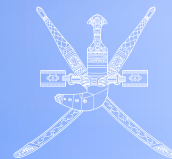




الاستراتيجية العمرانية
SPATIAL STRATEGY



وزارة الإسكان
والتخطيط العمراني
Ministry of Housing and Urban Planning



OMAN'S CONTRIBUTION TO IMPLEMENTING THE SDGs



1 Introduction

The ONSS deals with spatial development and its distribution across the country. Spatial development plays a key role in the achievement of sustainable development. At a high level, the objective of sustainable development can be summarized as meeting the needs of the present without compromising the ability of future generations to meet their own needs. In other words, development capable of maintaining a balance between short terms human need and interests with the preservation of natural resources and ecosystems and the protection of the long-term interests of future generations.

To achieve this in a way beneficial to the country and its people, the ONSS sets out a 20-year spatial planning framework that is geared to delivering a better balance between the social, economic and environmental dimensions of sustainable development. The idea is to deliver economic, social and environmental benefits together, in a mutually reinforcing way, rather than sacrificing some dimensions to deliver others. Since 2015, Oman has been a signatory to the UN's 2030 Agenda for Sustainable Development and the 17 SDGs.

This document highlights the contribution of the Sultanate of Oman to achieving the UN SDGs and implementing the New Urban Agenda through the ONSS.

1.1 Alignment with the UN SDGs

The SDGs build on the UN Millennium Development Goals (MDGs) and have a broader agenda that applies to all countries including new areas such as climate change, economic inequality, innovation, sustainable consumption, peace and justice, amongst the priorities. The goals are interconnected – often the key to success on one will involve tackling issues more commonly associated with another. Several of the Goals (SDG 7, 8, 9, 11, 13 and 15) are especially relevant to Spatial Strategies. Therefore, the ONSS, as it is implemented, is expected to play an important role in delivering these goals, either direct or indirectly as well as supporting the overarching goal of sustainable development. The linkages between the ONSS strategic goals and the SDGs are shown in Figure 1.1.



Figure 1.1 Alignment of ONSS Strategic Goals and the SDGs

There are 169 targets associated with the 17 SDGs; most of the targets are qualitative. There are 69 targets identified that are considered to be of the greatest relevance to the ONSS. The ONSS (along with other policies and actions) will help Oman to achieve these targets.

The following chapters highlight the main aspects of the ONSS that contribute to delivering the New Urban Agenda in Oman.

2 Sustainability Assessment of the Strategy

The objective of Sustainability Assessments (SAs) is to ensure that national development policies and strategies that may be developed by different authorities in Oman, including all those with spatial dimension, are subject to a systematic review of the extent to which they can be considered 'sustainable'.

For the SA to take place, it is a pre-requisite that each national policy or strategy sets out an explanation of how the policy/ strategy/ plan takes account of government policies and commitments relating to the mitigation of, and adaptation to, climate change in the concerned sector as well as all UN Sustainable

Development Goals. The policy/ strategy/ plan should also set out the government's objectives for the development of nationally and regionally significant infrastructure in that sector.

A Sustainability Assessment of the ONSS, to ensure its alignment with the UN Sustainable Development Goals (SDGs), had been carried out in three main stages:

- The first stage was a process of evaluation of four Alternative Strategies that led to the selection and refinement of the Preferred Spatial Strategy.
- The second stage was an assessment of the extent to which the 57 policies, as set out in the Draft ONSS, delivered the SDGs. This second assessment was used to identify whether there were any gaps or shortfalls in the draft final strategy which could be addressed as the strategy was finalised.
- The third stage, in order to increase the overall alignment of this Final Strategy with the UN-SDGs, involved refinement of those policies (and supporting text in the Policy Background) which had received lower scores in the stage two assessment.

Based on the above mentioned assessment, the final Spatial Strategy was developed on a National Level and further drafted on a Regional Level per Governorate. Oman has developed this approach to ensure that sustainability considerations are embedded during strategic planning and project development processes; this process includes referencing the SDGs. The ONSS process ensures that policies, plans and projects of national and regional significance, from a spatial development perspective, are subject to a formal appraisal of their sustainability.

3 Delivering Strategic Spatial Development

Although various definitions exist, spatial planning essentially seeks to influence the distribution of people and activities in 'spaces' of different scales or levels. It looks to create a more rational territorial organisation of land uses and the linkages between them, to balance demands for development with the need to protect the natural and cultural environment, whilst simultaneously seeking to achieve a country's stated social and economic objectives. It seeks to address potential conflicts between competing policy goals/ strategies developed by different Government agencies, especially seeking to balance those policies that promote economic development with those that have been developed for environmental and social protection and enhancement.

This strategic goals aims at creation of liveable, resilient cities and urban and rural communities; whilst maintaining the Omani Identity.

Urban growth will be distributed across the country, linked to existing Governorate Centres, with the strategy being predicated upon the functional arrangement of a series of 'Gateways' and 'Hubs', based on a defined settlement hierarchy. This will direct growth and development including new jobs and houses over the plan period to 2040.

The policies introduced in the ONSS include the following benefits:

- Considering the needs of the local communities in policy development

- Improving accessibility when considering the location of new development
- Supporting the provision of local facilities where they are lacking
- Promoting the reuse of vacant and derelict land, particularly where it has a negative impact on quality of life and economic development potential; and
- Aiding the creation and maintenance of pleasant, healthy and safe environments.

4 Delivering Growth and Prosperity

Spatial planning seeks to coordinate and improve the impacts of other sectoral policies on land use in order to achieve a more even/ equitable distribution of economic development across a given territory than might otherwise be created if left purely to market forces. Spatial planning is considered to be an important tool for promoting sustainable development and improving the quality of life.

The ONSS aims to achieve economic prosperity through complementary regional development that considers each regions strength and potential.

Economic growth and prosperity will be country-wide with the strategy based on the availability of land and premises within a series of 'Gateways' and 'Hubs', to enable effective business clustering. This will enable economic development over the plan period to 2040.

The economic benefits of Spatial Planning embedded within the ONSS are:

- Providing more stability and confidence for investment
- Identifying land in appropriate locations to meet the need for economic development
- Ensuring land for development is well placed in relation to the transport networks and the labour force
- Promoting environmental quality in both urban and rural areas, which can then create more favourable conditions for investment and development
- Identifying development that meets the needs of the communities
- Promoting regeneration and renewal; and
- Making decisions in a more efficient and consistent way

5 Managing the Environment

Spatial planning provides a framework to ensure that the environment in general and areas and resources of environmental significance and sensitivity in particular (terrestrial, coastal and marine), are used wisely and are proactively managed and enhanced for the benefit of existing and future generations, with development integrated into and respectful of Oman's natural heritage.

It is important to emphasise that the maintenance of an environment that is healthy for people in Oman, and the development of the country in a way that respects Oman's rich biodiversity, dramatic landscapes and seascapes and other features of the country's natural heritage, is not solely a function of the six policies presented here and the actions of Oman's environmental authorities. On the contrary, it is the

embedding of an environmentally responsible approach to development across all sectors that should lead to the healthy environment that is essential for the future well-being of the country's inhabitants and to meeting international commitments under the UN Convention on Biological Diversity.

The policies introduced include the following environmental benefits:

- Promoting regeneration and the appropriate use of land, buildings and infrastructure
- Promoting the use of previously 'brownfield' land and minimizing development of 'greenfield' sites
- Conserving important environmental, historic and cultural assets
- Addressing potential environmental risks (e.g. flooding, air quality)
- Moving to one of non-combustion power and renewable energy sources can lead to environmental improvements and opportunities for sustainable economic development.
- Protecting and enhancing areas for recreation and natural heritage
- Promoting access by all modes of transport (e.g. walking, and public transport) not just by car; and
- Encouraging energy efficiency in the layout and design of development

6 Implementing the ONSS

The SDGs are reflected in the overall strategy, the proposed scale and location of development, and the individual policies, with their focus on people, places and liveable and resilient communities across the country's different regions, protecting and enhancing key environmental resources, addressing climate change, efficient use and consumption of natural resources, delivering sustainable patterns of development that minimise the need to travel and reliance on the car and supporting high levels of economic growth in a way that can benefit all, building on the strengths of each region.

Indeed, it is evident that the policies go beyond addressing only those SDGs which are deemed to be most important to a spatial strategy. This confirms the importance of Oman making the ONSS the backbone of its development plans for the country over the next 20 years – in particular, the ONSS should be a key mechanism for delivering Vision 2040.

Throughout the ON SS Plan period, up to year 2040 and beyond, the ONSS will require regular updates, iterations and revisions, based on the ongoing monitoring, evaluation and feedback cycles associated with such a 'living document'. Hence, key steps of ONSS implementation and monitoring are highlighted below:

6.1 Policy Appraisal

Policy Appraisal is used to consider the various options to meet the identified Strategy Objectives, used as a key aid to select the best course of action. Policy Appraisal is critical to ensure that key steps are taken to aid the success of Policy implementation.

6.2 Monitoring KPIs

The role and purpose of strategic monitoring indicators for the ONSS is summarised as identifying and monitoring the level of performance. This is vital in understanding how to develop or amend strategies and policies to meet the ONSS's wider strategic aims. The indicators will contribute to monitoring change over time. They provide a broad, overarching understanding of conditions both currently and over a set period and allow for comparison across geographical areas, which will be important for Oman.

6.3 Evaluation

Following on from ongoing Strategy Objective monitoring through the development and implementation of robust KPIs, 'Evaluation' of data collection and monitoring needs to be conducted to provide an understanding of the current situation and effectiveness of the Strategy Objective implementation. Overall, evaluation should be used to reconfirm the overall Strategic Policies and identify any adjustment or changes required in order to achieve the set Targets.

Evaluations can be designed to answer a broad range of questions on topics such as how the Policy was delivered, what difference it made, whether it could be improved and whether the benefits justified the costs. Broadly, these questions can be answered by three main types of evaluation:

- Process evaluations assess whether a policy is being implemented as intended and what, in practice, is felt to be working more or less well, and why.
- Impact evaluations attempt to provide an objective test of what changes have occurred, and the extent to which these can be attributed to the policy.
- Economic evaluations compare the benefits of the policy with its costs.

6.4 Governance

The Office for Implementation of the ONSS is established under the Ministry of Housing and Urban Planning to implement, monitor and evaluation the Spatial Strategy. This organizational change emerged as a result of His Majesty the Sultan of Oman approving the ONSS as a whole- including the implementation framework.

His Majesty declared the ONSS as the backbone of achieving the Vision 2040 and ordered all relevant stakeholders to implement the strategy in their own right.