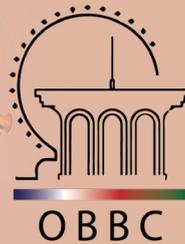


Oman's Tech Ecosystem

Why is the Sultanate
becoming a technology
destination of choice?

Ahmed Al-Bulushi



With significant progress made in laying the foundation for Oman's digital society and creating a modern ICT sector that is accessible to all and responsive to sustainable development needs, the Sultanate of Oman has been making huge strides towards becoming a technologically advanced country. Government, businesses, and individuals can access an integrated ICT infrastructure across the country, including rural and remote areas. Several major projects have been implemented nationwide, including the creation of a national broadband network, the unified government network, the National Center for Information Security, the Digital Certification Center, and many other infrastructure projects. In addition, the transformation into digital government contributed to accelerating the access to information technology by all segments of society and enabled the various economic sectors to develop and thrive.

The Sultanate's government is continuously working to unify national plans and strategies ensuring their alignment with the overall vision and national directions for sustainable development and all economic and social sectors. In this context, developing sustainable digital strategies have been given special attention making them a central pillar within Oman Vision 2040. The vision is centered around Several ICT strategic objectives so as to capture rapid technological advancements and



**Ahmed
Al-Bulushi**

Digital Competitiveness Team

Ministry of Transport, Communications & Information Technology (MTCIT)

facilitate adoption. There is a need to ensure a sophisticated IT infrastructure supportive for all sectors and capable of accommodating new developments as well as addressing the cybersecurity challenges. The National Vision also aims to create vibrant sustainable smart cities and high quality dynamic urban communities for living, work and leisure. In addition, it seeks to develop a digitally-aware society with skills and capabilities that can preserve its identity, keep pace with the new developments, and provide the basis for high-efficiency government services and performance.

The Sultanate of Oman seeks to achieve several goals that contribute to building and developing a prosperous digital economy that responds to future requirements. The National Digital Economy Program was recently approved by the government containing a set of pillars, medium and long-term goals based on the national directions of Oman Vision 2040. These pillars are

planned to be achieved through a set of executive programs. The main three pillars highlighted by the National Digital Economy Program are digital government, digitizing businesses and digital society. Moreover, the most important executive programs that are encompassed by the National Digital Economy Program are Government Digital Transformation (2021-2025), E-Commerce, Artificial Intelligence and Advanced Technologies, Space and Digital industry. The program focuses on utilizing the Fourth Industrial Revolution technologies in enabling the Economic Sectors, Motivating Digital Content development, developing a Cybersecurity Industry, Government Digital Transformation, Promotion of Data Centers and Cloud Services and Attracting foreign technology investments.

Artificial Intelligence (AI) and Advanced Technologies are seen as fundamentally important enablers that may facilitate global leadership in all future industries. Countries are racing to embrace AI technologies in numerous scenarios so that national security is bolstered and public services provided to society can be improved. The Sultanate of Oman is working to lay the essential pillars of AI applications in order to create a sustainable economy whilst also benefiting in its daily operations. These can be achieved through enhancing the productivity in sectors targeted for economic diversification through a coordinated

“The vision of the programme starts from the principle of enabling the public sector to achieve outstanding innovative performance”

application of smart technologies that develop the existing human talents and capabilities in this domain. Successful adoption of AI in the most essential and strategic sectors must be supported by the right policies and regulations to ensure human-centricity in the AI arena.

Furthermore, the Government Digital Transformation Program outlines the plans and projects to simplify, re-engineer and automate government services to improve citizens digital experience when receiving government services. This will be achieved by ensuring system integration between different government entities and providing government services through in a unified e-Portal.

The vision of the programme starts from the principle of enabling the public sector to achieve outstanding innovative performance and provide smart services, proactive procedures, and a rewarding digital experience. It strives for excellence in Government performance, open-



source data, and e-Community participation, all of which will contribute effectively to boost the business sector in Oman and attract an increased and wider spread of investments across different fields.

The digital transformation program is a stepping stone to enable Oman's rank in the UN eGovernment Development Index to jump from the top 40 countries in 2020 to the top 10 countries in 2040, as stipulated in Oman's Vision 2040. The Program is expected to empower startups and SMEs to provide innovative solutions to help develop a government work environment, enable agility, planning and predictability of future plans to enhance the performance of the state's administrative apparatus whilst ensuring transparency, accountability, and community engagement.



*From the National Digital Economy
Program Summary (2021)*