



FDI EXECUTIVE TRAINING PROGRAM MUSCAT EDITION

POST-EVENT REPORT

13–12 November 2025

Crowne Plaza, Muscat – Sultanate of Oman

Organized by Smart Investment Gateway (SIG) & NxtZones

Executive Summary

The second edition of Oman's FDI Executive Capacity-Building Program concluded in Muscat with more than 30+ senior participants from government, economic agencies, investment promotion entities, financial organizations, and the private sector. Across two intensive days, the program strengthened capabilities in:



The Muscat edition balanced global best practices with Oman-specific realities. It featured interactive group exercises, role-plays, scenario discussions, and a structured Q&A that surfaced real constraints and solution pathways for Oman's future FDI strategy.

Program Snapshot



Dates

12–13
November
2025 (2 days)



Location

Crowne Plaza,
Al Qurum,
Muscat



Organizers

SIG &
NxtZones



Audience

Ministries, banks,
SEZs, national entities,
private sector, and
business councils



Language

English
with Arabic
interpretation

At a Glance

**Total
Participants:**
30+

**Total
Entities**
20+

**Sectors
Represented**
10+

Number of Exercises
4 interactive exercises
(Group diagnostics, "What
Works / Challenges / Must
Change", Investor Pitch
Case, & Investor Role-Play)

Participating Organizations (indicative):

- Ministry of Economy
- Invest Oman
- Foreign Ministry of Oman
- Oman Arab Bank
- ITHCA Group - People & Culture
- Sohar International Bank
- Majlis A'Shura
- Al Shawamikh Oil Services
- UTAS
- Sohar Aluminum
- Minerals Development Oman
- AmCham Oman
- WAKAN Sustainability
- United Securities
- OCCI
- Khazaen Economic city
- Royal Oman Police (ROP)
- Ministry of Commerce, Industry and Investment Promotion
- South Al Batinah Governor's Office
- National Academy of Defense and Strategy
- State Financial and Administrative Audit Authority

Learning Design – What Participants Did

Day 1

Context Setting & Strategy Foundations

- Oman's economic landscape, Vision 2040, and the national need for FDI
- Global FDI dynamics, GCC competitiveness, and zone-based economic transformation
- SEZ trends, benchmarks and competitive strategies
- Interactive group exercise: "What Works, What Challenges, What Must Change?"
- Q&A dialogue with reflections from Dr. Yousuf, Dr. Adarsh, and Dr. Douglas

Day 2

Targeting, Promotion & Practical Tools

- Investor journey mapping
- Investor targeting and segmentation
- Hands-on lead generation, including AI tools
- CRM discipline and pipeline qualification
- Aftercare, expansion strategies, and single-window models
- Group case: designing an investment pitch and presenting to a panel
- Paradigm-shift discussion: the private sector's role in FDI

Interactive Session Highlights (Day 1)

Q1

What works well in attracting FDI to Oman?

- Strategic location and market access
- Political stability and safety
- Strong infrastructure and ports (Duqm, Sohar, Salalah)
- Low taxes and a business-friendly environment
- Educated and youthful workforce
- Multiple FTAs and agreements
- Abundant mineral resources and raw materials

Dr. Douglas van den Berghe's challenge:
“ Everyone says strategic location —
but how do we translate that
into investor value? ”

Q2

Key challenges identified

- Fragmented processes and inconsistent investor journeys (e.g., for govt approval and banking complexity and large collateral requirements)
- Bureaucratic delays and slow inter-entity coordination
- Limited depth in the local consultancy/advisory ecosystem
- Insufficient conversion of raw materials into finished goods or value addition
- High energy costs for certain industries and costs of transitioning to renewables
- Inconsistent FDI messaging and risk of investors engaging with the wrong entities
- Limited data availability; need for a national data center and R&D center internal market size and regional competition
- Fisheries infrastructure gaps (only 1.6% of GDP utilized)
- Unattractive quality of life and social infrastructure outside of Muscat

Q3

Recommendations & solutions

- Establish a true one-stop shop or have a system in place for Single Point of Contact (SPOC)
- Create sector-specific investment platforms (mining, fisheries, tourism)
- Lower production costs (i.e. energy costs by aggregating power purchase, smart energy systems or reduce logistics costs) and align incentives to priority sectors
- Focus on existing Omani strengths before pursuing new global hype sectors
- Strengthen "Brand Oman" through a unified
- Build stronger clearer sector specific value propositions and marketing material
- Adopt advanced investor-targeting tools and AI-enabled lead generation
- Assign dedicated account managers for major investors
- Streamline approvals and standardize communication
- Localize manufacturing linked to raw-material endowments
- While promoting a sector, highlight existing industries, companies, and competencies
- Use growing domestic private equity market to create joint ventures to attract investors
- Implement Omanisation law gradually, with grace periods for investors to commence operations
- Promote access to standardized and high-quality raw materials locally and via FTAs
- Enable easier access to domestic banks and international bank branches
- Leverage the Royal system's stability and continuity

Additional Cross-Group Insight: Sector Prioritization & Aftercare

Participants emphasized prioritizing existing sectors—manufacturing, logistics, mining, fisheries, and tourism - before aggressively expanding into newer domains such as AI, ICT, or data centers. These traditional sectors reflect Oman’s clearest competitive advantages and are where investment readiness can be accelerated.



“ We should focus on investor aftercare before running toward new investors. Retention is more valuable than attraction. ”

“ Keyreminder from Dr. Adarsh Varma: Focus on the growing MENA region first by capture the growing consumer market and import substitution policy frameworks. ”

Day 2 – Practical Tools & Frameworks

Covered topics:

- Investor decision-making process and how to align promotional efforts
- Pitch development and competitive value propositions
- Lead-generation systems (AI, CRM, segmentation)
- Strategic investment promotion frameworks
- Private sector roles in FDI attraction
- Paradigm shift from dependency to proactiveness
- Aftercare and expansion strategy models
- SEZ competitive positioning

Activities:

- Investor-meeting role-play on value proposition
- Group pitch presentations judged by experts

Key Takeaways from Participants

What works:

- Strong infrastructure
- Stable economic and regulatory foundation
- Strategic geographic advantage
- Strong talent base
- Incentives that help reduce costs

Challenges:

- Timeliness and predictability of decisions
- Clear ownership of the investor journey
- Branding Oman as an investment destination
- Limited aftercare and expansion support
- Weak coordination across ministries

Impact Tracking

Engagement Levels (Across 2 Days):

- Group Exercises Participation: ~90% active engagement
- Recommendations Generated: 35+ actionable recommendations across institutional readiness, investor journey, sector prioritization, and aftercare
- Cross-Entity Collaboration: High — participants represented 10+ sectors and multiple government–private interfaces
- Quality of Dialogue: Strong, deep Oman-specific insights surfaced in Q&A and group diagnostics

Recommended Actions



**Institutionalize
a national
investor-journey
playbook**



**Develop a
de-risking
toolkit to
accelerate
bank**



**Expand
case-based
training and
on-the-job
capability
development**



**Build a stronger
global narrative
around "Brand
Oman" to support
investor image
building**

Importance of Investor Aftercare

Effective aftercare and investor development is critical. Global evidence and the participants' own experiences indicate that a significant share of FDI growth - often 60–70% - comes from existing investors rather than new entrants. Ensuring predictable processes, quicker responses, and proactive support for companies already operating in the Sultanate will help anchor long-term investment, reinvestment, and job creation.

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Way Forward

- Standardize FDI processes
- Strengthen investor-readiness at institutional levels
- Position SEZs as globally competitive hubs

- Leverage data, AI, and private-sector innovation
- Accelerate Oman Vision 2040 diversification targets

Closing Note

The Muscat edition marks another milestone in Oman's FDI capability-development journey. The insights, recommendations, and tools shared over these two days have generated momentum toward a more coordinated, proactive, and investor-centric national ecosystem. SIG and NxtZones look forward to continued partnership on future training editions and national investment initiatives.

Call to Action

Next Steps — Turning Insight into Impact

The workshop showed that Oman has the talent, institutions, and ambition to lead the region in investment readiness. The real impact will come now — as teams implement quick wins, strengthen coordination, and build investor-centric systems. We invite all participants to champion this shift inside their organizations, share progress, and continue engaging with SIG & NxtZones as we roll out advanced capability-building programs in 2026.

