



The National Field
Research Centre for
Environmental Conservation
About innovative Environmental Research



Sultanate of Oman
Diwan of Royal Court

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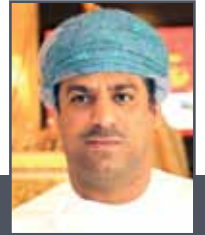
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Issue 26

Investment in

Ecotourism

Clean Environment and
Developed Economy



point of view

A Very Great Step

Dawood Sulaiman Al Balushi
Editor-in-Chief

The step taken by the Ministry of Environment and Climate Affairs and the Ministry of Tourism to activate the side of environmental tourism investment in the natural reserve it is, for sure, a very impressive step. It is a tangible progress in the aspect of ecotourism and exploiting it the optimal exploitation which commensurate with the continuous development of global tourism and the intense competition between the world nations to attract tourists by offering their natural and environmental wealth, as well as obtaining new sources of income that generates millions for such countries.

This investment step in Qurum Natural Reserve at the Governorate of Muscat and the Al-Sillail Natural Park at South Sharqia Governorate is good news of investment for the rest of the Sultanate's natural reserves. The establishment of tourist ports, the participation of the local community in the investment process and the invitation to private sector to invest in this vital sector, all this is good news. This step also confirms that the Sultanate has unique natural tourist attractions that must be utilized in all means for the diversification of income sources and not to rely on oil and gas as the main sources of income.

In order to complete the environmental tourism investment process in the Sultanate's natural reserves, the competent authorities must put in place conditions and laws that guarantee the protection of wildlife, animals, plants, and living organisms in these reserves. Investors should be instructed to follow the legislation that controlling investment inside Reserves to ensure their ecological healthness. Involving local communities which live close to the reserve in this investment process is very important and wise. Also, each protected area must contain a miniature scientific museum containing information about the reserve and some artifacts and historical antiquities found in the same area.

We would like to thank all those who are responsible for this wonderful experience. We hope that these bodies may consider themselves as guards to these nature reserves, so that there will be permanent control over them with the measuring the investment impact on environment and nature of each protected area. We are looking forward to a sustainable development for our natural reserves, to become promising sites for tourism investment while preserving its natural and environmental splendor and beauty in a sustainable manner.

Ecosystem

A complex system consisting of plants, animals, fungi, microorganisms and compresses of chemicals and natural and geological conditions that enter into the biological processes of these organisms. In the ecosystem there are complex, interrelated and interrelated processes characterized by many pathways that change the growth rates

of living groups and reach a stable state of equilibrium within the system as a whole. Any process that occurs for any element of the food chain, such as the use of a pesticide, has an impact on the rest of the ecosystem. There are no specific limits to the ecosystem, but limits can be imposed for research purposes by the type of study required and expected results.

Educational North Al Batinah has achieved advanced positions in The Knowledge Development Program and the «GLOBE» Environmental Program



Education in North Al Batinah has achieved advanced positions in the field of student scientific innovations in the knowledge development program and GLOBE environmental program, which comes in line with the Ministry of Education's innovation approach, represented by the Department of Innovation and Scientific Olympiad, on the continuous development of the mechanism of applying student scientific innovations. The academic year (2016 / 2017) in the

Oman Science Festival 2017 in its first edition. Al-Batinah Education in Natural Sciences and Mathematics was the first place in the project of Ionizer Air Purification System from Umayya Bint Qais School for Basic Education for the students Rawan Bint Saeed Al-Ma'amariyah and Taqwa Bint Saeed Al Jabriya. In the field of Engineering Systems, For the basic education of the students Zahraa bin Abdullah Al Naqbiya and Kifah Bint Khalid Al Sananiyyah. In the field of energy and transportation, the sensitive

extinguisher project was the third place of Al Awtebi Primary School for students Basel bin Abdullah Al Saidi and Adnan Bin Mohammed Al Saidi. In the field of environmental sciences, five projects were awarded, including the pure water project from Al-Ibdaa Primary School for Ahmed bin Nasser Al-Salam, the third place, and the palm fiber recycling project from Al-Utbi Primary School for students Saif bin Humaid Al-Zaidi and Turki bin Saeed Al-Zaidi.

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Our Environment is a Wonderful World

A Series of Workshops that Promote the Thinking of Young People on Various Environmental Issues



Prepared by: Nasr Al Rahbi

The National Field Research Centre for Environmental Conservation held a series of workshops at the University of Al-Sharqia in the context of following up the huge success of program «A Volunteer in my Environment» program which aimed at

enhancing the youth's thinking on various environmental issues and raising their awareness about the same, as well as the continuous quest to benefit from their contributions to reach successful solutions beside the dissemination of environmental culture and environmental thought throughout the community. The

workshops were presented by a multidisciplinary team of the Centre's researchers in the field of environmental research, and were organized by the Centre. A workshop on birds in Oman was held under the title: «Birds in Oman», a survey of wild plants. in addition to a workshop for explaining the tools and methods used to survey insects

in the field, under the title: «Insect survey» and finally a workshop on the tools used for field surveys and how to use them. The workshop witnessed wide participation by students from the University of Sharqia, where 55 students participated. The students expressed their happiness for participating in the workshops, stressing that they benefited from such participating, hoping to translate this amount of information obtained into achievements and realization of the objectives of the promising program. «A Volunteer is in My Environment»

More than 89 Projects competed on the Axis of Community Service...

The Program «A Volunteer in My Environment» won the fourth prize in the Vision for youth initiatives at its fifth version on the axis of «Community Service». The team of «Environmental Friend» from Sharqia University received the prize as the representative of both, the Sharqia University and The National Field Research Centre for Environmental Conservation which launched this initiative. «Echo Volunteering Centre» won the first place, «My Voice is Life» came second, the third place was for the «House of Girls» project and the fifth place was won by «My Initiative is My Experience in external scholarship». The prize is on the axis of «Community Service», where more than 89 projects competed. The award ceremony was held at the Grand Millennium Hotel in Muscat, where

«A Volunteer in My Environment» Program wins the Fourth Place in the Vision Contest for Youth Initiatives Award

Her Highness Dr. Mona Bint Fahad Bin Mahmoud Al Said, Assistant President of Sultan Qaboos University for International Cooperation, delivered the awards to the winners, in the presence of a number of their Highnesses and Excellencies, academics, the competitors, media professionals, young people and those who are interested. The award was organized by Al-Roya Newspaper, under the exclusive patronage of Occidental Oman (Oxy Oman). The award celebrates a series of outstanding national projects; as well as groups of innovators, inventors, creative and artists who have lit up a process of innovation and creativity, and hopes to establish a strong ground for our young people to embark on a national future based on innovation outputs of which are capable of achieving the development goals and facing the rapid changes.



Eco-tourism has imposed itself firmly on the global tourism market in recent times. It has become one of the most important international tourism products and the fastest growing market in the tourism industry. According to what reported by the World Tourism Organization, the annual growth rate of eco-tourism is over 5% in all parts of the world, as it represents 6% of global GDP, and 11.4% of total consumer spending. This makes it a market that cannot be underestimated.



Investment in

Ecotourism

Clean Environment and Developed Economy

- **Ecotourism is one of the most important pillars of the tourism strategy of the Sultanate**

- **Oman plans and programs are suitable for natural tourism and aim to involve local communities in tourism investment at the Natural Reserves**

- **Ecotourism accounts for more than the half of the rapid-growing tourism industry around the world**

Numbers and Facts

Tourist destinations around the world welcomed 598 million tourists during the period from January to June 2017, nearly 36 million more tourists than in the same period last year. This means the growth rate is 6% and much higher than the trend of recent years, and makes the mentioned period (from January to June 2017) the strongest half-year since 2010, meaning that more than 10% of the world's population have become interested in tourism around the world. This fact generates more than trillion dollars a year and opens the way for tourism investment. According to these figures released by the World Tourism Organization (WTO), environmental tourism has accounted for more than half of the rapid growth of the tourism industry around the world. The World Tourism Organization predicts that the number of tourists worldwide will reach 1.8 billion by 2030, drawing attention that such growth has to be managed so that it

can be translated into comprehensive economic growth opportunities that provide decent jobs for the development and sustainable tourism. The organization noted that the sustainability of the tourism sector will not be achieved without maintaining the different tourist environments and reducing the human impact on them.

The Philosophy of Ecotourism

This source of prosperity requires efficient management for the benefit of visitors and host communities alike, especially since the world has allocated 2017 to be the International Year of Sustainable Tourism for development, with a view to destinations and travelers a reminder that we must work for the sustainable tourism sector, which protects the environment, preserves the cultural heritage destinations and promotes respect for local communities everywhere. Being a promising emerging market as a global specialized industry, environmental tourism revenues are estimated in billions

of dollars as direct expenditure, in addition to other indirect gains and jobs provided by this huge market. This type of tourism is unique by its sustainable development results in protecting the environment, natural resources and economic and social benefits for the national economy in general and the local population at the tourist sites in particular. The preservation of environment biodiversity, in connection with history and culture, taking into account the realization of sustainable development, all these aspects are closely related to environmental tourism. Many specialists have worked on shaping and developing eco-tourism policies. The fields of those specialists varied and include geographic information systems, wildlife management, wildlife photography, marine life science, oceanography, management of national and Wilayat parks, environmental sciences, etc. However such efforts require capital to be invested for supporting such environmental activities so as to create sustainable profits





strengthening the Sultanate's culture, heritage and traditions at the same time, as well as preserving natural resources and ensuring their sustainability. The Omani tourism strategy seeks not only to attract large numbers of tourists but also to invite distinguished visitors who are expected to stay longer and spend more money, thereby realizing greater benefits without leaving negative impacts on culture and environment. The strategy has designated tourist areas of national importance that contain numerous resorts equipped with huge infrastructure and equipment. These areas constitute tourist destinations with about 6,000 accommodation rooms. The strategy focuses on 14 proposed tourist areas for the period 2016 - 2040. These areas are boasting interesting tourist sites, such as castles, springs and areas that highlight Oman's ancient cultural heritage, Bedouin areas and coastal lands such as the colorful deserts, the Sinbad house, the archeological sites from Iron and Bronze Ages, fortresses, mountain villages, valleys and the modern Omani city that built according to the old traditional model, as well as Empty Quarter desert, Frankincense & Incense Road, and Dhofar Western Desert Region. Most of these sites are distinguished by their environmental diversity and are considered as eco-tourism destinations.

Environmental Investment in the Tourism Sector

The future of tourism in the Sultanate requires competent authorities to double the economic activities related to tourism from 8 to 12 times using different methodologies. If the strategy is applied in full professionalism, it will result in increasing the number of jobs related to the sector (more than 500,000 jobs can be provided by 2040) and increasing the amount of investments expected during the period (2016 - 2040) to reach RO 19 billion, 12% of which come from the public sector investments.

Promising Sector

By the end of May 2017, the number of tourists reached 1.3 million tourists, compared with 909 thousand tourists during the same period last year, with a rise of 43%, according to the latest statistics issued by the Ministry of Tourism. While the total number of visitors to the Sultanate in 2016, was 3 million visitors until December 2016. This reflects the steady growth of the tourism sector in the Sultanate, and the great potential that we can build on in the future.

As for the environmental sites, the Ras Al Hadd reserve attracted 51,745 visitors during 2016. The number of visitors to the Damaniya Islands Reserve reached 4136 visitors in the same year. Water ponds in Wadi Bani Khalid attracted more than 156,119 visitors and Al-Jabal Al-Akdar 162,499 visitors. While the number of the fall (autumn) visitors in the Governorate of

Dhofar exceeded 604,000 visitors until the end of August 28, 2017, with a continuous increase compared to the same period last year. All these figures confirm the importance of eco-tourism in the Sultanate as attraction element. It only lacks funding and investment.

A Step Forward

The Ministry of Environment and Climate Affairs and The Ministry of Tourism have expressed their desire to develop and manage ecotourism in the Al-Sallayl Nature Reserve in South Sharqia Governorate and the Aarum Reserve Area in Muscat Governorate. It also opened the way to the tourist benefit of the Al-Wusta Wild life Reserve in Al-Wusta Governorate by opening it to the public during the holidays of the next 47th National Day. This initiative comes in the context of the general orientation of the Sultanate to implement the concept of sustainability in all its environmental, economic, cultural and social aspects. The project of developing and managing ecotourism activities is the first model in Oman that deals with nature related activities in protected areas, as such proposed nature reserves are characterized by unique natural elements, including biological environments, geological formations and heritage sites. The Sultanate has developed plans, programs and activities that are appropriate to natural tourism and education with the involvement of local communities in the natural reserve. The Sultanate will also intensify its efforts in the development and implementation of other tourism plans in the Qurum Natural Reserve in Muscat Governorate, Al-Jabal Al-Akdar Landscape Reserve, the Wetlands Reserve in Al Wasta Governorate and the Turtle Reserve in South Sharqia Governorate. The Ministry of Environment and Climate Affairs, in cooperation with the Ministry of Tourism, has established regulations to regulate tourism investment in natural reserves in line with maintaining the purpose for which protected areas were established and for the conservation of biodiversity.

Double Benefit

Sustainable tourism meets the needs of tourists, as well as maintaining tourist areas and increasing community employment. It aims to manage all available resources, whether economic, social, aesthetic or natural and to deal with heritage and cultural data, in addition to the necessity of maintaining ecological balance and biodiversity. Sustainable tourism is the point of convergence between the needs of visitors and the needs of the host regions. Thus, it protects and supports future development opportunities. All resources would be managed in a way that provides economic, social and spiritual needs while maintaining the cultural reality and the environmental pattern. Sustainability necessarily involves continuity. Sustainable tourism therefore includes the optimal use of natural resources, including sources of biodiversity, mitigation of tourism impacts on the environment and culture, and maximization of benefits by protecting both the environment and local communities. Sustainable tourism defines the organizational structure required to reach these goals.

A Clean Environment ... and a Developed Economy

Tourism of all kinds, especially the Ecotourism, is a phenomenon aimed at helping individual and society to promote the local and international economy for the benefit of mankind and the planet. In addition, eco-tourism with environmental balance is a new phenomenon that encourages research, study and reflection on nature, plants and animals, providing comfort to humans and contributing to sustainable development. The advantage of eco-tourism is to link investment and productive projects with the local community, while protecting the environment and its vital elements and cultural and natural heritage, according to one development equation, namely, (clean environment, active tourism, and developed economy). Ecotourism is the only way to maximize economic, environmental and social benefits tourism. Everyone is considered to be a real stakeholder in this process.

■ The future of tourism in the Sultanate of Oman makes it imperative to increase tourism-related economic activities 8 to 12 times



while preserving the environment. Tourism Environment and Oman Tourism Strategy

The investment in environmental tourism is one of the most important pillars of the tourism strategy of the Sultanate. The fact is that Oman environmental sites are part of the most important tourism products that the Sultanate is seeking to develop, including the Sultanate unique environmental elements and diversity that meet the tastes of tourists from all over the world. Oman Tourism Vision is aiming to make the Sultanate in 2040, as one of the most important tourist destinations that tourists visit for holidays, exploration and meetings. The goal is to attract 11 million international and domestic tourists. The objectives of tourism development in the Sultanate include improving the quality of life for Omani citizens while achieving benefits for other stakeholders and

A Creative Work of the Omani Photographer Wahid Al-Fazzari

(Al-Obour) Starring and Winning the First Place in Sharjah (Expurger) Photography Competition

The Omani photographer, Wahid Al-Fazzari, won the first place – the wildlife category – in the second session of the International Festival of Photography (Expurger) held in the Emirate of Sharjah, United Arab Emirates. Al-Fazzari won the first place through his participation with his his photo entitled «(Al-Obour)» «Crossing», which was captured during a photography trip in Africa, where the picture represented a moment of a break in one of the largest migrations in the world of animals, African buffalo as they crosses a river. The Arbitration Committee that consisting of 12 international arbiters selected 17 winners in eight different categories: Movement and Sports, the

most beautiful thing in the UAE, children under the age of 16, landscape, journalistic photography, portraiture, wildlife and silent nature. The 17 winners competed with ten thousand competitors from 98 different countries. The festival is a global forum for the art of photography and is an integrated platform that combines workshops, exhibitions, seminars, presentations, competitions, photography tours and product exhibitions. The program is supervised by international photographers who have won international awards and met in Sharjah, United Arab Emirates, to share their experiences and artistic techniques with festival leaders and photography enthusiasts.



Bahrain

Bahrain Launches a Project to Urge Citizens to Participate in Environment Protection

The Municipality of the Northern Region of Bahrain has launched the «Environmental Trustees» project, which is based on forming a group of citizens active in the environmental field to perform a community role aimed at playing a central role in protecting the environment and spreading community awareness. The project, which is the first of its kind in Bahrain, is based on several pillars, the most important of which is the promotion of general awareness among citizens, the exercise of environmental control, the preservation of public property at gardens and coasts, the preservation of the general cleanliness of villages and the reduction of municipal violations. The head of the Municipal Council in the Northern Region Municipality, Mohammed Khalifa Bouhmod explained in a speech at Alli Cultural-Sport Club that: «Environmental Trustees» is a community project based on motivating citizens interested in the environmental aspect of volunteering and involvement in municipal work.



Emirates

Ras Al Khaimah Launches an Initiative Allows Hotels to Change Methods of Waste Disposal

Ras Al Khaimah Waste Management Authority has launched a program, in cooperation with Ras Al Khaimah Tourism Development Authority (RAKIA), to ensure that all hotels within the Emirate participate in the separation of waste. The initiative, which has been implemented by all hotels in the Emirate since May 2016, has helped to process more than 500 tons of reusable materials in various treatment methods, except landfill in health landfills. Thanks to the solidarity of all hotels in the Emirate with this initiative, Ras Al Khaimah Waste Management Authority is on track to achieve its goal of treating 75% of the total of domestic solid waste in different treatment methods except landfill. The comes as part of (Emirates Vision 2021)



Saudi Arabia

1.3% of Households in Saudi Arabia Use Solar Energy

A survey conducted by the Saudi General Authority for Statistics (GASTAT) found that 1.3 percent of households in Saudi Arabia use solar energy allover Saudi areas.

GASTAT issued the results of the Household Energy Survey, which shows the proportions and forms of energy and consumption and household use of different types of energy, as well as rationalization of consumption and average operating hours.

About 99.93 percent of households use electricity in the dwelling, 99.19 percent of households are connected to the public electricity network, 0.61 percent use a private network as a source of electricity, and 0.13 percent of households use a private generator for electricity. The survey also showed that about 1.3 percent of households use solar energy in their homes in different Saudi Arabia areas.



Kuwait

The Oil Company Wins «Maritime» Global Award for Environmental Protection Category

The Kuwait Oil Company (KOC), represented by the Maritime Operations Group and the Public Relations and Media Group, has won an international award in “Maritime Standard.” The company has realized this achievement in the category of environmental protection award, after competing with four other regional and global organizations. The awards were presented at a ceremony held in the United Arab Emirates under the patronage of His Highness Sheikh Ahmed Bin Saeed Al Maktoum, Chairman of the Dubai Civil Aviation Authority and chairman and CEO of Emirates Airline, during which 29 awards were given to individuals, companies, authorities and organizations after deliberations by The Arbitration Committee.



Qatar

study to enhance air quality monitoring

The Ministry of Municipality and Environment represented in qatar by the Environmental Monitoring Department is implementing an advanced experimental technical study on monitoring the quality of surrounding air, which is expected to be completed during the first quarter of next year. The study comes in the framework of the development of the environmental monitoring work in the State of Qatar, as well as the project to strengthen the technological capabilities of the environment being carried out jointly by the ministry and a specialised team from Japan. During the preparatory meeting with the Japanese team, the Director of the Environmental Monitoring Department Hussain Saad al Kubaisi stressed the importance of cooperation and exchange of experiences in the field of environmental monitoring in order to achieve the goals of sustainable development in the field of environment and support the development pillar of the environment in Qatar National Vision 2030.

» IUCN Reveals the Damage Caused by Climate Change to Heritage Sites

A new report by the International Union for Conservation of Nature (IUCN) has revealed that the number of World Heritage sites damaged by global warming and at greater risk has increased to nearly to 62 sites in the past three years. Climate change destroys many of the world's greatest natural wonders, from Everglades National Park in the United States to the Great Barrier Reef in Australia.

Among the places at risk from climate change are the picturesque areas from the Galapagos Islands to the centre of the Amazon and the less famous but vital and unique sites, such as the Karst Caves in Hungary and Slovakia and the Royal Butterflies Reserve in Mexico.

» UNESCO Adopts the Universal Declaration on Ethical Principles in Relation to Climate Change

The Thirty-ninth Session of the UNESCO General Conference, which recently concluded its work in Paris, adopted the Declaration of Ethical Principles on Climate Change. The Declaration was prepared by a high-level panel of experts appointed by the Director-General of UNESCO in 2016. The 17-article Declaration calls on States, individuals and communities to incorporate ethical principles into all climate change decisions and actions. It urges the adoption of policies and actions to mitigate and adapt to climate change, where all parties work in a spirit of justice, global partnership and solidarity.

» Trees in Large Cities Grow Faster than at the Countryside

Researchers have discovered that trees in large, crowded cities grow faster than at rural and wild areas. A group of scientists from Munich University of Technology conducted a study on the effect of thermal factors in large cities, rural areas and wild nature. The study showed that trees in large cities adapt their life cycle to surrounding conditions.

According to United Nations data, urban population will reach more than 60 percent of the world's population by 2030, and industrial enterprises will increase, meaning that air pollution will increase in turn.

To improve the environment, humanity needs to plant large quantities of trees, which will help improve the health of citizens, but how will trees live in large cities?

To find out, scientists studied models of seeds and perennial trees gathered from large cities (Berlin, Hanoi, Cape Town, Paris, Munich, Houston, etc.). The group also focused on climatic zones and what trees grow in these cities. Scientists found that the life cycle of trees, which grow in large cities, is 25 percent faster than in rural and wild areas.



» A Bali Volcano Inspires Scientists Ideas to Reduce Global Warming

Climate scientists have followed up a volcano eruption in the Indonesia's tourist island of Bali to come up with ideas that can help reduce global warming by injecting chemicals that reduce the sun's rays heat at much higher altitude from the Earth's surface.

Volcanoes have started to play the role of natural laboratories in the «geo-engineering». The goal is that governments have to make a tincture of sulfur dioxide at a high altitude above the surface of the planet to be as a natural protector from the sun heat. That will contribute to curb the rise of temperature cause by human activity.

The ashes and smoke that the Mount Agung volcano emitted for days have not been big enough and have not risen sufficiently high to cool global temperatures, but scientists say they are studying what could happen if it erupts once more with the same force of its eruption in 1963. Jim Haywood, the professor of atmospheric science at Exeter University, said that has carried out simulations operations on the Bali volcano with the British Meteorology Office for possible scenarios and some simulations models related to geo-engineering.



Environmental Vocabulary

Logo of Give

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When we talk about something rare comes to mind its economic value, such as diamonds, gold, sapphires and other metals. Economic value is always dominated our thought and control the concept of the value of things. Despite the scarcity of diamonds and the high of its cash value to astronomical figures, its luster can be seen in museums and the palaces of the rich people. While the nature contains creatures considered as a building block in the integrated environment, if lost is not become rarely, but nonexistent.

The Omani environment embraces treasures of plant and animal biodiversity, some of which are described as semi-extinct according to the red list. With this precise and logical classification, some of Omani environmental individuals is on its way to extinction. One of such individual only exists in one place over Oman, and in a very limited location can be measured within meters. It is surrounded by a lot of challenges, and sometimes even exist as a full green tree in the circumstances when there is no rain and dried springs. Its roots remains rooted under the soil waiting for water droplets to authorize the exit, so the stems surrender to the open air announce a new life.

It has been said that it is a good and blessed tree. It is a medium size, with a length of one and a half meters, with short branches and short leaves. Few people know it, even those around it may not notice its existence, do not realize its disappearance, and those who hear about it think it is from another world or from another planet. Those who know about it and herbalists are aware of its medical importance. Its leaves and roots are used as an effective treatment for many diseases and have a strong effect in resisting toxins of reptiles. All this, is gaining it a significant environmental and scientific importance that opens the horizons of scientific research and attempts to multiply and cultivate it in other places similar to its natural environment and prevent Omani environment any loss of one of its rare members in the ecosystem.

The competent authorities in the Sultanate have been keen to give each Wilayah a distinctive logo. This tree was considered undisputedly to be the logo of an ancient Wilayah in which His Majesty Sultan Qaboos (May Allah protect him) established a wonderful building simulates Omani heritage named as (Asshumoukh Fort). The Omani liquorice (locally known as Al Mitc) tree, is the exclusive logo of Wilayah of Manah. Both in harmony as if they were born from one womb. The harmony that gives us a real meaning to this generous land that has a logo called the liquorice (Al Mitc).

Al Wusta Wildlife Reserve

Design: Marwa al.Ghafri

