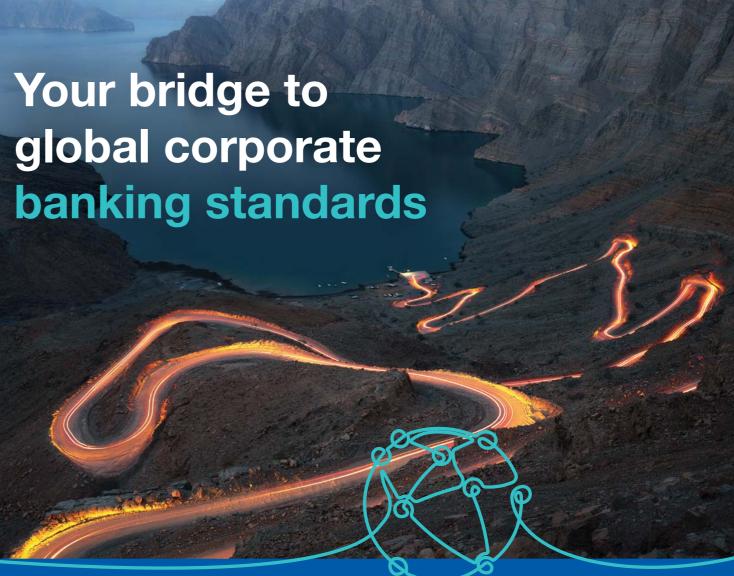
In the same year, Oman Data Park announced the launch of Rusayl 2 Data Center, the first green technology data center in the Sultanate of Oman, located in Rusayl, designed to accommodate more than 200 cabins with power capacity of 2.4 megawatts, in an investment value of \$4 million. It is considered the first data center in the Sultanate to integrate solar energy into its energy mix, starting with a capacity of 1.4 megawatts with the possibility of expanding to 10 megawatts.

Globally wise, Oman Data Park signed an agreement with the government of Zanzibar, in partnership with Ozone Solutions Limited, to expand "ePROZ" services in Zanzibar. This strategic partnership aims to provide two advanced units of electronic procurement and invoicing to improve procurement and accounts payable processes in government departments in Zanzibar.

It is noteworthy that all these achievements made by ODP, contribute to highlighting the quality of its services as the first provider of managed cyber security and cloud services provider, while it plays an integral role in supporting the digital transformation of Oman, through offering of an all-in-one solution of computing, cloud computing, data storage, networking, web hosting and network security services. ODP also offers the Sultanate's first Artificial Intelligence ready cloud infrastructure - Nebula AI powered by Nvidia. More details of their services can be found at

www.omandatapark.com

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Escrow and Custody

Transfers and Bulk

Corporate Internet





UAE Corridor



Trade Advisory



B2B Services



Future Outlook

'Global 50: Future Opportunities' report forecasts trends and drives innovation

Dubai - الدِصْم :

Dubai Future Foundation (DFF) has released its annual report, 'Global; 50: Future Opportunities,' which highlights key trends and future opportunities capable of driving transformative changes in the global economy and human societies over the coming decades.

The report outlines a diverse range of opportunities spanning key pillars, including health, nature and sustainability, community empowerment, system improvement, and future innovations. It aims to empower governments and businesses to make strategic decisions rooted in forward-looking insights to achieve sustainable development.

According to the report, global transformations are built upon ten main trends that serve as the foundation for developing future opportunities. These include the digital revolution, innovation in sustainable energy, advancements in biotechnology, artificial intelligence and the promotion of advanced healthcare.

These trends act as a compass for governments and businesses to shape their strategic future directions, guiding investments toward sectors with the greatest impact on individuals and societies.

The report presents 50 promising and inspiring opportunities to achieve new levels of growth, prosperity, and quality of life. Some opportunities are in their early exploration stages, others serve as a source of inspiration for deeper insights, while a few may seem challenging to realise in the near future.

Health: Scientific leaps to improve quality of life

Bioprinting human organs: The report highlights that bioprinting represents a transformation in organ transplantation, eliminating donor waiting lists and increasing the success rates of medical procedures.

Nanorobots for muscle repair: It points to the potential of using nanorobots to repair damaged muscles, enhancing individual health, particularly for the elderly.

Space mental health: Inspired by astronauts' experiences, the report suggests new methods to address loneliness and isolation, improving mental health on Earth.

Smart packaging systems: Biodegradable packaging systems that indicate food spoilage through light are among the innovations that could globally reduce food waste.

Nature and sustainability: Environmental innovations to preserve the planet

Nature-inspired cities: The report proposes creating cities designed with inspiration from nature to enhance sustainability and maintain ecological balance. Clean drinking water for all: Advanced nanotechnologies will enable precise removal of pollutants from water, ensuring clean drinking water for the global

population. Tidal energy: It highlights the potential to harness tidal forces as a sustainable



energy source using innovative turbines to reduce costs and improve efficiency. Rapidly renewing nature: Biotechnological advancements can accelerate nature's regeneration, supporting efforts to combat climate change.

Empowering communities:

Enhancing innovation and education Wisdom-based curricula: The report recommends developing educational curricula that foster logical thinking and skills essential for addressing future challenges.

Mental health-friendly neighborhoods: It explores designing residential neighborhoods focused on mental health, including local community support centres.

Sustainable digital economies: Building digital economic networks that encourage innovation and expand online job opportunities is emphasised.

Improving systems: Boosting efficiency and resilience

Decentralised cloud: The report explores opportunities in edge computing, which stores data closer to its sources, improving performance and energy efficiency.

Al for legal analysis: It suggests using Al to analyse laws and develop effective legal policies that align with global changes.

Connected and sustainable cities: The report envisions modern cities utilising smart technologies to reduce environmental impact and enhance residents' health.

Future innovations: Shaping a new world

Solar-powered cars: Future vehicles will rely on solar energy, contributing to carbon neutrality and reducing dependence on fossil fuels.

Space internet: Advances in satellite technology will enable seamless internet access worldwide, supporting comprehensive digital transformation.

Lucid dreams: The report explores the possibility of learning during sleep using communities **Timeframes for future**

opportunities

timeframes:

the world

ments.

Long-term (10 years or more): Opportunities demanding radical innovations

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brain-computer interfaces, marking a breakthrough in education and neuro-

science.

Innovative batteries: Developing batteries with more efficient and sustainable materials will accelerate the transition to clean energy.

Call to action: Planning for the future starts now

The report is more than just an analytical document; it is an invitation for collaboration and collective action between governments and institutions to embrace innovations and capitalise on unique opportunities. In a rapidly changing world, strategic planning and innovation become the keys to building a sustainable future that meets present needs while safeguarding the rights of future generations.

Key trends shaping the future of

According to the report, global transformations are driven by ten key trends that form the foundation for developing future opportunities. Among these trends are the digital revolution, sustainable energy innovation, advancements in biotechnology, artificial intelligence, and enhanced healthcare.

These trends act as a compass for governments and businesses to define their future strategic directions, guiding investments toward sectors with the greatest impact on individuals and

The report highlights how opportunities can be assessed based on different

Short-term (2–3 years): Opportunities related to existing technologies that can be implemented in the near term.

Medium-term (5-10 years): Opportunities requiring technology development and infrastructure improveand long-term structural changes.

Importance of the report for institutions and governments

Strategic planning: The report serves as a valuable tool for government and business leaders to develop proactive policies for future transformations.

Fostering innovation: It supports entrepreneurs and investors in identifying promising areas that offer economic and social value.

Building global partnerships: The report encourages collaboration among nations to adopt shared innovations and develop solutions to global challenges.

Lessons from the report

Change as a part of opportunity: The report emphasises the importance of preparing for radical changes as part of the challenges and opportunities facing the world.

Human values at the heart of innovation: It focuses on integrating innovation with human values to ensure improved quality of life.

The need for global cooperation: The report underscores that addressing future challenges requires global coordination to create a positive impact.

Conclusion: "Future Opportunities"

The "50 Global Opportunities" report is not just an analytical study of future trends but a roadmap to inspire innovation and build a more sustainable world. It serves as a call to action for everyone, from governments to individuals, to embrace these opportunities and work toward realising future visions.

The report offers a forward-looking vision, emphasising that early preparedness is the only way to keep pace with global transformations and create sustainable value.

For more details, visit: https://www. dubaifuture.ae/ar/ the-global-50







Saleh Nabhan Al Maamari Editor-in-Chief

Initiating construction works for Muscat Airport Free Zone

Muscat -

The Muscat Airport Free Zone is a strategic project aimed at establishing an integrated logistics hub with world-class air freight capabilities. Asyad Group, as the entity responsible for developing and operating the zone, is creating an integrated commercial environment that offers packages of tax and customs exemptions and commercial facilities. These initiatives will make the zone one of the leading investment destinations in the region and an international business hub in Muscat Governorate.

Asyad Group has commenced construction works for the Zone, marking the launch of the first phase of the project, which represents a significant addition to the region's infrastructure. The project aims to strengthen its position as a global hub for businesses and foreign direct investment.

Phase one of the project includes land preparation and leveling, the construction of internal road networks, public utility facilities, and an administrative office complex, which is expected to be developed in partnership with the private sector.

The project aims to provide a modern and attractive work environment that attracts global and regional companies, financial institutions, general trading companies, and startups. This will enhance the Zone's capability as a global

business hub that attracts foreign direct investment and ensures world-class logistical support and facilities.

This initiative reaffirms Asvad Group's commitment to accelerating its plans to contribute to Oman's economic growth. The project's location next to Muscat International Airport will enhance the economic significance of the Zone and integrate it into Asyad's comprehensive logistics ecosystem. This system connects



Faisal Al Balushi: An opportunity for Omani private sector to benefit from the competitive advantages and promising investment opportunities offered by the Zone

various land and sea ports, dry ports, and free zones and special economic zones to increase the volume of exports and imports via air freight for products requiring fast supply chains, such as pharmaceuticals, food products and e-commerce shipments.

Through this project, the Group also provides investment opportunities for the private sector by entering into longterm partnerships to develop several commercial projects. This approach ensures stability and sustainability for partner institutions in the long run, fostering the development of strategic assets with high value within the Zone.

Faisal bin Ali Al Balushi, Senior Manager of the Muscat Airport Free Zone, emphasised that the Group seeks to implement this strategic project in cooperation with its private sector partners. This reflects its commitment to enhancing its partnership to build an air logistics hub in Oman, drive economic growth, and open new horizons for local and global companies in the logistics sector.

He added that the Zone is an opportunity for Omani private sector growth and to benefit from the competitive advantages and promising investment opportunities it offers. He noted that the Group focuses its projects on contributing to achieving the goals of Oman Vision 2040, including improving Oman's ranking in the Global Competitiveness Index

Dugm Economist Magazine: Ten Years of Success

A decade has passed since the launch of Dugm Economist Magazine, which has consistently delivered knowledge and reliable economic data, providing insights for readers, investors, and those interested in economic zones in the Sultanate of Oman. Initially, the magazine focused on the development and promotion of the Special Economic Zone at Dugm (SEZAD). Later, it expanded its coverage to include developments in economic zones, free zones and industrial cities, particularly in the five years following the establishment of the Public Authority for Special Economic Zones and Free Zones (OPAZ).

The magazine has carved out a distinguished position, thanks to its specialised economic content and its commitment to consistent publishing schedules. This dedication reflects its resolve to engage with its audience, highlighting the benefits of these zones and providing businesses operating within them a platform to showcase achievements and future plans. The magazine has also shared updates on incentives, facilities and guarterly developments while offering stakeholders insights into the Authority's communication and one-stop shops, bolstering its standing in both local and international economic landscapes.

Looking back to the first issue of the magazine, the challenges of gathering information on the SEZAD were significant. At the time, foundational work was underway, master plans were being drawn, and major infrastructure projects were in their infancy. It was a journey of sourcing credible data, compelling topics, and visual content to showcase the zone's seriousness as one of Oman's most ambitious economic projects. The guidance of former editor-in-chief Mohammed bin Ahmed Al Shizawi was instrumental in shaping the magazine's approach, refining its editorial style, and establishing a network of specialized writers and interviews with key decision-makers.

From the outset, the magazine recognized rapid technological shifts and the uncertain future of print media. However, its target audience, including investors, decision makers, and economic professionals, valued print editions for their practicality and marketing utility, while digital platforms ensured broader and faster outreach. This dual approach has cemented the magazine's status as a key reference for Oman's economic affairs, striking a balance between traditional and digital media.

Finally, the senior management of OPAZ has provided significant strategic support, underscoring the magazine's crucial role in media and promotion as part of Oman's development. Marking a decade of publication is a testament to the magazine's success in both media and economic domains, serving as a pivotal platform aligned with Oman's visionary future under wise leadership.



The senior management of OPAZ places great importance on and provides strategic support to the magazine, reflecting a deep understanding of the vital role it plays through its media and promotional efforts in the country's development journey



تسـعى الهيئة العامـة للمناطـق الاقتصاديـة الخاصـة والمناطـق الحـرة إلـى توفيـر بيئـة اسـتثمارية جاذبـة ومتكاملـة فـي مختلف المناطق التـي تشـرف عليهـا، مـن خــلال تعــزيز البنيـة الأساسـية، وتقديـم الحوافـز والتسـهيلات التـي تلبـي احتياجـات المسـتثمرين، ودعـم الابتـكار والتنمية المستدامة.

وتركز الهيئة على تنويع القطاعات الاقتصادية، وإيجاد فرص عمل نوعية، وتعزيز مساهمة المناطق الاقتصادية الخاصة والمناطق الحرة والمدن الصناعية في الناتج المحلي الإجمالي، ما يجعلها محركات رئيسية للنمو الاقتصادي في سلطنة عمان.

The Public Authority for Special Economic Zones and Free Zones (OPAZ) aims to provide an attractive and integrated investment environment across the zones under its supervision by enhancing infrastructure, offering incentives and facilities that meet the needs of investors, and supporting innovation and sustainable development.

OPAZ focuses on diversifying economic sectors, creating quality job opportunities and enhancing the contribution of special economic zones, free zones and industrial cities to the gross domestic product (GDP), making them key drivers of economic growth in the Sultanate of Oman.