Briefings from Oman
Agriculture & Fisheries
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Published by Ithraa, the Sultanate of Oman’s inward investment and export development agency, Briefings from Oman is a series of ten sector-specific documents that explore waste management, logistics, tourism, health, manufacturing, agriculture and fisheries, and more.

Designed to connect the world with contemporary Oman and its dynamic business community, each Briefing provides a snapshot of one sector in the sultanate and the ambitious projects and innovative business ideas currently driving that space.

Informative, realistic and easily digestible, the Briefings are intended to inspire business, investors and our partners at large to consider the significant opportunities these sectors present.

Distribution

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Under the government’s 8th Five-Year Economic Development Plan (2011-15), Oman invested US$4,941 million in a variety of agriculture and fisheries-related infrastructure projects and upgraded existing facilities. This investment has raised Oman’s self-sufficiency in overall food production by 32.8% as of 2013. The sultanate is estimated to be 75.7% self-sufficient in vegetable production.

Oman’s Agricultural Census of 2012-13 recorded 256,000 farmers, 44,521 licensed fishermen, more than 2,800 labourers involved in fish transport and 2,500 at fish installations.
The GCC population is set to surpass 50 million by 2020 – a rapid rise from 41.7 million in 2010. This increase will spur on growth and demand in most sectors, particularly in the food industry. However, with land and water scarcity limiting agricultural production in the GCC this means food imports are large, forming 80% of the region’s food requirements in 2015.
Rising Demand

Population growth and the increase in the number of tourists as well as per capita income will see food consumption in the region reach 54.1 million tonnes by 2017. This represents a compound annual growth rate of 301% from 2012 to 2017. Experts estimate that GCC food import demand will reach US$53.1 billion by 2020, up from US$25.8 billion just a decade ago.

The region’s rising incomes will also impact the demand for food consumption. By 2017, the GCC GDP is expected to be US$1.8 trillion, up from US$1.1 trillion in 2010. Per capita income is predicted to increase to US$36,839 by 2017, up from US$27,304 in 2010. Improved transportation and consumer perceptions regarding quality and safety are also changing food consumption patterns.

To counter price fluctuation arising from external factors, Oman’s Public Authority for Stores & Food Reserves works toward streamlining the procurement and supply of essential food commodities.

Meeting the increasing demand for food is both a challenge for government and an opportunity for the sultanate’s private sector to expand within the market.

The UN’s Food & Agriculture Organization (FAO) estimates Oman’s food imports to reach US$4.8 billion by 2020, a significant rise from US$2.1 billion in 2010. Food imports mainly include grains, seasonal fruits, dairy products, poultry and meat.

Poultry

Some 57.5% of Oman’s poultry demand is met through imports, leaving room for local producers to expand operations. A’Saffa Foods, Oman’s largest poultry producer, recorded net sales of US$79.08m in 2014 up from US$67.1m in 2012.

In 2015, state-owned Oman Food Investment Holding Company (OFIC) announced the establishment of the A’Namaa Poultry Company, a poultry project investment with US$258m 50% of which is debt and 50% equity. OFIC holds 20% in the project with the remaining held by institutional investors. The company is expected to produce 60,000 tonnes of poultry meat a year by 2020, which equates to almost 60 million birds from a site near Ibri in north-west Oman. Combined with existing producers, the project is expected to ensure that Oman meets 70% of its poultry needs from domestic production by 2030, up from 36% at present.
Dairy

Another OFIC project is Mazoon Dairy Company, a US$258m investment with OFIC taking a 20% stake. The vertically integrated farm will start with about 4,000 cows in 2017, with a target of a 25,000-strong herd by 2026. The project began in 2015, with commercial production expected to start in 2017 with plans to scale up substantially over the longer-term.

Mazoon has a target of producing 202m litres of milk by 2026 and 985m by 2040. Combined with increases in output from other producers, and a new milk collection scheme being initiated by the government with participation from OFIC, this should cut milk imports from 69% in 2014 to 13% in 2026.

Sugar

It’s estimated that the Middle East has a 3 million tonnes per annum (tpa) shortfall in sugar processing capacity, and Oman currently imports 100% of its refined sugar demand, measured at 120,000 tpa. To supply local demand and generate export capacity, the Oman Sugar Refinery Company was established as a joint venture between Britain’s Tate & Lyle Sugars and an Omani investment firm. The US$200 million facility is planned to sit on 180,000m2 at Freezone Sohar and is expected to produce 1 million tpa of refined sugar. The refinery plans to import raw sugar cane from Brazil, Thailand, India and Australia.

Fresh Produce

According to FAO, cropped area in Oman is approximately 62,000 hectares or 2.8% of the total arable land. Oman’s growing processing capacity is important for the food industry, providing it with more export capacity since the country’s climate is ill-suited to produce fresh fruits and vegetables. Despite limited resources, Oman-grown produce meets over 75% of the sultanate’s demand for vegetables. Oman began soil-less farming in 2000 and has been conducting trials since then to develop the technique. Currently, there are 80 greenhouse plantations in Oman implementing the technique.
**Fisheries**

Oman is the largest fresh fish producer in the GCC. Landings, over the past five years have averaged 204,800 tonnes and valued at US$446.8m. Government investments into Oman’s budding fisheries and aquaculture segments have drawn investor attention. The Ministry of Agriculture & Fisheries (MAF) allocated US$331m during Oman’s eighth five-year development plan (2011-15) specifically for fisheries development, and US$1.3bn of government investment is expected by 2020. Across the sultanate, 10 new fishing ports are under development, and by 2020 this would increase the number to 31. Local fish production has risen significantly over the past few years, with the annual local catch increasing from 158,000 tonnes in 2011 to 192,000 tonnes in 2012.

A majority of the upcoming processing plants will be located at the Fisheries Industrial Zone at the Port of Duqm, set to be the largest multi-purpose fisheries facility in the Middle East. The planned US$250m fisheries centre will accommodate 60 processing plants, storage facilities, landing areas, boat repair shops, aquaculture projects and research and training centres. Investment in the sector will also promote SME growth around the major developing port cities of Sohar, Duqm and Salalah.

Oman plans to begin seaweed farming on a commercial scale. Once the water area is allotted, the sultanate will be the first country in the region to exploit the rapidly growing global seaweed farming industry, the total annual commercial value of which exceeds US$5.5bn, according to FAO figures.

**The Blue Revolution**

Over one billion people worldwide depend on fish as a source of animal protein in their diets. Global per capita fish consumption has undergone major changes, increasing steadily from an average of 9.9kg in the 1960s to 18.1kg today.

However, this increase has not been uniform across regions. Over the past 40 years, per capita fish supply has remained almost static in Sub-Saharan Africa. In contrast, it has risen dramatically in Asia and North Africa. Indeed, Africa and Asia - excluding China - have the lowest consumption of animal-source foods but the highest proportion of fish in their diet. And today, about half of all seafood destined for human consumption is produced through aquaculture.

The FAO projects that by 2030, aquaculture one of the fastest growing methods of producing food in the world, will be responsible for almost two-thirds of the fish we eat – it’s estimated that the entire Norwegian production of salmon, almost a million tonnes a year, could be grown in an area about the size of the runways at JFK Airport in New York.
Aquaculture

The most common type of aquaculture is farming in net pens or cages anchored to the sea floor near the coast. There are also closed systems of tanks or ponds that float on water or operate on land. The FAO estimates that over 600 aquatic species are produced globally in a variety of aquaculture systems using freshwater, brackish water or salt water. It takes roughly 0.5kg feed to produce 0.5kg of farmed fish; it takes almost 1kg of feed to produce 0.5kgs of chicken, about 1.3kg for 0.5kg of pork and about 3.2kg for 0.5kg of beef.

But as aquaculture continues to expand concerns are growing about its negative impact on the environment and global biodiversity, including the degradation of water quality, fish diseases and overexploitation of wild fish used as feed for farmed fish. For example, salmon and shrimp, while increasingly popular, consume several times their weight in fish feed-derived from other, typically smaller, fish. It generally requires 20kg of feed to produce 1kg of tuna. So even as we depend more on farmed fish, a growing scarcity of fish feed could potentially jeopardize future expansion of the industry.

Challenges

The industry faces a series of other challenges, such as limited access to markets – particularly in urban centres – due to underdeveloped infrastructure; poor governance and a weak regulatory framework; lack of training and expertise; and limited access to financial aid for smallholder farmers, which prevents them from generating an adequate income through aquaculture.

National Fisheries Development Strategy 2013-20

In 2013 the government launched the National Fisheries Development Strategy 2013-20 – designed to accelerate the development of Oman’s fisheries sector. Investments of over US$1.3bn were apportioned for the fisheries sector with the goal of boosting domestic employment and increasing the industry’s contribution to GDP. A core objective of the strategy is to more than double the output from the sector to more than 462,000 tonnes by 2020 and create an estimated 20,000 jobs. The impact of new fishing and processing is estimated to total over US$1.9bn by 2020.

The strategy also details a number of areas for private investment in the sultanate’s fisheries sector, an industry that currently sustains the livelihoods of approximately 46,665 Omanis. Opportunities identified include the development and operation of boatyards, marine construction activities, operation and management of fishing fleets, fish processing and value added activities, logistics and storage, activities related to the trade and export of fish, supply of fishing gear, equipment and spare parts, ice production, fish feed for aquaculture, hatcheries, supply of technology, diving services providers, fish farm operation and consultancy and training services.

To date, MAF has received 31 applications for aquaculture projects with a total investment value of US$390m. Applications were made for farming shrimps in ponds, fin fishes in cages and in tanks and farming projects of sea cucumber, lobster and abalone.

In 2014, a total of 19 aquaculture provisional licenses were granted with a combined investment value of US$332m. The provisional licenses were issued to investors who met technical criteria, allowing investors to prepare feasibility studies and environmental performance, after which they will be provided with a 25-year operational license. MAF will grant the required land and investors will be responsible for preparing the land and developing the project. Recent investment projects include:

Oman Fisheries Company (OFC) - a publicly traded company in which the government owns a 24% stake - plans to build a processing plant in Duqm with a capacity to process 35 tonnes of fish per day. OFC operates EU approved and HACCP accredited plants in Muscat, Masirah, Buraimi, Salalah, Sokara and Al Ashkhara.
In mid-2013, OFC secured licenses from the government to add 24 ships to its fleet with plans to add up to 100 vessels in the future. Exports of processed product generated approximately US$60m in revenues for OFC in the 2014/15 fiscal year. Markets in the Far East contributed around 71% of these earnings, Europe 9% and the Middle East 5%. OFC’s main fresh fish exports are: Yellow Fin Tuna, Swordfish, Mahi Mahi, King Fish, Red Seabreams, Silver Seabreams, Groupers, Amber Jack, Emperor, Red Mullet, Job Fish, Barracuda, Croakers and Trevally.

Another project that has received operational licensing is a joint venture between an Omani company and two aquaculture firms from Thailand and New Zealand. The combined investment is worth US$233m and comprises two ponds, one to produce sea bass and the other farming shrimp. The latter operation is expected to produce 3,000 tonnes of shrimp.

A major regional investment fund financed by private and public sources has also allocated US$80m for an aquaculture farm. Originally slated to be a private fund established by Dubai’s Emirates Star Fisheries, the Food Security Growth Fund received strong interest from government, sovereign funds and high-net-worth individuals. When completed, the farm is expected to produce 13,000 tonnes of fish each year, with most of the output expected to be shrimp. The project expects to start producing in 2016 and will scale up to full production by 2018.

**Public-Private Partnerships**
The government expects to partner with private entities to build and operate various fish processing and marketing facilities, offering long-term land leases, tax breaks, and duty benefits to incentivize investments. Duqm is likely to attract investors because the port, located on Oman’s eastern coast, offers access to emerging markets in Asia and East Africa. Future plans are also expected to connect facilities at the Special Economic Zone to national and international markets via road, sea, air and rail.

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**Fishing Incentives**
Oman offers incentives to aquaculture investors that include:

- Free repatriation of capital and profits
- 70% foreign ownership which may be increased to 100% on providing 70% of the financing
- No corporate tax of 12% for 5 years extendable to 10 years
- No custom duties on aquaculture machinery, equipment, spare parts and raw material for 5 years
- Soft loan up to US$2.6 million
- 3% interest rate for 10 years for projects with 30% Omani ownership
- Appropriate land right for passed aquaculture projects on MAF approved sites

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Food: The Big Picture

Why is the global food industry changing and how will it continue to evolve? Here are some of the key issues shaping the sector.

Population Growth & Food Scarcity
As the world becomes more populous and prosperous, demand for food and other natural resources will rise. Food consumption is expected to increase 35% over the next 15 years as we add another billion people to the world’s population by 2025. Agricultural production will need to increase by 70% to feed the world’s people by 2050, yet climate change and pressures on water and energy availability will impact supply.

Climate Change
Climate-related impacts are already reducing crop yields in some parts of the world, a trend that is projected to continue as temperatures rise further. Crops affected include staples such as wheat, maize, and rice. Climate change is projected to increase price volatility for agricultural commodities and reduce food quality. Greenhouse gas (GHG) emissions from agriculture comprised about 10–12% of man-made GHG emissions in 2010. The sector is the largest contributor of non-carbon dioxide (non-CO2) GHGs such as methane.

The potential for reducing GHG emissions from agriculture through changes in consumption could be substantially higher than technical mitigation options. Approaches include reducing food waste, changing diets towards less GHG-intensive food, e.g., substitution of animal products with plant-based food, and reducing overconsumption in regions where this is prevalent.
Water Scarcity

In many regions, changing levels and patterns of precipitation, melting snow and ice and retreating glaciers are altering hydrological systems, affecting water resources and quality. Climate change is projected to reduce renewable surface water and groundwater resources significantly in most dry sub-tropical regions. Each degree of warming is expected to decrease renewable water resources by at least 20% for an additional 7% of the global population.

Water and agriculture authorities, alongside specialist UN agencies, have begun preparing plans to officially declare a state of drought that spreads beyond the Eastern Middle East to Morocco and as far south as Yemen.

The effects of drought can be clearly seen in the Middle East. Under normal conditions, only one-fourth of the world’s average precipitation falls in the Middle East. What’s worse is that rainfall in 2014 was at its lowest level in 60 years, especially in Jordan. This period of drought was also seen in Lebanon, Iraq and Syria, and adversely affected water sources and agricultural activities. This year, food imports will rise in the Middle East, which is already the biggest importer of food in the world.
Heat Island Effect
According to the latest International Panel on Climate Change assessment, the climate is predicted to become even hotter and drier in most of the MENA region. Higher temperatures and reduced precipitation will increase the occurrence of droughts, an effect that is already materializing in the Maghreb. It is further estimated that an additional 80–100 million people will be exposed by 2025 to water stress.

In addition, agriculture yields, especially in rain-fed areas, are expected to fluctuate more widely, ultimately falling to a significantly lower long-term average. In urban areas in North Africa, a temperature increase of 1–3 degrees could expose 6–25 million people to coastal flooding. In addition, heat waves, an increased “heat island effect,” water scarcity, decreasing water quality, worsening air quality, and ground ozone formation are likely to affect public health, and more generally lead to challenging living conditions.

Rising Sea Levels
Global models predict sea levels rising from about 0.1 to 0.3 meters by 2050 and from about 0.1 to 0.9 meters by 2100. For MENA, the social, economic and ecological impacts are expected to be relatively higher compared to the rest of the world. Low-lying coastal areas in Tunisia, Qatar, Libya, UAE, Kuwait and particularly Egypt are at particular risk.

Antibiotics
The use of antibiotics in agriculture constitutes half of all antibiotics prescribed. It is significantly contributing to the rise of AMR (antimicrobial resistance) in a range of dangerous pathogens, including Campylobacter, E-coli and Salmonella among many others. More concerning is that resistance to ‘last-line’ antibiotics has also been found widely in farm animals. There is proven evidence that resistant strains of pathogens can transfer easily from animals to humans.

Labeling & GMOs
The genetically-modified (GMO) food debate continues as more people consider what the labels on their food should say. But, for the conscientious food consumer, GMOs aren’t the only thing to worry about in their food. Labels give the public lots of information – where it’s from, how much fat it has, how many calories or, potentially, what antibiotics were used. The debate over this information is only getting started.

Food Waste
Up to 250 kilograms of food is discarded on average by individuals annually in the MENA region at a cost of over US$60 billion according to FAO. The global volume of food wastage is estimated at 1.6 billion tonnes of “primary product equivalents.” Total food wastage for the edible part of this amounts to 1.3 billion tonnes. The direct economic consequences of food wastage (excluding fish and seafood) run to the tune of US$750 billion annually. There are opportunities for Oman’s SMEs to find ways to divert waste from landfills – an example is New York City’s Food Waste Challenge and its proposed ban on commercial food waste in landfills - part of the city’s goal of diverting 75% of all solid waste from landfills by 2030.
Deforestation: There isn’t a bigger hammer to the environment than deforestation.
Fertilizer

Fertilizer runoff is a serious environmental concern because of its negative impact on water supplies, wildlife and health, including eutrophication, which results in excess algae growth and oxygen depletion in lakes and streams, and methemoglobinemia, caused by too much nitrate-nitrogen in drinking water and fish death. Fertilizer runoff from farms has contaminated lakes and estuaries from China to the St. Lucie River estuary on Florida’s southeast coast.

Provenance

There’s rising demand from consumers for clean and sustainably caught and 100% traceable food. Consumers are looking for food that’s produced locally, packed in BPA-free packaging, non-GMO and preservative, additive and gluten free.

Globalizing Food Supply Chains

More food is being traded across borders as business activity becomes more mobile for international food companies entering new markets and looking to source the best prices for their food products. This is transforming the food industry as regulators, food producers, sellers and consumers demand a more consistent approach to food safety and quality standards across geographies.

Regulatory Standards

More stringent food safety regulations with stricter policies in terms of quality standards, supervision and sanctions are being adopted by governments committed to protecting their communities. Challenges are created in meeting multi-country regulations while remaining economically competitive.

Increasing Scrutiny

High-profile food safety and quality scandals are damaging public trust in the food industry and increasing consumers’ concerns about their food. With the ubiquity of social media and increasing media and public interest, more food scares are turning into damaging scandals – pushing governments and food companies to improve standards.

The latest European Union Rapid Alert System for Food and Feed (RASFF) report indicated that Oman received the least notifications on food product exports with health threats between 2011 and 2013, meaning that food exports from Oman to the EU are amongst the safest. Oman was ranked 17th amongst 143 countries.

Emerging Markets

The growth of emerging economies is creating huge consumer markets where none existed before. Consumption power is shifting to wealthier, more demanding and newly urbanized middle classes. By 2030, it’s estimated that the purchasing power of the world’s seven largest emerging economies - the E7 - China, India, Brazil, Russia, Indonesia, Mexico and Turkey, will overtake the established G7 economies. More people want the best and can afford to buy it.
Food Security

Food security will be a priority in the next 30 years as the rising global population, unfolding climate change and increasing competition for land and water tax the world’s existing resources. Adapting agriculture to those challenges will be key. Here’s why:

- The world population is expected to rise by 2 billion people to hit 9 billion by 2050.
- By 2050, there will be 35% more mouths to feed, most of them in Asia, Africa and South America.
- 70% percent of population growth will be in urban areas.
- By 2050, the demand for food is projected to increase by 60% from current needs.
- The demand for water will rise 30% in the next 25 years.
- Agriculture already uses 70% of the world’s freshwater.
- Energy needs will climb 50% by 2030.
- The biggest food demand globally is for milk and other dairy products.
- Global fish stocks are under pressure and cannot meet the growing demand for fish oils.
- 20% of the world’s plant species are threatened with extinction.

City Farming

Urban agriculture has a long history, but more recently economic, social and environmental concerns have fueled a revival of urban agriculture in cities across the world. The most important historic evidence of urban agriculture was discovered in Latin America: Aztec, Mayan and Incan cities were self-sufficient in perishable fruits and vegetables that were produced in and around the cities. Today, urban agriculture is defined by the UN FAO as:

“...an industry that produces, processes and markets food and fuel, largely in response to the daily demand of consumers within a town, city, or metropolis, on land and water dispersed throughout the urban and peri-urban area, applying intensive production methods, using and reusing natural resources and urban wastes to yield a diversity of crops and livestock.”

Offsetting Carbon Emissions

Urban farms help consumers lower food emissions by giving them the choice to eat food grown within their communities and not imported from thousands of kilometres away. In addition to offsetting carbon emissions, urban farming also contributes to economic growth, community building and improved health.

The growth of urban farming is reviving and stimulating local economies worldwide. The FAO reports that 800 million people worldwide grow vegetables or fruits or raise animals in cities, producing 15 to 20% of the world’s food and this percentage is expected to double in the next 20 years.

Feeding a 4-person Household

According to research from the US Community Food Security Coalition in a 130-day temperate growing season, a 10’x10’ metre plot can provide most of a 4-person household’s total yearly vegetable needs, including much of the household’s nutritional requirements for vitamins A, C, B complex and iron. From an economic perspective, approximately every US$1 invested in a community garden plot yields US$6 worth of vegetables.
Local Food Start-ups
The growing demand for safe, local food is leading to increased opportunity for local food start-ups, which in turn is fueling job creation. There’s an understanding that the profit potential from robust consumer demand for local food is real and here to stay. Even large fast food chains are no longer content to be fast; they now want to be casual, local and green, tapping into an alert and environmentally conscious market. The fact researchers quantify the amount of food produced on small urban farms is testament to the burgeoning local-foods movement and its data-hungry supporters.

Whether urban farms ultimately produce more food or not they certainly play a vital role in creating more awareness about food - where it comes from, what it takes to produce and how to prepare and eat it.

MAF Targets Youth
MAF plan to allocate 50,000 agricultural plots in Al Maghsar, south of Musannah as a first step in setting up integrated agriculture and aquaculture projects aimed at Oman’s youth and SME owners. The initiative is part of the ministry’s efforts to ensure the integrated management of agricultural and fisheries resources according to pre-set government strategies and plans.

Each farm will measure 10 feddans (4.2ha) and be divided into three parts for production of targeted crops. Each will feature greenhouses, open plant areas and aquaculture units. Plots are expected to grow potatoes, onions, watermelons, melons, carrots, tomatoes, cucumber, capsicum, strawberry and beans. A total of 1,200 square metres will be earmarked for aquaculture units. Irrigated water will be recycled and used in the units.

New York’s Five Boroughs
It’s estimated that about 3 million New Yorkers live in neighbourhoods with few or no grocery stores and supermarkets. These residents spend much of their limited income at convenience stores buying a narrow selection of poor quality food. While urban farms and community gardens are no substitute for full-service grocers, local food production can supplement the food budgets of low-income earners and enable people to eat healthier meals. A recent study in Philadelphia found that community gardeners in that city produced US$4.9 million worth of summer vegetables alone, not including spring and fall plantings or fruits and berries.
**Health & Food**

In 2000, the World Health Organization predicted that the number of people living with diabetes in Oman would rise by 190% – from 75,000 to 217,000 – by 2025. Today, the figure is already over 140,000. An unhealthy fast-food diet and a sedentary lifestyle, combined with the fast pace of modern living is taking its toll on the sultanate’s health.

Every year, 7,000 people in the sultanate are diagnosed as diabetic and 1,200 adults die from complications arising from the disease. According to the International Diabetes Federation, Oman spends an average of US$863 on every person with diabetes each year. Multiply that by 199,780 - the number of diabetic patients in Oman at the end of 2013 and you can see the reasons why we need to act.

**Socially Responsible Brands**

Fifty five percent of global online consumers across 60 countries say they’re willing to pay more for products and services provided by companies that are committed to positive social and environmental impact. In August 2014, the world’s largest food company by revenue, Nestle SA, imposed an extensive regime of strict new animal-welfare safeguards on its 7,300 meat, poultry, egg and dairy suppliers. The cereal giant Kellogg Co., now requires its international network of suppliers to permanently reduce their greenhouse-gas emissions.

**Millennials**

Today’s 18-35 year-olds want more information about their food - where it comes from and what’s in it. As a result, more health-conscious product development, with thoughtful ingredient choices will emerge. While weight management will be addressed, it won’t be in terms of ‘diet’ products. Instead, products focused on delivering satiety, energy and positive nutrition, without empty calories will be produced.

**Growing Careers**

Agriculture is the world’s largest industry. It employs more than 1 billion people and generates over US$1.3 trillion worth of food annually. Pasture and cropland occupy around 50% of the Earth’s habitable land and provide habitat and food for a multitude of species. Given its importance and the challenges agriculture faces with climate change, population growth, urbanization as well as food and water security, there’s never been a greater need for innovative, sustainable farming.

-Sadly, agriculture is rarely portrayed in the media as a young person’s game and is often perceived as outdated, unprofitable and backbreaking. But working in agriculture means more than just toiling the land. For Oman’s highly skilled and ambitious youth there are agricultural career opportunities in permaculture design, biodynamic farming, food packaging and marketing, ICT, forecasting, logistics, quality assurance, urban farming, food preparation and environmental sciences. And if this issue isn’t addressed we may face a shortage of new farmers to fill the gap when today’s producers retire.

Worldwide, the average age of farmers is 60, this isn’t such a bad thing. Young people entering the sector today have that base of agricultural knowledge and experience to draw from. The important thing is for them to learn from it and adapt it for the future.
Investing in Agriculture & Fisheries: A Step-by-Step Guide

**Step 1**

**Ithraa**

**Obtain Commercial Registration**

*Documents required:*
- Copy of partner’s passport
- Copy of Omani partner’s ID card
- New commercial registration (CR) form signed by all partners
- Sample authorized signatories

*In some cases, security approval is required (1-5 weeks)*

Criminal record clearance is to be attached by Omani Embassy in applicant’s home country

**OCCI**

**Collect Membership Card**

*Timeframe:*
1 hour

*Documents required:*
- CR payment receipt

**Company Stamp**

**Obtain Company Stamp**

*Timeframe:*
10 minutes

*Documents required:*
- CR

**MAF License***

**Obtain Industrial License**

*Timeframe:*
6 months

*Documents required:*
- Copy of investor’s passport or ID
- CR copy
- OCCI certificate
- Local municipality permit
- Ministry of Agriculture & Fisheries approval

Initial approvals from different entities depend on business activity

*This step doesn’t affect other steps. Preliminary approvals from relevant government agencies depend on the requested type of commercial activity.

**Step 2**

**Bank**

**Open Bank Account**

*Timeframe:*
Depends on the Bank

*Documents required:*
- CR
- Passport copies
- Articles of Association
- Sample authorized signatories

*Some banks may require additional documents

**Agriculture & Fisheries**

All organizations mentioned can be contacted via the One-Stop-Shop

- Ithraa
- Oman Chamber of Commerce & Industry (OCCI)
- Local Municipality
- Ministry of Manpower (MOM)
- Royal Oman Police (ROP)
Step 3

Rental Agreement

Complete Ministry of Commerce & Industry
Investor Application Form

*Documents required:
- CR
- List of machinery
- Identity card

*To apply to rent land, submit all documents to MoCI

Step 4

Muscat Municipality

Timeframe:
1-2 weeks

Required documents:
- CR + company stamp
- OCCI membership card
- Rental agreement

*Above steps only required for Agriculture not for fisheries.

*Additional documents are required for some activities.

Step 5

Ministry of Manpower

Obtain Investor Visa

Timeframe:
2 - 7 days

Register company on www.manpower.gov.om and print application form

Required documents:
- Application form
- CR + company stamp
- OCCI membership card
- Passport copies
- Rental agreement
- Municipality permit
- Commitment letter

ROP

Obtain Investor Visa

Timeframe:
1-2 weeks

Print application form from www.rop.gov.om

Required documents:
- Application form
- Medical report
- Two passport-style photographs
- CR + company stamp
- OCCI membership card
- Copy of passport
- Rental agreement
- Municipality approval
- MOM approval

ROP Civil Status

Obtain Investor Visa

Timeframe:
1 day

Required documents:
- Investor visa
- Passport copy
- Present for fingerprinting
Local Heroes

This directory lists leading Oman-based Agriculture businesses and government organizations. If you want to learn more about Agriculture & Fisheries in Oman they are ready to help you.

Ithraa
Directorate General of Investment Promotion
PO Box 25, PC 117, Sultanate of Oman.
Tel: +968 2462 3300 | invest@ithraa.om

Ministry of Agriculture & Fisheries
PO Box 467, PC 100, Sultanate of Oman.
Tel: +968 2495 2067 | www.maf.gov.om

Oman Foods Investment Holding Company SAOC
PO Box 61, PC 134, Sultanate of Oman.
Tel: +968 2421 0300 | http://omanfood.om/

Oman Animal, Plant & Genetic Resources Center
PO Box 1422, PC 130, Sultanate of Oman.
Tel: +968 22 30 54 03 | http://oapgrc.gov.om

Oman Aquaculture Development Company
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Formed in 1996, Ithraa is Oman’s award-winning inward investment and export development agency.

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Vision
Promoting the Sultanate as the best destination for investment and trade in the world.

Mission
To attract sustainable investment and promote the export of Omani non-oil goods and services that support the Sultanate’s ambitions for growth and prosperity.

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