

A VISION TO EXPAND A TRADING HUB'S HORIZONS



SOHAR PORT & FREEZONE MARKET ANALYSIS AND CARGO FORECAST OMAN

The Sohar Port and Freezone are strategically located on the south-eastern side of the Arabian peninsula, providing access to the GCC markets by land, sea, or air without having to enter the Strait of Hormuz. The two entities operate as a single port and industry location which is currently home to logistics, petrochemical, metals, automotive and food clusters.

The sites are managed by Sohar Industrial Port Company, which is working in close cooperation with the Port of Rotterdam to identify market trends and future opportunities. This is to help define the 2040 vision and development strategy and to inform the spatial masterplan.

BuroHappold Engineering was appointed to conduct a market analysis and forecasting exercise, to identify trade opportunities and inform the long-term cargo projections for the port. We also investigated ways of attracting new manufacturing investments and value added services such as the potential to become a regional logistics hub. This study was expected to closely link with existing investment decisions and commercial strategy while also addressing the likely changes in trade flows and freight movements based on regional transport connectivity and planned infrastructure improvement works.

Our team carried out their analyses within a closed market, where data and evidence gathering was challenging. We undertook more than 70 stakeholder interviews within the region, to gather a robust evidence base for competitiveness analysis and projections. We also conducted detailed precedent analysis to understand how the combination of port, freezone and logistics cluster contributes towards creating a competitive trading hub, and led three workshops with existing tenants to help align their expectations with the overall development strategy.

Stakeholder consultation with industry experts was of great value to create a strong basis for projections, with long-term projections best presented as various scenarios for consideration. The key macroeconomic factors within each scenario were clearly defined and agreed with the client team and other parties. This close engagement led to projections and a development strategy that were robust and considered plausible by the key stakeholders.

The outcomes of the study helped Sohar Port Industrial Company to define the 2040 vision for the port and freezone and inform the spatial masterplan.

CLIENT
Sohar Industrial Port Company

DURATION
2015 - 2016

SERVICES PROVIDED BY BUROHAPPOLD
Economic analysis, market demand assessment, economic modelling and forecasting, development strategy, scenario analysis