

The
Sultanate

was ranked highly in the
Competitiveness
Report 2018

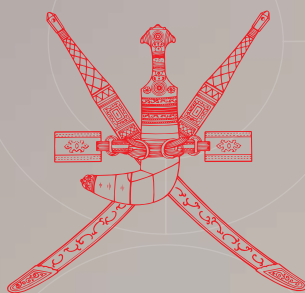
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Oman 2018

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HIS MAJESTY SULTAN QABOOS BIN SAID



In The Name of God
The Compassionate, The Merciful

“VERILY, AS FOR
THOSE WHO BELIEVED
AND DID RIGHTEOUS DEEDS,
WE SHALL NOT MAKE THE REWARD
OF ANYONE WHO DOES HIS
RIGHTEOUS DEEDS IN
THE MOST PERFECT
MANNER TO
BE LOST”

(HOLY QUR'AN)
Surat al Kahf (XVIII,30)

Introduction

Abundance and good fortune continue to smile on Oman as it advances towards the sixth decade of the modern Renaissance. With no sign of deceleration on its path to fully sustainable development, the rewards of steady, balanced growth, propelled by enthusiasm and a national work ethic with long established credentials, are evident across all sectors. Moderation has proven its virtue over the long haul, helping to nurture a national culture of confidence and capacity. Through the doors of possibility thrown open by the Renaissance, the Sultanate has managed to manifest its aspirations in a domestic climate marked by exceptional stability, thanks to the combination of early prescience and resolute oversight of His Majesty Sultan Qaboos.

The Sultanate of Oman takes particular pride in its cultural and historical heritage, but also in its contemporary successes, in the prosperity that has streamed out to reach every far-flung corner of the land and that has garnered the admiration of good neighbours and observers beyond its borders. It celebrates peace as a blessing of outstanding value, as it does its own cultural, intellectual and humanitarian contributions, past and present, to the world. It is energetic in its participation, regionally and internationally, in every forum and occasion that might further its clear and honourable goals, determined in its respect for and commitment to all fair covenants and conventions that guide the conduct of international affairs.

Formal recognition of progress in any endeavour is gratifying, and the Sultanate has earned unsolicited recognition in the form of its progressive placement in several international development indices, ranking currently among the top ten countries reviewed in the Global Competitiveness Report 2018.

In conceiving the most advantageous pathway for Oman, His Majesty placed the citizen firmly at the centre of the development project, seeing people as the creators, guardians and primary beneficiaries of its success. From initial vision, through every phase of implementation, to a future well qualified to surmount all obstacles, his focus has been on human potential as both the engine and beneficiary of development. His policies opened the doors of the nation's schools and hospitals to all, encouraged expression, creativity, intellectual enquiry, youthful ambition, physical and mental fitness, and care for others and for the environment, thereby establishing an ethos where all could prosper and seek the best in themselves and others.

In 2018, the ideals that fuelled the Sultanate's Renaissance process are as ever intact, and each passing year sees the realisation of practical goals that validate those ideals. The constantly moving target of development tracks past landmark achievements that have changed the face of Oman, drawing it inevitably towards centre stage among the community of nations.

This book contains a brief overview of some of the milestones that have waymarked the Sultanate's path to prosperity in this auspicious time. May the Almighty continue to shine His benevolence on that path and guide it to ever greater abundance, and may He continue to bestow happiness and good health on His Majesty Sultan Qaboos, that he may share in that abundance long into the future.

MINISTRY OF INFORMATION

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in their abundant and generous land. "*

Qaboos bin Said

(2nd National Day - 18 November 1972)

An Enlightened Leader Omani Diplomacy Defined



An Enlightened Leader.. Omani Diplomacy Defined

When His Majesty Sultan Qaboos bin Said took on the leadership of the country in 1970, the Sultanate, while never a country with aggressive intent towards its neighbours, was nevertheless one that lived largely in isolation from the outside world. Sultan Qaboos addressed this introspective pattern early in his reign, and set about the slow process of building close ties with Oman's Gulf neighbours, then with the Arab family of States, and ultimately with the wider world beyond. With friendlier ties came peace, and with peace the security that reassures people that their future and the future of their children is safe.

Just two years into the modern Renaissance, celebrating National Day on 18 November 1972, His Majesty outlined the objectives that would define Oman's new chapter. They would be based on the "pursuit of good relations with our neighbours, non-interference in the internal affairs of other countries, the creation of strong bonds with the Arab world, and friendship across the globe. We will stand by the Arab cause in international forums. We will stand by the struggle of Africa, that it may gain freedom and independence."

These high-minded principles, so reflective of His Majesty's own character, are the bedrock on which the Sultanate's foreign policy is founded. The friendships Oman sought actively almost five decades ago it continues to nurture to this day. Through them, it gained peace and

security and returned them in equal measure. The Sultanate is deeply conscientious in its commitment to the international conventions it has signed, to the guiding principles of the United Nations, to peaceful pathways to conflict resolution, and to the broad goals of regional and global stability. This has been demonstrated repeatedly in the interaction of its foreign policy with the often turbulent events that have shaken the region and the world. The Sultanate has never allowed such events, even at their most unnerving, to overwhelm its principles or its response.

The discernment and impartiality of Oman's foreign policy has earned it broad credibility. As a result, it has had frequent occasion to demonstrate its effectiveness as a negotiator motivated by the highest ideals. Its non-judgmental approach to all

players and its willingness to engage with events as a neutral arbiter, its active presence in the many political and apolitical associations and agencies to which it belongs, are its strengths. In all of its international dealings, the Sultanate is known as much for its wisdom and impartiality as it is for the clarity and boldness of its decision-making.

In the Gulf region, the Sultanate was an early sponsor of closer integration among the GCC member states, and emphasised at every opportunity the essential, compatible goals of regional security, stability and development. It has been proud to stand behind the shared aspirations of the GCC countries and their peoples.

In the Arab world, the Sultanate's policies and problem-solving abilities are broadly appreciated, a consequence of its readiness to respond as needed where conflicts of interest are causing strain, or where strain has led to collision. With peace as the goal, it has not been hard for Oman to maintain its position as a rational friend in irrational circumstances, when the reality of common goals becomes obscured. Only when internal struggles are set aside can brighter prospects for all of the peoples of the Arab world be assured.

The Sultanate is an active partner in all regional peace endeavours, and an advocate of dialogue as the best way to further them.

Its peace diplomacy is not restricted to the GCC or Arab domains. It has made carefully considered contributions on issues of broader geopolitical concern, issues of relevance to Africa, Asia, Europe, the United States. It is quietly vocal in the international and regional organisations of which it is a member. Its philosophy and its goals are the same: the importance of open and honest communication between governments and between peoples; the understanding that we live in a connected world and that peace and stability in any one region is affected by what is happening in other parts of the world.

The United Nations is an organisation with which the Sultanate shares its most fundamental ideals, and in this home from home it pursues a tireless quest for good relations, through its work with UNESCO, the ILO, the IAEA and the United Nations Human Rights Council.

In addition to its UN commitments, the Sultanate works with multiple other regional and international agencies concerned with human rights, as well as with efforts to combat terrorism and piracy.

Recent events in the region, with all of their political, economic and diplomatic ramifications, have kept Omani diplomats busy, negotiating, arbitrating, calming tensions.



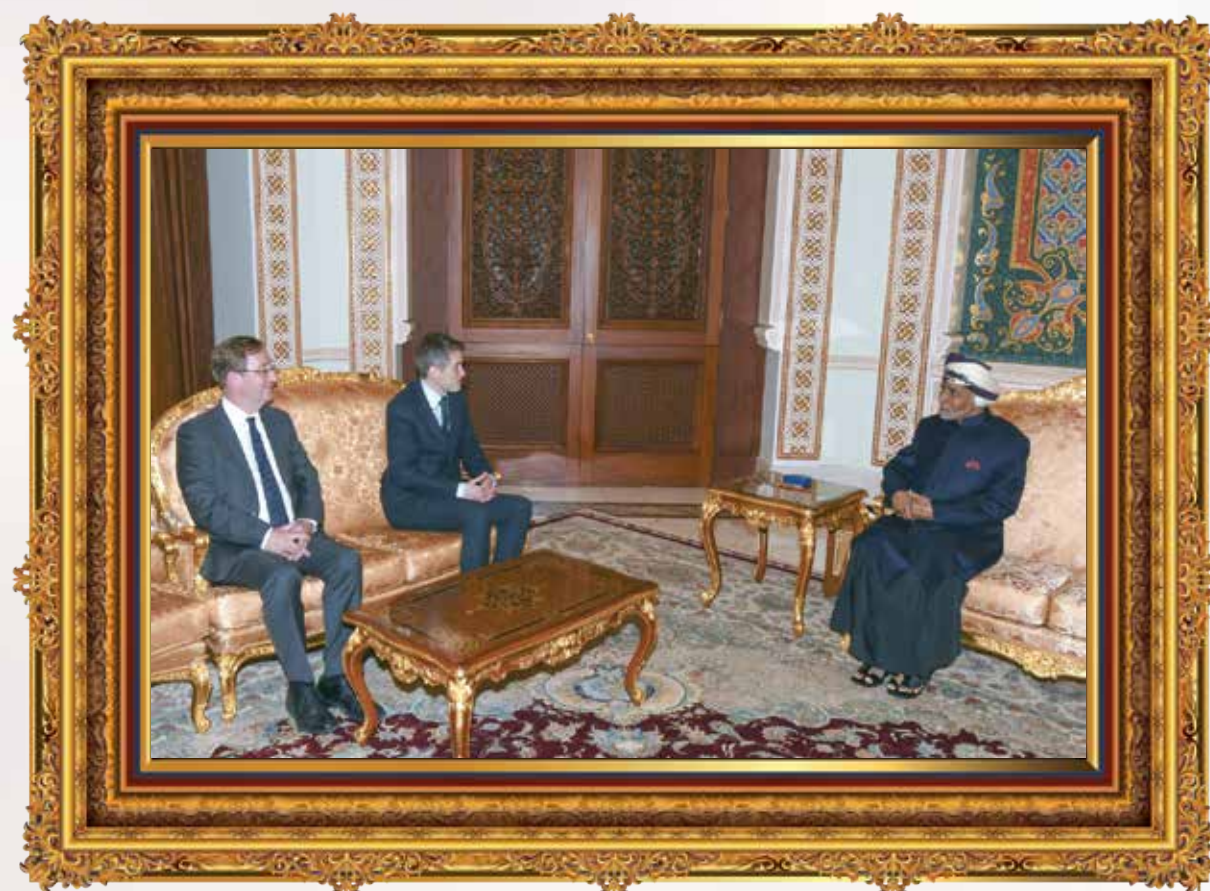
Cementing a strong existing bond, His Majesty Sultan Qaboos bin Said welcomed Egypt's President Abdel Fattah El Sisi on 5 February 2018 on a three-day State visit to the Sultanate.



In the same month, on 11 February 2018, His Majesty received Indian Prime Minister Narendra Modi, who paid a two-day working visit to the Sultanate in an affirmation of Oman's long standing and strong relations with the Republic of India.



The Sultanate continues to maintain close relations and extensive bilateral cooperation with the United Kingdom. On 24 January 2018, His Majesty welcomed UK Foreign Secretary Boris Johnson at Bait al Baraka for a friendly exchange of views.



On 11 April 2018, His Majesty received British Defence Secretary Gavin Williamson.



Earlier, also at Bait al Baraka, he hosted US Defence Secretary James Mattis on 12 March 2018, in a mark of Oman's friendly relations with the United States.



Reaffirming the positive relations that bind the Sultanate and the State of Palestine, and motivated by the desire to advance these ties in the service of the common interests of the Omani and Palestinian peoples, His Majesty Sultan Qaboos bin Said received the President of Palestine and Chairman of the Executive Committee of the Palestine Liberation Organisation His Excellency Mahmoud Abbas on 22 October 2018. President Abbas was on a three-day visit to the Sultanate.



To discuss means of moving the Middle East peace process forward and issues of mutual concern, and in the interest of security and stability in the region, His Majesty Sultan Qaboos bin Said received Israeli Prime Minister Benjamin Netanyahu at Bait al Barakah Royal Palace on 25 October 2018.



Earlier, also at Bait al Baraka, he hosted US Defence Secretary James Mattis on 12 March 2018, in a mark of Oman's friendly relations with the United States.



On 11 February 2018, His Highness Sayyid Fahd bin Mahmoud Al Said, acting again on behalf of His Majesty, met with HE Dr. Tedros Adhanom Ghebreyesus, Director-General of the World Health Organisation, who visited the Sultanate at the head of a delegation to participate in the launch of the National Policy and Multi-Sectoral Plan on Prevention and Control of Non-Communicable Diseases (NCDs).



His Highness Sayyid Asaad bin Tariq Al Said, Deputy Prime Minister for International Relations and Cooperation Affairs, in his capacity as Special Representative of His Majesty Sultan Qaboos bin Said, held talks on 27 March 2018 with Syrian Deputy Prime Minister and Minister of Foreign Affairs and Expatriates HE Walid Al Moallem, who visited the Sultanate for several days.



Representing His Majesty again on 24 July 2018, His Highness Sayyed Asaad bin Tariq Al Said met with Republic of Korea Prime Minister Lee Nak-yeon, who visited the Sultanate for three days.



On 12 March 2018, the Advisor to His Majesty Sultan Qaboos, His Highness Sayyed Shihab bin Tariq Al Said, met with HE Karu Jayasuria, Speaker of the Sri Lankan Parliament, and the delegation accompanying him on an official visit to the Sultanate.

These visits reflect the level of respect with which His Majesty the Sultan is viewed internationally. His opinion is valued by leaders of the free world, and his personal influence reflects powerfully on the Sultanate, enhancing its impact on the world stage. Oman will allow nothing to stand in the way of its commitment to its Gulf and Arab neighbours, and to broader geopolitics, participating in summits and gatherings with its agenda of peace and shared objectives.



In this context, His Majesty delegated His Highness Sayyid Fahd bin Mahmoud Al Said, the Deputy Prime Minister for Cabinet Affairs, to attend the 38th Summit of Leaders of the Gulf Cooperation Council countries, which convened in Kuwait on 5 December 2017.



His Highness Sayyid Fahd bin Mahmoud Al Said again represented His Majesty at the 29th Arab Summit held in Dhahran, Saudi Arabia, on 15 April 2018.



At the invitation of His Majesty Sultan Qaboos bin Said, His Highness Sayyed Asaad bin Tariq Al Said participated in the 6th Extraordinary Islamic Summit Conference which met in Istanbul, Turkey on 13 December 2017.

His Majesty delegated HE Yousuf bin Alawi bin Abdullah, Minister Responsible for Foreign Affairs, to attend on his behalf the Extraordinary Islamic Summit of the Organisation of Islamic Cooperation (OIC) held in Istanbul, Turkey on 18 May 2018.

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(2nd National Day - 18 November 1972)

History And Geography Geopolitics Of Location



History At The Intersection Of Cultures

Over its long recorded history, Oman grew to be a maritime leader at the centre of hugely important trade routes linking ancient civilisations in China, India and Mesopotamia with their contemporaries in the Eastern Mediterranean, Nile Valley and North Africa. At intervals and times of turbulence, moreover, it was a stabilising political force in the region and on the high seas.

To the Sumerians, Oman was 'Magan', or Copper Mountain. Magan was referenced in hundreds of Sumerian and Akkadian records, rendered in cuneiform script and indicating its importance in terms of strategic location and natural resources, in particular copper and precious stones.

Historical sources describe a steady migration of Arab tribes in the direction of Oman, where they settled from earliest times. The first major organised migration, at the end of the first century AD, was coordinated by Malik bin Fahm, a tribal leader of the Azd.

Oman was one of the first countries to embrace Islam, and did so voluntarily in the lifetime of the Prophet, who dispatched Amr Ibn al Aas to Oman's two kings (Jaifer and Abd, sons of Al Julanda ibn al Mustakbir) to invite them to adopt the new faith. They did so enthusiastically and Oman would become both a fortress of Islam at home and a powerful force in its propagation abroad, particularly in East and Central Africa.

During the early years of the daw'a, or call to Islam, Oman was prominent in the apostasy wars that emerged after the death of the Prophet, and participated in the great Islamic

land and sea conquests in Iraq, Persia and Sindh, and subsequently much further afield.

When the 16th century saw the arrival of the Portuguese in the Indian Ocean and Arabian Gulf, the Omanis lost control of the Eastern trade routes and their towns and ports were looted and vandalised. Over the following decades the gradual process of unifying ranks and rebuilding the country's naval capability would culminate in the successful expulsion of the occupier and the re-establishment of Oman's sea power. Successive naval expeditions were dispatched to the western Indian Ocean, to Persia, the Arabian Gulf and the East African coast where, one by one, the strongholds of the Portuguese were destroyed and their presence in the region brought to an end.

With the establishment of the Al Busaidi state by its founder, Imam Ahmad bin Said, in 1744 Oman's fortunes recovered and it set about building what would become its largest ever fleet, an armada which in 1805 numbered four frigates, four corvettes, two single-sail ships, seven boats with mast and twenty armed commercial vehicles.



The Omani vessel "Sultana" sailed to New York on 30 April 1840, carrying aboard Ahmed bin al Numan al Kaabi the first Arab envoy to officially visit America. The governor of Mombasa, then an Omani province, also flew to London in 1842 as ambassador to Queen Victoria. The ship «La Caroline» visited Marseille in 1849.

By the end of the 19th century and the beginning of the twentieth century, the country had once again retreated into isolation, weakened by internal division and external influence. But 23 July 1970 saw an end to this reversal with the advent of His Majesty Sultan Qaboos bin Said. Once again, Oman banished misfortune to emerge from stagnation into a new era of self-mastery, with all its inherited aspirations intact and its prominence among nations restored.

The names of Oman

There is no prevailing viewpoint as to the origin of the name 'Oman', some tracing it to 'Uman of the Al Qahtani tribe, others to a linguistic derivation meaning 'staying' or 'settling.' Ibn al Kaabi writes: "Oman means those who occupy a place, as in the adjective a'amen, or amoun i.e. a settled man. From this was derived Oman." He continues: "If a man is a'amen, this means he settled in Oman." Al Zujjaji, meanwhile, says "Oman was named after Oman bin Ibrahim al Khalil," while Ibn Kalbi says "it was after Oman bin Siba' bin Yaghthan bin Ibrahim Khalil al Rahman because it was he who built the city of Oman."

The Azd are said to have called Oman 'Omana' because they originated from a valley in Maarib which went by that name and which resembled their new home. Yalainous was one of the earliest Roman historians to mention Oman, in the first century of the Christian era. A century later, the name

recurs in Ptolemy. A. Grohmann in the 1936 Encyclopaedia of Islam (Brill, Leiden) was of the view that the Omana described by these two historians was in fact Sohar, the predominant regional economic centre of the Classical Age.

Oman has been identified by other names, most extensively 'Magan',

by which the Sumerians and Mesopotamians referred to it. The name may contain an allusion to the shipbuilding industry for which Oman was noted. In cuneiform inscriptions a magan was a type of ship's hull, known to the Persians as a mezon, and deriving from a root (mazan), meaning clouds or abundantly flowing waters.

Arab sources referred to Oman as an independent territory. Al Istakhri and Ibn Hawqal concurred that Oman was "a sovereign land with a sovereign people."

Contribution to the propagation of Islam

The arrival of Islam marked an important turning point in the history of Oman. The population responded voluntarily and peacefully to the invitation of the Prophet Muhammad to join the community of the faithful, and went on to play a leading role in the consolidation of the faith and promotion of the banner of Islam in its journeys both East and West.

The collected accounts agree that Mazin bin Ghadhuba was the first Omani to travel to the city of Madinah to meet the Prophet, to whom he said, «O son of a good and blessed people! Allah has shown the path of righteousness to the people of Oman through your religion. I hail from a country where prosperity and sustenance abound.»

The Prophet Muhammad replied, «My religion is the religion of Islam. Allah shall double the prosperity of the people of Oman. May blessings and prosperity be granted to those who believe in me and have seen me; may blessings and prosperity be granted to those who believe in me without having seen me, and to those who haven't seen those who have seen me. Allah shall increase

Ibn Khaldun had the clearest definition of all, describing Oman as one of a group of Arab districts in the Arabian Peninsula which had emerged as independent states, viz. Yemen, the Hijaz, Hadhramawt, Shihr and Oman, ruled separately as sovereign territories.

Whatever the exact interpretation, there is no doubt but that the name Oman is an ancient one and one with profound Arab and Arabian cross-links from time immemorial.

the faith of the Omani people.»

In a well-established Hadith, the Prophet said of the pious inhabitants of Oman: "God's mercy be on the people of Al Ghubaira (the people of Oman).... "They believed in me although they had not seen me."

The Prophet's singular commendation acknowledged the reports that had come to his attention of the genuine and wholesale embrace of Islam, in its purest interpretation, by the Omanis.

The speech delivered by the Caliph Abu Bakr to the Omani delegation that travelled to Madinah under the leadership of 'Abd bin Al Julanda after the death of Prophet Muhammad is an important record that tells of the good character and hospitality of the Omani people and of their adherence to Islam.

Omanis took Islam to East Africa, China and ports in other parts of Africa and Asia where they engaged in commerce. The Omani people are well known for their adherence to their religion and values. This has created strong bonds among them, bonds which they value highly.

Rule of the Nabhan

Omani historians are agreed that the Bani Nabhan ruled for a combined five hundred years, spread over two separate periods. The first of these two, or the First Nabhan Period, lasted four hundred years, from the death of Imam Abi Jaber Moussa bin Abi Al Maali Moussa bin Najad in 549 AH/1154 AD to the defeat of Suleiman bin Suleiman bin Mudhaffar Al Nabhani, the celebrated poet king, and swearing in of Muhammad bin Ismail as Imam of Oman in 906 AH/1500 AD. What followed was a violent succession of wars and invasions waged against the Bani Nabhan from within and without the country's borders, with intermittent periods of government by the Imamate.

The second or Later Nabhan Period, which lasted from 906 to 1034AH/1500 to 1624AD, featured a succession of failed imams and was beset by power struggles among the Bani Nabhan themselves, and

between the Nabhan and several other tribes in the jostle for power. Yet, the most significant of the events of this period was undoubtedly the occupation by the Portuguese of coastal Oman.

For portions of their rule, the Nabhan were confined in their influence to the interior of the territory, and at their peak they held sway as far as the coast. At yet other times dissident tribesmen managed to secede from Nabhan control by retiring to the coastal regions.

As to relations between the Nabhan and external powers, Omani sources point to a developing interplay of political and diplomatic connection between Nabhani Oman and the external world, evidenced in exchanges of visits with neighbouring countries, particularly those of the Gulf and East African regions, and with a number of Asian kingdoms.

The Ya'rubis and the expulsion of the Portuguese

While the Portuguese were systematically quelling all resistance in the region and extending their control over large stretches of the Omani coast, despite strong resistance, a new energy was being awakened in Oman. In 1624, Nassir bin Murshid emerged as a charismatic leader to become the first Imam of the Ya'rubī State. He was quick to grasp the scale of the task to be accomplished, and the nature of the changes taking place, both in Oman and the region. He became convinced that no confrontation with the Portuguese could be decisive unless undertaken by a disciplined and cohesive national force, which demanded that he take on the formidable task of uniting fractious Arab tribes.

In this enterprise he succeeded, consolidating the country under

his leadership for the first time in many years, then went on to empower it with a strong naval fleet, which curtailed Portuguese influence and liberated several coastal cities from their grip. The Imam Sultan bin Saif continued the task, until he managed to liberate Muscat in 1650.

The Omanis did not rest, having dispatched the Portuguese from their own coastline, but launched a succession of raids against Portuguese strongholds in the Indian Ocean and East Africa. In the reign of Imam Saif bin Sultan, the foundation stone was laid for the invincible navy that took control of all of the East African coastline, from Mombasa to Kilwa, turning Muscat into the principal entrepot of the Gulf region and one of the principal ports of the Indian Ocean and Arabian Peninsula.



Al Busaid: The revival of Oman's ancient glory and the establishment of a modern state

The swearing in, in 1744, of Imam Ahmed bin Said, Wali of Sohar, as ruler of Oman ushered in a new era in the history of the country, an era that has passed through many stages of its process up to the present day, a span of more than two hundred and sixty seven years. The selection of the Imam was promoted by an influential stratum of society, who appreciated the positions he had taken and recognised in him the quality of courage that had ensured the successful dispatch of an attempted Persian invasion of Oman.

During the reign of Imam Ahmed bin Said, Oman had for the first time in its history a central government. Imam Ahmed was able to unify the warring tribes and took the steps

necessary to lay the foundations for a modern state. This involved establishing an armed force to address the defence needs of Oman, modernising commercial activities and developing a naval fleet. During the reign of Imam Ahmed, Muscat maintained its position as one of the most important trading cities in the region. The Port of Muscat became a major port on the European trade routes. Imam Ahmed revived Oman's prominent role in the region. On one occasion, Imam Ahmed sent a -100boat force led by the naval cruiser Al Rahmani in 1775 to the northern sector of the Gulf to break a siege set by the Persians around the Iraqi city of Basra in response to the call of the Wali of Baghdad.

Arab and European historians agree that a number of factors led to the Omanis playing a leading role in the region. The most significant of these factors was Oman's legacy of centuries of maritime trade, the country's geographical location, and the unique heritage, coupled with the stability that prevailed in Oman at a time when the rest of the Gulf region was gripped by chaos and continuous instability. Imam Ahmed bin Said was a great asset to the nation. He

commanded a great degree of self-discipline, steadfastness and the ability to make the right decision at the right time. Imam Ahmed gained the respect of European powers, and their confidence in his leadership attracted foreigners and encouraged them to set up commercial agencies in Omani cities, particularly in Muscat, which in 1790 became "one of the most important cities in Asia" according to a report drafted by the British East India Company.

Imam Ahmed bin Said died in 1189 AH/1775 AD in Rustaq, the capital of Oman at that time. He was succeeded by a number of imams and sultans of the Al Busaid Dynasty. The capital city was moved from Rustaq to Muscat by Hamad, the grandson of Imam Ahmed bin Said. He ruled from 1193 AH/1779 AD to 1207 AH/1792 AD. Muscat has remained the capital of Oman until the present day.

The Omani people have a deep sense of belonging to their land,

and a keen awareness of the need for unity in order to confront any challenges the country may face. This sense of unity has been a consistent feature of the Omani national identity throughout the history of Oman. The Al Busaid family's continuous leadership since the mid18-th century until now has played a significant role in contributing to national unity, especially during the reign of Sayyid Said bin Sultan (1856-1807), and during the current reign of His

Majesty Sultan Qaboos bin Said, the builder of Oman's Modern Renaissance.

Although periods of weakness occurred from time to time, the rule of the Al Busaid Dynasty has yielded many great achievements, notably the elimination of foreign occupation and the establishment of an empire which extended to many parts of East Africa during the first half of the 19th century. This empire had a strong maritime presence in the Indian Ocean, leading to the fostering of balanced political relations with major world

powers such as Britain, France and the United States. During that time, many domestic and regional challenges were overcome and solid foundations for balanced regional and international relations were established. This enabled the Sultanate to protect its national interests and emerge as a prosperous country which ensures the right of all of its people to equal citizenship. With Oman's unity remaining intact, as it had throughout its history, the nation has revived its former glory and continued to make a contribution to the advancement of human civilisation.

Geography

While geography is essentially a question of location, terrain and land or sea borders, it also represents a kind of dialogue between nature, resources and environment and man's response to them – not only in the way he attempts to overcome any difficulties they may pose, but also in the extent of his success in

converting them into material assets. The Sultanate of Oman occupies a uniquely important location strategically and this fact has been reflected time and again in the choices it has made, along with its policies and style of execution, dictating how it interacts with issues and developments affecting it.

Situated in the extreme south-eastern corner of the Arabian Peninsula, Oman extends from latitude 16.40 to 26.20 degrees north and from longitude 51.50 to 59.40 degrees east. Its 3,165 kilometre coastline runs northwards from the Arabian Sea and the entrance to the Indian Ocean in the far south-west to the Sea of Oman and Musandam, where it overlooks the strategic Strait of Hormuz at the entrance to the Gulf.

Oman shares borders with the Republic of Yemen to the south-west, the Kingdom of Saudi Arabia to the west, and the United Arab Emirates to the north. It has sovereignty over a number of small islands in the Sea of Oman and the Strait of Hormuz, including Salamah and Her Daughters, as well as Masirah and the Hallaniyat Islands, and some other small islands in the Arabian Sea.

Lying on the Tropic of Cancer, Oman is one of the world's hot, arid regions, though part of the south of the country has a tropical climate.

As well as dominating the oldest and most important sea trade route in the world between the Gulf and the Indian Ocean, Oman – with an area of 309,500 square kilometres – is also criss-crossed by the old north-south and east-west overland trans-Arabian caravan routes.

The Sultanate's most distinctive geographical feature is the Hajar

mountain range, which extends down from the north in a great arc from Ru'us al Jibal at Ras Musandam (by the Strait of Hormuz, gateway to the Gulf) to Ras al Hadd – the Arabian Peninsula's most south-easterly point, which overlooks the Indian Ocean. At its highest point in the Jabal al Akhdar region, the Hajar range reaches a height of 3,000 metres.

In the governorate of Musandam the mountains rise to a height of around 1,800 metres above the Strait of Hormuz, which runs between

the Omani and Iranian coasts; the navigable international shipping lanes lie on the Omani side.

Omanis compare the Hajar mountain range to a human backbone. They call the area lying on the Sea of Oman the Batinah, or "Stomach", and the area to the west of the mountains the Dhahirah, or "Back". The Batinah – the coastal area formed by the wadis (dried up areas of river bed) that flow down from the mountains – is between 15 and 80 kilometres wide and over 300 kilometres long. The Sultanate's main agricultural area, which boasts farms and orchards irrigated by groundwater, runs northwards from Muscat to the borders of the United Arab Emirates.

Several wadis cut right through the Hajar mountains. The largest – Wadi Samayl – links the city of Muscat on the coast with the wilayat of Izki and Nizwa in the interior. Omanis call the mountains to the west of this wadi al Hajar al Gharbi (the Western Hajar); this region includes the Jabal al

Akhdar and the wilayat of Rustaq, Nakhl, al Awabi and several others.

The mountain area to the east of Wadi Sumail is called al Hajar al Sharqi (the Eastern Hajar) and includes – among others – the wilayat of Sumail and Bidbid. The highest peak in the Hajar range is Jabal Shams in the Dakhiliyah Governorate, the summit of which is around 3,000 metres above sea level.

At Qurm Heights in Muscat the Omani coast narrows and becomes rocky with numerous inlets. The shoreline from South Muscat Point to Ras al Hadd is similar. From Ras al Hadd to Filim on Masirah Bay the Sharqiyah Sands extend over a band of terrain some 160 kilometres long by 8 kilometres wide. To the south west of Masirah Island lies a vast area of flat, stony ground known as the Jiddat al Harasis. To the west of the Sharqiyah Sands is a stretch of low-lying rocky terrain around 250 kilometres wide crossed by wadis running from north to south; these include Wadi Halfain and Wadi Andam.



A dramatic mountainscape in Musandam Governorate. (Wilayat Khasab)

West of Masirah Island is the peninsula of Barr al Hikman, which is separated from Masirah by a channel 14 kilometres wide. It consists of salt flats, which can reach as far as 5 kilometres inland and, at some times of the year, are covered by the sea. The population of this area earns its living from fishing.

The Omani coast – including the Wusta and Dhofar Governorates – extends along the Arabian Sea for a distance of 560 kilometres, some 130 kilometres of which are exposed to monsoon rains. This latter stretch consists of a coastal plain between eight and ten kilometres wide and includes Salalah and several other wilayat such as Taqah, Mirbat, Sadah, Rakhyut and Dhalkut. The coastal areas of the Governorate of Dhofar are rich in fish including prawns and hamour (grouper), as well as sardines, the surplus catches of which are used as animal fodder or fertiliser. The mountain region of Dhofar extends from east to west for a distance

Geology

Superb rock outcrops in the mountains are a paradise for geologists from around the world. The country's rock record spans to more than one billion years. Next to thick layers of limestone, testifying to tropical conditions in the past, the rock recorded three periods when the country was ice covered, somewhat surprising given its present climate. Dark coloured Semail ophiolites, a layered mix of volcanics and rocks originating from very deep up to 10 km in the earth were pushed from north

of around 400 kilometres, from opposite the Hallaniyat Islands to the borders of the Republic of Yemen, forming a continuous chain which includes Jabal Samhan in the east and Jabal al Qamar in the west. At no point is this range more than 23 kilometres wide or higher than 2,500 metres. A 75 kilometre swathe of these mountains is cloaked in greenery from June to September each year during the khareef (monsoon) season, when the south-western monsoon winds give the region a very different character from the rest of the Arabian Peninsula and the rains transform the land into a delightful summer resort with rich pastures.

Frankincense trees grow in some areas – a living reminder that the region was once renowned for its trade in this substance – the main source of its wealth in ancient times.

Fresh water springs flow abundantly in Dhofar throughout the year.

to south onto the land over hundreds of kilometres 75 million years ago. These ophiolites locally can be rich in copper and chrome.

The flat interior plains are hiding a kilometres thick stack of much older sediments that host the country's hydrocarbon resources. Ancient salt, which comes to the surface in several salt hills, such as Qarat Kibrit, has been mined in the past, but also played an important role in forming oil and gas accumulations.

The Governorates and Wilayat (districts)

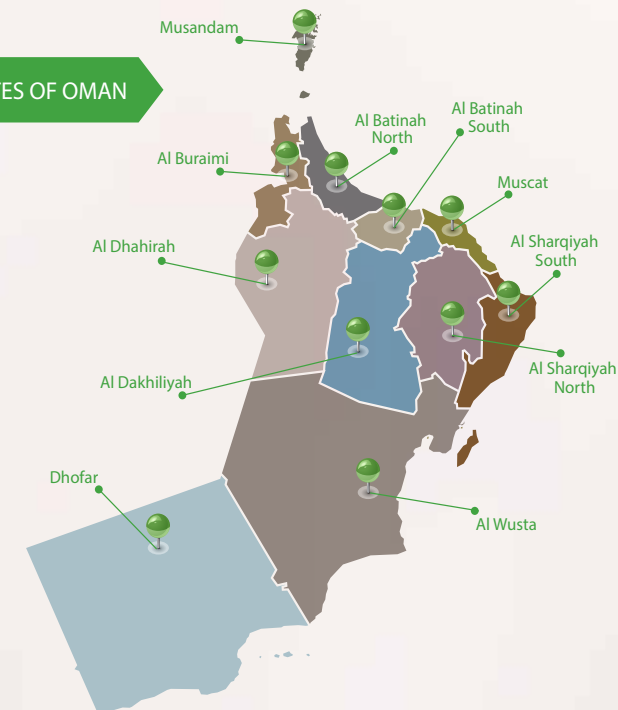
According to Royal Decree No. 114/2011, issued on 26 October 2011, Oman comprises 11 governorates:- Muscat, Dhofar, Musandam, Buraymi, the Dakhiliyah, the North Batinah, the South Batinah, the South Sharqiyah, the North Sharqiyah, the Dhahirah and the Wusta.

Each of these governorates has its own distinctive administrative, geographical and economic significance and comprises a number of wilayat (districts). (In all, the Sultanate has a total of 61 wilayat.) The Ministry of the Interior is responsible for overseeing the governorates, with the exception of the Muscat and Dhofar Governorates. In accordance with Royal Decree No.115/2011, Sultan Qaboos appoints the governors of each of the governorates, while the wali (local governor) of each wilayat is responsible for the local administration and acts as a link between the government, its institutions and the public.

His Majesty promulgated the Municipal Councils Law under Royal Decree No. 116/2011 on 26 October 2011 as a further step designed to streamline the administrative and municipal systems across the country and simplify procedures for members of the public.

Over a succession of development plans Oman has been able to ensure that balanced and integrated development takes place across the country's different governorates. Major projects and industrial zones have been set up from Muscat to Salalah, from Sur to Sohar, from Niwza to Musandam and Buraymi and from Ibri to Duqm, within the framework of an overall plan that balances the nation's priorities and the needs of the individual governorates. Different governorates take turns in hosting major national and religious events, including, in particular, the National Day celebrations.

GOVERNORATES OF OMAN



Nature at its most bountiful in Dhofar. (Wadi Darbat Falls)





Muscat Governorate



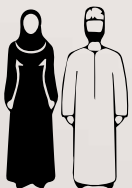
Muscat is at the centre of the country, politically, economically and administratively. It is the capital of the Sultanate, the seat of government and the administrative centre of the State. Muscat is a vibrant domestic hub of economic, tourism and commercial activity, as well as of the Sultanate's relations with other countries.

according to the most recent census of Population, Housing and Establishments

(775,878)

per the statistics of the National Centre for Statistics and Information published in August

(1,468,671)



2010

2018

Lying on the Sea of Oman at the southern end of the Batinah coast, Muscat Governorate borders the Eastern Hajar mountains and the North Sharqiyah Governorate to the east, the South Batinah Governorate to the west and the Dakhiliyah Governorate to the south.

Muscat has the highest population density of all the provinces in the Sultanate, with a population of 775,878 residents, according to the most recent (2010) census of Population, Housing and Establishments, that had risen to 1,468,671 per the statistics of the National Centre for Statistics and Information published in August 2018.

This governorate has seen active development in all sectors, including the establishment of a modern road network linking

Muscat with the other wilayat in the governorate and beyond, landscaping projects, parks, marketplaces, public utilities and upgrading of residential quarters and business districts. Upgrading of commercial and residential neighbourhoods has secured for Muscat a place among the most modern of cities. Its development strategies embrace the gifts of the past, while planning for the bright promise of the future.

Muscat Governorate comprises six wilayat: Muscat, Muttrah, Amerat, Bausher, Seeb and Quriyat, each of which is administered by a wali appointed by the Governor of Muscat. The governorate serves as the administrative authority for all citizens residing within its borders, its affairs falling within the jurisdiction of the Minister of State and the Governor of Muscat.

Dhofar is famous for its clement autumn climate, an oasis of green following seasonal rains.



Dhofar Governorate



The Dhofar Governorate has played an important role in Oman's history, in recent times as well as in the more distant past, and it was from Salalah, in Dhofar, that Oman's contemporary era of development first saw the light of day under the leadership of His Majesty Sultan Qaboos bin Said.

according to the most recent census of Population, Housing and Establishments

(249,729)

per the statistics of the National Centre for Statistics and Information published in August

(453,242)

2010

2018



Historically, Dhofar – the Arabian Peninsula's Land of Frankincense – was Oman's great gateway to the Indian Ocean and the crossroads of Southern Arabia's caravan routes, while in recent times it has become the country's gateway to progress and prosperity.

Dhofar Governorate lies at the southern end of Oman, with Salalah some 1,000 kilometres distant from Muscat. It borders the Wusta Governorate to the north-east the Arabian Sea to the south-east and south, the Republic of Yemen to the west and south-west and, to the north and north-west, the Rub' al Khali desert, or Empty Quarter, renowned for its seasonal climate, or khareef, as it is known locally. This is where she experiences her sweetest times amid lush plateaux cloaked in the rolling white mist

that moistens and cools the air.

This governorate has ten wilayat – Salalah, the main hub, and Taqah, Mirbat, Rakhyut, Thumrait, Dhalkut, Mazayounah, Muqshin, Shaleem and the Hallaniyat Islands, and Sadah.

The population of Dhofar Governorate is 249,729 according to the results of the General Census of Population, Housing and Establishments for the year 2010 and 453,242 people according to the statistics of the National Center for Statistics and Information for August 2018.

The governorate's affairs are administered by the Minister of State and Governor of Dhofar.

The Municipal Council of Dhofar has 24 members representing the governorate's wilayat.

The modern architecture of the Mosque of Sultan Qaboos at Bukha blends seamlessly with that of its ancient fortress.»



Musandam Governorate

according to the most recent census of Population, Housing and Establishments

(31,425)

per the statistics of the National Centre for Statistics and Information published in August

(44,870)

2010

2018

Musandam is of great strategic importance, as it overlooks the Strait of Hormuz, the most important international waterway.

It is important for oil exports and trade, both at the regional and international level, through which %90 of Gulf oil exports go to the outside world. It is also the eastern gateway to the trade and navigation movement to and from the Gulf States. Musandam is located in the far north of the Sultanate of Oman and overlooks the Strait of Hormuz and serves as the gateway between the Gulf

and the open sea in the Sea of Oman and the Indian Ocean.

The Governorate of Musandam has four wilayat – Khasab, the main hub, as well as Daba, Bukha and Madha.

The population of the province was 31,425 in the 2010 General Census of Population, Housing and Establishment, and 44,870 in the statistics of the National Centre for Statistics and Information for the month of August 2018. The Municipal Council has 8 members representing the various wilayat.



Buraymi Governorate

according to the most recent census of Population, Housing and Establishments

(72,917)

per the statistics of the National Centre for Statistics and Information published in August

(114,110)



2010

2018

The Buraymi Governorate is renowned for its strategic location in the north-west of the Sultanate. Historically, because of its height above sea level and abundant water supplies from its wadis and aflaaj (irrigation channels), it also became an important trading station on a major trade route and a significant producer of wheat, dates and other fruit.

There are several forts and castles in Buraymi, including – among others - al Khandaq, al Hillah, Bait al Nadd and al Khabib.

Buraymi is witnessing the implementation of promising development projects which are meant

to promote the governorate's tourism potential. The new tourism and development schemes offer a pronounced and very promising advance to a level of development sophistication that will reflect not only on Buraymi, but on the Sultanate as a whole.

The Governorate has three wilayat – Buraymi (the main one), Mahdha and al Sinainah – and a population of 72,917 according to the 2010 Census of Population, Housing and Establishments, or 114,110 in the August 2018 statistics of the National Centre for Statistics and Information. Its Municipal Council has 8 members.



Dakhiliyah Governorate

according to the most recent census of Population, Housing and Establishments

(326,651)

per the statistics of the National Centre for Statistics and Information published in August

(476,320)



2010

2018

Dakhiliyah Governorate, consisting of a large upland in the centre of the country, could be described as the Sultanate's 'strategic depth.'

From the Jabal al Akhdar or Green Mountain range, its terrain slopes southwards in the direction of the desert. A pivotal link between the Sultanate's different governorates, the Dakhiliyah borders the South and North Sharqiyah Governorates to the east, the Dhahirah Governorate to the west, the Wusta Governorate to the south and the Muscat and South Batinah Governorates to the north.

As well as being one of the country's main agricultural regions, the Dakhiliyah Governorate has also played a prominent role in the country's history.

It has eight wilayats – Nizwa (its main hub), Bahla, Manah, al Hamra, Adam, Izki, Sumail and Bidbid – and, according to the 2010 Census of Population, Housing and Establishments, it had a population of 326,651, now up to 476,320 per the August 2018 statistics of the National Centre for Statistics and Information. Its Municipal Council has 26 members.



North Batinah Governorate



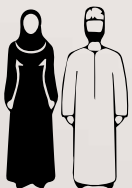
The North Batinah Governorate - a coastal strip between the sea and the mountains - is geographically and economically one of the Sultanate's most important governorates. It has six wilayats - Sohar (the main one), Shinas, Liwa, Saham, Khabourah and Suwaiq.

according to the most recent census of Population, Housing and Establishments

(483,582)

per the statistics of the National Centre for Statistics and Information published in August

(777,224)



2010

2018

The Governorate occupies a crucial geographical location along the southern shore of the Sea of Oman. It has long been a major Omani maritime and trade link with countries bordering the Gulf and the Indian Ocean. A visual representation of this governorate's major economic potential is the broad Batinah Plain, one of the Sultanate's largest agricultural plains. It is also rich in mineral resources, which are currently being exploited as a basis for several vital heavy industry projects.

Sohar Industrial Port is one of Oman's mega-projects. The Sohar Industrial Estate, which is linked to the port, continues to attract a large number of major industrial and manufacturing enterprises, including fertiliser, petrochemicals, aluminium and iron projects. These operations have been further boosted

with the establishment of the Free Zone Sohar and Sohar Airport, a new portal to the Sultanate, one which will speed up the development of nearby commercial and industrial projects sectors and help promote investment.

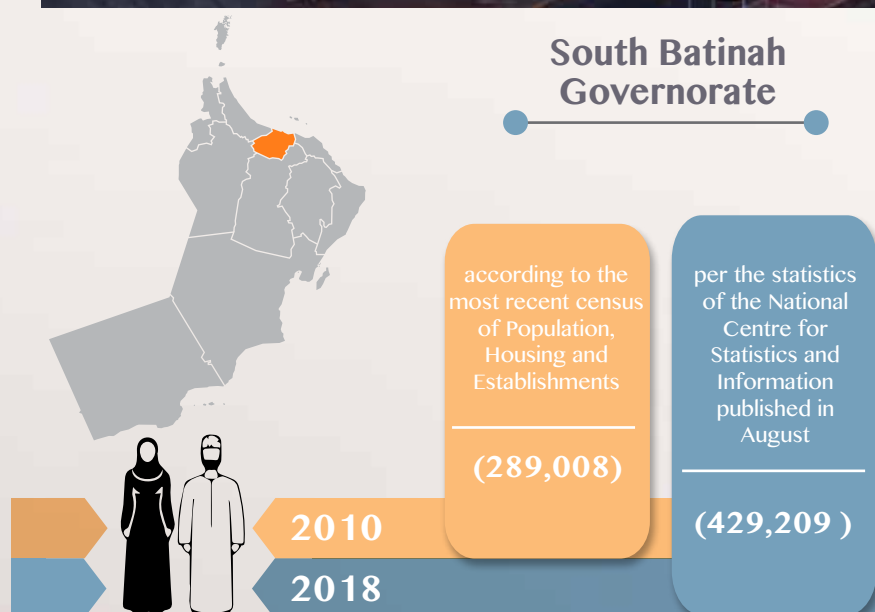
Meantime, the ongoing expansion of the port of Shinas, linking Musandam Governorate to the north with the Batinah by a network of rail, road and sea routes will greatly facilitate the transportation of both passengers and freight.

The Governorate's population stood at 483,582 in the 2010 Census of Population, Housing and Establishments and at 777,224 in the August 2018 statistics of the National Centre for Statistics and Information. The North Batinah Municipal Council has 28 members.

From the outset, the modern Renaissance gave precedence to urban planning and beautification in its development agenda.
(Wilayat Rustaq)



South Batinah Governorate



The province of South Batinah consists of six states namely Rustaq, Awabi, Nakhl, Wadi al Masjawel, Barka, and Al Masanaia. The population of the governorate was 289,008 people according to the general census of population, housing and enterprises for the year 2010, and 429,209 people, according to the statistics of the National Centre for Statistics and Information for the month of August 2018.

It lies between the Sea of Oman to the east and the slopes of the Western Hajar mountain range to the west. Because of its location, economic assets and large population, it has been an influential player throughout the course of Oman's history.

Many achievements have been logged in the public service areas in this governorate, including road infrastructure, telecommunications, extensive public parks and other urban planning and amenities to keep pace with the development of economic and social life in the Sultanate.

Specific attention has been focused on the development of the natural warm water springs of Ain al Kasfah in the wilayat of Rustaq and Ain al Thuwarah in the wilayat of Nakhl, in addition to extensive public parks.

The Municipal Council of South Batinah has 22 members representing the various wilayat.



South Sharqiyah Governorate

according to the most recent census of Population, Housing and Establishments

(188,032)

per the statistics of the National Centre for Statistics and Information published in August

(318,465)



2010

2018

The South Sharqiyah Governorate, which occupies the north-eastern part of the Sultanate of Oman, borders the Arabian Sea to the east, the Sharqiyah Sands to the south and the Dakhiliyah Governorate to the west.

The Governorate comprises five wilayats – Sur (the main wilayat), al Kamil wa'l Wafi, Ja'alan Bani Bu Hassan, Ja'alan Bani Bu Ali and Masirah.

South Sharqiyah has seen the implementation of a range of development projects, along with a major extension

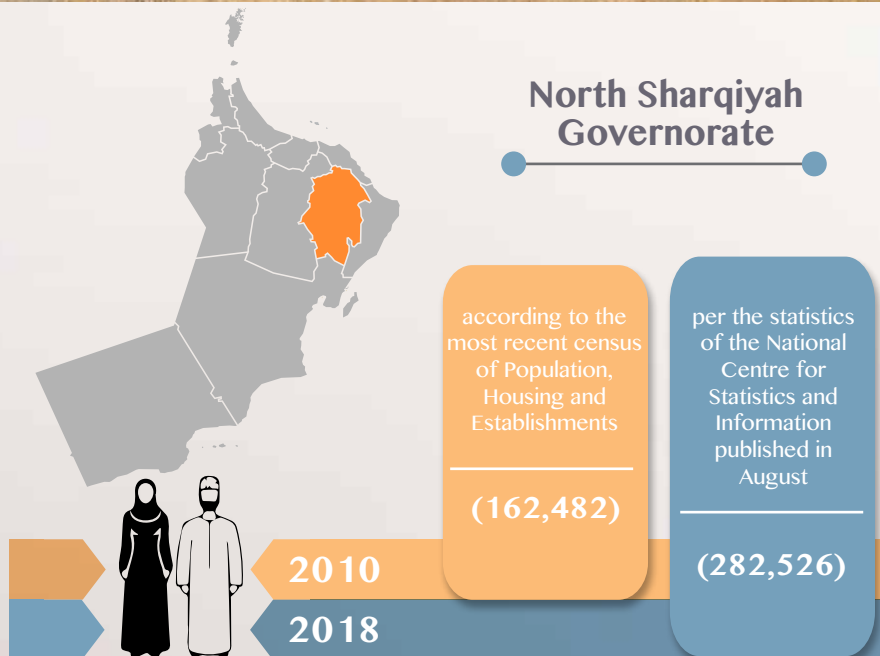
of the road network and infrastructure specific to tourism. It is home also to major economic projects, including LNG plants, a urea-ammonia smelter and the Industrial Estate of Sur, a hub for small and medium industries.

With a population of 188,032 in the 2010 Census of Population, Housing and Establishments and 318,465 in the August 2018 statistics of the National Centre for Statistics and Information, the governorate's Municipal Council has 16 representative members.

The creation of modern cities did not rule out the protection for future generations of the Sultanate's rich architectural heritage. (Al Hamam Fort, Wilayat Dima w'Ataen)



(Wilayat Ibra)



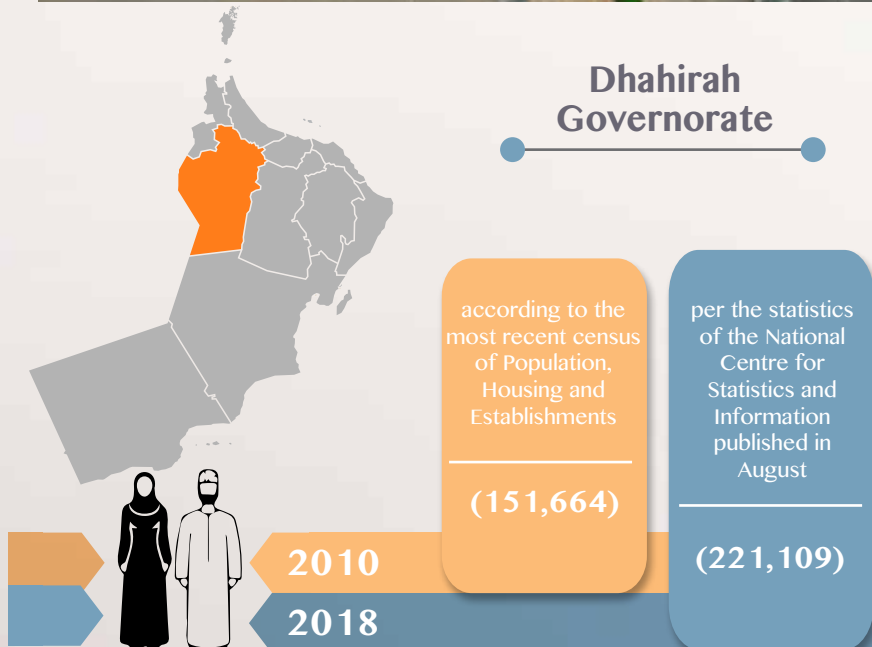
The North Sharqiyah Governorate overlooks the inner flanks of the Eastern Hajar mountain range. It shares borders with the governorate of Muscat to the north, the Dakhiliyah Governorate to the west and the South Sharqiyah Governorate to the east and south.

North Sharqiyah's six wilayats are Ibra, the main centre, Mudhaibi, Bidiyah, Qabil, Wadi Bani Khalid and Dima wa'l Ta'een.

With a population of 162,482 in

the 2010 Census of Population, Housing and Establishments, and 282,526 in the August 2018 statistics of the National Centre for Statistics and Information, the Governorate's Municipal Council has 16 representative members.

North Sharqiyah has benefited from substantial development projects, spread over a range of public services, including health, education, road infrastructure, water supply, as well as tourism projects.



Al Dhahirah is a semi-desert plain that descends from the southern slopes of the western Hajar mountains towards the desert of Al Rub al Khali, separated by the Al Khawr mountains from the interior of Oman. To the east, and to the desert of the Empty Quarter to the west and the central province to the south.

The Dhahirah Governorate has three wilayat – Ibri (the main wilayat), Yanqul and Dhank – and a 2010 population of 151,664, according to the Census of Population, Housing

and Establishments, which had grown to 221,109 in the August 2018 statistics of the National Centre for Statistics and Information.

Its most distinctive features include a high level of agricultural production and a location at the crossroads of the centuries-old trans-Arabian caravan routes. It also has several oil and gas fields and has benefited liberally from substantial development projects. Its Municipal Council has 10 members.

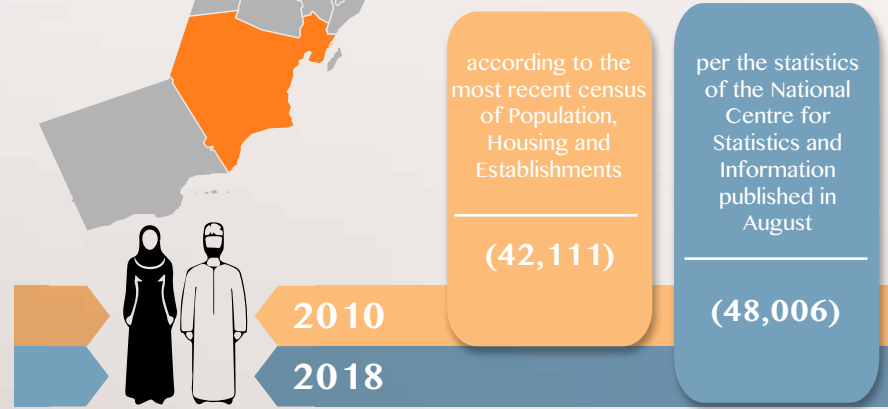
Al Wusta Governorate is rich in wildlife and remarkable geological formations.



Wusta Governorate



The Wusta Governorate lies to the south of the Dakhiliyah and Dhahirah Governorates. It overlooks the Arabian Sea to the east and borders the desert of the Rub' al Khali, or Empty Quarter, to the west and the Dhofar Governorate to the south. Its most distinctive features include a large number of oil and gas fields and a temperate climate throughout the year.



Al Wusta comprises four wilayat – Haima (the main hub), Mahawt, Duqm and al Jazer – and had a population in 2010 of 42,111, according to the 2010 Census of Population, Housing and Establishments, which had risen to 48,006 by August 2018, per the statistics of the National Centre for Statistics and Information. Its Municipal Council has eight members.

Duqm's Special Economic Zone (SEZAD) is one of the governorate's most ambitious projects. It is a multi-purpose economic interface of global proportions and key regional hub, assisted by Duqm's strategic geopolitical aspect, open to the Arabian Sea. Duqm

has benefited significantly from development in recent years and now occupies a special position on the global investment map, given its competitive edge and the many incentives and facilities afforded investors.

The drydock complex in the Duqm Economic Zone, meanwhile, reflects the government's strategy to develop Al Wusta Governorate into becoming a major contributor to the national economy and promoter of the Sultanate's standing internationally. In addition to this complex, many projects of water, electricity, roads, fishing jetties and health and educational services have been introduced.

*"Cooperation and solidarity
between the arms of government, a
constant exchange of views and of counsel
between the incumbents of the various
departments, this is the path that raises
performance and secures the success of the
programmes crucial to comprehensive
national development."*

Qaboos bin Said

(Inauguration of the Fifth Session of the Council of Oman- 31 October 2011)

Institutions of a Modern State



Basic Law of the State and its organisational structure

The establishment of a modern state and the securing of its sustained existence through a complex overlay of institutions, systems and laws were ground principles of Oman's modern Renaissance. This infrastructure was essential to advance society and support onward development and it was designed with care and purpose by His Majesty Sultan Qaboos bin Said, who understood both the democratic principles underpinning it and the factors that would adapt the design to the realities of Oman.

It was a high-minded ideal and one that has served the Sultanate well in its contemporary journey, enabling it to adopt the science and knowledge of modernity without losing authenticity.

The significance of what has been achieved in terms of the establishment and advancement of a modern State of Institutions was the result of a comprehensive vision, executed through careful planning and leadership. Dedicated to the homeland and its citizens, the direction of governance has been first to establish, and then protect, a concept of citizenship based on full equality between all citizens of the State and the rule of law.

This principle was ultimately enshrined in the Basic Law of the State, issued on 11 June 1996, and its amendments. The Basic Law is a charter that

enunciates all fundamental aspects of the modern state, the relations between its institutions and the responsibilities, rights, duties and tasks entrusted to the various organs of the State and its administrative institutions. It ensures the independence of the judiciary in the performance of its role, in order that justice may be served, overseeing its performance and ensuring its proper progress through the operating mechanisms of financial and administrative control of the State as expressed through the work of the State Financial and Administrative Audit Institution, the Public Authority for Consumer Protection, and other regulatory bodies which exercise their roles under the umbrella of this law. The associated obligations serve to secure and guarantee the basic freedoms of citizens, protected by law.

The Basic Law of the State

To advance the progression towards prosperity and stability and greater citizen participation in the development process, Royal Decree No. 96/101 was promulgated on 6 November 1996 instituting the Basic Law of the State. The Basic Law would provide the foundation for a secure future for Oman and enhance its status internationally as it promoted its belief in peace and cooperation between nations and peoples.

The seven chapters and 81 articles of the Basic Law created the legal framework needed to define and oversee the work of the various State authorities, guiding individual agencies on the specific objectives and scope of their responsibilities. Meanwhile it provides maximum safeguards to protect the freedom, dignity and rights of the individual. It raises the status of law to the highest sovereign standards recognised internationally.

This historic document defines the system of government in the state and the principles guiding the state's policies at various levels. It specifies the public rights and duties of citizens and gives details of the provisions concerning the Head of State, the Council of Ministers and the judiciary. It also refers to the specialised councils, the financial affairs and the Council of Oman (Majlis Oman). While laws must be issued on the basis of

provisions of the Basic Law of the State, these laws should not conflict with the Basic Law's provisions.

In confirmation of the participation of all members of society in the march of comprehensive development towards the desired goals of progress, some of the provisions of the Basic Law were amended for the first time under Royal Decree No 2011/99 on 19 October 2011. The new amendments granted legislative and audit powers and prerogatives to the State Council and the Consultation Council (Majlis al Shura) to ensure that both conform to the decisions issued by the Council of Ministers.

The amendments also granted the State Council (Majlis al Dawla) and Consultation Council (Majlis al Shura) the right to amend all laws proposed by the Council of Ministers before submitting them to His Majesty the Sultan who issues them as enforced laws. The Basic Law's amendments grant the Consultation Council alone the prerogative to propose laws. They also define terms for membership at the State Council and Consultation Council, as well as the number of members in the two councils so that the number of the State Council's members shall not exceed the number of the Consultation Council members.

To build a modern state on a bedrock of institutions, systems and laws was the visionary goal that propelled the modern Renaissance.
(Al Wazarat (Ministries) Street - Al Khuweir)



Institutions of a Modern State

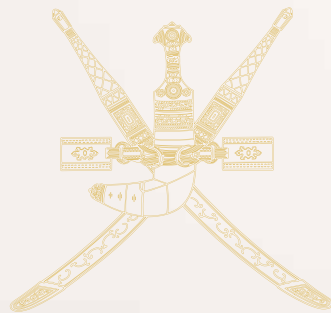
Firm foundations

The Basic Law of the State specified a set of firm foundations and specific principles for the State and the system of government. In its first article, this Basic Law states that the Sultanate of Oman is an independent, fully sovereign, Arab, Islamic State with its capital in the city of Muscat.

Article 2 states that the State's religion is Islam and that Sharia is the basis of legislation.

Part One of the Basic Law of the State also specifies the method and procedures for accession to power.

Article 5 stipulates that the system of government is Royal Sultani rule that is hereditary through the male descendants of Sayyid Turki bin Said bin Sultan on condition that the one chosen as successor be a Muslim, judicious, of sound character and a legitimate son of two Omani Muslim parents.



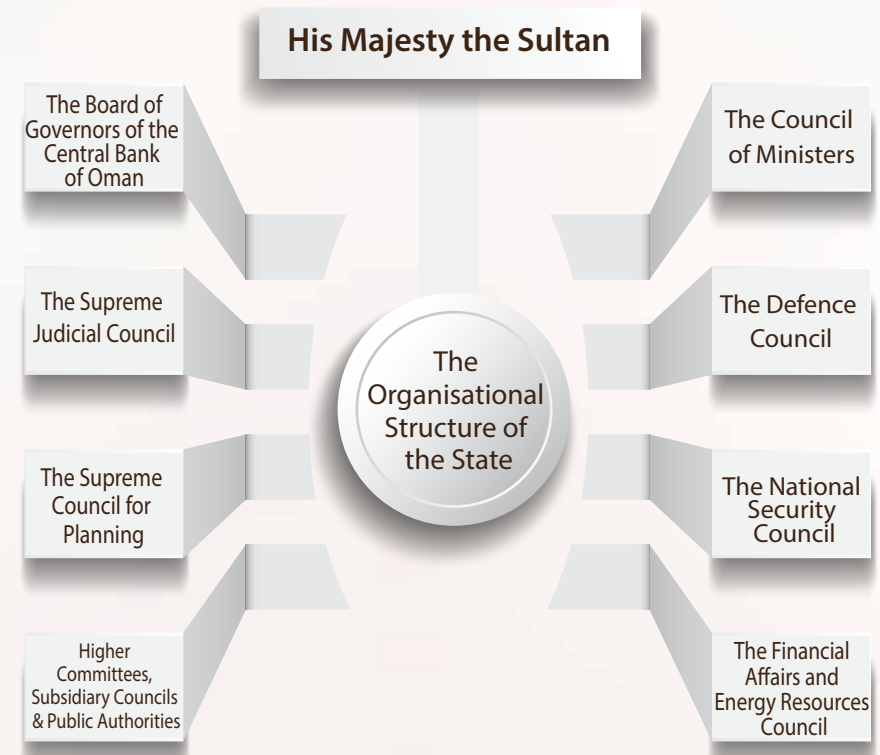
Article 59 stipulates that the sovereignty of law is the basis of government in the State and that the integrity, impartiality and probity of the judiciary shall be a guarantee of rights and freedoms.

The Basic Law of the State also guarantees the independence of the judiciary and makes interference in legal proceedings or the affairs of justice a crime punishable by law.

All aspects of Oman's political system and the way it operates is defined by the Basic Law of the State in its Articles, which guarantee the rights and freedoms of the country's citizens as well as the functions of the State's authorities and institutions.

The Organisational Structure of the State

The State's organisational structure consists of His Majesty the Sultan and the councils, the institutions and authorities listed below:



One - His Majesty the Sultan

His Majesty the Sultan is the Head of State, its paramount and final authority and the Supreme Commander of the Armed Forces. His Majesty's person is inviolate. Respect for him is obligatory and his command must be obeyed. He is the symbol of national unity. He is the country's guardian and defender. Article 42 of the Basic Law of the State defines His Majesty's functions.

Two - The Council of Ministers

The Council of Ministers assists His Majesty the Sultan in drawing up the general policy of the State. It is the institution entrusted with the implementation of the general policy of the State. In this context, the Council of Ministers undertakes the specific task of submitting recommendations to His Majesty the Sultan about economic, political, social, executive and administrative matters of concern to the government. This includes proposals of draft laws, Royal decrees, decisions aimed to promote the welfare of citizens or securing basic services to be rendered to them or raising the economic, health and cultural standards of citizens or determining the general objectives and policies of economic, social and administrative development or proposing suitable means and procedures to implement these policies to guarantee the proper utilization of financial, economic and human resources.

In addition, the Council of Ministers discusses the development plans prepared by the departments concerned and submits them to His Majesty the Sultan for approval. It also discusses the proposals of ministries, each in their areas of discretion, and takes proper decisions on those proposals.

The Council of Ministers supervises the smooth operation of the State's administrative apparatus and follows up the way it performs its duties and coordinates among its units. It is also entrusted with the general supervision of enforcement of laws, Royal Decrees, decisions, regulations, treaties, agreements and court rulings, in addition to other tasks or missions that are delegated to the Council by His Majesty the Sultan or tasks entrusted to it by the power of law. The Council of Ministers has a Secretariat General which helps it perform its functions.

His Majesty Sultan Qaboos presides over a session of the Council of Ministers.



Membership of the Council of Ministers, under the chairmanship of His Majesty the Sultan, is as follows:

His Highness Sayyid Fahd bin Mahmood al Said,
Deputy Prime Minister for the Council of Ministers

His Highness Sayyid Haitham bin Tariq al Said,
Minister of Heritage and Culture

HE Sayyid Khalid bin Hilal bin Saud al Busaidi,
Minister of the Diwan of Royal Court

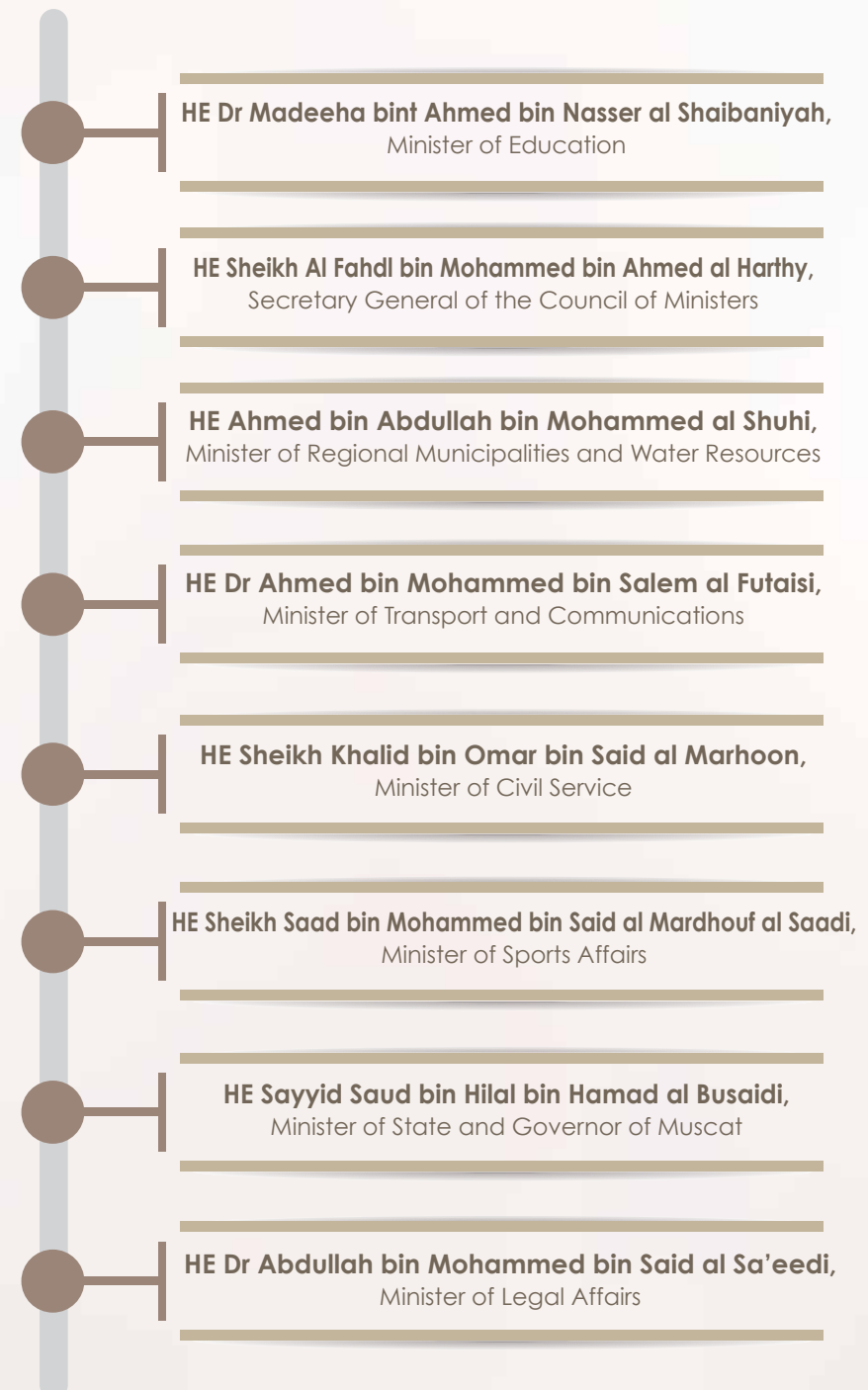
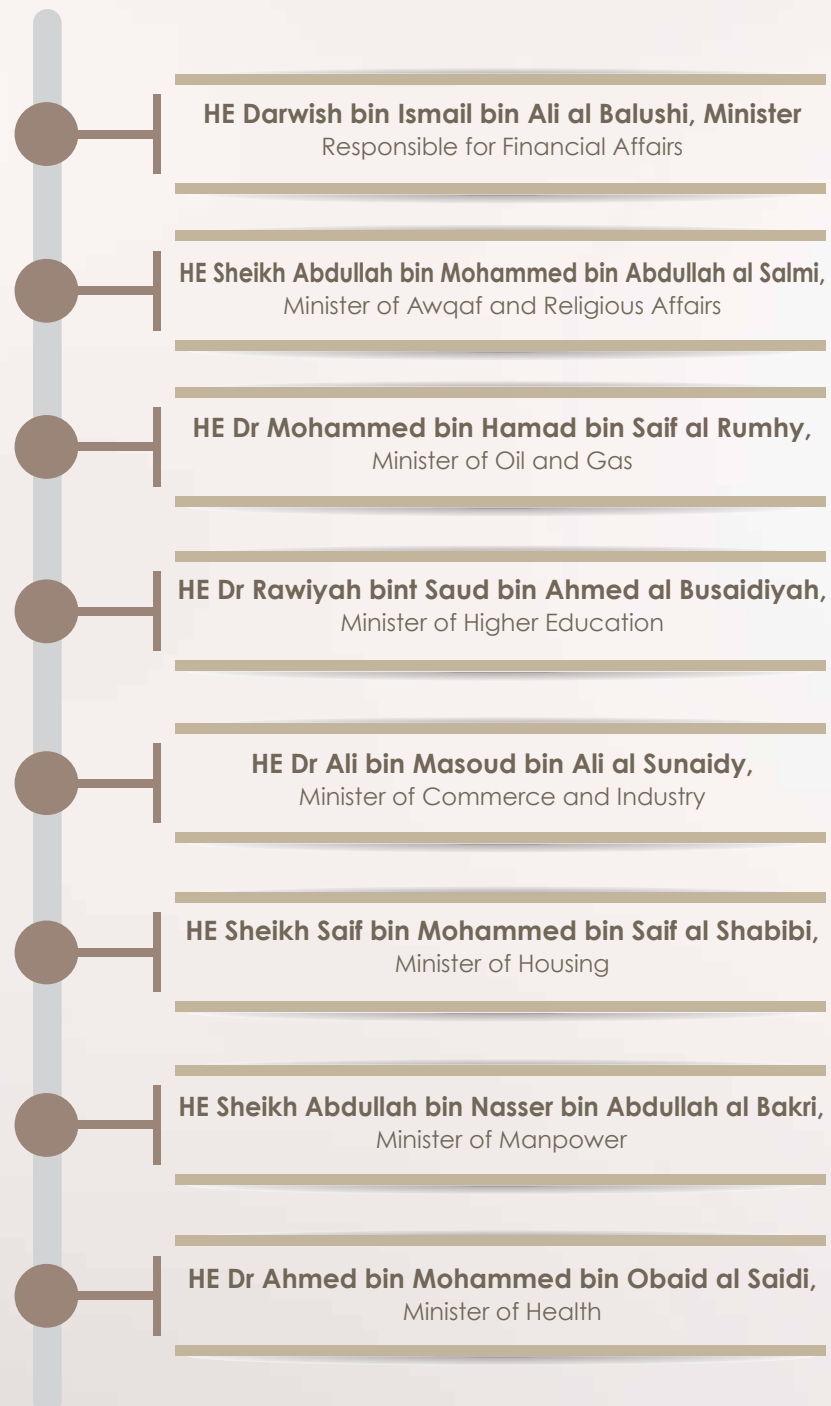
HE General Sultan bin Mohammed al Nu'mani,
Minister of the Royal Office

HE Sayyid Badr bin Saud bin Hareb al Busaidy,
Minister Responsible for Defence Affairs

HE Sayyid Hamoud bin Faisal bin Said al Busaidi,
Minister of Interior

HE Yusuf bin Alawi bin Abdallah, Minister
Responsible for Foreign Affairs

HE Sheikh Abdulmalik bin Abdullah bin Ali al Khalili,
Minister of Justice



HE Dr Fuad bin Jaafar bin Mohammed al Sajwani,
Minister of Agriculture and Fisheries

HE Mohammed bin Salim bin Said al Toobi,
Minister of Environment and Climate Affairs

HE Sheikh Mohammed bin Said bin Saif al Kalbani,
Minister of Social Development

HE Sayyid Mohammed bin Sultan bin Hamoud al Busaidi,
Minister of State and Governor of Dhofar

HE Ahmed bin Nasser bin Hamad al Mahrazi,
Minister of Tourism

HE Dr Abdulmunim bin Mansoor bin Said al Hasani,
Minister of Information

Three - The Defence Council

On 28 December 1996, His Majesty Sultan Qaboos issued Royal Decree No 105/96 structuring the Defence Council under His Majesty's chairmanship and with 8 other people selected as members on grounds of their ranks or positions. The Defence Council meets at the direction of His Majesty the Sultan to discuss issues pertaining to the Sultanate's defence and security.

Four - The National Security Council

The National Security Council (NSC) is responsible for reviewing all issues related to national security. It convenes under the chairmanship of His Majesty the Sultan in cases deemed appropriate by Sultan Qaboos. Otherwise, the NSC convenes under the auspices of the Minister of the Royal Office. Its members are: The Inspector General of Police and Customs, the Head of the Internal Security Service, the Chief of Staff of the Sultan's Armed Forces and the Chairman of the Communications and Liaison Department. The Council may request the attendance of non-members as and when appropriate. The Council has a Secretary-General who is appointed from the Royal Office staff.

Five - The Financial Affairs and Energy Resources Council

This Council undertakes the responsibility of drafting the State's fiscal policy and all matters related to its financial and monetary system. It drafts the annual General State Budget and studies financial allocations for development projects, as well as anything related to domestic and external investment, its funding and other savings-related investment, financial and monetary affairs.

The Council's remit also includes the development of energy resources and their contribution to the national economy, as well as improvements to the ways in which the funds they generate are utilised.

The Council, which convenes under the chairmanship of His Majesty the Sultan or its Deputy Chairman, was restructured under His Majesty's chairmanship by Royal Decree No 60/2011, issued on 9 May 2011.

On 12 June 2018, the Council approved an extension, to 1 January 2019, of the grace period for application of the newly amended municipal fees, duties, charges, insurance and financial guarantees collected by the institutions of the municipal sector.

A memorandum submitted on factors affecting the sustainability of public finances and the balancing of public expenditure with revenue, taking into account all available financial resources, along with safe levels of deficit and of public debt, was reviewed. A series of measures was adopted with a view to attaining financial sustainability and improving the Sultanate's credit rating.

Six - The Board of Governors of the Central Bank of Oman

The Board of Governors of the Central Bank of Oman undertakes the task of drafting a suitable monetary policy for the Sultanate. It also runs the Central Bank of Oman (CBO), which was established on 1 December 1974 as per the provisions of the Banking Law No 7/74, later amended by Royal Decree No 114/2000.

The Board is fully empowered to adopt all necessary measures to ensure that the CBO is properly managed. It also enjoys the full authority to issue currency, monitor the banking institutions and oversee banking operations in the Sultanate.

The Board of Governors of the Central Bank of Oman consists of six governors, appointed and headed by His Majesty the Sultan. On 5 September 2017, Royal Decree No. 42/2017 was issued to reconstitute the Board of Governors of the Central Bank of Oman, under the chairmanship of His Majesty.

Seven - The Supreme Judicial Council

The Supreme Judicial Council has jurisdiction over the general policy of the judiciary, guarantees its independence and monitors its development. It executes a role in consolidating the values, ideals and ethics of judicial work and the prudent care of its systems. In order to achieve its objectives, the Supreme Judicial Council has jurisdiction over the courts and the Public Prosecution. In addition, it facilitates the litigation process and access to legal proceedings and considering nominations submitted by the competent authorities for appointments. Promotions in the judiciary, the Administrative Court and the Public Prosecution, in cases where the law stipulates such posts should be filled by Royal Decree, also fall under this Council's remit. As well as proposing draft laws on judicial matters and expressing views on draft laws it also gives its opinion on draft judicial co-operation agreements between the Sultanate and other countries, as well as on any other matter His Majesty sees fit to put before it for review.

The Council was restructured on 29 February 2012 pursuant to Royal Decree No. 9/2012, with His Majesty the Sultan as Chairman.

Eight - The Supreme Council for Planning

The Supreme Council for Planning was promulgated by Royal Decree No. 30/2012, issued on 26 May 2012. The Council drafts strategies and policies necessary for achieving sustainable development in the Sultanate. It also drafts mechanisms for implementing these strategies and policies towards the achievement of economic diversity and ideal utilisation of natural and human resources.

On 25 March 2018, the Supreme Planning Council reviewed the performance report on the Omani economy, which demonstrated an up tick in the local economy, with good indicators achieved for 2017. GDP continued to show positive growth. The Council also reviewed efforts being coordinated in preparation for Future Vision 2040, in which all segments of society were shown to be actively and interactively engaged. The Council also reviewed the progress achieved in establishing the National Strategy for Urban Development and planning its upcoming stages. It also discussed the status of the prototype urban revitalisation project in Wilayat Barka and the preparatory work already ongoing in this respect.

Nine - Higher Committees, Subsidiary Councils and Public Authorities

Article No 56 of the Basic Law of the State states that "Specialised Councils shall be established, their powers defined and their members appointed in accordance with Royal Decrees. The State's administrative apparatus comprises a number of Higher Committees, Specialised Subsidiary Councils and Public Authorities, each of which is responsible for managing or overseeing a specific sector with a view to drafting a comprehensive vision for development. In serving the public interest and to guarantee the smooth flow of work in each sector, these bodies coordinate with other relevant departments, including ministries.

The members of these Committees, Councils and Authorities include ministers and public figures according to their specialisation.

The Higher Committee for Conferences

This Committee is responsible for preparing, monitoring and liaising on conferences attended by Oman –

particularly those involving the Gulf Co-operation Council for Arab states – in coordination with the relevant ministries.

The Supreme Higher Committee for Five-Year Plans

The Supreme Higher Committee for Five-Year Plans specifies the basic elements and guidelines for the five-year development plans. It conducts half-yearly assessments and follow-up of these plans.

It acts as an executive force in brokering the current priorities outlined by His

Majesty, translating them into policies to be enshrined in and executed through the Five-Year Development Plan.

The Committee promotes ever greater coordination between the government and both the State and Shura Councils in mobilising energies to achieve national goals.

The State Financial and Administrative Audit Institution

The State Financial and Administrative Audit Institution (SFAAI) was established as a financially and administratively independent body on 22 November 1999. On 27 February 2011, His Majesty Sultan Qaboos gave orders to amend its name to the State's Financial and Administrative Audit Institution, whereupon it became the administrative and financial control apparatus of the State. It reports directly to His Majesty the Sultan.

Crowning the sequential steps in the development of the Audit institution, the Financial and Administrative Audit Law was issued by Royal Decree No. 111/2011, coincidentally with the Law for the Protection of Public Funds and Avoidance

of Conflicts of Interest (the "Anti-Corruption Law"), promulgated by means of Royal Decree 112/2011. These two enactments together bring focus to the work of the SFAAI and expand its terms of reference in a manner to sharpen its performance in meeting the broad objectives of national development.

On 15 January 2016, Sultan Qaboos issued directives including Muscat Municipality, the General Secretariat of the Council of Ministers, the Court of Administrative Justice and the Public Authority for Craft Industries in the sphere of responsibility of the State Financial and Administrative Audit Institution.

The Civil Service Council

The Civil Service Council undertakes the responsibility of drawing up general policies related to the civil service and related plans of administrative development. It looks into decisions, laws and procedures aimed at increasing Omanisation and upgrading performance in the State's administrative apparatus.

The function of the Council is to undertake the task of developing civil service systems, and increasing the efficiency

of the methods, means and procedures routinely used in the work of the civil service; also to review policies, systems, harmonised pay tables, along with allowances, benefits and bonuses; and to propose amendments to same to the Council of Ministers; finally to adopt systems of administrative control designed to verify the integrity of the application of laws and regulations relating to the civil service.

The Sultan Qaboos University Council

The Sultan Qaboos University Council works to maintain and advance the standard of university education and to achieve the maximum extent of conformity between the courses offered at Sultan Qaboos University and its graduate output and the requirements of the National Development Plan. In January 2018, the Council approved the introduction of a new specialisation (Psychological Counselling) within the Master of Arts

Programme in Psychology at the University's Faculty of Education. The Council also approved the upgrading of the College of Medicine and Health Science's Medical Education and Information Systems Unit to the status of an academic department, to be entitled 'Department of Medical Education and Information Systems', affording a boost to medical education in the College.

The Tender Board

The Tender Board was established on 30 April 1973, and in October 1984 Royal Decree No. 86/84 brought an amended system into line with legislative advances drafted to keep pace with the Sultanate's economic and social development objectives. On 24 March 2008 Royal Decree No. 36/2008 introduced the Tender

Law, which works today as an effective tool for the protection and management of public funds. Its promulgation was followed up by amendments in the form of Royal Decrees Nos. 19/2011, 120/2011 and 60/2013.

The Tender Board has responsibility for announcing tenders, opening bids, analysing and

awarding government tenders priced at over RO3 million. Excepted from this process are contracts relating to security and defence projects and projects with specific connotations in law. The Council approaches its functions guided by measures designed to raise performance levels in government agencies, in order to ensure the proper and efficient use of public money.

The Board exercises its functions by way of measures that guarantee the implementa-

tion of government projects, by providing goods, supplies and services of the highest specification at the lowest price, and by ensuring equal opportunity for all companies and institutions in the competition for public contracts. It is particularly supportive of small and medium enterprises, encouraging them to participate in the bidding process, and it is equally supportive of government strategy to provide work opportunities for the national workforce.

The Education Council

Government education policy directly reflects His Majesty's express aspiration for the advancement of national development and of the national workforce, and the Education Council oversees aspects of the contribution of education to this process. Royal Decree No. 48/2012 established the Council as an extension of the Higher Education Council, created in 1998 by virtue of Royal Decree No. 65/1998.

Based on this, and in light of the Council's competences, the Council has worked with all concerned bodies to prepare studies, plans and programs that would contribute to the development of the educational system in the Sultanate and improve its development.

In 2017, His Majesty Sultan Qaboos bin Said reviewed and endorsed the philosophy of education as espoused by the Sultanate's educational authorities, a philosophy that defines policy for all stages of the educational system and serves as a reference in building curricula that harmonise with broad national objectives.

In 2018, the Council approved the establishment of a Faculty of Law at the University of Dhofar. It also introduced the Excellence Awards for Omani teachers, a new incentive designed to promote the teaching profession among school leavers and college graduates.

The Oman Medical Specialty Board

In order to cope with exponential growth in the Sultanate's health services sector since the 1970s and the unprecedented achievements logged as a consequence of intense focus on the provision of superb healthcare for citizens, it became necessary to bring home the process of internationally acknowledged training in general and specialised medicine. In implementation of the directives of His Majesty Sultan Qaboos, Omanisation is an ongoing national goal on the path to full self-reliance in the labour market. Royal Decree No. 31/2006 created the Oman Medical Speciality Board (OMSB), a legal personality with financial and administrative independence.

The Research Council

The Research Council has passed many milestones since its foundation under Royal Decree No. 54/2005, announcing and initiating the immediate implementation of a national strategy for scientific research. Policies and mechanisms adopted were supportive of research as a means to meeting local requirements while adhering to international standards in innovation and scientific excellence. To this end, the Council values research links, knowledge transfer and a research environment that is both stimulating and grounded in real needs and capacity. The Council established an open

Since its inception, the Board has accumulated a body of expertise in specialist medical education and can today claim position as a leading academic institution in this region of the world.

Year on year, the Board has seen the number of doctors enrolled in its training programmes increase steadily, from an initial enrolment of 75 to more than one hundred in the 2010/2011 academic year, to 145 in 2016/2017. By the end of 2017, the OMSB had graduated nine batches of highly qualified physicians and surgeons, a total of 694 of them Omanis, to enter the health service in a variety of specialties.

research grants programme and in 2009 initiated the funding of research proposals submitted by researchers in various disciplines. The national strategy is to build competence and capacity and to nurture an environment likely to yield advanced research objectives. The programme receives research proposals, examines their potential and dispenses funding as appropriate in six research sectors: viz. energy and industry; communications and information systems; the environment and vital resources; education and human resources; culture and social and basic sciences; health and social service.

In 2017, in the fifth year of the student research programme, the Research Council approved the funding of 58 student research proposals. The proposals, drawn from the six approved research sectors, was conducted at 19 selected universities and colleges throughout the Sultanate and supported 173 male and female students.

Also in 2017, the launch took

place of the Omani Virtual Scientific Library, Masader, ('sources' in Arabic), which has the purpose of linking the Omani academic community with the best research resources in the world. Masader provides access for researchers in all fields to electronic information, incorporating periodicals, court research, doctoral dissertations, masters and scientific conference working papers.

The Oman Academic Accreditation Authority

The Omani Authority for Academic Accreditation was established as the official body responsible for the accreditation process and for ensuring the quality of all public and private higher education provided by institutions in the Sultanate; and for accrediting the academic programmes offered by these institutions. The Authority plays a key role in disseminating the culture of quality.

The Omani Authority for Academic Accreditation has worked since its creation to develop a national system for the

quality management of higher education based on international best practice, while taking into account the special requirements of the local Omani environment.

It has logged many achievements in this regard, including: development of a plan to manage the quality of higher education in the Sultanate. Known as the Quality Plan, this strategy was based on the results of a comprehensive analytical study of the quality requirements of higher education.

The Public Authority for Craft Industries

The establishment of the Public Authority for Craft Industries (PACI) was responsible for a spurt of growth in arts and crafts in Oman and incentivised a perception of opportunity in the sector as a source of income.

PACI works to advance the capabilities of artisans and adapt the output of the craft indus-

tries to contemporary trends. This it does through training and production initiatives that support aspects of the artisan production cycle and thus promote traditional craftsmanship as a viable source of employment income in the modern context.

The artisan sector saw record growth in 2018, with a spurt in

the numbers of craftworkers turning professional. At the end of February 2018, the Sultanate had 21,142 active craftworkers and every one of the country's craft centres was occupied with training, upskilling and productivity programmes, distributed across 51 separate courses. PACI was supporting 807 established craftworkers.

An important aspect of PACI's work involves protecting intellectual property, and the Authority has registered some 468 individual artisan products, including innovative design adaptations of existing craft-

works. Such diligence is particularly valuable to otherwise unprotected creative artisans and delivers the reassurance that will move the sector forward to greater innovation and improved quality, while harmonising standards with those accepted regionally and internationally through representative organisations.

The Sultan Qaboos Craft Excellence competition reflects His Majesty's recognition of the value and significance of the craft industries and demonstrates his high level of commitment to Oman's crafts people.

The Capital Market Authority

The Capital Market Authority (CMA) has worked, as legislator and regulator, to achieve for the capital market and insurance sectors the highest economic interests of the State. It strives to protect all parties interacting with these sectors, guided by a pursuit of justice, integrity and transparency that fulfils international best practice standards. It monitors the legislation governing the two sectors, issuing new laws or amending or replacing existing legal instruments to keep pace with current requirements and accommodate developments adopted by accredited global organisations.

The Capital Market and Insurance sectors have been undergoing rapid development, most notably

with the adoption by the CMA Board of Directors of the transformation of the Muscat Securities Market into a wholly owned subsidiary of the government, in line with international practices in this regard. Meanwhile, in a remarkable turnaround, commercial banks have begun issuing bonds and sukuk, reflecting a desire by the capital market sector to finance investment projects using long-term financing tools, partnership with individuals and institutions and the expansion of private sector ownership, qualitatively and quantitatively. The market capitalisation of Muscat Securities Market is in the region of RO18 billion

The Oman Charitable Organisation

The Oman Charitable Organisation (OCO) supports various social care and relief causes both inside and outside the Sultanate. The Authority provides assistance, often unannounced, to deserving causes in many countries. It supports Palestinians in need, and has provided resources for the reconstruction of the Gaza Strip and the establishment of educational facilities in the West Bank. It has supplied relief to Yemen, Syria, Libya, Pakistan and many other troubled zones, arising from the tragic consequences of conflict,

war and climate catastrophe, acting through such established international organisations as the International Committee of the Red Cross, the UNHCR or the like.

The OCO also makes contributions in situations of personal or collective disaster resulting from accidents, earthquakes or famine in various parts of the world. It has special units devoted to the care of children and orphans, the disabled, the elderly and other disadvantaged social groups.

The Information Technology Authority

The Information Technology Authority (ITA), since it came into being under Royal Decree No. 2006/52 on 31 May 2006, has been responsible for Oman's national digital strategy, or project e-government. Its purpose is to lead the transition to a knowledge-based economy by means of a range of digital age initiatives and projects across all aspects of society.

The Authority works in coordination with all government units, businesses and individuals to implement projects and improvements geared to raising the efficiency and effectiveness of government services; to supporting the business sector;

and providing citizens with the necessary skills and knowledge to interact with electronic services. Its overall objective is to sponsor a media environment of high quality and speed that facilitates communication and information flow and meets social and national aspirations well into the future.

The Authority was also responsible for implementing G-Cloud, the Oman Government Cloud Project that provides a common infrastructure, including servers, networks, storage and applications, such as enables the platform to meet the needs of all government agencies comfortably.

The Telecommunications Regulatory Authority

The Telecommunications Regulatory Authority (TRA) is the organisation responsible for regulation of the telecommunications sector in the Sultanate through the enactment of relevant laws, regulation of the telecommunications market and the issuance of relevant licences. It is active also in the important task of combating cybercrime and promoting awareness of the optimal and proper use of telecommunication devices and services.

The Telecommunications Regulatory Authority (TRA) was established on 12 March 2002 under the Telecommunications Regulatory Act, issued by means of Royal Decree Law No. 30/2002 and designed to liberalise and upgrade services in the sector. It was given responsibility in 2012 for reorganising the national postal ser-

vices sector in line with the Postal Services Executive Regulation Law that stemmed from Royal Decree No. 71/2012 on the development and liberalisation of the postal sector.

On 17 January 2018, the Authority celebrated the inauguration of the Satellite Radio Observation Station for space services, which will enable it to improve the use of current and future spectrum and satellite resources to accord with national and international rules and practices. It will be able to determine the geographical location of satellite signals and services received in the Sultanate, as well as to detect in the uplink and downlink any illegal use of satellite services, enabling it to resolve accidental or intentional interference in satellite services

The Public Authority for Electricity and Water

The Public Authority for Electricity and Water (PAEW) was established under Royal Decree No. 92/2007, issued on 9 September 2007, following the privatization of the electricity sector in 2004. The Authority is competent to regulate the electricity and water sector in the Sultanate in accordance with extant law. The PAEW - a legal entity that is financially and administratively independent - has the right to own the funds needed to enable it to achieve its objectives. The Authority is responsible for executing the master plan for the water sector, as outlined for the period up to 2040. The plan involves a roll out of desalination projects and water transfer and distribution projects, aiming for high levels of coverage and increased reliability of water supply. The Sultanate's

current water sector coverage, as per the latest statistics for 2015, is 60% and that figure is planned to rise to 98% by 2040.

In keeping with the gradual roll out of the 2040 plan, the water distribution network was extended in parts of the wilayat of Amerat and Muttrah in Muscat Governorate. In addition, the water distribution network was opened in the wilayat of Al Hamra and Bahla states in Al Dakhiliyah. The new networks take in a total of 18 districts in Amerat, seven in Muttrah, five in Bahla, and the district of Al Aishi in Al Hamra.

The Authority is constantly developing infrastructure and expanding water networks, with the result that its subscribers have grown exponentially, from 196,000 in 2007 to 473,000 at the end of July 2017.

The National Documents and Archives Authority

The National Records and Archives Authority (NRAA), established under Royal Decree No. 60/2007 issued on 2nd July 2007, as a national project to preserve Oman's history and establish a comprehensive system for managing public records related to government departments subject to the NRAA Law.

Providing technical support and follow-up in the management of current and intermediate documents, through interaction with the relevant authorities, is one of the specific and most significant competencies of the Authority. It provides technical support to government units to assist them in preparing systems for the management of their own documents. As of May 2017, it had supported 45 units of the administrative apparatus of the State in this process, operating in compliance with the Records and Archives Law.

The NRAA has since its inception pursued its core aim of collecting documents and archives relating to the Sultanate from countries that contributed through their past relations with Oman to constituting the documentary archive. It also collects documents from citizens of the Sultanate. The NRAA has by these methods assembled a large and important store of documents representing a portion of the national memory.

On 1 May 2017, the Authority conducted a safe disposal of documents to securely destroy paper documents, electronic containers and other storage devices on behalf of government and security agencies, companies, private institutions and individuals. The destruction plant is the first of its kind in the Middle East. It holds two ISO certificates, for quality, health and security.

The Public Authority for Investment Promotion and Export Development

The Public Authority for Investment Promotion and Export Development (PAIPED) was established by Royal Decree No. 52/2011 of 27 March 2011, drafted under the government strategy for the continuous development of the investment sector and promotion of Omani exports through attractive packages offered to local and foreign investors.

PAIPED is committed to encouraging greater participation by the private sector in

support of Oman's drive for greater internal investment and export growth in sectors unrelated to fossil fuels. The overriding goal is to increase Oman's trade balance.

The Authority is also concerned with attracting foreign investments by facilitating all transactions and realising 'economic weight for the Sultanate' by following up economic developments in the world.

The Public Authority for Social Insurance

The Public Authority for Social Insurance (PASI) has made significant strides in the drive to achieve social insurance cover for citizens working in the private sector. It was set up for this purpose under Royal Decree No. 72/1992. Its role is vital in protecting this segment of the working community.

PASI aims to improve the quality of its services and promote mutual trust and satisfaction between employers and insured employees within the available resources and in line with laws and regulations

in force.

The social insurance sector has logged many positive developments since the introduction of social insurance regulations in 1992 for Oman's working in the Sultanate's private sector. Successive amendments to insurance legislation have succeeded in extending the insurance umbrella and bringing in categories not protected by insurance in the early years of the system. There were 240,063 insured at the end of January 2018, according to the latest statistics available.

The Public Authority for Stores and Food Reserve

The Public Authority for Stores and Food Reserve was established in 1980 by virtue of Royal Decree No. 62/1980. The Decree defined the basic role and function of the Authority as ensuring the availability of basic foodstuffs on a permanent basis in the quantities and state or readiness that would enable it to intervene rapidly in the event of a national emergency, such as a situation caused by climatic or other unanticipated upheaval.

The Authority's brief was recently expanded by means of Royal Decree No. 3/2017, which re-established its objectives and terms of reference in particular aspects, including implementation

of the food security strategy, periodic reporting to the Council of Ministers, development of national policies and legislation related to the Sultanate's food security sectors, and the establishment of an integrated national food security information system by coordination with the concerned authorities.

In line with the Authority's expanded mandate, 2017 initiated an ambitious plan to make available a strategic reserve of quality food staples on a permanent basis, effected by way of a series of agreements with overseas suppliers. The agreements provide reassurance of a steady supply of staples from reliable sources.

The Authority has demonstrated intelligence and economy in its policies and its efforts have been validated in the advanced levels of food security achieved by the Sultanate, as acknowledged in internationally recognised

assessment indicators. The Sultanate was one of the better performing countries on the Global Index of Food Security in 2017, ranking second among Gulf and Arab countries and 28th globally.

The Public Authority for Consumer Protection

On 28 February 2011, Royal Decree No. 26/2011 established the Public Authority for Consumer Protection (PACP). The PACP Regulations followed on 5 April 2011, pursuant to Royal Decree No. 53/2011.

From the outset the PACP has worked to enact legislation, regulations and guidelines within its terms of reference, bearing on price stability, the mobilisation of consumer awareness in regard to misleading advertising and the processing of relevant complaints from individuals and consumer associations. It examines and tests appropriate solutions to these issues, monitoring all commercial activity on an ongoing basis and observing the movement of goods and services and to ensure their proper distribution. It promotes competition, challenges commercial fraud and works to avert monopoly situations that would be harmful to the national economy. In general, it pursues action to pro-

tect and strengthen consumer rights in all of their aspects.

The Consumer Protection Law was issued under Royal Decree No. 66/2014 and the Competition Protection and Anti-Monopoly Law under Royal Decree No. 67/2014 to align with the current status of consumer transactions in the Sultanate's domestic and international markets. The Sultanate has been keen to introduce deterrent legislation that defends consumer and supplier rights from fraud. These laws also aim to regulate the relationship between the individual consumer and the business sector supplying goods and services.

The executive regulation of the Consumer Protection Law was issued on 9 March 2017 to complete the complex of legislation governing consumer protection, and gives scope for the actual application of the articles of this law.

The Special Economic Zone Authority at Duqm

The Special Economic Zone Authority at Duqm (SEZAD), established under Royal Decree No 119/2011 on 26 October 2011, has been active in its role of managing the Special Economic Zone in Duqm, while overseeing business relations between companies and investors in the SEZAD Zone. It has concentrated on completing the drafting of legislation as necessary to the smooth running of the Economic Zone and to building its capacity in terms of technical, administrative and financial human resources to secure the maximum benefit for this enterprise.

On 26 December 2013, SEZAD Royal Decree No. 79/2013 delivered a major boost to domestic investment in the region and to the attraction of foreign investment through its incentive offerings in the form of facilities and guarantees for projects built specifically within the SEZAD zone. Heading up the incentive list was an ex-

emption from taxes, 100% foreign ownership of projects and exemption from the minimum capital investment required under business and other legislation; along with exemption from all restrictions in regard to the introduction, handling and exchange of foreign currency and from application of the provisions of the Commercial Agencies Law.

On 6 September 2017, implementation of the new SEZAD regulations governing real estate development in the Special Economic Zone commenced. The attractive legislative environment offered by the regulations is expected to enhance SEZAD's efforts to attract local and foreign investment. At stake is the need to encourage the private sector to cooperate in the construction of multi-purpose real estate development projects aimed at the residential, commercial and tourism markets.

The Public Authority for Radio and Television

The Public Authority for Radio and Television (PART) came into being on 19 October 2010, established by means of Royal Decree No. 108/2010. It is responsible for the dissemination of its media message through successful audio and visual programming. PART's message promotes high-minded social and cultural values, community engagement and patriotic identification, embodying the state ideology and vision, and aspires to leadership in the field of audio-visual media. Its programming ethos is grounded in the historical authenticity of the

Omani identity and the modern Renaissance and it offers a high-quality information product which is rewarded by strong audience confidence.

The Authority has sought to develop its media content and production quality, keeping pace with developments in the field. It continues to keep abreast of the rapid developments overtaking the technical aspects of radio and television broadcasting with a view to maintaining and improving on its current well-regarded status in the field.

The Public Authority for the Manpower Register

On 19 May 2013, Royal Decree No 32/2013 was issued to amend some of the provisions of the regulations for the Public Authority for the Manpower Register. This Decree specifies the powers and prerogatives of the Authority, which is entrusted with the establishment of a comprehensive database of manpower in various departments within the government sector (civil, military and security) and in private sector establishments.

The Authority, acting in coordination with the Ministry of Manpower, has contributed to implementation of the Council of Ministers' drive to

provide job opportunities at public and private institutions for an initial 25,000 national job seekers. The Authority has extensive experience in dealing with job advertising and this process is now easier than ever with the help of the SMS alert system.

The employment index at the Ministry of Manpower shows that an impressive 32,120 job seekers entered the private sector workforce nationwide between the beginning of December 2017 and 4 June 2018, more than fulfilling the Council of Ministers mandate in this regard.

The Public Authority for Civil Aviation

The Public Authority for Civil Aviation (PACA), acting pursuant to Royal Decree No. 43/2013 of 16 September 2013, defined the Authority's objectives in promoting the civil aviation sector and all of its supporting facilities, and raising standards to the maximum achievable in terms of efficiency, quality, and safety and security of civil aviation and air transport.

The Authority has worked diligently to extend the air transport network linking the Sultanate with the rest of the world. It has broadened the investment field, attracting international airlines into Oman's air space and facilitating the introduction of new national carriers. PACA's dynamic approach, viewing air access in all its forms and with all its attendant services as crucial to further economic development, is fuelling new non-oil sectors of revenue growth in Oman, serving tourism principally, but also busi-

ness generally, as a self-financing arm of the national logistics system.

The opening of the new Muscat International Airport was one of PACA's most significant achievements in 2018, insofar as it had a primary role in the completion of this project. Muscat Airport is the crown jewel of the civil aviation sector in the Sultanate. The Authority also launched the Air Navigation Radar at Salalah Airport and inaugurated the Emergency Centre at Muscat International Airport.

In addition, PACA has issued Salam Air with an Air Operator Certificate and operating licences enabling it to fly locally and internationally, and Sohar Airport has been opened up to international air traffic. Meanwhile, the Oman Aviation Group has approved the establishment of free zones at Muscat, Salalah and Sohar Airports, in compliance with Civil Aviation Law.

The Public Authority for Small and Medium Enterprises

The Public Authority for Small and Medium Enterprises (SMEs), Riada ('leadership' in Arabic) was established by Royal Decree No. 36/2013 of 30 May 2013 to boost the SME sector and enlarge its contribution to the national economy. Its primary role would be to service the sector by furnishing technical and training programmes and other support services, such as career guidance, various consultation facilities and feasibility studies. The Authority issues the entrepreneur's privilege card to innovators and the self-employed and oversees entrepreneurship awards. It sponsors incubator systems and business centres, manages land usufruct rights and organises internal and external exhibitions and events.

The Authority assists SME entrepreneurs with economic feasibility studies, including the collection and analysis of rele-

vant project information to determine viability. In addition to feasibility studies, the Authority supports entrepreneurs through the entire consultation process (commercial, administrative, marketing, technical), helping them prepare appropriate strategies for their chosen project.

The Sultanate ranked 3rd in the Arab world and 33rd globally on the International Entrepreneurship Index 2017, marking global recognition of the positive status of entrepreneurship in the Sultanate and of the uninterrupted advance of small and medium enterprises in the economy.

There were 34,636 SMEs registered with Riada at the end of May 2018, up from 31,835 at the close of 2017, according to preliminary data issued by the National Centre for Statistics and Information.

The Public Authority for Civil Defence and Ambulance

The Public Authority for Civil Defence and Ambulance was established under Royal Decree No. 3/2013, issued on 8 January 2013. It is a legal entity that is materially and administratively independent and it operates under the jurisdiction of the Royal Oman Police (ROP). On 30 November 2014, the organisational structure of the Authority was defined with the announcement of Royal

Decree No. 68/2014.

The Authority has outlined a clear forward strategy to keep pace with development by providing the equipment and machinery needed to perform the work assigned to them in fire and rescue (land and water), and rescue of the injured, as well as search and rescue operations and dealing with hazardous materials.

The Omani Authority for Partnership for Development

The Omani Authority for Partnership for Development (OAPD) was established by Royal Decree No. 9/2014 of 2 March 2014. It is a legal entity affiliated to the Ministry of Trade and Industry, but which enjoys financial and administrative independence.

The OAPD's broad remit includes providing opportunities for the training and qualification of Omanis in specialised skills, supporting small and medium enterprises, and working to strengthen the private sector. It also promotes the use of technology in both the public and private sectors, and the integration of modern techniques into existing systems. It contributes to the strengthening of the military and security capabilities of the Sultanate at all levels; facilitates

investment; introduces proposals to diversify sources of national income and move towards a sustainable and efficient economy, all in application of the partnership for development programme.

The Oman Aviation Academy is one of the most important projects to emerge from the work of the Authority. In July 2017, the Authority signed a partnership agreement with the Oman Aviation Academy, the Sultanate's first specialised aviation training academy, based in Sohar. It will provide aviation training and educational services to international standards and conformant with the terms and regulations of the European Aviation Safety Agency.

The Public Authority for Mining

The Public Authority for Mining (PAM) was established by Royal Decree No. 49/2014 issued 21 September 2014 with the founding strategy of conducting a comprehensive geological survey of the Sultanate and then developing the mining sector.

The Authority has worked since its inception to refine the overall strategy for the mining sector in the Sultanate, the primary objective of which is to develop it to optimal benefit. Thus it seeks investment in and exploitation of mineral wealth in directions

best suited to the objectives of economic diversification.

On 17 July 2017 PAM formally contracted for implementation of the Oman Mining Strategy, which defines the way forward for the mining sector over the coming 10 years. The Strategy constitutes a solid basis for the management and regulation of the sector, determines targets for the contribution of this sector to GDP, with anticipated annual growth levels, and suggests appropriate mechanisms for its development.

The Implementation Support and Follow-up Unit

The Implementation Support and Follow-up Unit (IFSU) was established by Royal Decree No. 50/2016 on 17 October 2016. The Authority is a legal entity with financial and administrative independence. It has the capacity to own, manage and dispose of fixed and movable funds.

The IFSU was established to both underpin and supervise the government's drive towards economic diversification. It will be the official body responsible for monitoring government projects and initiatives in manufacturing, tourism, logistics, finance and innovative finance, the labour market and employment, fisheries and other of the 19 projects outlined in the Ninth Five-Year Plan to promote economic growth and reduce dependence on oil.

In order to afford the unit greater responsibility and secure its decision-making authority, the Royal Decree specified its direct subordination to the Minister of the Royal Court.

During 2017, the IFSU, acting in coordination with ASYAD and the Ministry of Transport and Communications, facilitated significant progress

across several initiatives, including the establishment of Bayan (means 'declaration in Arabic'), the One Stop Inspection Project. This project was accomplished by way of a series of service level agreements signed by the concerned authorities with the Royal Oman Police. The Risk Management System was subsequently merged with Bayan. The transport and logistics sector were combined into a special grouping and an agreement signed between the Public Authority for Mining and Minerals Development Oman to conduct exploratory studies and prospect for minerals in the areas of Mangi and Shuwaymiyah. The same parties collaborated to accelerate the rail project and expansion of the Wadi Sa'a-Hafit highway and the Al Tafafi highway in Ibri to dual carriageways. The IFSU, meanwhile, published the port services guide and completed the infrastructure of the postal service.

A contract development and working group was formed and several meetings held with the purpose of advancing these important projects.

The Omani National Committee for Education, Culture and Sciences

The Oman National Commission for Education, Culture and Sciences (ONCECS) has as its main function the streamlining of the overlapping connections between Arab, Islamic and international organisations working in the areas of education, science and culture (UNESCO, ALECSO and ISESCO) on the one hand, and between the concerned authorities and educational and cultural institutions in the Sultanate on the other. It and publicises Oman's heritage and the Sultanate's efforts in educational, cultural and scientific fields. It cooperates with the three abovementioned organisations in the interest of mutual understanding and interaction among people belonging to different cultures.

The Sultan Qaboos Prize for Environmental Preservation is awarded biennially through UNESCO's Man and Biosphere Programme. The prize is given in recognition of a distinguished contribution to environmental conservation made by individuals, groups, institutions or organizations in line with UNESCO policy and programmes.

The Sultan Qaboos Prize for Environmental Preservation is the first Arab award to be established internationally for environmental conservation. It was instituted on the initiative of His Majesty Sultan Qaboos in June 1989 with UNESCO's approval and blessing.

The Oman Human Rights Commission

The Oman Human Rights Commission has endeavoured since it was founded in 2008 to deliver a clear and supportive vision of human rights in the Sultanate. It monitors the status of human rights, fundamental freedoms, responsibilities and duties, compliant with the terms of reference assigned to it under Royal Decree No. 124/2008. The Commission (formerly known as the Human Rights Commission) is a legal entity with independence in the exercise of its duties. It is based in Muscat and

is subordinate to the State Council (Majlis al Dawla).

On 18 April 2016, Royal Decree No. 23/2016 was issued amending the Commission's name to its current title. Royal Decree No. 24/2016 followed, appointing the Commission's 14 members, drawn from various areas of expertise and including among them four Omani women.

On 21 June 2017 Royal Decree No. 26/2017 was issued appointing the head of the Omani Commission for Human Rights.

The National Youth Committee

The National Youth Committee was established under Royal Decree No 117/2011, issued on 26 October 2011 and is an independent legal entity.

The Committee seeks to open up channels of constructive communication and productive dialogue with and between young people in the Sultanate, with the aim of promoting a sense of allegiance to the nation and its leader.

Its functions also include instilling religious values and the values of good citizenship, and promoting attachment to Oman's cultural heritage. It seeks to educate youth on matters of legislation that define their duties towards the State and society and guarantees their personal rights and

freedoms as defined in the Basic law of the State.

In 2018, the Committee continued with its five programmes covering the third period (2016-2018) of its overall five-year plan (2016-2020). The programme addresses the issues of citizenship and affiliation, the Youth Development Programme, the Youth Participation Programme, the Economic Empowerment Programme and youth development generally.

On 22 to 24 July 2018, the Committee hosted the 2018 Omani Youth Forum in Dhofar Governorate. Entitled 'The Future of Oman', it explored the steps undertaken by the Sultanate to involve the community in Oman's Future Vision 2040.

The National Crisis Management Committee

The National Crisis Management Committee was set up at His Majesty's instruction on 8 June 2010 to manage crises and establish protocols to ensure prompt response to exceptional circumstances requiring immediate services and/or subsistence and medical assistance.

Among the objectives of the Committee are the re-formulation of the national plan for crisis management and the creation of a central entity equipped to manage such crises. It

is working to update information on all civilian facilities, roads, terrain and GIS databases; and to redistribute reserve stores food to all governorates of the Sultanate. It is currently engaged in establishing rapidly deployable hospital facilities, which can be airlifted and outfitting specialised operating units for use in crisis situations. It is also overseeing the supply of desalinated water to referral hospitals for use in the event that desalination plants are rendered out of commission.

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ty of the faithful, in which Muslim society is
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advocates goodwill in all things."*

Qaboos bin Said

24th National Day – 18 November 1994

The Judiciary System .. Bolstering The State Of Institutions



The Judiciary System .. Bolstering The State Of Institutions

Since 1970, the Sultanate has been moving steadily towards its goal of becoming an exemplary modern state of institutions, governed by the rule of law. The process has been fortunate in having the blessing and encouragement of His Majesty Sultan Qaboos bin Said.



As one of the supporting pillars of the state of institutions, alongside the executive and the legislature, the judiciary has been a focus of His Majesty's attention and a target of the infrastructural overhaul that has contributed so much to the success of the Renaissance project. In 2011, in the fifth decade of the Renaissance, Sultan Qaboos addressed the Council of Oman and reassured them that there would be no deceleration of pace in the advance to judicial independence and to institutions capable of resisting pressure from special interests.

If an enlightened judiciary is crucial to nation-building, then the maturity of the Sultanate's development process is a positive reflection on the impartiality of its justice system. In their present state, the justice system and

the judiciary are contemporary in format and function, with a formidable performance record. Royal Decree No. 9/2012, establishing a Supreme Judicial Council to be presided over by His Majesty the Sultan, made clear that the Council's purpose was one of guaranteeing the independence of the judiciary and consolidating the values, ideals and ethics of fair justice, fairly executed. The decree was followed up by Royal Decree No. 10/2012, announcing the independence of the judiciary in the Sultanate, and a new chapter in Oman's judicial process. This Decree transferred the responsibilities of judicial administration to the Council of Administrative Affairs for the Judiciary, in a further distancing of the system from potential external influence.

Secretariat-General of the Council of Administrative Affairs for the Judiciary

Royal Decree No. 54/2012 described the mandate of the Council of Administrative Affairs for the Judiciary and defined its role in supporting the development of the justice system. The decree stipulated that a secretariat-general be created to assist the Council and its Chairman in the exercise of its mandate. The Council Secretariat-General is a structure with six sub-branches: the Directorate-General of Administration and Finance Affairs, the Directorate-General of Courts, the Directorate-General of Planning, the Directorate-General of Judges' Affairs, the Directorate-General of Implementation and the Directorate-General of Judicial Inspection.

This organisational structure reflects the Council's genuine determination to see through justice reform in all aspects, from planning, administrative and financial requirements to judicial review, from the registration of cases to the implementation and follow-up of verdicts to ensure that justice is served fully and without delay.

The creation of the Directorate-General for Implementation was one of the most significant pointers to the Council's intentions in this regard. True justice demands that court proceedings are handled with dispatch, since justice deferred is not justice and leads to a perception that the system does not work fairly for the victims of wrongdoing.

Judicial inspection regulation

Article 2 of Royal Decree No. 10/2012 transferred authority for the court system and its administration, along with the administration of judicial inspection, to the Council of Administrative Affairs for the Judiciary. The Directorate-General of Judicial Inspection exercises the review functions stipulated in the Judicial Authority Law. It oversees the work of judicial inspectors, receives and acts on complaints requiring judicial review, and undertakes studies into matters relevant to judicial inspection and its refinement.

In the context of these ongoing endeavours to improve the judicial

process in the Sultanate, the Council of Administrative Affairs for the Judiciary on 7 May 2017 updated the regulation pertaining to judicial inspection, superseding that in force since 25 January 2001.

The new regulation availed of the most recent experience of judicial inspection systems in the countries that preceded Oman in the field. It established rigorous mechanisms for continuous review and evaluation of the judicial functioning of the courts. It extended the scope of inspection to the summary and appeal courts and to other organs of the judicial process. Judicial review was in this perspective seen as a monitor and

an agent of protection, as opposed to one given to tracking errors, a tool to prevent rather than correct failures of the system.

The Sultanate's policy of accelerating the transition to a fully electronic administrative system of superior quality, serving sustainability and the knowledge-based society, has been a main driver of the development of the judicial system, and this has manifested in diverse areas, from the design of court complexes and

of the Supreme Court building to the accelerating trend to supplant all manual and paper-based processes with digital alternatives.

On 21 November 2016, the Council of Administrative Affairs for the Judiciary launched the case management programme, effectively transforming the courts into 'smart courts' insofar as concerns the filing, recording and processing to completion of all court proceedings.

Courts of first instance

The courts of first instance are primary courts, where a dispute is first heard. The court is presided over by one or three judges (tripartite chamber). The Judicial Authority Law, promulgated by way of Royal Decree No. 99/90 and its amendments, defines in its sixth article how these courts are constituted. A court of first instance consists of a presiding judge and

an adequate number of assisting judges, as appropriate.

There are 44 courts of first instance distributed throughout the Sultanate. They are competent to adjudicate civil and commercial cases, requests for arbitration, personal status cases and general, labour, tax, leasing and other cases filed before them in accordance with the Law.

Courts of Appeal

Courts of appeal (second instance courts) are competent to hear appeals against judgments issued by the primary courts and which are assessed to qualify for appeal under the law. Disputes may not be brought initially before a court of appeal, insofar as they exist to correct miscarriages of justice arising from rulings delivered in a court of first instance and requiring an adjudicating authority other than a primary court judge.

The courts of appeal were established by a sequence of royal decrees. They are composed of a presiding judge and a number

of assisting judges. Chambers are formed as needed. The chamber is presided over by the court president or by its most senior judge and rulings are delivered by three judges.

Royal Decree No. 14/2001 initiated the establishment of six appellate courts: in Muscat, Sohar, Nizwa, Salalah, Ibri and Ibra. However, with advancing urbanisation and rising population density, the number of appellate courts has now been expanded to 13, so that every governorate has one appellate court and Muscat has two, one at Seeb and one in Muscat itself.

The Supreme Court

The Supreme Court is the capstone of the judicial pyramid in the Sultanate. Established by means of the Judicial Authority Law announced as Royal Decree No. 90/99 and its amendments, it consists of a single court based in Muscat.

The Supreme Court is composed of a President and a sufficient number of Deputy Presidents and Judges. It convenes as required to adjudicate appeals. Sessions are presided over by the Court President or one of his deputies or by the most senior of the judges, and rulings are delivered by five judges, as stipulated in Article 139 of the Code of Civil and Commercial Procedures promulgated under Royal Decree No. 29/2002.

The Supreme Court may hear appeals brought before it against judgments rendered by the courts of appeal, where the contested judgment is perceived to have been the result of a violation of law, an error in its application or interpretation, or where a ruling has been deemed invalid or proceedings leading to the ruling have been deemed invalid.

In accordance with Article 240 of the same law, the Court is competent to hear appeals made against

any final judgment in a dispute, irrespective of the level of court that rendered it, where it contradicts a separate previous ruling delivered to the litigants and *res judicata* applies.

In accordance with Article 241 of the law, appeals on points of law that contest final judgments in courts of any level may be filed by the State Prosecutor with the Supreme Court in cases where the ruling has been predicated on a violation of law or an error in its application or interpretation, where the litigants are permitted by law to appeal, or where they have missed or waived the deadline for appeal.

In accordance with the Judicial Authority Law, the Supreme Court is required to dedicate a specially constituted body to adjudicate in cases of negative or positive conflict of jurisdiction between courts in the ordinary court system and administrative or other specialised courts. This body is also competent to adjudicate disputes concerning the compatibility of laws and regulations with the Basic Law of the State, to ensure that none of its provisions is transgressed.



Stately lines – architecture pays homage to the supremacy of the law.

The Administrative Court



Meeting of
the General
Assembly of the
Administrative
Court of Justice.

The ideology of the state of institutions and law espoused by His Majesty Sultan Qaboos bin Said, and confirmed in the provisions of Article 67 of the Basic Law of the State, as outlined in Royal Decree No. 96/101, requires that a separate administrative court system should determine the outcome of disputes involving matters of administration.

Under Royal Decree No. 91/99, the Administrative Court of Justice was established for this purpose. The Court was to be a bastion of high-minded justice, of the rule of law, a protector of the rights and freedoms of individuals, by subordinating the actions of the State administrative apparatus to the scrutiny of the Court, ensuring that the work of the

State's institutions is executed in the full light of the law. Given that the public interest is the ultimate objective of the work for which these bodies were founded, it is appropriate that they should be moderated by a system that ensures the transparent and most efficient management of public resources and operation of the utilities and amenities that serve the community.

The Administrative Court operates in parallel with the ordinary courts, which handle the arbitration of disputes between individuals and private entities, to form an integrated system, each arm of which performs the role assigned to its specific jurisdiction.

The Court has seen a steady increase in both the volume and

magnitude of cases brought before it since the promulgation of Royal Decree No. 3/2009, which expanded its jurisdiction. It hears cases filed by public officials involving the exercise of their public service functions by reference to relevant administrative decisions. Its creation brought public officials a reassuring sense of job security and with this came a positive overall impact on the public service. The Court also adjudicates in cases brought by concerned parties that involve a review of administrative decisions, or decisions issued by administrative committees having legal competence.

Despite the rapid expansion of its caseload, arising from the pace of development, the Administrative Court has nevertheless managed to maintain its reputation for speedy settlement. Administrative disputes are particularly sensitive to time delay, given the necessity to ensure that the smooth operation of the public administration is kept free of obstacles, though without prejudice to justice. In this, the Court will not sacrifice the strictest application of the law in the despatch with which it processes the matters brought before it.

The Administrative Court closely monitors the execution of its judgments, which are characterised by simplicity and speed of delivery. One result of this approach has been a substantial decrease in issues of implementation, and a

culture within the administrative authorities of responding quickly to rulings issued against them. Their attitude respects the right of the Court, with its mandate to serve justice, to demand that the provisions of law be enforced; for the work of the Court complements the work of the administration, and both are subject to the rule of law in the ideal context of fair governance.

The Administrative Court settles disputes involving State and public contracts, carefully balancing the rights and obligations of the parties in the interests of law without prejudice to the public service for which these contracts are intended. The scrupulousness of this process lends assurance to investors that their rights will be fully protected. Such confidence is crucial to the development process and to the various economic investments of the State, both external and internal. Finally, the Court rules in administrative disputes involving the assessment and recovery of funds judged to have been spent unlawfully, and in this way makes a valuable contribution to the preservation of public funds.

On the recommendation of His Majesty Sultan Qaboos, the main building of the court was sited in the Al Irfan district of Airport Heights, Bousher. It is an impressive structure, built to contemporary specifications, as befits the status of the Court and its role within the Sultanate's judicial system.

The Notary Public Departments

The Notary Public Departments play a vital role in regulating relations between parties and sealing their rights in social transactions of many kinds, such as in documenting marriage and divorce arrangements, verifying widowhood, costs and the like; and also commercial relationships, where notaries clarify the exact nature of trade and financial ties for individuals and institutions. Notary departments are independent and are present in all governorates, a total of 61 distributed throughout the Sultanate.

Notaries issued, approved and verified a combined 53,718 documentary items in the first third of 2018, both official and unofficial in



origin, and including declarations of non-marriage and certificates of divorce and widowhood. Of this total, 34,916 constituted official documents and 4,449 were declarations of non-marriage, 517 certificates of widowhood and 13,702 endorsements of informal declarations. A further 134 items involved date certifications on informal documents. Overall the highest proportion were official documents, at 23% of the total.

The Reconciliation Committees

The Reconciliation Committees embody the inspirational vision of His Majesty Sultan Qaboos, and the government has shown itself fully committed to this vision. Taking a broad-horizon approach to mitigating the impact of disputes between litigants, successive governments have pursued policies that afford value to the reconciliation process in society. Oman's long heritage of tolerance has proven success as the basis of a harmonious society. In the Sultanate today, the virtues of reconciliation, counsel and tolerance have been reformulated into legal frameworks that merge these Islamic values with the finer aspects of a modern judicial system. It is against this background that the Mediation and Reconciliation Committees were founded, with justice being assessed and served by public figures selected for their



competence in the sphere. The Mediation and Reconciliation Law was issued in the form of Royal Decree No. 2005/98, filling a necessary, modernised niche in the mechanism of administering justice.

In its Article 4, the Mediation and Reconciliation Law specified the competence of the Mediation and Reconciliation Committees in adjudicating civil, commercial and personal status disputes.

There are 46 Mediation and Reconciliation Committees distributed across the Sultanate.

The Higher Institute of Justice

The Higher Institute of Justice is a beacon that lights the path to national development and the rule of law. It has done much to consolidate and expand awareness of the law and how it needs to permeate every aspect of life if society and the individual are to feel secure in their rights. The Institute was established by means of Royal Decree No. 35/2010 of 11 April 2010 and its inauguration

the following year was a landmark achievement of the Renaissance. The mission of the Institute is to prepare and qualify judicial cadres who are fully abreast of ongoing developments in the nation's judicial and legal institutions. Their training is derived from specialist academic curricula and fully compares with international qualification standards.



Preparing and qualifying judicial cadres is the function of the Higher Judicial Institute.

The Public Prosecution

The Public Prosecution Department continues to pursue its judicial mission in society by way of a rapid yet well studied sequence of steps towards optimum development, exercising meanwhile the functions with which it is entrusted. Its development proceeds apace alongside the steady advance of the Sultanate, as it adopts the tools and technology of a contemporary state.

The Public Prosecution Department safeguards the process of investigation and law enforcement on behalf of the public, using the best technology and manpower available at any time to assist it in

its work. Today this translates into sophisticated electronic services, and high performance judicial and administrative cadres to examine evidence and prepare prosecutions that are likely to succeed. It also means ensuring a strong complement of women in the ranks of its personnel, and sustaining such internal and external partnerships as will benefit the Department in its present and future practice.

The work of the Public Prosecution Department depends on the personnel who head up its investigations and prosecute cases, and its success is in large part a reflection of their capacity. As such,

the recruitment and training of this cadre is conducted with extreme selectivity.

In the years since its establishment, the Public Prosecution Department has accumulated extensive judicial expertise, giving it a strong record of success in the courts, where it ably exercises its role in the investigation and disposal of even the most complex cases.

A department specialising in the processing of human trafficking cases was established in Muscat Governorate, and a branch to handle prosecutions involving the Municipality of Sohar was established in the wilayat of Sohar itself.

The Public Prosecution, acting in coordination with the Royal Oman Police, has made significant



In 2017, the Public Prosecution added two batches of secondary public prosecution agents to the service, a total of 26 appointments. The agents had completed the mandatory two-year training for assistants. The new additions brought membership of the Public Prosecution to 179, distributed over 13 directorate-generals, 44 administrations and 15 units of specialised administration.

The year 2017 saw a significant drop in the caseload of the Public Prosecution, representing a total of 27,686 cases filed, as against 37,972 for 2016, or a decline of 27%.

The same year saw the inauguration of a specialised department to handle drug-related crime, headquartered at Rustaq in the Governorate of Al Batinah South.

progress in its investigative activity, resulting in a lot of time, effort and expenditure saved. Certain health and safety issues were resolved through the introduction on 14 May 2017 of remote video surveillance, which links prosecutors in the Muscat Governorate drug-related crime unit with the detention centre in Samail.

The Public Prosecution also piloted a trial system of electronic case filing at three departments: the Muscat Governorate Unit for the Prosecution of Drug-related Offences and the Public Prosecution Departments in Salalah and Bahla, so that a prosecutor in court attendance can access case data from a hand-held device. The system will have a major impact in reducing the handling of paper records.

Legal Affairs

The Ministry of Legal Affairs plays a vital role in the development of the Omani integrated legal system. The pyramidal system is founded on the Basic Law of the State, promulgated by way of Royal Decree No. 96/101 and on which all Royal decrees and the laws issued subsequently are built.

Royal Decree No. 14/94 defined the powers of the Ministry of Legal Affairs in developing laws and regulations reflective of the advances witnessed by the contemporary Sultanate. The Ministry coordinates with relevant ministries and government bodies in this respect. It also reviews draft Royal decrees, regulations and proposals submitted for decision on behalf of the various ministries and government units prior to their issuance and publication in the Official Gazette.

The role of the Ministry is not limited to preparing legislation and enactment procedures. It also extends to a review of existing legislation to assess where adjustments may be needed and this it does in coordination with the relevant government bodies. The Ministry also provides legal opinions and issues official approved interpretations of Royal decrees, laws and statutes when circumstances so require. A consequence of this is the merging of legal precedents and concepts towards a common understanding and application across society.

The Ministry of Legal Affairs exercises its jurisdiction in the rendering of binding legal opinions as requested by State administrative bodies or public institutions, when disagreement has arisen on the interpretation of royal decrees, laws or ministerial regulations or decisions.

In addition to its functions in the areas of legislation and advisory opinion, the Ministry of Legal Affairs reviews contracts involving financial obligations of more than half a million Omani rials before these are signed by any governmental body. It reviews draft international agreements concluded by the Sultanate and applications for accession to existing conventions. International conventions are important legal instruments insofar as their provisions have the force of domestic law after ratification by the Sultanate by Royal Decree, conformant with the provisions of Article 76 of the Basic Law of the State.

The Ministry is also competent to review draft memoranda of understanding concluded by government agencies with other countries.

The Ministry of Legal Affairs publishes the Official Gazette, which contains the official versions of decrees, laws, statutes and ministerial decisions, along with announcements and other materials which the law requires to be published in the Official Gazette.

To provide easy access for those with an interest in the law, a bound volume is issued yearly, containing the Royal decrees, Royal commands, laws and statutes of a legislative nature issued during the course of the year.

Other publications of the Ministry include books explaining the legal principles underlying opinions on legal issues. These appear annually and contain the texts of legal opinion issued by the Ministry that year, together with the statutes from which they are derived.

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Qaboos bin Said

24th National Day – 18 November 1994

Tolerance ... A Defining Feature Of The Omani Personality



Tolerance .. A Defining Feature Of The Omani Personality

For all of its recorded history, Oman has been known to outsiders for its people's ability to connect with other cultures and civilisations, to welcome visitors and coexist with their neighbours and trading partners. Its social fabric is woven from the sturdy threads of its Islamic heritage on the one hand, and the harmonious character of the indigenous Omanis, brought together by a shared tolerance. If one characteristic defines the Omani personality above all else, it is tolerance.



Architectural jewel
and masterpiece
of engineering
(Mosque of
Sayyida Fatma
bint Ali Al Said)

The Sultanate's relations with others is today as ever based on policies of good-neighbourliness, of non-interference in the internal affairs of others, of respect for international law, convention and norm, of freedom of worship, and of steady homage to the core principle of peaceful coexistence. Underpinning these policies is an unflagging belief in open communication and a tolerance of all traditions and creeds; a belief it manifests in such initiatives as its centres of dialogue with other religions and sects, and its sponsorship of academic chairs at internationally

respected universities, where a more benign history of Islam is explored to reveal a religion that values peace and social harmony.

One of His Majesty's defining characteristics is his absolute commitment to tolerance and renewal in religious and material life and he has neglected on no occasion to reiterate his denunciation of violence and fundamentalism in all its forms, recognising that the root of violence is most often to be found in extremist views. Excess has no place in Islam, which invites its adherents to view one another with kindness.

Typical in this regard were his remarks to the opening of the Fifth Session of the Council of Oman on 31 October 2011, in which he observed that «the process of thought, when it is open and broad in its reach and untainted by intolerance, offers a healthier platform for the growth of a people and nation and for the advancement of society.»

Consequently, religious tolerance was adopted as a core principle by the modern Omani Renaissance. The Basic Law of the State guarantees personal freedoms and their exercise, limited only by law. Article 28 of the Constitution stipulates that «freedom of worship is protected in accordance with established custom where it does not violate public order or

morality,” and Oman's Personal Status Law guarantees the right of non-Muslim residents of the Sultanate to engage in ritual practices that do not contravene Oman's indigenous tradition, as stipulated by Article 282. Non-Muslims are free to attend their own places of worship in the full assurance of their protection under the law.

If further conviction were needed, Judicial Circular No. 22/2016, issued by the Public Prosecution, urged prosecutors “to take such strenuous legal action as is warranted in cases of religious or doctrinal conflict, given its serious nature, and to prosecute to the maximum extent such disgraceful and criminal acts.”



It is not surprising, therefore, that the Annual Report on Religious Freedoms in the World continues to commend the role of the Sultanate in consolidating the values of dialogue, tolerance and moderation between religions and cultures in Oman and abroad.

Meanwhile, the US State Department's most recent annual Report on Global Terrorism, published in September 2018 and which examines efforts to combat terrorist acts on a country by country basis, praised for the second successive year the Sultanate's anti-terrorist role in the Middle Eastern region, noting the local and international impact of its contribution. Among the positive repercussions of this commitment are the security and stability of the Sultanate itself, which reflect strongly on the balanced leadership of His Majesty Sultan Qaboos bin Said.

A further report published by the Bloomberg Philanthropies foundation in May 2018 commended the Sultanate's

stable and tolerant political climate, noting the “strong national identity of the country .. evident on the streets of Muscat”, with its historic buildings and “low-rise beige villas with traditional arches and windows enclosed with carved wood latticework. Being neutral and independent has served the country well over the decades, making it a key conduit for trade and diplomacy in the turbulent Middle East.”

The Sultanate draws on its own rich heritage of peaceful interaction in promoting the principle of coexistence and has demonstrated energy and focus in materialising its commitment. An outstanding innovation in this context is the touring exhibit “Tolerance, Understanding, Coexistence: Oman's Message of Islam” that has travelled the world since 2010 and that offers a perspective of religious tolerance that can serve as a model for Muslims everywhere and an inspiration to peoples of every colour, nationality and creed.

The “Message” was born of a desire to dismantle the stereotypical image of Islam in the West, and replace it with emphasis on tolerance as a principle on which more successful human relations are based.



On 18 September 2018, the exhibition arrived at UNESCO headquarters in Paris, eight years on from its inauguration. Its long tour has brought it to 177 cities in 35 countries, where it presented its message of peace in 26 languages. In the course of the journey it has forged many strong and sometimes unexpected partnerships, with scientific and academic institutions, organisations and museums, out of which have grown mutually beneficial projects exploring aspects of religious scholarship, the Arabic language and other areas of enquiry. Chief among its supportive partners have been the United Nations itself, and of course UNESCO, and it has twice been nominated for peace awards, by affiliates of UNESCO and of the Republic of Korea.

The exhibition's mission is, through acquaintance, to convey and promote the Sultanate's own experience of amicable relations, approaching the subject from the triple aspects of religious tolerance, understanding of others and peaceful coexistence. The success of this approach is validated by high attendance figures in all of the countries it has visited. Coordinated with the help of a number of organisations, notably UNESCO, it is supported also by religious centres that share the values of moderation and coexistence among peoples, cultures and religions.

Accompanying the “Message” on its tour is a media campaign which uses inspirational cards to communicate its values and which have, thanks to social media and the internet, enjoyed phenomenal success in their own right.

The exhibition catchphrase : “Let me do something for tolerance” personalises its purpose of encouraging the spread of a culture of tolerance in human societies, favouring individual, collective and institutional action as a practical expression of this compassionate ethos.

The choice of slogan comes from a belief in the crucial role of tolerance where a gap needs to be bridged in strained relations and where different points of view must be brought closer in order to find common ground in an atmosphere of peaceful dialogue.

The Ministry of Awqaf and Religious Affairs publishes Tafahum (‘Understanding’ in Arabic), a journal of ideas which seeks to narrow differences among people of opposing beliefs and to foster the Islamic call for tolerance. The magazine seeks contributions from scholars and intellectuals both inside and outside the Sultanate and advocates in its editorial policy the principles of intellectual freedom, diversity of views and renewal in Islamic thought.



September 2018 marked its 60th edition. It has published a book, also entitled Tafahum, consisting of an anthology of historically valuable philosophical and scientific essays in the Arab-Islamic tradition.



The Ministry of Awqaf and Religious Affairs uses technology to develop its services and facilitate its beneficiaries, while pursuing the best advice available in investing the endowment funds for which it is responsible, including mosque and school endowments, and family and charitable endowments. It also oversees upwards of sixteen thousand mosques throughout the territory under the mosque programme.

In addition to the Sultan Qaboos academic chairs established at some of the most prestigious American, European, Asian and Australian universities, and which play a vital and useful role in the study of Arab and Islamic

civilisation, and in deepening the foundations and reach of dialogue between religions, the Sultanate has either established or supported the setting up of cultural centres and foundations around the world that share the goal of achieving more understanding between peoples and cultures. An example is the Sultan Qaboos Centre in Washington, which is active in communicating and interacting with American society, the Lebanese-Omani Cultural Centre in Beirut, and the Liqaa International Centre for Dialogue of the Melkite Greek Catholic Patriarch of Antioch and All the East in Beirut.



The Sultan Qaboos mosques are outstanding examples of architectural beauty and technical mastery. (Sultan Qaboos Mosque in Bahla)

Motivated by the wishes of His Majesty Sultan Qaboos, and in exercise of instructions delivered by him, numerous new mosques have been built throughout the Sultanate, helping to alleviate the pressure on existing mosques as the population grows. Other mosques have been restored or rebuilt, and ancillary services added to facilitate the needs of worshippers.

The many mosques that bear the name of HM Sultan Qaboos bin Said and which were built at his personal expense, tell another chapter of the story of the modern Renaissance he pioneered and of its

deep concern for people. The Renaissance believes in providing the faithful with the means to perform their rites of worship in surroundings of peace, tranquility and safety. It tells a story of Oman's role in and contribution to Islamic civilisation from its earliest days, as evidenced in architectural masterpieces that exude the spirit of Islam. Wonderful mosques, marked by creativity and harmony in their engineering and design, express the deeply felt impact of Islamic culture in the hearts of Muslims, manifested in these religious buildings of surpassing beauty.

The Office of His Eminence, the Grand Mufti of the Sultanate, plays a leading role in spreading religious awareness based on proper knowledge of the Holy Qur'an and the guiding teachings of the Prophets Sunnah.

The Institute of Sharia Sciences, meanwhile, is an academic institution with a mission to gain validation for the noble values of Islam, for tolerance, love and mutual compassion in society. Its ideal world is one in which free cultural exchange is fully accepted and differences celebrated.

Through its academic programmes, the Institute turns out highly qualified experts in shari'a law, Islamic studies and related skills. It uses what

means are available at any time, including technology, in the service of its aims, including to promote and implement the distance learning project. This latter project constitutes a particularly efficient use of technology in delivering content to a wide audience. It has availed of an innovative educational service to stimulate a climate of serious academic research.

The distance learning programme facilitates students wishing to pursue their studies remotely from both within the Sultanate and overseas. Available through e-learning are the Bachelors Degree in Islamic Studies, Jurisprudence and Fundamentals, as well as the Diploma in Islamic Sciences.



Distance education facilitates the study of Islamic sciences by means of e-learning.

*“In the coming phase,
given the extended powers granted to
the legislative and regulatory authorities,
and that the ramifications of progression are
significant; we have absolute confidence that all
members of the Council will fulfil their mandate
energetically and effectively to advance this
precious country towards a proud, prosperous
and safe horizon, bearing in mind the
enormous responsibilities that have
been imposed upon their Council
as a body involved in
decision-making.”*

Qaboos bin Said

(Inauguration of the Fifth Session of the Council of Oman - 31 October 2011)

The Council of Oman



The Council of Oman ..Broader Participation In Decision-Making



The concept of shura, or consultation, has been a core principle of His Majesty Sultan Qaboos bin Said's approach to governance from the earliest days of his rule, and it has come to maturity over the last half century by a series of incremental stages. The intelligence of this approach sprang from a close acquaintance with the country's history and largely unchanged political and social fabric, into which has been woven a moderate and inclusive assimilation of the Islamic faith. Tolerance is embedded in the Omani character, from long interactions with other cultures, and influenced their interpretation of Islam both at home and in their campaigns to spread the faith overseas.

In his first address to the citizens of Oman after assuming power in 1970, His Majesty informed them that the democracy they might expect would be grounded in the teachings of Islam and in the heritage and values of Oman, while every advantage would be taken of such modern means and mechanisms as would facilitate its evolution.

From the establishment of the State Advisory Council in 1981, followed by the Shura, or Consultation Council in 1991,

the process of broadening participation in political decision-making in Oman continued apace. The shura process has progressed without interruption to arrive at its current format, a system of two legislative houses: the appointed State Council and the elected Consultation Council. The two houses share position beneath the broad umbrella of the Council of Oman, though each enjoys a separate legal personality and financial and administrative independence.

Royal Decree No 2011/39 of 12 March 2011 granted legislative and supervisory powers to the Council of Oman that expanded the Council's ability to express the aspirations of citizens and engage them more fully in the decision-making process. This was an important step forward in the democratic practice and it empowered communities and strengthened the consultative phase of policy-making that is a distinctive expression of Oman's historic preference for a shura approach. This was accompanied by several measures which together reinforce the independence of the judiciary and public prosecution.

Council of Oman (Majlis Oman)

The establishment of the Council of Oman by means of Royal Decree No. 1997/86 of 16 December 1997 was a significant milestone in the advancing shura process. It greatly expanded the basis of participation in decision-making, which now benefited from the expertise of scholars and specialists. This was crucial to the successful exploration of appropriate strategies for implementation of the ambitious development programmes envisioned by the modern Renaissance.

The structures and powers, respectively, of the State Council (Majlis al Dawla) and Consultation Council (Majlis al Shura) were appended to the Royal Decree establishing the Council of Oman (Majlis Oman) and addressed three areas: the first outlined the shared terms governing the two houses; the second dealt with the State Council; and the third with the Consultation Council.

The Council of Oman consists of :

The State Council

whose members are appointed by His Majesty Sultan Qaboos from a national pool of experts and distinguished citizens

The Consultation Council

whose members are publicly elected. The Council of Oman is convened by His Majesty the Sultan to discuss issues of concern raised by him.

State Council.. Contributing Actively To National Policy Initiatives

The State Council embodies the Sultanate's commitment to enshrining shura in the exercise of its mission to achieve comprehensive national development through popular participation in decision-making, and to advancing Omani society. The State Council acts in conjunction with the Consultation Council to form a powerful arm of the state of institutions apparatus conceived into existence by His Majesty Sultan Qaboos.

Today, the Council is a strong and well-established pillar of the Sultanate's political infrastructure, embodying the principle of true consultation. Consultation, fortified by the values

Royal Decree No. 2011/99, issued on 19 October 2011 and amending certain provisions of the Basic Law of the State, lays out the principles underpinning performance and constitutes a true interpretation of the intention to extend the powers of the Council of Oman as outlined in Royal Decree No. 2011/39 issued on 12 March 2011 and granting legislative and supervisory powers to the Council of Oman.

In line with His Majesty Sultan Qaboos' consistent goal of promoting cooperation between all state institutions, the pursuit of which has been behind much of the success of the Sultanate's many large-scale development projects, a joint meeting was convened on 2 May 2018 between the Council of Ministers and the Council of Oman (State and Consultation Councils). The session was a materialisation of His Majesty's conviction as to the importance of constructive dialogue if peak performance is to be guaranteed in manifesting plans.

of Islamic sharia, has a long history in Oman, and the Council has matured into a sophisticated medium of the democratic process, exercising the powers granted to it fully as an effective instrument of national policy. The State Council enjoys a legal personality and financial and administrative independence. It is composed of a cohort of experts and specialists, enabling it to act effectively as permitted by its powers and competencies. In this way, the State Council has been enabled to maximise its contribution to the national work, constrained only by the rule of law and institutions.

Membership of The State Council

The State Council consists of a chairman and members (whose number does not exceed the number of Consultation Council members) who are appointed by His Majesty the Sultan. They are selected from among former ministers and under-secretaries and those of equivalent rank, as well as former ambassadors, former senior judges, retired senior officers, dignitaries and eminent personalities from the worlds of science, literature, culture, business and academia, in addition to people who have provided distinguished service

to the nation and any others whom His Majesty the Sultan sees as fit to appoint.

His Majesty Sultan Qaboos on 8 November 2015 issued Royal Decree No. 47 /2015 appointing the members of the State Council to its sixth term, a total of 84 members in addition to the Chair, of whom 61 were new members. Twenty three others were retained from the previous session.

The new appointees to the Council include 14 women, or 17% of the total membership.



(Office of the State Council)

Terms of Reference and Powers

Article 58 of Royal Decree No. 99/2011 on the Council of Oman defines the powers available to the State Council and necessary for it to achieve its objectives. These objectives consist of approving or amending draft legislation referred to it by the Council of Ministers, proposing new legislation, and discussing and making recommendations affecting development projects and the annual State Budget as forwarded by the Council of Ministers. It also reviews the annual report of the State Financial and Administrative Audit Institution.

The Basic Law of the State sets out mechanisms for the debate and approval of bills brought before the Council bearing on matters of national and local significance. The Council commissions studies and proposes solutions to issues of development generally and to specific economic and social problems.

Sessions of The State Council

The State Council is appointed for a term of four years, consisting of four annual sessions. The duration of each session is no less than eight months, beginning with the annual inaugural session of the Council of Oman.

The Council sits regularly, as determined by the Council Office on the basis of the issues before it or of draft legislation referred to it for review; or as proposed by its Standing Committees from issues sanctioned by the Council Office. The Chairman of the State Council may convene extraordinary sessions as necessary.



Structure of The State Council

The State Council is constituted of



The Council Chairman:

The Council Chairman broadly oversees the proper functioning of the work of the Council and ensures compliance with national legislation and Council regulations. The Chairman has two deputies, chosen by direct secret ballot by an absolute majority of Council members at the inaugural sitting of each annual session.

The Council Office:

The State Council Office prepares the Council's agenda and decides on its sittings, as well as the work of its committees. It assists the members in performing their duties, offers support to Council committees and drafts regulations organising task management and coordination for the committees that comply with Council bylaws.

Standing Committees:

The Committees are constituted from the Council membership as determined by the Council at the recommendation of the Council Office at the outset of each annual session. Their job is to study draft laws referred to them, in addition to the specific topics within their jurisdiction. In its current sixth session, the Council has five standing committees: the Legal Committee, the Economic Committee, the Social Committee, the Education and Research Committee and the Committee on Culture, Information and Tourism.

The Secretariat-General:

The Secretariat-General is composed of the Secretary-General, appointed by royal decree, supported by a team of assistants and staff from various departments. The Secretariat performs such actions as are necessary to assist the Council and its affiliate bodies in fulfilling their collective mission in accordance with the mandate of the Council Office.

The Secretariat is composed of four secretariats: the Assistant Secretariat for Sessions and Committee Affairs, the Assistant Secretariat-General for Administrative and Financial Affairs, the Assistant Secretariat-General for Media and Public Relations, and the Assistant Secretariat-General of the Information and Research Centre.



Meeting of the State Council's Social Committee.

Energetic Debate Yields Rich Rewards

The third annual session of the sixth term of the State Council (2015-2019) was a particularly busy one, with many achievements to its credit that reflected well on the Council's determination to fully avail of its powers and competencies.

The Council convened in ordinary session on eight occasions between the beginning of the second annual session and up to the end of May 2018, during which it debated a series of bills and proposals passed to it by government, as well as studies commissioned by the Council itself. It approved, following intensive discussions, the draft General State Budget for the fiscal year 2018.

The Council also debated the Commercial Companies bill, the Mineral Wealth bill and the Living Water Resources bill referred to it by the Council of Ministers.

It reviewed to completion a series of proposals and studies, including: a study by the Economic Committee on the establishment of free economic zones in the governorates of Buraymi and Musandam; adoption of the Council's internal regulations as submitted by the Legal Committee; a proposal bearing on the regulation of drone activity; a study referred by the Social Committee on the development of the social security system; and a proposal on the National Programme for Government Proficiency and Creativity.

During the third annual session of its sixth term, the State Council hosted presentations by two government agencies. Officials from the Research Council presented on the national strategy for innovation, and the Information Technology Authority (ITA) provided members with an up to date status report on its activities.

Over the same period, the Council hosted nine meetings with chairpersons, rapporteurs and members of its Standing Committees to review reports drafted by their subcommittees on bills destined to come before the Council. The Council Office studies all such reports and proposals brought before it at these meetings before rendering its considered verdict on their value.

The Council Office and the Consultation Council Office held their first joint meeting of the third annual session in a symbolic, but also fruitful, mark of their commitment to coordinate their respective activities. The meeting explored aspects of coordination as they impact on the overall strategy of integration in service of the public interest. A mechanism for the inclusion of provisions in draft legislation to be brought before the Council of Oman was approved; as were the rules of procedure for its parliamentary division. Representatives of the Council, drawn from the membership of its two constituent houses, participate in the activities of regional and international associations and parliamentary bodies, and the joint meeting was an occasion to establish protocols for such occasions and for cooperation and information exchange between the two houses.

The Council's Standing Committees, and their subcommittees and working groups, held a combined 70 meetings of diverse purpose over the same period, debating proposed legislation, reviewing studies or hosting guests of relevant expertise.

The State Council, acting on behalf of the Sultanate, hosted the Regional Forum of Parliamentarians on Science

and Diplomacy on 25 December 2017. The event is an annual one, organised by the Islamic Educational, Scientific and Cultural Organisation (ISESCO) and brings together parliamentarians, experts and scholars from nine Arab countries. The aim of the Forum is to fortify the role of parliamentarians in the development of legislation and policies that support science and technology and to build bridges of cooperation among Member States. Science diplomacy is viewed as a particularly effective instrument of this strategy and the Forum promotes coordinated decision-making on issues bearing on science and innovation.

In its external activity, the Council exchanged visits with counterparts, seeing such encounters as valuable networking events and opportunities to enhance communication and build stronger relations with friendly countries, especially in matters of parliamentary relevance. The Council also participated in a number of regional and international parliamentary forums, including meetings of the Arab Parliament and of the Inter-Parliamentary Union.

The Council's Parliamentary Friendship Committees have an important contribution to make in the development of parliamentary relations with parallel Councils in other countries, their interactions providing positive opportunities for economic, cultural and social cooperation.

The activities and accomplishments of the Council during its most recent session bear witness to the success of the advancing shura process in the Sultanate, moving it ever forward in the service of present and future generations.

Consultation (Shura) Council.. energetic focus leads to legislative progress

The Consultation Council's third annual session (2017-2018) of its eighth term (2015-2019) was a busy one for public representatives participating in 25 scheduled legislative and supervisory sessions. The scheduled legislative sessions debated bills referred by government or by Council members, & these included government proposals bearing on international agreements to which it was proposed that the Sultanate become a signatory.

Armed with the new powers afforded to it by Royal Decree 99/2011, which extended its competencies, the Council of Oman, incorporating the State and Consultation Councils, has entered a new era of national action. This Decree enhances the work of parliament by raising standards of democratic performance and transparency, factors which determine the success of forward strategies and the drive to expand citizen participation in the decision-making process.

From its inception, the Consultation Council has shown diligence in the exercise of its functions, exerting its

influence through maximum use of its powers. It takes seriously the magnitude of the national goals for which it bears responsibility and furthers these goals by maintaining a strong connection with the public. Its 2015-2019 term is seeing a qualitative advance in citizen involvement in the practicalities of achieving national development objectives. This interactive environment fostered by the Consultation Council encourages public visits to the house, along with frequent public-parliamentary events and exchanges.

The Council's scheduled third session meetings included debate and review of Standing Committee reports, as well as of ministerial responses to proposals referred by the Council. The supervisory sessions included addressing ministerial statements by the direct method of hosting the respective ministers in the house for face to face discussion. Meanwhile the Consultation Council, having fully studied all proposals, offers proposals of its own for surmounting or bypassing obstacles that stand in the way of the expeditious implementation of development plans.

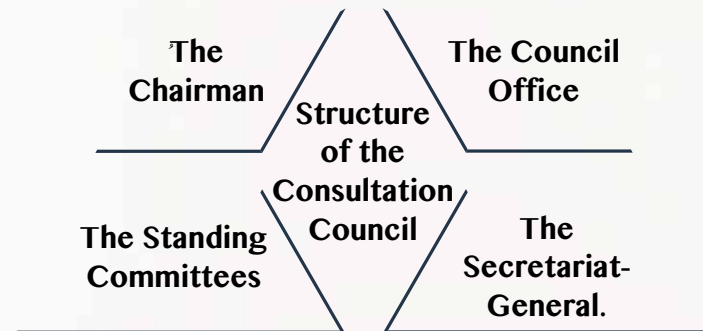


Meeting of the
Consultation
Council's
Legislative and
Legal Committee

Structure of the Consultation Council

The term of the Consultation Council is four years, beginning from the official announcement of election results and extending to 30 September of the fourth year of the Council's term.

The Consultation Council exercises its powers and prerogatives through its four main bodies.



The Council Chairman

The Chairman oversees the activities of the Majlis, manages its sittings, represents it in its dealings with other bodies and speaks on its behalf. He has the right to summon extraordinary sessions as necessary. He and his two deputies are elected at an extraordinary session summoned by His Majesty in accordance with Article 58 of the Basic Law of the State.

Adoption of the rules of procedure for the parliamentary division of the Council of Oman, the umbrella body of both houses, has clarified the protocols for participation in reciprocal regional and international activities, in addition to defining the format for cooperation and information exchange between the two houses.

The Council Office

The Council Office sets the timetable and agenda for the Council's ordinary sittings in light of the activities of the Council's committees and the topics referred to them or put before the Council.

The Consultation Council maintained a schedule of several weekly meetings up to the end of June 2018. Over the course of 19 meetings, 70 parliamentary questions were reviewed, 61 of which were approved; there were five requests for briefings; and 27 petitions filed by members. Members also lodged five bills; and reviewed on a regular basis ministerial responses to parliamentary questions put to them.

Standing committees

At its inaugural meeting of the first annual session of the eighth term, the Consultation Council approved the formation of the principal Council committees: the Legislative and Legal Committee, the Economic and Finance Committee, the Health and Environment Committee, the Education and Scientific Research Committee, the Social Services and Development Committee, the Youth and Human Resources Committee, the Food and Water Security Committee and the Information and Culture Committee.

The Standing Committees hold meetings and host gatherings and workshops at which they address matters of interest to the community on the basis of studies commissioned by them and the findings and recommendations thereof. The combined outcome of this expertise and debate brings value to government and private sector projects, always with the overall aim of resolving challenges sustainably.

The Secretariat-General

consists of the Secretary-General, who is appointed by Royal Decree, and a number of employees and specialists. The Secretariat-General assists the Consultation Council and its affiliate bodies in carrying out their tasks and facilitates all that relates to organisational

and administrative procedures of relevance. The Secretariat-General plays a vital role in the success of the Council's functions. The Council debated the draft organisational structure and internal regulations with a view to upgrading the performance of the Council.

In the course of 2018 the Secretariat-General, under the umbrella of its community outreach and exchange strategy, organised a series of dialogues on topics of interest to the community, notably among them the Shabab Mumakkan (approximately 'Enabled Youth') initiative, motivated by an aspiration to empower young people socially, economically, politically and culturally. A separate initiative created a dialogue on 'Challenges of the national economy within the framework of the Ninth Five-Year Plan.'

Legislative and Oversight Tools and Activities

The Consultation Council exercises its powers and prerogatives in accordance with recognised parliamentary lines. Its legislative and oversight powers have been expanded since the Basic Law of the State was amended for this purpose and the Council of Oman was granted legislative and regulatory oversight that raises the ability of the Council to participate more effectively and with greater impact in the decision-making process on the one hand; and better express the aspirations of constituents on the other. The Council monitors the performance of government agencies and acquaints itself with policies, plans and programmes being implemented to ensure that they meet best practice standards. At its third annual session, members of

the Council discussed the statement delivered by HE Darwish bin Ismail Al Balushi, the Minister Responsible for Financial Affairs, on the draft General State Budget for the fiscal year 2018 during a sitting held in camera following a vote by members.

The Council also invited HE Dr Ali bin Masoud Al Sunaidi, Minister of Commerce and Industry and heard him deliver a six-point report on his ministry's current action plan, as concerns its executive programme; the ministry's part in the economic diversification sectors of the Ninth Five-Year Plan; relevant legislative applications and agreements; the government's input in improving the business environment; and its promotion of small and medium enterprises in the programme of economic diversification.



At a separate sitting, the Council hosted HE Dr Ahmed Bin Mohammed Al Futaisi, Minister of Transport and Communications. His comprehensive statement explained issues of concern to the transportation and communications sectors in the Sultanate, including logistics, transport, aviation and ports and maritime affairs. He reported on the implementation status of futuristic projects as well as the modernisation of existing infrastructure, their financing and investment, and areas of institutional development.

The Council also hosted, at its 13th and 14th ordinary sittings, HE Sheikh Mohammed Bin Saeed Al Kalbani, Minister of Social Development, who delivered a status report on the work of his ministry covering social security; relief and emergency assistance programmes; a support centre for the elderly and disabled; family development; NGOs; social action; as well as the Ministry's development plans and Social Action Strategy (2016-2025).



The 18th and 19th sittings heard the report of HE Dr. Abdulmunim bin Mansoor Al Hasani, Minister of Information, in which he summarised his ministry's work under the headings: the Omani media; digital media; training

and qualification of national cadres; Oman's information policy; foreign media and media briefings; in addition to private media investment; and the ministry's relationship with the organisations of civil society.

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Insofar as concerns external relations, the Consultation Council participated in periodic meetings and international conferences of parliamentary and legislative groupings from the Gulf, Arab and international arenas, at which were discussed all aspects of the work of legislation and oversight as they

relate to Arab and international affairs. These exchanges are crucial to the process of choosing dialogue and open discussion as the preferred means to conflict resolution. This preference guides the Council in all of its interactions and negotiations, both domestically and with counterparts overseas.

Municipal Councils..

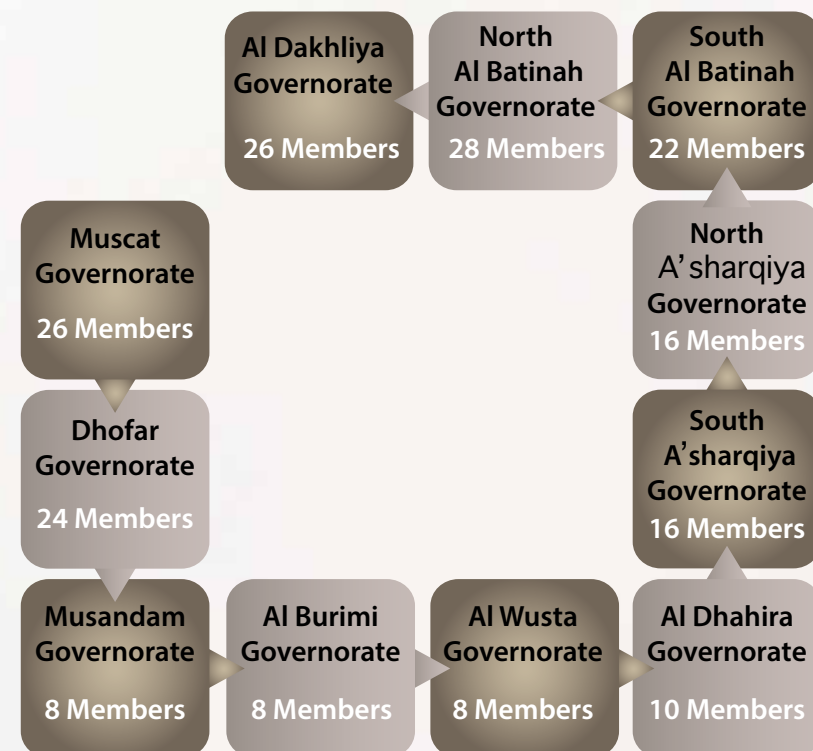
where development programmes come home to the community

The Sultanate's Municipal Councils are the product of Royal Decree No. 116/2011 of 26 October 2011 and represent a further advance on the path to more public participation in policy-making, and greater integration between community and government institutions. Municipal Councils coordinate with the Consultation Council in drawing up development plans, so that they may be better attuned to the local needs of their constituents. By this means, both broader national development

and specific local needs can be harmonised and attained without detriment to one another.

The newly formed Municipal Councils met for the first time on 22 December 2012, and immediately set to work, operating within the legal and procedural parameters assigned to them. They hold periodic meetings, during which they discuss economic, social and other matters of relevance to their constituents, always with an eye to maximising benefit for their respective communities.

Under the provisions of the legislation and regulations enacted pursuant to Royal Decree No. 116/2011, as defined in Administrative Decree No. 15/2012, a total of 192 members represent the 11 governorates of the Sultanate.



In addition to the 192 publicly elected members, the Councils incorporate two representatives of government bodies having positions no lower than director-general or department head where the Council's specialties do not include representatives at that level. The government bodies concerned are: the Ministry of Regional Municipalities and Water Resources (or Muscat Municipality or Dhofar Municipality); the Ministry of Education; the Ministry of Housing; Ministry of Health; Ministry of Tourism; Ministry of Environment and Climate Affairs; Ministry of Social Development; Royal Oman Police; Sohar Municipality for North Batinah Governorate; in addition to two professional consultants who are residents of the governorate in question selected by the Minister of Interior and the competent minister in the case of Muscat and Dhofar.

The Municipal Council of Muscat Governorate is chaired by the Chairman of Muscat and the Municipal Council of Dhofar Governorate by the Chairman of Dhofar. The Councils of the remaining governorates are chaired by their respective governors.

The Municipal Councils Law defined the competencies of the Municipal Council, designed to be compatible with the State's general policy and national development plan. The Councils provide opinions and recommendations on the development of municipal systems and services within their respective governorates. They can propose the establishment and improvement of roads, the beautification and layout of street networks, urban squares, public places and beaches. They advise on procedures to protect the local environment from pollution, and propose projects and recommend suitable sites for them with respect

to the specific demands of water supply, roads, parks, drainage, lighting, schools, housing, places of worship, health and commercial centres. Their contribution is of particular value in the introduction of public facilities, services and projects of interest to citizens, in proposing the development of public parks and recreation places, in protecting the beaches from erosion and pollution and in coordinating all these matters with the relevant authorities.

The Municipal Council monitors implementation of the regulations relating to lighting, water, sanitation and other public utilities, coordinating with the relevant authorities. It drafts terms for invitations to tender, defines the limitations of commercial signage and public space advertising, again in collaboration with the competent local bodies. It proposes the establishment of markets and slaughterhouses, coordinates with experts on waste disposal sites and waste systems, and proposes systems for the collection, disposal or recycling of waste that meet rigorous current environmental standards. It defines planning and zoning criteria for public shopping areas, including for street vendors, for restaurants and cafes, for commercial and industrial zones and for installations hazardous by nature or disruptive of the public peace, or harmful to health.

The Councils maintain open lines of communication with public authorities insofar as concerns protecting the public benefit in the implementation of development projects, ensuring that they meet the conditions laid out in the Law of Expropriation of Property for Public Utility; as well as in the development of systems for the control of stray animals; in naming neighbourhoods; in the study and development of

outline and detailed urban plans and in offering recommendations on the planning of residential, commercial, industrial and tourist amenity zones.

The Municipal Council has other functions, such as examining proposals submitted to it and issuing appropriate resolutions or recommendations in connection with the siting and installation of public moorings and anchorages; and studying complaints submitted by citizens and other bodies on issues that fall within the competence of the Council. The respective authorities will have access to the necessary data to

examine these complaints.

The Municipal Council imposes and collects, amends and, where appropriate, cancels municipal fees. It monitors the implementation of service projects in the governorate and makes observations to pass to other local authorities. It offers its opinion in advance of the exploitation of any public facility within the governorate.

It deals with the study of social issues and observes negative phenomena in the governorate and proposes appropriate solutions. It approves the establishment of cultural, leisure

and tourism festivals; regulates the schedules and working parameters of taxis and public transport; and follows up on the implementation of contracts awarded and responsibilities assumed.

The Council coordinates with neighbouring councils with a view to resolving issues related to the provision of services to villages and communities. It oversees measures designed to eliminate street begging and makes observations and recommendations for adjustments to existing policy; proposes programmes to assist the indigent and limited income

families and to upgrade facilities for the care for orphans and disabled persons.

Finally, it has responsibility for programmes of accelerated relief to victims of fire, flooding and climate catastrophe, allocating financial resources for rapid disbursement in such cases. To this end, it communicates with the local community and with private sector institutions, hosting meetings and assessing case histories and proposals that may benefit the level of services offered and contribute to local development within their province of care.



Municipal Council
meeting, Buraymi
Governorate.

*"We recognise the importance
of the media and the role it plays in the lives
of nations. We realise that the media is a mirror
that reflects what is going on in the country, and
this mirror must be true and transparent, honest
with itself and with others."*

Qaboos bin Said

(2nd National Day - 18 November 1972)

The Omani Media ... A Source Of News

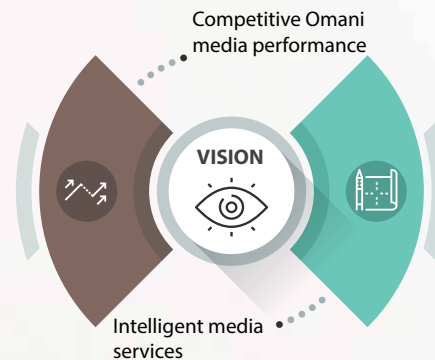


The Omani Media – A Reliable Source Of Development News

The Omani media has a strong tradition of honest journalism and can be depended on for an accurate portrayal of the development process at any time. Across all formats, its reports are characterised by balance and clarity, attributes highly valued in the philosophy of the modern Renaissance.

His Majesty Sultan Qaboos bin Said, whose personal vision and drive are reflected everywhere in the milestones achieved across the Sultanate, has been a powerful champion of independent, yet responsible, media. Conscious of its importance in explaining the development process to the public, His Majesty is sensitive to the value of presenting projects in a positive light, though not at the expense of the truth, which will reveal itself quickly enough, especially should the reality contradict the media narrative.

In managing to deliver an objective and intelligent information service without sacrificing its competitive edge, the Omani media has accomplished an unusually delicate balancing act. Indigenous press, radio and television services and, increasingly, the exploding new fields of digital and social media, have survived against the odds and against challenges that have felled many of their competitors, and that in itself is a mark of the sophistication of the Sultanate's readership and audiences. Such efficiencies as were necessary to survive were made, and Omani media outlets today are in a healthy state, administratively and financially. Most importantly, in terms of the message with which they are entrusted, they can hold their own against the most aggressive external media institutions competing for public attention, employing quality, technology and attractive presentation to this end.



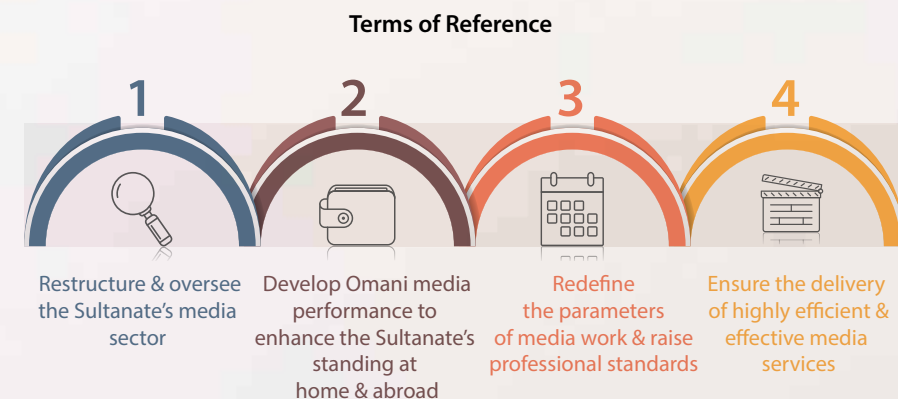
Behind the enterprise is a supportive legislative infrastructure that guarantees editorial independence and thus inspires performance.

The strategic vision for the Omani media foresaw heavy investment needed to develop its various branches, and to extract a superior level of performance from private and other non-State media. It encouraged higher creative and production standards commensurate with the potential offered by developments in communication technology, as well as continuous and systematic training of media personnel to meet exacting standards of performance and credibility.

Some of these objectives were advanced by way of an effective three-way research process in which the media surveyed public opinion and preferences and communicated the results to policy-makers, while digital performance was encouraged to establish a clear path to better media services.



The Ministry of Information, under the terms of reference and functions assigned to it by Royal Decree No. 2009/35, regulates and supervises the media sector in the Sultanate. It is constantly working to advance media performance with a view to enhancing the Sultanate's standing at home and abroad through the effective communication of information.



Royal Decree No. 45/2015 was announced on 2 November 2015 and approved the organisational structure of the Ministry of Information, in line with developing media trends and the competencies of the Ministry as defined in Royal Decree No. 35/2009. Arising from the later decree, new directorates within the Ministry of Information were created and others reformulated, so that today it consists of five general directorates and four departments, in addition to the Oman News Agency.

The media has earned its position of respect in Omani society and guards this esteem closely. His Majesty Sultan Qaboos has frequently acknowledged its public service in disseminating without bias the message of the modern Renaissance, often referring to this contribution in his public addresses. Speaking on the Sultanate's Second National Day on 18 November 1972, he referred to the media as a "mirror that reflects what is going on in the country", and described this mirror in the Omani context as "true and transparent, honest with itself and with others."

His Majesty has also commended the media for its reporting on positions taken by the country on various regional and international

issues. Addressing the nation on the Sultanate's 20th National Day on 18 November 1990, he applauded the manner in which the Omani media "applies standards of honesty and impartiality in its reporting that refuse to bow to sensationalism or alarmist tendencies."

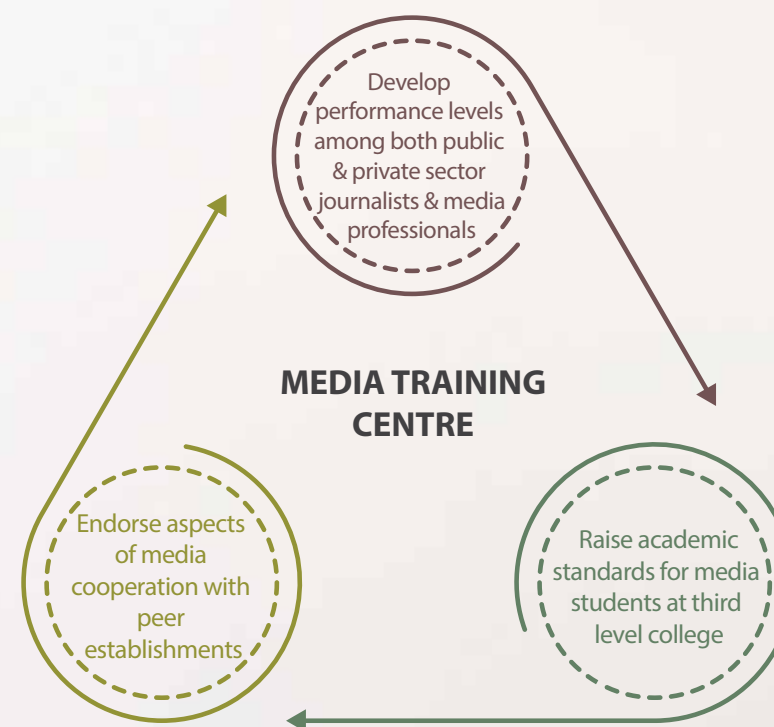
"As the impact of the media on the contemporary life of people and societies escalates, it is crucial to ensure that the Omani media remains capable of carrying out its elevated social mission, raising among citizens an awareness of their fundamental role in developing their home country, even as they build effective relations with the international community as citizens of the world."

Higher Standards Among Media Professionals

Royal Decree No. 3/2018, issued on 9 January 2018, confirmed His Majesty's long held commitment to supporting standards of excellence in the media, and found expression in the establishment of the Media Training Centre (MTC), an affiliate of the Ministry of Information. The Decree defined the organisational structure of the Centre.

The Centre's mission is to develop performance among journalists and media professionals serving in the various units of the State's administrative apparatus, or

working in the print, audio, video or electronic media. It offers training services to private sector press and media institutions, and to qualifying journalists and media professionals. It also provides performance-enhancing courses for media students at third level institutions and exchanges training expertise with peer institutions abroad, which it arranges in collaboration with the Ministry of Information, the Public Authority for Radio and Television and Sultan Qaboos University.



Meanwhile, the Ministry, as represented by the Community Media Centre, is working to enhance the success of government communications with the public, and in this context it coordinates with the Government Services Communication Centre at the General Secretariat of the Council of Ministers on all matters related to official media exchanges with the community.

The Ministry of Information is a strategic partner of the Government Services Communication Centre, sharing in its responsibilities and supporting it in its interactions with the media departments of government units.

The Ministry works jointly with the Centre to synchronise information streams emanating from media and public relations departments in the various institutions and units of the State administration; so that a single, clear and useful message is conveyed. Such clarity can

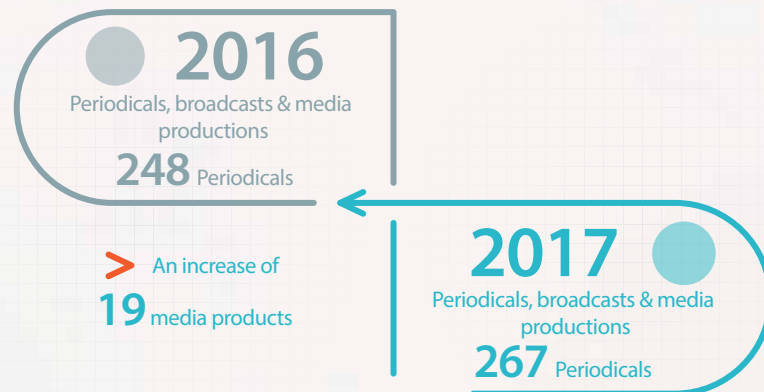
only be positive for relations among the various media and public relations departments in government institutions, as well as between these agencies and the public at large.

Ministerial Decision No. 38/2017 of 4 October 2017 identified the administrative divisions within the Ministry of Information and their respective competencies. In the ensuing overhaul, the Department of Media Studies and Documentation became the Centre for Community Information, incorporating three sub-units: the Electronic Monitoring and Analysis Section, the Information Studies Section and the Documentation and Daily Production Section.

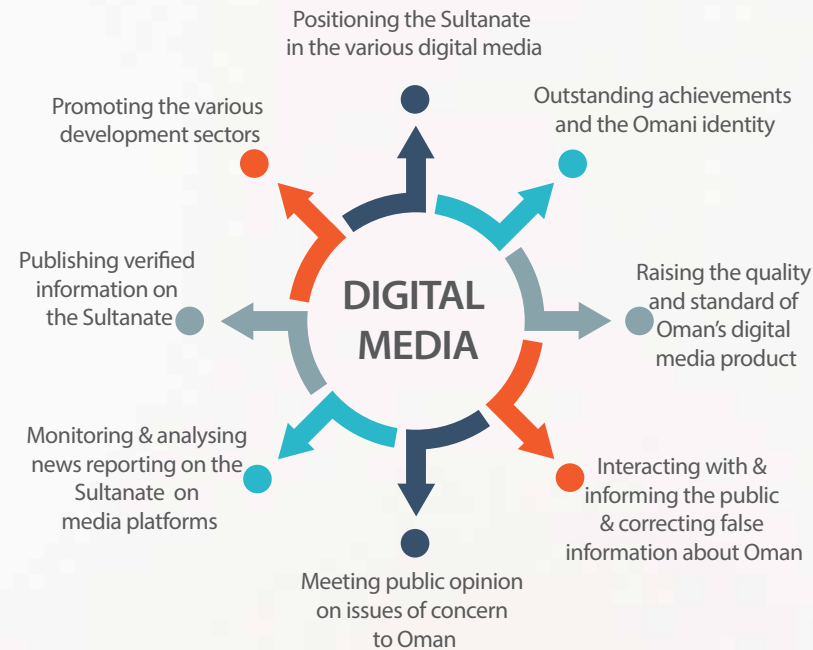
The Centre was transferred to the jurisdiction of the Directorate-General of Electronic Media, where it began the monumental task of transferring all media files from paper to digital format.

The Ministry of Information espouses the State-approved policy of clear communication, seeing its mandate as one of constantly improving the quality of its media message to the public, for the delivery of which it uses the tools of technology, creativity and technique. It is diligent in its pursuit of better information and engages

in research, public polling and targeted studies to this end. The communication environment to which it is committed is one guided by the principles of objectivity, credibility and responsibility that underpin Oman's overall communication policy, whether dealing with the public at home or the international community in its overseas interactions.

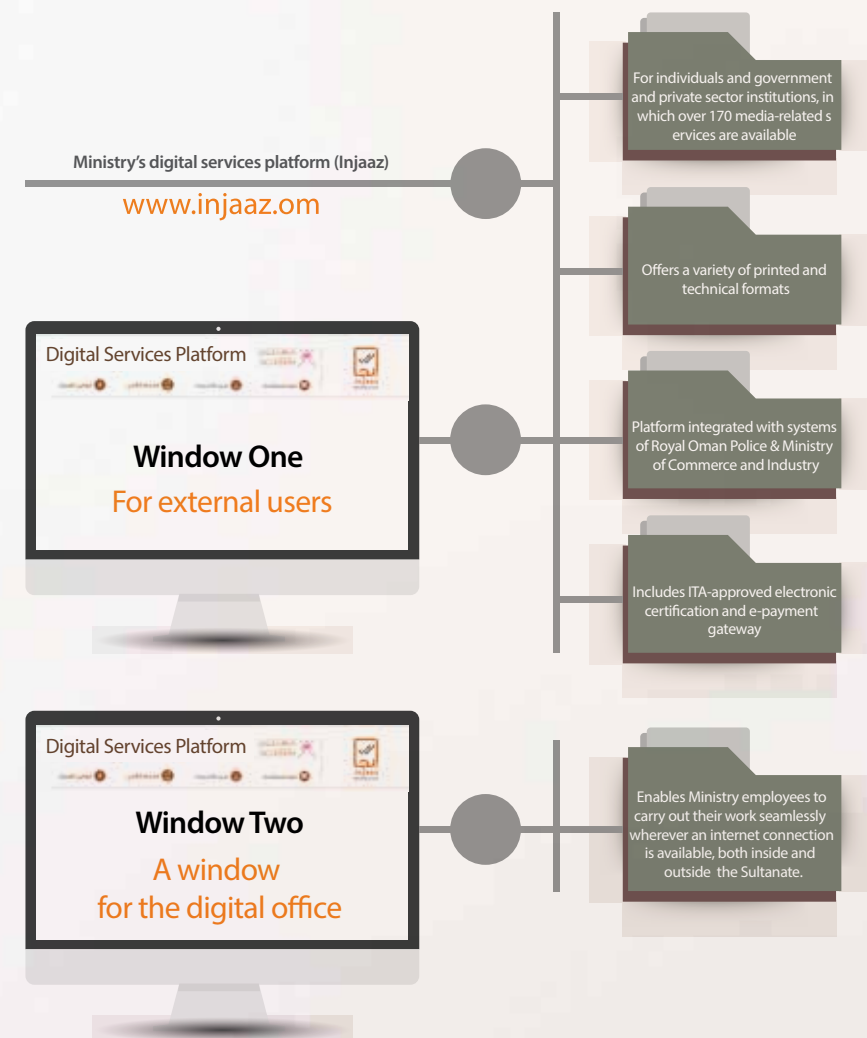


Digital Media



One of the Ministry's most significant digital media achievements is its digital services platform Injaaz ('achievement' in Arabic) Oman. Injaaz is the digital portal through which the Ministry provides the range of services it offers to individuals and private and public sector institutions. Meanwhile, Ministry employees

are facilitated in harmonising procedures and functions via the 'digital office' through which they conduct all of their work practices. An added advantage is the technical support offered by the platform to the visually impaired, thanks to its capacity for high legibility fonts, text enlargement and colour coordination.

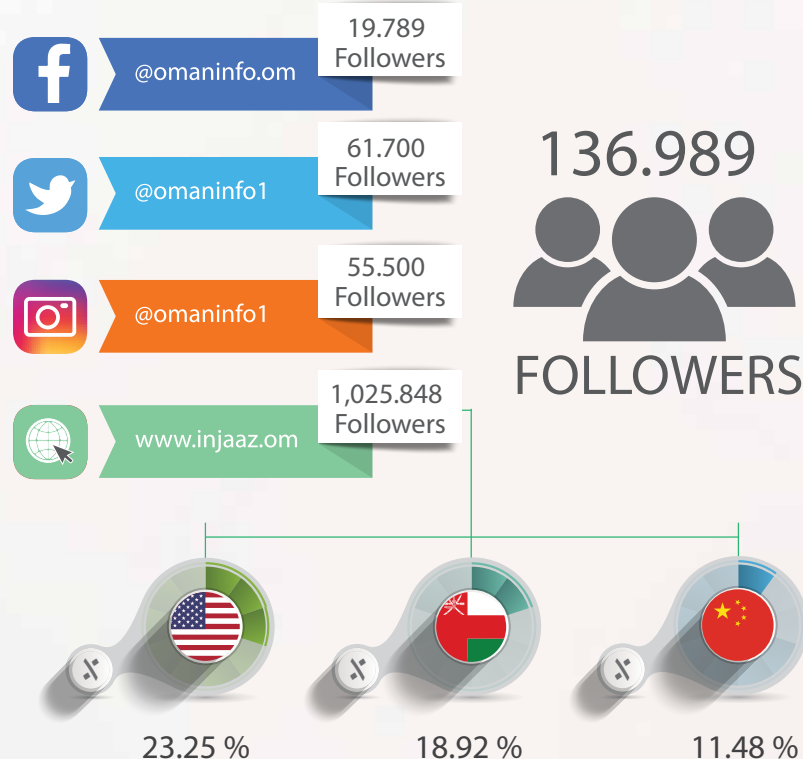


The Ministry of Information website complements the Digital Oman system as a valuable, instantly accessible source of information on the Sultanate.

Given the importance of visual and text communication with social network users, the Ministry is working to develop the digital content broadcast via its accounts to such sites. Its updated style now includes postings of video clips, photo images and newsfeeds aimed at audiences inside and outside the Sultanate. The result has been a spike in site visits and greater interaction with subscribers and followers. The Ministry sites now have 136,989 followers on social networks, including 61,700 on Twitter, 19,789 on Facebook and 55,500 on Instagram.

The Ministry is now looking to update its website, giving it a more contemporary feel and

providing a window on national identity, social and cultural development and Omani history and values. Its editorial style, and presentation in Arabic and foreign languages, will reflect the Ministry's overall media policy, which is highly focused on the innovative and rapidly changing digital field. At the time of publication, the Ministry had posted upwards of 3,000 items in Arabic and English on its own website, re-posted 78 features on the Sultanate from the Oman News Agency, and added a further 13 titles under the Oman Files heading that record achievements by the Sultanate and its citizens in diverse fields of endeavour.



Ministerial Decision No 38/2017, which identified the divisional competencies within the Ministry and established the Centre for Community Information to oversee issues of relevance to Oman, has already manifested positive results. Besides strengthening relations between government institutions, the Centre has been responsible for a more streamlined and positive flow of information about the Sultanate. Since its creation, it has published upwards of 168 reports on local and international events of Omani interest, with a focus on the media, culture and tourism. Among many such reports were accounts of the RNO support vessel Fulk al Salamah's voyage to East Africa, of the Al Muhallab bin Abi Sufra Symposium, of the First Government Communication Forum, and of the opening of the Abi Musallam al Biruni Library in Uzbekistan. In addition, the Centre devoted a special report to the marking of

40 years of Oman-China relations. Through its Centre for Community Information, the Ministry continues to pursue its goal of more coordinated government action, working actively with the Government Services Communications Centre at the General Secretariat of the Council of Ministers in all matters related to media communication with the community. The Ministry and Government Centre participate jointly in multiple events and media consultations.

In this context, the Ministry has been working directly with the Centre to stimulate the media and public relations departments within the administrative units and agencies of the government. The joint objective is to encourage the delivery of a clear and honest message to the public that will benefit society, enhance inter-departmental relations and bridge the information gap between the agencies of government and the public at large.



Guarding The Sultanate's Valued Reputation

Solicitous of the positive reputation the Sultanate has acquired regionally and internationally for its achievements under the enlightened reign of His Majesty Sultan Qaboos bin Said, and eager to promote to the widest audience the success story of the Sultanate's strong and diverse cultural contribution to the world; as well as its environmental and tourist attractions to investors and visitors alike; the Ministry participates in the most important of the international book fairs in the Arab world and further afield. In 2017/2018, Oman was strongly represented at 11 such overseas fairs, 5 in the Arab world and 6 in

the non-Arab world. In addition, the Ministry sponsored two international cultural media events, in Lithuania and China respectively.

Publishers and booksellers from the Sultanate were actively present at the major international book events in Beirut, Casablanca, Cairo, Paris, Beijing and Tehran. In Beijing, the Ministry-sponsored Omani-Sino Media and Cultural Festival in September 2018 provided a unique opportunity to showcase Oman's cultural, historical and economic accomplishments, while celebrating 40 years of amicable diplomacy with the People's Republic of China.



The Ministry of Information, represented by its Directorate-General of Foreign Information in its external presentation of facts about Oman, ensures that prominence is given to the country's image as a peaceful contributor to the various debates on international issues. To this end, it engages the tools of press and news wire, radio, television and other media platforms to optimum effect. Moreover, it regularly invites media professionals from abroad to visit the Sultanate and report on their own experience.

Statistics reveal that 18,380 print format items of information alluding to Oman, including news reports and commentary, were published in 2017/2018, in the guise of press hard

copy and online web material.

The Ministry of Information maintains media liaison bureaus in three countries, respectively the Arab Republic of Egypt (Cairo), United Kingdom (London) and the United States of America (Washington).

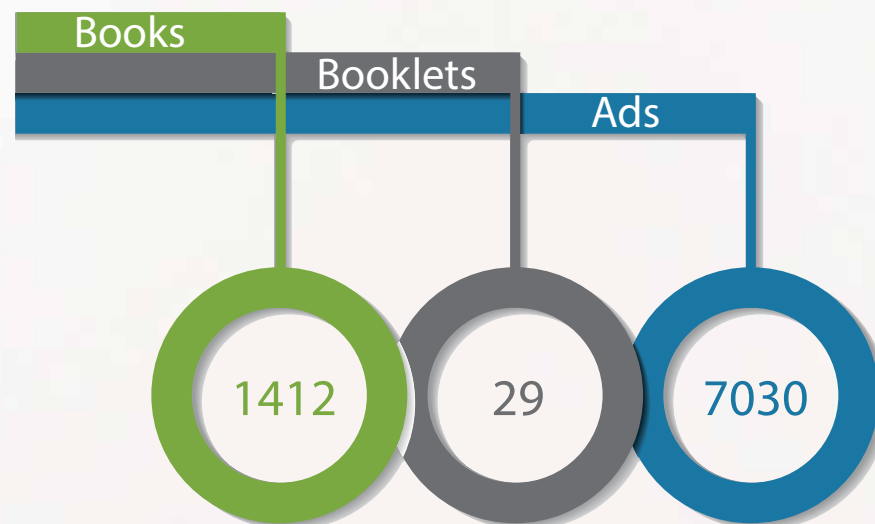
Backing its endeavour to broaden awareness of Oman, the Ministry regularly invites respected journalists from Arab and foreign countries to visit the Sultanate and inform themselves of the reality of its stable social, political and economic status, as well as to attend national and government-sponsored events. In 2017/2018, 370 such professionals from around the world visited the Sultanate.

Publishing and Publications

The Ministry, through its Department of Press and Publications, is responsible for authorising all publications published and/or distributed in the Sultanate. This includes periodicals, such as newspapers and magazines, and non-periodical publications, including books, advertisements and other such material.

Number of publications authorised to date

8,471



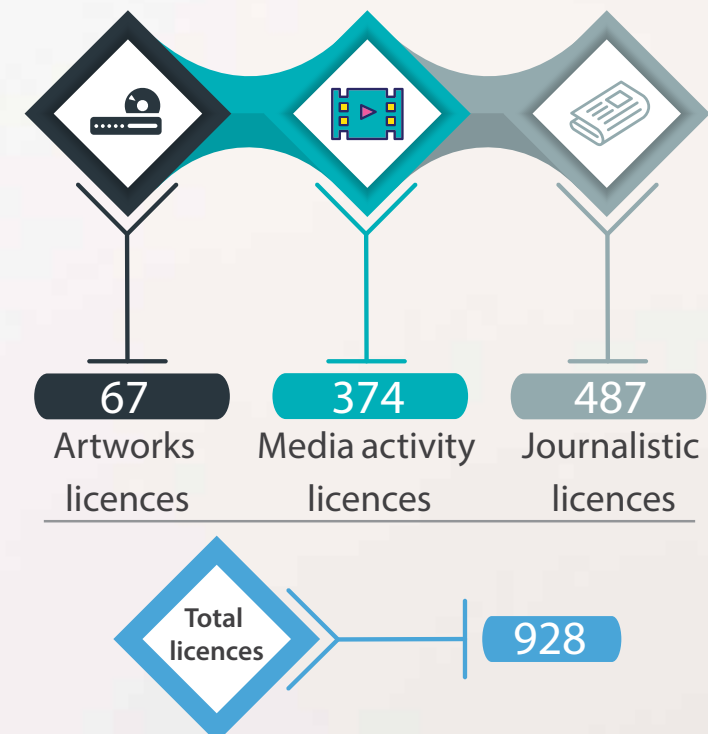
In addition, the Ministry collaborates with several government agencies, ministries and libraries in organising the Muscat International Book Fair, a major event held annually and attended by many publishing houses based inside and outside the Sultanate.

Media Licensing

Given the crucial role that legislation plays in the working ethos of the media, the Ministry of Information has taken a special interest in the regulatory framework that governs the Sultanate's media institutions, both government and private. In this context, it has built a dedicated media licensing department into its newly reorganised structure. The new department is attached to the Directorate General of Publications and Artworks as the Department of Media Licences. Its responsibilities include issuing work licenses to media institutions, ensuring they operate in compliance with the Publications and Publishing Law, the Law on Artworks and the Private Radio and Television Corporations Law.

The Department issues work permits to press organisations and journalists, to radio and television companies and their personnel and to institutions operating in the field of audio and video creation and broadcast. It also licenses the distribution of foreign newspapers within the Sultanate, as well as the work of publishing houses, book dealers, printers and other enterprises involved in the activity of disseminating information within the Sultanate. All licences are approved and issued by reference to the Sultanate's own cohesive social environment and extant media policy as it applies domestically and overseas.

Number of licenses issued in 2017/2018



The Race To Quality

To encourage innovation and celebrate the talent that permeates the Omani media, and to foster a spirit of competition among the media professionals working in the field, the Media Proficiency Competition continues a tradition successful in the past.

The competition ethos reflects the spirit of amicable rivalry that characterises relations between branches of the Omani media family. The sixth competition in the series focused on print journalism and an incentive prize was dedicated to the work of third level media students.

Media Proficiency Competition 2017 - subcategories



The Media Excellence Awards and the winners were announced on 31 January 2018 at the Second Media Family Forum, sponsored by the Ministry of Information jointly with the Public Authority for Radio and Television and Sultan Qaboos University.

The Forum, which convened under the banner 'Our Media .. a Renewable Commitment', also announced the establishment of Oman's first specialist media library, which is expected to become an important reference point for

researchers and scholars. And, sealing this recognition of the value of research, the Ministry of Information Award for Media Research was announced at the same meeting, along with the creation of the Media Dialogue Forum «to be a meeting between specialists and media professionals.»

The planned Oman Media Museum, announced also on the occasion, will tell the human side of Oman's media story, and include a display on the Sultanate's portrayal in the media through the ages.



The 'Our Media' event celebrated pioneering Omani journalists and, as well as announcing the winners of the Media Excellence Awards for Journalism, honoured Omani recipients of Arab and international media awards in 2017. Serving as backdrop to

this important media gathering was a photo exhibition that chronicled the Sultanate's portrayal in the international press over the past century. The subject of next year's Media Excellence Award will be Radio and Television.

The purpose of the Media Family Forum is to create positive awareness of the Omani media and an environment that supports various media efforts and initiatives.

FUTURE MEDIA PROJECTS



Oman News Agency

The Omani News Agency is the official source of news for the Sultanate. It was established by Royal Decree No. 39/86 of 29 May 1986. On 25 June 1997, the Oman Press, News, Publishing and Advertising Establishment was established by Royal Decree No. 43/1997. The Omani News Agency (ONA) was appointed by this decree as one of the units of the Corporation until the issuance of Royal Decree No. 75/2006, which transferred the Omani News Agency to the Ministry of Information as of 16/7/2006.

Since its establishment, ONA has been a significant implementer of Oman's media policies, derived broadly from the vision of His Majesty Sultan Qaboos bin Said and expressed in the mandate assigned to it at its foundation.

The agency has been active locally, regionally and externally, and constantly measures its own performance against a rising standard. It has done much to enlighten the public with its briefings on local and foreign events, priding itself on publishing only accu-

rate, verified news through its local and international network of sources. The Agency reports principally on political, economic and development activities, but also covers events in all fields and all parts of the world where the Sultanate is a participant or is impacted. In this manner, a clear perspective of the Sultanate's position is at all times protected. It distributes newsworthy content to print and broadcast media in the form of stock or live reportage, analysis and photographic material.

The agency offers coverage of events in the Sultanate and is made available to member institutions, while providing background and information material to reporters and media outlets based in the Sultanate. The agency also archives data and images relating to the most important events of the day and all events covered by ONA.

The Oman News Agency reports in both Arabic and English, via satellite and via the agency's website.

As its reach and influence have grown, and in light of the continued acceleration of growth domestically, ONA has assigned correspondents to locations throughout the Sultanate, whence they cover local news for the agency. It also supports a network of correspondents in Arab and international capitals who provide the agency with breaking developments and background coverage, and whose work has distinguished the Omani agency among its peers at home and abroad. The agency now sponsors a total of 66 correspondents, 55 of them in the Sultanate itself and 11 abroad.

In recent years, ONA has undertaken the publication of a num-

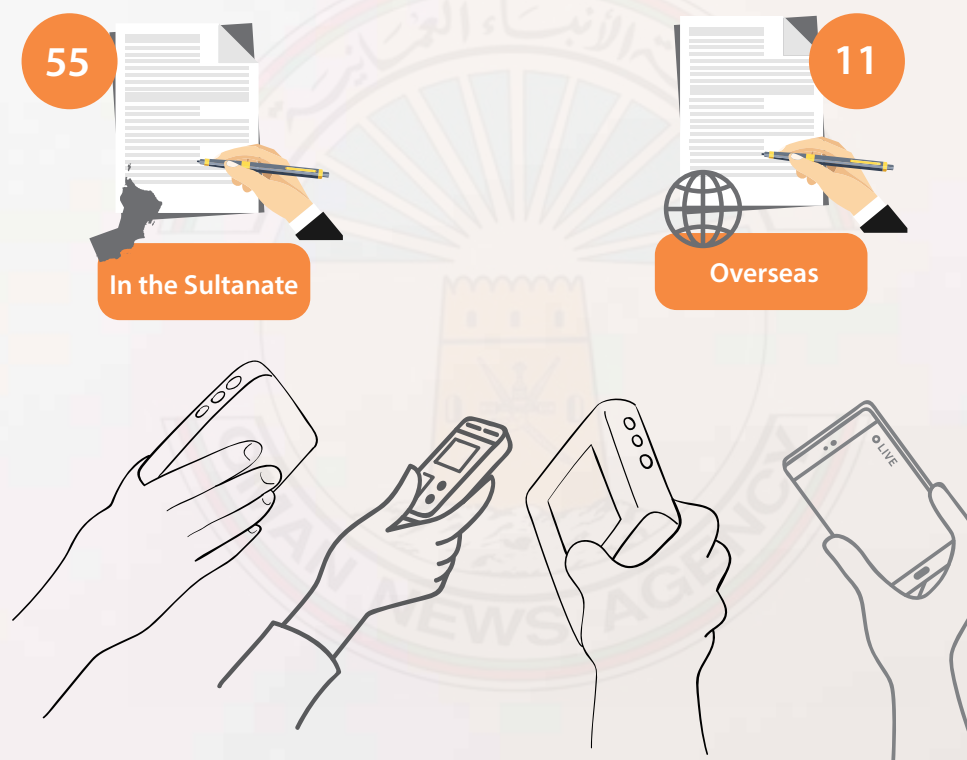
ber of original works, among them The Sultanate of Oman – Ranking in Arab and International Indices, People Participation and the Flowering of a Nation, and Patterns of Light.

The agency is constantly developing its news products and expanding its clientele inside and outside the Sultanate. Its Sabq (approximately 'priority' in Arabic) service offers subscribers reports on the most important political, economic and sporting events of the day, along with sundry features and commentaries. This service is now available as a mobile phone app, making it easier than ever for subscribers to keep abreast of events and developments.

Table shows breakdown of ONA news coverage by category



ONA employs 66 correspondents



Oman Press

The Omani press is trained and equipped to respond to rapid developments in media and communications at international level. It is equally conscious of its mission to fulfil the demand for real and relevant news by the Omani public, while providing a forum for the open discussion of citizen concerns.

An outstanding feature of the press in Oman is that it is wholly owned by the private sector, with the exception of the Oman Establishment for Press, Publication and Advertising. The work of the Sultanate's press organisations is regulated, as are the procedures for publishing a newspaper, establishing a publishing house, printing press or advertising company, by means of the Press and Publications Law, which was amended by Royal Decree No 87/2004. Newspapers, magazines and media establishments should be owned by

Omani nationals.

The Sultanate publishes a fleet of newspapers, magazines and bulletins, daily, weekly, monthly, bi-monthly, quarterly, half-yearly and yearly, in addition to free magazines, responding to ever more sophisticated demand from a fast-evolving society with fast-evolving concerns. In addition ministries and agencies also publish magazines or publications concerned with their own activities or special interest matters.

Oman's Arabic-language dailies are Oman, Al Watan, Al Shabiba and Al Ruwaya. Published daily in the English language also are the Oman Daily Observer, Times of Oman and Muscat Daily. In addition, several tabloid format weeklies dominated by entertainment, sport and advertising themes are delivered free of charge with their parent newspapers or distributed individually.



Oman Establishment for Press, Publication and Advertising

The Oman Establishment for Press, Publication and Advertising (OEPPA) is the Sultanate's largest news organisation, both in terms of its human and technical resources and of its publication output. It is a constantly developing enterprise and is a pioneering force operating at the very forefront of journalism, as well as in all branches of the print media.

Faced by the same challenges confronting media establishments worldwide in recent times, the OEPP undertook a root and branch internal overhaul that took stock of changing realities and production values on the one hand and available resources on the other; and emerged a stronger institution, with a new fo-

cus on training, on reduced operating costs and use of the raw materials consumed so heavily by the print industry. In this manner, OEPPA managed to keep pace with the fast changing landscape of media and advertising, to drive forward productivity goals and expand its publishing list and yet remain profitable, despite slow growth, indeed decline, in the field and among its marketplace peers.

Nizwa magazine, the quarterly issued by OEPPA, held its leadership position in the pantheon of Arab cultural publications. It continues to print and distribute its free supplement on Omani culture with every edition of the magazine.



Radio and television .. still ahead in the development stakes

The Omani media maintains an intent focus on both individual and institutional performance. The Public Authority for Radio and Television (PART) was founded, and subsequently refined, under, respectively, Royal Decree No. 108/2010 of 19 October 2010 and Royal Decree No. 100/2011 of 22 October 2011, and is a legal entity with financial and administrative independence. It is affiliated to the Council of Ministers, but with free discharge of its own resources. The Public Authority for Radio and Television derives its vision and mission from the philosophy of the modern Renaissance. Its programming is an embodiment of the public policies of the State in all fields. It espouses media values that celebrate development in all its aspects, social, cultural and economic, and it promotes ethical norms and values and a more cohesive expression of national unity.

The work of PART was validated in the form of several regional and international awards received by the Authority during 2018. At the 19th Arab Radio and Television Festival held at the end of April 2018 in Tunisia,

the Malaf al Osboue (The Week's File) programme took first place in the Public Television Talk Show category, as did Kharej al Sandouq (Outside the Box) in the Youth Programming category. The TV documentary Al Sahafa fi Zanzibar (The Press in Zanzibar) received a commendation for production excellence.

Meanwhile, at their 49th Session held in Cairo on 9 May 2018, the Council of Arab Ministers of Information also singled out Malaf al Osboue for a 2018 Arab Media Excellence Award as Best Television Talk Show; Nizwa for Best Television Cultural Programme; Al Mujahar (The Microscope) for Best Television Programme. Broadcaster Mona Bint Mahfouz Al-Mundhiriya received a career citation for her services as the Sultanate's first female radio and television broadcaster.

PART's radio and TV coverage of Cyclone Mekunu came in for special commendation by the Council of Ministers for its adept news management and first class reporting of the dramatic weather event. The coverage received wide praise at the time from the public and from local and overseas audiences.

The Audio Sector

The audio sector describes the field served by the various radio stations operating in Oman, and it fulfils a strategic aspect of PART's mandate. As an area of broadcasting activity, it has specific audiences with unique interests and the audio sector formats programming to the service of these needs. It enjoys huge audiences both inside and outside the Sultanate, broadcasting via satellite.

The radio is proudly committed to its various target audiences and is versatile in experimenting with new and innovative

programming initiatives. Its personnel are highly trained professionals and they operate in a working environment that values creativity. Public interactions are encouraged in this climate and the dialogue helps keep programmers abreast of current and changing trends of broad interest to the community.

The audio sector can be summarised in the five radio stations: Public Radio, Youth Radio, Holy Qur'an Radio, English Radio and Classical Music Radio.



Public Radio

The first radio station in the Sultanate, Public Radio began broadcasting on 30 July 1970, documenting the very earliest steps of the modern Renaissance. It sees its dual mission as, on the one hand, helping to inculcate values of good citizenship, while contributing to raising the standard of publicly-disseminated information.

Public Radio articulates its public service mission with a programming schedule that revolves around social, cultural,

intellectual, economic and religious issues of general interest. It encourages dialogue on these issues and reinforces the emerging ethos of self-motivation and engagement with the broad horizons of national development.

The ethos of Public Radio draws on the principles of moderate Islam and on the authentic Arab customs and traditions that have moulded the open-minded tolerance of the Omani personality.



Youth Radio



Youth Radio was launched on 23 July 2003, on Renaissance Day, under the title 'The Youth Programme' and specifically targeted young listeners. It takes a serious approach to its mission, broadcasting a carefully selected mix of enriching material, though attractively packaged and delivered by upbeat presenters.

The youth programmes are conceived and produced by young Omani media professionals and tend to have an interactive focus with the listening public, involving live studio interviews and social media exchanges.

Youth Radio began round the clock transmissions on 1 January 2014, broadcasting to all governorates.

Holy Qur'an Radio

Holy Qur'an Radio is dedicated to the Holy Qur'an and its teachings, and its broadcasts include recitations from the Holy Book in the various styles, along with programmes of special interest to Muslims or students of Islam. The programming ethos is one of moderation and tolerance, and its content promotes these Islamic values. As features also of the Omani character, they are values that resonate strongly with Omanis and with their inter-

pretation of Islam historically. This interpretation respects freedom of worship and rejects all forms of extremism in favour of understanding between Islamic sects and harmony, brotherhood and compassion between people.

Holy Qur'an Radio was launched on 28 July 2006, broadcasting for seven hours a day and moved to its current 24-hour schedule on 1 January 2014.

A broad approach to public radio programming merges with the diverse needs of Omani listeners across all age groups and special interests.

English Radio

English Radio was established on 15 December 1975. It communicates with the non-Arabic speaking communities living in or visiting the Sultanate,

and fosters dialogue between them and their host community. On 1 January 2015, English Radio began broadcasting around the clock.



Classical Music Radio

Classical Music Radio joined the airwaves on 22 July 2010, broadcasting under the title 'The Classical Music Programme' for 12 hours daily. On 1 January 2013, the schedule was extended to 19 hours daily, beginning at 6.00 am and continuing up to 1.00 am the following morning.

Classical Radio brings its audiences the finest works of the great composers, from Oman, from the Arab region and from the wider world. It sees its role as spreading a culture of music appreciation to the widest possible listenership, and it has high ratings across the generations.

The visual sector

The visual sector has to cover all events, local and foreign, in all categories, from news to sport to entertainment, round the clock and to production standards that compare with those of the most aggressive competition in the field. All significant events that take place in the Sultanate at local or national level and that are of religious, social, cultural, economic or sporting consequence, are covered by the national broadcaster, as are many newsworthy events overseas. In addition, magazine and documentary programmes explore a broad range of cultural, scientific, youth, sports, social, economic, tourism,

health, family and child programmes, in serious or entertainment format, as appropriate to the subject matter.

Diversity and inclusiveness are two noticeable features of the programming package offered by Sultanate of Oman TV through its four channels: The General Channel, The Sports Channel, The Cultural Channel and Oman Direct, supported by their exceptional media, technical, administrative and financial teams, and this integrative approach has impacted positively on viewer satisfaction, cementing the social impact of television.



The General Channel

As the national broadcaster, Oman TV is the visual documenter of Omani society, offering its viewers a window on all aspects of Omani life in the 21st century: what Omanis are doing today, as well as the history that brought them to this point. Its ethical mission is to consolidate the social values of citizenship, moderation, tolerance and dialogue, with the end purpose of arriving at greater understanding and peace among peoples and nations. It recruits talented young Omani technicians, writers and presenters with skills in the televisual field to create the high quality product that viewers see on their screens.

General Channel programmers are driven by the goal of drawing viewing audiences into greater engagement with the content presented and they accomplish this through a focus on issues of social and humanitarian interest, while maintaining the flow of daily news from around the world, as well as government announcements and coverage of local events in Oman. The channel maintains a regular schedule of children's programmes, nature documentaries from around Oman and miscellaneous feature content of Omani, Gulf, Arab and international origin.

The visual sector, represented in the broadcasting output of the various specialised television channels, reflects the current status of development across Omani society in all its manifestations.

The Sports Channel

One of Oman TV's four dedicated channels, the Sports Channel offers broad coverage of local and international sporting events, with news, analysis and panel discussions appealing often to separate

viewing sectors. Major sporting events receive huge viewing audiences, but daily and weekly roundups and special interest programmes have loyal followers among all age groups.



The Cultural Channel

The Cultural Channel essentially promotes Omani culture to its viewers, highlighting the Sultanate's unique heritage and keeping abreast of local culturally-focused events. It provides direct coverage of the most important relevant activities taking place around the country, including lectures and seminars attended by lovers of books and literature, art or related areas of interest. It produces or commissions special interest programmes and documentaries locally, and also airs select overseas

productions as appropriate to its mandate

In the context of the close collaboration that exists between PART (the Public Authority for Radio and Television) and the various agencies of government, the Cultural Channel covered 83 activities in 2017, by way of cultural news reports, or of reports carried by the Al Thaqafa fi Usboa (Week in Culture) programme, or of live or recorded broadcasts from the scene of events.

News Channel

News broadcasts place the listener and viewer at the heart of local and international events. Communicated by way of audio and video transmissions, electronic information networks and social media sites that bring added immediacy to the events taking place, the processing of news for public dissemination is accomplished by competent and closely coordinated relay teams of reporters, editors and presenters.

News broadcasts are frequently separated into segments representing cultural, social, economic, tourism and sundry other activities delivered, as protocol demands, calmly and objectively by well-trained newscasters.

News in Oman is brought to the viewer by a network of international correspondents, who report all developments without bias, a policy that sits well with the Sultanate's overall communication philosophy. Oman maintains a neutral stance on regional and international issues, protecting its reputation as an impartial observer and fair arbiter of events.

News bulletins, meanwhile, always take care to include national and cultural achievements in the Sultanate itself. In particular, they report on the progress of development projects throughout the provinces, explaining government policy via reports, commentaries and documentaries.



The news department delivers news and commentary in a manner that draws viewers towards the centre of local and international events.

Oman Direct Channel

Oman Mubasher or Oman Direct is Oman TV's youngest channel and it takes a special interest in all events taking place on Omani soil of a political, social, sports or cultural cast. Its reporters attend conferences, festivals, seminars, poetry and literary meetings, student graduation ceremonies, military occasions. Certain important international events are also covered, especially where the Sultanate is participating in some capacity.

Oman Direct's programme schedule and coverage grew in 2017, as its technical teams gained experience in the field. It broadcasts 24 hours a day and links up with the General Channel in covering major national events, as well as on live news broadcasts and reportage and live programmes, while also pursuing its own independent schedule.

In 2017, Oman Direct provided live coverage of 294 events.

Digital Media

The digital media sector is the link that connects PART with the online public, via digital services that deliver news to the internet and social media platforms. At the present time 40 such subscriber and public web portals and phone apps are actively supplying news to the public, expanding the reach of broadcasters to new audiences. Young people are turning in ever greater numbers to hand-held devices for their consumption of news and PART's digital policy is responding to this trend.



Private Sector and Radio and Television Broadcasting

The developed state of the Omani media is an accurate mirror of the developed state of Omani society. To stay ahead in the media race, the Private Institutions Radio and Television Law was declared in 2004, providing opportunities for the Omani private sector to enter the broadcasting industry, enabling private institutions to own and manage radio and television channels. The principal beneficiaries of this broadening of scope are the Sultanate's listeners and viewers.

The result has been several new radio channels offering programmes on the FM wave band, operated by the Omani private sector. These channels are:

- Radio Hala in Arabic and Radio Hi FM in English, both of which are owned by the Media Entertainment Network.

- Radio Al Wusool in Arabic and Radio Merge FM and Virgin Radio Oman in English - which are owned by Sabco Media.

- Radio Muscat), owned by Muttrah Information Services, is a public service broadcaster covering all provinces of the Sultanate on FM frequency band.

Radio Shabiba FM in Arabic and Radio TFM in English, both run by the Muscat Media Group

These services have brought choice to radio offerings across the Sultanate. In addition, retransmission permits were granted to certain international radio corporations, such as the BBC and Radio Monte Carlo.

The Magan Channel is the only television channel owned privately. It has been broadcasting around the clock since 2008.



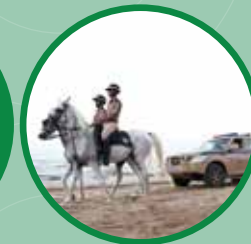
Private sector TV and radio companies complete the audiovisual media message that today reflects the advances achieved by Omani society.

*"The root of the pride
we share in our armed forces
and security services comes from an
appreciation of their paramount contribution
to safeguarding the homeland and preserving the
achievements of the Renaissance. We are eager
to underline our appreciation for their
work and to reinforce it."*

Qaboos bin Said

(9th National Day - 18 November 1999)

Security ... A Cornerstone Of Development And Prosperity



Security..A Cornerstone Of Development and Prosperity

The development programmes and projects being implemented across the Sultanate today are all designed to generate greater well-being for the country's citizens and meet the demands of their everyday lives wherever they may happen to be, while at the same time ensuring that Oman is able to take its rightful place among the nations of the world. This upsurge in activity is underpinned by powerful, dependable armed forces equipped and trained to defend the nation, protect its achievements and safeguard its security and stability so that its people can live in peace and prosperity.

This is why from the earliest days of the Renaissance particular importance has been attached to the Sultan's Armed Forces (SAF) and the Royal Oman Police (ROP) by His Majesty Sultan Qaboos bin Said, their Supreme Commander. Equipped with advanced modern weaponry and trained in hi-tech defensive and offensive combat in a wide variety of different environmental and climatic conditions, they are constantly at the highest state of readiness. Their leaders obtain advanced scientific and technical qualifications from the Sultanate's numerous institutes and military academies, while their personnel and their families are provided with a full range of

health, educational, social and other welfare services.

As a result, the Sultanate has been able to maintain its stability, so that consequently today it is highly ranked in the international security indices. It was listed first in the Arab world for absence of internal and external conflict on the 2018 Global Peace Index issued by the Australia-based Institute for Economics and Peace in June 2018, fifth in the Arab world on the Global Peace Index and fourth in the Arab world on the 2018 Social Security and Peace Index. Within a wider global context, it has also been listed as one of the states in the world which enjoys a high level of peace.

In the Davos World Economic Forum report issued in November 2017 Oman was ranked third globally on the list of states with the highest levels of security. This happy situation is also reflected in a number of other indicators confirming the Sultanate's high level of social security, low crime rates, minimal threat from terrorism, tolerant attitudes and other factors that help contribute to a sound economy and attractive investment climate.

The Sultan's Armed Forces (SAF)

Protecting the achievements of the modern Renaissance

The Sultan's Armed Forces (SAF) represent at once a crowning achievement and also a bulwark of Oman's modern Renaissance. The main focus of the SAF's plans for upgrading its main wings – the Royal Army of Oman (RAO), the Royal Air Force of Oman (RAFO), the Royal Navy of Oman (RNO) and the Royal Guard of Oman (RGO) – is on training its personnel to the highest performance standards.



The goal is to produce modern armed forces with a full range of joint weapons systems whose members are able to handle the latest military technology proficiently in every field. The Sultanate aims to ensure that its armed forces enjoy all the material and moral capabilities they require in order to carry out their sacred national duty; these include advanced weaponry and equipment such as tanks, armoured personnel carriers, missile and artillery systems, armoured vehicles, fighter aircraft and transport

helicopters. Oman's armed forces also include a naval fleet that includes landing craft, corvettes and advanced speedboats, in recognition of their critical function. The forces' support wings are regularly upgraded, while their personnel are maintained at peak performance by regular training in weaponry and the arts of defence, as well as in the most sophisticated technical equipment available to them, which they handle with confidence and professional ease.

The Royal Army of Oman



After many years of upgrading and modernisation over the course of the Renaissance, the Royal Army of Oman (RAO) has become a strong military force, a source of pride for Oman. Its brigades, formations and units have been supplied with high-tech weaponry. In the meantime, special training programmes are being conducted to enhance the combat capability of military personnel and introduce them to the latest systems applicable in war.

Army units and formations are constantly monitored for combat fitness, and are at all times ready, equipped and able to meet their

national obligations. Their equipment includes armoured personnel carriers, modern artillery and air defence systems, armoured vehicles, signals systems, transport vehicles and maintenance workshops. The RAO units and formations comprise an integrated, high performance force, with efficient operational, administrative and technical systems in place; armed with the technical firepower and skilled manpower needed to meet all eventualities.

The firqat forces have also undergone significant improvements in their organisation, training, installations, service facilities and telecommunications systems.

Its arsenal is constantly reviewed and restocked as the weapons industry advances towards new frontiers in defence, and upgrades are selected and adapted to the operational requirements of the fully integrated system favoured by Oman's military strategy. Combat units are streamlined for more efficient deployment, and new elite special-purpose units created and professionally trained.



The Royal Air Force of Oman



In addition to its highly trained personnel, the Royal Air Force of Oman (RAFO) is a modern air force equipped with advanced fighters, helicopters, logistical transport aircraft, and air defence systems, including radars, anti-aircraft batteries, training aircraft and training simulators.

RAFO has concluded several forward-looking agreements geared towards meeting challenges down the road, as well as at raising current

technical capability. It operates air bases fitted with state-of-the-art systems capable of functioning in all circumstances and conditions.

RAFO's weapons systems and equipment, transport facilities and manpower are constantly being upgraded to ensure the highest levels of combat proficiency and readiness as it performs its role of protecting Oman's skies and supporting the other wings of the Sultan's Armed Forces. Meanwhile, RAFO's humanitarian role includes search and rescue operations, support services for citizens in the mountain regions, and the provision of transport for sick people from their home districts to the main specialist hospitals in the Governorate of Muscat and other regions.

The Royal Air Force of Oman is a sleek modern force with state of the art weaponry and organisation.

The Royal Army of Oman - a significant strike force

The Royal Navy of Oman



Due to Oman's strategic location and the fact that the Sultanate overlooks one of the most important waterways in the world – the Strait of Hormuz – the Royal Navy of Oman (RNO) has played a critical role in safeguarding the country's strategic security and economic interests through the RNO's permanent presence in Oman's territorial waters.

The RNO fleet boasts a range of sophisticated equipment and weapons, in addition to gunboats and fast missile vessels, including backup, training, cargo and hydrographical survey vessels. The flotilla lends support

to the division's patrol boats in their mission of securing Oman's coastline and territorial and economic waters or monitoring the safe passage of ships and oil tankers through the strategic Strait of Hormuz, besides ensuring the safe marine transport of SAF units along the Omani coast.

It also helps protect the Sultanate's fishing grounds and provides support for amphibious joint operations. Its highly trained manpower are equipped to deal with any challenges they might face during the performance of their national duties.

The RNO organizes the annual Sultan Qaboos Sailing Trophy and presented the seventh award of the Trophy at the conclusion of the International Sailing and Tall Ships Conference in the French city of Bordeaux on 2nd December 2017, when it was won by the Sail Training Association Latvia (STA-Latvia) for its sailing skills and achievements in training young volunteers.



The Royal Guard of Oman (RGO)



Like the other wings of the Armed Forces, the Royal Guard of Oman (RGO), which is an important component of the Sultanate's modern military system, has been accorded priority status by His Majesty the Sultan, the Supreme Commander of the Armed Forces. The RGO enjoys a high level of combat proficiency and capability and has a full range of infantry and support units with advanced systems and equipment, as well as educational, technical

and administrative units. It attaches special significance to training programmes, which are designed to keep personnel up to speed with handling the advanced equipment with which the RGO has been supplied.

The Royal Guard Technical College supplies the RGO and other state bodies with technologically qualified manpower trained to international standards, while the Royal Oman Symphony Orchestra boasts the flower of Oman's young musical talents.

The RGO's bands perform at military, national and international events, and the RGO Cavalry demonstrates its skills in displays of horsemanship and show jumping competitions, and on national and military occasions including graduation and passing out ceremonies.

The Royal Guard of Oman.
exceptional
combatability

The Royal Oman Navy is proactive in its defence of the national interest.

Training

Numerous facilities for the training and education of officers and men have been set up on site at units and bases and branches of the military. All military service categories are covered -scientific, technical and technological.

The National Defence College – the highest academic strategic institution – trains young nationals in strategy and strategic planning at the national, regional and international levels. Fields covered include security, defence and strategic decision-making, as well as the

development of military skills in general.

The Command and Staff College supplies the SAF, RGO and other security services with officers trained in leadership skills. The College also operates courses for officer trainees from other Arab and friendly countries.



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The SAF also provides opportunities for its personnel to complete their higher education in relevant military, administrative and technical disciplines, either within the Sultanate or at universities and colleges abroad.

Recruitment is among the highest priorities of the Ministry of Defence, the Sultan's Armed Forces and the Royal Guard of Oman, and they provide employment for large numbers of young Omani job-seekers. The regular passing out ceremonies of successive batches of officers and men demonstrate the importance they attach to the country's human resources, which include graduates from the secondary school system and universities as well as post-graduates.

Under the constant theme of raising combat efficiency through continual training and field testing of army units, the SAF and the RGO take part in regular joint land, sea and air exercises at various levels. The security and military services carried out the "Al 'Ubur" joint naval training exercise and the annual "Search and Rescue" joint exercise in conjunction with the navies of various Arab and friendly countries. This operation was designed to enhance the

Sultanate's operational and security capability at sea, while providing practical training in modern security operations and exchanging expertise with other naval forces. On 12th December 2017 the Royal Army of Oman carried out the "Nimr al Jabal" practical exercise in conjunction with the British armed forces. This was followed on 4th February 2018 by the Royal Navy of Oman's annual "Khanjar Hadd" naval exercise in which the navies of several friendly countries also participated. Between 25th February and 19th March 2018 the armed forces were engaged in the "Al Juhd al Mushtarak 10" command centres exercise, in which several military, security and civil components took part in preparation for the "Al Shumoukh 2" and "Al Saif al Sareea 3" exercises due to take place in October 2018.

On 9th March 2018 the Royal Air Force of Oman completed the "Nimr al Barari" mobilization exercise, which involved the participation of aircraft and air force weapons systems. The Sultan's Armed Forces also carried out a number of other land, sea and air exercises in which they proved their high levels of competence and proficiency.

12/12/2017

The Military Technical College celebrated the graduation of its first batch of students.

25/02 - 19/03
2018

The armed forces were engaged in the "Al Juhd al Mushtarak 10" command centres exercise

12/12/2017

The Royal Army of Oman carried out the "Nimr al Jabal" practical exercise in conjunction with the British armed forces.

09/03/2018

The Royal Air Force of Oman completed the "Nimr al Barari" mobilization exercise, which involved the participation of aircraft and air force weapons systems.

04/02/2018

The Royal Navy of Oman's annual "Khanjar Hadd" naval exercise in which the navies of several friendly countries also participated

01/10 - 03/11
2018

Several military, security and civil components took part in preparation for the "Al Shumoukh 2" and "Al Saif al Sareea 3" exercises.

The “Shumoukh 2” national exercise and “Saif Sareea 3” joint exercise

The “Shumoukh 2” national exercise, which began on 1st October 2018, was carried out by the Sultan’s Armed Forces (SAF) in conjunction with the Ministry of Defence’s other departments and military and security services. A large number of government civil bodies also took part. The aim of the exercise was to highlight the proficient planning and execution of integrated joint operations carried out by the SAF and all the Sultanate’s other military, security and civil authorities, with the aim of upgrading military and security standards in accordance with the latest training methods and programmes. The exercise was immediately followed on 17th October 2018 by the Saif Sareea 3 Omani-British joint exercise and, on 3rd November 2018, by a land and air exercise using live ammunition.

Those taking part in “Shumoukh 2” and “Saif Sareea 3” included over 70,000 Omani military, security and civil personnel in addition to more than 5,500 British soldiers. The exercises involved the use of a range of different weapons and military equipment including, in particular, items that had only recently entered the service. This was in fact the biggest field exercise in the history of the Sultan’s Armed Forces.

The two exercises were designed to simulate the reality of hostile action launched from outside the country’s borders and included training in the concepts of traditional, asymmetrical

and “hybrid” wars. They represented the culmination of efforts aimed at benefiting from the lessons learnt from previous military exercises, and in doing so they sought to reinforce the concept of integrated joint operations – one of the SAF’s long-established goals.

The training was aimed mainly at putting the SAF’s joint operations concepts into practice. In addition to the goal of holding joint operations with friendly forces, these also included integrating the operations of the SAF and security and civil authorities and enabling the military and civil security bodies to play their designated roles at times of crisis through the Implementation of the Emergency and General Mobilisation Laws.

The exercise began with the pre-op planning stage. This involved political, diplomatic and media procedures as well as operational and logistical preparations. Stage Two - the actual operational stage – entailed a number of different steps as determined by the objectives of the exercise. They included training in carrying out integrated joint operations and involved engagement with virtual enemy forces by the various wings of the Sultan’s Armed Forces, the Royal Guard of Oman, the Sultan’s Special Force and the auxiliary military, security and civil authorities, as well as friendly forces from the United Kingdom. This was followed by the post-op phase, leading to the achievement of the desired strategic and national goals.

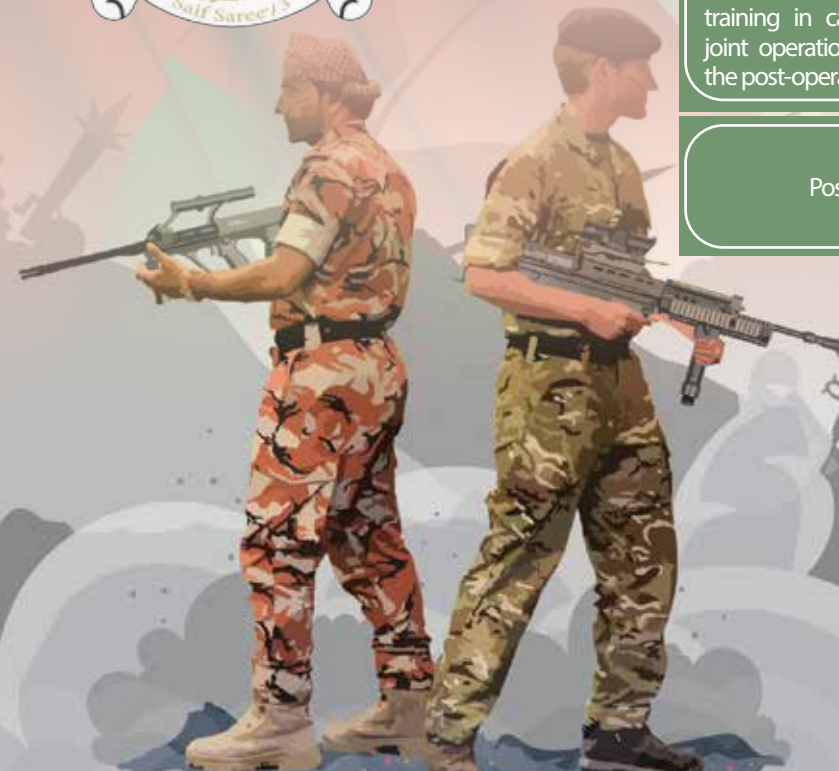
The Sultan’s Armed Forces held the “Shumoukh 2” national exercise and “Saif Sareea 3” joint exercise with the British military on 1st October. These marked the latest stage in moves to highlight the proficient planning and execution of integrated joint operations carried out by the Sultan’s Armed Forces and all the military, security and civil authorities, with the aim of upgrading military and security standards in accordance with the latest training methods and programmes.

The exercises, which are designed to simulate the reality of hostile action launched from outside the country’s borders, include training in the concepts of traditional, asymmetrical and “hybrid” wars.

The preparatory pre-op period represents the planning stage. This includes political, diplomatic & media procedures as well as operational & logistical preparations.

The actual operations take place over a number of stages. These begin with training in carrying out integrated joint operations and conclude with the post-operational phase.

Post Operations





Social, Medical and Engineering Services

The Social Services division at SAF Staff HQ provides social welfare for officers and men of the SAF and their families in the form of housing loans and the supervision of building works, as well as other services including services for SAF veterans.

The Sultanate is a permanent member of the Arab Federation of War Veterans' and Victims' Associations, in which it is represented by Military Social Services.

The SAF Medical Services division offers medical services to members of the armed forces and their families and SAF Medical Services also provide medical care and support for evacuation operations.

The SAF Medical Services School supplies the SAF with qualified medical and technical personnel. New state-of-the-art departments and facilities have been added at the Armed Forces Hospital at al Khoudh.

In a major achievement for the Middle East region, a medical team from the Armed Forces Hospital carried out a cochlear implant operation on a patient who had lost 70% of his hearing ability.

On 10th December 2017 the SAF Medical Services opened its new Ear, Nose and Throat (ENT) Medical Centre at the Armed Forces Hospital and on 27th March 2018 the Centre carried out its first cornea implant operations on two patients. These were the first eye operations of their kind in the Sultanate.

The Defence Ministry's Engineering Services division—one of the SAF's main support wings—plays a vital role in providing technical and engineering backup during military exercises. It also provides essential services

such as water, electricity supply and infrastructure utilities at military camps, bases and other installations, and it is constantly increasing the output capacity of its power stations at military sites.

As the body responsible for the military media, the Morale Guidance section has the function of maintaining morale and highlighting both the role of SAF and its personnel and their high levels of proficiency in carrying out their national duties.

On His Majesty the Sultan's instructions, Morale Guidance organizes the annual Military Hajj Mission to the Holy Places. It also holds competitions and maintains the SAF's picture archive, which records—in sound and pictures—the history of the armed forces from the beginning of the Renaissance.



Health care is one of the ways the Royal Army of Oman takes care of its personnel and their families

Specialised authorities and services

The National Survey Authority (NSA) is the central body for the production of military and civilian maps. It also carries out aerial photography operations in every part of the Sultanate, sets the criteria for topographical surveys, maintains the National Geographical Archive, and supplies aerial charts and geographical data. It has an extensive range of modern printing and programming equipment for the production of maps, charts and photographs, as well as ultra-high precision satellite survey systems and standard and analytical graphic drawing facilities.

The Maritime Security Centre is responsible for protecting Oman's marine environment and combating any security threats to the Sultanate's territorial waters and economic area. It receives notification about maritime security hazards such as pollution of the marine environment, search and rescue operations and obstructions to the sea navigation routes, and helps prevent piracy, illegal immigration, smuggling

and other similar activities. It liaises closely with all the relevant civil and military authorities.

As part of its general training programme, the Centre held its 2018 marine security exercise from 22nd to 26th April 2018 in conjunction with the Sultan's Armed Forces and other Omani security services, as well as forces from the United States of America.

The Information Technology (IT) sector has been significantly upgraded. The IT personnel are professionally qualified, the most advanced international programs have been installed and all the staff of the Defence Ministry and SAF directorates and sections have been trained to operate them. The e-administration data systems have been expanded and installed in other vital areas such as the Directorates of Human Resources, Supplies and Purchases, Finance etc. This has led to higher productivity and faster, more efficient work performance, providing decision-makers with prompt and easy access to the information they need.



The National Survey Authority has responsibility for generating maps for military and civilian use.

The Defence Ministry's Pension Fund

The Defence Ministry's Pension Fund, which was set up under Royal Decree No. 87/93, issued on 29th December 1993, invests its assets for the benefit of veterans and the families of its deceased Omani personnel. It also provides funding for the pensions and end-of-service benefits of the Ministry's Omani employees and plays an active role in setting up industrial, service and other companies which contribute to the Sultanate's economic prosperity and provide employment for Omani nationals.

The light weapons ammunition factory in the wilayat of Sumail - the most modern vital project of its kind in the region - was set up by the Sultanate's military and security pension funds as a closed joint stock company. Equipped with the latest technology, it manufactures light ammunition to the highest international standards in order to meet the needs of the Sultan's Armed Forces and security services. The Ministry of Defence received the first consignment of the factory's output on 16th May 2017. It was officially opened on 16th May 2018.

Physical Fitness

The Sultan's Armed Forces attach great importance to sports as a means of ensuring their personnel maintain a high level of physical fitness and combat capability, and it is for this reason that they provide a wide range of sports facilities.

In a historic victory, their military team won the 2nd Military World Cup which was hosted by the Sultanate in January 2017.

The SAF shooting team also achieved impressive

results. It won the British Army Shooting Federation's team and individual championship competitions in 2017 and on 3rd January 2018 the SAF shooting team, the national shooting team and the military teams that had represented the Sultanate at regional and international events in 2017 were awarded honours on the orders of His Majesty the Sultan, the Supreme Commander of the Armed Forces.

The Shabab Oman II

The Shabab Oman II came into being after His Majesty the Sultan – the Supreme Commander of the Armed Forces – issued instructions that the RNV Shabab Oman should be replaced by another sailing vessel to continue with its mission of building bridges of friendship between the Sultanate and other countries around the globe.

With its crew of young Omanis, the Shabab Oman visited the ports of Arab and friendly countries to develop cultural contacts with the peoples of the world and introduce them to Oman

and its people. It won a number of prestigious awards, including the International Friendship Trophy, which raised its global profile and become inseparably associated with it. It also won the Friendship Trophy for the Historical Seas Regatta in Greece, the International Friendship Trophy for the Tall Ships Race in the United Kingdom (for the seventh time) and the International Friendship Trophy for the North Sea Regatta in the Netherlands. No other sailing ship has ever won three International Friendship Trophies in a single year.

Shabab Oman II has done much to build bridges of communication and friendship between the Sultanate and the countries of the world.



The Royal Oman Police (ROP)

Progress, Development and Proficiency

Upholding Oman's security and stability is the supreme goal of the Royal Oman Police (ROP). In fulfilling its responsibilities it is guided by the directives of its Supreme Commander - His Majesty Sultan Qaboos bin Said - and his firm belief that security is a cornerstone of development and prosperity and a vital element in safeguarding the country's gains.

On 18th November 2018 His Majesty the Sultan presided over the military parade held to mark the country's 47th National Day at the Police Special Task Force HQ parade ground in the wilayat of Seeb in the Governorate of Muscat. The event was organized by the ROP.

Under its current plans the ROP intends to expand its services such as traffic, passports, residence and civil status and make them available under one roof so that they become more accessible to the general public. In recent times the ROP has opened over twenty new police stations and area headquarters in the Sultanate's regions, as well as new service and Special Task Force premises. These include headquarters buildings in Mirbat, Buraimi,

Izki, Nakhl and Mahdhah. State of the art equipment has been installed in these new facilities.

In 2017 and 2018 a new Police Special Task Force HQ building was opened in Seeb and Special Task Force units were opened in Nizwa, Mahdhah, Suwaiq, Duqm and Khasab.

The ROP's General Command attaches particular importance to the Special Task Force. The Force's main functions include operating patrols in order to ensure a 24-hour police presence, guarding vital installations, providing security at events organised by government bodies and departments, protecting diplomatic missions, mosques, hotels and non-government establishments, and extending assistance to citizens and residents in need.

The Special Task Force HQ is equipped with the most up-to-date facilities and its highly trained personnel are capable of handling any situation. There are plans to extend its area of operations to ensure that it has an effective countrywide presence.

Training

The ROP attaches great importance to training. At the Sultan Qaboos Academy for Police Sciences and other training centres, police cadets undergo basic training on joining the force; this is then extended to additional on-the-job on-site training courses.

On 19th March 2018 the Sultan Qaboos Academy for Police Sciences signed a co-oper-

ation agreement with Sultan Qaboos University as part of a plan to enhance its academic expertise by developing close relations and joint programmes with national universities and research centres. The programmes will also help create a more productive academic environment for the students and teaching staff.



The Officers' Institute has been set up in response to the growing numbers of trainees and to meet the ROP's current and future needs.

The Training Department at the Directorate-General of Human Resources has established partnerships with several established international training bodies including Britain's Police

College and security institutions in the United States and various European countries. In recent times experts from those establishments have been brought to the Sultanate to run internationally recognized specialist courses. ROP personnel have also been sent on advanced courses abroad.

Specialised Police Units

The ROP has set up a number of directorates-general and specialist police units to keep abreast of economic, social and demographic growth in the Sultanate. These include the Police Coastguard division, which prevents smuggling and illegal immigration through Oman's territorial waters.

The Coast Guard have been supplied with fully equipped speedboats to boost their efficiency in carrying out their duties.

The ROP's Ports Security Di-

rectorate was established to protect the commercial and industrial harbours and their installations and ensure that all Omani seaports comply with international rules on the safety of shipping and port facilities. It liaises with the relevant government departments and public utility companies at the seaports. Police coastguard stations have also been built in all the industrial and commercial ports and fishing harbours along the Omani coast.

In recent years the ROP has



One of the prime tasks of the Police Coast Guard involves dealing with smugglers and infiltrators in Omani waters.

scored notable successes in its fight against crime. This reflects the success of its efforts to uphold the law and establish security across the length and breadth of the country.

The ROP aims to provide the highest possible levels of training in **criminal investigation** and keep its investigators up to date with the latest theoretical and practical skills so that they can always be one step ahead of the lawbreaker. The ROP has introduced a criminal investigation competition to encourage greater interaction and competitiveness between the country's investigation directorates and further improve its crime-fighting figures. This has contributed significantly to a drop in crime figures in comparison with last year's.

In a move to reduce the human and material damage narcotics cause to society, branches of the **Directorate-General for Combating Narcotics and Psychotropic Substances** have been set up in all the Sultanate's governorates to work with the other relevant authorities in tackling the problem of drug trafficking and the sale and use of narcotics. This has enabled the police to record a significant increase in detection rates.

The figures show that the level of drugs offences in 2017 fell by over 60% compared with 2016 and that there was a 10% drop in the number of those charged with such offences.

The Mounted Police Unit has established a law and order team trained in peacekeeping, riot control and the dispersal of disorderly demonstrations and gatherings. Their training includes joint field exercises and simulated operations in conjunction with the Special Task Force's law and order team.



Police dog sections have been set up under the umbrella of the Mounted Police Unit in several of the new police stations as well as at land, sea and air border crossing points to provide back-up security services. They include guard dogs, tracker dogs and dogs trained in the detection of explosives, drugs and corpses.

As well as taking part in public parades and attending official events and local and international matches, the mounted police also operate coastal patrols and support the regional police forces in maintaining security.

Among its other functions, **The Directorate-General of Police Aviation** provides support for other police units. Its patrols monitor the Omani coast and shipping in the coastal areas and pursue suspect vessels in the Sultanate's territorial waters. The Police Aviation service also transports police, scene of crime officers and medical teams to remote areas with difficult terrain where a crime has taken place, provides security back-up for regional police forces, and carries out search and rescue and fire fighting operations and transports sick and injured people from areas that

are difficult to reach overland. It also transports food supplies and other vital provisions to residents of the mountain areas, particularly during wet weather.

The Directorate-General of Police Aviation is equipped with modern helicopters and fixed-wing aircraft, which are operated and maintained by well qualified Omani pilots, navigators and technicians.

The ROP provides health care and medical services for police personnel and their families through the Police Hospital and its clinics at the Sultan Qaboos Academy for Police Sciences in Nizwa, the Special Task Force units and the mobile hospital, which offers treatment for emergency cases and internal diseases, as well as simple and emergency surgical operations.

A new Royal Oman Police Hospital currently under construction on the Airport Heights will provide a range of specialist medical services and cater for the growing numbers of personnel joining the police force. When it is finished it will represent a significant increase in the quality and volume of medical services available in the Sultanate.



The Royal Oman Police enacts a vital role in maintaining security throughout the country.

Road Safety

The road accident figures for 2017 show a drop of %52 in the number of fatalities, %33 in the number of injuries and %67 in the number of accidents. This represents a steady trend over the five years since 2012 and reflects the ROP's efforts to reduce traffic accidents, which also include road safety awareness programmes and increased numbers of speed cameras and mobile patrols. Hand-held devices have been introduced to enable police patrols to prepare and print traffic violations electronically and obtain details of vehicles, their drivers and any previous offences.

A driving simulator has been introduced to provide training on preventive driving programmes

run by the Traffic Safety Institute. Consequently, it is now possible to evaluate learners without their needing to go out on to the streets, thereby protecting them from the perils of the road and saving time and effort for all concerned.

On 1st February 2018 the ROP's Directorate-General of Traffic announced the winners of its third road safety competition. The competition is designed to involve all sections of the community including government departments, private institutions and members of the public in promoting safe driving practices and reducing the number of traffic accidents by spreading awareness and highlighting the efforts that are being made to achieve this goal.



E-services

Following His Majesty the Sultan's instructions on the need for digitization the ROP is now recognized as being among the Sultanate's most advanced e-government departments.

The ROP has completed a project to link the civil status system electronically with 31 government departments and it has e-links with the Ministry of Manpower, the Health Ministry and the National Statistics and Data Centre. It is currently working on e-link projects for the Civil Status System. Under the e-visa system introduced by the ROP in June 2017 applicants can now obtain their visas and pay their visa fees online.

ROP websites provide access to all the services provided by the different branches of the police force, as well as details of police-related laws. Additional facilities are also available through an SMS

service launched in cooperation with the local telecommunications companies.

In response to the global trend towards the use of smartphone apps, the ROP has developed a range of apps to deal with matters ranging from traffic issues to procedures to be followed in case of emergencies. These apps ensure that police services are easily accessible to the public and save considerable time and effort on all sides.

In April 2016 the Directorate-General of Customs launched its direct automatic transfer service to the Gulf Co-operation Council (GCC) states as part of a programme to upgrade the customs services and simplify customs clearance procedures. This introduction of modern electronic technology aims to boost trade between the GCC countries.



The Royal Oman Police is a front runner in implementing the e-government project

The Public Authority for Civil Defence and Ambulance

The Public Authority for Civil Defence and Ambulance (PACDA) was established by Royal Decree No. 3/2013, issued on 8th January 2013. In pursuit of its aims of protecting lives and property, it provides a broad range of services including civil defence, fire-fighting, search and rescue and ambulance services. It also deals with incidents involving hazardous materials.

The PACDA's premises are equipped with hi-tech materials and facilities to enable the service to keep abreast with the pace of the Sultanate's development. These include motor vehicles and other equipment needed to enable its personnel to carry out their duties.

In 2017 the Authority dealt with 4,748 fires in various parts of the country and carried out 2,147 rescue operations to free people trapped in vehicles, lifts, high buildings etc.

It also carried out 173 rescue operations at sea and tackled twelve incidents involving haz-

ardous materials. Ambulance crews responded to 12,394 cases and dealt with 8,075 injuries as a result of accidents and 2,751 sick patients.

When the cyclone Mekunu struck the Governorate of Dhofar in May 2018, the Authority placed its departments and centres across the country on high alert as it prepared to respond to emergencies.

In this connection it freed or rescued a number of individuals trapped in wadis, houses and other buildings, cleared the public highways of obstructions, provided the water supply depots with electricity generators and operated a fleet of tankers to deliver water to houses that had been cut off.

The Authority responded to numerous calls for ambulance services, during which it provided emergency medical care for those in need and transported them to hospital. It also drained water from flooded houses and other buildings.

Services Provided By The Public Authority For Civil Defence and Ambulance



"We have directed the government to focus in its future plans on social development, especially in aspects related to livelihoods, so that more job opportunities are made available, as well as training and rehabilitation programmes. We need higher productivity, greater efficiencies and more evolved solutions from the point of view of practicality, culture and expertise. We are following closely all steps taken in this regard and they will be brought to the attention of the Supreme Planning Council."

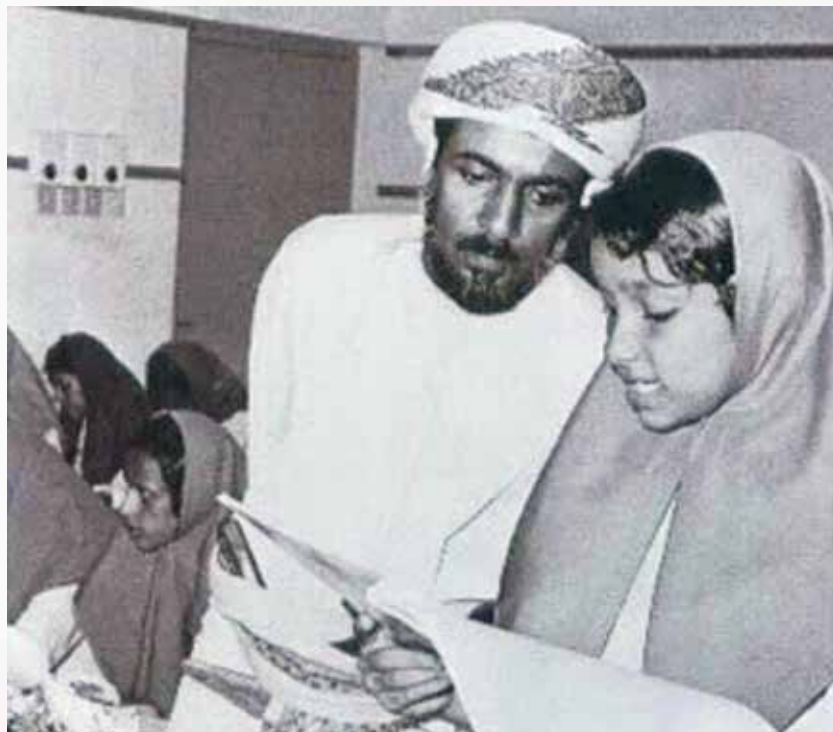
Qaboos bin Said

(Annual inaugural session of the Council of Oman 2012)

Human Resources ... Achievements and Aspirations For The Future



Development Leads To Broader Horizons



As the modern Renaissance approaches a major milestone, the accumulated effects of five decades of good governance, of sound economic, health and education policies, are unmistakable in the altered aspirations of young Omanis. Today, every town and village in Oman resonates with the energy of a young generation ready and able to take on the world. Young Omanis are confident in their abilities. They are outward-looking. They will not settle for less than they believe they can achieve. This is the transformation that His Majesty Sultan Qaboos bin Said set out to encourage in 1970 and it represents by any standards an extraordinary manifestation of human potential. More than any generation of modern times, Omanis today are capable and willing to meet the challenges of the coming period with skill and imagination.

Addressing the parents and grandparents of today's rising generation in his first public statement after assuming power on 23 July 1970, Sultan Qaboos evoked a glorious past in his hopes for the Sultanate's future. He recalled a time when Oman was a strong presence

in the Arab world and beyond. In the following decades his hopes were more than fulfilled, bringing Oman to where it stands today, a modern country that nevertheless respects its traditions, vigorous and ambitious, yet grounded in the modesty and tolerance of Islam.

Sultan Qaboos' personal vision became the blueprint for the Sultanate's evolution from narrow self-absorption to global outreach and the basis for Oman's restored position in the world today.

Appropriately, the health sector was the focus of early attention, and formidable progress has been accomplished. The priority goal of making health accessible to all has been generously achieved.

More recently, a major concern has been that of providing as near to full employment as possible for Omanis. In this context, the Ministry of Manpower has been working closely with the private sector and with the job-seeking public and facilitated the placement of 33,302 job-seekers in private sector establishments between 3 December 2017 and 11 July 2018. Surpassing by a full 32% their projected target of 25,000, this was both a very positive reward for their efforts and a boon to the home economy.

The welfare system sponsors multiple care programmes for persons challenged by disability or economic hardship, and social security beneficiaries and their families may expect to enjoy a generous standard of living. Not only are they thus enabled to share in the fruits of economic and social development, but they are not prevented from making their valuable contributions in return.

His Majesty has always stressed that the accomplishments of the Renaissance «would not have manifested without the effort, hopes and continuous giving that sustain the work for a better future, that aspire to a more beautiful time for those participating in the work." They have, he has said, "laboured together to create a renaissance for Oman in every field of endeavour, answering the call to all those willing to explore new possibilities, to expand horizons and to strive for ever broader and higher purposes."



A strenuous effort is ongoing to see job seekers absorbed by private sector institutions and companies.

Education

Successive Ministries of Education have extended the process of adapting the educational system to current human and national needs. The quality of development being a direct reflection of the quality of the national labour force, education was another early priority of the Renaissance. The national curriculum would have to produce graduates who could meet the demands of the Fourth Industrial Revolution. As the world grows exponentially in complexity, they would need to have attained an easy familiarity with the instruments of the digital age, and the motivation to prosper in the increasingly sophisticated economy of the Sultanate.

The importance of early childhood education in establishing a good basis for a lifelong drive to learn cannot be overstated. The Ministry of Education has given maximum attention to pre-school education and has succeeded in increasing enrolment by encouraging the private sector to enter the field. The academic year 2017/ 2018 registered growth of 23.4% over 2016 /2017, a strongly positive indicator of parents' eagerness to enrol their children in kindergarten.

Since pre-school services tend in the main to be concentrated in the cities, the Ministry resolved to level opportunity by establishing first cycle (14-) classrooms in every governorate throughout the Sultanate.

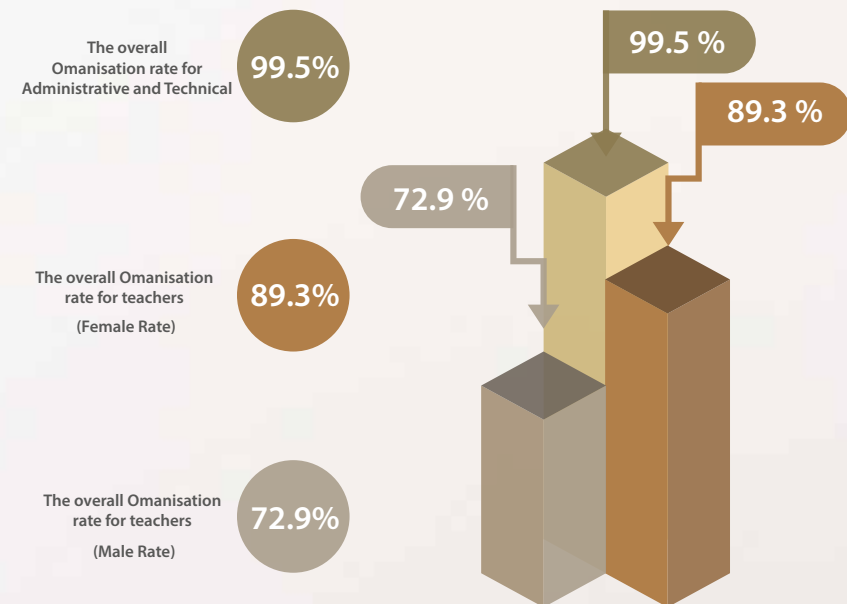
The service is administered via public schools distributed nationwide. The number of these increased by 25 in the 2016 /2017 and 2017/2018 academic years, representing an expansion rate of 27.2%. The increase can be attributed to growth in the school-age population, which grew by 2.95%.

There were 56,385 teachers serving in the public school system in 2017/ 2018, of which 67.6% were female.

The system also supported

11,298 administrative and technical staff nationally in the same school year, of which 99.5% were Omani nationals. This figure rose to 100% for the 10- 11 and 11- 12 grade levels.

The overall Omanisation rate for teachers was 84% in the public school system in 2017/ 2018. Broken down, this differentiated into 72.9% for males and 89.3% for females.



The overall Omanisation rate in the public education schools for the academic year 2017/2018



Private schools operate side by side with public schools. Available educational statistics indicate that the number of private schools increased by 586 in the two-year period between 2016 and 2018, bringing the total number of private schools in the Sultanate to 636. Of this figure, 309 served the basic education segment and 327 were kindergartens. Muscat governorate had the highest number of private schools, at 242, and between them they processed a total of 105,680 pupils in 2017/2018.

There were in addition 44 international schools distributed throughout the educational directorates and catering to a

combined 63,760 students, including 9,221 children of pre-school age.

The 2017/ 2018 requirements of the special needs sector were furnished by three schools serving 535 pupils. Most of these pupils were enrolled at the Intellectual Education School or the Al Amal School for the Deaf, which had 185 pupils between them. In addition, 218 schools throughout the governorates were signed up to the integration programme, serving 1,734 male and female pupils, and 631 further schools, with 1,169 teachers, were implementing the Learning Difficulties Programme.



In recent years, the Ministry of Education has been committed to a policy of skills revision for teachers, sponsoring a range of educational projects to this end. It oversees

academic training programmes through the Specialised Centre for Professional Training of Teachers, where nine programmes were implemented over two years,

attracting a total of 2,644 participants, including teachers, supervisors and school administration personnel. In addition, 14 central training programmes targeted 558 teachers and a further 543 non-central programmes implemented by way of the educational directorates served 18,275 teachers nationwide.

Continuing the effort to enhance the status of teachers and foster appreciation of their social role, the Educational Excellence Awards was introduced in 2018/2019 to celebrate Omani teachers. Sponsored by the Education Council, the annual award is but the latest in a series of initiatives that hope to generate a spirit of positive competition within the teaching community and to promote the best educational practices.

The Ministry has, meanwhile, not neglected the cadre of administrators whose work underpins the implementation of educational policy. They, too, have access to various integrated training programmes designed to assist them in maintaining efficiency levels. The courses are run in collaboration with the Institute of Public Administration and constitute stages in a broader strategy covering the period 2017-2020.

The Sultan Qaboos Award for Sustainable Development takes place within the school environment. Proposed by Ministerial Decree No. 3/2018, which called for development of a contest focused on the maintenance of high standards of hygiene and health in the school environment, competition for the award will materialise against the backdrop of the 2018/ 2019 academic year.

The award aims to promote values of sustainability among all members of the school community; to foster supportive attitudes in the school and local environment; to improve the skills of the various school personnel and develop their competencies to benefit the goals of sustainable development; to instil in pupils a spirit of patriotism and good citizenship that will sustain them in their future endeavours; to build in them character traits and a skill-set appropriate to the challenges of the 21st century; to draw out qualities of leadership and communication and encourage experimentation and creativity; overall to encourage school administrations generally, and the community of individual schools, to apply best practice in education and to create sustainable projects that serve teaching and learning programmes.

In order to foster innovation, the Ministry of Education has introduced group-specific projects targeting various categories of ministry employee and that are designed to nurture a culture of positivity and creativity among pupils and school-leavers.

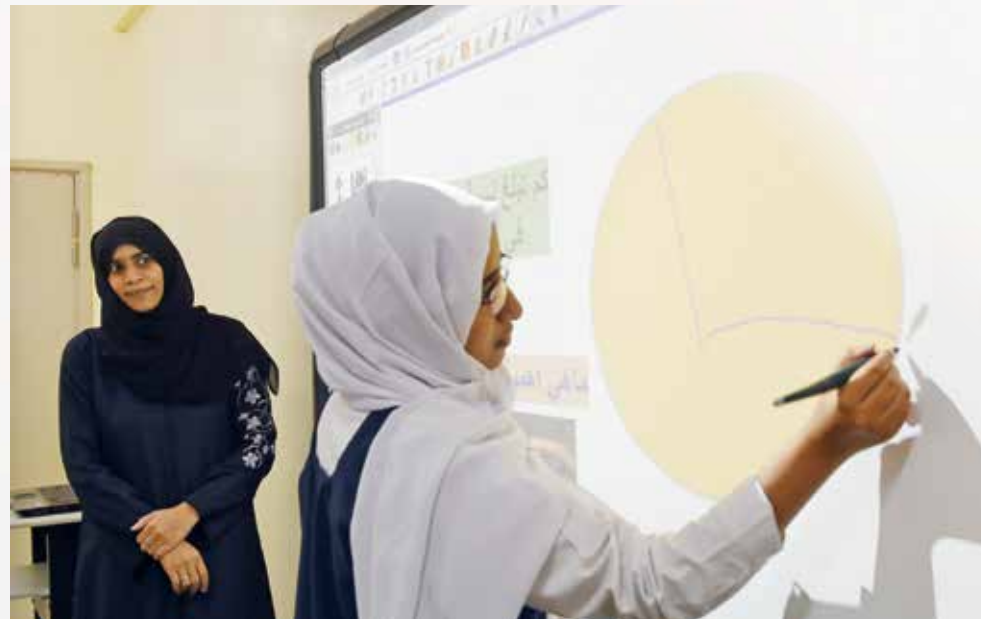
Towards the same end, the Ministry has upgraded its own organisational structure. The Department of Knowledge Development has been renamed the Department of Innovation and Scientific Olympiad to align with the Ministry's orientation in support of innovation and leadership within the student and teaching bodies. The Department comprises three constituent bodies: the Scientific Olympiad, the Scientific Innovation Section and the Department of International Studies, and its contribution is expected to fuel a spurt of new interest in scientific research and experimentation.

The Ministry's leadership, creativity and innovation campaign is directed at all age brackets. It is an exciting departure from the traditional approach to schooling, and it is providing an attractive and encouraging environment for both teachers and pupils, one in which modern technology has much to offer. The learning process is made both easier and more open to individual experimentation. Two governorates (Al Dakhiliyah and Sharqiyah North) have been selected to site prototype centres of innovation, with access for all grade levels.

One outcome of this broad strategy to promote an interest in science is the agreement signed between the Ministry and the Omani Authority for Partnership for Development (OAPFD) that initiated a cooperation programme for the teaching of science, technology, engineering and mathematics (STEM) in 30 of the Sultanate's public schools. The programme will roll out over a three-year period that began in the second semester of the academic year 2017/ 2018.

The programme aims to incentivise initiative and a spirit of innovation among students, who will study the main content of the standard curriculum by way of educational experiences that focus on linking education to daily life. Creative and critical thinking will be encouraged. It is a revolutionary, practical approach that will reward participation in the sustainable development of a knowledge-based society heavily focused on science, mathematics, engineering and technology.

The philosophy of education in the Sultanate is structured to support the demands of a healthy, capable society well into the future. It is grounded in the realities of both Oman's inherited traditions and of the accelerated changes the country and the world are going through. The Ministry of Education reinstated intermediate level testing in 2017/ 2018, after this had been suspended to complete development priorities and a policy of skills diversification.



National testing is one of the most convincing standard tools used to measure the quality of teaching and learning with a view to improving the outcomes of education. It provides accurate statistical data and indicators to identify the skills, knowledge and basic competencies acquired from the curriculum by students at the end of a specific educational level in the public and private schools of the Sultanate of Oman; in reading, writing and numeracy by the end of the first cycle (fourth grade); in the Arabic language, mathematics and science by the end of the second (tenth grade); and overall by the end of the seventh grade. In an important achievement, the Sultanate, represented by the Ministry of Education, brought home the prestigious 2018 WSIS (World Summit for the Information Society) Prize for its Parent Mobile App, which supports parental access to the achievement, attendance and behavioural records of their school-going children. The prize, announced at the WSIS Forum in Geneva, Switzerland, in March 2018, was awarded in the 'Access to Information and Knowledge' category. Setting it apart from the competition were its ease of service and interaction, ease of digital response to information and digital indicators available through the application. The WSIS Award winners are selected on the basis of a rigorous and comprehensive assessment conducted by the judging panel, supported by a public online vote. The assessment criteria measure an ICT system's contribution to sustainable development goals against those of the United Nations Sustainable Development Plan 2030; along with the application's capacity

to transform traditional and paper-based processes into intelligent electronic device applications; and, in the case of the Parent App, to facilitate communication between parents, students, teachers and principals.

The same application won the shield of the Arab Smart Government 2017, as a standout example of the smart applications and continuous services the Ministry offers various segments of the community. It enables a student's parent to identify his/her offspring's data and schedules, student elective courses and results of educational assessment, while providing the possibility of communication with teachers through the application's windows.



Statistics of schools and employees for the academic year 2018-2019



Government Schools

1159



Basic Education Schools

1032



Schools Grades 10 to 12

107



Schools Grades 11 & 12

20

Number of government schools

10868

Administrative
& Technical

50691

Teachers



Number of teachers, Administrative & Technical in schools

Number of students in government schools for the academic year 2018-2019



Student
(Male & Female) 523573

School 1123

97%



Morning Schools



Student
(Male & Female) 21724

School 36

3%



Evening Schools

304050
Student
(Male)

300717
Student
(Female)

Higher Education

The status of higher education in any country will provide one of the most accurate measures of its development potential, as well as being a prime indicator of the level of advancement of its people. In Oman, the need for higher education has never been greater, as ever more ambitious development plans race ahead. Indeed institutions of higher education and centres of specialist and scientific research are natural homes for cultural and scientific trailblazing, for incubating progressive ideas distilled from minds preoccupied with elevating the cultural and economic status of their social environment.

The Ministry of Higher Education has responsibility for exploiting to the maximum extent the cultural and scientific gifts of Oman's brightest intellects, extracting value from the community of brilliant minds that make up the country's third level student body. This they accomplish by affording students such support as will enable them to reach their full potential. The Sultanate's scholarship system is generous in the opportunities it makes available for further study, domestically and overseas, to deserving candidates. Now, new mechanisms commensurate with the rising number of grants and scholarships being awarded have materialised in the form of

several agreements signed with the private sector that will fund scholarships for undergraduate and postgraduate studies. As of May 2018, ten such agreements had been signed which among them granted scholarship support to a number of hearing-impaired and sight-impaired candidates for study programmes in Jordan. France and Canada were added to the list of destination countries for external bachelor degree-level studies. New scholarships were opened up both domestically and overseas as a result of a collaboration with the Ministry. Finally, new procedures were drafted regulating the uptake of student scholarships at home and abroad. The Ministry of Higher Education, represented by the Directorate-General of Scholarships, supervises undergraduate scholarship students within the Sultanate and abroad, providing such support as they need to see them through to academic success. With the Sultanate experiencing the urgent need for expertise in specific disciplines, there is much at stake. In 2017,2018/ 1,683 external and 9,638 internal scholarships were awarded. The Directorate also created an integrated database for postgraduate students studying at institutions both inside and outside the Sultanate. In total, 24,421 students were

admitted to higher education institutions in 2017/2018, of whom 14,661 were enrolled at government institutions and 8,515 at private institutions within the Sultanate and 1,245 were on scholarship and external grant schemes distributed over 182 programmes in 17 countries, including three Gulf countries. Beneficiaries of overseas scholarships in 2017/2018 were

studying in the United States of America, the top choice of foreign destination, with 404 enrolments, followed by the United Kingdom, with 298, and Australia, 139. In addition, 44 scholarships were awarded by overseas establishments covering all levels of study, from bachelor through to doctoral level.



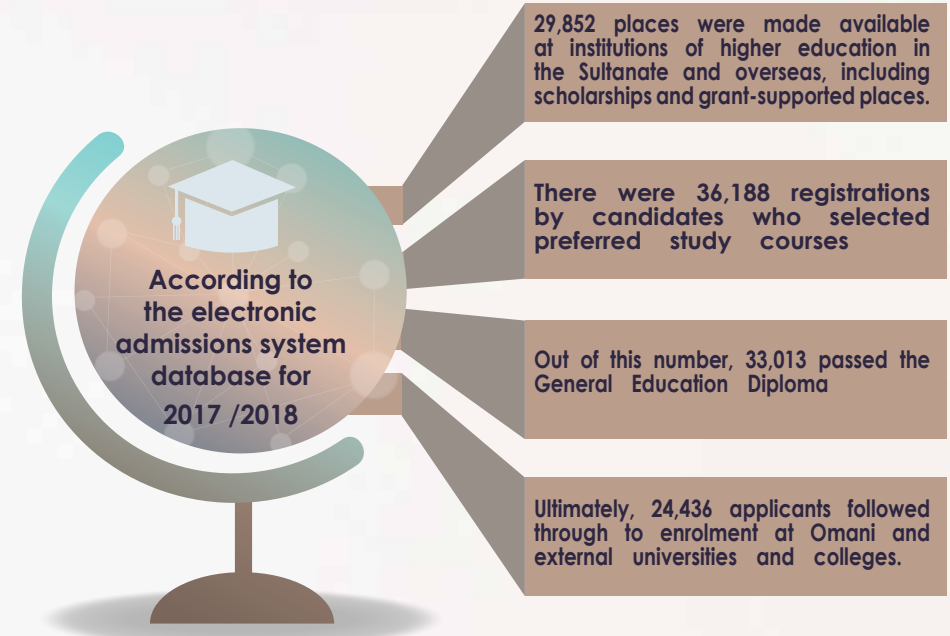
Unified Admission Centre

The Unified Admission Centre ensures that all students who have completed the General Education Diploma or equivalent are guaranteed equal opportunity in applying for further education. It also meets the community need to facilitate the process of applying for and managing higher education institutions via the internet, SMS or smart phone application *iltahaq* (means 'join/enrol' in Arabic).

Twelve years from its launch in 2006, the Centre completed its work in 2017/ 2018 on the digital system organising the process of registration and admission of students into higher education institutions both inside and outside the Sultanate. The Centre is now looking into an update of the unified admissions regulations, originally published on 22 June 2017, which will bring further efficiencies to the process.

The Centre is also working on adaptations of the admissions process to the various third level establishments to refine the fairness and equality of the system. These would affect, among other matters, the arrangement of the student manual, the classification of study programmes at institutions of higher education, and of scholarship and grant schemes, both internal and external, by

reference to the general field of specialisation: viz. health, natural sciences, physics, engineering and so on, such as to facilitate the search for a specialisation that is most appropriate to the student's inclinations and wishes; and to encourage him/her to choose wisely from the disciplines, rather than focusing on one institution over another. Also proposed is the identification by applicants of a minimum of 12 study programmes to choose in applying to the unified admission system. An applicant may increase this number, as desired, to any higher number from among the courses for which they qualify. Meanwhile government and private institutions have expanded the range of courses offered to students with disabilities, making available a combined 234 places at this time.



The Unified Admissions Centre also administers the Higher Education Statistical System, which was based on the Ministry's project to link 70 government and private educational institutions (41 public and 29 private) to the central database. The statistical data for the academic year 2016/ 2017 was extracted from the central database without the need to refer back to the individual institutions. This database is home to financial and metadata covering every higher education institution within the Sultanate, as well as data on students and

employees at all third level institutions in Oman and on Omani scholarship students overseas.

The statistical data helps decision-makers in developing strategies and policies to handle the development of higher education in the Sultanate. It compares the output of higher education with the needs of the labour market. It also brings into relief the Sultanate's education status globally, using comparative data provided by international organisations.

Colleges of Applied Sciences

The Ministry of Higher Education supervises five Colleges of Applied Sciences in the Sultanate (Sohar, Nizwa, Sur, Ibri and Salalah) as well as the College of Education in Rustaq. There were 6,998 students enrolled at these colleges in the 2017/2018 academic year.

Under an evaluation of the programmes offered by the Colleges, accompanied by an analysis of their compliance with the requirements of the labour market, a Business Management Programme was reviewed and introduced and new disciplines added (Supply Chain Management, Marketing, Insurance, Banking and Banking Services) during the academic year 2017/2018.

The Colleges of Applied Sciences are working together to create a culture of scientific research and to upgrade the output of research by activating the role of the Scientific Research Centre within the Directorate-General of Colleges of Applied Sciences. The latter umbrella organisation has mapped the scientific objectives of the College system with the purpose of recruiting them as active partners in the development spurt that is taking place in the Sultanate across multiple sectors. By studying real situations and with careful analysis of the results, recommendations can be made that greatly enhance decision-making.

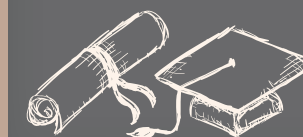


The Faculties of Applied Sciences promote a culture of scientific research and have contributed to higher research yields.

Private Higher Education

The Private Higher Education Sector has seen remarkable growth in recent years, both quantitatively and qualitatively. Today there are 29 private institutes of higher education in Oman, nine universities and 20 private colleges, offering study courses at diploma, bachelor and master degree level, and these are distributed across the governorates. Moreover, most of these institutions have now moved into permanent quarters. Of the 29 institutes, 24 have completed construction of custom-built campuses, all to the full standard requirements of a third level facility.

During the 2017/2018 academic year, a decision was made to upgrade the National Automobile Institute to the status of College of Automotive Technology, bringing it under the umbrella of the Ministry of Higher Education. The establishment of the College of Medicine at the University of Dhofar was approved in principle and the National University of Science and Technology was established by a merger of the Caledonian College of Engineering and Oman Medical College. The General Education Diploma (non-science stream) has been accepted in the engineering disciplines, where the institutions will provide an intensive one-year academic programme in which students will be taught the scientific subjects relevant to their course of interest.



Sultan Qaboos University (SQU)



Sultan Qaboos University is a bright star in the Sultanate's higher education system. Its superior academic programmes have consistently turned out brilliant and high-achieving graduates in a range of disciplines, eager to contribute their expertise to the demands of national development. The university's new media identity was launched on 14/2/2018. The

information portal brings the SQU brand into tune with the spirit of the age and youth, its content streamlined to the demands of rapid change and development. Sultan Qaboos University was ranked among the top 10 Arab universities in the 2018 Arab Universities Index prepared by London-based educational institution Quacquarelli Symonds.



During the academic year 2017/2018, the University had over 16,000 students enrolled in bachelor degree courses, distributed across the university's nine colleges: the College of Medicine and Health Sciences, the College of Agricultural and Marine Sciences, the College of Education, the College of Economics and Political Science, the College of Arts and Social Sciences, the College of Science, the College of Engineering, the College of Law and the College of Nursing. The University also attracts a large number of applicants for postgraduate programmes at the master's and doctoral level. It offers 63 masters programmes across all Colleges and 30 doctoral programmes provided by six Colleges, in addition to the postgraduate diploma offered by the Faculty of Arts and Social Sciences.



There were 1,297 master's degree students enrolled in the 2017/2018 academic year, a further 232 at doctoral level, and 12 students of the postgraduate diploma. There were 135 new registrations. Seventy seven of the master's level students were expatriates, as were 50 of those at doctoral level, along with one registered for the postgraduate diploma. Three of the new enrolments were expatriates. The same academic year saw 436 master-level students graduate, and 34 doctoral students. Seventy two of the master's students were beneficiaries of study grants, distributed across the Colleges, and 30 of the doctoral students from the six relevant Colleges also benefited from study grants.

Keeping pace with the accelerated progress and development pursued by all institutions, the University Hospital has been upgraded to Platinum level by Accreditation Canada International, the international arm of the Canadian organisation's accreditation system for healthcare institutions, after achieving nearly 98% of the requisite standards and indices of quality and patient safety. It is the first health establishment in the Sultanate to earn this status.

A succession of successful conferences and seminars has elevated the reputation of SQU and broadened its network of contacts with researchers and academics at universities around the world. Consequently, 2017 saw the university's various colleges and research units, as well as its Centre for Preparatory Studies, host a total of 15 conferences.

Between the beginning of 2018 and mid-year, the university had sponsored 11 conferences and seminars. It continues to demonstrate the high value in which it sees its researchers, offering them every

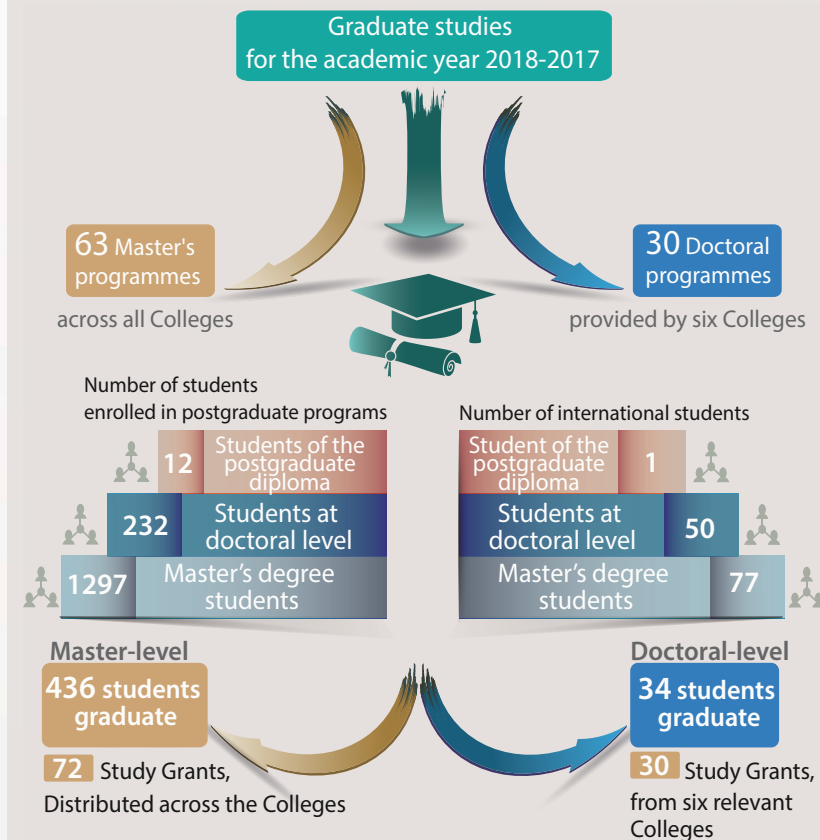
support in their work, and its commitment was evident in the approval granted to 212 applications from within the university to attend external academic events. In all, 498 SQU academics attended regional and international conferences.

In its endeavour to establish effective research partnerships with like-minded institutions, Sultan Qaboos University has signed multiple memoranda of understanding, cooperation programmes and bilateral agreements with local and overseas universities and academic and research institutions.

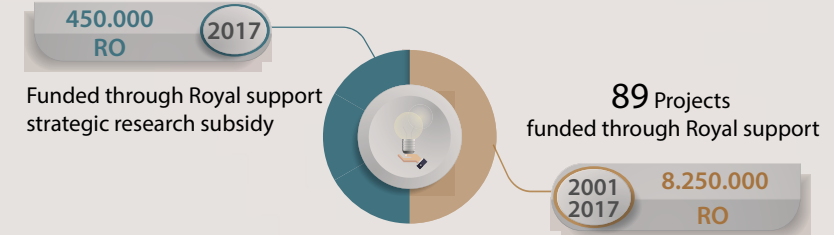
In August 2017, the University established two new facilities: respectively, the Nanotechnology Research Centre, which began as a research chair funded by the Research Council, and the Sustainable Energy Research Centre. The two facilities immediately began conducting research and offering consultations in their respective fields and researchers in 2017 published a combined 15 papers in recognised scientific journals and offered 13 research presentations at conferences and workshops.



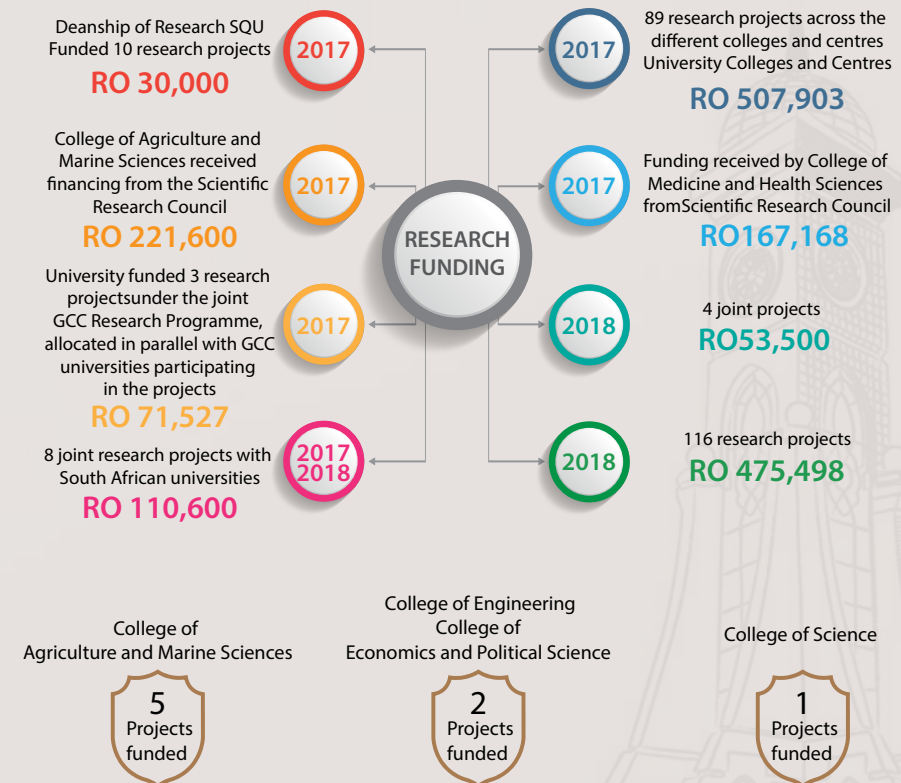
Statistics Sultan Qaboos University



Strategic Research



Research funding



Health

The Qaboos era brought transformation to the Sultanate's health sector, and the transformation has accelerated even further in recent years, thanks to the contribution of highly advanced technology. The strategy to provide superior health and medical care to all sectors of the population is reflecting positively in all health indicators.

With the launch of the Ninth Five-Year-Plan for Health Development (2016- 2020), the Sultanate saw further growth in the quality and efficiency of performance. The Ministry of Health enacts a policy of providing the bulk of its services to the population through the Sultanate's various existing health institutions, and these services have so far succeeded in keeping pace with both a rising population and rapid economic and social development.

The year 2018 constitutes Year 3 of the Ninth Five-Year Plan for Health Development, a plan which in its conception was designed to mirror demographic trends and health developments across

the globe. It arose out of Health Vision 2050, which itself is revolutionising the health planning process. The Ninth Five-Year strategy and objectives are built on seven axes of this vision: governance, leadership and delivery of health services; human health resources; health information and research; health products and vaccines; medical technology; health funding; and cooperation and partnership between the sectors.

Like the nation's other major stakeholders, the Ministry of Health has tailored forward plans with a view to meeting the goals of sustainable development (2015- 2030). The Third Goal of sustainable development relates directly to health. Goal Three encompasses 13 sub-goals which translate into indicators functioning to evaluate the principal goals scientifically.

Goal Three of sustainable development aims to ensure that every citizen, irrespective of age, has the means to enjoy a healthy and fulfilled lifestyle, compatible with the health system's 2050 outlook.

The Ministry of Health is solicitous

of the welfare of its health workers, whom it respects as the backbone of the health service. It has retrained and upskilled Omani health workers to equip them in their strategic function of health provision into the future. It monitors statistical information and data closely when evaluating its five-year plans & with a view to arriving at sound, fact-based policy, thereby earning for the Sultanate high praise for its contribution to advancing Omani society.

The healthcare system

consists of three integrated components: primary healthcare, secondary healthcare and tertiary healthcare. Primary healthcare is provided at health centres and local hospitals in all governorates & wilayat of the Sultanate. Secondary care is provided by referral hospitals in the Sultanate's main wilayat. These hospitals offer more skilled & specialised levels of healthcare. Tertiary care encompasses high-level technical healthcare. This is provided in the major hospitals.



The Sultanate had 76 hospitals at the end of 2017. Of these, 49 were under the direct administration of the Ministry of Health.



These hospitals provide a combined total of 6,696 beds, or 14.7 beds per 10,000 of the population, and 5,039 of these were at Ministry of Health hospitals, representing 75.3% of the total.

The Sultanate had 76 hospitals at the end of 2017. Of these, 49 were under the direct administration of the Ministry of Health. These hospitals provide a combined total of 6,696 beds, or 14.7 beds per 10,000 of the population, and 5,039 of these were at Ministry of Health hospitals, representing 75.3% of the total.

The logic behind the Health Ministry's concern for secondary and tertiary healthcare stems from a conviction that progress in these areas will bring down the rates of communicable diseases, raise average life expectancy levels and allow for more focus on problems arising from non-communicable diseases, which typically require continuous and advanced healthcare.

As regards low-cost, high-efficiency primary healthcare, Ministry policy in its successive

five-year plans has shown an inclination to expand the number of establishments providing primary healthcare to the public throughout the Sultanate, while offering regular support and upgrades to those institutions to enable them to provide a service of high quality. These efforts have had a tangible and remarkable outcome - a significant improvement in the health status of the Omani population. By the end of 2017, Oman had 233 primary health-care institutions, polyclinics and local hospitals run by the Ministry of Health, including 60 health centres with beds, 124 health centres without beds, 20 polyclinics and 29 local hospitals.

The Ministry of Health is acutely aware that the quality of healthcare is heavily dependent on the availability

of a qualified and adequate workforce. As such it has given particular attention to strategies that support the development of the workforce in its pursuit of a superior health service contributing to the better overall health of the population. In 2017, 50 medical and paramedical graduates from Ministry of Health institutes joined the workforce, making for a total of 13,432 such graduates to date. This is in addition to 3,247 qualified medics and paramedics who graduated from higher

education institutions in 2017, all contributing to the rise in Omanisation ratios in the health service. A growing cohort of qualified Omani doctors is emerging yearly from Sultan Qaboos University and private third level medical colleges, while nursing and technical institutes affiliated to the Ministry of Health are turning out highly trained medical and paramedical personnel to swell the ranks of an increasingly competent and sophisticated health system.

The private health sector is a valuable extension of the Sultanate's public health service and is enjoying steady growth. There were

Private Hospitals

21

Health Clinics

945

**Pharmacies
Operating Nationwide**

718

**Healthcare
Complexes**

270



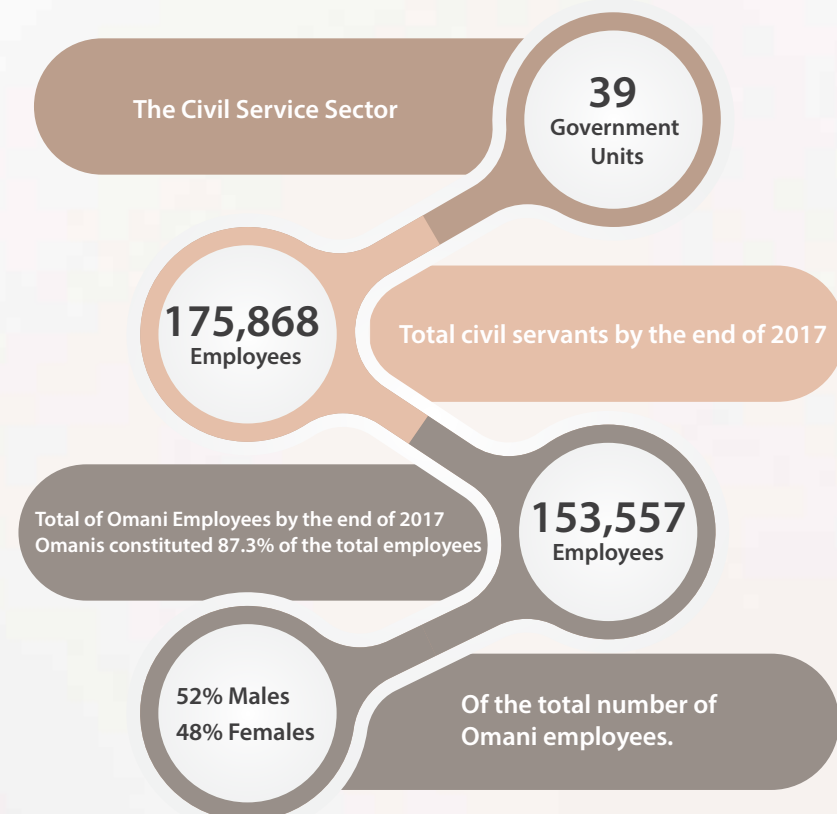
Healthcare in the Sultanate has undergone successive qualitative leaps, and tangible progress has been achieved at all levels at an accelerated pace. (The Royal Hospital)

Civil Service

The Ministry of Civil Service has responsibility for ensuring effective job development and mobility between the administrative units of the civil government. It handles personnel training and retraining, including for its own staff. It has undertaken the considerable task of changing both external and internal perceptions of the nature of administrative work and the functions of the bureaucracy, aiming to mould a civil servant who is knowledgeable and scientifically aware and who is capable of participating actively in the country's development. At the core of its approach is the Renaissance principle of the citizen's place being at the heart

of the process. It sees its role as serving the smooth execution of government policy and it pursues modernisation in all of its processes. It uses science and technology to facilitate its work and to encourage change in the ethos and methods of the civil service sector.

The Ministry of Civil Service, as stipulated in Royal Decree No. 142/ 2008, proposes policies and plans that promote better work practices across the service, impacting its organisation, recruitment, procedural, legislative and information aspects, while directing and coordinating efforts to ensure optimal use of available human and financial resources.



The civil service at the end of 2017 was running 39 government units by way of 175,868 employees, of which figure Omanis accounted for 87.3%, or 153,557 males and females across the sector. Males accounted for 52% of the Omani total, and females 48%.

An electronic training programme for civil servants, conceived in tandem with the HR system, was developed in response to multiple positive assessments of this approach. The specifics of the training required were entered into the system by way of state-of-the-art technology and software, creating a bank of relevant programmes accessible online. In this way, the largest number of personnel could be trained simultaneously, with attendant time, manpower and costs savings. The system has proven to be immensely beneficial in the effective training of civil servants. It enhances flexibility, enables training to proceed without interruption to employees and ensures selection of the best programmes for specific employer and employee needs. The programmes consist of integrated audio-and video-assisted electronic training packages, delivered in an interactive format that motivates the trainee to obtain maximum benefit from the experience.

Electronic training is being made available across all administrative units of the State and to other stakeholders linked to the HR management system, so that personnel can access training at will and in their own time and it has already impacted positively on employee performance and motivation.

The Ministry's adoption of the Human Resources Management System or Human Resource Information System

(HRIS) greatly enhances its ability to match resources with operational requirements. Since its installation, the service has seen improvements in strategic performance, in staff participation in the development of plans and work programmes, and in the successful application of a fair and credible performance measurement system that meets legislative and regulatory ideals. Meanwhile, the established HRIS infrastructure leaves it well placed to keep up with exciting new developments in the field, while fulfilling its primary purpose of building functional and decision-making competencies in the workforce it manages.

Through HRIS, a competency framework for civil service employees has been drawn up, with a set of specific competencies assigned to all job titles by reference to administrative grade and functional specifics, all of which are detailed in the competency manual.

The system also introduced an impartial and precise methodology for measuring employee performance in civil service units. Sharing the basis of measurement are, on the one hand, the contribution of the employee in the successful realisation of departmental plans and objectives and, on the other, the degree to which he or she has attained the competencies identified in the annual performance document and identified the training and development needs required to achieve his or her future career development goals. Such reports are invaluable assessment instruments for motivated employees and go a long way towards instilling a culture of continuous self-development.



Given that the human component is the one most important to all levels of administrative work, the service made allowance for the training of 86,517 civil servants and employees in 2017. Of these, 85,989 were placed in programmes within the Sultanate and 528 were trained abroad. A select group were seconded for further academic qualification.

It is appropriate to mention here the mawrid system, the purpose of which is to support and develop work procedures within the governmental sector. It focuses on improving the format of service delivery with the help of information systems technology. The resulting modern, integrated and comprehensive information base supports decision-making through ease of access to, and updating of, data. It facilitates the preparation of critical analysis, offers immediate access to employees' functional data, which ensures their assignment to the most appropriate service units. In the broader perspective, it facilitates job policy and public spending strategies aimed at reducing the salary and benefit burden on the public service. The system has an administrative and a financial

application. The administrative application has been in a process of gradual adoption and is now running in most branches of the civil service, a total of 38 branches at the end of 2018.

Under its mandate to support national recruitment policy, the Ministry of Civil Service works to ensure that recruitment in government units complies with accepted standards: civil service placements may be secured only on the basis of equal opportunity in application, and on principles of fairness and equality. In addition the Ministry is committed to the requirements of national labour policy, which links recruitment to job needs, the existence of vacant posts and available funding.

Considerable attention has been directed towards updating central recruitment

procedures to ensure that best practice is applied in implementing the system. Fair access, speedy processing and conservation of human and material resources in the job application and placement procedures are consequences of this commitment to greater efficiencies, and the transparency of the system reassures candidates that the competition and selection processes are beyond reproach.

In the context of ongoing cooperation with various units and institutions not subject to the Civil Service Law or its enactments, the Ministry of Civil Service invited seven civil, military and government bodies to avail of the central recruitment system by offering them access to its electronic system in processing written tests submitted by 3,283 candidates competing for published vacancies.

The Ministry offers a test environment in which computer terminals are linked to a bank of relevant questions, which are then downloaded to candidates under a rigorous and transparent protocol. On conclusion of the test, the results are displayed directly on-screen within the test hall. With digitalisation of its recruitment process in a constant process of refinement, and speed and efficiency as ever-present goals, the Ministry recently launched an

application for smart phones that further eases the stress of the job-seeking process.

The phone app represents a major qualitative leap in the service provided to both job-seekers and employers. Users can peruse a list of published job vacancies and view details of specific suitable positions. A candidate may apply for the position directly via the app, follow up details of appointments made or of examination results. Also accessible are any issues that may have arisen with a candidate's application or follow-up; details relevant to the appointment, once made; and any documents of relevance to the applicant that may serve him or her at any future time.

All of this concerted effort has not gone unnoticed, and the central recruitment system has been the beneficiary of numerous Arab and international awards, including the Sultan Qaboos Award for Excellence in e-Government Services, the United Nations Public Service Award for Preventing and Combating Corruption in the Public Service and the Middle East Institute of Excellence Award for the Best Electronic Project. The broad credibility earned by the Sultanate's experience has led to great interest being expressed by several countries in the details of its experience.

Manpower

The principal task of the Ministry of Manpower is to optimise the combination of services provided by the labour, technical education and vocational training sectors. The constant upgrading of human resources is key to the success of the development process. National growth and achievement of the economic objectives of Oman 2020 will depend on greater productivity from a more knowledgeable workforce. As such, the Ministry oversees an intelligent investment strategy that drives individual motivation to pursue new knowledge and skills, to diversify and generally hone

individual talent through training and further education. To create this consciousness in the work force is to guarantee the success of the Sultanate's ambitious national plans by guaranteeing the success of individual potential.

To help it achieve its objectives, several electronic services have been launched over the past years which bring the vision of e-government closer and which facilitate the process by which individuals and communities can benefit from the Ministry's services. Chief among the new e-services are electronic licensing and electronic filtering.

The latest available statistics show a total of 191,606 job applications processed by the electronic system between 1 January 2016 and June 2018. Job applications by citizens represented 146,318 of this number, of which 136,229 work contracts were approved. Of the remainder, 1,797 were rejected and 5,980 annulled.

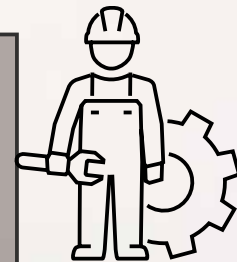
The Ministry of Manpower has now mandated that all individual employment contracts open to Omani candidates be registered electronically through the Ministry website or the mobile phone app. Simultaneously, it has suspended manual registration at Ministry outlets. Electronic licensing of non-Omani employees has also been introduced, in particular of homeworkers

and their dependents and market workers, with a view to facilitating procedures for potential employers looking for service staff and for ease of communication for all concerned.

A total of 36,052 commercial e-licences were electronically approved by the Ministry between January and May 2018, representing applications across the Sultanate.



Meantime, at the end of June 2018, the private sector was employing 241,325 Omanis, 181,179 of them male and 60,146 female. There were 1,911,478 expatriates in the labour force, down from 1,924,839 in 2017 and 1,942,008 in 2016. These were concentrated in and around Muscat, where 817,019, or almost half of the total, were employed.



In 2017, 4,869 establishments were inspected to check compliance with Labour legislation. Details reviewed were the national and/or expatriate status of employees, adherence to working hours, holiday and rest period provisions, payment of wages to employees in accordance with specified schedules and, generally, whether the establishment was compliant with the terms of the law in relation to working conditions, occupational health and safety provisions. Employers and employees were offered guidance on their statutory rights and how to protect these.



Young Omanis are increasingly qualified to confidently assume the top positions in the national labour market.

Technical Education



Technical education is a significant player in creating the specialised cadres that are so necessary to the Sultanate's diversifying labour market. The technical colleges take in an annual quota of school-leavers who have passed the General Education Diploma or equivalent and turn out graduates well qualified with the necessary knowledge and skills in the disciplines of engineering, business, the applied sciences, pharmacy, photography and fashion design. The colleges offer a total of 39 accredited courses, in which they encourage the experimentation and innovative thinking that define a dynamic, motivated workforce.

The Ministry of Manpower supervises the Sultanate's seven technical colleges



The Ministry of Manpower supervises the Sultanate's seven technical colleges, namely: The Higher College of Technology in Muscat, the Al Musanna College of Technology, the Nizwa College of Technology, the Ibra College of Technology, the Salalah College of Technology, the Shinas College of Technology and the Ibri College of Technology. The Technical Colleges absorb a high

volume of school-leavers annually through the unified admissions system. In 2017/2018, 7,861 places were taken up in technical education, representing 32.2% of all third level admissions, or 53.6% of all admissions to government third level institutions. In all, 38,379 male and female students were enrolled in the Technical Colleges in the 2017/2018 academic year.



The close of the 2016/ 2017 academic year, meantime, saw 5,912 new graduates enter the labour market. Given the escalating numbers opting for a technical college education, several infrastructural projects have been accelerated to meet the surge in demand, providing additional equipment, classrooms, laboratories, staff rooms and ancillary student service buildings.

Vocational education and training is another pillar of the changing labour market, offering a modestly broader syllabus than those of the technical institutions. Alongside the direct focus on career skills, students benefit from a character-building ethos that produces well-rounded graduates. The Sultanate is deeply committed to its Omanisation programme, and a technically qualified, ambitious and diversified workforce will be most likely to handle the phase-out of expatriate labour and its replacement with Omanis. In 2017, Ministerial Decree No. 406 /2017 raised the status of the government's vocational training centres and its specialist institutes for fishermen to that of college. Today the Sultanate has a total of seven

Vocational Colleges, in the wilayat of Seeb, Saham, Sur, Shinas Buraimi, and Salalah, respectively, in addition to the Vocational College of Marine Sciences in Khaboura.

The training tracks at the Vocational Colleges and the Vocational College of Marine Sciences have been developed and updated to bring them into line with current trends and ensure that graduates are technologically up-to-date and useful to the labour market.

During 2017/ 2018, the Ministry approved a comprehensive schedule for implementation of the professional diploma programme which will equip graduates with the qualifications to bring value to the workforce in needed specialisations. It is anticipated that many of these graduates will seek work opportunities outside the government system, thus boosting the Omanisation rate in the private sector. Moreover, it will encourage General Education Diploma holders to extend their education to third level, where they may acquire professional qualifications that will greatly enhance their career opportunities.



At the end of 2017, the Sultanate had 359 functioning private training establishments, including 177 institutes, 16 centres, 18 training units and 148 training service agencies. Training activities at these establishments are concentrated in the commercial, industrial, artisanal, specialist and training service sectors.

Technical education has expanded into new disciplines to keep pace with contemporary labour market needs.

Social Development



The scope of social development today goes far beyond the one-dimensional notion of care that characterised it in the past, to one that embraces principles of equity, social integration, community participation, economic and knowledge empowerment. It is grounded in the belief that a social investment in human capital and in the expansion of human ability and potential should have as its end objective the manifestation of a full and independent life. Any real transformation of human perspective from dependency and passivity to active participation in the process of community development is an endeavour that will require the collaborative action of many separate institutions.

The social security programme is one of the most important achievements of the modern Omani Renaissance. It offers citizens protection, welfare and empowerment. The efforts of the Ministry of Social Development are today reflected in the targeted support offered to vulnerable groups; generous monthly pensions and payments; benefits and facilities associated with pensions and special payments; and a variety of quality services available to those in need. The guiding principle is social justice and the goal is a decent standard of living for all. At the end of 2017, the system was providing support for 79,487 social security cases at an annual cost of RO122,945,635.

The Ministry also provides, in coordination with government agencies and private sector institutions, a raft of services and benefits for individuals and families who are undergoing hardship. Twenty eight of these services take the form of exemptions from health and housing fees, civil and municipal fees and labour charges, as well as free legal aid. Monthly payments or lump sums are disbursed, covering allowances for school-going children, as well as supplementary finance for

students enrolled at university at their own expense; sickness allowances; Eid bonuses; a condolence payment at death; pilgrimage grants; housing repair and maintenance grants; food, bedding and computer allowances; land grants; the provision of prosthetics and other assisting devices; along with assistance in attaining employment, training and internal scholarships and empowerment assistance to help families identify income-generating resources.

Through cooperation and coordination between the Ministries of Social Development and Higher Education, 2,268 students from families supported by the social security system were enabled to continue their higher education at public and private universities and colleges in the Sultanate in 2017/2018/ at State expense. In addition 399 pilgrims were enabled to complete their Haj obligations with State support.



The Ministry coordinates with the Ministry of Manpower in implementing a programme that provides rehabilitation and employment for people with disabilities. The project involves integrating vocational rehabilitation programmes into existing programmes offered by vocational training centres. A unit for evaluation and follow-up of vocational rehabilitation programmes and of employment programmes for the disabled was established. Training programmes offered by the Vocational Evaluation and Rehabilitation Centre were brought up to date. Training was brought into the Al-Wafa Social Centres. The Al Rafd Fund was approached with a view

to securing funding for specific projects for persons of disability and for the children of welfare families. A follow-up section was established at the Vocational Evaluation and Rehabilitation Centre at the Directorate-General for Persons with Disabilities to translate all of these initiatives into practicality by collaborating with private sector institutions to identify job opportunities in the private sector, whether in the form of direct employment or on-the-job training. Within the Ministry itself the position of Placement Specialist will be devoted to the task of tracking down appropriate employment and rehabilitation opportunities within the private sector.

Employment statistics for 2017 report 985 placements, of which 756 were from welfare families and 229 were persons with disability. A further 72 persons with disability were taken on as trainees at the Ministry's Vocational Rehabilitation and Evaluation Centre. Going forward, the Ministry hopes to arrange work placements in all governorates at private sector companies and institutions to secure access of the target group to this service with

minimum upheaval.

The Social Action Strategy (2016/ 2025) was formulated as part of a strategy that defines the future of social work in the Sultanate. The strategy pays its respects to the principles of Islamic sharia, to the Basic Law of the State, and to the Directives of His Majesty Sultan Qaboos, as well as to relevant international treaties and conventions, national legislation and relevant social norms.



This strategy reflects the paradigm shift that has transformed old concepts of social protection into its broader reinvention, as administered today by the Ministry of Social Development. In its new equitable, sustainable incarnation, the family takes

the place of prominence in the exercise of social policies. It favours a system-based approach, systematic practices, continuous follow-up, and impact assessment and evaluation in the development and implementation of social policies to optimum benefit.

The NGO Sector is in a growth phase in the Sultanate and benefits from the enthusiastic patronage of His Majesty Sultan Qaboos. The Sultan Qaboos Award for Volunteer Works is the highest honour attainable in the field and is a powerful incentive to volunteers in their selfless service. The Ministry of Social Development oversees many civil and professional associations, as well as

branches of the Omani Women's Association and the social clubs of expatriate communities in the Sultanate. It monitors the work of these associations to ensure their compliance with the provisions of the Civil Associations Law and with regulations issued by the Ministry relevant to their activities. It reviews the agendas of their annual general meetings and the action agreed by members.



Nursery care from infancy is handled by institutions supervised by the Ministry of Social Development, where basic care, along with educational, social and recreational support, is provided for infants from six months to three and a half years of age. The nurseries

are overseen by the Ministry's suitably qualified staff to ensure their compliance with the appropriate regulations and to administer reform in the event of violation. The Ministry had 252 nurseries under its supervision at the end of 2017, housing 9,461 infants.

Sports

Thanks to the generous support of His Majesty Sultan Qaboos over the years, Omani sportsmen and women have emerged from obscurity to earn high accolades in international competition across an ever broadening platform of individual and team sports.

The achievements of recent years have been remarkable and provided many occasions for proud athletes to raise their country's flag at closely contested events.

The talent that brought home all this success was incubated in the many local clubs and sports facilities that thrive in every corner of the Sultanate, where gifted youngsters are nurtured and coached to ever higher levels of excellence, often by volunteers. The Sultanate's superior facilities have enabled

it to host many international and Asian tournaments and the Ministry of Sports Affairs is acutely aware of the value to the local sports culture of attracting as many such prestige events as possible. They offer important opportunities for young Omanis to network with their peers from abroad and to gain experience and motivation to continually raise the bar in their chosen sport. The Sultanate participates in conferences, seminars, forums and sporting festivals at Gulf, Arab and European levels. In the past year the Sultanate sponsored 13 separate delegations on missions overseas, a combined total of 61 young men and women representing institutions as diverse as universities, ministries, associations and sports clubs, as well as of the Ministry's popular youth and summer programmes.

Both 2017 and 2018 were good years for national teams and individual sports stars at Gulf, Arab and Asian events. The national football team began 2018 with an early victory in the 23rd Arabian Gulf Cup that ran from 22 December 2017 to 5 January 2018 in Kuwait. It was a thrilling start to the year and a second time win for Oman in the biennial tournament.

The outpouring of public support for the home team was echoed by His Majesty Sultan Qaboos, who rewarded their success generously in the form of a cash bonus to each of the players, as well as to the members of their technical and management teams. The victorious teamsters were also gifted land allotments by His Majesty in appreciation of their spirited performance, technical excellence and determination in this important

and highly contested competition.

A near-victory was in store for the national football team at the Islamic Solidarity Games in the Republic of Azerbaijan in May 2017 where Oman, although pipped only in the match final with Azerbaijan, nevertheless brought home three silver and four bronze medals from the Games.

Maintaining its strong record, the national beach soccer team won the International Beach Soccer Friendly hosted by the Republic of China in Haikou in November 2017. The national beach handball team brought home silver from the 2017 Asian Beach Handball Championship held in the Thai city of Pattaya in May 2017, and the national athletics team earned two silver and three bronze medals at the Arab Athletics Championships in Tunis in July.



Euphoria grips the nation as the Oman team sweeps to victory in the 23rd Gulf Cup, held in Kuwait.



Back in Tunisia in November 2017, the junior athletics team again won silver and bronze in the biennial Arab Youth Athletics Championships in Rades. In August 2017, the national junior volleyball team won silver at the 14th Arab Junior Volleyball Championship in Jordan, and the senior beach volleyball team reached the finals of the Arab Beach Volleyball Championship hosted by the Sultanate from 4-10 November 2017.



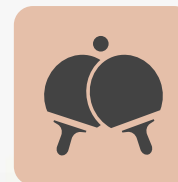
In shooting, members of the national team won two silver and two bronze medals, respectively, in individual pistol and rifle contests at the 2017 Islamic Solidarity Games in Baku. The national disabled team took home two silver and two bronze medals from the Asian Youth Para Games hosted by Dubai in December 2017.



In August 2017, the national sailing team earned bronze at the prestigious SB20 Cowes Week & Grand Slam, the world's largest regatta held every August in Cowes, Isle of Wight, England. Meanwhile, participating in the First Beach Woodball World Cup Championship 2017, held on Bintan Island, Indonesia, the national beach ball team took third place in the knockout tournament, in which 11 countries participated.



The much-decorated national weightlifting team maintained their glittering track record in 2017, earning six gold and four silver medals at the Afro-Asian & Arab Weightlifting Championships hosted by Egypt in Cairo in December 2017.



In table tennis, Oman celebrated victories at home, winning silver in the U12s and bronze in the U21s in the national team's first ever entry into international competition. The occasion was the 16th Arab Cup Table Tennis Championships, which was hosted by the Sultanate from 15 to 20 August 2017.

Encouraged by these successes, work proceeds towards completion of several new sports projects and the expansion of others around the country. The Sultan Qaboos Sports Complex is being extended, as are the facilities at Al Saada and Al Rustaq. In all, facilities such as these are meeting the needs of 1,011,661 members and participants nationwide, 357,989 at the Sultan Qaboos Complex in Bausher alone. In 2017, 1,711 sports enthusiasts availed of the services of the physiotherapy unit and 836 others the services furnished by the Sports Medicine Centre at the Sultan Qaboos Sports Complex in Bousher.



In April 2018, the Sultan's Armed Forces Hospital's Ophthalmology Centre made local history with first-of-its-kind surgery when an Omani medical team completed twin corneal transplants. The procedure was done with the help of a PhysioMax machine that uses Femtosecond laser technology and represented a new departure in ophthalmology in the Sultanate.

The Ophthalmology Centre, which opened on 17 December 2017 with advanced capabilities and sophisticated medical equipment, is a vital arm of the Armed Forces Hospital, where it has developed life-altering health solutions.



Abdullah bin Hamood al Raqadi, the Director General of Information Technology at the Ministry of Health, has received well-earned recognition for his contributions at the Ministry of Health and to Oman's digital transformation strategy, winning the IT Man of the Year Award on the margins of the Future IT Summit in March 2018 in Dubai, UAE. Mr Al Raqadi also received an honorary award for his contributions to the Titans.



Student inventors Salem and Mohamed al Habsi, competing with a team of undergraduates and graduates of Sultan Qaboos University as Team Sumou, won plaudits and a prestigious gold medal at the 29th International Invention Exhibition in Malaysia (ITEX 2018) in May 2018.



The Sultanate, represented by the Ministry of Education, delivered strong performances at the 11th Arab Open Robotics Championship held in the Arab Republic of Egypt from 23 to 26 March 2018. Students from Al Marwa School for Basic Education in North Sharqiyah won top place in the FLL competition, with second place going to North Batinah's Quba School team. Meanwhile the robotics team from Al Numan bin Basheer School for Basic Education in Al Batinah came in second place in the line tracking event.

The championship has developed into one of the Arab world's most highly contested events in the robotics field since it was first held in 2008 and draws teams of school and college students from the age of six years up to third level graduation.



The National Beach Volleyball Team B, consisting of players Mazin al Hashmi and Nuh al Jalboubi, were crowned champions at the 27th Arab Beach Volleyball Championship, which ended on 5 August 2018 in Agadir, Morocco.

National Team A, consisting of duo Ahmed al Hosni and Houd al Jalboubi, won bronze.



In August 2018, the Royal Army of Oman (RAO), represented by their Drums and Bagpipes Band, celebrated third round victory in the annual RSPBA competitive event in Scotland's North Berwick, qualifying it to take part in the Glasgow finals. Fifteen bands from around the world took part, and the RAO band also won best Pedestrian and Discipline performance in the contest, and best band from outside the United Kingdom.



Outstanding Omani PhD student Muna bint Mohammed al Habsi was a member of the research team that won the Nobel Prize for Medicine in 2018 for their ground-breaking approach to cancer treatment.

Japanese Professor Tasuko Hongo, who led the winning team, invited Ms al Habsi to work with his research group after reviewing her cv.

The Nobel Committee at the Swedish Karolinska Institute in Stockholm made the announcement on 1 October 2018 awarding the Nobel Prize in Physiology or Medicine jointly to American scientist James Allison and to Professor Tasuko Hongo's team. The Committee cited the winners for their "discovery of cancer therapy by inhibition of negative immune regulation."

*“Clearly, a country’s
heritage is not confined to its
architecture, to its castles, forts and
artefacts, but is alive in the morals, customs,
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the next.*

Qaboos bin Said

(24th National Day – 18 November 1994)

Heritage, Culture And The Arts



Heritage, Culture And The Arts .. Windows On An Illustrious Past

One of the distinguishing marks of the Sultanate's development strategy in 1970, and one that justified its characterisation as a genuine renaissance, was Sultan Qaboos bin Said's constant referral back to heritage. Heritage and culture can sometimes be overlooked in the race to modernity, but at a nation's peril, and His Majesty was alive to the value of Oman's cultural legacy, material and intangible, as a great unifier, a source of national pride in its most elevated form. Social cohesion is the bedrock of sustainable development, and the perception of a shared heritage is the lifeblood of social cohesion. In such an environment, knowledge, skills, customs and values are readily transferred from generation to generation.

Sultan Qaboos' public addresses contain numerous allusions to Oman's past, and cementing the link between present and past has been a recurring theme in his elucidation of the philosophy of the Renaissance. Nor was the material support of government found wanting when matters of heritage were at stake.

The Sultanate's modern development process continues to draw heavily on its intellectual and cultural heritage and respect for the pool of exceptional skills and knowledge shared by indigenous craftsmen and women.

"Clearly" His Majesty noted, in a typical motivational address delivered on the Sultanate's 24th National Day in 1994, "a country's heritage is not confined to its architecture, to its castles, forts and artefacts, but is alive in the morals, customs, traditions, sciences, etiquette and arts that are transmitted from one generation to the next. No true protection of our heritage can be said to be complete if it does not include the protection of this living legacy. We can say today that we have had success, thank God, in achieving in large part this noble national goal."

The Sultanate has underwritten its commitment to culture in the guise of several landmark cultural projects. It has, meantime, ratified international conventions of significance to intangible cultural heritage, such as Unesco's 2003 Convention for the Safeguarding of the Intangible Cultural

Heritage and its 2005 Convention on the Protection and Promotion of the Diversity of Cultural Expressions. The Ministry of Heritage and Culture has established a National Register of Intangible Cultural Heritage that is classified by sector. The Ministry was a member of the Governmental Committee on the 2003 Convention during the period from 2008 to 2012.

Springing from the efforts of the Ministry of Heritage and Culture, which ensured that the focus of its responsibilities was never ignored in plans for the various stages of development; nor indeed the potential of Oman's rich cultural heritage to sustain itself economically; other specific-purpose cultural institutions emerged, such as the Office of the Adviser to His Majesty the Sultan for Cultural Affairs. The latter upholds a special interest in the Land of Frankincense complex in Dhofar and the Salut archaeological site in Al Dakhiliyah, where it has contributed to both beautification and the provision of service facilities, with an eye to encouraging cultural and archaeological tourism.

In addition to these two official bodies, cultural activity in the Sultanate is supported by institutions such as the Royal Court, Sultan Qaboos University and the Ministry of Tourism. Most spectacular on the long

list of projects undertaken are the many castles and forts rehabilitated since 1970, which today serve as tourist attractions. Just as impressive in their respective fields are the works of the National Records and Archives Authority (NRAA) and of the Public Authority for Craft Industries (PACI), both effective contributors to the inspirational and economic benefits of respecting the past.

The Sultan Qaboos Centre for Culture and Science, through its affiliate institutions, has been active in many areas, pioneering cultural, literary, scientific and artistic projects. It has done much to raise domestic and international awareness of Oman's unique culture and to encourage young Omani scholars to avail of the Centre's resources in their studies and cultural pursuits.

On 15 November 2017, the winners of the Sixth round of the Sultan Qaboos Awards for Culture, Arts and Literature were announced. The latest round targeted three areas of focus: Economic Studies in the Culture section, Architectural Design under Arts, and Literary Criticism under Literature. The Awards, which are open in alternate years to national and to Arab world participants, affirm the Sultanate's historical role in nurturing cultural awareness, as they do His Majesty's enduring support for the country's intellectual and artistic life.



Archaeological sites

The Sultanate's heritage and cultural sites have been very fortunate in the unquestioning attention and support they receive. No expense is spared to ensure that restoration projects undertaken can avail of scientific methodology and experienced teams, working to internationally approved standards. This is a mark of respect to the value of the heritage, and one of its rewards is a guarantee of long term economic viability in the form of tourist returns. There are hundreds of sites around the Sultanate where history has been brought back to life in this way and it is a history that has a fascinating, centuries-long story to tell.

The Ministry continues to restore castles, forts and historic quarters, to promote museums and excavations at prehistoric sites, and to document monuments deemed to be of historical or archaeological value on completion of surveys. Prominent among 2018's restoration projects were the Khandaq and Hilla forts in the Governorate of Buraymi.

As the restoration work on Adamis fort in Al Dakhiliyah's wilayat Adam nears completion, works are ongoing at the Jamea Al Busaid alleyway, as well as on the Falaj al Ain citadel on the northern edge of the district and the Falaj al Maleh citadel on its western extremity.

The Ministry's nationwide brief ensures that it is kept busy with a long list of projects distributed throughout the Sultanate, many of them simultaneously in the implementation phase. In South Sharqiyah's historic city of Sur, the rehabilitation of the Fateh al Khair Centre is being conducted in a collaboration with a specialist Italian institution commissioned to overhaul the Centre's collection. To date, more than 400 artefacts from the legacy

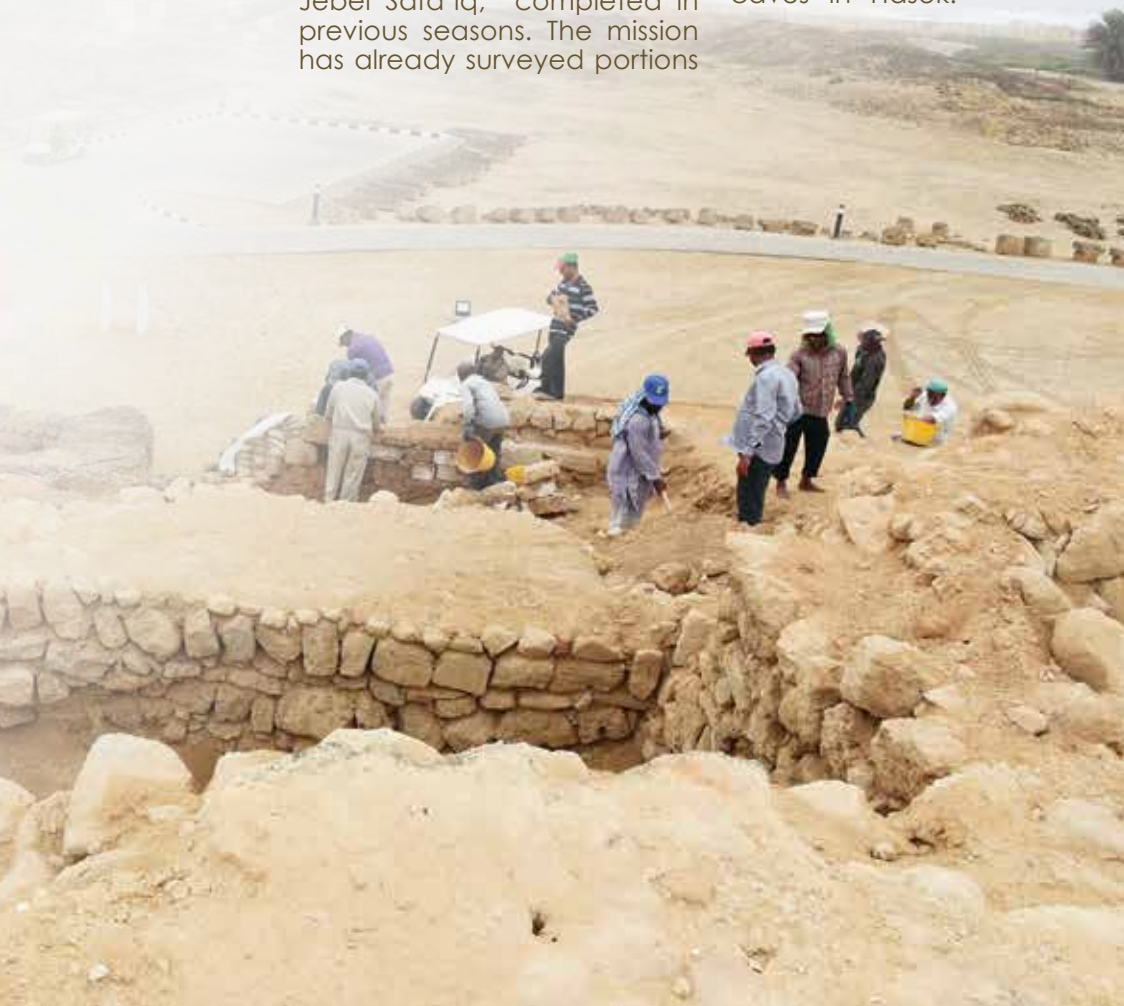
of Sur's sea merchant past have been restored, including shipbuilding tools, ship models, instruments of navigation, photographs, books, letters and prints, household items, clothing and accessories, craft tools and materials.

In November 2017, the Ministry of Heritage and Culture unveiled its list of surveys, studies and excavations to be carried out over the 2018-2017 season, in total 16 projects distributed across the Sultanate. Many of these projects involve local and foreign universities and/or international scientific institutions. As a location settled from the earliest recorded times, the Sultanate's archaeological map has an important story to tell of human development across the ages.

The survey and exploration programme that is the responsibility of the Department of Excavation and Archaeological Studies at the Directorate-General of Archaeology and Museums includes among other projects works ongoing in wilayat Hasik in Dhofar Governorate, where the Ministry is overseeing an exhaustive survey of the Arabian Sea coast. The survey

is being conducted jointly with a French mission from the National Centre for Scientific Research (Centre national de la recherche scientifique) and its goal is to collect and document evidence of early human settlement on the Omani coastal stretch from South Sharqiyah to Dhofar. The work supplements earlier surveys along the Arabian Sea coast, together with archaeological studies on the caves of Nataf, Sharbatat and Jebel Safa'iq, completed in previous seasons. The mission has already surveyed portions

of wilayat Jalan Bani Bu Ali, Rimal Al Sharqiyah, Barr al Hikman and Masirah Island, revealing archaeological sites dating to the Stone Age, Bronze Age and Iron Age respectively. At Ras al Hadd, meanwhile, two early Bronze Age sites were uncovered, and archaeological surveys completed at Jabal Qara, Hasek, Jabal Safa'iq and Masirah Island revealed several Stone Age sites, most notably those at the Nataf caves in Hasek.



Survey and excavation works in South Sharqiyah's Shi'aa district in wilayat Sur entered their third season, conducted jointly with a team from the French desert and steppe foundation, L'Institut des déserts et des steppes. The mission is searching for signs of Stone Age settlement, as well as identifying ancient cemeteries threatened today by urban expansion and development projects in the areas under examination.

The Institut is conducting separate archaeological excavation with aerial photography at Khor Garama and Asilah to learn more about funerary rites in the third millennium BC.

Restoration works continue at Qalhat in South Sharqiyah's Sur.

In its third season, the team of restorers continue to refurbish buildings and document those restored in earlier seasons under a contract agreed with the WMF (World Monuments Fund) foundation. An additional contract was signed with a French partner to carry out a 3D survey of the city. A third agreement, with the French National Centre for Scientific Research (Centre national de la recherche scientifique (CNRS)), will see completion of a comprehensive study of the artefacts and ceramics discovered in the city, in addition to completion of the overall site survey.

Archaeological excavations continue at Ras al Hadd, also in wilayat Sur, where an Italian

mission from the University of Bologna is studying one of Oman's most important archaeological sites of the past five millennia or more. Ras al Hadd was an attractive location to early settlers, arising from its strategic location overlooking the Arabian Sea. It has thus been a significant target of archaeological investigation, in the course of which multiple sites of historical interest stretching from the Neolithic Age to the Islamic era have been identified. The Italian team is following up on the work of earlier seasons to learn more about burial customs, as well as examining traces of the successive waves of settlement and record the artefacts found on site.

Arising from the significant discoveries made at the Mudmar site in wilayat Adam and the Salut site in Al Dakhiliyah, excavations will continue at these locations, where a collaboration is in place with teams from France's Sorbonne University. At Mudmar, survey and excavation work will pursue evidence already uncovered confirming Stone Age, Bronze Age and Iron Age human settlement. Specific studies are scheduled into burial customs representing each of these time periods.

With identification of the monastic site in wilayat Dibba in the far northern Governorate of Musandam, the Ministry of Heritage and Culture has supervised fieldworks ranging from surveys to excavations, and archaeological studies into the discoveries of the most recent season. Caches of pottery, stone and bronze receptacles, swords,

daggers, arrows, bayonets, bronze axes and a host of other artefacts have been added to the national collection of artefacts as a result of this exciting new area of archaeological investigation.

In the current season, the Ministry, working again with an Italian team from the University of Bologna, will complete excavation of Tomb No. 2, an earlier discovery dating to the first millennium BC. Several subsequent burials were made above the site of this tomb in later times.

The Ministry of Heritage and Culture is planning to conduct fourth season archaeological studies at Bimah in wilayat Quryat, Muscat Governorate. The studies will focus on the two hundred year period from the third to the first centuries BC and will be carried out jointly over five annual seasons with an Italian research team from the University of Naples. Their main focus will be human settlement along the coastal strip, along with subsequent resettlement in the modern Islamic era. The latter study will take the form of an architectural and archaeological area survey. A further collaboration with Ohio University in the United States will examine the social, environmental and pastoral systems operating in antiquity, and the changing patterns of vegetation cover, and look at their impact on local communities in Dhofar Governorate. This will be one of the most important of the many projects sponsored by the Ministry and is scheduled to be completed over a five-year period.



Sites of historical and cultural significance have benefited from the Sultanate's highest level of commitment to their preservation and restoration. (Baleed archaeological site)

This season, the mission will survey the habitat of the rock badger (*hyrax syriacus*) and collect samples in the rocky shelters and cavities of the arid region north of Wadi Dhahboun. This study will contribute to existing knowledge on the vegetation of many thousands of years ago, and to an understanding of the rich diversities of the pastoral landscape. The overall picture that emerges will provide enlightenment on the extent to which the inhabitants of the period studied were able to benefit from their plant environment.

During this season also, excavations will be carried out at the Shokour site in Al Dhahirah's wilayat Dhank covering the settlement period from 1300-2000 BC. The Ministry is overseeing an expedition from the Anthropology Department of Philadelphia's Temple University which will be investigating social and economic conditions in the Stone and Bronze Ages, as well as burial customs characteristic of those times.

Meanwhile, the Ministry of Heritage and Culture will be working with a team from Sultan Qaboos University to complete excavations at the Dahwa site in wilayat Saham, where the last season's work was focused on a settlement dating to the Umm al Nar Bronze Age period. Seventeen square and rectangular buildings from this time were excavated, along with the remains of copper smelting furnaces.

The importance of the region lies in its coastal position, whence it connected with civilisations as

far away as India. Pottery vessels were found that were used for storage, indicating the existence of trading links between the two regions.

In light of the significant archaeological discoveries announced during the past season at the Aqir al Shamus site in Al Dhahirah's wilayat Nafir, the Ministry is extending its collaboration with a US team from Johns Hopkins University to undertake further excavations. Aqir al Shamus dates to the first millennium BC and is the first archaeological site associated with the mining and production of soapstone to be uncovered in the Sultanate, and in the Gulf region.

The site consists of a quarry and workshop for the production of soapstone. An archaeological survey reveals a multitude of broken stone vessels, apparently damaged in the process of manufacture. To date, some 800 fragments have been collected from surface level. Preliminary site studies confirm that the quarry is of Iron Age origin and that it may have been active up to the Islamic era. Stone samples will be studied and broader mineral surveys conducted in Al Dhahirah Governorate to trace copper and chlorite deposits and establish a pattern of early settlement.

In a partnership with the Netherlands' Leiden University, the Ministry enters the fourth season of its archaeological documentation project, with broad-ranging area surveys to be conducted in the vicinity of Wadi al-Jizzi in wilayat Sohar in the northern province of Batinah.

The overall area covered will extend from Sohar and along the full length of Wadi al-Jizzi.

This location, as is known from earlier studies, has been an attractive destination for human migrations over several different time periods, its principal appeal being the ready availability of water and mineral resources, as indeed its proximity to the important merchant city of Sohar. It is hoped that current studies and the more systematic documentation of archaeological finds will offer up a more detailed picture of human settlement in the area, assisted by supporting studies into ancient mountain pathways, copper deposits and smelters in and around Sohar; the origins of irrigation in the region; and local funerary beliefs and practices.

A joint mission, meanwhile, between Sultan Qaboos University and the University of Durham in the United Kingdom will survey and document findings in the wilayat of Rustaq, Musanah and Al Suwaiq, and conduct archaeological excavations at late Iron Age sites in the vicinity of Falaj al Sharara in wilayat Rustaq.

At the Bronze Age sites of Khashbah in wilayat Al Mudhaibi, excavations conducted alongside a team from Germany's University of Tübingen are progressing towards completion. Khashbah, as confirmed by earlier site work, was a transit station on an early copper route and the area abounds in the remains of copper smelting towers and traces of human settlement.

For four successive seasons, the Tübingen mission has carried

out exploratory surveys and excavation work on behalf of the Ministry in the villages and towns of North Sharqiyah. The sites surveyed have seen settlement as far back as the third millennium BC and the foundations of urban dwellings of distinctive architecture are clearly delineated.

Extensive site analysis carried out by the German team includes carbon14- studies on coal found on site that date Khashbah's stone buildings to 3100 BC.

The Khashbah site contains the oldest manmade structures found in the Sultanate to date. The built area has a diameter of around 24 metres with an additional rectangular amenity space. A copper smelter and fragments of slag were found inside and outside the main building, suggesting its use as a workshop in the production of copper.

One of the most significant Bronze Age copper stations is located at Qamira in wilayat Dhank, where huge stone structures attest to its importance on the old copper trade route. The Ministry of Heritage and Culture will continue excavation works here with the help of a Polish mission from the University of Warsaw. The Polish team is on schedule to complete its current season goals of excavating three sites, namely: Qamira 1, a cemetery dating to the Umm al-Nar era; Qamira 2, a Neolithic settlement; and Qamira 3, an early Iron Age structure. The expedition hopes to learn more about the nature of settlement in the area, as well as refining the accepted current chronology of the sites.

Ancient civilisation through a modern lens

The Sultanate's cultural institutions work collaboratively to promote Oman's profile as an enlightened country, showcasing the many aspects of this profile at local and overseas events. Culture represents the civilised face of a country's development process and the Sultanate proudly protects its status as a crucible of ancient and recent culture.

All of the official and independently-founded associations inspired by the arts, literature, music and culture generally share the common purpose of building links in their field of interest with peer groups abroad. The Ministry of Heritage and Culture, the Sultan Qaboos Higher Centre for Culture and Science, the Literary Forum, the Cultural Club, along with diverse associations of writers, dramatists, film producers, journalists and the like, exchange cultural activities with other countries; participate in meetings of joint committees or gatherings sponsored by multinational organisations; host or attend cultural events and activities; and subscribe to various internationally-agreed conventions, as approved by the Ministry of Legal Affairs. In this manner they lend credibility to the Sultanate's enduring support for the arts.

At home, government-sponsored Culture Weeks and the like give creative artists and writers the opportunity to swap ideas, or meet their overseas peers. They are drivers of the intellectual continuity and dialogue that enrich Oman's creative life and they encourage public expression of personal talent in the arts and literature through exhibition, publication and audio-visual production. Government support for innovation and for the arts through such cultural events and contests safeguards quality standards by broadening access to the work of peers in the various fields.

The Sultanate is particularly keen to maintain open cultural communication with its brothers and sisters in the GCC countries, with whom many public events are shared.

The GCC Cultural Committee holds periodic meetings to discuss ideas and develop events that nurture the highest aspirations of their respective countries and peoples.

Meanwhile, the publishing industry in the Sultanate is highly supportive of local writers and promotes their work abroad by on occasion supplying libraries with works of Omani literature. An example

is the collection of representative Omani works that was gifted to Belgium's Catholic University of Louvain, as is the similar collection presented to the library of the University of Brunei.



In a historic achievement, the Sultanate, represented by the Ministry of Heritage and Culture and its relevant working group, succeeded in November 2017 in having the Omani manuscript 'Secret Origin in Marine Science' registered in the UNESCO Memory of the World Programme.

The manuscript is the first of its kind to be registered on behalf of the Sultanate and is deemed to be one of the most important manuscripts in existence on the subject of marine science. It has particular value to scholars of international politics and economics, as well as of tribal migration, especially in the period prior to the Sultanate's modern Renaissance.

The Omani manuscript «The Metal of Secrets in Marine Science» is registered in the UNESCO World Memory Register.

Museums

The Sultanate has a well-earned reputation for investing in its heritage, and taking exceptional care of its historical treasures. It recognises the role museums play in reflecting the dialogue of cultures, languages and societies, how they bring knowledge of ancient civilisations and bygone times to life, with all of their political, social, natural and geological ramifications.

The National Museum is the Sultanate's most prominent cultural edifice. It is dedicated to highlighting the nation's many-faceted heritage, from the birth pangs of human settlement in the Arabian Peninsula many millennia ago and up to the present day.

The National Museum was established by Royal Decree No. 62/2013, promulgated on 20 November 2013. It was officially opened on 15 December 2015. The museum houses more than seven thousand archaeological artefacts, most of them of rare or unique value, as well as tens of thousands of other display items systematically arranged to illustrate the narrative of human evolution in Oman from its earliest days to the present time.

The National Museum was the

first museum in the Middle East to incorporate Braille into its Arabic guide system for the benefit of the blind. It was also the first museum in the Middle East to adopt the open storage system. It was the first museum in the Sultanate to include a museum learning centre, the first to introduce a system of preventive conservation, and one which meets the highest international standards. And, finally, it was the first museum in the Sultanate to incorporate a UHD audio-visual theatre.



In addition to the National Museum, the Ministry of Heritage and Culture oversees several other publicly-supported museums, including the Natural History Museum, opened in 1985, which showcases the many diverse aspects of the Omani environment through illustrated descriptions of terrain, geology, vegetation, insects, and wildlife.

With a need now to modernise and expand the museum in line with contemporary development trends, the Ministry has set in motion an ambitious plan to restructure the facility to an overall plan conceived and overseen by the Smithsonian Foundation. On completion, the museum will represent a quantum leap forward to the very vanguard of museum design.

The Children's Museum, which opened in 1990, is a science and technology learning resource that introduces modern inventions and delivers scientific knowledge in a simplified and child-friendly manner that easily conveys a sense of the vital role of science in life.

The Omani-French Museum was inaugurated in Muscat in 1992, with a mission to highlight the historical relations between 18th-century France and Oman. It is located in the building that was once the French consulate and consists of eight halls. The museum houses a collection of documents that chronicle Omani-French relations, alongside traditional costumes from the two countries, a selection of jewellery and antiques, and models of Omani and French ships.

In Sohar Fort, a museum was opened in 1993 and its contents deal with the history of the city of Sohar and its cultural and economic relations. In 2008, the Sayyid Faisal bin Ali Museum was opened inside the building of the Ministry of Heritage and Culture.

The Ministry of Defence runs the Sultan's Armed Forces Museum, which opened at Bait al Falaj Fort in Ruwi in 1988 and contains exhibits highlighting Oman's military history.

The Muscat Gate Museum, which takes the visitor on a tour of Muscat, highlights the city's growth from a commercial harbour to a prosperous capital city. It contains displays illustrating the city's development from ancient times.

Muscat Municipality runs the Bait al Baranda Visitor Centre and Museum, which presents a potted history of the city of Muscat and is also a venue for exhibitions and training courses.

The Office of His Majesty the Sultan's Advisor on Cultural Affairs oversees the Land of Frankincense Museum, which opened on 23 July 2007 as part of Al Baleed Archaeological Park in the Governorate of Dhofar. It has a historical hall with six sections documenting Oman's history as a whole over the ages, and a maritime hall devoted to Oman's illustrious seafaring and boatbuilding history.

The Oil and Gas Exhibition Centre portrays the history of the formation of oil over different periods and the stages of its extraction and narrates

The Museum of Natural History is a portal to quality information on every aspect of the Omani environment.

the story of oil discovery, in the Sultanate in particular. The Central Bank of Oman's Currency Museum, situated within the bank's premises, reviews the chronology of currency exchange in the Sultanate and showcases both old and modern currencies, including banknotes and coins which were exchanged during the early stages of the Islamic era.

There are privately-owned museums, such as Bait al Zubair Museum in Muscat, which opened in 1998 and houses valuable displays of collectibles and costumes from the various governorates of the Sultanate.

Book Fairs

Oman is an enthusiastic participant in overseas cultural fairs and expositions and is equally active in hosting such events at home. It is a regular and distinguished presence at all the major international book fairs, bringing to broad notice the output of Omani intellectuals past and present.

The Ministries of Heritage and Culture, of Information and of Awqaf and Religious Affairs, each contribute publications to these fairs and join other relevant public bodies in subsidising

Ghaliya's Museum of Modern Art, opened in 2011 on the Mutrah corniche, has rooms representing the typical modern house in the period from the beginning of the 1950s to the mid 1970-s.

On 8 January 2014, the Education Museum at the Saidia School in Muscat was opened. The museum documents the evolution of public education in the Sultanate. The Saidia School itself occupies a prime and prestigious position in this story and was the inspiration for the foundation of the museum.

Omani establishments that need funding assistance to take part.

The long-running Muscat International Book Fair is the most ambitious cultural event in the Sultanate. It has achieved prominence among Gulf and Arab states hosting similar events, being among the top ten book fairs in the Arab world and one that holds distinction in the larger world as a pioneering annual publishing forum.

Salalah was the 'City Guest of Honour' at 2018's 23rd Muscat International Book Fair and the city's

landmark accomplishments were celebrated. Salalah's longstanding external connections, its topography, economic potential and the customs and traditions of its people were all highlighted, as were the city's manifold contributions to science and the arts, all of which continue to flow into and enrich the cultural landscape.

The Muscat International Book Fair provides a unique forum for the Sultanate to pay tribute to the outstanding minds that have moulded the cultural identity of Oman across the centuries.



Cultural exhibitions showcase an important side of Omani life. (Muscat International Book Fair 2018)

Documents and Manuscripts



Documents and manuscripts are powerful repositories of the product of man's creativity over the ages, of science and knowledge in the various areas of human endeavour. The Sultanate has prioritised the preservation of those important records of the past that document the course of national action.

The National Documents and Archives Authority (NRAA) is responsible for the preservation, collection, classification and storage of documents in the Sultanate. Since it was created in 2007 under Royal Decree No. 2007/60, the NRAA has assembled and archived a vast and important collection of historical documents of relevance to the Sultanate across all periods of its recorded history.

The NRAA has more than one million five hundred thousand documents stored in various formats, as paper and electronic manuscripts, books and folios. Its collection continues to expand exponentially, reflecting the wealth of documentation in existence and also the energetic endeavours of the NRAA to assemble and store them.

The Authority has responsibility for all official State documents, in addition to privately sourced documents, which it stores in a manner such as to ensure their preservation, while allowing easy access to scholars and researchers. At the present time, the NRAA is home to some 300,000 privately sourced manuscripts and a further 55,000 Omani manuscript originals

and copies of public or scholarly interest. The Authority maintains excellent relations with overseas institutions of common concern with the various countries of the world and is a signatory to 15 memoranda of understanding with various countries, and with institutions concerned with the archival of documents and manuscripts.

These various commitments facilitate cooperation in the work of document classification and storage, which manifests as a sharing of data and expertise, as visits exchanged for the purposes of training or arranging meetings, exhibitions or relevant activities. The Authority uses all available diplomatic and bilateral channels, meanwhile, to secure agreement with countries that have a shared history with Oman based on political or economic collaborations, or geographic proximity, with a view to sourcing sought after manuscripts in the original or, as is frequently the case, reproductions, in particular where the originals are stored in international archives.

Since 2012, the NRAA has been engaged in a race to record and preserve for posterity the rich fund of wisdom contained in the collective 'oral memory' of the nation, and it has fitted out a dedicated studio for the purpose. So far, 400 interviews have been conducted with 300 individuals, rendering a total 700 hours of audio and visual record. The interviews are later transcribed for ease of storage and circulation.



In the processing of archival documents prior to their storage, restoration is frequently necessary, with the goal of returning them to their original condition, or as near to that state as possible. Having analysed a manuscript for its composition, including the specifications of the paper and inks used, suitable chemical treatments are selected for the task. In this manner, a total of 130,000 pages, representing 34,207 documents, have been restored to date, along with 842 manuscripts and books, 120 files, 49 folders and 536 maps.

At international level, the NRAA has hosted and sponsored multiple conferences and seminars on the study of documents and archives that reference the Sultanate in one form or another, a total of 15 such gatherings to date. The most recent such conference took place in December 2017 at the Sheikh Jaber Cultural Centre in Kuwait, where the Authority sponsored the Sixth International Conference on

"Oman's Relations in the Indian Ocean and the Gulf between the Seventeenth and Nineteenth Centuries."

The conference was accompanied by an exhibition of more than 300 documents, 25 handwritten texts and a selection of images and maps, alongside a display of rare Omani manuscripts of historical significance that gave insight into aspects of the Sultanate's enlightened past.



A meeting at the Sixth International Conference "Oman's Relations with the Countries of the Indian Ocean and the Gulf from the Seventeenth to the Nineteenth Century", held at the Sheikh Jaber Cultural Centre in Kuwait.

Sultan Qaboos Higher Centre for Culture and Science



Oversight of the many Sultan Qaboos mosques throughout the Sultanate is one of the functions of the Sultan Qaboos Centre for Culture and Science (Mosque of Sayyida Fatma Bint Ali)

The Sultan Qaboos Higher Centre for Culture and Sciences (SQHCCS) has had a powerful material impact on the literary and artistic movements witnessed by the Sultanate. The Centre fosters cooperation with cultural institutions in other countries, introducing Omani culture in a receptive environment.

The Centre functions under the mandate of Royal Decree No. 52/2012, which established it as a cultural and scientific body with functions related to the protection of culture, science and the arts. It supports several bodies concerned broadly with culture, including the Oud (lute) Hobbyists Association, the Photographic Society, the Oman Traditional Music Centre, the Sultan Qaboos College for Teaching Arabic to Non-Native Speakers, the Sultan Qaboos Centre for Culture, Washington, the Sultan Qaboos Award for Culture, Arts and Literature, in addition to fulfilling responsibilities related to the affairs of mosques, Islamic institutions and libraries and Qur'anic schools.

The Centre is also responsible for overseeing the Sultan Qaboos Academic Chairs, consisting of the 16 chairs, professorships and fellowships established in the name of His Majesty Sultan Qaboos at 13 international universities. These endowments range in discipline from the humanities to the applied sciences. The Sultan Qaboos Chair in Arab and Islamic Literature at Georgetown University in Washington DC, established in 1980, is the oldest of these academic endowments. The most recent is the Sultan Qaboos Fellowship in Mathematics, established in 2014 at Corpus Christi College, University of Cambridge, in the United Kingdom.

One of the most important tasks assigned to these chairs is that of conducting studies and research in their respective fields. Graduate students undertaking master's and doctoral studies are supervised, and seminars, conferences and scientific workshops are also facilitated.

The Sultan Qaboos College for Teaching Arabic to Non-Native Speakers

reflects His Majesty's belief in the value of facilitating communication within Oman's very cosmopolitan community. The College provides a vital service, which contributes to the removal of language barriers and strengthening of connection between the cultures that inhabit the human landscape of the Sultanate.

In June 2018, in a collaboration with the Sultan Qaboos Cultural Centre in Washington DC and the Omani British Friendship Association, along with the Command and Staff College in Muscat, the College took in a fresh batch of 41 male and female students of

diverse nationality to its summer season. The summer course consists of a seven-week intensive immersion in Arabic language and culture.

On 25 December 2017, the Centre celebrated the winners of the 27th Sultan Qaboos Competition for Memorisation of the Holy Quran at the Sultan Qaboos University in Sohar.

The latest contest attracted 2,156 participants, up from 2,012 in 2016, 1,537 in 2015 and 1,083 in 2014. The ever-increasing popularity of the competition is a positive and encouraging sign of the great value it represents.



The annual ceremony where winners of the Sultan Qaboos Awards for Culture, Arts and Literature are revealed, along with the themes of the upcoming round, is a highly anticipated event. Round Six winners, announced at a press conference on 20 December 2017 at the Sultan Qaboos Centre for Culture and Science, were Jalaluddin Ahmed Amin from Egypt for Culture (Economic Studies); and Saudi Arabia's Saad bin Abdul Rahman Baz'ei for Literature (Literary Criticism). The Arts Award (Architectural Design) was withheld in the latest round

by a decision of the panel, which judged that the required goals and standards had not been adequately met by any of the participating candidates.

Round Seven of these coveted Awards is, as in alternating years, restricted to Omanis, and the subjects of the 2018 focus were announced at the same press conference: Intangible Cultural Heritage under the Culture heading; Short Film under Arts; and Popular Poetry under Literature. Winners receive the Order of Merit for Culture, Science, Arts and Letters, along with a cash grant of RO100,000.

The Sultan Qaboos College for teaching Arabic to Non-Native Speakers is an effective tool in enhancing communication between the Sultanate and non-Arabic speaking communities.

On 25 December 2017, the Centre celebrated the winners of the 27th Sultan Qaboos Competition for Memorisation of the Holy Qur'an at the Sultan Qaboos University in Sohar. The latest contest attracted 2,156 participants, up from 2,012 in 2016, 1,537 in 2015 and 1,083 in 2014. The ever-increasing popularity of the competition is a positive and encouraging sign of the great value it represents.

The Oman Centre for Traditional Music researches and documents Oman's traditional musical arts, as well as collecting, recording and documenting its oral folklore. The Centre has assembled an important archive of Omani traditional music, including audio and video records, and documented most of the differentiated Omani traditional singing styles, their practitioners and festive and ritual occasions where they are performed. It also collects poetry and verse, folk melodies and drum performances, along with the names of notable practitioners and their signature styles across the entire Sultanate, from Musandam to Dhofar.

The Omani Society for Fine Arts helps to support and develop the fine arts in the Sultanate and raise the level of awareness in the community about the visual arts and culture. As well as protecting the arts, it also seeks to enrich them by encouraging them to derive their inspiration from the Omani and Arab cultural heritage and the intellectual and aesthetic values of the society in which they have their roots.

The Society has sponsored many events and activities that serve the arts by fostering the development of appreciation and awareness of creativity.

The Photography Society has excelled repeatedly in international competition, most recently bringing home for the fourth time the World Cup for Photography at the 39th FIAP Youth Digital Biennial 2018, organised by the International Federation for Photographic Art (FIAP) in Bulgaria.

Oman also won four individual awards. Maalai bint Hwaishe al Shikili won the silver medal and Hayat bint Yahya al Balushi took bronze in the under-16 category. The silver medal in the under-21 category was won by Qais bin Salim al Badda'ei and Abdullah bin Said bin Salem al Ruzaiqi won bronze in the same segment.

This outstanding victory run for young Omanis at the 39th FIAP event and similar competitions, in which they are matched against the cream of their international peers, is testament to their ability to compete with the best on merit. Oman previously brought home the World Cup for Photography in 2012, 2014, 2016 and 2017.

The Lute (Oud) Players Amateur Association organised multiple events throughout the year and hosted artists and musical groups to exchange ideas and expand mutual repertoires. Since it was founded just over a decade ago, the Association has done much to sustain and enhance the oud-playing tradition in Oman and to encourage an influx of new enthusiasts.

Sultan Qaboos Higher Centre for Culture and Science

The Cultural Club is a driver of the Sultanate's intellectual revival, with its mission to harmonise literary, cultural, intellectual and scientific events. The combined effect serves the advancement of intellectual and cultural dialogue internally and enhances Oman's contribution to broader trends regionally and internationally.

The National Book Support Programme provides opportunities for individuals in possession of original literary, intellectual or academic material to find publishing outlets for their work. The programme has facilitated the publication of numerous titles of cultural or intellectual value that would otherwise not have seen the light of day.



The Literary Forum seeks to enrich the Sultanate's literary, intellectual and cultural landscape through the creation of literary and intellectual activities that expand the national bank of knowledge. One means to

this end is the publications of books, which themselves serve as launching pads and fuel for its many annual seminars, as indeed does the output of the "Literary Forum in Support of the Omani book."

The Cultural Club brings value to the Sultanate's cultural movement.

The Royal Opera House Muscat

The magnificent Royal Opera House Muscat (ROHM) stands as a bridge between cultures, both within Oman and between Oman and the outside world. It represents the vision with which His Majesty Sultan Qaboos bin Said set out to recognise and celebrate authentic Omani values and the Arab and Islamic identity of Oman. From this solid ground can rise a generation confident enough to be open to the cultures of the world and aware of their great diversity and beauty.

The Royal Opera House unveiled its much anticipated Eighth 2018-2019 season, themed 'Around the World with the Royal Muscat Opera House' with an exciting programme featuring among other highlights Alexander Borodin's Prince Igor on a list of 69 performances and 40 new programmes. The season runs from September 2018 to May 2019 and the Eighth season includes a world premiere of a new opera produced by the Muscat Royal Opera House, as well as joint productions with leading opera houses around the world. In March 2019, ROHM will host the Oman World Festival of Folk Music, the first event of its kind to be held at the House and which will bring to Muscat outstanding musicians both from within the Sultanate and from around the world.

In a pioneering initiative, ROHM has included in the 2018-2019 season a show designed to introduce infants aged 6 to 18 months to music theatre. The show features as part of ROHM's educational outreach programme and supplements its regular activities, which include open houses, tours, workshops and exhibitions, as well as school performances and family and educational productions.



The Royal Opera House Muscat encourages dialogue between indigenous and external cultures.



Competition
39th FIAP Youth
Digital Biennial 2018



Hosting country
People's Republic of Bulgaria



Organised by
International Federation of
Photographic Art (FIAP)



Prize
World Cup –
Under 16 Category



The Weaver





Competition
39th FIAP Youth
Digital Biennial 2018



Hosting country
People's Republic of Bulgaria



Organised by
International Federation of
Photographic Art (FIAP)



Prize
World Cup –
Under 16 Category



Alvagor





Competition
19th Biennial of Nature
Photography 2018



Hosting country
South Africa



Organised by
International Federation of
Photographic Art (FIAP)



Winner
Shehab Al Shandudi



Prize
FIAP Nature Biennial Gold



Rub'a al Khali





Competition

19th Biennial of Nature
Photography 2018



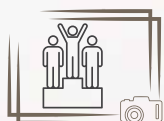
Hosting country

South Africa



Organised by

International Federation of
Photographic Art (FIAP)



Winner

Qassem bin Mohammed bin
Said Al Farsi

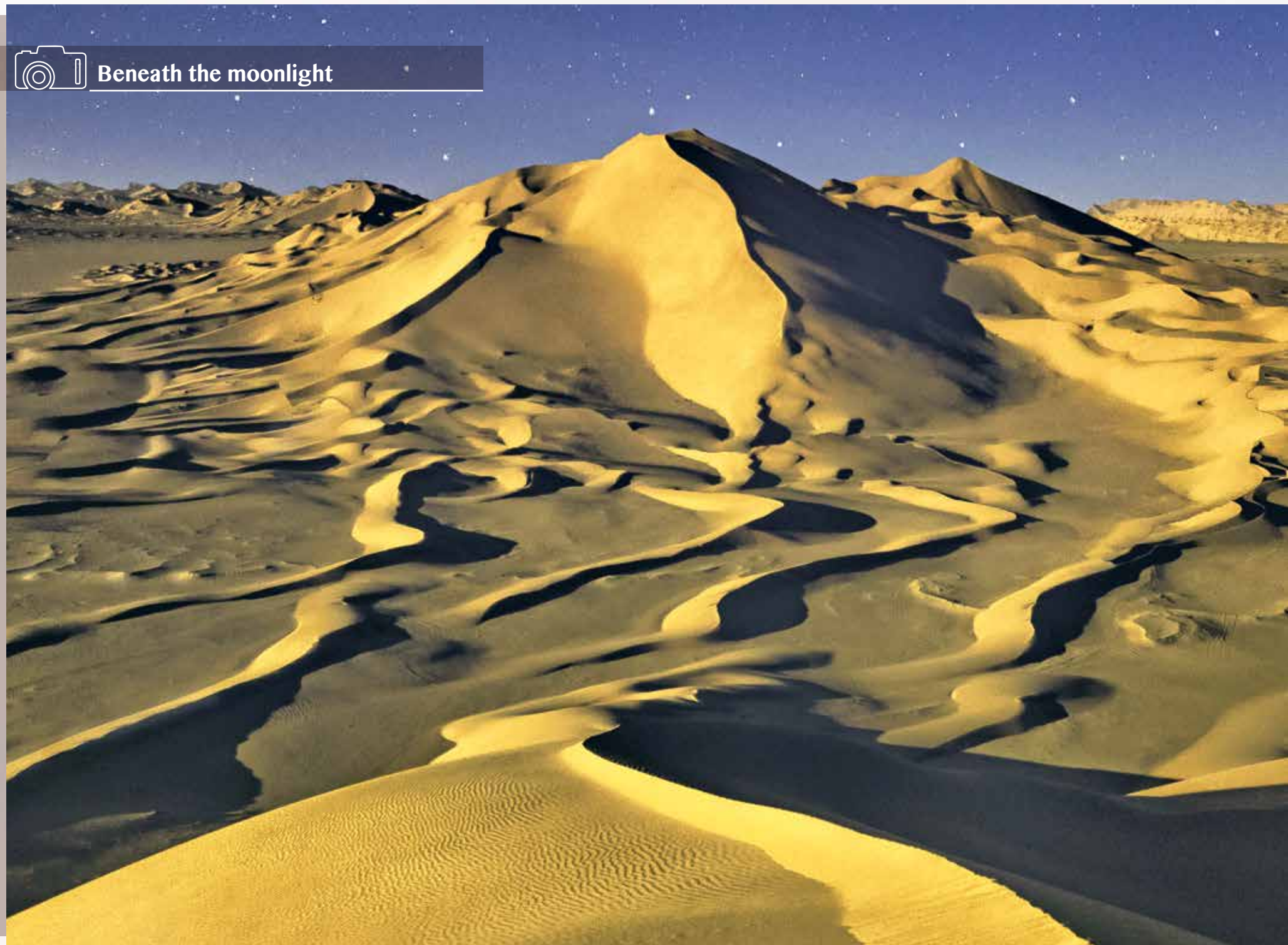


Prize

FIAP Nature Biennial Gold



Beneath the moonlight



"... There is no doubt but that the economy of a nation is its very lifeblood, the source of its strength and the single most important driver of its sovereign status and stability. All our attention is directed towards finding the means and the projects that will stimulate growth in our economy, and provide work and a decent standard of living for every citizen. We have already recognised the significance of the times in which we find ourselves and of our position in the region. As such, we understood that the construction of adequate ports would have to be a priority."

Qaboos bin Said

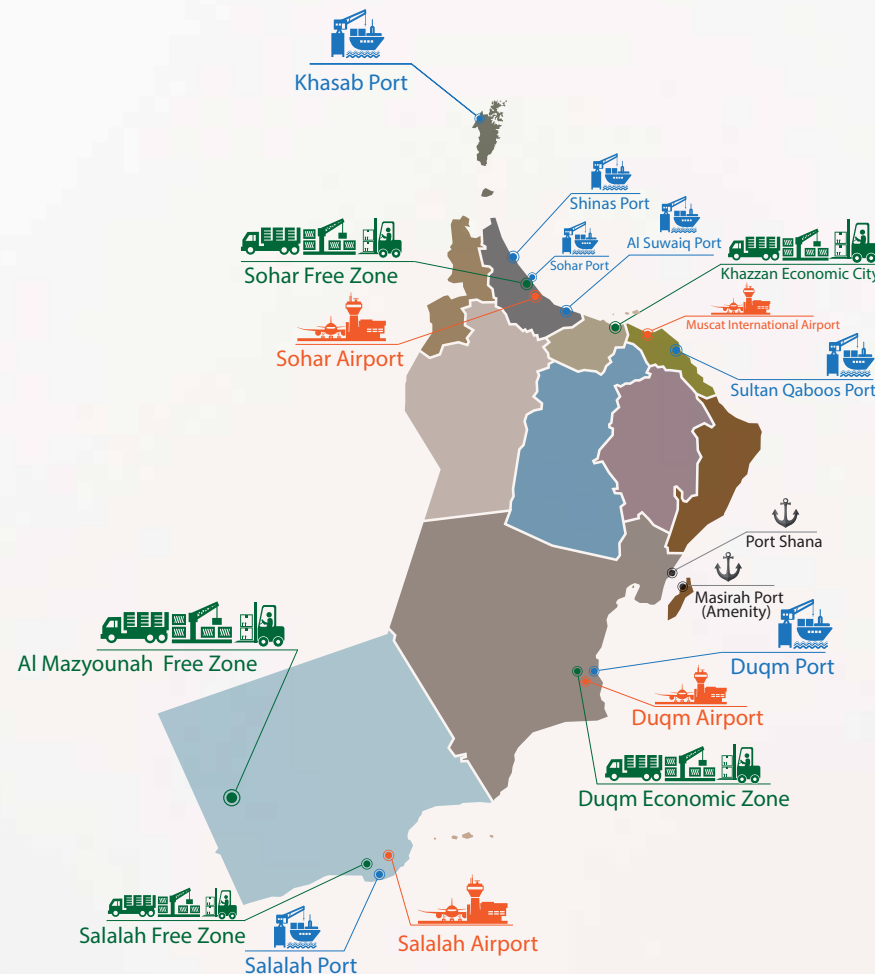
(Opening of Sultan Qaboos Port – 20 November 1974)

Logistics Sector... A Bulwark Of Economic Diversification



History At The Intersection Of Cultures

The geography of Oman is uniquely distinguished by its open windows on three well-trafficked seas, in addition to the Arabian Gulf: the Sea of Oman, the Arabian Sea and the Indian Ocean. From its earliest history, ports have been crucial points of exchange in its economy, never more so than since the arrival of the modern Renaissance. Several major commercial and industrial ports have been expanded or introduced since 1970, and these today contribute hugely to the development of the logistics sector as one of the main drivers of economic diversification.



In 2013, the Sultanate embarked on a long-term logistics strategy, establishing a team of 10 prominent figures recruited from the private sector, government agencies and academia. This team set to work, under the supervision of the Ministry of Transport and Communications and with the backing of a further 65 specialists in all disciplines relevant to logistics development, to draft a strategy for the Sultanate's logistics sector up to 2040, to be known as SOLS 2040 (Sultanate of Oman Logistics Strategy 2040).

SOLS 2040 rests on four pillars:

Market development

The facilitation of trade in the Sultanate

The strengthening of human capital

The introduction of modern logistics techniques

As it rolls out, under the supervision of the Ministry of Transport and Communications, SOLS is operating on the premise that the logistics sector will in 2040 be contributing some RO14 billion to GDP, even as it provides 300,000 jobs in the sector. By then it will have grown to rank the Sultanate among the top 10 countries listed on the global Logistics Performance Index (LPI).

As it stands, the Sultanate's logistics sector is thoroughly and regularly evaluated by international institutions, and in 2018 ranked 13th on the Agility Emerging Markets Logistics Index. Moreover, it held its position among the top ten in the assessments of Market Compatibility and Market Connectedness, achieving third place in the category of Compatibility and sixth in Connectedness. The sub-index of Market Compatibility examines market access and the business climate. The Agility Index provides an expansive view of economic competitiveness and incorporates a survey conducted by more than 500 logistics service executives from across the world. Its analysis assesses 50 emerging markets and ranks country facilities on the basis of size, ease of doing business, infrastructure and transport networks.



Oman Global Logistics Group (ASYAD)

The establishment of the government holding company Omani Global Logistics Group (ASYAD) in June 2016 represented a landmark in the Sultanate's goal of becoming a global logistics hub. Asyad is the government's executive arm, urging forward the logistics sector to its destined vanguard position in the economy, while integrating the many policies that impact on the sector. The Group gathers under its umbrella all of the constituent companies of the logistics sector, in many of which the government is a direct owner or shareholder, such as ports, free zones and road, rail and sea transport companies. At stake is the consolidation

of shared resources, such that they are employed to maximum efficiency and with the promise of maximum return on investment.

In exercise of its function as the executive arm of government, Asyad has worked to translate into material reality the Sultanate's economic diversification plans, as they bear upon its area of responsibility. A principal focus in its approach to development of the logistics sector is the merging of capabilities among sector companies, wherein services are linked, resources more efficiently employed, and integrated solutions offered locally and interconnected solutions globally.

Asyad seeks to establish Oman as a global logistics centre by

Incentivising domestic-global market links by way of supportive trading tools and by promoting greater efficiencies and international best practice standards

Expanding business & trading capacity

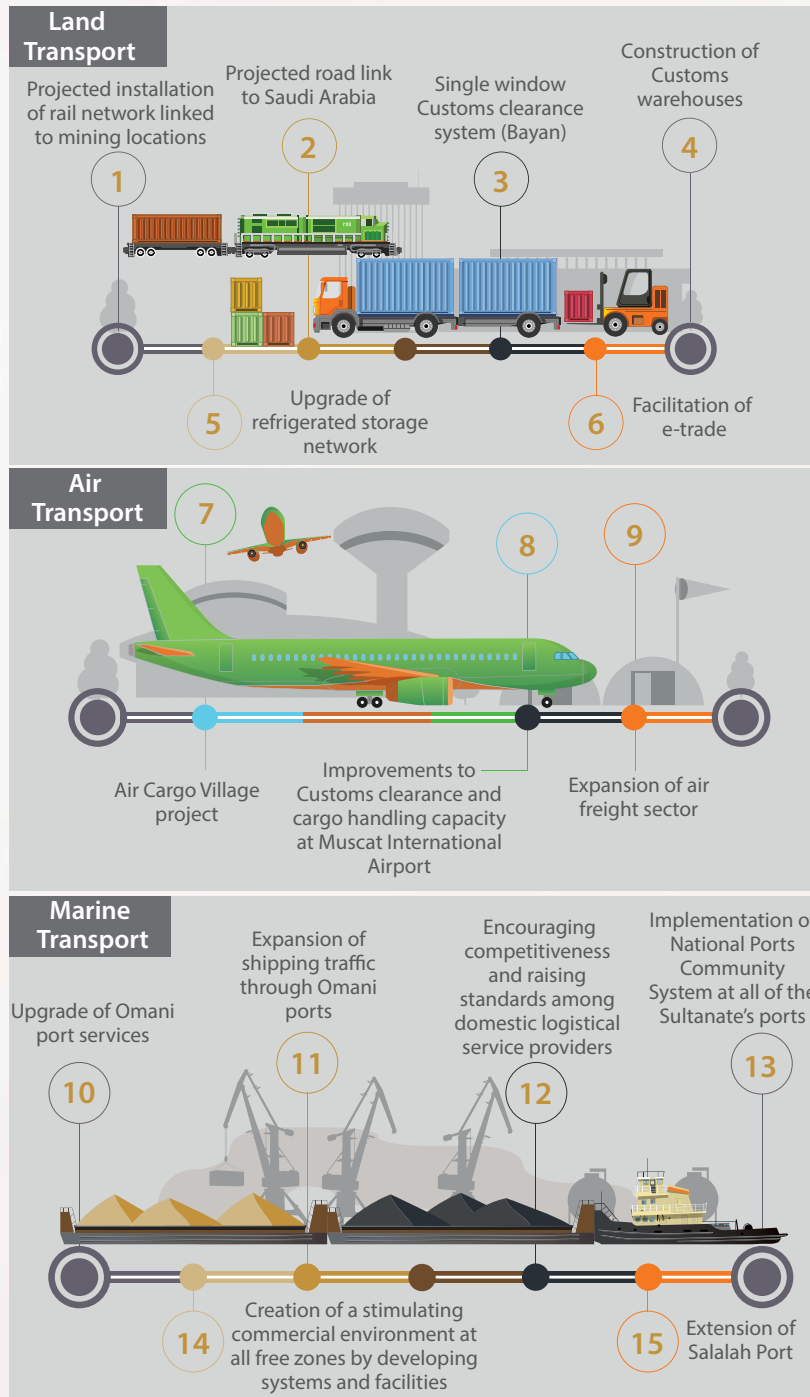


Facilitating the Sultanate's interactions and those of neighbouring countries with world markets

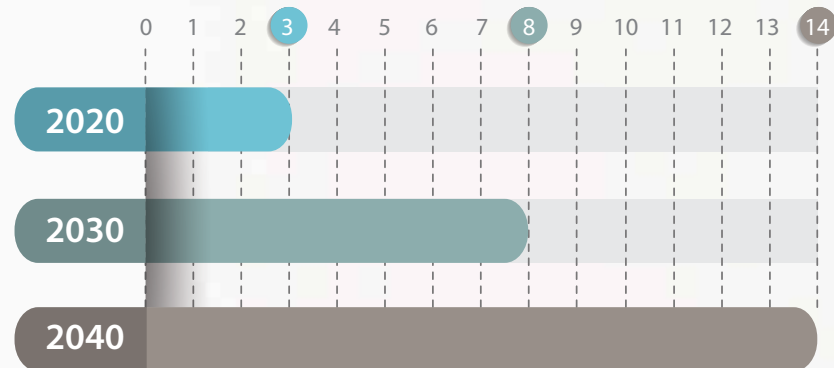
Developing the human resources and owning the technologies that will enable the logistics sector to reach its full potential



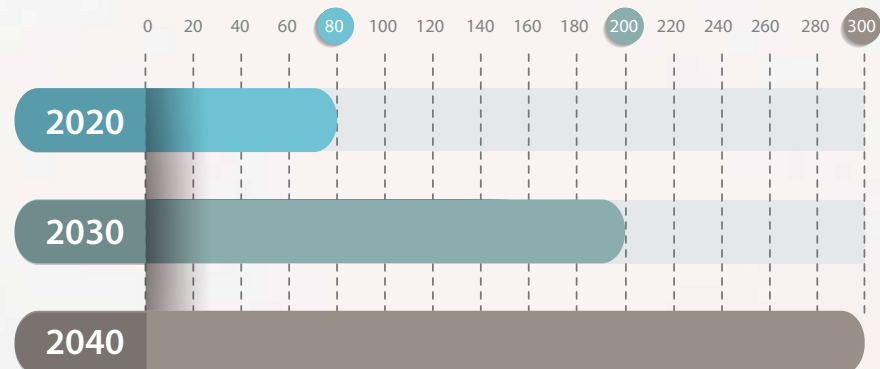
Initiatives in developing the logistics sector



National Logistics Strategy Indicators Contribution to GDP (RO billion)



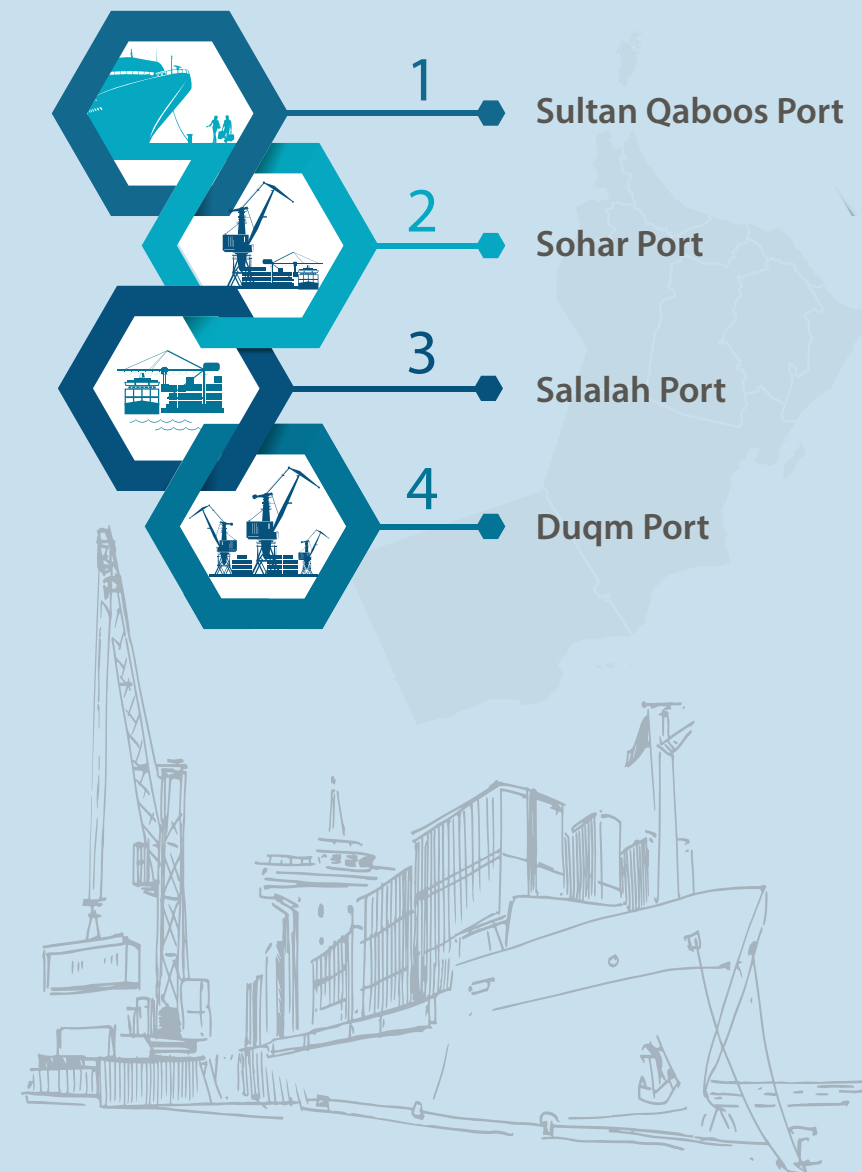
National Logistics Strategy Indicators Employment up to 2040 (Job Vacancies In Thousands)



Ports

Ports are a mainstay of the logistics sector. Oman has been developing its ports steadily in recognition of their primary significance to the goal of attaining economic diversification and attracting investment.

The Sultanate's port network consists of four main facilities:



First: Sultan Qaboos Port



- To be converted into a tourist port

Under the plan, the Sultan Qaboos Port area will become a centre for

- tourist and cultural activities, attracting investment in the tourism and real estate sector.

- The port district will feature several hotels, as well as shopping malls, art galleries and museums.

- The Oman Tourism Development Company (Oman) will implement the overall development plan for its conversion to a tourist port.

- A port company affiliated to the Asyad holding group will manage operations in the port.

Activity at Sultan Qaboos Port 2010 to end July 2018



Number of
Vessels



Exports
(Tonnes)



Imports
(Tonnes)



Number of
Containers
(TE)



Number of
Passengers

2010

1858

1623962

9019922

306464

174088

2011

4650

1543909

8314785

319319

169361

2012

4007

1842948

10419303

344921

183443

2013

2858

2047010

10665508

367795

160659

2014

2324

1185012

6691481

191359

152756

2015

1533

0

1145406

0

176383

2016

1398

0

1093743

0

1093743

2017

1208

0

1006624

0

242157

July
2018

652

0

689284

0

140500

Second: Sohar Port



- The country's principal port of import and export.
- Linked to major industrial projects.
- The total port area is in excess of 45 square kilometres.
- Total dock length: 6,270 metres.
- Contains 22 berths with depths ranging from 16 to 25 metres.
- The port is connected to the Sohar Free Zone, which covers an area of 4,500 hectares.
- In 2017, 3,075 vessels docked at the port, up from 2,634 vessels in 2016.

Activity at Sohar Port 2010 to end July 2018

	 Number of Vessels	 General Cargo (Tonnes)	 Liquid Cargo (Tonnes)	 Number of Containers (TE)
2010	1110	871075	7695769	79988
2011	1398	947514	12758076	78263
2012	1788	1335775	14852239	186345
2013	1800	1336696	16793284	215078
2014	1918	1891155	14837800.6	330668
2015	2354	2642734	16933838	536254
2016	2322	3627439	18944752	620104
2017	3073	5838792	15996472	828833
July 2018	2004	5714887	10931493	579915

Third: Salalah Port



- Salalah Port is acknowledged to be one of the most important container transshipment hubs on the East-West trade lane
- The port area is 10.7 square kilometres
- Contains 22 berths
- Berth depths range from 3 metres to 18 metres.
- Total dock length: 5,637 metres.
- The general cargo station has 14 docks.
- The port offers facilities for yachts, as well as coast guard vessels, cruise ships and passenger ferries.
- Future expansion in the master plan for Salalah Port envisages the inclusion of several berths and facilities for container ships and vessels carrying all types of general cargo. This would increase the capacity of the container terminal to more than 15 million TEUs and expand the general cargo station to a handling capacity of 40 million tonnes of dry bulk cargo and five million tonnes of liquid cargo annually.

Activity at Salalah Port 2010 to end July 2018

	 Number of Vessels	 Goods Handled (Tonnes)	 Number of Containers (TE)	 Number of Passengers
2010	4014	6280228	3485359	31286
2011	3328	6519105	3221718	23202
2012	3139	7259325	3633817	28159
2013	2972	7943841	3343434	25397
2014	2691	10221129.01	3033552	32150
2015	1981	12540367	2569357	26744
2016	2824	13036519	3325044	35524
2017	2396	13586682	3946424	22156
July 2018	1232	8688248	2025999	18658

Fourth: Duqm Port



- Distinguished by its prominent geographical location near international shipping lanes and access to African and Asian markets.
- A major income generating project for the national economy, contributing strongly to its goal of diversification.
- Focuses on the attraction of large industrial investments.
- Has a 7km breakwater.
- The port basin has a depth of 18 metres and the entrance channel 19 metres.
- A multi-purpose port.
- The port's sophisticated infrastructure can receive and handle giant container vessels.

There are secondary ports, viz. Khasab Port in Musandam Governorate and Shinas Port in North Batinah Governorate, the latter being one of the most dynamic portals in trade with the neighbouring countries. In addition, Port Shana in Al Sharqiyah and Masirah port on Masirah Island serve principally as tourist support facilities.

Fifth: Khasab Port

- Located in Musandam Governorate close to the strategic Strait of Hormuz, Khasab Port is an active trading portal for both trade and tourism.
- Promotes local trade with neighbouring countries
- Participates in promoting commerce and serves the economy of Musandam Governorate.
- The port covers an area of 159 hectares.
- Encompasses a commercial berth (300 metres), a fixed berth for fishing vessels (100 metres) and 8 floating docks.

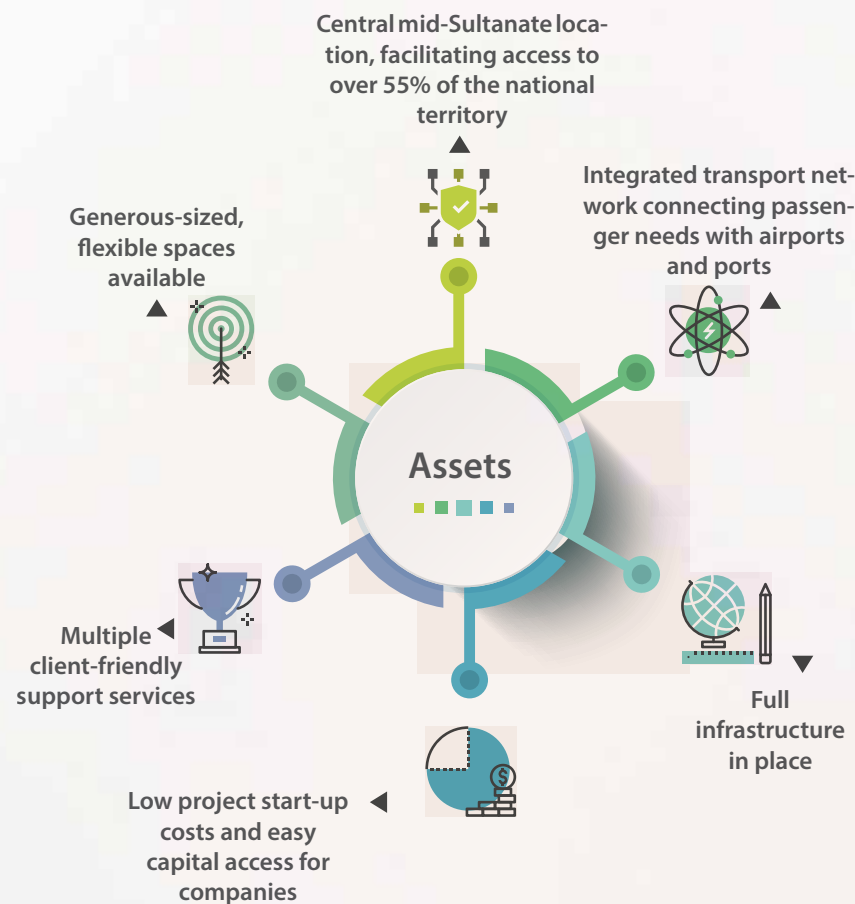


Khazzan Economic City

The Khazzan Economic City is a recent introduction to the Sultanate's logistics project. It was established as a land port that would operate in harmony with the overall logistics service network, incorporating sea ports, airports, road networks, border crossings, free zones, and economic and industrial zones.

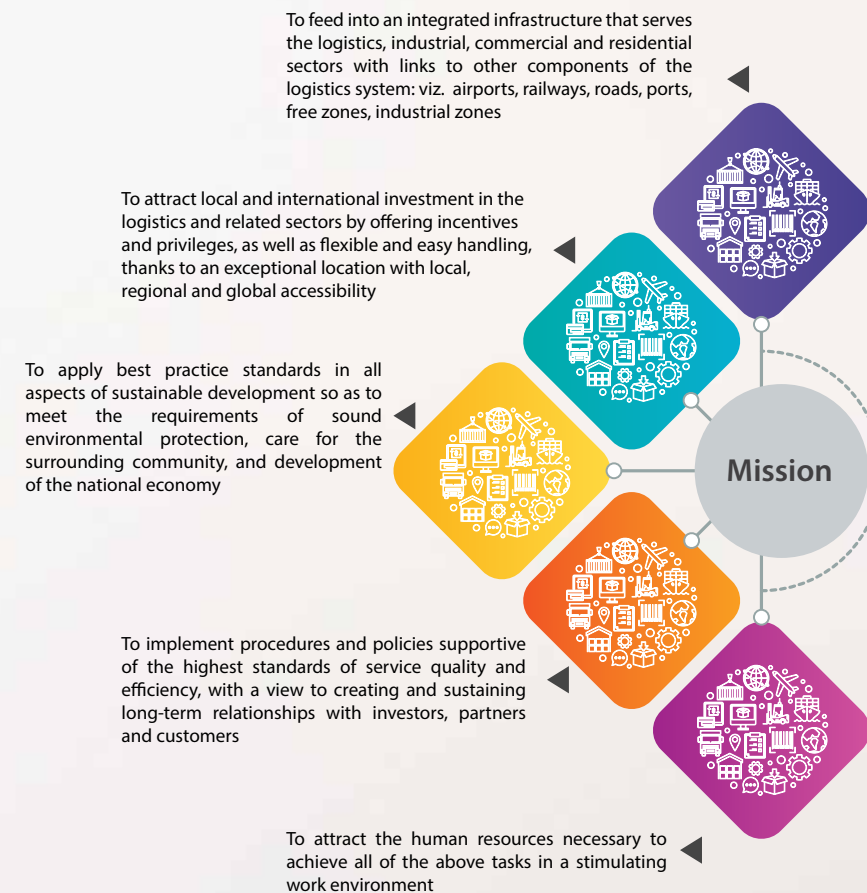
Located in the southern province of Al Batinah, it is located about 40 kilometres from Muscat International Airport and 180 kilometres from Sohar Port. It abuts the Al Batinah Highway and is very adjacent to other main roads that criss-cross the Sultanate.

Kazzan Economic City has a current total ground coverage of 51 million square metres and plans are to develop it by several stages. In March 2018, a tripartite development agreement was signed by the Oman Logistics Company, an affiliate of the Asyad Group, the Oman Investment Corporation and the Mohammed Ali Al Swailem Group (MASCO)..



The development of Khazzan streamlines with the government's overall plan for the infrastructure of the logistics sector. It will advance the mobility of commerce in the Sultanate, provide promising investment opportunities for the private sector, increase competitiveness and support the Sultanate's goal of becoming a major logistics hub, regionally and on a world scale.

Phase One of the Khazzan logistics hub includes a land port, customs clearance depots, support services, including general administrative services to facilitate investor procedures, a truck servicing centre and a logistics service area offering security services and continuous monitoring. It includes ready-to-lease warehouses of varying size, dry stores, cold stores, open storage areas and individual closed units, and commercial depots, facilities and services. The multi-use green zone constitutes the pulse of the City, encompassing offices, shops, residential, hotel accommodation, educational services, training, and other service facilities.



Economic and free zones

The Duqm Economic Zone and the Free Zones at Sohar, Salalah and Al Mazyunah are major components of the logistics and industrial sectors.

In 2017, the Duqm Economic Zone saw the opening of Al Nahda Village, with an accommodation capacity of some 17,000 people. Al Nahda was established to house the growing workforce employed by the Zone's various projects. The Village represents a substantial enhancement of housing quality and living standards in Duqm. Again in 2017, agreement was reached to proceed with construction of liquid and bulk cargo docks at the port. This will equip Duqm to handle exports of refined liquids and enhance the value of its contribution to the national economy. A usufruct with construction agreement was also reached in 2017 which will see completion of the oil storage station at Ras Markaz that was

envisaged in the Sultanate's economic diversification plan. It will go towards the creation of a strategic national oil inventory and prepare the Sultanate to become a global centre for the storage of crude oil and its derivatives. Also in 2017, two foundation stones were laid, initiating giant projects. The US\$10.7 billion Sino-Oman Industrial City in Duqm will rise on a ground area of some 1,172 hectares; and the landmark bus manufacturing plant being constructed as a strategic partnership project with Qatar represents a new departure for the Sultanate.

Duqm refinery, an investment project shared by the Sultanate and the State of Kuwait, broke ground in 2018. On completion, it will have a refining capacity of 230,000 bpd.

The Duqm Economic Zone covers an area of 2,000 square kilometres

and encompasses the key logistics services components represented by Duqm port, dry dock and airport. The port is undergoing several interlocking infrastructure projects that will propel it to full commercial exploitation. The dry dock has been in operation since 2011, and at May 2018 had serviced 570 vessels. The Duqm

operation is an impressive success story and the facility is today being guided by management towards a future invested in the steel industry and in the repair of offshore oil platforms, thanks to a growing reputation earned for its services in the repair, maintenance and conversion of oceangoing vessels.



The dry dock strengthens the global standing of the Duqm Special Economic Zone.



Several contracts and investment agreements were concluded involving the Al Mazyunah Free Zone. By the end of 2017, a total of 160 enterprises had signed investment contracts with the Free Zone management, up from 115 at the end of 2016. Moreover, the Zone handled and/or re-exported 64,000 tonnes of goods, as compared with 28,000 tonnes in 2016.

In 2018, Salalah Free Zone succeeded in attracting substantial new investments, including a US\$365 million pharmaceutical plant contract with a major international company, which will produce upwards of 100 pharmaceutical

compounds.

The Sohar Free Zone logged several positive developments in 2017, including a land lease agreement with a leading Indian cotton yarn manufacturer. The world-renowned company is investing US\$300 million in its project, which is expected to produce 100,000 tonnes of finished yarn annually for export to textile factories overseas. The Free Zone, meanwhile, continues to improve on its logistics infrastructure, establishing an assembly point for the products of small Free Zone investors who ship to destinations across the Sultanate and overseas. The Free Zone benefits from

Duqm Port has established itself as a world class facility.

the services provided by the port of Sohar, which logged an impressive 11% increase in the volume of cargo handled by the port to more than 85 million tonnes in 2017, along with a 36% increase in the volume of containers handled, to some 840,000 TEUs. A 40 hectare sector of the port area was also dedicated to food-related activities, and today houses a wheat mill, a sugar refining plant and a storage and distribution space assigned to cereals and vegetable oils. The mill is run by Sohar Mills, which will have a maximum daily production capacity of 500 tonnes. The Oman Sugar Refinery Company owns

and operates the sugar refining plant, with annual capacity to reach one million tonnes. The newly dedicate zone will serve as an integrated food-processing hub. The existing industries are pioneering what is expected to become a principal activity in the Sohar Free Zone, and will be joined by 26 other companies operating in the region.

The Sultanate is working to improve the performance of the free zones, with a view to enhancing the country's ability to attract more foreign investment, and to consolidate independent endeavours to promote these incentive areas abroad.



Air transport

Air transport is a fast-growing arm of the Sultanate's logistics capability, indispensable to the rapid shipment of perishable or urgently needed goods. Statistics show an increase in the value of imports air-shipped to Oman in 2017 to RO1.8 billion, up 55.3% from RO1.2 billion in 2016. Indeed air cargo accounted for 17.7% of all registered goods imports in 2017, valued overall at RO10.6 billion.

The air transport sector

underwent several positive developments during 2018. On 20 March, the new passenger terminal at Muscat International Airport came on stream. The airport has a current capacity of 20 million passengers annually and will have a final fully expanded capacity of 56 million passengers annually. Passenger figures for 2017 using Muscat International Airport grew 16% over the previous year, from 12 million to 14 million. Of this figure, 12.8

The new Muscat International Airport is a landmark project in the Sultanate's development strategy.

million arrived or departed on international flights and 1.2 million on domestic flights.

The number of international and domestic flights was up in 2017 to 114,000, from 103,000 in 2016.

During 2018, the Oman Aviation Group was founded as a government holding company under the umbrella of which all government-owned civil aviation companies, including Oman Air, Oman Airports Management, Oman Aviation Services and other companies under establishment, including the Oman Navigation and Meteorology Company, will operate.

The Oman Aviation Group is part of the overall government strategy of developing and managing government investments in infrastructure and services in the civil aviation sector effectively. The building of key performance indicators will help streamline the financial and economic administration of the Group's subsidiaries.

Group strategy is focused on optimising the capabilities of the aviation sector by coordinating closely with the tourism and logistics sectors as its principal resources. It plans to restructure Oman Air by way of a company transformation programme which will change the airline's business model to meet the future vision of the tourism and logistics sectors. The changes will maximise organisational efficiency in

areas such as sales, operations, support and procurement.

Oman Aviation's plans to establish airport cities will enhance the potential of airports and expand related activities. Such investments it intends to develop through partnerships with the private sector. Also projected are free zones sited at the Sultanate's various airports, which are expected to draw additional foreign investment and increase collateral revenue. Overall, this intensive activity in and around the aviation sector will serve to reinforce the Sultanate's trading and other connections with the outside world, drawing it in from the periphery and towards the active centre of global engagement.

The Group's efficiency drive is expected to improve productivity in ground handling, catering, shipping and hospitality infrastructural works. A successful outcome will increase the direct contribution of the aviation sector to GDP, as well as fuelling growth indirectly through the future contributions of the tourism and logistics sectors. Considerable added value will come from other target sectors, such as retail, loading and discharge, hotels, restaurants and tourist facilities. As Omani airports ascend the Skytrax rankings, projections of increased traffic envisage passenger numbers reaching an annual 39 million by 2030

Muscat International Airport Terminal

Commercial operation began

- 20 March 2018

Total area

- 580,000 square metres

Designed and developed to meet IATA's Service Level A standards

Capacity

- 20 million passengers annually in Phase One
- 56 million passengers annually when fully developed

Main structural components:

- 3 wings, each having 3 levels
- 118 flight clearance desks for airlines
- 82 flight clearance desks for travel clearance by the Royal Oman Police
- 12,000 sq m retail space
- 10 baggage lines with capacity of 5,200 bags per hour



Road transport

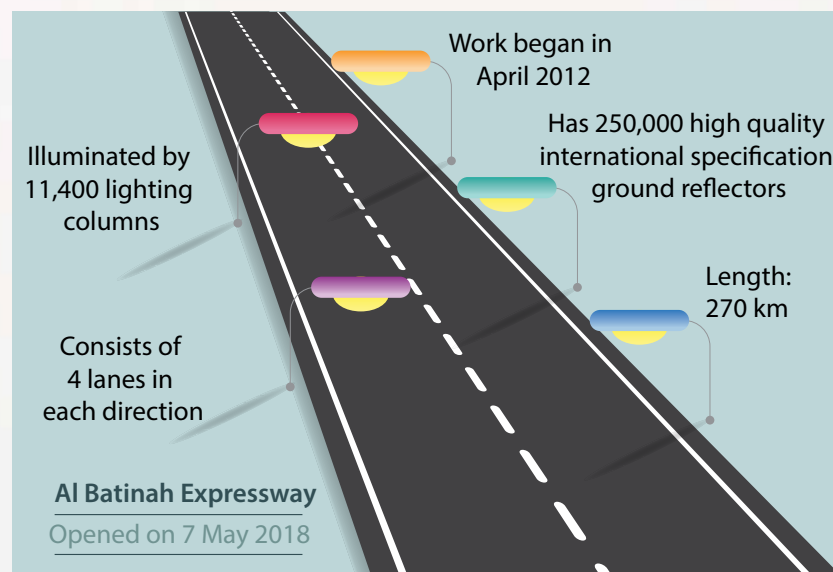
Road transport constitutes one of the busiest components of the logistics sector and is one of the reasons for the success of the sector in achieving its objectives to date. The Sultanate has been working to develop road transport to best benefit multiple economic, social and tourism goals.

At the close of December 2017, the Sultanate had 14,846 km of paved road, and this was in addition to 17,135 km of gravel and unpaved road.

The 270 km Al Batinah Expressway opened in 2018, linking the governorates of Muscat and North and South Al Batinah. The expressway is a major addition to the road network, with its connections to land, sea and air ports on the one hand and to markets and industrial, economic and free zones on the other.

Several other road projects were completed in 2017, including a 90 km stretch of the 248 km Al Sharqiyah Expressway, a 181.4 km stretch of the Sinaw-Mahout-Duqm road (sections I and II), dualisation of the 35.5 km long Taqa-Mirbat road and of the 47 km Nizwa-Ibri road (phase II, section II).

Principal among the national road projects ongoing or completed in 2018 were, in addition to work on the Al Sharqiyah Expressway, the dualisation of, respectively, the 320 km Adam-Thumrait road (sections I and II), of the 38.5 km Barka-Nakhl road, the 14 km Aqaba-Rustaq road, the 41.9 km Al Abila-Al Fayyadh in Buraimi and the 34 km Ibri-Yanqul road (phase two). All projects are overseen by the Ministry of Transport and Communications.



Oman Railways

Oman Rail is working on a transportation solution that will feed into the national logistics network with the specific brief of transporting raw materials to port. The 'metal line', as the 375 km rail project has come to be known, will initially transport gypsum and limestone from quarries in the Shwaymiyah district of Dhofar to Duqm port for export to international markets.

The metal line is designed to dovetail with the GCC rail network, and is expected to contribute to infrastructural development along the trajectory of the railway line.



*" The progress of a country
and the prosperity of its people depends to
a large extent on its economic strength. And so, we
have always pursued economic policies that will
sustain economic growth at an appropriate pace,
such that our country is at all times equipped to
weather the negative effects of global economic
recession. "*

Qaboos bin Said

(12th National Day – 18 November 1982)

Economic Development



ECONOMIC DEVELOPMENT

In 2017 the Sultanate's national economic indicators showed a number of positive trends. Revenues rose to RO8.5 billion, up from RO7.6 billion in 2016, while public spending was cut from RO12.9 billion in 2016 to RO12.2 billion. Efforts to control expenditure and the relative revival in the price of oil helped reduce Oman's overall budget deficit to RO3.7 billion – down 30.1% from its 2016 figure of RO5.3 billion. The deficit was funded through local and foreign loans and withdrawals from the state's reserves.

Oman's 2017 Gross Domestic Product (GDP) at current prices topped RO27.9 billion - its highest level for three years (up from RO25.7 billion in 2016 and RO26.5 billion in 2015). The oil sector recorded a growth rate of 20.8% in 2017 to RO8.4 billion, compared with RO6.9 billion in 2016, while the non-oil

sector grew by 3.9% to RO20.4 billion, up from RO19.7 billion in 2016.

Total commodity exports in 2017 rose to RO12.6 billion compared with the 2016 figure of RO10.3 billion – a rise of 22.7%. Oil and gas exports, non-oil exports and re-exports were significant contributors to this growth. Oil and gas exports rose from RO5.8 billion to RO7.3 billion, with non-oil exports rising from around RO2.4 billion to RO3.1 billion. The value of re-exported goods rose 2.6% to over RO2.1 billion.

Commodity imports rose 19.5% to RO10.6 billion – up from RO8.9 billion in 2016.

During this period the General State Reserve Fund increased its investments in the Sultanate from 2% to 10% with the aim of stimulating the national economy and boosting the performance of several economic sectors.



Revenues rose to RO8.5 billion – up from RO7.6 billion in 2016

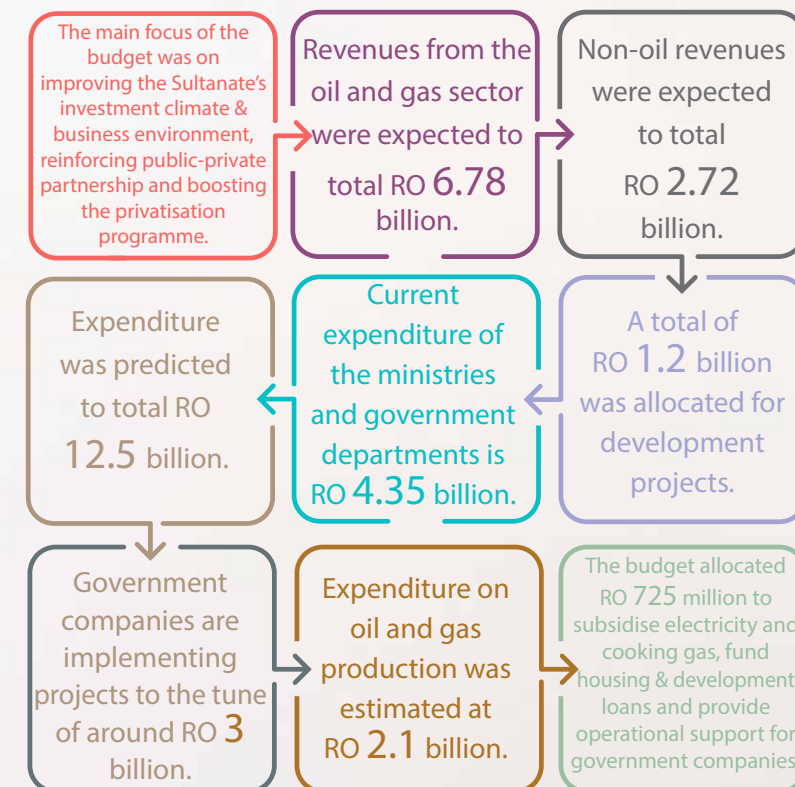
The 2018 General State Budget

Where revenues and expenditure were concerned, the 2018 General State Budget included a number of precautionary measures and incentives. Total revenues were estimated at RO9.5 billion and the price of oil was calculated on a basis of US\$50 per barrel. Overall public expenditure was estimated at around RO12.5 billion, while some 84% (RO2.5 billion) of the deficit, expected to total RO3 billion, will be financed by external

and domestic borrowing ; the remaining amount, estimated at around RO500 million, will be funded by reserve financing.

The budget aims to maintain the state's fiscal and economic stability, improve economic growth rates and safeguard the stability of the public's standard of living. Most of it – around RO3.9 billion – was allocated for the education, health, housing and social welfare sectors.

The 2018 General State Budget



GLOBAL COMPETITIVENESS REPORT

2018

The Sultanate was ranked highly in several positive indicators in the 2018 Global Competitiveness Report, achieving a score of 3.4 points over the course of the year. Globally, this is the highest index value score and resulted in the Sultanate being ranked 47th globally, compared with 61st last year.

47th

The Sultanate's
2018 ranking

**Highest
Value**

The Sultanate showed the highest index value improvement at a global level, scoring 3.4 points in 2018.

**14
Positions**

The improvement rate in the Sultanate's rankings was the highest in the world.

Fourth in
the Arab world

The Sultanate was ranked fourth in the Arab world in 2018.

This represents a rise of two positions compared with 2017.

**The only
one** in the Gulf



The Sultanate is the only Gulf country to show an improvement in its rankings in the 2018 report.



GLOBALLY

In the 2018 Global Competitiveness Report the Sultanate was ranked as follows in the report's indicators

Freedom from terrorist incidents

1

Globally

1

In the Arab World

Business cost of organised crime

4

Globally

1

In the Arab World

Confidence in police services

5

Globally

1

In the Arab World

Quality of road infrastructure

8

Globally

1

In the Arab World

Quality of road network

12

Globally

2

In the Arab World

Co-operation in employer-employee relations

14

Globally

3

In the Arab World

Protection of intellectual property

17

Globally

1

In the Arab World

Independence of the judiciary

18

Globally

1

In the Arab World

Property rights

20

Globally

1

In the Arab World

Time needed to start up commercial activity

36

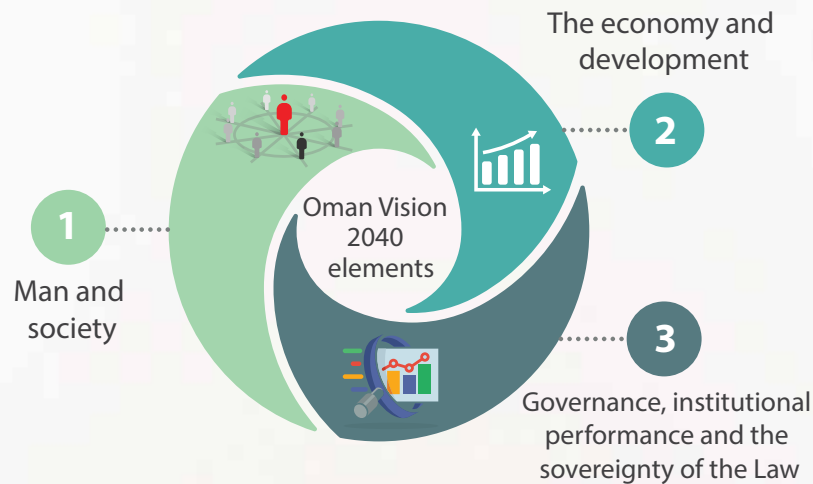
Globally

1

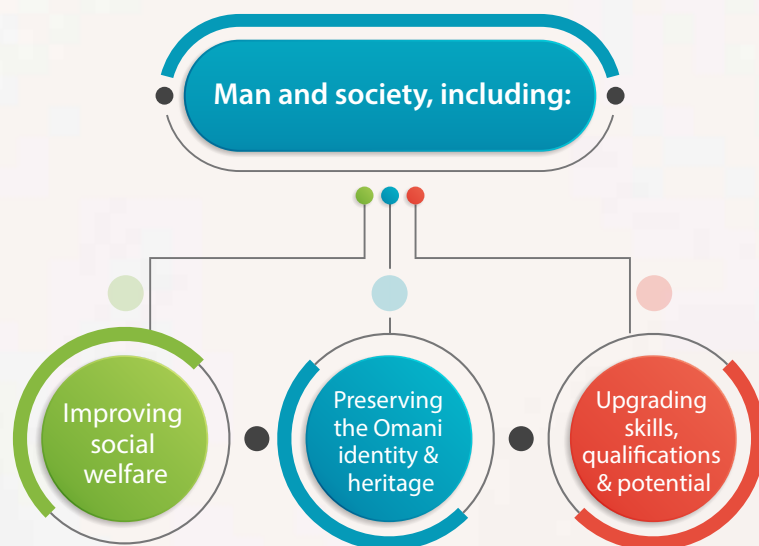
In the Arab World



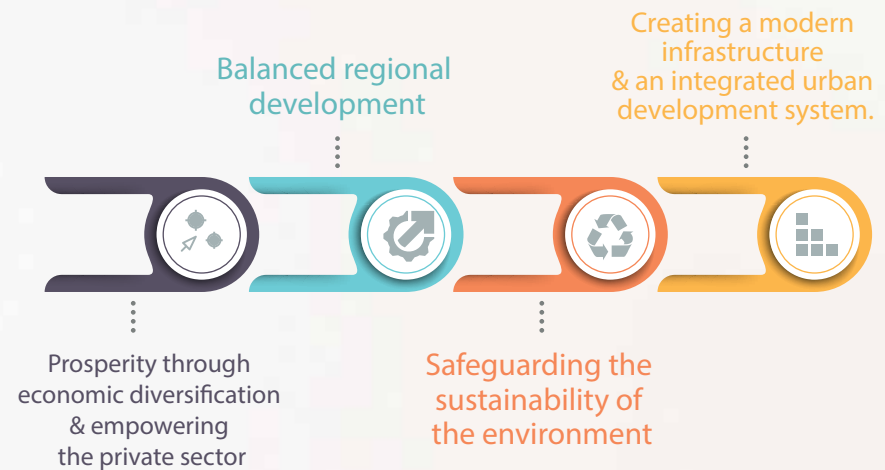
Oman Vision 2040



Implementation of the Vision will begin in 2021 with the launch of the 10th Five-Year Plan



The economy & development, including:



Governance, institutional performance and the sovereignty of the Law.

The 2018 "All Oman Initiative" was aimed at promoting a participatory approach to Oman Vision 2040 by involving the local community and including its priorities and aspirations in the Vision document.

Oman Vision 2040's final document is expected to be ready during the first quarter of 2019.

The Tender Board

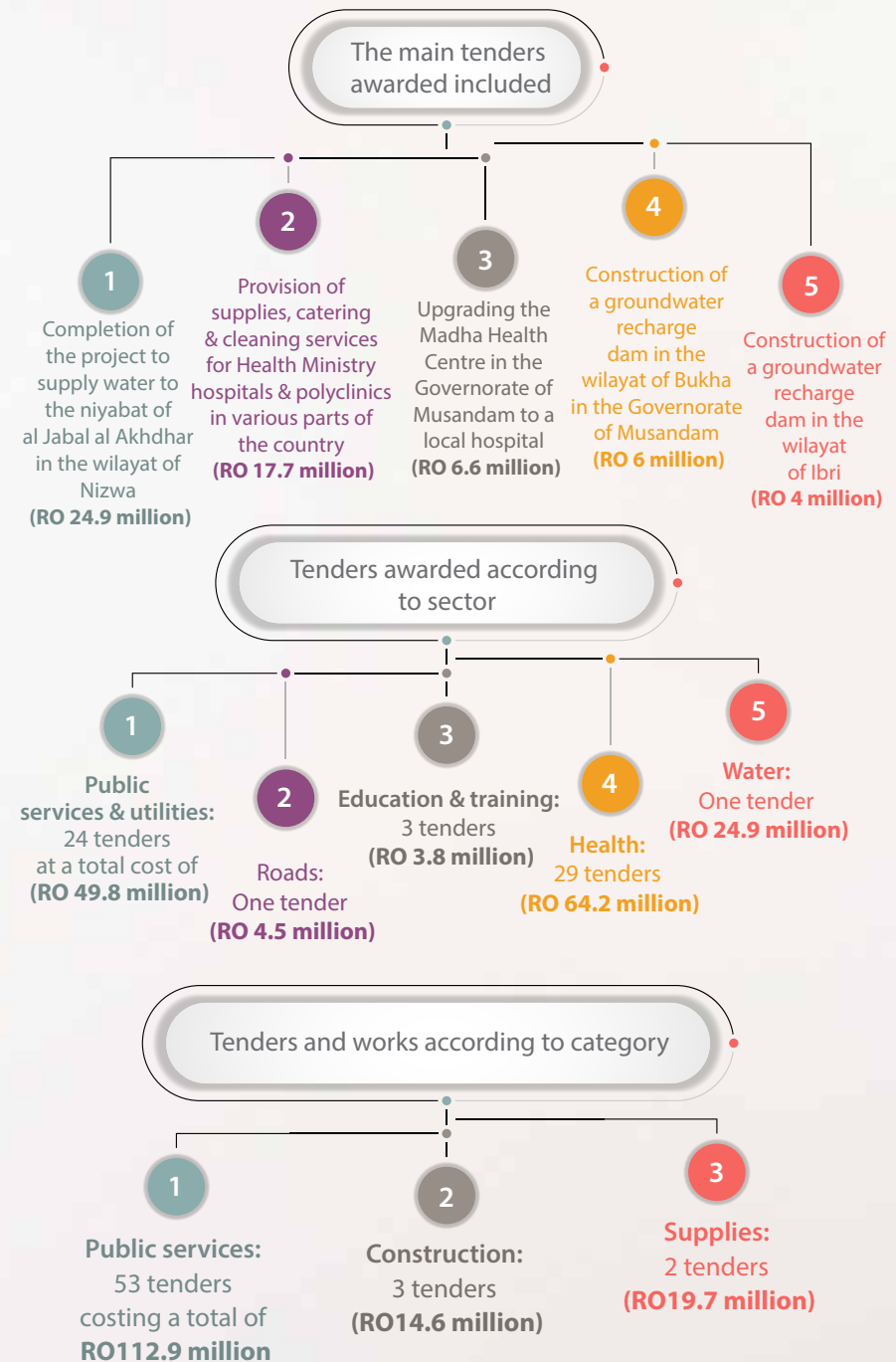


The Tender Board is responsible for issuing tenders, opening bids and analysing and assigning all government tenders valued at more than RO3 million.

In 2017 the Tender Board approved 58 tenders costing RO147.3 million, compared with 59 at a cost of RO285.4 million in 2016. The Tender Board, established in 1973, is responsible for inviting tenders, opening and analysing bids and awarding all government tenders valued at over RO3 million. The Board exercises its functions through a set of procedures which stimulate

better performance by government agencies and the efficient use of public funds, while on the one hand ensuring equal opportunities for all companies and establishments to compete to provide services and implement government projects, and, on the other, supporting small and medium enterprises.

In 2017 the Tender Board awarded 58 tenders at a cost of RO147.3 million



Oil and Natural Gas

During 2017 the companies operating in the concession areas drilled, tested or evaluated 58 oil exploratory wells. (Of these, 21 were drilled in 2015 and 2016 and tested in 2017.) Petrophysical analyses and productivity tests proved positive in several of them and the results were added to the existing reserves, raising the Sultanate's estimated reserves of crude oil and condensates at the end of 2017 up to around 4.7 billion barrels. In 2017 the Sultanate cut its oil production in line with the policies agreed upon by OPEC and the independent exporters with the aim of stabilising oil prices. Following this commitment, average daily production of crude and oil condensates fell to around 972 thousand barrels per day (bpd) – down from the 2016 figure of 1.4 million bpd. The Sultanate's overall production in 2017 was around 354.2 million barrels compared with

367.5 million barrels in 2016.

Oman's oil exports in 2017 saw a drop of 8.6% from 321.9 million barrels in 2016 to 294.2 million barrels. China was the main importer of Omani oil (77% of total oil exports), followed by India (9%), Japan (3.5%) and South Korea (3%).

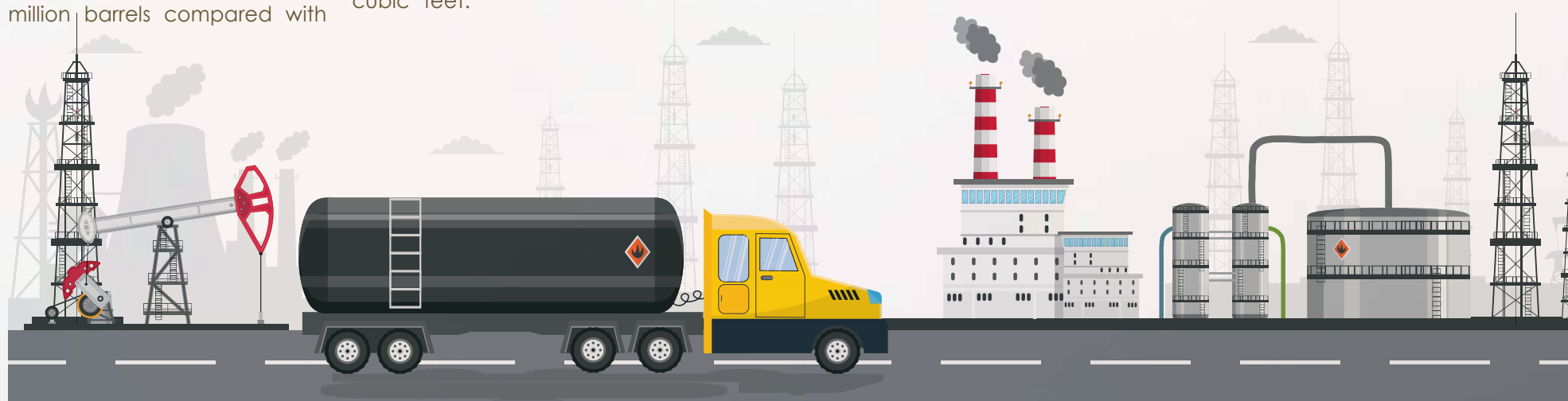
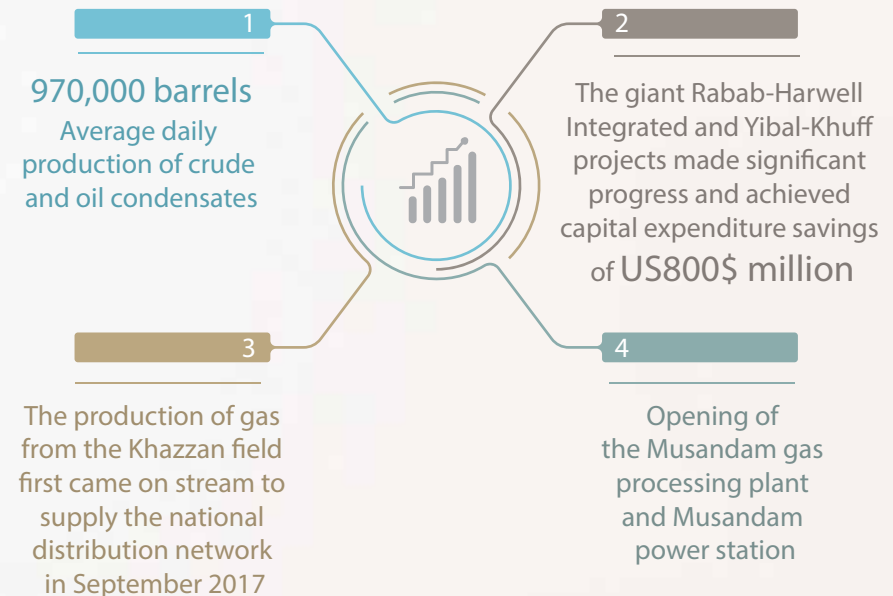
The average price of Omani crude in 2017 saw a rise of 27.8% to US\$51.3 per barrel, as against US\$40.1 per barrel in 2016.

With regard to the gas sector, the companies operating in the oil concession areas drilled, tested or evaluated 32 gas exploratory wells in 2017. (Of these, 11 were drilled in 2015 and 2016 and tested in 2017.) Analyses and productivity tests proved positive in several of them and the results were added to the existing reserves, raising the country's estimated gas reserves to around 24.9 trillion cubic feet.

In 2017 the Sultanate's daily production of natural gas averaged around 106.8 million cubic metres. Exports of liquefied

natural gas (LNG) totalled some 8.6 million metric tonnes and gas condensates 238,000 metric tonnes.

Positive developments in the oil and gas sector in 2017



The Banking Sector

By the end of 2017 credit issued by the banking sector had risen to RO23.6 billion – a rise of 6.4% compared with the figure at the end of 2016.

Credit granted to the private sector rose 6.5% to RO21 billion, while deposits in the banking sector increased by 5.6% to

RO21.6 billion. Private sector deposits rose by 5.2% to RO14 billion. With regard to the banks' financial solvency, at the end of December 2017 the basic capital reserves and undistributed profits of the traditional commercial banks stood at around RO4.6 billion.

The banking sector showed good growth in 2017

- 1 Financial solvency data on the quality of the assets, allocation cover and capital adequacy of the banks operating in the Sultanate showed that they were in a strong position.
- 2 In 2017 the banking sector continued to maintain a reasonable growth rate and supported diversification initiatives. These included providing the credit needed by small and medium enterprises.
- 3 Figures for credit granted to the private sector on a sector-by-sector basis show that credit advanced to individuals (mostly in the form of personal loans) accounted for 46.1% of the total, followed by non-finance companies (45.7%), finance companies (4.9%) and other sectors (3.3%).
- 4 Figures for private sector deposits on a sector-by-sector basis show that individuals accounted for around 48.2%, non-finance companies 29.9% and finance companies 19.1%.
- 5 The traditional commercial banks' investments in securities rose 19.1% in 2017 to RO2.9 billion. Investments in government treasury bills totalled RO454.9 million, while investment in longer term government securities (including development bonds and other government bonds and financial instruments) rose 2.3% to RO1.3 billion.

The Central Bank of Oman (CBO) A Pivotal Role In Ensuring Financial Stability

The bank deposit insurance scheme helps provide comprehensive insurance cover for specified bank deposits. It encourages saving, bolsters financial stability and reduces the impact of the risks that traditionally occur in the banking sector.

As well as studying the changes that take place in the overall economy and the different economic sectors within the Sultanate, the CBO also keeps a close eye on financial security indicators and events outside the country with the aim of establishing appropriate links with other institutions and maintaining a model that is compatible with the course followed by the financial system.

The National e-Payment Gateway was launched in November 2016 to allow online payments with debit/prepaid payment cards for government services and internet shopping. In addition to being an efficient system, the Gateway provides enhanced security and minimises the risk of losses as a result of fraud.

The Central Bank of Oman (CBO) oversees the banking and financial establishments operating in the Sultanate and reinforces the financial security system.

Following the introduction of Islamic banking in the Sultanate the CBO endeavoured to set up an Islamic bank deposit insurance scheme to operate in parallel with the current system.

The CBO operates a sound policy on issuing licences and applies a raft of precautionary and supervisory procedures and controls in order to maintain monetary and financial stability and help promote growth.

The Credit Data Centre collates credit data on loan establishments with the aim of ensuring the efficient management of their credit risks and facilitating the granting of credit to all the economic sectors.

The Capital Market

During 2017 the capital market sector injected RO1.9 billion into the national economy – a rise of 19% compared with 2016. The Capital Market Authority (CMA) worked to provide an attractive investment climate and this helped boost the market value of the companies listed on Muscat Securities market (MSM), leading to a rise in domestic and foreign investment in them.

At the end of 2017 the market value of the public joint stock companies stood at around RO8.1 billion, or 29% of that year's GDP, which totalled RO27.9 billion.

At the end of 2017 the total market value of the securities listed on MSM stood at some RO17.9 billion, including closed joint stock companies (market value RO7.1 billion) and bonds and sukuk (Shariah-compliant

bonds) (RO2.6 billion).

In 2017 the CMA issued a raft of new rules and regulations. One of the most significant of these – the new regulations on real estate investment funds – marks a positive step towards reinforcing a major financing instrument which will help further regulate the property market and encourage more individuals to benefit from what the sector has to offer. Several provisions of the Capital Market Law were also amended and rules on changing the status of public joint stock companies were approved. The CMA's board of directors also agreed that MSM should become a company fully owned by the State General Reserve Fund, as a preliminary step towards offering it for public subscription in future.



Ruwi commercial district, home to the headquarters of the capital market, as well as leading banks and commercial institutions.

Muscat Securities Market

Muscat Securities Market (MSM) was affected by regional and international conditions in 2017 and this led to a fall in the main and sector indices. At the end of

2017 the main MSM index closed down 683 points at 5,099 points, while the trading volume rose in value to RO992.7 million – up from RO958.8 million in 2016.

Item	2017	2016	change %
MSM Index (points)	5099.28	5782.71	- %11.8
No. of shares traded	4,263,993,120	4,540,986,403	- %6.1
Value of shares traded (RO)	916,601,051	945,458,015	- %3
No. of bonds traded	11,600,347	92,370,953	- %87.4
Value of bonds traded (RO)	76,115,641	13,411,387	%467.5
No of deals	163,954	201,106	- %18.4
Total securities traded	4,275,593,467	4,633,357,356	- %7.7
Total value traded (RO)	992,716,692	958,869,403	%3.5
No. of companies trading	119	109	%9.1
No. of companies rising in value	22	42	- %47.6
No. of companies falling in value	75	50	%50
No. of companies unchanged	22	17	%29.4
Market value of public joint stock companies (million RO)	8183.03	8939.64	- %8.4
Market value of bond and sukuk market (million RO)	2631.99	1993.46	%32
Market value of closed joint stock companies (million RO)	7135.83	6355.02	%12.2
Total market value (million RO)	17950.85	17288.12	%3.8

The Insurance Sector

At the end of 2017 the insurance sector's direct premiums totalled RO451.5 million, compared with RO450.2 million at the end of 2016. Insurance also contributed around 1.6% to the country's GDP in 2017.

Mutual insurance showed good growth, with the direct premiums of the mutual insurance companies operating in the Sultanate rising to around RO45.7 million; this accounts for about %10 of the insurance sector's total direct premiums. For their part, the insurance brokerage companies helped boost the performance of the insurance market, with premiums obtained through them accounting for around 27% of the total insurance premiums in 2017.

In 2017 the insurance companies increased their minimum capital to RO10 million in response to the amendments to the Insurance Companies Law, promulgated under Royal Decree No. 39/2014, which requires companies to strengthen their financial capacity by increasing their minimum capital base from RO5 million to RO10 million, while obliging national insurance companies

that are still closed joint stock companies to become Omani joint stock companies. This resulted in an 11% rise in the insurance companies' combined capital to around RO236.6 million at the end of 2017.

Several measures and decisions were adopted in 2017 with the aim of strengthening the insurance sector's role in the national economy through the application of international standards. These included regulations on the marketing of insurance policies, a set of procedures for licensing and valuing vehicles that have been written off as a result of accidents, and regulations on investment-related insurance policies. Legislation was introduced in 2017 to upgrade the sector's organisational structure and amend the regulations governing the activities of insurance brokers. The following year – 2018 – saw the introduction of the first phase of the agricultural insurance policy and the Capital Market Authority set up a department to oversee health insurance and related policies.



Trade

The Ministry of Commerce and Industry is in the process of simplifying procedures for investors and entrepreneurs by converting all its services into e-services. One consequence of this has been that the number of commercial registrations by the end of December 2017 rose to around 369,000 – up from 350,000 at the end of 2016.

In 2017 the domestic product from service-related activities (which

include a number of local trade activities including restaurants, hotels, transport, storage, telecommunications, real estate etc.) rose to RO14.4 billion – a rise of 4.6% compared with the 2016 figure of RO13.7 billion.

Commodity exports in 2017 rose to RO12.6 billion, compared with RO10.2 billion in 2016. This was due to a 26.1% increase in the value of oil exports and a 32.4% increase in the value of non-oil exports.

Good growth rates in the trade sector.

Item	2017	2016	change %
Domestic product from service-related activities (million RO)	14425.9	13794.9	%4.6
Service-related activities' contribution to GDP at current prices (million RO)	%51.6	%53.6	%3.7-
Wholesale and retail trade domestic product (million RO)	2318.8	2147.7	%8
Wholesale and retail trade's contribution to the non-oil domestic product	%11.3	%10.9	%3.6
Total commodity exports (million RO)	12651.5	10295.3	%22.8
Total recorded commodity imports (million RO)	10164.2	8900.2	%14.2
Oil exports (million RO)	7366.1	5840.3	%26.1
Non-oil exports (million RO)	3176.4	2398.8	%32.4
Re-exports (million RO)	2109	2056.3	%2.5
Credit advanced for imports by the banking sector till December (million RO)	1070	1145.9	%6.6-
Credit advanced for exports by the banking sector till December (million RO)	19.9	13	%53
by the banking sector till December (million RO)	800.6	675.7	%18.4
Credit advanced for wholesale and retail trade by the banking sector till December (million RO)	369,000	350,000	%5.4

*Including service activities related to domestic trade such as wholesale and retail trade, restaurants, transport, storage, telecommunications, real estate, commercial projects, financial brokerage etc.

Industry

The Sultanate encourages private sector participation in developing the national economy and promotes the adoption of modern technology in its industries with the aim of ensuring that Oman produces high quality industrial products. In the interests of greater competitiveness in the domestic and foreign markets, it has also simplified procedures for investors in order to boost the number of strategic investment projects and attract foreign investment that will generate added value for the national economy.

In 2017 the industrial GDP rose to around RO5.5 billion – a 1.7% rise compared with the 2016 figure. Manufacturing industry grew by 8.7% to RO2.6 billion – up from RO2.4 billion in 2016. Loans advanced by the Oman Development Bank for industrial projects up to the end of December 2017 totalled some

RO25.2 million, while banking credit issued to the industrial sector, at over RO1.4 billion up to the end of 2017, represented 7% of the overall banking credit of RO20.5 billion issued over the course of the year.

The Special Economic Zone in Duqm, the free zones in Sohar, Salalah and al Mazyounah, and the industrial estates managed by the Public Establishment for Industrial Estates (PEIE) offer attractive environments for domestic and foreign industrial investment. At the end of 2017 investment in PEIE's industrial estates totalled some RO6.3 billion, while the economic and free zones recorded good rates of growth in their investments as well as the number of their projects. Several new pieces of legislation introduced in 2017 also helped enhance the investment environment in those areas.



Incentives and special facilities help the industrial sector achieve the success that increases its contribution to the national economy.

The Sultan Qaboos Award for Industrial Excellence

1 The award is designed to encourage Omani factories to remain at the forefront of modern technology, comply with standard specifications & boost their Omanisation levels.

3 From 2013 the award became a biennial event.

5 The Ministry of Commerce and Industry has upgraded the award in line with its vision of creating a more competitive business climate that will help streamline and develop Omani industry. The framework and factors for evaluating the award have been updated and new criteria have been added to encourage industrial creativity. It was decided that a prize should also be awarded for the factory with the most creative features.

7 Evaluation of the participating industrial enterprises was based upon a range of criteria including: leadership, the production process, the industrial process, the supplier's relationship with the customers, employee safety, the work environment, the company's readiness to take on its share of social responsibility, industrial creativity, industrial and financial performance and product marketing.

2 First awarded in 1991, it was originally called "The Sultan Qaboos Trophy for the Best Five Factories". Since then, it has been continually upgraded in response to the Sultanate's economic growth.

4 In 2015 its name was changed to "The Sultan Qaboos Award for Industrial Excellence". Its date was also changed to February to coincide with Oman Industry Day – an annual event celebrated on 9th February each year.

6 The presentation ceremony for the 2018-2017 Sultan Qaboos Award for Industrial Excellence was held in February 2018. A total of 19 industrial enterprises took part in the competition.

8 The Oman Fiber Optic Co. was the winner of the category of companies with sales of less than RO10 million. Oman Flour Mills was the winner of the category of companies with sales of between RO10 million and RO50 million, and Oman Cement won in the category of companies whose sales are in excess of RO50 million. The winner of the "most creative" category was Jindal Shadeed Iron and Steel.

Oman Chamber of Commerce and Industry (OCCI)

In late 2017 the Oman Chamber of Commerce and Industry (OCCI) held new elections for its board of directors and the boards of directors of its branches for the period from 2018 to 2022. The new OCCI board took up its duties in January 2018. There were 129 candidates, 75 of whom were elected. They included five members for the Governorate of Muscat and seven members for each of the branches in the Sultanate's other governorates. The vote was held in 14 centres and overall turnout was 77%.

In its capacity as the Omani private sector's official representative body, the OCCI aims to serve the sector and increase its contribution to the national economy.

The OCCI's new South Batinah Governorate branch premises were opened in the wilayat of Rustaq in 2017, along with the Wusta Governorate's new branch premises in the wilayat of Haima. The same year also saw the launch of the OCCI's new e-services; these cover membership renewal,

company name changes, grade changes, requests for information, replacement of lost documents and registration of new members. In 2017 the OCCI held a symposium entitled "The Economies of the Gulf Co-operation Council (GCC) States in the Post-Oil Era: Horizons and Solutions" in collaboration with the GCC Secretariat-General and the Federation of GCC Chambers of Commerce. It also held a forum on "Duqm – Society and Economy", which was attended by Malaysian Prime Minister Dr. Mahatir Mohammed and which discussed the future growth prospects for commercial and investment companies in the context of the global economic situation in 2017.

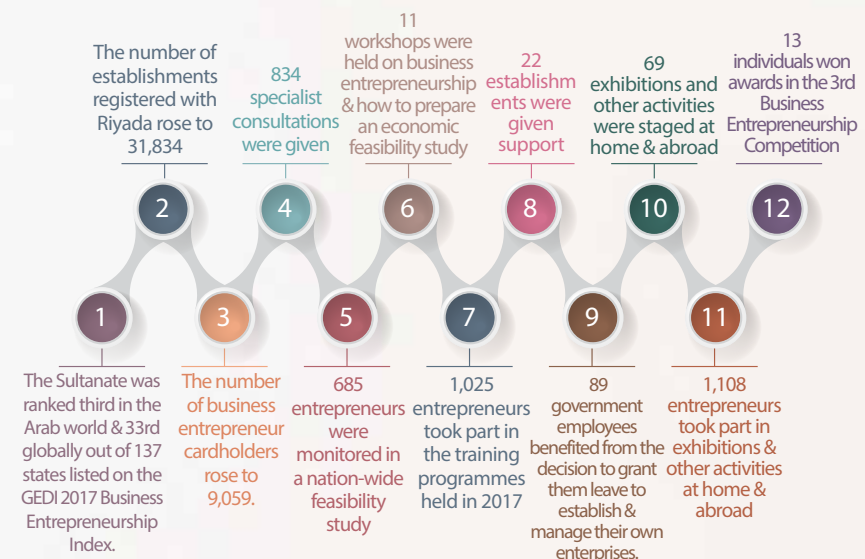
The OCCI also sent five specialist trade delegations on trips abroad in 2017 with the aim of attracting foreign investment and providing incentives for the major corporations that are active in the national economy. It also sent 23 trade delegations representing small and medium enterprises.

The Development of Small and Medium Enterprises (SMEs)

Riyada ('leadership' in Arabic) - the Public Authority for Small and Medium Enterprise (SME) Development - ('leadership' in Arabic), was established with a brief to promote small and medium

enterprises, helping them plan and raise finance and services as necessary, in collaboration with other government and private sector bodies.

Main achievements in 2017



Goals and Strategies Up to 2020



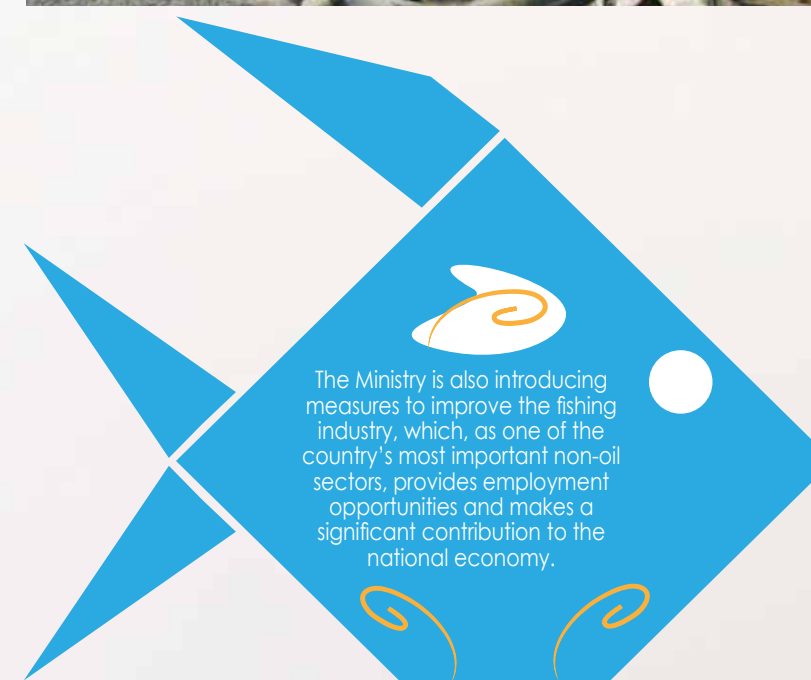
Agriculture and Fisheries

The Ministry of Agriculture and Fisheries aims to upgrade its programmes for the development of the agricultural sector by making use of the Sultanate's available resources in order. The main focus is on improving agriculture and livestock production methods, introducing and supporting

new production technologies and modernising the marketing and agri-industry systems, while promoting competitiveness and added value and maintaining the quality of all Oman's agricultural and livestock products such as dates, fruit and vegetable crops, local honey, dairy produce, eggs, poultry and red meat.



The Sultanate is coordinating multiple programmes designed to increase fish production and its value to the economy.



Upgrading the agricultural and fisheries sectors



Agriculture and livestock

- 1 Operating an investment programme with public and private companies with the aim of increasing food production.
- 2 The Oman Food Investment Holding Company - the government's investment arm in this sector - is setting up five companies specialised in the production and processing of cow's and camel's milk, poultry and red meat production, and the processing and marketing of Omani dates.
- 3 Projects are currently being set up to produce breeding fowls, manufacture chicken feed & produce & market fruit & vegetables.
- 4 The private sector is setting up ten egg and poultry production projects.
- 5 These projects are expected to improve the level of self-sufficiency in food production.
- 6 In 2017 agricultural (non-livestock) produce increased by 26.6%.
- 7 67,000 date palm seedlings were produced & distributed as part of the farmers' support programme or under the nationwide replacement & renewal scheme. A large number of them were also allocated for the million date palms project.
- 8 Producing 129,000 fruit seedlings from improved strains and distributing them to farmers.
- 9 Installing modern irrigation on 98 farms with a total area of 364 feddans.
- 10 Subsidising farmers' projects. These include the installation of greenhouses, the cultivation of promising new crops with a high economic value, and introducing farmers to modern mechanised farming.
- 11 Providing livestock treatment and immunisation services through 86 permanent, 29 mobile and 27 private veterinary clinics.
- 12 Protecting and monitoring natural grazing land and establishing enclosed pastures.



Fisheries

- 1 Self-sufficiency in fish catches reached a level of 193% in 2017 compared with 177% in 2016.
- 2 In 2017 the fisheries sector's output totalled around 348,000 tonnes, up 24% on 2016
- 3 Fish production in 2017 was valued at a total of RO227 million - a rise of 12% compared with the 2016 figure
- 4 In 2017 the Sultanate's fish exports rose 30% to 197,000 tonnes
- 5 In 2017 the Sultanate's fish exports comprised 57% of its total fish catches
- 6 The country's 24 fishing harbours provide a range of services and facilities for over 47,000 professional and amateur fishermen. They also serve the Sultanate's deep-sea and coastal fishing fleet of around 23,000 trawlers and boats.
- 7 A total of 60 wholesale & retail fish markets have been set up to maintain safety & quality standards, ensure a balance between supply & demand & between exports & the needs of the domestic market, & guarantee an adequate & continuous supply of fish in the home markets at suitable prices.
- 8 A strategic sustainable aquaculture plan is being prepared and a fisheries research and scientific experimentation centre is being set up.

"Greater consideration for the environment and its protection needs to be integral to the planning & implementation of development projects, along with more active links with relevant regional and international organisations. It is important that every citizen do their part to protect our natural resources & the public health generally from harmful effect, and to preserve the unique and beautiful natural landscape with which God has blessed our beloved Oman."

Qaboos bin Said

(15th National Day – 18 November 1985)

Moderrn Amenities And A Clean Environment



Modern Amenities and A Clean Environment

The Sultanate is a subscriber of long standing to the principles of environmental conservation which today are actively promoted by the international community and stipulated in regional and global conventions to which the Sultanate is an enthusiastic signatory. The Sultanate's environmental strategy has a strong success record, and extends from the conservation of natural resources and wildlife to broad support for climate protection. Care of the environment was built into the Sultanate's development plans from day one and environmental considerations have a place of priority in all aspects of State planning.

The Ministry of Environment and Climate Affairs, whose responsibility it is to maintain a spotlight on the environmental dimension of the country's development strategy, oversees compliance with extant regulations and standards. It is a vocal advocate of sustainable development and of protection of the environment and, by association, of public health. It champions sound environmental management as a means of increasing the sustainability of development projects across all fields. Meanwhile, it drafts for approval plans and programmes that line up with national objectives and strategies, ensuring that a balance is maintained with the Sultanate's commitments to relevant international conventions. Environmental legislation in the Sultanate is built around the principle of universal individual

responsibility for the environment and for its protection. Moreover, it espouses the prevention-oriented approach that regulates against pollution at source and that makes protection of the environment and of the country's natural resources central to all public policies.

There were 1,200 environmental permits and approvals issued during 2017, in addition to 7,659 chemical licences and 427 waste management permits.

Oman Environment Day falls on 8 January each year and is a promotional event that brings attention to bear on the advantages of a cleaner atmosphere. The 2018 campaign was hosted by Dhofar under the banner 'A Sustainable Clean Environment' and was energetically supported by the public, who lined up to participate in planting, beach-cleaning and general awareness activities.



Sultan Qaboos Prize for Environmental Preservation

The Sultan Qaboos Prize for Environmental Preservation is an expression of His Majesty Sultan Qaboos bin Said's appreciation for the work of inspirational environmentalists around the globe. The prize was established by His Majesty during a visit to UNESCO Headquarters on 1 June 1989 and is assigned every two years by a panel representing the Bureau of UNESCO's MAB (Man and the Biosphere) programme for outstanding work in the field. Individuals, groups of individuals, institutes and organisations are all eligible to receive the award, which is presented at a ceremony at UNESCO headquarters.



Since the Prize was first awarded in 1991, it has honoured many distinguished international figures for their achievements. The 2017 Sultan Qaboos Prize for Environmental Preservation was awarded to the National Parks Board of Singapore.

The National Parks Board (NParks) was cited for its efforts in promoting biodiversity conservation in a highly urbanised & land-scarce city state. NParks' activity focuses on the conservation of key habitats; on habitat enhancement and species recovery; and on the promotion of biodiversity at all levels of the educational system. It manages Singapore's first World Heritage site, the Singapore Botanic Gardens, as well as 350 parks and four nature reserves.

In a collaboration with the Secretariat of the Convention on Biological Diversity (CBD), NParks is preparing the Singapore City Biodiversity Index, an important self-assessment tool for urban biodiversity conservation efforts. The Board has been responsible for significant conservation research that has also resulted in the discovery of new endemic plant & terrestrial invertebrate species; & these results have in turn been used to design better management programmes & facilitate more scientific decision-making.

- **1991** Prize went to the Mexican environmental institute (Instituto de Ecología A.C.) for its important contributions to scientific training and research and numerous valuable publications.
- **1993** Prize went to the botanist Professor Jan Jenik (Czech Republic) for a lifetime of dedication to ecology and a long association with the Man and Biosphere programme.
- **1995** The award went to Lake Malawi National Park for its ambitious lake management programme, carried out in cooperation with local communities.
- **1997** Prize was awarded jointly to the Department of Environmental Sciences of the Faculty of Science, Alexandria University (Egypt) for their work in the Omayed Biosphere Reserve; and to the Forest Department of Sri Lanka for their forest management and commercial plantation projects.
- **1999** Prize went to the Charles Darwin Foundation for the Galapagos Islands.
- **2001** Prize went to the Chad Association of Volunteers for the Protection of the Environment (Association Tchadienne des Volontaires pour la Protection de l'Environnement - (A.T.V.P.E.) for significant activities throughout Chad, in particular in reforestation and soil conservation.
- **2003** Prize was awarded jointly to the Centre for Ecology (Centro de Ecología) (Venezuela); and to Norwegian biodiversity specialist Mr Peter Johan Schei (Norway).
- **2005** Prize was awarded jointly to the Great Barrier Reef Marine Park Authority (Australia); and to Dr Ernesto C. Enkerlin-Hoeflich (Mexico), President of the National Commission on Natural Protected Areas of Mexico.

- **2007** Prize was awarded jointly to the Institute of Biodiversity Conservation (Ethiopia); and to Dr Julius Oszlányi (Slovakia), Director of the Institute of Landscape Ecology at the Slovak Academy of Sciences of Slovakia, for their respective endeavours as advocates of conservation and biodiversity.
- **2009** Prize went to Spain's Autonomous Authority for National Parks (OAPN), which operates under the Spanish Ministry of Environment, Rural and Marine Areas. It honoured the OAPN's major achievement in coordinating the Spanish National Parks Network and developing UNESCO's Man and the Biosphere Programme in Spain.
- **2011** Prize went to the Nigerian Institute for Forest Research, in recognition of their pioneering work in forest management and preservation in the country; and the promotion of healthy forests for the purposes of biodiversity conservation, sustainable food production, the sourcing of industrial raw materials and creation of employment opportunities.
- **2013** Prize was awarded jointly to: The State Forests National Forest Holding of Poland and South Africa's Endangered Wildlife Trust. Founded in 1924, the State Forests National Forest Holding of Poland is the largest organisation of its kind in Europe and is responsible for managing more than 75% of Poland's forests. South Africa's Endangered Wildlife Trust was established in 1973 and develops and implements innovative environmental protection projects in South Africa, working closely with local communities to protect endangered species and ecosystems.
- **2015** Prize went to the Wetlands Ecology Research Group of the University of Buenos Aires, Argentina, consisting of Mr Fabio A. Kalesnik, Mr Horacio Srolli and Mr Luciano Iribarren, for their research on a wide range of ecological aspects of wetland ecosystems, and for their critically valuable socio-environmental studies and environmental education and training initiatives.
- **2017** Prize went to the National Parks Board of Singapore for their commitment and hard work supporting environmental protection; biodiversity conservation in a highly urbanised and land-scarce city state; habitat enhancement and species recovery; and the integration of biodiversity at all levels of the educational system.

Nature Reserves

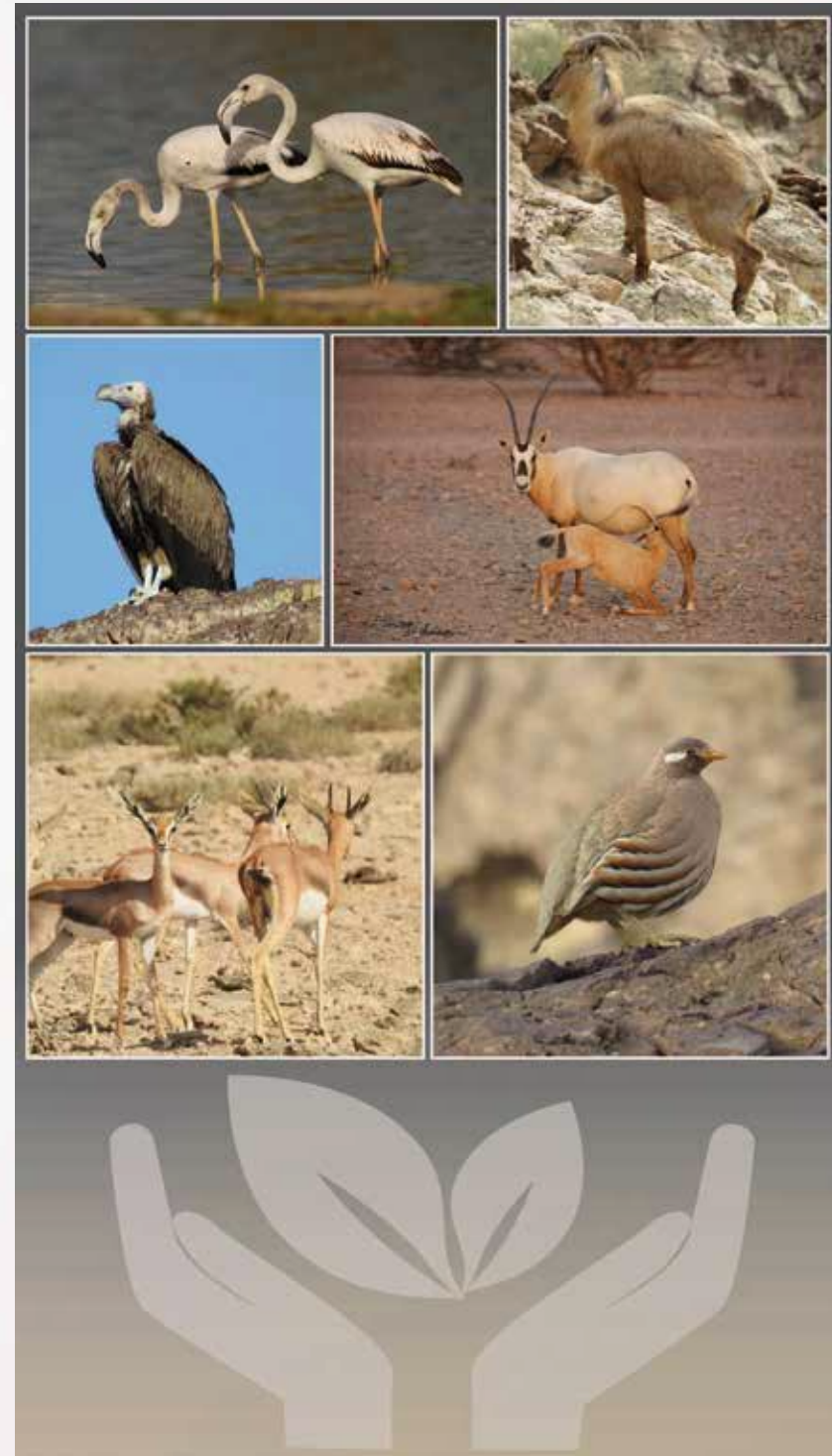
In establishing nature reserves, the Sultanate set out to preserve wildlife, protect ecosystems and their vital components, and spare natural landscapes, geological formations and archaeological sites from disfigurement. The dedication of nature reserves is one of the most effective methods of ensuring the conservation of endangered animal and plant species in the service of biodiversity, while minimising negative impacts on climate change and on land degradation.

The Sultanate has long worked towards the establishment of a system of protection zones, and detailed surveys were conducted over the years into its various environments and biological systems. All of this research culminated in a proposal to dedicate 68 separate areas, representing some 37% of the total area of the Sultanate. By the end of 2017, a total of 18 nature reserves supporting diverse ecosystems were functioning across the land and

territorial waters of Oman.

The Ministry of Environment and Climate Affairs is working with the Ministry of Tourism to exploit the tourist potential of the country's nature reserves, without damage to the ecological balance. Their joint focus is on building meaningful community partnerships that enable all sectors of society to contribute constructively to the expansion and preservation of protected areas.

Ecotourism and nature reserves are mutually compatible arms of the kind of investment that should prosper as the Sultanate's tourism enters a growth phase. The diversity of Oman's landscape and its unspoiled status are obvious advantages. To encourage the trend, the Qurum Nature Reserve in Muscat Governorate and the Al Saleel Nature Park in South Sharqiyah have been selected for limited investment. Plans will be vetted carefully to ensure that no harm will come to their biological diversity. Both reserves comprise features uniquely attractive to specialised ecotourism.



Nature reserves throughout the Sultanate reflect its concern for the country's wildlife and for the maintenance of biodiversity.

A part of the Qurum Nature Reserve in Muscat Governorate



Housing Sector

2017 housing indicators

The Ministry of Housing is responsible for the planning and allocation of land for its various uses. It is responsible for the registration and preservation of landed property in a manner that complies with the system managed by the Secretariat of the Land Registry. It oversees development in its sector, and it designs and supervises the State's social housing programmes.



Urban planning and survey

- Apportioned parcels and drafted outline plans that resulted in upwards of 66,000 lots assigned to diverse use.

Land distribution

- Distributed 36,000 land parcels throughout the Sultanate. The largest portion of the lots distributed, 30,995 in total, were assigned to residential use.
- Lots assigned for commercial use, 497 in total, were mostly in the Governorate of South Batinah.
- A further 1,533 lots were allocated to commercial-residential use, & these were mostly in the Governorate of Buraymi.

Land Registry

- Over 118,000 real estate transactions were recorded, most of them concentrated around Muscat Governorate.
- Real estate activity in 2017 was valued at RO2.6 billion.
- A total of 58,515 parcels of land were registered for the first time.
- Of this number, 48,373 lots were for residential usage.
- Over 225,000 deeds of title were delivered.
- Of titles issued, 1,210 were to citizens of Gulf (GCC) countries.

Social Housing

- RO10 million was assigned to the housing assistance programme for 2017.
- In total, 242 families were benefiting from the housing assistance programme.

Regional Municipalities

Strengthening municipal services

The Ministry of Regional Municipalities and Water Resources is constantly improving the services it manages across the country. In 2017, it progressed major urban enhancement projects, refurbished existing or created new markets, parks, gardens and slaughterhouses, and protected public health by inspecting public facilities and monitoring food quality.



110 km of internal roads were paved

1,027 lampposts were added on internal roads supervised by the Ministry

81 public beautification projects were implemented

22,980 building permits, including 16,783 for large residential projects, were issued

Health inspection activities were intensified at food installations, shops, factories and other processing facilities

32,436 municipal licences were issued to food, industrial, commercial and professional establishments

19,724 samples were taken at food and water laboratories and branch units to ensure that they conformed to the approved health specifications

Efforts to ensure food safety, as well as compliance with approved health standards, are in constant review.

Electricity

The electricity sector has expanded rapidly to meet rising demand, due to urban expansion and population growth. The Sultanate's total electricity production in 2017 was up 5% to 35,941 GWh, as compared with 34,214 GWh in 2016.

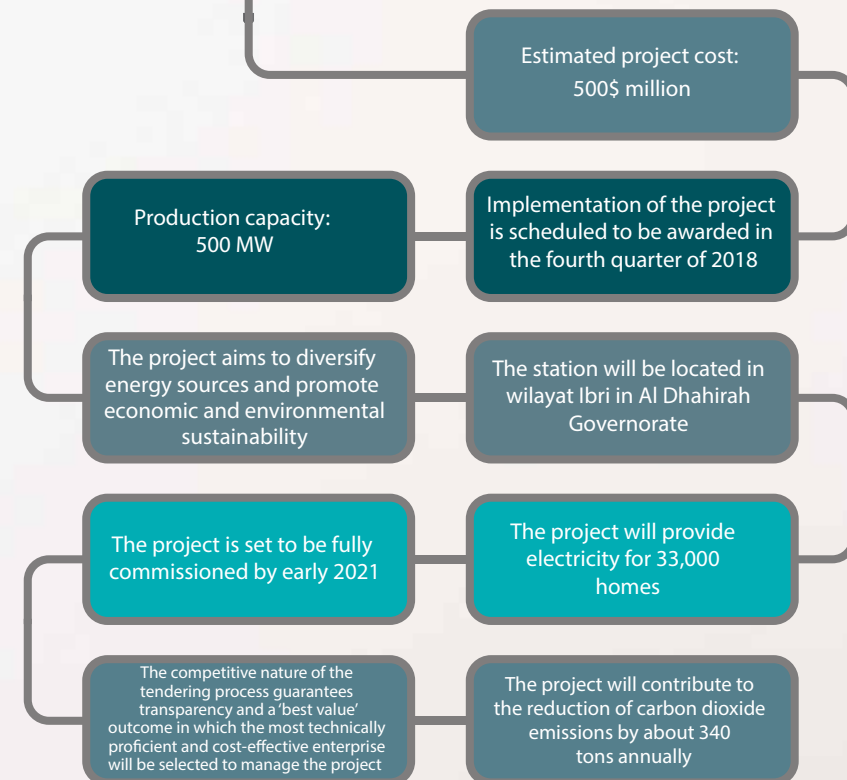
To keep pace, new power plants are being installed in several governorates and these are designed to benefit from renewable energy in the generation of electricity. In December 2017, a pioneering project was announced for construction of an independent power station having a capacity of 500 MW. The station will be built in wilayat Ibri as a privately-funded investment.

In February 2018 the first four blocks of the mammoth Miraah (mirron in Arabic) solar thermal facility were inaugurated at the Amal oilfield. A further 32 blocks are planned for construction and, once

completed, the US\$600 million plant will become one of the largest solar projects in the world. Current daily capacity of 112 MW will provide 660 tons of steam, achieving significant savings in gas. In its final form, the plant will consist of 36 greenhouses built sequentially, offering more than 1 gigabyte of capacity. Unlike solar panels that generate electricity, Miraah uses large mirrors to concentrate sunlight and boil oilfield water directly into steam. The steam is used for the extraction of viscous or heavy oil as an alternative to steam generated from natural gas.



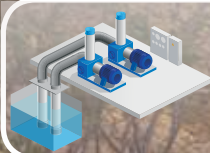
The First Solar Power Plant



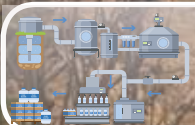
The electricity sector continues to grow, to keep pace with the increasing demand arising from urban expansion. (The Miraah solar steam generating power station)

Water Sector

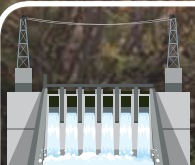
Over the years, the Sultanate has refined its water security strategy, diversifying sources to include desalination, purification treatment, and the sourcing of new groundwater supply. It has invested heavily in securing a highly efficient water network, and in its project to deliver high quality drinking water to 98% of the Sultanate's population by 2040.



Sea water desalination plants are significant components of the Sultanate's water security project, and the Public Authority for Electricity and Water (PAEW) plans to expand existing desalination plants and create new facilities to meet rising demand.

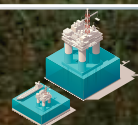


The Sultanate produced 399 million cubic metres of water in 2017, as compared with 378 million cubic metres in 2016.

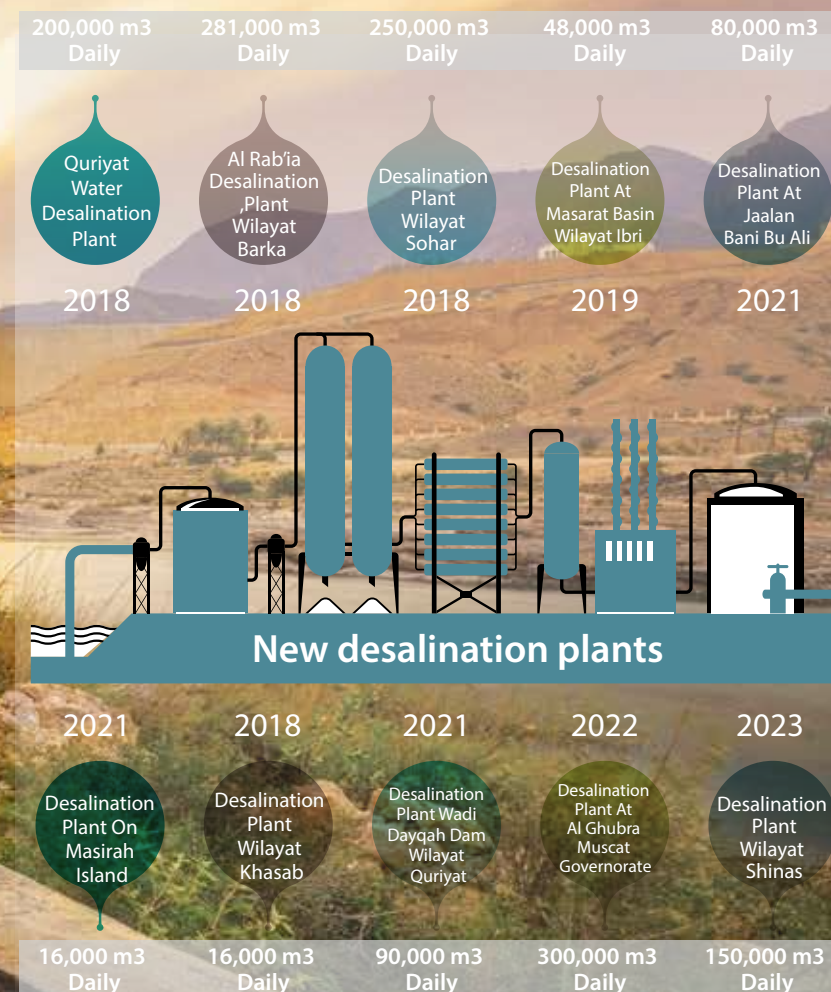


By the end of 2017, the Ministry of Regional Municipalities and Water Resources had overseen the construction of 156 dams for the purposes of groundwater recharge (46 dams), surface storage (107 dams) and flood protection (3 dams).

Between them, these dams trapped 23 million cubic metres of water in 2017. In Sur, South Sharqiyah, the main dam in the overall flood protection system was completed in 2017. It has a capacity of 22 million cubic metres.



Seventy separate projects involving the rehabilitation and maintenance of aflaj and drilling of associated wells were completed in 2017.



Telecommunications

The manifold services offered by the telecommunications sector combine to form an infrastructure that supports the entire economy. At the end of 2017, the Sultanate had 497,000 live fixed telephone lines, representing a phenomenal growth spurt over the 2016 figure of 422,000 lines. Mobile phone subscriptions also rose in the same period, from 6.8 million to 6.9 million, an increase of 1.1%.

There were 4.3 million active mobile broadband subscribers, up 10% from the 3.9 million total at the close of 2016. Fixed broadband subscriptions stood at 349,000 at the end of 2017, representing a 30.7% increase over the 2016 figure of 267,000.

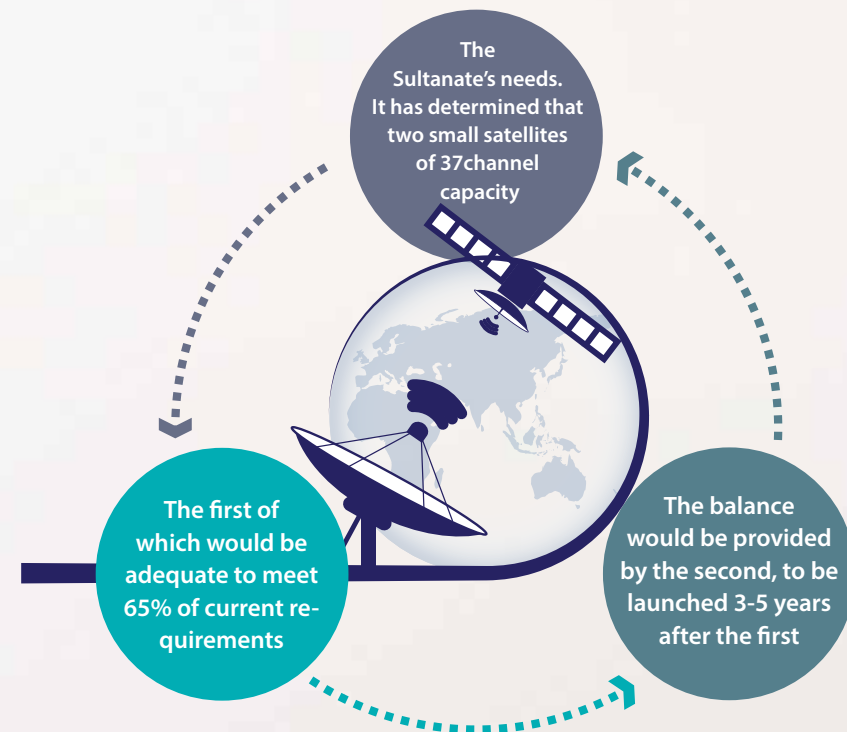
Oman's telecom operators conducted the country's first

online auction of special mobile numbers (diamond and gold) in February 2018. The auction was supervised by the Telecommunications Regulatory Authority (TRA) to ensure full transparency in the allocation of the numbers.

Meanwhile the Ministry of Transport and Communications,

acting in a collaboration with the State Reserve Fund, is preparing an investment file prior to the launch of the Sultanate's first 'made-in-Oman' satellite. The project has several strategic objectives, among them considerations of State security, a quantum expansion in network coverage and scope of services, and the transfer and embedding of technologies. The Ministry is now anxious to build a national cadre of professionals and technicians competent in this sector.

Meanwhile, it has completed the identification of load capacity requirements and of the size of the satellites suited to the Sultanate's needs. It has determined that two small satellites of 37-channel capacity would be appropriate, the first of which would be adequate to meet 65% of current requirements. The balance would be provided by the second, to be launched 3-5 years after the first.



Information Technology

The Information Technology Authority (ITA) continues to roll out the various component elements of Digital Oman, which encompasses a set of projects and mechanisms designed to enhance government service efficiency, while upskilling the public to ease their interactions with electronic services.

Responsibility for implementing the Digital Oman and e-Government strategies rests with the Authority. To this end, it is overseeing the installation of important infrastructure and managing all other related projects.

The seven-stranded project that is embodied in Digital

Oman combines, among other components, advanced infrastructure, digital community development, smart government and e-services, and development of the ICT industry.

Installation of the National Data Centre (NDC) completed a key phase of the ITA's infrastructure



programme. It is designed to function as a multi-use, high-availability centre that will host data for all government institutions. At the time of going to press, the Centre was hosting the data systems of 38 government agencies.

The Authority also launched the Government Cloud Project, established the National Centre for Electronic Certification, and created a unified government network and electronic payment portal.

The ITA is tireless in its pursuit of cybersecurity and as e-Government rolls out, more than 400 government digital networks have now been fully secured, with over 800 million cyberattacks on government networks foiled. Meanwhile its national firewall technology has detected more than 2 million viruses and malware programmes and 32,000 other software programmes. It has blocked 730 million cyberattacks from 199 countries.

Sultanate ranks high in Information Technology internationally

The Sultanate climbed to 63rd position globally on the UN E-Government Survey of 2018, compiled by its Department of Economic and Social Affairs (UNDESA).

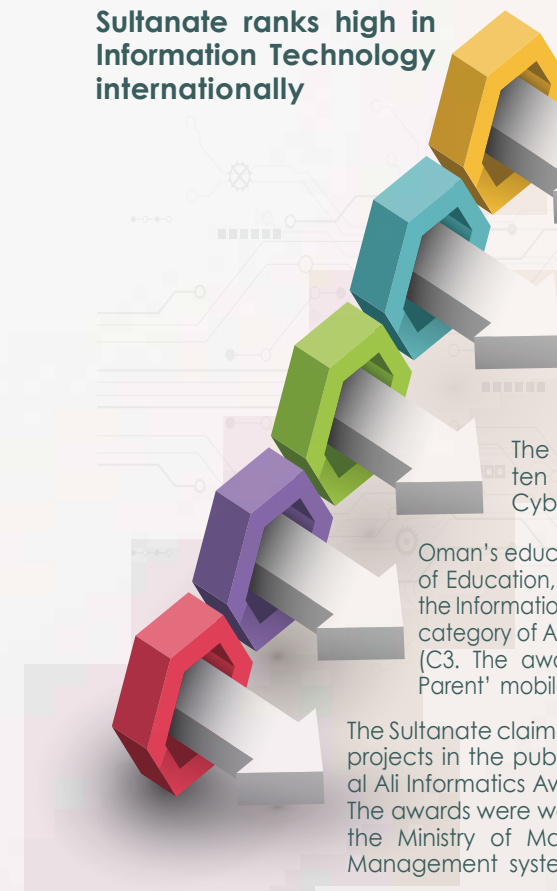
This marks an advance of three places over its 2016 position as 66th out of 193 participating member states.

The Sultanate was ranked sixth among Arab countries on the UN's E-participation Index (EPI) and second among Arab countries in its Online Service Index (OSI) for 2018.

The Sultanate was among the top ten countries globally on the UN's Cybersecurity Index in 2018.

Oman's education portal, a project of the Ministry of Education, was awarded the World Summit on the Information Society (WSIS) award for 2018 in the category of Access to information and knowledge (C3). The award was assigned for its 'Student's Parent' mobile phone application.

The Sultanate claimed two awards for best technology projects in the public sector at the 17th Sheikh Salim al Ali Informatics Awards in Kuwait in November 2017. The awards were won by the ITA's gcloud Project and the Ministry of Manpower's Advanced Manpower Management system.



The overriding objective of Digital Oman is to raise the efficiency and effectiveness of government services and to strengthen the business sector.

Tourism

Tourist numbers were up again in 2017, with 3.3 million visitors entering the Sultanate over the 12-month period, an increase of 3.5% over 2016. Visiting cruise ships accounted for 222,000 of the total, up 2.3% from 217,000 in 2016.

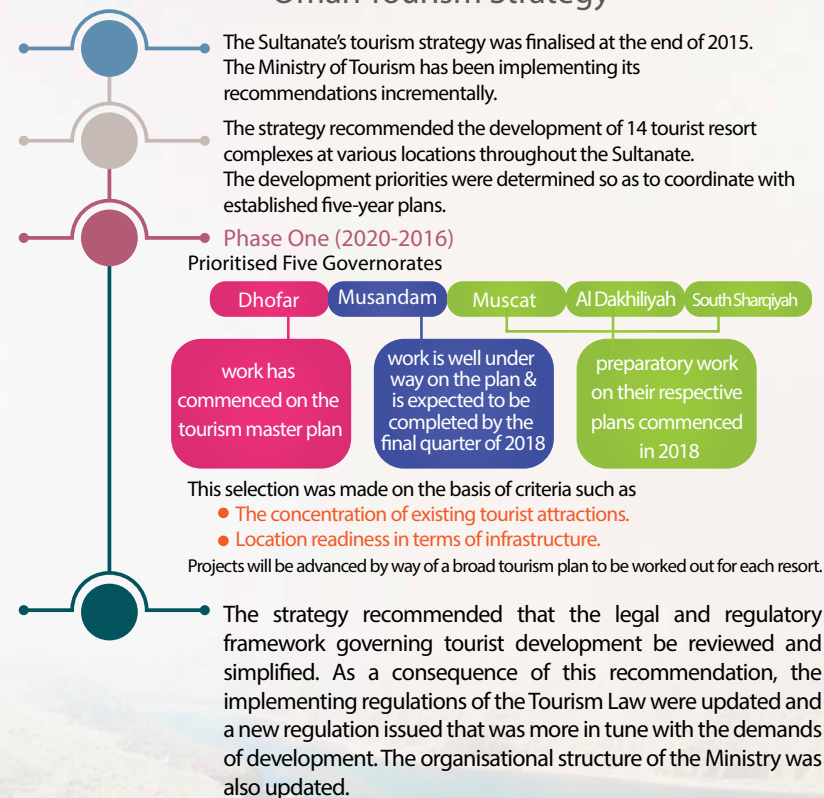
Hotel capacity is rising with the trend, and 20,581 rooms were available in 2017, 9.3% more than the 18,825 available in 2016. Total beds were up from 29,538 in 2016 to 31,774 in 2017, an increase of 7.6%.

These positive developments are a direct outcome of the Sultanate's economic diversification policies, in which strong new support is coming from the tourism sector.

As tourist numbers ramp up, facilities are expanded and upgraded and the sector's contribution to the national economy advances.

Multiple new projects are expected in 2018 and 2019. Of 55 projected hotels, three are categorised as 5-star, five as 4-star, 16 as 3-star, 19 as 2-star and 12 as 1-star facilities. The new hotels will add 4,760 hotel rooms to the national accommodation bank and these will be supplemented by 27 hotels providing 883 apartments. Finally, four camping grounds scheduled to open in 2018/2019 will provide an additional 75 places.

Oman Tourism Strategy



The Sultanate has many tourist attractions that are contributing to a larger role for tourism, while encouraging investment in the sector.
(Wilayat Khasab)

Muscat Festival



The 2018 festival was launched on 18 January and continued until 10 February. 'Let's Celebrate Together' was the 2018 festival theme.

Festival venues included: Al Amerat Public Park, Al Naseem Public Park, Oman Automobile Club, Al Madina Theatre, Oman Convention and Exhibition Centre, and various cultural halls and clubs.



Cultural Events:

The festival included cultural events such as:

Lectures, Arts evenings, and Theatrical.

- Muscat Festival is an annual staging arena for creative talent to present itself to an appreciative audience. For writers, poets and original thinkers, as well as the literary-minded public, the festival offers an exciting programme of lectures, literary seminars, poetry recitals and other cultural events featuring Omanis and visiting artists and intellectuals.
- The international conference 'Ideas and their role in building awareness in the Gulf region'
- The launch of the Salem Bahwan Award for short feature films
- Seminar on 'Investing in the Book Market'
- Oman Photographic Forum, which was attended by a group of photographers from Oman and abroad, and included a technical exhibition for participants, photography field trips, a photography evening and a talk on Oman's aflaj and their impact on civilisation.
- Animation contest and -3D movies.

Specialist Events such as:

2018 Oman Bride Show, fashion shows, plays and artistic performance.

Sports Activities:

- Thirteen different activities revolving around motorsports were mounted, including: Discover the Beauty of Oman, the Oman Drifting Championship and the Muscat Speedway Cup.
- The six-stage Tour of Oman, in which some of the world's best cyclists took part and which is ranked among the top ten cycle races in the world
- Finals of the Football Fives World Championship (F5WC)



The Tour of Oman offers up a delightful combination of sport and tourism.

Salalah Tourism Festival

In July and August every year, the climate in Dhofar Governorate is at its best, with temperatures of about 25°C or even lower in the hills. This is the time when thousands of Omanis, as well as visitors from GCC and Arab countries and further afield, are drawn to the cool, green south.

The Salalah Tourism Festival runs for most of the season, and it has become a highlight for both visitors and local businesses, a feast of entertainment and a solid income generator.

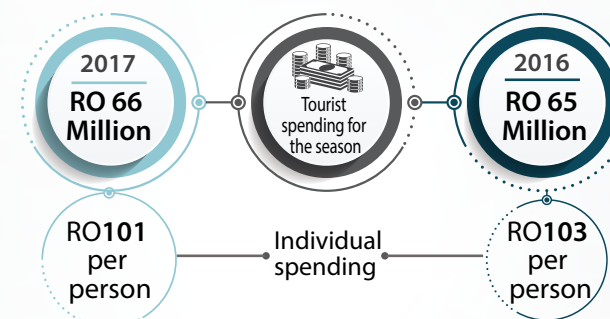
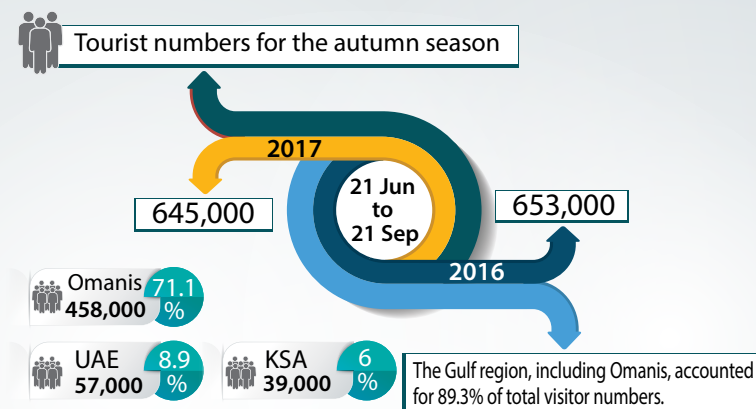
The 2018 Festival ran from 10 July to 25 August, during which time some 500 activities and events took place at venues throughout

Dhofar, including performances by 50 folk troupes representing the artistic heritage of ten wilayat around the country. The festival is the embodiment of all of the colour and custom that brightens life in urban, rural, nomadic and coastal Oman, presented in formats that entertain and enlighten, as heritage shows, exhibitions, concerts, plays, competitions and other inspiring events.

The Salalah Tourism Festival is extending the tourist season into the autumn, and is particularly attractive to families visiting from other parts of the Sultanate and from Oman's GCC neighbours to the north.



Tourists return for Salalah's autumn season 2017

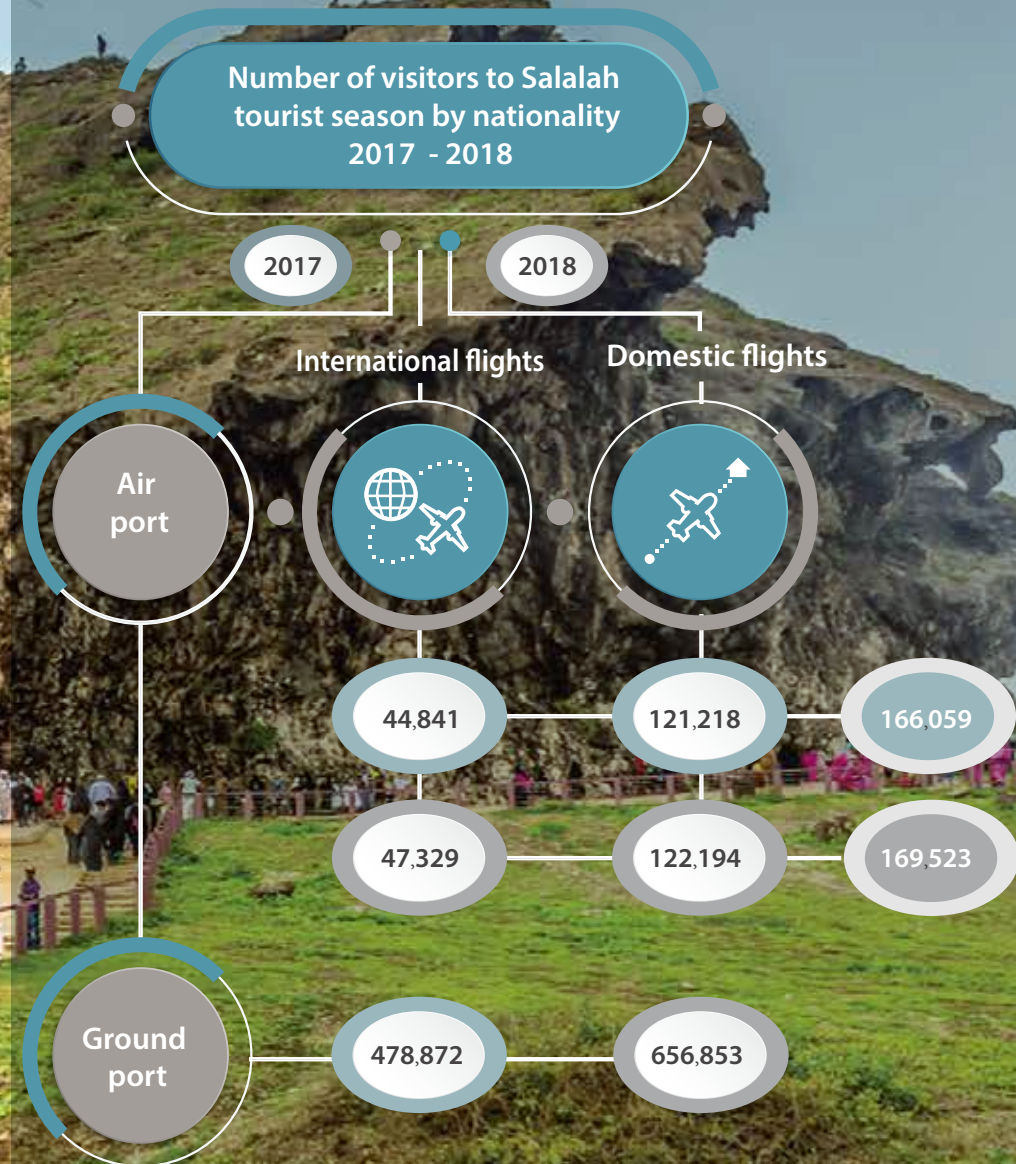


Accommodation accounted for 35.3% of total tourist spending, while shopping, transportation & entertainment accounted for 22.4% and food and drink 22.6%.

Recreational tourism represented 90.8%, or RO60 million, of the Salalah season's total tourism income in 2017, and business tourism 5.2%.

Accommodation choices favoured furnished apartments & villas, & rentals of this type of accommodation accounted for RO48 million, or 73%, of the total spending on accommodation.

A total of 4.35 million bed nights were serviced during the autumn season, as compared with 4.396 bed nights in the equivalent 2016 season.



Wadi Ayn



Ain Razat



Wadi Darbat Waterfall



Wadi Nah



Ayn Kho



Ayn Athu



SOCIAL INDICATORS

● 2016

● 2017



Total Population

4.414.000

4.560.000



Omanis

2.428.000

2.505.000



Expatriates

1.986.000

2.055.000



Hospitals

74

76



Hospital Beds

6588

6697



Doctors/
10,000 Patients

19.6

20.0



Nurses /
1000 Patients

44.8

43.7



Schools

1725

1808

SOCIAL INDICATORS

● 2016

● 2017



Omanis

195.937

195.680



Expatriates

37.624

36.383



Government Civil
Service Employees

233.561

232.063



Students

748.308

770.481



Omanis
registered with
the Public Authority
for Social Insurance

233.869

238.688



Expatriate
Manpower in the
Private Sector

1.787.979

1.795.689



Total Internet
Subscribers

269.549

251.335

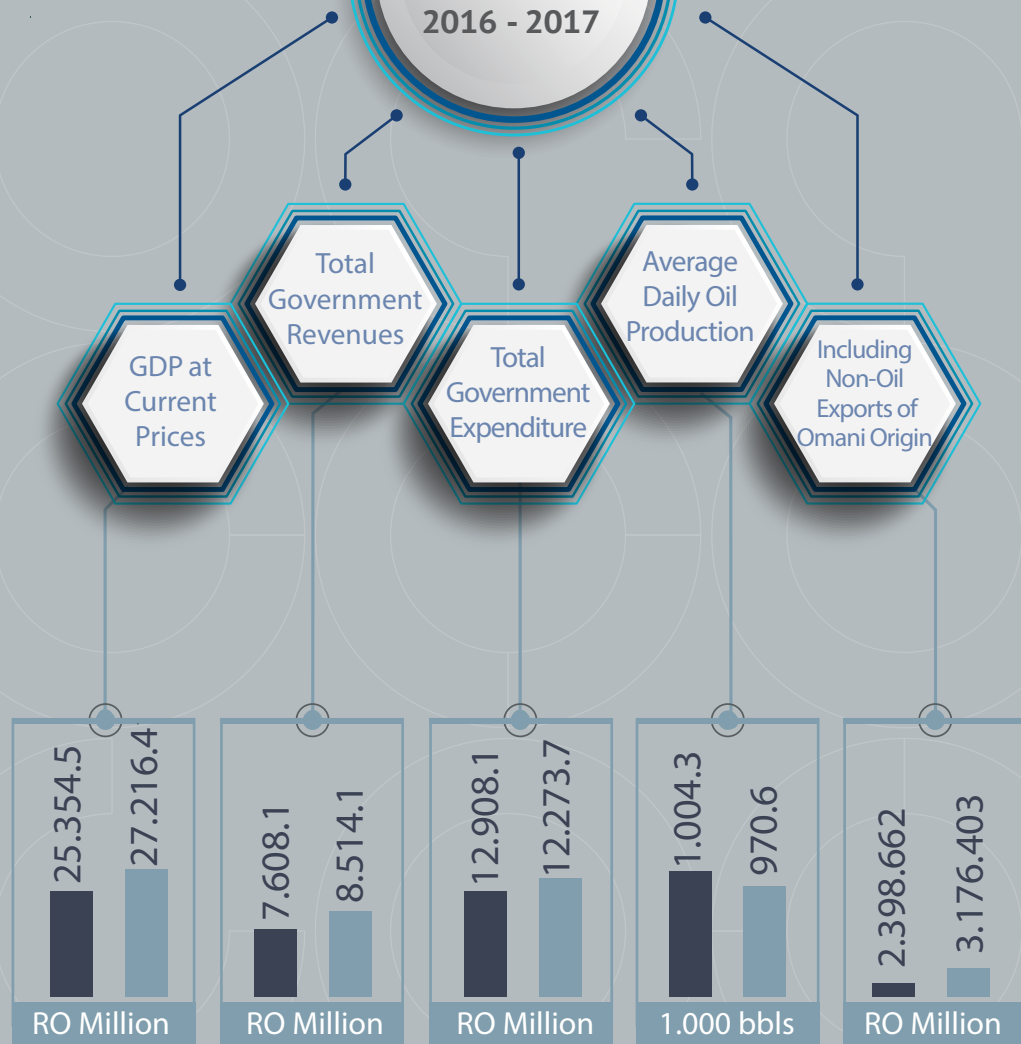


Hotels and
Accommodation

340

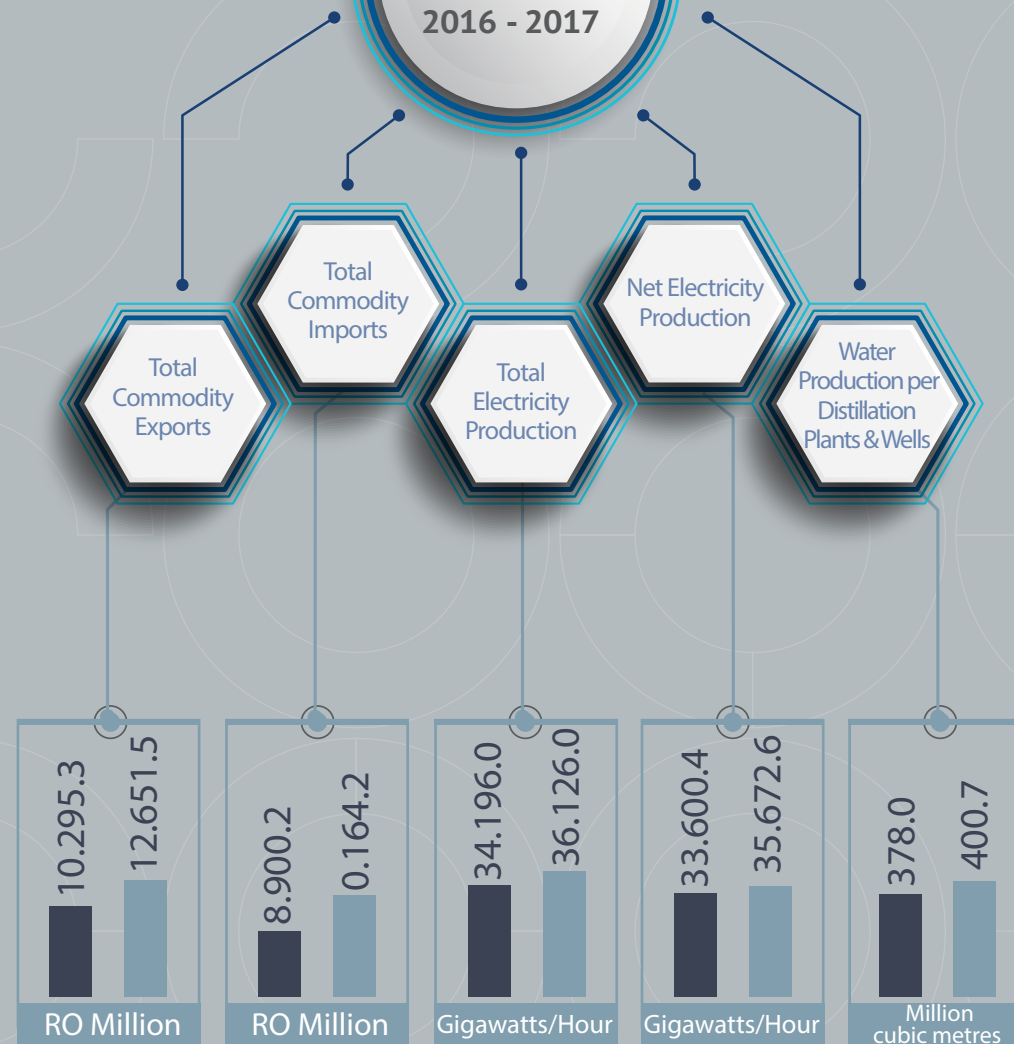
359

ECONOMIC INDICATORS 2016 - 2017



2017 ■ 2016 ■

ECONOMIC INDICATORS 2016 - 2017



2017 ■ 2016 ■

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- Public Authority for Radio and Television
- Sultan Qaboos Higher Centre for Culture & Science
- Office for Conservation of the Environment
- Oman Photographic Society
- Salem Al Shakili

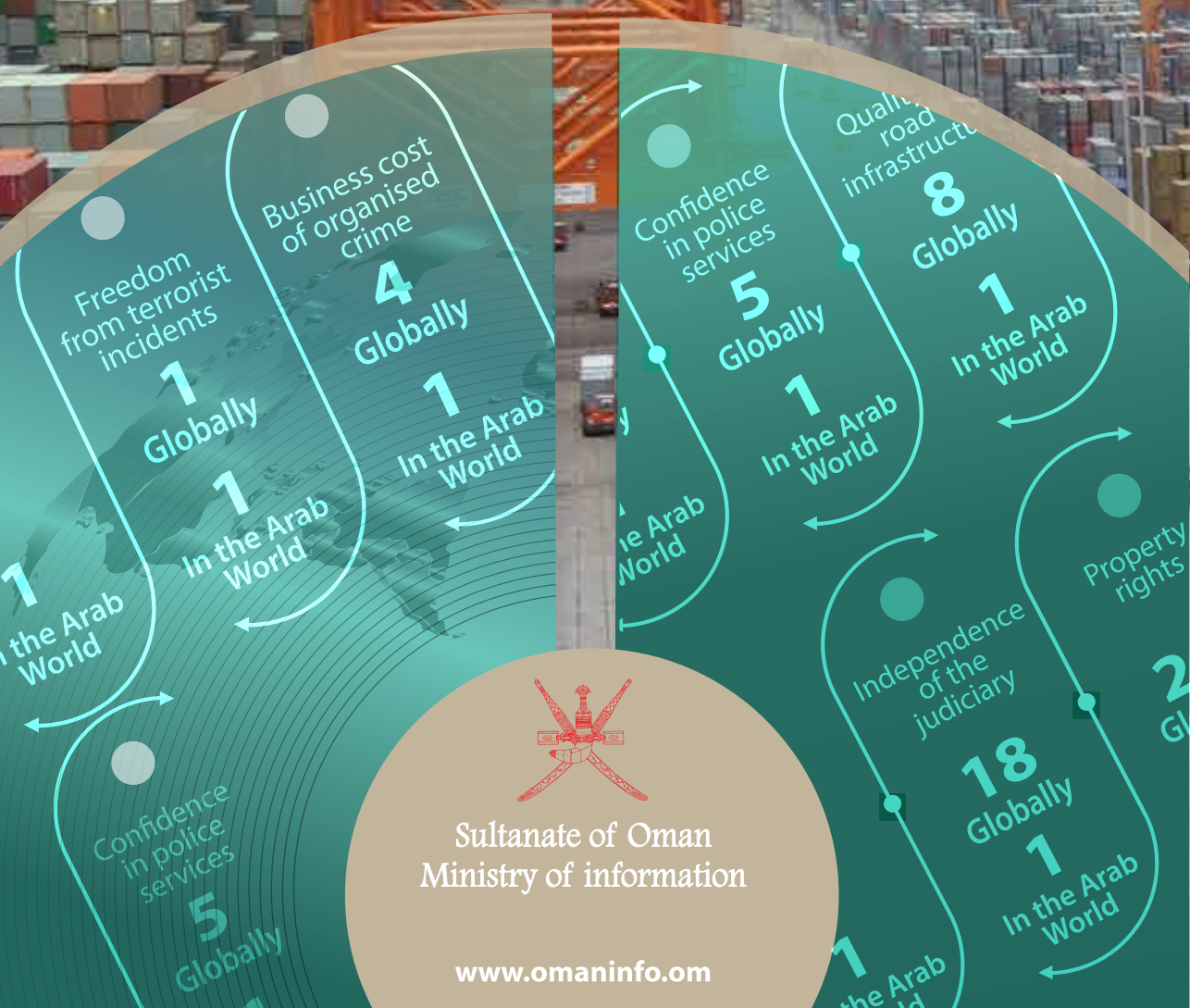
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