Oman Tourism Strategy

Executive Summary

For: The Ministry of Tourism of the Sultanate of Oman
Document No. 309
Extended Version

Created by:

THR Innovative Tourism Advisors
Barcelona, July 8th 2016
The Oman Tourism Strategy has been developed by THR Innovative Tourism Consultants for the Ministry of Tourism of Oman.
# Table of Contents

Acknowledgement 6

1. The need for a Tourism Strategy 7
   1.1 Tourism is part of Oman’s future 7
   1.2 Oman has much to offer the world 8
   1.3 Benefits of the Strategy 9
   1.4 Mission, Values and Vision Statement 10

2. Key Components of the Oman Tourism Strategy 12
   2.1 The Core Strategy 13
   2.2 Strategy Direction Statements 24
   2.3 Development Guidelines 25

3. Oman Tourism Strategy Map 39
   3.1 The Strategy Goal and Objectives 40
   3.2 Value for Stakeholders 41
   3.3 Strategy Drivers 42
   3.4 Strategy Enablers 46

4. Investment Required 50
   4.1 Investment Phasing 51
   4.2 Detailed Investment 52
   4.3 Government funding 55
   4.5 Public-Private investment model 56

5. Implementing Bodies and Roadmap 57
   5.1 Implementing Bodies 57
   5.2 Roadmap and next Steps 62

Epilogue 68
Message from His Majesty Sultan Qaboos Bin Said

I reaffirm the necessity to give tourism a priority in the future development programme. This sector has great potential for growth and for making an effective contribution to economic diversification, since our dear country possesses such splendid touristic assets such as its historic heritage, natural beauty, perfect environment, folklore and traditional industries.

In addition, there is the security, stability and the spirit of tolerance of the Omani citizens, thanks to God. The tourism industry is well qualified to offer career opportunities to Omani citizens. It is well capable of serving the aims of regional development, since its benefits will cover all regions.

On this basis we should prepare a new strategy to develop this sector so it can stand on its own feet in a severely competitive, flexible and diversified international market.

His Majesty Sultan Qaboos Bin Said
Message from His Excellency Ahmed bin Nasser Al Mahrizi, Minister of Tourism

The Ministry of Tourism is proud to share the long-term vision of the tourism sector for the Sultanate. In cooperation with international tourism consultants THR, the Oman Tourism Strategy (2016-2040) was developed in line with, and in response to the strategic planning approach adopted by the Sultanate.

Under the leadership of His Majesty Sultan Qaboos Bin Said, the economic development and diversification mission has identified tourism as a strong pillar of that process. With the natural environment our country has, its tradition and culture, and the hospitality of its people, Oman has all what it takes to become a favorite destination for distinctive and mindful tourists, who will come to enjoy the tourist assets our land and people offer, while respecting the sustainability of our natural environments and historical heritage.

One of the most important objectives the Oman Tourism Strategy seeks to achieve is an increasing contribution of the sector to the national GDP, in conjunction with the sustainable development process currently taking place in other economic sectors. The Ministry of Tourism realizes the key role tourism can play in enhancing the standard of living of Omanis across the country. Another important objective is to capitalize on the capabilities of the tourism sector to generate job creation and provide employment opportunities, in addition to substantial prospects for new Small and Medium Enterprises (SMEs).

Whilst the new Oman Tourism Strategy has identified the challenges currently facing the sector and the means to overcome them, it focused attention to management and governance, sustainable development, efficient marketing, human capacity development, as well as the modernization of the legislative and regulatory framework, and the strengthening of the tourism sector’s structure itself.

The worldwide tourism industry has never stopped growing, even in periods of economic uncertainty. The players are numerous, and we have to be at the cutting edge of planning, execution and appropriate use of our assets, to be able to effectively compete within the region and in the entire world.

The execution of this ambitious tourism Strategy will call upon collective and coherent efforts from all stakeholders in order to see this project through successfully. Hand-in-hand, the public sector and private enterprises, both local and international, will have to come together and methodically implement the Strategy in its successive phases, with tight coordination and determined goodwill.

We, at the Ministry of Tourism, are totally committed to ensure that the vision of tourism for our country becomes a reality, and to see our sector taking an increasingly important role in the development of the economy.

We wish all the people of Oman continuous achievements and prosperity.
Acknowledgement

With the blessing of Allah Almighty, we are now approaching the successful completion of preparing the Oman Tourism Strategy, which will guide our path towards sustainable tourism development for a quarter-century to come. On this momentous national occasion, the Ministry of Tourism is greatly honored to express sincere loyalty and gratitude to the patron of Oman modern Renaissance, His Majesty Sultan Qaboos bin Said – May Allah Almighty protect Him. His insightful Vision, inspiring thought and wise directives have always given us support and confidence in guiding the Tourism Sector, and laying the solid pillars that will enable it to maximize its contribution to the development process, and strengthening its role in realizing the objectives of economic diversification, in line with the long term strategic planning approach presently pursued by the Sultanate.

Many thanks and gratitude go to the International Consulting Company THR Innovative Tourism Advisors, whom we have entrusted with carrying out the study of the Oman Tourism Strategy Project, after being convinced of its high level of technical and professional capabilities. We appreciate their positive reaction to the remarks and proposals aimed at introducing improvements. We particularly appreciate the series of training sessions conducted by the Company for the benefit of the Ministry of Tourism and other related Tourism Sector personnel, with the objective of enhancing their capacities and equipping them with better understanding of advanced methodologies that shall be required during the implementation phase of the Strategy.

Our thanks and appreciation also go to the members of the various Committees supervising the Strategy, particularly the Main Committee, which provided valuable directives and guidance, and also performed close follow-up throughout the course of preparation. The Main Committee also catered for ensuring the Strategy compliance and consistency with the Government of the Sultanate’s policies, goals and orientations, as well as guaranteeing adequate coordination with the concerned Government Ministries. Also to be thanked are the members of the Advisory Committee, which included the various national authorities, ministries, bodies and institutions, both public and private sector and academic institutions. Our gratitude goes to the members of the specialized sub-committees and task teams for their valuable contributions stemming from their knowhow and experience.

We reiterate our appreciation to all those mentioned, and to many others as well, for their excellent cooperation during the preparation process. We are confident that they shall continue this cooperation in the coming important phase of implementing the Strategy, where the formulated plans need to be translated into tangible realities and benefits for the Omani citizens.

Praise is also due to the various Directorates of the Ministry of Tourism, for their focused and sustained efforts put in the preparation of the Strategy. In particular, we thank the Directorate General for Planning, Follow-up and Information for methodically discharging the tasks of coordination and follow-up between the Ministry and the Consulting Company. Thanks are additionally extended to the Ministry experts and advisors who provided professional support and conducted prudent reviews; and to the administrative staff who carefully carried out various follow-up and coordination processes, and undertook important administrative and financial tasks related to the Strategy Project.
1. The need for a Tourism Strategy

1.1 Tourism is part of Oman’s future

Tourism is a key driver of the global economy

Tourism is one of the world’s largest and fastest growing industries, and is a key source of global economic development. According to UNWTO, the business volume of tourism equals or even surpasses that of oil exports, food products and automobiles. In 2014, there were over one billion international tourist arrivals, and tourism accounted for over 11% of the world’s employment and over 9% of the world’s GDP. The remarkable growth of international tourism is expected to continue and by 2030; international tourist arrivals are estimated to reach 1.8 billion¹.

Tourism will bring additional economic prosperity, benefit the people of Oman and enhance its nature and culture

Oman is committed to economic diversification, to move away from an oil-based economy. Tourism offers an enormous opportunity for achieving this major objective. Tourism will bring 5 important socio-economic benefits, as described in figure 1 below:

Figure 1. Tourism socio-economic benefits for Oman by 2040

- More employment & career prospects: Above 500,000 jobs in Oman
- Mobilization of investment (2016-2040): OMR 18,877 Million expected (12% public)
- Increased contribution of Tourism Income to Country GDP: 6-10% (Income + production minus intermediary inputs)
- Development of local economies and tourism SMEs: 1,200 SMEs
- Improved quality of life and confidence in the future: Strengthen local pride and identity

Tourism will bring increased, better and more diverse opportunities for the Omani people. As tourism grows, host communities throughout the Sultanate will benefit and their lives will become fuller and more prosperous as they develop new skills, find better jobs and set up enterprises throughout the country. Tourism will also help preserve Oman’s precious cultural and natural assets and reinforce cultural expressions, strengthening the local pride and identity of the Omani population. Tourism will strengthen the nation brand, telling the world that Oman is an open, friendly, stable and peaceful place to visit, do business and invest.

¹ UNWTO, Tourism Towards 2030
1.2 Oman has much to offer the world

Oman spans oceans, deserts, mountains and wadis, lush green and parched gold landscapes, modern cities, unique and rich history and artifacts dating back to the earliest human settlements. For discerning travelers, Oman will become the true, open, authentic heart of Arabia. Oman is uniquely able to truly represent the culture of Arabia and satisfy the aspirations of tourists who have genuine respect and the curiosity to explore the authentic experiences of Arabia.

Oman is a land of tolerance and diverse cultures. Over centuries it has perfected the skills of embracing cultural, ethnic and environmental diversities without compromising its values. Oman need not envy nor copy any other tourism destination. Its essence does not need to change, other than to invest in tourism infrastructure, tourism products and human capital development, in order to accommodate a greater influx of interested and delighted visitors.

Tourism has roots in Oman’s past

Oman’s history is closely linked with a long tradition of maritime trading that has historically connected the country with distant lands, cultures and visitors. For centuries, the world looked to Arabia as lands of enlightenment, learning, beauty and progress. Its legends, art and architecture fueled fascination and imagination around the globe. The world has perceived Oman as a great and noble seafaring nation connecting Arabia, Africa, and India.

Oman has a culture of authentic hospitality, symbolized by kahwa and Omani halwa. Oman’s authentic Arabian cultural heritage and traditions are testaments to centuries of travel, learning, adventure and sharing (which today we call “tourism”); and Omanis are pleased to share these riches with others. The essence of the Omani welcome is its being unique, honest, authentic, rich and shared. This constitutes a profound foundation for modern tourism.

Oman is an emerging tourist destination with outstanding assets and ample room for growth

With exceptional natural and cultural resources, well-developed infrastructure, a strong national airline, a warm sense of Omani hospitality, a business-friendly environment and able political leadership, the Sultanate has all the components of a highly successful tourism destination. Oman’s distinctiveness and beauty are attracting increasing numbers of curious visitors from all over the world and these visitors are receiving experiences that richly reward their choice, all because Beauty has an Address.

For centuries Oman had been a powerful center of travel and trade. This is a strong basis for modern tourism. The opportunity exists today for Oman’s tourism sector to grow into a powerful engine of economic diversification, cultural expression and social development. Tourism’s contribution to the national GDP is currently at around 2%; but there is potential for this figure to get multiplied, and for Oman’s tourism economic activity to achieve 8 to 12 times increase.

Given the unique and highly attractive natural and cultural assets of the Sultanate, there is a high potential for attracting more visitors who stay longer and spend more; thus contributing towards building a competitive and sustainable tourism industry in Oman.
1.3 Benefits of the Strategy

A strategically planned and implemented tourism development offers immense opportunities for Oman to maximize tourism benefits, while minimizing potential negative implications. The Tourism Strategy will enable Oman to reap significant benefits from tourism:

Benefits of having a Tourism Strategy

- Raise awareness and interest in tourism amongst all stakeholders, particularly investors and host communities.
- Empower stakeholders to consider opportunities realistically, with value propositions based on authenticity, responsible tourism, experiences and yield over volume.
- Enable Oman to achieve superior financial performance, better quality of life for its people and generate more attractive investment opportunities.
- Drive Oman towards becoming a high-quality competitive destination, one that attracts investors and visitors from all over the world.
- Strengthen Oman’s identity and brand by enhancing the national culture and heritage.
- Create quality local employment opportunities and boost entrepreneurship.

Benefits of communicating the Tourism Strategy

- Attract support for tourism throughout all sectors.
- Provide a means to build consensus amongst all stakeholders.
- Enable stakeholders to understand the driving principles of successful tourism and help them utilize these.
- Present the Government with clear guidelines and a detailed implementation plan for the sustainable development of Tourism.
- Direct the attention of investors to investment opportunities and Government priorities.

Benefits of implementing the Tourism Strategy

- Increase the contribution of Tourism to the GDP to 6-10%.
- Create 535,000 jobs in the tourism sector.
- Achieve Social Responsibility Index of 850/1000.
- Achieve over 11 million international and local tourists.
- Achieve 14 million room nights.

A Strategy is also a must to unify the Vision

Stakeholders are interested and willing to invest in tourism but they require, and rightly demand, a solid national Tourism Strategy that can leverage their efforts, by guiding them to the right locations, markets, products and business models. Furthermore, stakeholders need to be empowered to share the common understanding of the vision for Oman’s tourism, and to receive necessary tools that enable them to participate effectively in the implementation of the Oman Tourism Strategy.
1.4 Mission, Values and Vision Statement

The Mission

The mission statement is a brief description of the destination’s core purpose, answering the question why should tourism exist and grow in Oman and for whom?

The main benefits of a well-designed mission are that it:

- Facilitates decision-making processes.
- Helps to concentrate on the overall goal of the destination.
- Provides a shared purpose.
- Provides focus on a higher long-term goal.

The Oman Tourism Mission is:

*To diversify our economy and to create jobs by offering the world enriching tourism experiences with Omani personality*

Core Values

Core values define the ethos, personality and soul of a destination, answering the question what do we stand for? These values are enduring beliefs or ideals and codes of conduct for our actions, and set the standards by which the destination is expected to operate. Usually four to six values are sufficient, sufficient enough to be powerful yet straightforward to remember.

The main benefits of having an appropriate set of values are:

- Inspiring pride and confidence among tourism stakeholders and tourists alike.
- Building a compelling and sustainable tourism destination brand.

The core values selected to represent the spirit of Oman’s tourism development are:

1. Friendliness
2. Kindness
3. Respect
4. Pride in our identity
5. Honesty
6. Generosity
The Vision

What does Oman want to become and achieve? The vision defines Oman’s aspirational goal, by stating the business frame of reference, objective and time period to achieve it.

Oman’s Strategy is not aimed at chasing mass tourists; it is designed rather to invite fewer Premium visitors who will spend more time and bring greater benefits, with minimum negative impacts on culture and the environment. Oman’s tourism will:

- Be high-touch, rather than high-tech.
- Be authentic, rather than artificial.
- Strengthen Omani culture, rather than compromise it.
- Be a source of pride.
- Be experienced by the world as an enlightened treasure.

How will Oman achieve its goal ethically? Strongly associated with the Vision, 3 Guiding Principles drive the execution of the Strategy:

1. Improve the quality of life of the people of Oman while also benefiting the rest of the stakeholders
2. Cultivate Omani culture, heritage and traditions
3. Preserve natural resources and ensure their sustainability
2. Key Components of OTS

The components of the Oman Tourism Strategy

The ultimate task of Strategy formulation is deciding how Oman will accomplish its tourism agenda in light of the in-depth analysis conducted, the objectives set and the critical issues identified. In other words, the Oman Tourism Strategy marks the way in which Oman will create value and compete successfully in international tourism markets.

OTS is structured around 3 parts covering 9 components, as shown in figure 2:

![Figure 2. The components of the Strategy](image)

- **2.1 The Core Strategy**
  - Setting the competitive advantage
  - a. The Scope
  - b. The Competitive Advantage
  - c. The Premium Demand Strategy

- **2.2 Strategy Direction Statements**
  - Managing the key issues
  - d. Strategy Direction Statements

- **2.3 Development Guidelines**
  - Ensuring smart growth
  - e. 5 Planning Concepts
  - f. 14 Tourism Clusters
  - g. Accommodation Keys and Resorts
  - h. Human Capital Development
  - i. A Sustainable Tourism Destination
2.1 The Core Strategy

The Core Strategy deals with how to create a sustainable competitive advantage (differentiation) that leads to superior financial and social performance. It develops a clear formulation of the goal to be achieved, the key competitive advantages to be created and the tourism typologies and source markets to be targeted.

a. The Scope (business sectors, targets and geographical markets)

The Strategy identifies 9 Business Sectors in which Oman will compete

As a result of the evaluation of both the attractiveness of all tourism types and the competitiveness of Oman, the Strategy identifies the following Business Models on which Oman will focus:

Figure 3. Oman’s 9 Business Sectors
The Strategy identifies 5 target traveler profiles

The combination of socio-demographic and motivational variables with personality characteristics enables distinguishing 5 segments to be targeted by Oman according to their travelling profiles:

**Figure 4. Oman’s target traveler profiles**

<table>
<thead>
<tr>
<th></th>
<th>Millennials</th>
<th>Vacationist</th>
<th>Sophisticated</th>
<th>Discerning</th>
<th>Special interest</th>
</tr>
</thead>
<tbody>
<tr>
<td>1</td>
<td></td>
<td></td>
<td></td>
<td></td>
<td></td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>2</td>
<td></td>
<td></td>
<td></td>
<td></td>
<td></td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>3</td>
<td></td>
<td></td>
<td></td>
<td></td>
<td></td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>4</td>
<td></td>
<td></td>
<td></td>
<td></td>
<td></td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>5</td>
<td></td>
<td></td>
<td></td>
<td></td>
<td></td>
</tr>
</tbody>
</table>

- Young, up to 30
- Travel to experience new things, have fun with friends
- Looking for experiences with high levels of nature and adventure
- Technology is part of their lifestyle
- Middle class families & couples
- Travel to relax in a safe environment, preferably by the sea
- Prefer to have everything organized
- High income families & couples
- Travel to feel closer and experience the world of the rich
- Looking for relax or discovery in style
- Very high quality and service expectations
- Some are second home buyers
- Mature individuals & couples 30 - 65
- Travel to discover new destinations, its most representative attractions and live experiences.
- Educated, high income
- Travel organized or self-arranged
- Travel to satisfy a special interest: diving, trekking, birding, etc.
- Highly networked in special interest communities
- Willing to sacrifice quality services to fulfill their interest
- Travel organized or self-arranged

The Strategy targets diverse Geo-Markets differently

Targeted traveler’s profiles are found in varying degrees in different geographic markets. Following the attractiveness - competitiveness analysis of different key source markets, both regional and international, strategic geo-markets for Oman have been identified:

- International markets: Germany, France, India and the United Kingdom.
- Regional markets: UAE and Saudi Arabia.

There are certain cultural similarities in regional markets like the domestic, Saudi, and UAE markets for example. The considerable expatriate communities, especially in UAE, are included, as they are “next door”; but they are treated separately, as their motivations, preferences, and lifestyles differ widely. Focus on other markets will be directed towards selected niche targets or geo-markets.
b. The Competitive Advantage

Oman’s competitive advantage will be utilized through an exceptional menu of tourism experiences. Considering existing market opportunities and Oman’s inner strengths, the challenge lies in solving essential tourist needs in a distinctive and exclusive way. Experiences will become the heart of Oman’s Customer Value Proposition. They will create sustainable competitive advantages that lead to superior financial and social performance, while capitalizing on the vigor of Oman’s leadership.

Figure 5. Oman’s tourism competitive advantage

The essence of the experience concept

An experience is a memorable activity which allows participants to appreciate, do or learn things that produce positive emotional states through fascination and seduction:

The activities and resources on which the experience is based must be distinctive and representative of Oman, while remaining in line with the tourism industry trends and the targeted audiences. The generation of seduction and fascination elements is key, as it enables the visitors to achieve positive emotions through appealing experience themes, amazing landscapes, innovation, exclusiveness, etc. The fusion of these key elements produces a positive emotional state for the visitor, hence creating memorability.
Oman’s menu of experiences includes 3 types of experiences

Figure 7. Oman’s menu of experiences

Oman’s experiences

- Top Experiences
  - Exclusive selection of once-in-a-lifetime travel experiences
  - Entice visitors to choose Oman as a destination
  - Grand Tour of Oman
  - Forts and Castles
  - Dhow and khors
  - Omani villages
  - Wadis and nature
  - Souq flavors
  - Turtles nesting
  - Frankincense story
  - Etc.

- Signature Experiences
  - Set of experiences driven by the local companies
  - Rooted in local culture and inherently personal
  - Based on...
    - Nature
    - Religion
    - Culture
    - Heritage
    - Traditions
    - Food
    - Etc.

- Brand Experiences
  - Micro experiences that create a local flavor
  - Perceived by all visitors by the mere fact of “being there”
  - Frankincense ceremony
  - Coffee and dates welcome
  - Omani breakfast
  - Omani boutique shops
  - Tourist information points
  - Gala dress experience
  - Etc.

Top Experiences (Lead by the Public sector)

Top experiences are exclusive selections of once-in-a-lifetime experiences that will entice international tourists to choose Oman. The key to distinctive and unique experiences is engaging travelers with the culture, people and/or places visited in ways that are authentic and memorable.

A collection of world-class Top Experiences will establish the foundation of Oman’s positioning as a tourism destination. Oman will focus on developing top experiences such as:

1. Grand Tour of Oman, an off-road adventure
   From Musandam to Salalah, a land of surprises awaits in a country best discovered off-road. The GTO captures the essence of Oman in an experiential tour. A luxury adventure through outstanding Forts and Castles, untouched and striking natural landscapes, legendary culture, ancient traditions and renowned hospitality; Oman in a nutshell, feels the thrill. The itinerary is tailor-made to interests through a user-friendly planning tool, but any choice is always a success. The journey is the goal. The open road, a classic touring route and the pleasure of driving. Unwind, travel along spectacular scenic routes and live unexpected experiences. A unique insight of Oman, a chance to bond with its people, make one feel connected to its places and marvel at their culture. It is all there, in one unforgettable trip.
2. Forts and Castles, reenactments of the past
More than 500 Forts and Castles spread all over the country portray the powerful and wealthy past of Oman. Located in a crossroad land between Asia and Europe, Forts and Castles served as centers of defense, military headquarters, administrative base and judicial centers. Dating back to centuries, Forts and Castles witnessed struggles of military legacy, used to defend the country from foreign attacks or by the Portuguese in their empire-building quest.
Step across the threshold to see history come alive. Become a part of history, admire techniques from some of the finest architects and engineers of their time and relieve a story of resisting invaders or learning how the early settlers lived. Take a journey back in time and be captivated by the charm of the past. An opportunity to revive the legend of Oman, as it once was. History carved in mud brick, where each stone has a story to tell!

3. Musandam dhows, sail striking khors
Jump into the khors (inlets) on board of a dhow, a traditional wooden-hulled Omani vessel. Discover villages only accessible by boat that still remain true to its past. Enjoy the calmness of the fjords and practice a variety of water sports with thrilling fjords as a backdrop. Relax in the shade of the deck and sip a traditional Arabian coffee with dates. Snorkel into pristine turquoise waters and be seduced by the combination of breathtaking scenery above water and its treasures beneath.
After sailing, drop the anchor at a secluded bay and as the sun sets and darkness falls, settle back and relish the calmness of the fjords. As the night sky twinkles to life, listen to the stars storyteller and decode the Arabian night sky, locating the Milky Way, the signs of the Zodiac as well as planets and galaxies that are visible due to the clarity of the atmosphere.

4. Omani villages, relieve the traditional lifestyle
Make your way through rugged mountain landscapes and beautiful wadis into a traditional Omani village. Surrounded by picturesque farmed terraces supporting pomegranate and apricot trees and idyllic date plantations, restored villages allow discovering and experiencing the authentic Omani way of life.
Explore traditionally-furnished houses, marvel at the traditional architecture and discover the falaj, the ancient irrigation channels passing through the city. Revive the ancient traditions and trades, the norms and social habits that characterize the true Omani lifestyle. Taste local home-cooked dishes, Oman’s authentic flavor.
Embody the life of Omanis, in all its simplicity and harshness. Be a local for a day. Fall in love with villages that seem unsullied by the passing of time.
5. Wadis and nature, extreme sports glory
With endless miles of striking landscapes and wadis, rocky mountain peaks, dramatic gorges and caves, rugged beautiful coastline and mesmerizing sandy deserts, Oman is a paradise for nature and adventure lovers.
Feel the thrill of an adrenaline rush in a unique setting for great outdoor activities. Discover Oman’s wadis, where immense nature possibilities await. Push yourself further by taking up an extreme pursuit such as caving, canyoning, abseiling, base jump or cliff diving. Open your eyes to new shades of color in the desert. Swim in pristine turquoise waters and trek endless routes across sand, scree and bare rock. Whether it is by foot, 4-wheel, quad bike or camel, Oman’s spectacular scenery begs for exploration. Challenge yourself and discover Oman from a new angle.

6. The Land of Frankincense story
Treasured for its medical and spiritual qualities, frankincense is much more than a tree. It represents the foundation of Dhofar’s culture and history, bustling with life thousands of years ago. Cities and civilizations emerged due to the trade of frankincense. Notable explorers as Marco Polo and Lawrence of Arabia were part of it.
Discover the ancient frankincense trade route in search of clues to a lost civilization that controlled the once most precious commodity in the world, Frankincense. Explore the Land of frankincense Museum for a closer approach to the area; travel back in time in Samhuram, the remains of the famed port from where frankincense was shipped to all parts of the world and visit the Boswellia Sacra Tress, endemic to Oman and producing the world’s finest and most highly prized Frankincense resin.

7. All the flavors & authenticity of Omani souqs
Not merely traditional markets, Omani souqs are places for social gathering. Here, present and past merge together in an explosion of colors, flavors and fragrances. A chance to immerse in Oman’s popular culture through a maze of tightly packed and narrow lanes, a shopper’s delight worth wandering along.
Every day, a varied program of themed events and activities brings the souq alive. Rejoice at the sounds of traditional live music performances; discover the local folklore exhibitions, relish at poetry recitals, or marvel at ancient handicraft demonstrations. Move from one stand to another and discover a fascinating array of gold, spices, textiles and other products. Get a sense of how business in done and learn the art of bargaining. Taste rose water and saffron-infused halwa, Stop the clock, look at the world spin and admire the constant buzzing activity of Oman’s daily life.
8. Turtles nesting and hatching
Oman has 5 of the world’s seven species of sea turtles. Learn the secrets of turtles, who manage to navigate oceans to return to the exact same beach where they hatched using magnetic fields!
Explore the interactive museum and learn about turtle biology, their nesting rituals, the turtle’s diet, habits or life at sea. Come closer to these marine animals and learn the little things that can be done on land to aid the survival of the species.
Live a ranger guided turtle encounter and observe how turtles crawl their way up to the beach. Walk the beach at sunrise or sunset under a starry night and witness a whole generation of turtles come to life, hundreds of tiny hatchlings emerging from the nest to make it to the sea. A unique an unforgettable turtle walk experience.

Signature Experiences (Lead by the Private sector)
A set of experiences will be driven by local companies (Destination Management Companies and Operators) and endorsed with a “Signature Experience” label. Businesses wishing to be included in this program will have to comply with its standards and become certified.
By setting up a Signature Experiences Program, existing tourism businesses will be assisted and encouraged to promote their products and reach international audiences, while gaining global recognition and exposure. This program will also stimulate the development of innovative products and foster the appearance of new tourism experience operators. Some examples of Signature Experiences to be developed are:

1. Glamping on a starry night (Glamorous Camping)
A break in the great outdoors with a touch of glamour. As the sun sets, you will settle back and relish the sounds of the desert. The night sky twinkles to life while you listen to the star storyteller and decode the Arabian night sky. An unforgettable overnight experience.

2. The beauty of Islamic architecture by the Grand Sultan Qaboos Mosque
The Grand Sultan Qaboos Mosque, an extraordinary piece of modern Islamic architecture in Muscat. After the visit, you will enrich your experience by talking with Mosque’s staff to share first impressions about the Mosque history and fabulous architecture. A culturally enriching experience.

3. Sea, sun and pampering
An opportunity to practice the art of real relaxation. The largely untouched coastline of Oman is the perfect spot to relax by losing yourself to the rhythms of the tides and enjoying the quietness of the Arabian nights. An example of how there is nothing quite like nature to reach a state of calm.
4. Traditional camel races
An integral part of Oman’s culture and history: an exciting camel race. You pick your favorite camel and follow with admiration its elegant run to the finish line. Around you, folkloric manifestations that will entertain you and bring you closer to the Omani culture and lifestyle. An authentic experience.

5. The phenomenon of Khareef
Landscapes and cooling temperatures like nowhere else in the entire Gulf, as lush greenery and mist come together to delight monsoon visitors. In the Khareef festival, you can immerse yourself in Omani culture and be a part of traditional songs and dances, learn from handicraft demonstrations and enjoy other forms of Omani customs and traditions.

6. Diving in search of underwater treasures
Pristine turquoise waters that will seduce you via the combination of breathtaking scenery above the water and its treasures beneath. Fantastic diving conditions throughout the year and a rich maritime legacy form an exciting underwater kaleidoscope, able to delight the most demanding scuba lover.

7. Date products and frankincense perfume
An opportunity to acquire an in-depth knowledge of some local products and create your own date cream or frankincense perfume, just like the ancient way. You can walk among the date plantations to select your preferred ones and later on be familiarized with the different essences to design your own personal frankincense perfume.

8. Omani feast as it once was
An Omani-style lavish feast of local cuisine, enjoyed to the sound of traditional Omani music. You will discover new flavors and dishes, ranging in taste and aromas, generally characterized by an extensive use of spices and exotic herbs. A very tasteful experience to be completed with a selection of Omani coffee and dates.

9. Bedouin way of life
An opportunity to meet a real Bedouin family who will convey to you their ancient and authentic traditions. You can sit down with them and share a traditional meal while listening to their stories and getting the feel of their original customs. Later on you may even learn how to milk a camel, play ancestral instruments or acquire handmade crafts as an authentic souvenir.
10. Stargazing
A chance to find your star on a quiet desert night while gazing at the sky in any of the stargazing camps across Oman. Sipping a warm and full of flavor traditional Omani coffee while learning about the different constellations and getting a real thrill from the tales behind them and their meaning for desert dwellers.

11. High-end cultural heritage
An experience to remember and feel very special while discovering the Royal Opera House in Muscat. You can enjoy an exclusive night visit, where spaces non-open to the public are made available to you. Finally, you will be delighted with a very special dinner in one of the luxurious rooms of the Opera House.

12. Authentic Omani homemade cuisine
An opportunity to have a real taste of Omani cuisine while enjoying the company and conversation of an Omani family. You will walk to the local market to buy the groceries and learn about the cooking back in the house. A great chance to dive into authentic Oman.

13. The art of Omani handicrafts
A chance to enter into the studio of an Omani craftsman and create art with your own hands following the instructions of a professional. You will learn about ancient techniques while you share a nice talk that will bring you closer to Omani roots. A highly enriching experience.
Brand Experiences (Lead by both Public-Private sectors)

Micro experiences perceived by all Oman’s visitors due to simply “being there”. These experiences create a local flavor by delivering an inspired experience and helping visitors feel truly connected to the heart and soul of Oman. The following are some Brand Experiences that will be present in a wide variety of places and moments:

1. The frankincense ceremony
   Enjoying a frankincense ritual, an integral part of daily life of Oman. The frankincense fragrance will accompany the visitor throughout their stay in Oman, while its aromatherapy scents will enhance the psychological well-being. An atmosphere perfumed by frankincense that will stick to their soul, inspire them and bring back pleasant memories.

2. The coffee and dates welcome
   The welcome ritual entails a distinctive aroma of freshly brewed spice-flavored Omani coffee, served in small cups. Tourists will discover the cardamom and saffron nuances of its unique strong and bitter flavor and will taste some locally grown dates or halwa. To be a part of an Omani hospitality ritual at its best, a traditional welcome that will make the visitor feel at home.

3. Omani dress experience
   Especially important in hotel reception, airports, etc. Getting amazed with the exuberance of the Omani traditional dresses. Walking around the main tourist attractions, airports, hotels, etc. and find live characters with the Omani dress on (in its different versions) to live and feel the Omani personality which is part of the image and the tourism brand of the country.

4. The Omani breakfast
   Getting the day off to the best start with a taste of local Omani cuisine. Indulging to an abundance of aromatic quality dishes representing the best of Omani hospitality. Boosting the morning energy and tasting a slice of local flavors with an assortment of made-to-order and signature Omani dishes for a superb start of the day.

5. Omani boutique shops
   Making sure the tourist takes back home the most genuine souvenirs of Oman. In the Omani boutique shops they will find a wide assortment of national and regional authentic, quality certified products such as khanjars, kummas, frankincense set, exclusive fragrances, etc. The shop assistants will give advice in the choice and explain the convenient goods’ delivery to the shopper’s home address.

6. Tourist information points
   Getting the flavor of Oman in its Tourist information points. Sitting to taste a delicious Omani coffee while browsing useful contents, online or offline, on what to do & see, where to stay, etc. Seeking for advice from highly trained teams and starting to feel the warmth, hospitality and respect of Omani people. Tourist information staff speak several languages and will assist the visitor.
c. Premium Demand Strategy

The Oman Tourism Strategy adopts a “Premium Strategy” approach, as it addresses the market with emphasis on the affluent and luxury category. This strategy attracts fewer tourists than a mass strategy; but increases per capita tourism revenue. The Premium strategy produces greater positive social and/or environmental impacts than other strategies that have been considered.

The Premium Demand Strategy will attract fewer tourists compared to the Standard Strategy; however, it will generate more jobs, more production and more contribution to the GDP.
2.2 Strategy Direction Statements

Slightly similar to a Vision Statement, the Strategy Direction Statements present the direction that the Strategy will follow during its execution. For each of the 15 key issues identified, a Strategy Direction is drafted.

**d. Strategy Direction Statements**

The Oman Tourism Strategy contains 71 Strategy Direction Statements, which address the 15 Strategic Issues involved in achieving the Vision.

**Figure 9. 15 Key Issues addressed by the Strategy Direction Statements**

<table>
<thead>
<tr>
<th></th>
<th>Planning &amp; Development</th>
<th></th>
<th>Operations &amp; Quality</th>
<th></th>
<th>Competitiveness Leadership</th>
</tr>
</thead>
<tbody>
<tr>
<td>1</td>
<td>Investments &amp; Entrepreneurship</td>
<td>6</td>
<td>Marketing Planning &amp; Management</td>
<td>11</td>
<td>Current Competitive Conditions</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>2</td>
<td>Host Communities Involvement &amp; Benefits</td>
<td>7</td>
<td>Marketing Operations</td>
<td>12</td>
<td>Legal &amp; Regulatory Framework</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>3</td>
<td>Sustainability of the Natural and Cultural Environment</td>
<td>8</td>
<td>Talent Attraction &amp; Retention</td>
<td>13</td>
<td>Governance</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>4</td>
<td>Experiences</td>
<td>9</td>
<td>Human Capital Development</td>
<td>14</td>
<td>Management</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>5</td>
<td></td>
<td>10</td>
<td></td>
<td></td>
<td></td>
</tr>
</tbody>
</table>
2.3 Development Guidelines

The Development Guidelines set the grounds of the smart growth strategy to optimize the social, economic and environmental benefits of tourism. Development Guidelines detail specific courses of action to develop the clusters, hotels and resorts, and human capital needed; all from a sustainable tourism perspective.

e. Five Planning Concepts

The planning framework and development concepts adopted will deliver a strong offer portfolio, supported by a solid local community consensus, strong stakeholder collaboration and well-managed overall coordination. At the core of the framework developed for the Oman Tourism Strategy are five closely interrelated planning concepts:

Figure 10. Five planning concepts

<table>
<thead>
<tr>
<th>Tourism sites and attractions</th>
<th>Clusters</th>
<th>Resorts</th>
<th>Touristic zones of National Interest</th>
<th>Itineraries</th>
</tr>
</thead>
<tbody>
<tr>
<td>Historic, natural and cultural elements or events around which activities and tourism experiences are developed</td>
<td>Areas that contain a varied and attractive portfolio of experiences, services, infrastructures and equipment</td>
<td>Master planned spaces of a relatively large size offering a combination of hotels, leisure facilities and other tourism related services</td>
<td>Large areas (200 - 2,000 hectares) that hold various resorts and share big infrastructures and equipment</td>
<td>Defined routes connecting clusters and tourism sites and attractions (also called circuits)</td>
</tr>
</tbody>
</table>
f. 14 Tourism Clusters

A critical element of the Oman Tourism Strategy is the planned system of clusters. Each cluster comprises well-serviced groups of attractions and features ample accommodation, a transportation network, infrastructures, tourist facilities and services. Cluster development will enable Oman to:

- Increase global performance.
- Diversify and strengthen the product offer.
- Boost the professionalization of the tourism area.
- Offer a compelling destination of distinction.
- Facilitate engagement between visitor and destination.

The Oman Tourism Strategy stipulates the development of 14 natural, cultural and urban clusters connected by 5-7 high value itineraries in the years to come. The 14 planned clusters are:

Figure 11. Clusters Development in Oman over the next 25 years
Development phasing guidelines

With the objective of achieving efficient clusters that allow competitive and profitable tourist development, the OTS recommends a gradual and flexible approach. The four phases recommended by the Strategy are 2016-2020, 2021-2025, 2026-2030, 2030-2040.

The following roll-out model presents the gradual distribution of the clusters in 5-year periods.

**Figure 12. Roll-out model**

<table>
<thead>
<tr>
<th>A. Musandam</th>
<th>Crowning coastal wilderness</th>
<th>2016-2020</th>
<th>2021-2025</th>
<th>2026-2030</th>
<th>2031-2040</th>
</tr>
</thead>
<tbody>
<tr>
<td>B. Nizwa &amp; Jabal Shams</td>
<td>Fortresses, mountain villages and canyons</td>
<td>![Icon]</td>
<td>![Icon]</td>
<td>![Icon]</td>
<td>![Icon]</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>C. Muscat</td>
<td>Oman’s high-end cultural heritage</td>
<td>![Icon]</td>
<td>![Icon]</td>
<td>![Icon]</td>
<td>![Icon]</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>D. Salalah, al-Baleed WHS, Sunharem WHS &amp; Wadi Dawkah WHS</td>
<td>The land of frankincense</td>
<td>![Icon]</td>
<td>![Icon]</td>
<td>![Icon]</td>
<td>![Icon]</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>E. Eastern Coast Wadis &amp; Ras al Jinz</td>
<td>The jewels of Oman</td>
<td>![Icon]</td>
<td>![Icon]</td>
<td>![Icon]</td>
<td>![Icon]</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>F. AR Rustaq, Nakhal and al-Hazm</td>
<td>The land of castles and springs</td>
<td>![Icon]</td>
<td>![Icon]</td>
<td>![Icon]</td>
<td>![Icon]</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>G. Sharija Sands</td>
<td>Home of Oman’s Bedouins</td>
<td>![Icon]</td>
<td>![Icon]</td>
<td>![Icon]</td>
<td>![Icon]</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>H. Maskat Island</td>
<td>Oman’s island realm</td>
<td>![Icon]</td>
<td>![Icon]</td>
<td>![Icon]</td>
<td>![Icon]</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>I. Sohar</td>
<td>Sinbad’s homes</td>
<td>![Icon]</td>
<td>![Icon]</td>
<td>![Icon]</td>
<td>![Icon]</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>J. AD Dgwm</td>
<td>Oman’s new city built on ancient traditions</td>
<td>![Icon]</td>
<td>![Icon]</td>
<td>![Icon]</td>
<td>![Icon]</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>K. Bat, al-Khutum and al-Ayn Tombs</td>
<td>Bronze and iron age monuments</td>
<td>![Icon]</td>
<td>![Icon]</td>
<td>![Icon]</td>
<td>![Icon]</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>L. Buraimi</td>
<td>Desert of colors</td>
<td>![Icon]</td>
<td>![Icon]</td>
<td>![Icon]</td>
<td>![Icon]</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>M. Rub al Khali</td>
<td>Rub al Khali wilderness</td>
<td>![Icon]</td>
<td>![Icon]</td>
<td>![Icon]</td>
<td>![Icon]</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>N. West of Salalah &amp; Jabal Qamar</td>
<td>Dhofar’s wild west</td>
<td>![Icon]</td>
<td>![Icon]</td>
<td>![Icon]</td>
<td>![Icon]</td>
</tr>
</tbody>
</table>

The phasing of the clusters is based on the assessment of seven variables:

- **Attractiveness of the area**: the number and relevance of touristic attributes and the perceived ability of the destination to satisfy the visitors’ needs.
- **Development needs**: the number and complexity of the developments required to improve the tourism infrastructure and to enable tourism growth.
- **Level of investment required**: the volume of investment needed to complete the development required and to prepare the destination for growth.
- **Estimated demand**: the potential to draw tourists in, defined by the attractiveness of the destination and further intrinsic factors - such as the readiness of the destination to accommodate tourism, willingness of the local community to develop the industry and the physical and psychological capacity of the destination to cope with tourism.
- **Seasonality**: the existence of a high concentration of tourism flows in certain periods of the year due to climate and other conditions. These fluctuations can result in inefficiencies, affecting all aspects of tourism supply.
- **Environmental impacts**: the development of tourism involves certain activities that can have adverse effects on the environment; consequently, the assessment of their impact and the adoption of adequate corrective measures are key.
- **Social profitability**: defined by the contribution of tourism to the generation of employment, maintenance of heritage and the preservation of natural assets, enhancement of business opportunities, improvement of the quality of life and welfare of the population etc.
g. Accommodation Keys and Resorts

It is imperative for Oman to achieve optimal accommodation growth by ensuring that:

- Growth is adequate in volume and speed, and takes place in the most appropriate territorial areas.
- The accommodation supply is developed in the proper formats and categories.
- The accommodation investments deliver an attractive profitability.

The new lodging keys will comprise three main types of offer: Hospitality, Hotel Serviced Units and Second Homes.

**Figure 13. 80,000 new lodging keys to be developed by 2040**

Source: THR projections

**Hospitality keys**

By 2040, Oman will need an inventory of around 65,000 hospitality keys. This means to develop 50,000 additional hospitality keys, in addition to the current 15,000 ones. And in order to meet the preferences of a highly diversified demand the new keys must be of very different typologies: Hotels, inns, guest houses, bed & breakfast, mansions, campsites, glamping, mobile homes, rural accommodation, etc.

**Hotel Serviced Units (HSU)**

Include villas, town houses or apartments owned by private investors and operated as hospitality keys by hotel operators in exchange for a share of the rental revenues. Some HSU are enjoyed for just a few days per year by their owners.

**Second homes (SH)**

Those are usually composed of villas, town houses and apartments for the private enjoyment of its owners. New and sophisticated formulas of shared ownership are increasingly being used.
Development directions by typology

Oman needs vast diversification in both hospitality and hotel service units, as well as specialization in the accommodation offer. The Strategy stipulates the following structure by year 2040:

**Figure 14. Tourism accommodation planned by 2040**

Resort Development Strategy

To successfully reach the Tourism Vision set out for 2040, 60% of new keys will be in resorts. Furthermore, the following resort structure is needed in order to respond to motivations and preferences of targeted tourists and real estate buyers:

**Table 1. Resort size mix projected by 2040**

<table>
<thead>
<tr>
<th>Size</th>
<th>% on total keys</th>
<th>Total keys(1)</th>
<th>Average keys</th>
<th>Resorts Units (min-max)</th>
</tr>
</thead>
<tbody>
<tr>
<td>Boutique resorts</td>
<td>15</td>
<td>7,538</td>
<td>300</td>
<td>23 - 28</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>Large resorts</td>
<td>25</td>
<td>12,563</td>
<td>1,000</td>
<td>11 - 14</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>Mega resorts</td>
<td>60</td>
<td>30,152</td>
<td>2,000</td>
<td>14 - 17</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>Total</td>
<td>100</td>
<td>50,253</td>
<td></td>
<td>47 - 58</td>
</tr>
</tbody>
</table>

Source: THR projections

(1) Hotel keys + Serviced Units keys + Real Estate keys
Regional Distribution Strategy

By 2040, the regional distribution of accommodation provision will change considerably to enable a balanced regional distribution of tourism development and a resultant balanced regional development:

Figure 15. Accommodation regional distribution planned by 2040 (% on total)

<table>
<thead>
<tr>
<th>Region</th>
<th>2013</th>
<th>2040</th>
</tr>
</thead>
<tbody>
<tr>
<td>Muscat</td>
<td>53.1%</td>
<td>30.8%</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>Dhofar</td>
<td>12.6%</td>
<td>23.8%</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>Al Dakhiliyah</td>
<td>4.7%</td>
<td>11.7%</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>Sharqiya South</td>
<td>5.1%</td>
<td>6.3%</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>Musandam</td>
<td>2.1%</td>
<td>5.4%</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>Others</td>
<td>22.4%</td>
<td>22.0%</td>
</tr>
</tbody>
</table>

General Guidelines for accommodation development

The growth strategy that should propel the development of accommodation in Oman proposed by the Oman Tourism Strategy are as follows:

Table 2. Twelve Accommodation Development Guidelines

General

1. Planned and controlled growth

Growth must focus, primarily, on the clusters and these should be put into operation in stages as to optimize the economies of scale, profitability, value proposition for tourists, and, above all, as to avoid an oversupply in the market which can lead to unattractive yield and to investments halt that will cause Oman’s tourism development to be compromised for decades.

Hospitality: higher differentiation and much better quality

2. Diversify typologies and specializations

The hospitality industry is changing faster than ever before because of emerging new market segments, the imperative need to fulfill motivations and preferences, and to be able to keep ahead from competitors. Boutique hotels, design hotels, themed hotels, all-suites hotels, glamping, mansions, holiday villages, serviced units, luxury bed and breakfast, are only a few examples of concepts that didn’t exist 10-15 years ago. And soon we will see unexpected new ventures.
3. Concentrate accommodation growth in 3, 4, 5 stars and 5 star Luxury

According to international standards, 1 and 2 star hotel categories will be soon out of international markets’ and Omani standards. Considering the lesson learned internationally, the accent will fall on 4 and 5 stars and 5 star Luxury especially for the Premium Demand.

4. Diversify geographically the locations of new accommodation offer and concentrate on the clusters

To develop accommodation offer is essential, also out of Muscat. Accommodation is needed in clusters and also in touristic towns & villages and in isolated areas to service specific major attractions and itineraries.

5. Concentrate accommodation in mixed-use resorts

A major portion of the accommodation growth should focus on mixed-use resorts, which is the core formula prevailing worldwide given its uncountable advantages of all kinds. This formula will be a success in Oman if an urgent assessment and improvement of current regulations and administrative procedures is conducted, which if left as they are may hinder the process.

6. Guarantee higher quality in services

Without higher quality, attracting the Premium Demand will not be feasible. This entails bringing to Oman the standards and operative technology of relevant international brands, compatible with the positioning of Oman and its Premium Demand Strategy.

Resorts

7. Towards of highly experiential mixed-use resorts

Some of these 50,000 new keys will be located in urban or rural areas. However, as it corresponds to the current world strong tendency, the majority of them will be located in "mixed-use" resorts: master planned leisure areas that combine several uses such as hotel, real estate, shops, sports, entertainment, etc. Between 40 and 60 resorts of different sizes, categories and themes are estimated in Oman in the next 25 years.

From the start, the resorts should be truly mixed-use, meaning that hotel investments should start from the outset as well as the shopping and entertainment offer as to authorize the licensing of Leisure Real Estates (LREs).

Each resort should have a wide range of very well planned and operated experiences. Also, each resort should ensure the continued operation of at least 3 of the "Branded Experiences" proposed in the OTS. The existence of a Town Center should be a must for every resort; requiring a minimum of 0.8 sqm of Town Center (total surface) per resort bed (i.e. a resort with 5,000 beds will need a minimum of 4,000 sqm of town center for entertainment, shopping, restaurants, etc.)
8. Improve the conditions for the right types of Leisure Real Estate (LRE) accommodation

LREs mostly adopt 2 forms: Second Homes (SH) or Hotel Serviced Units (HSU). For the LREs to develop successfully, tourist destinations need to attract investors interested in sophisticated hotels and bigger and sophisticated resorts. However, this is not easy due to the low profitability related to the hotel industry and to the large investments in infrastructure, landscaping, and operations associated with resorts. The most successful strategy to stimulate the necessary investment in hotels and resorts is the Leisure Real Estate because the LREs provide additional profitability that makes investments more attractive. Therefore, tourist destinations encourage LREs for three reasons:

- To attend the growing demand for LREs which, at the same time, provide significant investments to the destination.
- To achieve financial viability to develop resorts because of the multiple benefits for tourists, investors, and Governments related to these accommodations.
- To compensate the low profitability of the hotel industry and make investments more attractive.

Each hospitality key will grant the developer with the right to build additional LRE keys in the proportions indicated below. This incentive mechanism will apply not only to resorts, but also to developments in urban and isolated areas. Obviously, those developments below 3 stars should not be encouraged.

9. Resort Management Agency

The authorities responsible for approving the resort development should require that these have a Resort Management Agency as to ensure a good level of management of the following:

- Repairs and maintenance of the public component of the resort
- Delivery of services to LRE owners
- Resort’s experiences and rituals management system
- Resort’s Town Center management
- Resort’s brand and marketing umbrella management
- Etc.

10. New legal and regulatory framework

The current legal and regulatory framework in Oman does not create the right conditions for an efficient resort development. LRE ratios, administrative processes, some restrictions on property access are just some of the issues that must be urgently reviewed as to start attracting a significant number of good (profitable) investors.

Later in this chapter, the analysis of the situation is explained and relevant proposals about how to manage it are suggested.
11. Resort clustering

The OTS strongly recommends that the grouping of resorts in specific areas is promoted due to the important benefits of clustering: destination creation, economies of scale, lower public and private investments, lower operating costs, greater comfort for employees, easier logistics, etc. Clustering is usually most successful when it is promoted by a Master Developer that assumes the coordination of the entire cluster. Moreover, it helps creating Tourism Zones of National Interest (TZNI) which is discussed next.

12. Tourism Zones of National Interest (TZNI)

The OTS recommends that, within the main clusters, special high-priority areas and tourism development are identified and declared. These areas undergo an indicative Master Plan, have Government support in terms of systematic infrastructure, and offer investors important administrative, economic, and credit benefits. Most of the resorts should be developed within the TZNIs.
h. Human Capital Development

The execution of the Oman Tourism Strategy will generate quick tourism industry growth, which in turn, will lead to fast growth in tourism employment. To achieve the Oman Tourism Strategy Vision and implement the Premium Strategy, the quality of services in the tourism industry needs to be continuously strengthened, this requires quality tourism education and training, as well as highly motivated tourism Human Capital.

The development of tourism Human Capital is a key element of the Oman Tourism Strategy as it enables a strong relationship between tourism investment, employment creation and host community development. Adapting tourism development to globalization and new market demands will require concerted efforts to improve professional knowledge and skills of tourism sector employees. To achieve this, particular attention will be given to the adaptation of new technology and tools for tourism human capital development, together with strong attention on addressing an increasingly diverse range of tourism jobs over increasingly diverse business typologies.

The total (direct and indirect) tourism employment generated in Oman over 2020-2040 time period is as follows:

![Figure 16. Total tourism employment (direct and indirect) by 2040](image)

Source: THR projections

* Does not include the direct and indirect required in construction employment related to investment, which is estimated at 20,200 jobs by 2040.

Out of the estimated 321,000 (approximately) direct tourism jobs to be created by 2040, data indicates that the hospitality sector will account for 22.75% (73,224) while the other tourism related sectors will add the remaining 77.25% (248,639) of the employment share.

According to the distribution of job profiles by job level categories, overall 70% of the direct tourism employment (almost 222,815 employments) would be occupied by Omanis.
A strengthened tourism education and training system will ensure that Omani talent will reap the benefits of tourism development in Oman and contribute to the development of a competitive tourism industry, according to the Premium Strategy set by OTS. As a result of the Strategy, new employment opportunities will be available across 200+ businesses in a wide range of sectors.
Effective operation of the tourism education and training system requires the coordinated work of some 500 dedicated professionals encompassing the Government, tourism education and training providers and tourism industry firms. The Strategy sets the direction for the creation of new education and training programs that address tourism human capital needs arising from the Strategy implementation, while taking the latest educational and training methodologies and technologies onboard.

In order to cater for the emerging and new professions within tourism as identified in the Oman Tourism Strategy, the following 10 new tourism education programs are recommended to be created at the existing universities:

**Table 3. Top ten Tourism Education programs to be created**

<table>
<thead>
<tr>
<th>Program typology</th>
<th>Program level</th>
</tr>
</thead>
<tbody>
<tr>
<td>2 programs for Special Interest Tourism</td>
<td>Diploma</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>1 program for Adventure Travel</td>
<td>Diploma</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>1 program for Adventure Travel</td>
<td>Bachelor</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>1 program for International Conventions and Events Management</td>
<td>Bachelor</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>1 program for Real Estate and Hospitality Assets</td>
<td>Bachelor</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>1 program for Resort Development and Management</td>
<td>Master(*)</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>1 program for E-tourism</td>
<td></td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>1 program for Heritage Management and Interpretation</td>
<td></td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>High Level Tourism Executive Education Program for Omani Officials</td>
<td>Executive</td>
</tr>
</tbody>
</table>

(*) The programs to be set up are conversion Master programs which are to provide tourism education for professionals who already have a Bachelor degree in a non-tourism related field such as architects, economists, sociologists, geographers etc. Final program choice and titles of master programs suggested, pending to be decided.
i. A Sustainable Tourism Destination

The Oman Tourism Strategy advocates the adoption of a Sustainable Tourism model that integrates the principles of tourism sustainability at all levels and widely spreads the benefits of tourism throughout the country and society.

Oman will be a tourism destination that commits to sustainable and responsible tourism, benefiting the host community, local culture, the environment and eco-systems and the visitors. Benefits shall also be extended to the entire tourism industry and Omani society. As a result, a large number of tourism businesses will get environment certificates granted by internationally renowned institutions, in alignment with the Ministry of Environment and Climate Affairs. Both the local population and visitors will develop a responsible attitude towards the environment.

The system of protected areas, together with places of cultural interest, will have management practices that minimize the environmental and social impact of tourism activity and will contribute to preserving the environment. Cultural heritage, including traditions and local culture, will be fully valued thanks to tourism patterns adopted in the new experiences and tourism products that will be commercialized. Both domestic as well as international tourists, will responsibly enjoy local culture, and tourism experiences will incorporate genuine local products.

Benefits and concept of Sustainable Tourism

By adopting a Sustainable Tourism approach, Oman will generate important benefits:

- Minimize negative economic, environmental, and social impacts;
- Generate superior economic benefits for the host community and enhance well-being;
- Maximize opportunities for the community and involve citizens in tourism choices that affect their lives, including decision-making, planning and management processes;
- Contribute to the protection, enhancement and interpretation of natural and cultural heritage;
- Add value and increase visitor satisfaction through authentic experiences and meaningful connections with local people, easing understanding of local culture.

The Oman Tourism Strategy focuses on two sustainability components: host communities and the natural and cultural environment.

---

2 International Center for Responsible Tourism
Host Communities’ involvement and benefits

Tourism development will bring enhanced quality of life, higher economic wealth and a stronger feeling of well-being. Tourism will contribute to:

- Generating higher economic wealth, as through investment, new employment possibilities will arise and local companies will benefit.
- Producing a stronger feeling of well-being, as it leads to improvement in living conditions and the beauty of the environment. It also reinforces confidence in the future and infuses a sense of belonging into the community.

Sustainability of the Natural and Cultural Environment

Defined as the set of conditions in which people, living beings or communities live, the environment should not be understood as something strictly natural, instead cultural heritage values that shape the society we form and cohabit should also be considered. Oman will become a sustainable destination for responsible tourism, achieving a compatible long-lasting balance between tourism development and environment preservation. Natural and cultural sites will be planned, interpreted and managed according to their potential and carrying capacity.

Natural environment

Like any other economic activity, tourism affects the destination’s ecosystem. Oman will efficiently and responsibly use the natural resources and minimize the negative impacts on nature. Tourism will help preserve and enhance the natural environment by boosting the development of a system of nature protected areas and promoting the implementation of internationally recognized environmental certifications, among other measures.

Cultural environment

Tourism expresses the country cultural identity. Oman will integrate cultural wealth into tourism, thus increasing its appeal as a tourism destination, strengthening its identity and improving visitors’ experiences. Tourism will hence promote Oman’s cultural heritage while simultaneously improving its protection, restoration, interpretation and dissemination. Heritage and culture will be valued and used appropriately in the creation of authentic Omani products and experiences.
The Strategy Map provides a blueprint for integrating the strategies and operations of diverse actors and stakeholders; it helps to align processes, people, investments and technology for superior performance. The Tourism Strategy Map for Oman is structured into four components:

A. Strategy Goal and Objectives.
B. Value for Stakeholders.
C. Strategy Drivers: 4 Themes.
D. Strategy Enablers: 3 Themes.

Source: THR based on “The Execution Premium”, Kaplan & Norton
3.1 Strategy Goal and Objectives

The overall goal of the Oman Tourism Strategy is to become, by 2040, a top of mind destination for vacations, discovery and meetings, in such a way as to contribute to economic diversification. This goal is complemented by a system of macro-objectives that show the scope of what is to be achieved, and allow for estimating the time and effort needed:

### Table 4. Oman Tourism Strategy Macro-Objectives

<table>
<thead>
<tr>
<th>Item</th>
<th>Units</th>
<th>2013</th>
<th>2030</th>
<th>2040</th>
</tr>
</thead>
<tbody>
<tr>
<td>Visitors (including domestic tourists)</td>
<td>Millions</td>
<td>n/a</td>
<td>7.3</td>
<td>11.7</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>International Tourists</td>
<td>Millions</td>
<td>1.42</td>
<td>3.2</td>
<td>5.3</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>Room Nights</td>
<td>Millions</td>
<td>n/a</td>
<td>8</td>
<td>14</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>Employment</td>
<td>Thousands</td>
<td>89</td>
<td>293</td>
<td>535</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>Tourism Production (OMR)</td>
<td>Millions</td>
<td>1,140</td>
<td>5,548</td>
<td>9,585</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>Tourism GDP</td>
<td>%</td>
<td>2</td>
<td>4.8</td>
<td>5.9*</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>Social Responsibility Index</td>
<td>%</td>
<td>--</td>
<td>70%</td>
<td>85%</td>
</tr>
</tbody>
</table>

Source: THR projections
n/a: Not Available
* Tourism GDP by 2040 could reach up to 10% depending on a series of scenarios

**Visitors**: Measured by the total number of visitors (visitors and tourists) that visit Oman for one of the following reasons: leisure overnight trips, excursionists, business trips, trips with the purpose of visiting friends and relatives, in addition to domestic tourism.

**International tourists**: Measured by the total number of international visitors excluding day-trippers.

**Room nights**: Measured the number of hotel rooms occupied for one night; a statistical unit of occupancy.

**Employment**: Includes the total number of jobs (by Omani and expats) in companies that serve visitors directly as well as in companies that provide services to the tourism companies. Does not include jobs occupied for the construction of the tourism offer.

**Tourism production**: Measured in terms of the “income” (salaries + profits + indirect taxes), and not in “production” terms (income + intermediate inputs).

**Tourism GDP**: Calculated as the share of contribution to the national GDP generated by all tourism services.

**Social responsibility index**: Measures the adequacy of the relationship between tourism business, the society and the environment in which they operate.
3.2 Value for Stakeholders

The value for stakeholders’ perspectives refers to customer satisfaction, business opportunities for collaborators, attractive investment opportunities and better quality of life and sustainability for the community. The values to be generated for each of those three types of stakeholders who have been identified are:

<table>
<thead>
<tr>
<th>Value for Stakeholders</th>
<th>Description</th>
</tr>
</thead>
<tbody>
<tr>
<td>Value for Customers</td>
<td>An exceptional tourism experience and a competitive quality of tourism services. The value for tourists consists in providing memorable and unique experiences complemented by warm hospitality, quality service, high security and good levels of comfort.</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>Value for Collaborators</td>
<td>Attractive business opportunities for both companies and prescriber customers. Collaborators are individuals or businesses that provide travel services to tourists coming in to Oman and / or inform the market of Oman’s advantages as a tourist destination. To deliver value is to offer collaborators good products, services, and destinations. Moreover, it is also important to provide them with local reliable support, good facilities, and easy access and transport within Oman.</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>Value for Investors</td>
<td>Attractive investment environment and opportunities for both investors and SMEs. The value to be delivered to investors and entrepreneurs entails providing them with a good offer of investment opportunities accompanied by a seamless investment climate and simple, flexible, and transparent procedures and administrative regulations.</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>Value for Society</td>
<td>Better quality of life for host communities, cultural, social and environmental sustainability. Omanis will perceive value in the tourism development if it generates wealth, employment, and an increased sense of well-being and happiness with low social and environmental costs. The environment and local culture conservation is part of the value to be delivered to present and future host communities.</td>
</tr>
</tbody>
</table>
3.3 Strategy Drivers

The driver themes comprise internal strategic goals and identify key processes necessary to deliver customer and shareholder objectives. Those processes also contribute to the financial perspective’s productivity objectives.

The four driver themes are:

Theme 1: Plan and Develop

This theme lays the foundation for a comprehensive Tourism development program. The initiatives address all key elements of tourism planning and development, including spatial planning. Strengthened mechanisms for increased investment and SME support are also key. By implementing them, Oman shall have the opportunity to better plan, develop and achieve a “Sustainable” growth tourism model, building real opportunities for the long-term prosperity of the Omani society.

Theme 2: Be socially and environmentally responsible

Addresses economic, social, cultural and environmental aspects of sustainability, to ensure that the negative impacts of Tourism are minimized, win-win situations are generated and opportunities for the host community created. Taking sustainability as a crosscutting approach and cornerstone of the Plan contributes to the optimization of economic growth. At the same time, it enhances cultural heritage and local traditions and integrates them into the new authentic tourism experiences and products.

Theme 3: Deliver an exceptional tourism experience

Focuses on the creation of exceptional, unique Omani experiences and a strengthened tourism quality system. Implementing the initiatives will ensure that the visitor experience system becomes Oman’s main competitive advantage and the experiences offered will be unique to the culture of Oman and resonate strongly among visitors. As a result, the market, as demonstrated through media coverage and tour operator offerings, will recognize Oman as a uniquely special destination.

Theme 4: Attract more and higher yielding customers

Focuses on reaching the right customers through a 3-year Smart Marketing Plan, the setting up of Visit Oman Marketing Agency and the activation of a “best in class” electronic marketing system, using a platform spanning digital branding distribution. As a result, Oman will attract more, and higher yielding customers, maximize traditional and digital marketing efforts at lower acquisition costs, and attain higher conversion rates per visitor.
The Strategic Objectives (letters) and corresponding initiatives (numbers) by driver theme are:

Table 6. Theme 1: Plan and Develop

<table>
<thead>
<tr>
<th>Strategic Objective</th>
<th>Initiative</th>
</tr>
</thead>
</table>
| **A.** Achieve excellence in tourism planning and development | 1. Implement the National Tourism Planning Initiative (NTPI)  
NTPI will see the strengthening of MoT Planning Unit and its close alignment with OTS. Officials working at the Unit will benefit from high-level executive education in spatial tourism planning. The Tourism Land Bank will be updated and modernized, helping to attract investors for cluster development. All relevant stakeholders will be fostered to engage and coordinate, particularly with Omran in the field of tourism planning. |
| **B.** Attract the right amount of investment from vetted investors | 2. Activate a Tourism Investment Special Unit (TISU)  
TISU will operate with reinforced organizational capacity to provide strengthened investment support. The Unit will prepare a portfolio of investment proposals for which in-principle government support will be considered. An Invest-Easy Program will be established and tools to strengthen investor confidence will be implemented. The Unit will focus on the top five projects offering greatest net-benefits but also retain efforts to prepare projects for micro, small and medium-size investors. |
| **C.** Encourage the growth of tourism SMEs | 3. Launch a Special Tourism Entrepreneurship Program (TEP)  
TEP will see the launch of the national tourism entrepreneurship support initiative. It will provide training for host communities to encourage tourism-related business startups, operations and management. The training will seek to stimulate innovation in tourism entrepreneurialism, especially in providing local culture and nature-based experiences. It will also seek to connect Omani local entrepreneurs to national and international businesses through the Joint Ventures and Alliances Support Program as well as capitalize on the global trend towards booking experiences and activities online directly with providers. |
Table 7. Theme 2: Be socially and environmentally responsible

<table>
<thead>
<tr>
<th>Strategic Objective</th>
<th>Initiative</th>
</tr>
</thead>
</table>
| **D.** Create a social responsibility leadership system | 4. Activate the National Council for Sustainable Tourism (NCST)  
NCST will operate with strong public-private sector partnership and coordination. A specialized Oman Observatory for Sustainable Tourism will be established. The Council will also set up and operate a National Tourism Sustainability Certification Program, integrating environmental and socio-cultural sustainability with existing and new tourism projects. |
| **E.** Improve the quality of life of host communities | 5. Create the Host Community Participation and Benefits Program  
Public-private partnerships with host communities will be fostered. A “Tourism is Everybody’s Business” awareness campaign will be launched, raising awareness about the economic opportunities of tourism within host communities. A “Made in Oman” product certification will be set up, fostering design and production of authentic crafts and products. To build related technical and management capacity, a “Made in Oman” Training Program will be developed and conducted, including the creation of a Tourism Reinvestment Fund for host communities. |
| **F.** Ensure a high level of sustainability in tourism clusters and sites | 6. Create the Environmental and Cultural Sustainability Program  
An “Our environment, our future” campaign will be launched, raising awareness about the need for environmental protection and preservation through tourism in host communities. Host communities will receive coaching from regional technical teams regarding tourism sustainability and will be introduced to appropriate powerful planning tools in protected areas, cultural and archaeological sites. |

Table 8. Theme 3: Deliver an exceptional tourism experience

<table>
<thead>
<tr>
<th>Strategic Objective</th>
<th>Initiative</th>
</tr>
</thead>
</table>
| **G.** Offer an expanding portfolio of exceptional Oman Top tourism Experiences (OTE) | 7. Activate the Oman Experience Agency (OEA)  
OEA, for reasons of flexibility, speed-to-market and thematic proximity, will be attached to the Visit Oman marketing agency. It will be staffed by MoT employees with enterprising orientation and externally hired design and management experts. The Agency’s mission is to design, deliver, manage the growth and marketing of a world-class system of tourist experiences, complying with the following criteria: true to its place, with Omani personality, highly attractive for selected target segments, complementary to one another, and with high value creation for tourists, local communities and enterprises. |
| **H.** Develop a portfolio of Omani style Signature Experiences | 8. Create the Signature Experiences Program (SEP)  
The initiative will see the setting up and empowering of the Signature Experiences Program team, definition of the affiliation platform and process and launching of a sophisticated marketing and sales system aligned with the Marketing Plan. |
| **I.** Strengthen the quality of tourism products services and experiences | 9. Implement the National Tourism Quality System  
The Oman Tourism Services Quality Unit (OTSQU) will be launched, and an Oman Tourism Quality Assurance Framework will be developed. Technical assistance to the industry will be provided to implement quality management processes. A special award, which will recognize achievements in quality improvements in the Oman tourism industry, will also be launched. |
<table>
<thead>
<tr>
<th>Strategic Objective</th>
<th>Initiative</th>
</tr>
</thead>
<tbody>
<tr>
<td>J. Set up a world class marketing platform</td>
<td><strong>10. Activate the Visit Oman (VO) Marketing Agency</strong>&lt;br&gt;The initiative will see the development of the organizational structure for Visit Oman. This will be closely aligned with the Oman Tourism Strategy priorities and structure. The Agency will be staffed by appropriately educated and experienced staff that will be able to manage the transition process and then day-to-day operation of the Visit Oman Marketing Agency.</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>K. Increase Oman’s secondary demand in source markets</td>
<td><strong>11. Implement a 3-year Smart Marketing Plan</strong>&lt;br&gt;This initiative will see the design of the plan, execution of the communication strategy and monitoring of the implementation plan. The focus will be on implementing a Strategic and Operational Marketing Plan using best practices and tools to significantly influence targeted source markets. The definition and implementation of the Plan is to be performed by Visit Oman with active technical and financial participation of key players and an exclusive group of partners in target source markets.</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td></td>
<td><strong>12. Execute a Media Relations Special Program</strong>&lt;br&gt;The initiative will see the development of a Media Relations plan with a global firm and the launch, management and monitoring of implementation. Within defined target markets, Visit Oman will select relevant online media, print media and TV programs to reach target customers. The Market Based Representatives (MBRs) will establish contacts and analyze wants and needs of media/key journalists and bloggers. Visit Oman will then select and produce relevant visual, text and audiovisual content. The right mix of paid and unpaid PR will be defined and key members of the media will be invited to visit Oman and frequent media events organized by local MBRs.</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td></td>
<td><strong>13. Operate a world class e-marketing unit (eMU) inside Visit Oman</strong>&lt;br&gt;The initiative will see the creation of a dedicated e-Marketing team, development and implementation of a cutting-edge e-Marketing strategy, the hiring of a specialized web-marketing agency to support infrastructure and design building and implementation of a monitoring system to measure performance and satisfaction. With the initial help of specialist consultants, but driven by in-house experts, necessary technology, platforms, tools and processes will be identified and put in place by a new, highly skilled team. Capacity building activities will also be conducted to enable the in-house team to operate with a decreasing use of external service providers.</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>L. Strengthen the marketing performance of the local tourism industry</td>
<td><strong>14. Activate an Industry Marketing Support Program</strong>&lt;br&gt;The initiative will see the creation of the Industry Marketing Team in Visit Oman who will manage marketing intelligence within the Business Intelligence System. The team will develop and launch 5-7 support services, involving tourism industry operators in the design, as well as addressing their needs. In addition, these first steps will turn into a relevant support platform and the team will be present physically in the destinations to listen and train.</td>
</tr>
</tbody>
</table>
3.4 Strategy Enablers

The enabler themes cover intangible aspects of future success such as human capital, organizational capital and information capital, including skills, training, organizational culture, leadership, systems and databases, among others. Those enablers will support the value creation processes.

The three enabler themes are:

Theme 5: Develop human capital

Focuses on raising public awareness about the tourism sector in general and tourism sector employment in particular. It aims to inform the Omani population about the employment opportunities tourism brings and to connect Omani jobseekers with suitable employment openings in tourism. Crucially, it will also focus on strengthening the tourism education and training system, through established traditional methods and innovative approaches that were developed for the specificities of Oman.

Theme 6: Improve the competitiveness framework

Focuses on creating a Government unit responsible for elaborating the National Competitiveness Plan and coordinating and promoting the continuous improvement of the tourism competitiveness conditions of Oman. Promotes the development of Competitiveness improvement programs by other Government bodies in areas such as transport, innovation and technology. It also addresses the critical task of re-engineering the tourism legal and regulatory framework of Oman.

Theme 7: Govern and manage

Focuses on creating a comprehensive governance system to manage and execute the Tourism Development Plan. Crucially, it includes the activation of the Inter-Ministerial Committee for Tourism and the activation of the Office of Strategy Management. Includes the development of a state of the art tourism monitoring system. As a result, Oman will have a solid governance model with clear roles and responsibilities and enhanced internal and external stakeholders’ engagement.
The Strategic Objectives (letters) and corresponding initiatives (numbers) by enabler theme are:

**Table 10. Theme 5: Develop human capital**

<table>
<thead>
<tr>
<th>Strategic Objective</th>
<th>Initiative</th>
</tr>
</thead>
</table>
| M. Attract and retain more OMANIs to the tourism industry | 15. Implement an awareness and incentives program  
The awareness campaign will focus on raising public awareness about the tourism sector in general and tourism sector employment in particular, informing the Omani population about the full spectrum of diverse employment opportunities in the tourism industry. The roll out of the campaign will be aligned with the cluster development strategy described in OTS. The incentives program will aim mostly at retaining talent within the industry, compensating some negative aspects of the industry and fostering career development. |
| N. Educate exceptional Omani talent | 16. Set-up Turijobs Oman Platform  
The initiative will see the setting up, management and monitoring of a Turijobs Oman Platform, enabling employers to post jobs and job seekers to search for tourism jobs by keyword, location, professional level, level of education, length of experience, contract type, working hours, etc. Education and training providers will be able to post about education and training opportunities. It will also serve as a tool for promoting events such as job fairs, education seminars, events that will showcase Omani role models, competitions and awards. |
| O. Train exceptional Omani talent | 17. Strengthen the Tourism Education System  
The initiative will focus on curriculum development by creating two Centers of Excellence. This will be done through effective international partnerships with top-level universities. New programs will be launched closing the gap by better addressing tourist activities and experiences and emerging new professions. Tourism education institutions and programs will embrace new technologies and approaches and will see the creation of strong graduate management programs, such as the selective education of Omani talent abroad. The strengthening of the system will involve knowledge cascading curriculum support, train-the-trainer programs and continued faculty development. |
| | 18. Strengthen the Tourism Training System  
The initiative will focus on strengthening the tourism training system both in capacity and in terms of diversity of skills. A key priority will be to enable the Omani tourism industry to have the right quantity of a trained and motivated tourism labor force capable of delivering exceptional experiences with a high level of service quality. This will be achieved through the newly established Oman Tourism Training Fund (OTTF), continued development of occupational standards, updating training curricula and creating new satellite training facilities, strengthening training staff capacities and creating innovative on-line training programs for tourism professions. |
| | 19. Launch the Culinary Centers Special Program  
The initiative will see the organization of a team to manage the creation and development of Oman Culinary Centers (OCCs). The team will assess Omani Cuisine and develop the Competitive Strategy and Business Plan for Oman Culinary Centers. The Culinary Centers will be established in partnerships with top international culinary centers and with the involvement of an International Advisory Board. The Centers will provide technology transfer, education, training, research and innovation. |
Table 11. Theme 6: Improve the Competitiveness Framework

<table>
<thead>
<tr>
<th>Strategic Objective</th>
<th>Initiative</th>
</tr>
</thead>
<tbody>
<tr>
<td><strong>P.</strong> &lt;br&gt;Develop a system to permanently improve sector’s competitiveness</td>
<td><strong>20. Activate the National Tourism Competitiveness Unit (NTCU)</strong> &lt;br&gt;The essence of the initiative will be the setting up and operating of a Tourism Management Competitiveness Unit (TCMU). The Unit will prepare National and Local Tourism Competitiveness Plans as well as Competitiveness Plans for each Business Model, covering the 14 clusters and 9 business models which comprise the Oman Tourism Strategy.</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td><strong>Q.</strong> &lt;br&gt;Enhance a better competitive environment</td>
<td><strong>21. Selectively Improve the Competitiveness Diamond</strong> &lt;br&gt;The Tourism Competitiveness Unit will coordinate and follow up the implementation of the National Competitiveness Plan. The initiative will include monitoring and coordination with other relevant competitiveness programs, the promotion of innovation, technology and best practices and the elaboration of a Tourism Infrastructure Program (TIP). Furthermore, a World Economic Forum Travel &amp; Tourism Competitiveness Program will be initiated.</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td><strong>R.</strong> &lt;br&gt;Reengineer the current legal and regulatory framework</td>
<td><strong>22. Deeply update the Tourism Legal Framework</strong> &lt;br&gt;The essence of this initiative will be the comprehensive updating of the Oman Tourism Law, including the Integrated Tourism Complexes (ITCs) regulations; and additionally the Foreign Capital Investment Law. Furthermore, a key element will be the creation of a Public Electronic Depository of Tourism Laws and Regulations that will be made readily available for tourism industry operators and investors.</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td></td>
<td><strong>23. Reengineer the current Licensing and Approval System</strong> &lt;br&gt;The initiative will see the comprehensive update of the licensing and accommodation classification system and the setting up of a One-Stop Shop for that purpose. This approach will avoid piecemeal changes, cancel overlaps and duplications and will ensure that the One-Stop Shop is implemented with technological excellence and functionality. Efforts will be made to ensure that stakeholders are fully aware of the availability and function of the One-Stop Shop.</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>Strategic Objective</td>
<td>Initiative</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>---------------------</td>
<td>------------</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td><strong>S.</strong> Implement an efficient Tourism Governance System</td>
<td><strong>24. Set up a Tourism Governance System</strong>&lt;br&gt;The initiative will see the setting up of four key organizations. More specifically, it will include the activation of the Inter-Ministerial Committee for Tourism (IMCT), setting up the Office of Strategy Management, the reformulation of the National Chamber of Tourism and launching specialized governmental Tourism Task Forces.</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td><strong>T.</strong> Implement a world-class Tourism Management System</td>
<td><strong>25. Implement an improved National Tourism Management System</strong>&lt;br&gt;The initiative will see implementation of the new organizational structure of the Ministry of Tourism, the launch of an integrated Oman Tourism Sector website, running the annual Oman Tourism Industry Forum and the development of a National Media Program.</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td><strong>U.</strong> Implement a cutting edge Tourism Management Information System (TMIS)</td>
<td><strong>26. Reengineer the Tourism Management Information System (TMIS)</strong>&lt;br&gt;The initiative will see the setting up of the Tourism Management Information System management board and team, and the design of the Tourism Management Information System Roadmap. The team involved will identify and secure sources of information and will implement an Inbound Tourism Expenditure Survey. The initiative will also include development of a dedicated Business Intelligence Platform.</td>
</tr>
</tbody>
</table>
4. Investment Required

A successful 25-year program for Oman requires 4 types of investment

Successful implementation of OTS will require significant investment in Oman over the next 25 years, both from the public and the private sector. These investments will be of four types:

Table 13. Four main types of Investment

<table>
<thead>
<tr>
<th>Investment Type</th>
<th>Category</th>
<th>Comment</th>
<th>Public Sector’s Involvement</th>
</tr>
</thead>
<tbody>
<tr>
<td>1 Experiential System</td>
<td>“Hard” Investment</td>
<td>Includes development of the experiential tourism offer on which Oman’s competitive advantage will be built. Includes developing Oman’s “Top Experiences”, enhancing natural and cultural resources, rehabilitating villages, restoring traditions, etc.</td>
<td>Very high</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>2 Accommodation and Resorts</td>
<td>“Hard” Investment</td>
<td>Includes a high variety of accommodation types: hotels, inns, B&amp;Bs, campsites, guest houses, special accommodation, etc.</td>
<td>Very low</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>3 Infrastructure and Utilities</td>
<td></td>
<td>Includes the infrastructure required to facilitate visitor’s access to the various tourism attractions. It is essential so that tourists can access Oman and get around once there. Also essential for the tourism offer of utilities and serviced lands which must be developed in good conditions.</td>
<td>Low</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>4 “Soft Investment” Strategy planning, management and execution</td>
<td>“Soft” Investment</td>
<td>Related to planning, technology acquisition, innovation and quality encouragement, legal framework improvement, education, public bodies maintenance, etc. All of these activities are essential to successfully manage the implementation of the Strategy.</td>
<td>Very high</td>
</tr>
</tbody>
</table>
4.1 Investment Phasing

Coinciding with the phases of implementation, investment throughout the upcoming 25 years is divided into four clearly defined phases:

![Figure 21. Development in three phases](image)

The following typologies of investment are observed:

**Phase 1. Preparation**
- **Phase 1.1 Organizing for Growth (2016-17)**
  The first 5 clusters (Musandam, Muscat, Nizwa, Salalah, and Eastern Coast) and 2 NTZIs at the Muscat and Dhofar Governorates will be launched according to the roll out model. Investment volume-wise, this 2-year activity plan will use approximately 9% of the total investment volume.
- **Phase 1.2 Take off (2018-20)**
  The key investment will be in experiences systems, tourism accommodation and tourism infrastructure projects. Investment will be particularly substantial in the above-mentioned Governorates (Musandam, Muscat, Al Dakhiliyah, Dhofar, and Al Sharqiya South). This 3-year activity plan will consist of approximately 12% of the total investment volume.

**Phase 2. Growth (2021-30)**
- Key clusters development and construction activities initiated in phase 1.1 will continue, and other new clusters will be developed. In the first five years (2021-2025), investment will be particularly strong in the Al Dakhiliyah, Muscat, Al Sharqiya South, Dhofar, Al Batinah South, and Al Sharqiya North Governorates, utilizing 14-16% of the total investment volume. In the 2nd five-year period (2026-2030), significant investment will take place in Al Sharqiya South, Al Batinah South, and Al Sharqiya North Al Batinah North, Al Wusta and Dahirah Governorates, again amounting to 14-16% of the total investment volume.

**Phase 3. Stabilization (2031-40)**
- A continuation of phase 2, but focusing on consolidating tourism infrastructure in key projects (mostly in terms of experiences systems, accommodation facilities, as well as broadening and diversifying the tourism offer). This final development stage within the plan assumes to utilize up to 45-47% of the planned total investment volume.
4.2 Detailed Investment

a. Summary of investment

The total investment (private and public) until 2040 to execute OTS is estimated at OMR 18,936 Million. The approximate investment by the Government is estimated at OMR 2,361 Million over the 25-year life of the Plan, which represents 12% of total investment. A distribution of investment in three time periods, as well as the split between public and private sector, is shown below:

Public investment that is used for developing Tourism must be looked at within the broader national economic perspective, as other economic sectors, and the community at large, also benefit from such investment.

The breakdown of projected investment required is as follows:

<table>
<thead>
<tr>
<th>Concept</th>
<th>Phase 1.1</th>
<th>Phase 1.2</th>
<th>Phase 2</th>
<th>Phase 3</th>
<th>Total</th>
<th>%</th>
<th>% Total Public</th>
</tr>
</thead>
<tbody>
<tr>
<td>Experiential System</td>
<td>.042</td>
<td>.087</td>
<td>.089</td>
<td>.227</td>
<td>.445</td>
<td>3</td>
<td>75</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>Accommodation &amp; Resorts</td>
<td>.824</td>
<td>1.237</td>
<td>1.672</td>
<td>6.621</td>
<td>10.354</td>
<td>55</td>
<td>5</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>Infrastructures &amp; Utilities</td>
<td>.695</td>
<td>.984</td>
<td>1.319</td>
<td>4.854</td>
<td>7.852</td>
<td>41</td>
<td>16</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>&quot;Soft&quot; Investment</td>
<td>.025</td>
<td>.044</td>
<td>.059</td>
<td>.157</td>
<td>.285</td>
<td>1</td>
<td>92</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>Total</td>
<td>1.586</td>
<td>2.351</td>
<td>3.140</td>
<td>11.858</td>
<td>18.936</td>
<td>100</td>
<td>12</td>
</tr>
</tbody>
</table>

Source: THR projections
Numbers have been rounded, so slightly differences could appear.

Note: Tourism developers will benefit from large public investments (national or regional) that have not been included in the above table as they are not “specifically tourist related”, rather oriented towards general regional economic development.
A distribution of investment in three time periods, as well as the split between the public and private sector, is provided below.

**Table 15. Distribution (private / public) of projected total investment required (OMR Billion)**

<table>
<thead>
<tr>
<th>Concept</th>
<th>Phase 1.1 2016-17</th>
<th>Phase 1.2 2018-20</th>
<th>Phase 2 2021-25</th>
<th>Phase 3 2026-40</th>
<th>Total</th>
<th>%</th>
</tr>
</thead>
<tbody>
<tr>
<td>Private</td>
<td>1.359</td>
<td>2.013</td>
<td>2.714</td>
<td>10.490</td>
<td>16.575</td>
<td>88</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>Public</td>
<td>.228</td>
<td>.338</td>
<td>.427</td>
<td>1.368</td>
<td>2.361</td>
<td>12</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>Total</td>
<td>1.586</td>
<td>2.351</td>
<td>3.140</td>
<td>11.858</td>
<td>18.936</td>
<td>100</td>
</tr>
</tbody>
</table>

Source: THR projections

Numbers have been rounded, so slight differences could appear.

When referring to public investment in developing tourism, it must be taken into account within the broader economic system, since other economic activities and society as a whole also benefit from it.

**b. Soft Investment**

The total indicative budget to manage and execute OTS (“Soft” Investment) is OMR 285 Million. This budget does not include infrastructure costs (part of the investment plan budget, according to previous points) and salaries.

The table below shows the breakdown of budget by theme over the next 25 years:

**Table 16. Investment/budget for OTS management by Theme (OMR Million)**

<table>
<thead>
<tr>
<th>Theme1</th>
<th>Phase 1.1 2016-17</th>
<th>Phase 1.2 2018-20</th>
<th>Phase 2 2021-25</th>
<th>Phase 3 2026-40</th>
<th>Total</th>
<th>%</th>
</tr>
</thead>
<tbody>
<tr>
<td>1. Plan and develop</td>
<td>1.3</td>
<td>1.6</td>
<td>2.3</td>
<td>5.6</td>
<td>10.9</td>
<td>3.9</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>2. Be socially and environmentally responsible</td>
<td>2.4</td>
<td>3.4</td>
<td>4.0</td>
<td>12.1</td>
<td>22.0</td>
<td>7.7</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>3. Deliver an exceptional tourism experience</td>
<td>1.4</td>
<td>1.3</td>
<td>2.4</td>
<td>6.5</td>
<td>11.6</td>
<td>4.2</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>4. Attract more and higher yielding customers</td>
<td>13.0</td>
<td>27.9</td>
<td>36.8</td>
<td>99.3</td>
<td>177.0</td>
<td>62.1</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>5. Develop human capital</td>
<td>3.1</td>
<td>5.4</td>
<td>7.8</td>
<td>20.8</td>
<td>37.1</td>
<td>13.0</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>6. Improve the Competitiveness Diamond</td>
<td>2.3</td>
<td>1.7</td>
<td>2.8</td>
<td>5.9</td>
<td>12.7</td>
<td>4.6</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>7. Govern and manage the System</td>
<td>2.0</td>
<td>2.5</td>
<td>3.1</td>
<td>6.6</td>
<td>14.1</td>
<td>4.9</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>Total</td>
<td>25.4</td>
<td>43.8</td>
<td>59.2</td>
<td>156.8</td>
<td>285.3</td>
<td>100</td>
</tr>
</tbody>
</table>

Source: THR projections

(1) This budget does not include infrastructure costs (part of the investment plan budget, according to previous points) and salaries.

Numbers have been rounded, so slight differences could appear.
c. **Hard investment by Governorate**

The results obtained are as follows, considering key investment in new accommodation (including real estate) and rooms to be built in each Governorate (as stated in **OTS**).

**Table 17. Distribution of projected total investment per Governorate in 2040 (OMR Million)**

<table>
<thead>
<tr>
<th>Governorates</th>
<th>Projected Total Accommodation investment</th>
<th>Projected total investment per Governorate</th>
</tr>
</thead>
<tbody>
<tr>
<td>Musandam</td>
<td>664</td>
<td>1,046-1,278</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>Al Batinah N</td>
<td>456</td>
<td>750-917</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>Al Dahirah</td>
<td>167</td>
<td>294-359</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>Al Dakhiliyah</td>
<td>1,436</td>
<td>2,173-2,656</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>Al Batinah S</td>
<td>737</td>
<td>1,304-1,594</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>Muscat</td>
<td>2,463</td>
<td>3,450-4,216</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>Sharqiya N</td>
<td>255</td>
<td>430-525</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>Sharqiya S</td>
<td>755</td>
<td>1,397-1,708</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>Al Wusta</td>
<td>584</td>
<td>1,117-1,366</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>Dhofar</td>
<td>2,701</td>
<td>4,475-5,469</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>Al Buraimi</td>
<td>135</td>
<td>352-430</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>Total</td>
<td>10,354</td>
<td>16,786-20,517</td>
</tr>
</tbody>
</table>

Source: THR projections
Numbers have been rounded, so slight differences could appear.
4.3 Government funding

The role of the Sultanate of Oman’s Government in financing the Tourism Development Plan is crucial. Its initial actions dictate whether or not it believes in the Plan, hence investment would result in attracting follow-up engagement by private sector investors. Unless it takes the lead and shows commitment to the Plan, additional investment from the private sector may never materialize.

After analyzing Oman’s national budget, it can be concluded that investments made during 2013 amounted to OMR 2,822 Million\(^3\). Taking this figure into account, alongside the annual public investment required (OMR 2,361 Million in 25 years), OMR 94 Million represents approximately 3% of the annual budget for public investments in Oman. This proves that the proposed Government funding is realistic and feasible.

**Financial Incentives**

The need for financial incentives will depend on the general availability of financial services to the private sector and the Omani Government’s attitude towards complementing private investment with public investment. Public investment can include the construction and maintenance of infrastructure services (water supply, waste disposal and road construction), as well as grants and loans for the construction and operation of tourist facilities such as accommodation, resort complexes, and entertainment and recreation venues.

Government involvement, via direct incentives, could be made possible for major development projects through the provision of direct loans to private developers.

In the case of financing projects for Omani entrepreneurship and SMEs, the Government may provide direct finance (grants or loans) or support the project by assisting with professional services.

If the Government is to use direct financial incentives, it will need to determine matters such as the scale of the loans, grant limitations, project viability, repayment periods, conditions on the use of the loans, and training conditions for local residents.

\(^3\) Estimation of the budget 2013
4.4 **Public-Private investment model**

Public-private partnerships (PPPs) are mechanisms for Governments to procure infrastructures and services for the public, using the resources and expertise of the private sector. Historically, Governments have financed infrastructure projects with budgetary allotments. However, as demand grows and access to resources becomes more limited, it is necessary to organize additional resources for the provision of infrastructure and services.

**Areas for PPP in tourism**

Oman’s potential areas for PPPs in tourism include:

1. **Experiences**: including Top, Brand and Signature Experiences based on Oman’s portfolio of resources (Forts and Castles, archaeological sites, wadis, jabals, desert, towns and villages, etc.)
2. **Accommodation**: including hotels, serviced units, inns, guesthouses, B&B, campsites, glamping parcels, special products and real estate.
3. **Infrastructure**: including transportation infrastructure (roads, pathways, etc.), utilities (energy, water, sewage, etc.) and supporting services (health, security, education, etc.) in clusters, Tourism Zones of National Interest (TZNIs) and Resorts.

**Recommendations**

The Government should focus its investment efforts on Experiences and Soft Investments (the 7 defining components to provide a sustainable and profitable tourism industry in Oman, as is reflected in the Strategy Map). These two areas should account for approximately 80% of public investment.

Unlike traditional formulas that are mainly based on financing infrastructure, investment should be encouraged for designing new-to-the-world experiences that generate an eye-catching, competitive advantage for Oman. Investment in the restoration of Forts and Castles, the adaptation of charming villages or the preservation of wadis is possibly less profitable from an economic perspective. However, the Government must understand that these elements are precisely the ones that will drive critical mass and speed up private investment in other components of the tourism chain.

The remaining 20% should be used to foster PPPs. By encouraging and supporting PPP models, Oman will improve its infrastructure and accommodation and increase the efficiency of its services, in line with the Strategy. The Government then benefits from the expertise of the private sector, while fostering new solutions and bringing sufficient funding for the execution of the OTS.

When it comes to developing Tourism Zones of National Interest (TZNIs), it is highly recommended to count on the support and expertise of a Master Developer. In this case, the Public Development Authority subsidizes the land, with beneficial conditions for the Developer, and takes responsibility for planning the development of the area. In exchange, the Master Developer (which can be formed by a group of investors) is in charge of coordinating, parceling and equipping the land for optimal use, to ultimately sell it to individual investors in plots.
5. Implementing Bodies and Roadmap

5.1 Implementing Bodies

The Strategy implementation will be a highly collaborative process, involving a large number of public and private sector organizations, host communities, investors, tourism businesses, tourism education and training providers and tourism sector employees.

Two bodies will be essential to lead the implementation execution program and will provide the institutional framework to ensure collaboration between all stakeholders for the Strategy implementation:

- The Inter-Ministerial Committee for Tourism (IMCT)’s main objective will be prioritizing, maximizing cooperation between relevant ministries on tourism activities and improving resource efficiency to boost and enhance the Oman Tourism Strategy implementation.

- The Office of Strategy Management (OSM) will oversee the development and implementation of the Oman Tourism Strategy. OSM will report directly to the Highest Authorities of the Ministry of Tourism, ensuring governance systems integration with the Strategy, both within the Ministry of Tourism and the Inter-Ministerial Committee for Tourism (IMCT).
a. The Inter-Ministerial Committee for Tourism (IMCT)

The initiatives that have been identified in this Strategic Plan will involve different Ministries, both affected by and involved in the development of the new OTS.

In order to ensure that the execution process is conducted in a coordinated and timely fashion, while implementing key initiatives, a new body – the Inter-Ministerial Committee for Tourism (IMCT) is to be created. This senior level body shall work towards the overall goal of monitoring, promoting and energizing the execution process of the OTS.

Its main objectives are maximizing cooperation in tourism activities, improving resource efficiency to boost and enhance the Oman Tourism Strategy for the next 25 years, and coordinating and observing implementation. The Commission, being the final decision-making body, will meet on a regular basis to monitor progress.

Goal of the IMCT

The overall goal is to grant success to the execution of the OTS and its initiatives. In this context, the specific brief of the Inter-Ministerial Committee will be as follows:

- To publish progress reports on the execution of the OTS every six months.
- To ensure that the Execution Program is seen as an integrated set of actions with a coordinated and collaborative approach across departments, agencies and the private sector.
- To assign different task forces to address specific issues of concern.
- To estimate potential constraints to the implementation process and to recommend how these may be addressed/changed and by whom.

Proposed structure

The IMCT must be an authoritative body, therefore its membership should comprise top-level representatives of the Ministries involved. It should consist of no more than seven to ten members. The IMCT should be chaired by one of the highest authorities of the Government. The Committee would not require staff of its own as it can be serviced by the MoT (meetings, report drafting, secretarial services etc.). It should assemble on a monthly basis, may set up its own task forces to focus on particular issues, and meet with representatives of individual bodies and organizations essential to the development of tourism, both at Government and industry levels. It is expected that the IMCT will consult widely and regularly with key representative groups and enterprises, and with Government departments and agencies whose policies and actions have a significant impact on the development of tourism.
b. The Office of Strategy Management (OSM)

Acknowledging the importance of aligning key management processes in order to succeed, the creation of an Office of Strategy Management (OSM) is intended to initiate, guide and coordinate the OTS execution.

Purpose and roles of the OSM

The overarching purpose of the OSM is to oversee and administer the Strategy development and execution. More specifically, the OSM:

- Ensure that both the Government and the private sector focus on the OTS by integrating strategy-focused concepts, principles, and best practices into the processes of the organization.
- Provide an integrated approach to the strategy management process, bridging traditional functional domains such as Finance, Business Planning, Human Resources, and Performance Management.
- Drive performance management through Balanced Scorecard (BSC) reporting, and Strategy Review Meetings at different levels within the MoT.
- Ensure the integration of governance systems and the strategy management process within the MoT and Inter-Ministerial Committee for Tourism (IMCT).

To perform its mandate, the OSM has three main roles: Process designer, process owner and process coordinator.

Proposed structure

Executing the strategy may involve making changes that His Excellency the Minister can empower, and the OSM will be most effective when it has direct access, and reports directly to H.E. the Minister. The following chart shows a proposed organizational structure for the OSM.

![OSM proposed organizational structure](image-url)
There should be a dedicated OSM unit managing the OTS and its execution. There should also be a Single Point of Contact (SPOC) in each of the proposed General Directorates of the Government, to ensure the smooth coordination and dissemination of relevant information.

The SPOC will function as the coordinator in each Directorate as well as in public authorities and agencies involved in the OTS execution. The SPOC will gather information, coordinate it and report it at the required level (including the IMCT). The head of the Directorate, as well as public authorities and agencies involved in the execution of the Strategy, will assign this contact point, who should be 50-100% dedicated to OTS management activities.

c. Other organizations, agencies and units

The execution of the Strategy requires support and contribution from newly specialized organizations and agencies. Most of these units will be under the direct control of MoT. Others will be independent bodies and entities that will associate with MoT for the purpose of planning, coordination and the execution of several initiatives. Among 13 recommended bodies, the top priority ones are:

<table>
<thead>
<tr>
<th>Name</th>
<th>Acronym</th>
<th>Typology</th>
<th>Suggested Action</th>
</tr>
</thead>
<tbody>
<tr>
<td>Inter-Ministerial Committee for Tourism</td>
<td>IMCT</td>
<td>Committee</td>
<td>New creation</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>Oman Experience Agency</td>
<td>OEA</td>
<td>Independent Agency</td>
<td>New creation</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>Office of the Strategy Management</td>
<td>OSM</td>
<td>Mot Unit</td>
<td>New creation</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>Visit Oman</td>
<td>VO</td>
<td>MoT DG (Marketing)</td>
<td>Restructure MoT</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>Oman Tourism Quality Unit</td>
<td>OTSQU</td>
<td>Mot Unit</td>
<td>Integrate under DG Experiences structure</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>E-Marketing Unit</td>
<td>E-MKT</td>
<td>Mot Unit</td>
<td>Integrate under DG Marketing structure</td>
</tr>
</tbody>
</table>

Apart from this, all key players and stakeholders will be invited to contribute to and support the Strategy. One of the most important components for successful execution of the Strategy is engaging the main stakeholders involved in planning, development and support. This comprises close collaboration between public and private sector leaders. Therefore, for each initiative involved, efforts will be made to create synergy and obtain a consensus on actions for implementation. The portfolio of the stakeholders will need to be updated annually in order to reflect the sector’s growth and increasing diversity.
The key stakeholders from the public sector involved in the execution program are grouped into 4 categories: Ministries, Public companies & organizations, Other Government bodies and Regional Authorities.

**Figure 25. More than 30 public stakeholders involved in the implementation**

<table>
<thead>
<tr>
<th>PUBLIC SECTOR</th>
<th>Public companies &amp; organizations</th>
</tr>
</thead>
<tbody>
<tr>
<td>Ministries</td>
<td>• OMRAN</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td></td>
<td>• Oman Air</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td></td>
<td>• Public Investment Fund</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td></td>
<td>• Oman Rail Corporation</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td></td>
<td>• Oman National Ferry Company</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td></td>
<td>• Universities</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>Other Government bodies</td>
<td>• Governorate, Wilayat &amp; Municipalities authorities</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td></td>
<td>• AD Duqm Special Economic Zone</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td></td>
<td>• Port Authorities for Muscat, Khasab, Salalah and Duqm</td>
</tr>
</tbody>
</table>

Additionally, the key private sector stakeholders that will be involved in Strategy initiatives include:

**Figure 26. More than 500 private stakeholders involved in the implementation**

<table>
<thead>
<tr>
<th>PRIVATE SECTOR</th>
<th>Tourism products &amp; services</th>
</tr>
</thead>
<tbody>
<tr>
<td>Destination Management</td>
<td>• Global Distribution Systems</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td></td>
<td>• Online Travel Agencies</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td></td>
<td>• Traditional travel &amp; tourism businesses</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>Accommodation</td>
<td>Professional services</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td></td>
<td>• Independent tour guides</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td></td>
<td>• External consultants</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>Tourism Education &amp; Training</td>
<td>Transport services</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td></td>
<td>• Selected airlines</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td></td>
<td>• Bus &amp; Taxi companies</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>Intl. &amp; Regional Organizations</td>
<td>Associations</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td></td>
<td>• Oman Chamber of Commerce &amp; Industry</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td></td>
<td>• Professional associations</td>
</tr>
</tbody>
</table>
5.2 Roadmap and next steps

The execution roadmap is a tool which aims to make the initiatives schedule defined in the Plan easy to read and understand. The goal is to provide a well-defined, clear and practical scheme for future activities and tasks to be carried out in order to roll-out the OTS. A series of roadmaps have been prepared to assist the implementation process.

a. High level roadmap by period 2016-2040

The figure shows a general overview of a roadmap for the next 25 years, considering the key milestones to be achieved in each period on:

- Oman TOP experiences developed
- Direct employments generated for Omanis
- New hotel rooms developed
- Roll-out of clusters

Figure 25. High level execution Roadmap (2016-2040)

<table>
<thead>
<tr>
<th>2016-2020</th>
<th>2021-2030</th>
<th>2031-2040</th>
</tr>
</thead>
<tbody>
<tr>
<td>+5,620 new hotel rooms operational</td>
<td>+15,419 new hotel rooms operational</td>
<td>+29,596 new hotel rooms operational</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>Drivers &amp; Enablers related initiatives implemented</td>
<td>3 OTEs launched</td>
<td>3 OTEs launched</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>Signature Experience Program (SEP) launched</td>
<td>Playgrounds (clusters) A, B, C, D, &amp; E operational</td>
<td>Playgrounds (clusters) F, G, H, I, J &amp; K operational</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>+76,387 new direct employments activated</td>
<td>+126,900 new direct employments activated</td>
<td>+242,900 new direct employments activated</td>
</tr>
</tbody>
</table>

OTE: Oman TOP Experiences

Results Achieved
b. First 5-year Execution Roadmap by period 2016-2020

The following roadmap shows critical milestones for the next 5 years (2016-20), included in the seven themes considered in OTS, to facilitate a general overview of critical aspects of the Execution Program.

![First 5-year Execution Roadmap 2016-2020](image)

**Figure 27. First 5-year Execution Roadmap 2016-2020**

**c. Key actions to be performed**

The implementation of the Oman Tourism Strategy has taken its first steps by being presented and endorsed by the Council of Ministers. With the Government’s endorsement of the Plan as an appropriate framework for developing the Tourism sector, the Plan will then be presented to the various stakeholders, mainly tourism development agencies bodies and units, tourism industry and key community groups.

The Plan’s success depends on the many stakeholders, both directly and indirectly involved in the industry, working together to bring a common Vision for Oman’s tourism to fruition. Hence, publicizing the Plan will be essential in generating their support.

The collective and coordinated contributions of all participants shall convert the Oman Tourism Vision into reality.
To implement the Plan, there should be an intense preparatory phase until the end of 2017 preparing the groundwork for implementing the OTS. The 14 key actions to perform are listed below:

**Actions related to the institutional framework**

<table>
<thead>
<tr>
<th>Key Action</th>
<th>Description</th>
</tr>
</thead>
<tbody>
<tr>
<td>1. Activate the Inter-Ministerial Committee for Tourism</td>
<td>The actions identified in the execution program involve different Ministries, affected by and involved in the development of the new Tourism Strategy. To ensure that the execution process is conducted in a coordinated and timely manner, and that key actions are implemented, it is recommended that a special-purpose body be created, named the Inter-Ministerial Committee for Tourism.</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>Key Action</td>
<td>Description</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>------------</td>
<td>---------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>2. Launch the Office of Strategy Management and the Project Management Unit</td>
<td>The Office of Strategy Management (OSM), with the support of the Project Management Unit, will oversee the development, alignment, implementation, and management of the Oman Tourism Strategy in order to fulfill the Vision, reporting directly to the Highest Authorities. This should be a high-level body with a defined purpose and life span, with the overall goal of monitoring, promoting and energizing the execution process. Its main objective is to maximize cooperation on tourism-related activities and improve resource efficiency, boosting and enhancing Oman Tourism Strategy for the next 25 years. The Committee will coordinate and observe the implementation of the Oman Tourism Strategy, meeting on a regular basis to monitor progress. It will be the main decision body evaluating the Tourism Strategy, along with relevant competent authorities.</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>4. Launch the implementation of the new the Ministry of Tourism organization</td>
<td>In terms of the Ministry of Tourism, the organizational alignment process will ensure the Ministry of Tourism’s framework is aligned with the realization of OTS, operationally (the business’ ability to deliver its ‘mission’) and strategically (the management of the business to achieve its vision). This involves ensuring the core business processes and the organizational structure designed to manage it are appropriate and effective. It includes governance mechanisms that empower management, as well as the creation and monitoring of performance objectives (performance management). This new organization will be much more effective and crucial in creating a World Class Tourism Management System that supports the successful execution of Oman’s Tourism Development Plan.</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>7. Launch the Oman Experience Agency</td>
<td>Oman will design, plan, resource/staff and launch a highly effective and innovative public organization named the &quot;Oman Experience Agency&quot;. The organization for flexibility, speed-to-market and thematic proximity purposes, should be managed as an independent organization outside the MoT, while still very much associated with the Visit Oman marketing agency. The Agency’s mission is to design, deliver, and manage the growth and marketing of a world-class system of tourist experiences. This system should comply with the following criteria: remaining faithful to each location/cluster, retaining authentic Omani personality, being highly attractive for selected target segments complementary to one another, and with high-value creation for tourists, host communities and enterprises. The initiative will see the creation of the OEA, the planning and the launching of the Oman Tourism Experiences.</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>13. Execute a practical education program for the MoT staff</td>
<td>The Ministry of Tourism will launch a practical executive education program (Master program) for its staff. The education program will be focused on key tourism topics that are directly related to the implementation of the OTS. The training sessions will cover the components of the Oman Tourism Strategy, such as product development, experience design, SMEs, human capital, investment attraction, marketing and communications, etc., as well as other complementary areas such as strategic thinking, decision taking, analytical skills, etc.</td>
</tr>
</tbody>
</table>
### Actions related to initiatives

<table>
<thead>
<tr>
<th>Key Action</th>
<th>Description</th>
</tr>
</thead>
<tbody>
<tr>
<td>3. Agree on OTS funding</td>
<td>To achieve the KPIs and targets established for each strategic objective of the plan, it is important to agree on the financial resources needed for implementation, in order to ensure that the execution process is conducted properly. The budget and sources of funding for each of the initiatives presented in the program have been assessed. The cost to the Sultanate of Oman for executing the OTS is approximately OMR 69 Million (Soft Investment) over the Plan’s 5-year duration. Each initiative is then broken down into the estimated yearly costs for the first 5 years, and funding being split into public or private sources. THR has listed the entities, both Governmental and non-Governmental, involved in the execution and funding of each task to reach a joint agreement.</td>
</tr>
</tbody>
</table>
| 5. Launch short term Technical Assistance Support | For successful execution of the program, technical support with continuous presence in Oman, built around the OSM, will be necessary. This guarantees optimal logistics support to the work teams spread about Oman and ensures the efficiency of communication and relationships between all agents and stakeholders involved. Technical assistance should basically provide the following services:  
- Supporting the implementation of initiatives.  
- Executing training programs.  
- Providing advisory services.  
- Delivering technical reports and recommendations. |
| 8. Reengineer the Legal and Regulatory Framework | It will be necessary to review, update and streamline the tourism legal and regulatory framework. The Oman Tourism Law and the ITC regulations will be updated and the initiative will see the creation of a public electronic depository with streamlined tourism laws and regulations. This will involve the implementation of a suitable electronic platform, the collection of laws and regulations, cancelling those which are unnecessary and developing new ones in order to stimulate tourism industry growth, facilitate investment and supply official translations of key laws and regulations. Furthermore, a comprehensive review and update of the tourism licensing and accommodation classification system will be required, as well as creating an online One-Stop Shop function for applications and approvals with related advisory service. |
| 11. Launch 1 Top and 2 Brand Experiences | Oman will select and launch the 1st Top Experience, as well as 2 Brand Experiences that will establish the base of its positioning. The following are experiences with great potential to become the 1st Oman’s Top Experiences: Grand Tour of Oman, Forts and Castles, Musandam Dhow. |
| 12. Align OMRAN and Oman Air with the OTS | The MoT and OMRAN must work hand-in-hand so that efforts are focused and opportunities are taken. Coordination makes it easier to channel investment proposals and move them through the planning process. Furthermore, the MoT should work in close coordination with Oman Air and annually review the geographical market priorities. |
### Actions related to projects

<table>
<thead>
<tr>
<th>Key Action</th>
<th>Description</th>
</tr>
</thead>
<tbody>
<tr>
<td>6. Translate the OTS into a National Tourism Operational Plan</td>
<td>This task focuses on the design, development and implementation of a National Tourism Operational Plan that provides the necessary detail to deploy and implement the OTS at a detailed, operational level.</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>9. Implement the Strategic Marketing Plan</td>
<td>The initiative will see the execution of the communication strategy and implementation monitoring. The focus will be on implementing a Strategic and Operational Marketing Plan using best practices and tools to significantly influence the targeted source markets (international, regional and domestic). The definition and implementation of the Plan is to be performed by Visit Oman, while having active participation, both technical and financial, from key players (companies, regions and organizations), and an exclusive group of partners in target source markets.</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>10. Implement the Muscat TZNi Master Plan</td>
<td>Oman will start the implementation of TZNi Master Plans; we recommend kick starting the process with the Muscat TZNi. A Tourism Zone of National Interest (TZNI) is a vast territory with a high tourist vocation that will be converted into a tourism destination. It can also be a group of sites, within a specific area, that can be used for other purposes.</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>14. Deploy the National Planning Effort</td>
<td>The National Tourism Planning effort will see the strengthening of the Ministry of Tourism Planning Unit and its close alignment with the Oman Tourism Strategy, in order to develop tourism master plans of the main tourism zones. Officials working at the Unit will benefit from high-level technical assistance and executive education in spatial tourism planning, an area in which the Ministry of Tourism currently lacks expertise. Furthermore, as part of the initiative, the Tourism Land Bank will be updated and modernized, helping to attract investors for the development of clusters. The initiative will also foster a strengthened engagement and coordination with all relevant stakeholders, particularly with Omran in the field of tourism planning.</td>
</tr>
</tbody>
</table>
Epilogue

Applying rigorous logic, Oman will make tourism magic

The Oman Tourism Strategy is the product of the wisdom, experience, ideas and dreams of a large number of people. It has taken over a year to formulate the Strategy and it will take 25 years to bring it to fruition, but soon, the logic of this Strategy will begin to bear fruit.

As a result, the people of Oman will welcome tourism and enjoy its benefits in every corner of the Sultanate, from Musandam to Muscat and Salalah, from the desert of the Empty Quarter to the numerous beaches.

Because the Strategy is comprehensively grounded in information and logic, every part and segment of Oman’s economy, society and environment will benefit.

Because the logic of the Strategy is wise, those who are attracted to Oman’s tourism will be discerning travelers, conscious travelers who seek to understand, respect and share, and who in turn will spread the word of Oman as a source of treasures.

These discerning travelers will stroll through souqs, marvel at ancient arts and crafts and find that Authenticity has an Address. They will encounter genial eyes of welcome, kahwa and halwa and realize that Hospitality has an Address. They will encounter historic and thrilling tales like that of Sindbad the Sailor and wild and mysterious landscapes of wadis, canyons and caves and realize that Adventure has a Port of Call. They will savor fragrances of frankincense, myrrh and a host of delicate perfumes and awaken to the fact that the Arabia of Legends has a real and present Address.

That address is Oman.

This is the address they will return to. This is the address they will share with others. This is the magic that will emerge as we employ the logic of Oman’s Tourism Strategy.

Fully realizing the vast social and economic potential of tourism for Oman is an enormous opportunity and an ambitious task. It requires both vision and precision. It demands detailed planning and execution, but it cannot succeed without the inspiration, the determination and the investment required to turn what is potential into reality over time. For Oman, it will represent prosperity, economic resiliency and cultural flourishing. For the world, it will mean a destination of authentic Arabia.

The Strategy is now in place. It is our joint responsibility to turn this logic into magic.