

Sustainable Tourism Workforce Development in Oman: Integrating Investment Strategies, Omanization Outcomes, and Oman Vision 2040 Priorities

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Abstract: This conceptual paper develops an Omanization-centered mechanism explaining how mission-oriented tourism investment can produce sustainable workforce development in Oman. Investment design that explicitly commits to Omanization output sentry, upskilling, progression, and retention-is theorized to be the proximate pathway through which projects strengthen workforce capability, equity, resilience, and productivity. Governance and measurement are positioned as a supportive shell rather than additional causal stages: Vision 2040 provides target setting and accountability; the EFQM model supplies leadership and strategy routines that embed localization within organizational plans and continuous improvement; and the UN's SF-MST framework standardizes indicators for transparent, comparable reporting. The paper synthesizes recent sector trajectories (2018-2023) and consolidates a decision-useful KPI dashboard (Table 1) and an alignment matrix linking design levers to Omanization outputs and Vision 2040 priorities (Table 2). Theory-driven propositions (P1-P6) specify testable links for future empirical work, including the roles of training/credentialing, demand stability, process-technology complementarities, EFQM alignment, and place-based pipelines. Implications are drawn for policy, managerial practice, and education/training systems, together with a sequenced implementation roadmap and monitoring and evaluation arrangements.

Keywords: *Omanization; Sustainable Tourism Workforce; Investment Strategies; Oman Vision 2040; EFQM.*

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I. INTRODUCTION

A. Problem Context and Motivation

Tourism is widely recognized as one of the fastest-growing global sectors, contributing substantially to employment creation, GDP growth, and cultural exchange. In emerging economies, it is increasingly positioned not merely as a leisure industry but as a strategic lever for economic diversification and human-capital development (UNWTO, 2023). In Oman, this role is codified in Oman Vision 2040, which emphasizes sustainable tourism as a driver of socio-economic transformation and national competitiveness.

A central policy instrument underpinning this ambition is Omanization, a localization strategy designed to increase national participation in the labour market, reduce dependency on expatriate workers, and build domestic capabilities. Despite progress in selected activities, the tourism workforce continues to face skill shortages, high turnover, and limited career-progression opportunities for

nationals (Al-Harrasi & Al-Maawali, 2023). These gaps underscore the need to link investment choices systematically with workforce outcomes so that the economic benefits of tourism growth translate into durable, sustainable employment and capability formation (Oman Vision 2040 Implementation Follow-Up Unit, 2023).

Global megatrends-including digitization, smart technologies, and sustainability-oriented consumption-have increased the complexity of workforce requirements. Recent evidence highlights urgent skills gaps in tourism services, hospitality management, and digital readiness (OECD, 2023; ILO, 2022). For Oman, the challenge is a twin imperative: attracting investment that develops modern tourism infrastructure and services, while ensuring that such investment translates into sustainable career pathways for Omani nationals. This imperative motivates a conceptual alignment model that explicitly links investment strategies to Omanization outputs-entry, upskilling, progression, and retention-and, in turn, to sustainable workforce development within the broader Vision 2040 framework.

B. Study Aims, Objective and Theoretical Questions

➤ Study Aim

The study aims to theories how mission-oriented tourism investment-across infrastructure, services, human capital, marketing, and technology/innovation-translates into Omanization outcomes (entry, upskilling, progression, retention) and thereby delivers a sustainable tourism workforce aligned with Oman Vision 2040, using SF-MST-consistent indicators for measurement.

➤ Study Objective

This objective translates into three theoretical research questions:

- O1- Conceptual clarity. Define a sustainable tourism workforce across four dimensions-capability, equity, resilience, and productivity-and map each dimension to SF-MST indicator families.
- O2- Causal pathway. Conceptualise Omanization as the proximate mechanism that links investment design to workforce sustainability, spanning the staged localization outputs of entry, upskilling, progression, and retention.
- O3- Investment architecture. Specify a five-domain investment portfolio (infrastructure, services, human capital, marketing, technology/innovation) and articulate domain-specific pathways to Omanization outcomes.
- O4- Context anchoring. Ground the framework in Oman's recent trajectories (2018–2023/2022), including total tourism employment, the Omanization rate, inbound demand, hotel capacity and utilization, and governorate-level patterns.
- O5- Alignment and measurement. Translate the framework into Vision-aligned KPIs and policy/managerial levers, drawing on EFQM 2025 leadership/strategy enablers and SF-MST measurement logic.
- O6- Propositions and roadmap. Derive theory-driven propositions and outline a practical roadmap for subsequent empirical validation, including candidate data sources, indicators, and study designs.

➤ Study Questions

- RQ1- How should a sustainable tourism workforce be conceptualized and measured using SF-MST-across the four dimensions of capability, equity, resilience, and productivity?
- RQ2-What proximate mechanism explains how Omanization links investment design to sustainable workforce development, spanning entry, upskilling, progression, and retention?
- RQ3- In what ways do the five investment domains (infrastructure, services, human capital, marketing, technology/innovation) differentially influence Omanization outcomes-entry, upskilling, progression, and retention?
- RQ4- What do Oman's recent trajectories since 2018 (total employment, Omanization rate, inbound demand, hotel capacity and utilization, and governorate patterns)

imply for aligning investment with Omanization and workforce sustainability?

- RQ5- Which KPIs and alignment levers-consistent with Vision 2040 and EFQM 2025-most effectively connect investment design, Omanization outputs, and sustainable workforce outcomes in practice?
- RQ6- Which testable propositions and evaluation designs, including data sources and indicators, logically follow for subsequent empirical research?

These questions are theory-building and guide the construction of the conceptual framework; they are not empirically tested in this paper.

C. Contribution and Significance

➤ Integrative Theorization:

It brings together strands on tourism investment, Omanization, and sustainable workforce development-domains often examined separately-to explain how investment choices shape localization outcomes and long-term workforce sustainability (Al-Mukhaini, 2022).

➤ Alignment Through Organisational Excellence:

By mobilizing the EFQM 2025 model, it situates workforce issues within an organisational-excellence framework, clarifying how leadership and strategy routines can translate national policy into operational outcomes (Fonseca & Domingues, 2022).

➤ Policy Relevance to Vision 2040:

The conceptual model is directly aligned with Oman Vision 2040, offering guidance on aligning tourism investment with national priorities in employment, skills development, and economic diversification (OECD, 2024; UNWTO, 2023).

➤ Foundation for Empirical Testing:

The theory-driven propositions specify measurable constructs and indicators suitable for subsequent empirical evaluation using emerging datasets from the National Centre for Statistics and Information (NCSI) and the Ministry of Heritage and Tourism (MoHT).

D. Structure of the Paper

To orient the reader, the paper is organized as follows. Section 2 synthesizes recent literature on sustainable tourism workforce development, tourism investment strategies, Omanization, and Oman Vision 2040, and delineates the conceptual gap. Section 3 develops the theoretical lens by integrating EFQM-based organizational alignment, a human-capital capability logic, and SF-MST measurement, and states the propositions (P1–P6). Section 4 introduces the Omanization-centered conceptual framework and specifies its constructs, moderators, and operationalization. Section 5 draws out theoretical, managerial, and policy implications and presents the KPI dashboard (Table 1) and the alignment matrix (Table 2). Section 6 distills the main findings emerging from the framework. Section 7 sets out policy, managerial, and education/training recommendations, an implementation roadmap, risks and mitigations, and

monitoring and evaluation guidance. Section 8 outlines a staged empirical research agenda. Section 9 concludes by summarizing the study's contributions and indicating avenues for validation and policy learning.

II. LITERATURE REVIEW

➤ *Defining a Sustainable Tourism Workforce: Scope, Dimensions, and Measurement*

Recent scholarship defines a sustainable tourism workforce as a multidimensional construct organized around four mutually reinforcing dimensions: capability, understood as the stock and development of skills and career pathways; equity, understood as decent work and inclusive participation; resilience, understood as retention, tenure, and the capacity to absorb shocks; and productivity, understood as value created per worker. Post-pandemic evidence shows that tourism labor markets continue to exhibit structural vulnerabilities—high turnover, pronounced seasonality, compressed wage ladders, and housing constraints—which require system-level responses that align labor-market policy, destination management, and firm practice through service redesign, work reorganization, and social dialogue rather than isolated HR fixes (ILO, 2022; OECD, 2024). Within this pattern, accommodation and food services lagged the broader labor recovery through 2023, underscoring persistent gaps in

skills and retention and the need for targeted skilling pathways and improvements in job quality (OECD, 2024).

For measurement, this study adopts the Statistical Framework for Measuring the Sustainability of Tourism (SF-MST) as the backbone that standardizes concepts, classifications, and indicator families. Relevant families include skills and qualification profiles, job stability and tenure, youth and women's participation, and training intensity, enabling destinations to track workforce sustainability alongside economic, social, and environmental outcomes consistent with SDG 8 (UNWTO, 2023; UNWTO & UNSD, 2024). In the Omani context, this measurement logic directly supports Omanization: localization outputs—Omani entry, upskilling, career progression, and retention—are treated as the proximate mechanism through which investment choices translate into capability, equity, resilience, and productivity.

Operationalization relies on administrative HR and HRIS records that capture intake, training hours, credentialing, promotions, and separations, together with accreditation datasets and official sector statistics issued by the Ministry of Heritage and Tourism (MoHT) and the National Centre for Statistics and Information (NCSI). This configuration enables SF-MST-consistent reporting at project and portfolio levels (MoHT, 2024a-e; NCSI, 2024).

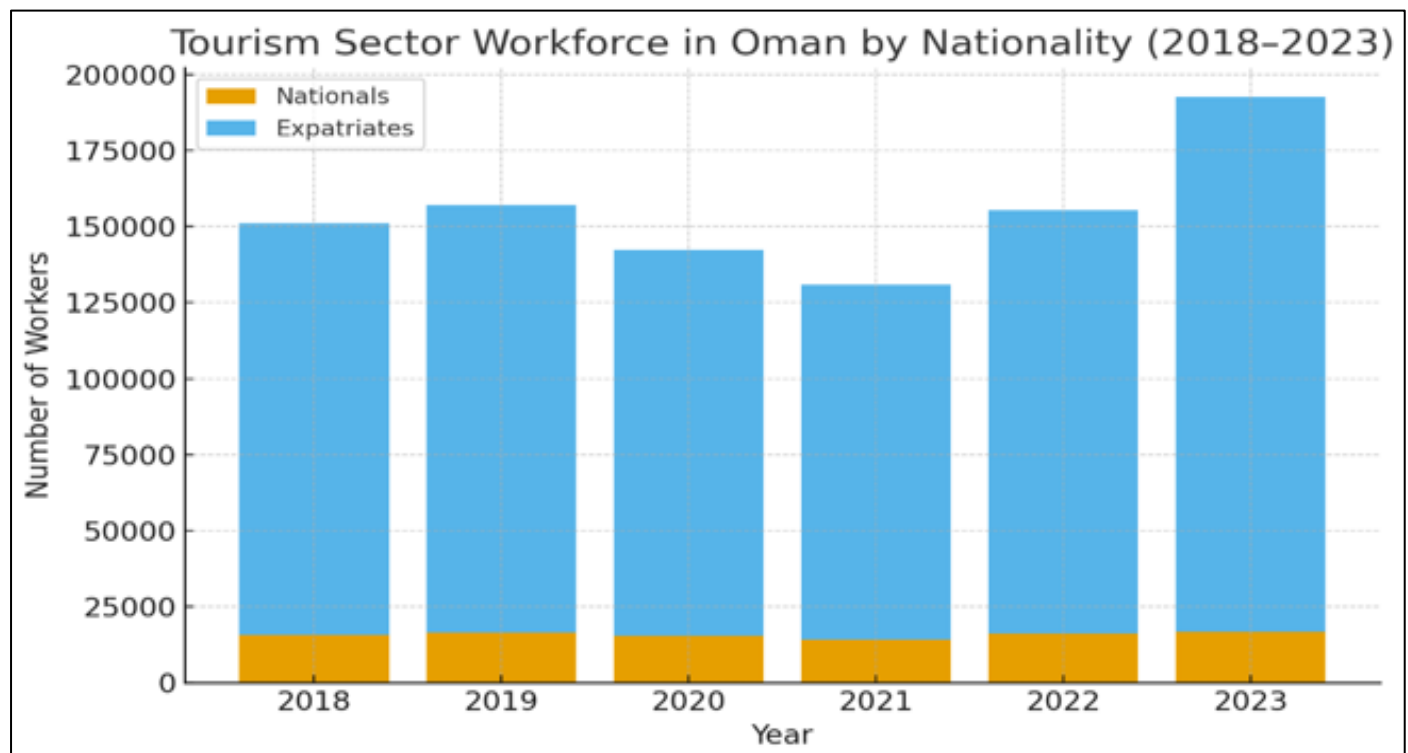


Fig 1 Tourism Sector Workforce in Oman by Nationality),

Source: Ministry of Heritage & Tourism (MoHT), Total Workers in the Tourism Sector (2018–2023)

The figure indicates that total tourism employment contracted during 2020–2021 and then rebounded strongly in 2022–2023, surpassing pre-pandemic levels. Across the entire period, expatriates constitute the clear majority of workers, while the national (Omani) share remains relatively

small and broadly stable. This pattern suggests that recent job growth has not translated into commensurate gains in Omanization and reinforces the case for embedding explicit targets for Omani entry, upskilling, progression, and retention within project design and routine reporting (MoHT, 2024a).

➤ *Tourism Investment Strategies: Domains and Workforce Pathways*

Tourism investment is treated as a mission-oriented portfolio whose design commits to Omanization outputs and to routine SF-MST-consistent disclosure rather than to asset accumulation alone. Contemporary guidance frames this portfolio across five domains: infrastructure, tourism services, human capital, marketing and promotion, and technology and innovation. Multilateral organizations urge alignment with the SDGs, inclusivity, and climate action, explicitly tying investment to local capability formation and MSME participation (UNCTAD, 2025; UNWTO, 2023).

Macro-evidence underscores the sector's contribution to GDP and employment and highlights productivity and skills constraints as binding bottlenecks to realizing investment impacts (WTTC, 2024). Complementary diagnostics link destination competitiveness to capability upgrading in quality, safety, and environmental standards, as well as to leadership and coordination that steer investment toward skills pipelines and resilient business models (World Bank, 2022; World Bank, 2023).

Omanization-centered pathways. Each investment domain has a distinct route to sustainable workforce outcomes when Omanization outputs are specified in advance and measured consistently. Infrastructure that improves access and disperses demand across seasons supports more

stable hours and higher retention. Service and product upgrades create new role requirements and justify structured progression ladders. Human-capital investments—apprenticeships, dual training, and micro-credentials—deepen skills and increase promotion into supervisory and technical positions. Marketing and promotion that focus on specific origin markets raise requirements for language capability and digitally mediated service and help align intake and upskilling with the demand mix. Technology and innovation, including guest-journey digitization, data-informed operations, and green retrofits, improve process reliability and productivity, making progression feasible and attractive for Omani staff (UNWTO, 2023; OECD, 2024).

Demand conditions and seasonality. Returns to investment and the local skill mix depend on market dynamics. Inbound arrivals in Oman contracted sharply in 2020–2021 and then surged in 2022–2023, reshaping both the locus and the content of workforce upgrading, with emphasis on foreign-language capability, digital service delivery, and segment-specific competencies aligned to the evolving origin-market mix (MoHT, 2024e). To stabilize tenure and earnings, capacity and quality upgrades should be paired with demand-smoothing instruments such as events and MICE programming and access or airlift coordination, while Omanization outputs remain tied to realistic demand trajectories (OECD, 2024).

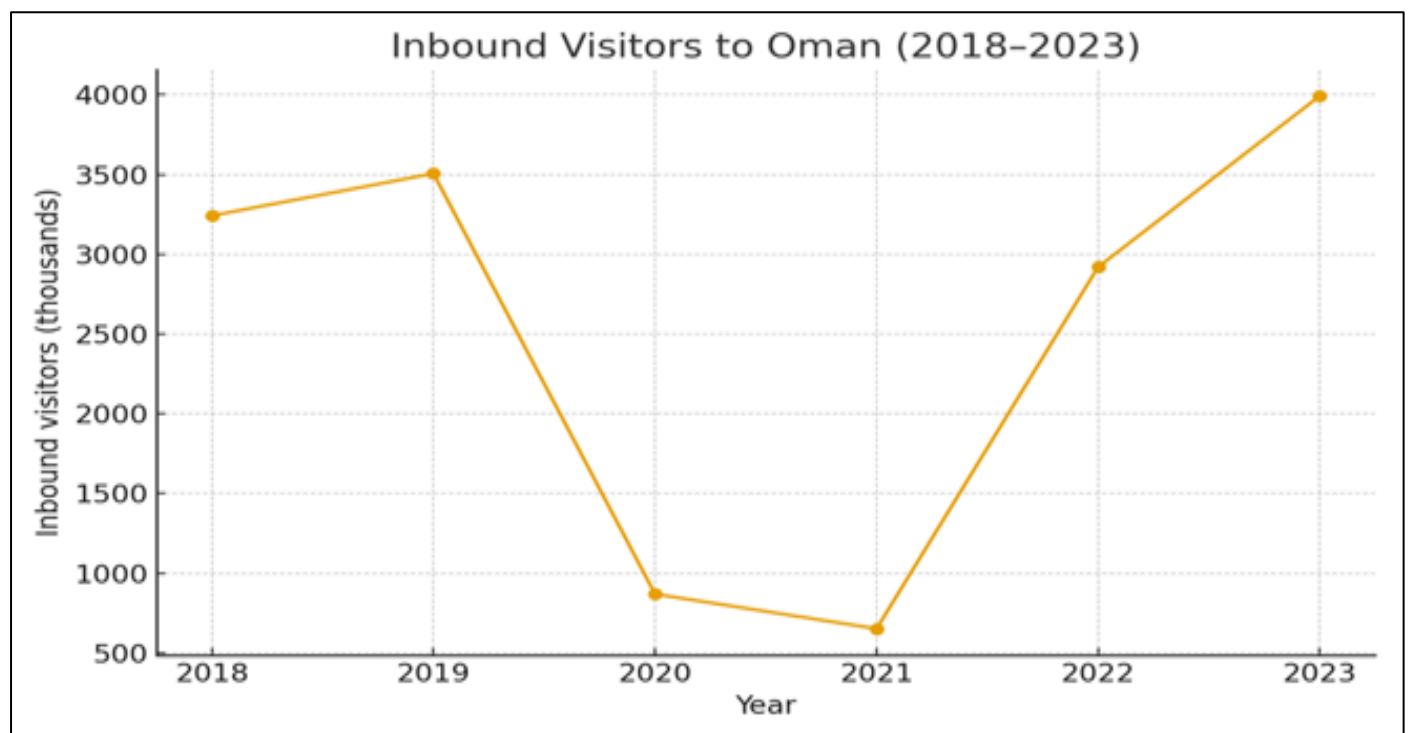


Fig 2 Inbound Visitors (2018–2023)

Capacity–utilization dynamics in accommodation. Hotel activity illustrates the channel through which capacity interacts with workforce outcomes. Establishments increase from 412 in 2018 to 674 in 2022 and to 813 in 2023, while rooms rise from 22,182 in 2018 to 30,332 in 2022 and to 32,821 in 2023. Occupancy drops sharply during the

pandemic and only partially recovers by 2022, indicating volatility and exposure to seasonality. Without skills pipelines and progression pathways for Omanis, capacity expansion risks deepening reliance on expatriate labor (MoHT, 2024a; MoHT, 2024c).

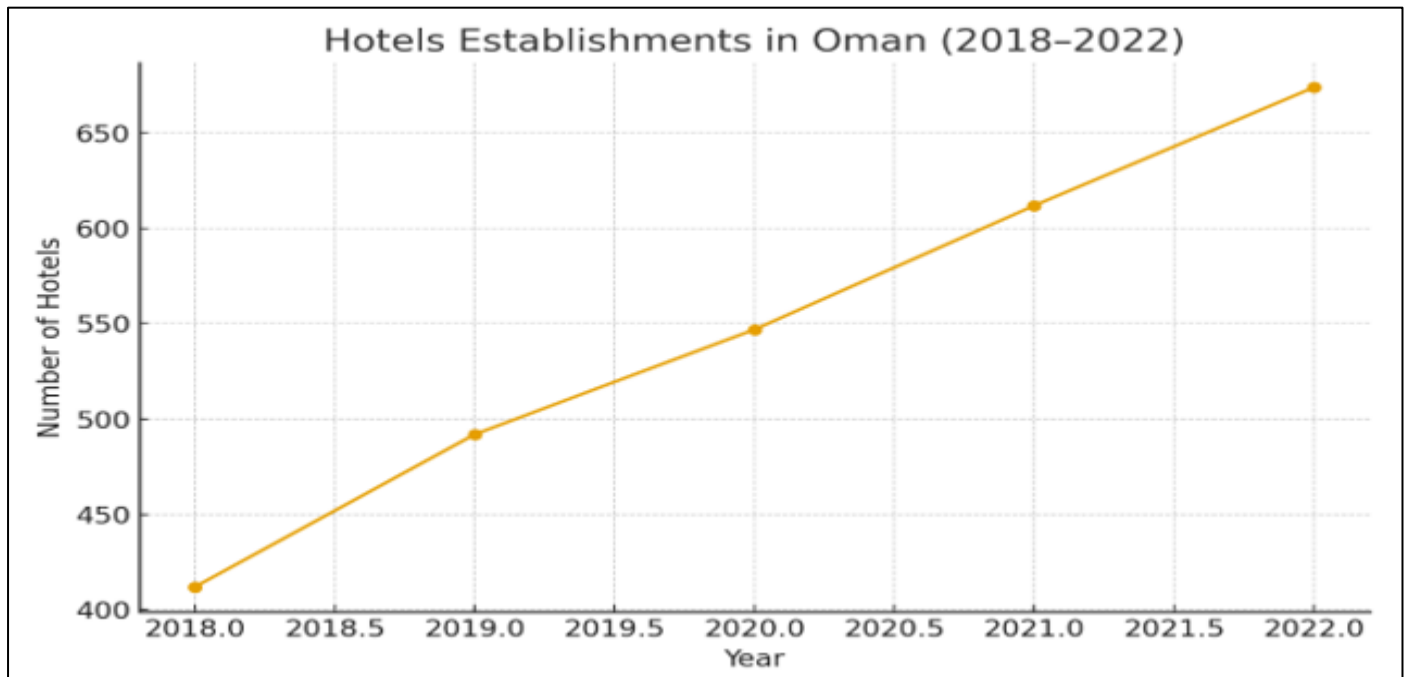


Fig 3a: Number of Hotel Establishments, 2018–2022

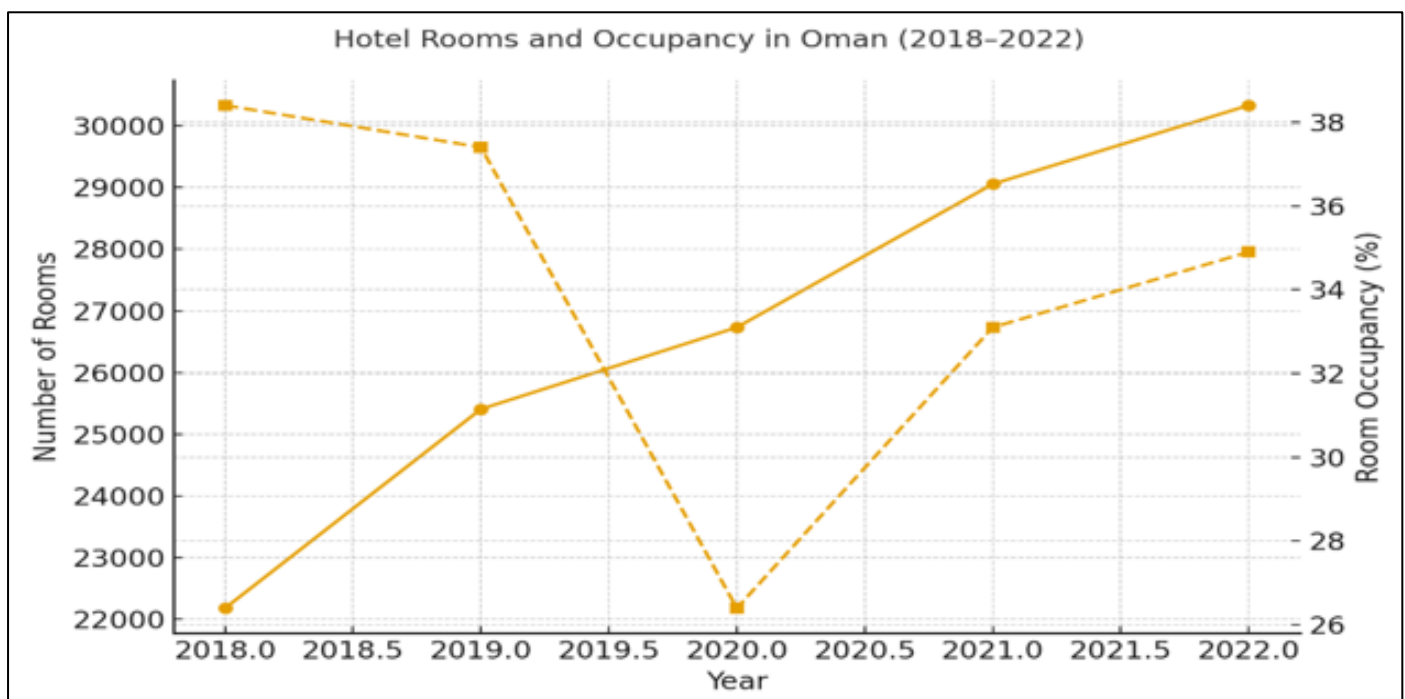


Fig 3b: Hotel Rooms and Room Occupancy, 2018–2022

Governance and measurement conditions. Translating domain-specific pathways into results requires project-level agreements that contractualizing Omanization outputs-quantified Omani intake, minimum training intensity, credentialing targets mapped to roles, progression thresholds, and retention milestones-together with a routine cadence of disclosure and independent verification. Alignment is supported by Vision 2040 target setting, EFQM-consistent leadership and strategy routines inside firms and destination organizations, and SF-MST-consistent indicator definitions that enable comparable, auditable reporting at project and portfolio levels. Place-based design and MSME support-

shared HRIS, pooled training services, voucher schemes-address capacity constraints and broaden equitable participation (Oman Vision 2040 Implementation Follow-Up Unit, 2023; EFQM, 2025; UNWTO & UNSD, 2024; ILO, 2022).



➤ Omanization and Oman's Tourism Labour Market

Omanization constitutes the principal localization policy shaping workforce composition and career progression in Oman's tourism economy. The Labor Law enacted by Royal Decree No. 53/2023 codifies substantive rights and operational instruments-such as employer localization plans,

transparency on workforce composition, and regulated replacement-thereby strengthening compliance and medium-term workforce planning across sectors, including tourism (Sultanate of Oman, 2023).

On the statistical and administrative side, the institutional data infrastructure has matured. The Ministry of Heritage and Tourism (MoHT) publishes sectoral series that include total employment in tourism, hotel activity indicators, and arrivals by nationality, while the National Centre for Statistics and Information (NCSI) issues monthly and annual

tourism indicators and Tourism Satellite Account-based aggregates covering, among other items, hotel revenues, guest volumes, and occupancy (MoHT, 2024a, 2024b, 2024c; NCSI, 2024, 2025). Taken together, these sources enable routine monitoring of Omanization outcomes-Omani entry, competency development through training and credentialing, career progression into supervisory and technical roles, and retention/tenure-and provide an empirical basis for aligning investment projects with Vision 2040 human-capital priorities

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عدد العاملين في المنشآت الفندقية حسب المحافظة خلال الأعوام 2009-م 2022															
Number of Employees In Hotels Sector by Governorate for the years 2009 - 2022															
Region	2022	2021	2020	2019	2018	2017*	2016	2015	2014	2013	2012	2011	2010	2009	المحافظة
عماني															
Muscat	2,538	2,193	2,105	2,439	2,398	1,839	1,927	1,871	2,041	1,989	2,198	2,708	2,604	2,894	مسقط
N. Al Batinah	236	208	165	267	256	198	284	165	184	174	202	404	440	449	شمال الباطنة
S. Al Batinah	183	163	134	227	224	238	195	231	191	157	172	0	0	0	جنوب الباطنة
Musandam	142	190	81	188	171	138	130	139	112	77	75	109	123	143	مسندم
Al Dhahirah	40	29	11	45	39	19	16	30	24	19	15	14	17	10	الظاهرة
Al Dakhliyah	628	451	304	622	591	382	247	123	115	117	117	109	138	166	الدخلية
N. Al Sharqiyah	1,461	1,045	422	1,632	1,528	646	135	135	135	136	78	184	171	114	شمال الشرقية
S. Al Sharqiyah	434	306	136	463	439	308	254	177	150	150	158	0	0	0	جنوب الشرقية
Al Wusta	88	75	47	79	78	69	47	52	49	36	9	4	4	7	الوسطى
Dhofar	836	532	419	765	750	447	326	282	318	285	260	268	350	291	الظفار
Al Buraimi	54	39	17	50	47	42	48	41	52	56	49	62	104	67	البريمي
Total	6,642	5,731	3,841	6,777	6,521	4,326	3,607	3,744	3,370	3,195	3,332	3,861	3,951	4,141	الإجمالي
غير عماني															
Muscat	5,160	3,590	3,272	5,502	5,553	4,605	4,448	4,123	4,227	3,995	3,813	3,592	3,363	3,221	مسقط
N. Al Batinah	391	303	220	517	489	404	513	303	285	254	269	464	367	471	شمال الباطنة
S. Al Batinah	267	198	142	327	344	398	304	304	267	258	244	0	0	0	جنوب الباطنة
Musandam	365	289	81	421	426	423	449	497	466	407	439	389	395	332	مسندم
Al Dhahirah	33	24	10	37	34	26	21	47	44	33	25	28	23	3	الظاهرة
Al Dakhliyah	1,430	973	537	1,473	1,422	952	545	351	324	269	216	205	193	177	الدخلية
N. Al Sharqiyah	2,960	2,120	864	3,284	3,060	1,291	269	270	263	272	255	226	232	219	شمال الشرقية
S. Al Sharqiyah	317	220	96	330	326	318	272	265	213	225	199	0	0	0	جنوب الشرقية
Al Wusta	262	234	187	281	269	273	169	178	129	126	106	31	10	17	الوسطى
Dhofar	2,254	1,437	1,273	2,262	2,266	1,753	1,538	1,268	1,028	717	548	579	525	491	الظفار
Al Buraimi	212	163	61	192	181	162	205	203	118	142	111	106	81	100	البريمي
Total	13,652	9,551	6,743	14,626	14,370	10,605	8,734	7,809	7,364	6,698	6,725	5,621	5,189	5,031	الإجمالي
أجنبي															
Muscat	7,698	5,783	5,287	7,941	7,951	6,443	6,375	5,994	6,268	5,984	6,011	6,300	5,967	6,115	مسقط
N. Al Batinah	627	511	385	784	744	603	797	468	469	428	471	868	807	920	شمال الباطنة
S. Al Batinah	451	361	276	554	568	636	499	535	458	415	416	0	0	0	جنوب الباطنة
Musandam	508	478	161	609	597	560	579	636	578	484	514	498	518	475	مسندم
Al Dhahirah	73	52	21	82	73	45	36	77	68	52	40	42	41	13	الظاهرة
Al Dakhliyah	2,058	1,425	841	2,095	2,013	1,335	791	474	440	386	334	313	331	343	الدخلية
N. Al Sharqiyah	4,421	3,165	1,286	4,916	4,588	1,937	404	405	397	408	333	410	404	333	شمال الشرقية
S. Al Sharqiyah	751	525	232	793	765	627	526	442	363	375	357	0	0	0	جنوب الشرقية
Al Wusta	350	309	234	360	347	342	216	230	178	161	115	35	14	24	الوسطى
Dhofar	3,091	1,969	1,691	3,027	3,016	2,200	1,864	1,550	1,346	1,003	809	847	875	782	الظفار
Al Buraimi	266	202	78	242	227	204	253	243	170	198	159	168	185	167	البريمي
Total	20,294	14,780	10,492	21,403	20,889	14,932	12,341	11,054	10,734	9,893	9,557	9,481	9,142	9,172	الإجمالي

* Provisional
Source: National Centre of Statistics & Information

مصدر: المركز الوطني للإحصاء والمعلومات

Fig 4 Hotel Employees by Governorate, 2009–2022.

Source: Ministry of Heritage & Tourism (SOP-07-16,

Number of Employees in Hotels Sector by Governorate for the years 2009–2022).

Employment in the hotel's subsector is spatially concentrated-most prominently in Muscat and Dhofar-with substantially thinner layers elsewhere, indicating uneven opportunity structures across governorates. This pattern justifies a place-based Omanization approach that develops governorate-specific training pipelines, apprenticeship placements, and hiring targets co-designed with local product strategies in heritage and urban culture, nature-based and adventure offerings, and events and MICE. Embedding such localization requirements in project agreements-covering intake and training-hour quotas for local residents, credentialing milestones, and retention targets-aligns with recent guidance on territorial human-capital development and destination competitiveness and can broaden progression and retention opportunities for Omanis beyond major hubs (MoHT, 2024d; OECD, 2024).

➤ Vision 2040 Priorities and the Omanization-Sustainability Mechanism

Strategic priorities and measurement. Oman Vision 2040 places human capital, labor-market quality, and economic diversification-including tourism-at the center of national transformation, governed through indicator-based targets and performance tracking. Within this study, those targets provide the policy scaffold for aligning projects with workforce results rather than asset growth alone. For measurement, the Statistical Framework for Measuring the Sustainability of Tourism (SF-MST) is adopted as a shared reporting spine for workforce-relevant indicator families, including skills and qualification profiles, job stability and tenure, youth and women's participation, and training intensity, thereby enabling SDG-consistent monitoring

(Oman Vision 2040 Implementation Follow-Up Unit, 2023; UNWTO & UNSD, 2024; UNWTO, 2023).

Co-design with Omanization instruments. In practice, tourism investment should be co-designed with Omanization instruments-public-private training alliances, apprenticeship pipelines, and competency frameworks-and reported using SF-MST-consistent metrics so that choices such as digital visitor management, green retrofits, or event and MICE infrastructure demonstrably generate local capability formation and quality jobs for Omanis. This approach is consistent with contemporary guidance on mission-oriented tourism policy and evidence-based measurement (UNWTO & UNSD, 2024; OECD, 2024).

Omanization is the pathway to workforce sustainability. Omanization is theorized as the proximate mechanism through which mission-oriented investment produces sustainable workforce outcomes. Four channels are salient:

- **Capability Formation:** Targeted localization raises the Omani share in medium- and high-skill roles and strengthens co-investment in training, credentialing, and structured career progression within firms and supply chains (UNWTO, 2023; UNWTO & UNSD, 2024). Indicative metrics: training hours per Omani employee; certification rate; Omani progression share.
- **Equity and Decent Work:** Increased national participation improves access, stability, and job quality for Omanis, in line with SDG-aligned decent-work principles and the sector's sustainable recovery agenda (ILO, 2022; OECD, 2024). Indicative metrics: Omanization rate by unit and role, disaggregated by gender and age where feasible.
- **Resilience and Retention:** Locally embedded skills and careers reduce turnover and vacancy risk and help sustain service quality under shocks and seasonality; coupling investment with demand-stabilizing choices-such as events programming and access/airlift coordination—supports longer tenure (OECD, 2024). Indicative metrics: Omani retention and tenure, complemented by demand/occupancy context indicators.
- **Productivity and Value Creation:** A skilled Omani core improves labor productivity and supports technology adoption and process discipline, particularly when paired with role redesign and micro-credentials (OECD, 2024; UNWTO & UNSD, 2024). Indicative metrics: labor productivity; share of Omani staff in digital/technical roles, aligned with competency standards.

➤ *Synthesis and Identified Gaps*

The post-2022 literature provides solid diagnostics of skills and retention deficits, a maturing SF-MST measurement logic, and clear guidance on mission-oriented investment. What remains insufficiently specified is a destination-level causal pathway that puts Omanization at the Centre of translation from investment design to sustainable workforce outcomes (OECD, 2024; UNWTO, 2023; UNWTO & UNSD, 2024). To address this gap, the present study advances a parsimonious model that organizes investment choices, delineates Omanization outputs-entry, competency development, progression, and retention-and

links these outputs to the four dimensions of workforce sustainability under explicit organisational alignment. Alignment is conceived through Vision-style target setting and EFQM-consistent leadership and strategy routines, with measurement standardized via SF-MST indicator families (Oman Vision 2040 Implementation Follow-Up Unit, 2023; EFQM, 2025).

Sectoral trajectories in Oman reinforce the need for such a pathway. Total tourism employment increased from about 151,000 in 2018 to about 193,000 in 2023, while the Omanization rate declined by 2023-evidence of decoupling between expansion and localization (MoHT, 2024). Closing this gap requires co-planning human-capital and technology investments with explicit Omanization milestones-particularly entry and progression-tracked through Vision-aligned KPIs so that growth in job quantity converts into durable local capability and tenure (OECD, 2024; UNWTO & UNSD, 2024). The next sections formalize this mechanism and translate it into a compact KPI dashboard (Table 1), an alignment matrix for execution (Table 2), and a set of theory-driven propositions for future empirical validation.

III. THEORETICAL LENS AND INTEGRATION

➤ *Framing the Mechanism: Omanization as the Proximate Pathway*

Conceptualization. Mission-oriented tourism investment is defined as project design that explicitly commits to Omanization outputs-Omani entry, upskilling, career progression, and retention-and requires reporting against SF-MST-consistent indicators (UNWTO, 2023; UNWTO & UNSD, 2024). Within this lens, Omanization functions as the proximate causal pathway that translates investment choices into sustainable workforce development, rather than serving as an end in itself. The four output stages follow a cumulative capability logic: entry enlarges the base of national participation; upskilling deepens competencies; progression reallocates Omanis into higher-value roles; and retention preserves learning and service quality under volatility (ILO, 2022; OECD, 2024).

Mechanism scaffold (textual form). Investment design is aligned through EFQM leadership and strategy routines; this alignment enables delivery of Omanization outputs-entry, upskilling, progression, and retention; the delivered outputs collectively advance sustainable workforce development that is tracked with SF-MST indicators; Vision 2040's indicator-based governance provides the policy frame that keeps the entire chain outcome-focused (Oman Vision 2040 Implementation Follow-Up Unit, 2023).

➤ *Organisational Alignment: EFQM Leadership & Strategy Enablers*

Project design alone rarely delivers people outcomes; durable results require organisational routines that translate targets into day-to-day execution. The EFQM Model (2025) offers concise alignment grammar that links purpose and strategy to stakeholder-centred execution and learning. In the present framework, EFQM enablers function as the

organisational bridge between investment intent and realised Omanization outputs. Four capabilities are pivotal:

- Codifying targets within plans, roles, and accountability structures.
- Institutionalizing training and credentialing as recurring routines.
- Redesigning work to create clear supervisory and technical career tracks.
- Running continuous-improvement cycles that act on indicator signals (EFQM, 2025).

➤ *Human Capital & Capability Logic*

An Omanization approach centred on competency formation converts generic headcount targets into destination-specific capabilities-skill portfolios, service standards, and process discipline—that are difficult to imitate and complementary to technology and quality systems. The resulting local core supports higher labour productivity, more reliable service, and greater resilience through longer tenure and lower vacancy risk, while remaining consistent with decent-work priorities (ILO, 2022; OECD, 2024).

➤ *Policy Governance and Measurement: Vision 2040 & SF-MST*

Oman Vision 2040 provides indicator-based governance that orients programs and projects toward human-capital priorities and transparent performance management. The Statistical Framework for Measuring the Sustainability of Tourism (SF-MST) supplies a coherent measurement spine—skills and qualification profiles, job stability and tenure, youth and women's participation, and training intensity—so that workforce outcomes are comparable, auditable, and actionable in line with SDG 8 (UNWTO, 2023; UNWTO & UNSD, 2024). In practice, each funded project should disclose a compact KPI set and align managerial levers and incentives with Vision-consistent targets and reporting cadences.

➤ *Boundary Conditions and Scope*

The theoretical lens rests on three conditions. First, investment is co-planned with Omanization instruments, including apprenticeships, credentialing pathways, and role redesign. Second, design is demand-aware, reflecting Oman's post-pandemic rebound and associated seasonality. Third, place-based variation is recognized: governorate labour pools and product strategies differ, necessitating localized pipelines and targets (OECD, 2024). Principal risks include nominal localizations without competency growth, MSME capacity constraints, housing and wage frictions, and weak reporting routines. These risks are precisely what EFQM alignment and Vision/SF-MST measurement are intended to mitigate through clear targets, process discipline, data quality, and periodic review (EFQM, 2025; UNWTO & UNSD, 2024).

➤ *Theory-Driven Propositions*

• *P1 Omanization as Mediator*

Projects that explicitly specify Omanization outputs—entry, upskilling, progression, and retention—will achieve greater improvements on sustainable workforce indicators than otherwise similar projects that do not, controlling for project size and segment (UNWTO & UNSD, 2024; OECD, 2024).

• *P2 Training and Credentialing*

Higher training intensity and higher credentialing rates among Omani staff are associated with greater progression of Omanis into supervisory and technical roles (ILO, 2022; UNWTO, 2023).

• *P3 Demand Stability and Retention*

Projects that incorporate demand-stabilising instruments, such as events programming and access/airlift coordination, will exhibit higher Omani retention and longer tenure (OECD, 2024).

• *P4 Process–Technology Complementarity*

Coupling digital and green process improvements with role redesign and micro-credentials increases the share of Omanis in skilled roles and raises labour productivity (OECD, 2024; UNWTO & UNSD, 2024).

• *P5 EFQM Alignment*

Stronger EFQM-consistent leadership and strategy routines amplify the translation of investment into Omanization outputs and, in turn, into improvements on sustainable workforce indicators (EFQM, 2025).

• *P6 Place-based pipelines*

Governorates that implement Omanization pipelines tailored to their product strategies will register faster growth in Omani progression and retention than governorates that apply uniform, non-contextual targets (OECD, 2024).

IV. CONCEPTUAL FRAMEWORK

This framework formalizes an Omanization-centred mechanism explaining how mission-oriented tourism investment can yield sustainable workforce development in Oman. Investment design that embeds explicit Omanization clauses is expected to generate a sequence of Omanization outputs—entry, upskilling, progression, and retention. Accumulated over time, these outputs strengthen the four dimensions of workforce sustainability: capability, equity, resilience, and productivity. Governance and measurement are treated as an external shell that disciplines planning, execution, and reporting through Vision 2040 target-setting, EFQM leadership and strategy routines, and SF-MST indicator definitions (EFQM, 2025; Oman Vision 2040 Implementation Follow-Up Unit, 2023; UNWTO & UNSD, 2024; UNWTO, 2023; OECD, 2024; ILO, 2022).

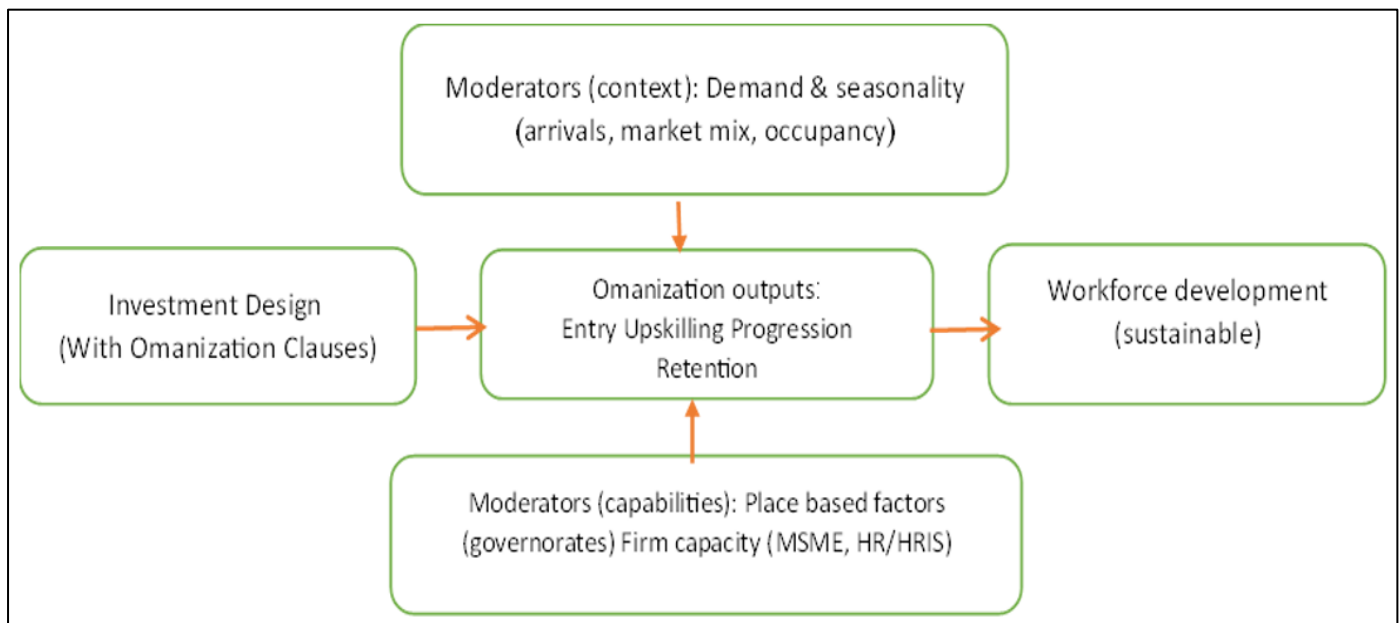


Fig 5 Conceptual Framework (Omanization-Centred Mechanism by the Researcher)
Source: Author's elaboration.

Investment design that embeds Omanization clauses is expected to generate staged Omanization outputs—entry, upskilling, progression, and retention—that collectively advance sustainable workforce development. The mechanism operates within a governance-and-measurement shell comprising Vision 2040 target setting, EFQM leadership and strategy routines, and SF-MST indicator definitions. The strength of the relationships is conditioned by context moderators—notably demand stability and seasonality—and capability moderators, including place-based labour pools, MSME capacity, and the quality of HR/HRIS data systems.

➤ *Constructs and Direction of Causality*

Investment design with Omanization clauses. Project agreements specify localization outputs—Omani intake targets, training and credentialing quotas, progression thresholds, and retention targets—and commit to periodic disclosure using standardized templates (UNWTO, 2023; UNWTO & UNSD, 2024).

Omanization outputs (proximate mechanism). Four staged outputs are distinguished: entry of Omani hires; upskilling captured by training intensity and credentialing rates; progression into supervisory and technical roles; and retention measured by 12-month retention and tenure.

Sustainable workforce development (outcome). Aggregate improvement in local participation, depth of skills, clarity of career structures, employment stability, and labor productivity, tracked through an SF-MST-consistent dashboard (UNWTO & UNSD, 2024).

Causal statement. Investment design is hypothesized to determine Omanization outputs; those outputs are, in turn, hypothesized to determine sustainable workforce development. This specification centers people's outcomes

and avoids assuming that asset expansion alone improves localization (OECD, 2024; ILO, 2022).

➤ *Governance and Measurement as an External Shell*

Vision 2040 (targets). Provides indicator-based governance that orients projects toward nationally prioritized human-capital outcomes (Oman Vision 2040 Implementation Follow-Up Unit, 2023).

EFQM (leadership/strategy routines). Supplies organizational grammar for alignment: direction (purpose, vision and strategy, culture and leadership) and execution (engaging stakeholders, creating sustainable value, driving performance and transformation). In this study, EFQM denotes the routines through which Omanization clauses are embedded in plans and roles and are supported by mentoring ladders, micro-credentials, HRIS, and continuous improvement (EFQM, 2025).

SF-MST (indicator definitions). Provides standardized indicator families and definitions that enable comparable, auditable reporting of workforce results across projects and overtime (UNWTO & UNSD, 2024; UNWTO, 2023).

➤ *Moderators that Act on the Pathway*

- **Context moderators: demand and seasonality.** Greater stability in arrivals, market mix, and occupancy—achieved, for example, through events programming and access/airlift coordination—strengthens the translation from Omanization outputs to retention and productivity; severe seasonality or shocks weaken it (OECD, 2024).
- **Capability moderators: place-based and firm capacity.** Governorate labor pools, MSME capacity, and HR/HRIS quality condition whether entry and upskilling translate into progression and retention. Tailored pipelines and basic HR systems amplify observed gains.

➤ Operationalization and Measurement

A compact dashboard is recommended for routine monitoring: Omanization rate by unit and role; training hours per Omani employee; certification rate; Omani progression share; 12-month Omani retention and median tenure; and labor productivity (GVA or revenue per FTE). Definitions, formulas, and sources are consolidated in Table 1. Policy-managerial levers and responsible actors are mapped in Table 2, ensuring a traceable link from governance to execution.

➤ Link to the Theory-Driven Propositions

Figure 6 codifies the mediated pathway whose implications are developed in §3.6. In summary, P1 formalizes the mediating role of Omanization; P2–P4 specify capability accumulation and demand/process complements; P5 captures amplification associated with EFQM-consistent alignment; and P6 recognizes spatial heterogeneity across governorates. Together, 3.6 (propositions), Figure 6 (mechanism), Table 1 (measurement), and Table 2 (execution/actors) complete the governance-measurement-execution loop anchoring the paper's contribution.

V. IMPLICATIONS (THEORETICAL, MANAGERIAL, POLICY) AND MEASUREMENT DASHBOARD

➤ Theoretical Implications

The framework positions Omanization as the proximate pathway through which mission-oriented tourism investment influences sustainable workforce development. The mechanism is clarified by distinguishing staged localization outputs—entry, upskilling, progression, and retention—and by treating governance and measurement as an external shell that disciplines design and review rather than constituting additional causal stages. In this shell, Vision 2040 provides target setting, EFQM supplies leadership and strategy routines for organizational alignment, and SF-MST offers standardized indicator definitions for comparable reporting (EFQM, 2025; UNWTO & UNSD, 2024; UNWTO, 2023). Theoretical value follows in three respects:

- It advances an explicit mediation claim by identifying Omanization as the mechanism translating investment into workforce outcomes.

- It ensures operational measurability through SF-MST-aligned indicators that render the mechanism testable and auditable.
- It enhances transferability to other diversification domains where localization, organizational alignment, and standardized indicators are jointly required (OECD, 2024; ILO, 2022).

➤ Managerial Implications

Project execution should treat Omanization outcomes as managed deliverables. Contracts and internal plans ought to set quantified targets for Omani intake, training hours per Omani employee, credentialing rates, promotion thresholds into supervisory and technical roles, and retention/tenure benchmarks, with quarterly disclosure via HRIS using standardized templates (EFQM, 2025; OECD, 2024; UNWTO & UNSD, 2024). Role architecture should include supervision ladders, structured mentoring, and micro-credentials mapped to role requirements to convert upskilling into progression. Demand-aware rostering—supported by events/MICE programming and access/airlift coordination—should stabilize hours and earnings, thereby supporting retention and longer tenure (OECD, 2024). Continuous-improvement cycles consistent with EFQM should use the KPI dashboard to diagnose bottlenecks, adjust intake and training pipelines, and tighten accountability for delivery (EFQM, 2025).

➤ Policy Implications

Program design should make incentives and permits contingent on verified delivery of Omanization outputs, rather than on inputs or asset expansion alone. Place-based pipelines are warranted to reflect governorate labor pools and product strategies, with intake, training, and placement ratios calibrated to local conditions. Implementing agencies—such as MoHT and NCSI—should adopt standardized templates harmonized with SF-MST so results are comparable across projects and auditable over time. Public–private training alliances and apprenticeship arrangements ought to be formalized with measurable intake and placement ratios, while independent reviews confirm the completeness and accuracy of KPI reporting. These elements collectively strengthen accountability and learning loops consistent with Vision 2040 and the evidence-based measurement guidance of UNWTO/UNSD (UNWTO & UNSD, 2024; Oman Vision 2040 Implementation Follow-Up Unit, 2023).

Table 1 SF-MST–Consistent KPIs for Monitoring Omanization-Led Workforce Development

Primary use	Primary Source(s)	Disaggregation & Frequency	Definition / Formula	KPI (unit)
Localization breadth	Firm HR; regulator reporting	By unit, role/skill band; quarterly	$\text{Omani employees} \div \text{total employees} \times 100$	Omanization rate (%)
Upskilling output	Firm L&D; PPP academies	By unit/role; quarterly	$\text{Total training hours for Omani staff} \div \text{Omani headcount}$	Omani training intensity (hours per employee)
Competency signal	Firm HR; accreditation bodies	By standard/role; semi-annual	$\text{Omanis earning/renewing credentials} \div \text{Omani headcount} \times 100$	Certification rate (% of Omani staff)
Progression outcome	Firm HRIS	By unit/role; quarterly	$\text{Promotions awarded to Omanis into}$	Omani progression share (%)

			supervisory/technical roles ÷ total promotions × 100	
Resilience/tenure	Firm HRIS	By unit/role; quarterly	Omani employees retained after 12 months ÷ Omani employees 12 months earlier × 100	Omani 12-month retention (%)
Stability depth	Firm HRIS	By unit/role; quarterly	Median months of service among Omani employees	Median Omani tenure (months)
Equity (SDG-aligned)	Firm HR; national stats	By unit/role; annual	Female Omani employees ÷ Omani headcount × 100	Female Omani participation (%)
Productivity outcome	National accounts; firm finance	By sub-sector; quarterly/annual	Sector GVA or revenue ÷ total FTEs	Labour productivity
Pipeline health	Firm HR/recruitment	By role; quarterly	Average days to fill Omani-targeted roles	Vacancy fill time (days)
Alignment test	PPP academies; firm HR	By cohort; quarterly	Omanis placed in target roles ÷ Omani trainees	Training-to-placement ratio
Governance compliance	Programme M&E	Portfolio; quarterly	Projects submitting complete KPI packs ÷ all projects × 100	KPI audit coverage (%)

The table consolidates the core measurement specifications: indicator definitions, explicit formulas (numerator and denominator), required disaggregation (by unit, role, gender, age group, and governorate where feasible), reporting frequency, and primary data sources. The default cadence is quarterly unless otherwise specified (for

example, productivity or GVA per FTE may be annual). Primary sources comprise firm HR/HRIS/L&D records, accreditation bodies, and official statistical releases (MoHT/NCSI). Indicator definitions are harmonized with SF-MST guidance to ensure comparability and auditability over time (UNWTO & UNSD, 2024; UNWTO, 2023).

Table 2 Investment–Omanization–Vision 2040 Alignment Matrix

Example actions & lead actors	Vision 2040 priority (illustrative)	SF-MST-consistent KPIs	Targeted Omanization outputs	Design lever (in project agreements)
Apprenticeship quotas; dual training; micro-credentials (Lead: Firms; PPP academies)	Human-capital quality	Omanization rate; Training intensity; Certification rate	Entry; Upskilling	Skills pipeline
Standardized supervision ladders; on-the-job mentoring (Lead: Firms)	Productive jobs	Omani progression share; Certification rate	Progression	Role redesign & mentoring
Events/MICE calendar; route/airlift coordination (Lead: DMOs/MoHT; carriers)	Economic diversification	Omani retention/tenure; Occupancy stability (context)	Retention	Demand stability
Guest-journey digitization; green retrofits + micro-credentials (Lead: Firms; MoHT grants)	Innovation and sustainability	Progression share; Labour productivity	Progression; Productivity	Digital/green process upgrades
Governorate intake targets; local scholarships (Lead: MoHT; governorates)	Balanced regional development	Omanization rate by governorate; Retention	Entry; Retention	Place-based pipelines
Quarterly KPI reporting; independent audits (Lead: Programme M&E; MoHT/NCSI)	Evidence-based policy	KPI audit coverage; KPI completeness	All	Governance & reporting

Purpose and scope. Table 2 operationalizes the framework by linking project design levers to Omanization outputs and to their measurement specifications, thereby aligning day-to-day execution with Vision 2040 priorities. Indicator families follow SF-MST definitions to ensure comparability and auditability, while responsibilities are assigned to illustrative lead actors supported by EFQM-aligned routines (target setting, role codification, mentoring, continuous improvement). Where applicable, data templates

are harmonized with MoHT/NCSI reporting standards to facilitate portfolio-level aggregation and external assurance (UNWTO & UNSD, 2024; UNWTO, 2023; Oman Vision 2040 Implementation Follow-Up Unit, 2023; EFQM, 2025).

VI. FINDINGS

➤ *Finding 1 - Omanization as the Proximate Pathway*

Across literature and sectoral evidence, Omanization emerges as the immediate channel through which mission-oriented tourism investment affects workforce sustainability. The staged localization outputs-entry, upskilling, progression, and retention-constitute the actionable levers that shape workforce quality and resilience. Asset or capacity expansion alone does not produce sustained localization gains unless these outputs are explicitly specified and monitored (OECD, 2024; UNWTO & UNSD, 2024).

➤ *Finding 2 - Governance and Measurement as an External, Supportive Shell*

Vision 2040 target setting, EFQM leadership and strategy routines, and SF-MST indicator definitions standardize objectives, embed execution discipline, and enable comparable reporting. They operate as a surrounding shell that supports the causal chain without adding extra causal stages, thereby preserving parsimony while maintaining accountability (EFQM, 2025; UNWTO, 2023; UNWTO & UNSD, 2024).

➤ *Finding 3 - Context and Capability Moderators' Matter.*

Stability in arrivals, market mix, and occupancy increases the likelihood that entry and upskilling translate into retention and productivity; severe seasonality or shocks weaken this linkage. Governorate labor pools, MSME capability, and HR/HRIS quality similarly condition whether progression and retention materialize at scale, which elevates the importance of place-based pipelines and basic HR systems (OECD, 2024).

➤ *Finding 4 - Alignment Routines Amplify Returns to Investment*

EFQM-consistent routines-direction (purpose, vision and strategy, culture and leadership) and execution (stakeholder engagement, value creation, performance and transformation)-increase the probability of meeting intake, training/credentialing, and promotion targets and of closing the loop through continuous improvement responsive to KPI signals (EFQM, 2025).

➤ *Finding 5 -A Compact, SF-MST-Consistent Dashboard is Feasible and Decision-Useful.*

The indicator set consolidated in Table 1- Omanization rate by unit/role, training hours per Omani employee, certification rate, Omani progression share, Omani retention/tenure, and labor productivity-provides sufficient resolution for quarterly managerial diagnosis and policy oversight while remaining aligned with international standards (UNWTO & UNSD, 2024; UNWTO, 2023)

➤ *Finding 6 — Oman's Sectoral Synthesis Supports a Demand-Aware, Multi-Segment Focus.*

MoHT/NCSI statistics indicate post-pandemic demand recovery alongside utilization volatility and geographic concentration of employment. These patterns support demand-aware rostering and segment-specific pipelines not limited to accommodation but extending to food and

beverage, transport, tour operations, MICE, and heritage/nature-based activities, thereby broadening avenues for Omani progression and retention (MoHT/NCSI, sectoral releases cited earlier).

➤ *Finding 7 - Equity and Decent Work are Integral.*

Female Omani participation and youth transitions should be embedded as design targets and reported through the same dashboard, consistent with SDG 8 decent-work principles. This approach strengthens social sustainability alongside capability, resilience, and productivity (ILO, 2022).

Cross-references. The conceptual mechanism is depicted in Figure 6; measurement definitions are consolidated in Table 1; and execution levers and actors are mapped in Table 2. Formal theoretical statements are provided in 3.6 (P1-P6).

Transition to 7. Building on these findings, the next section translates the framework into actionable recommendations for policymakers, destination managers, and education and training providers.

VII. RECOMMENDATIONS

The conceptual mechanism and the indicator framework into a sequenced set of policy, managerial, and education/training recommendations, with an implementation roadmap and M&E.

➤ *P1. Contractualize Omanization Outputs in Licenses and Funding*

- Action: Write Omanization outputs-Omani intake targets, training and credentialing quotas, promotion thresholds into supervisory/technical roles, and retention/tenure targets-into permits, grants, and land-lease agreements.
- M&E: Require quarterly disclosure on SF-MST-consistent templates (see table 1) with explicit numerators/denominators and disaggregation. Non-delivery triggers corrective action plans and proportionate penalties; verified delivery qualifies projects for higher incentive tiers.
- Lead actors: MoHT (licensing), investment/funding authorities, destination management entities.

➤ *P2. Link Incentives to Verify Delivery.*

- Action: Make grants, tax relief, expedited permitting, and public procurement scoring contingent on audited KPI delivery and complete reporting.
- M&E: Use an audit-coverage KPI (Table 1) and independent assurance to confirm completeness and accuracy of KPI packs.
- Lead actors: Ministry of Finance and investment funds, MoHT/NCSI (standards and data), independent reviewers.

➤ *P3. Establish Place-Based Pipelines by Governorate*

- Action: Set governorate-specific intake, training, and placement targets aligned with local product strategies (heritage/urban culture, nature-based/adventure, MICE/events). Fund apprenticeship seats and local scholarships proportionate to targets.
- M&E: Track outcomes by location (entry, credentialing, progression, retention) using common templates; publish aggregate dashboards while preserving confidentiality.
- Lead actors: Governorate authorities, MoHT regional offices, training providers, employer associations.

➤ *P4. Stabilize Demand to Support Retention*

- Action: Coordinate national events/MICE calendar, route/airlift development, and off-season programming to reduce volatility in hours and earnings.
- M&E: Monitor occupancy/utilization alongside Omani retention and tenure; incorporate demand-stability indicators as contextual variables in portfolio reviews (Table 1).
- Lead actors: Civil aviation and transport authorities, event bureaus, destination organizations.

➤ *P5. Build MSME Capability Through Shared Services*

- Action: Provide shared HRIS, pooled L&D services, and training vouchers to help MSMEs meet reporting and skill-building requirements at manageable cost.
- M&E: Track MSME participation, training hours per Omani employee, and credentialing rates; include a service-uptake KPI in the dashboard.
- Lead actors: MoHT, chambers/industry associations, accredited training centers.

➤ *P6. Strengthen Data Governance and Independent Audit*

- Action: Mandate SF-MST-aligned indicator definitions and adopt standardized reporting templates harmonized with MoHT/NCSI. Require periodic independent audits of KPI packs.
- M&E: Publish aggregate, anonymized dashboards at portfolio level; enforce data-quality checks (completeness, timeliness, consistency) and document revisions.
- Lead actors: NCSI (standards), MoHT (compliance), independent assurance providers.
- Cross-references: Measurement specifications appear in Table 1 (KPI Dashboard); execution levers, responsible actors, and accountability lines are mapped in Table 2 (Alignment Matrix)

➤ *Managerial Recommendations*

- *M1. Workforce Planning Integrated with Demand Forecasts*
- ✓ Action: Align staffing plans with seasonality, events/MICE calendars, and route/airlift schedules; use

roster smoothing and cross-training to limit involuntary churn and overtime spikes.

- ✓ M&E: Track occupancy/utilization alongside Omani retention and tenure; review variance between planned and actual staffing each quarter as in ablet 1.
- ✓ Lead functions: Operations, revenue management, HR.

• *M2. Progression Pathways and Role Redesign*

- ✓ Action: Standardize supervision ladders and competency-based role requirements; attach micro-credentials to each rung and codify promotion criteria in HR policies to raise Omani progression into supervisory and technical roles.
- ✓ M&E: Monitor Omani progression shares and time-to-promotion; audit adherence to competency rubrics.
- ✓ Lead functions: HR/L&D, line managers, quality.

• *M3. Training Intensity and Credentialing*

- ✓ Action: Set minimum annual training hours per Omani employee and target credentialing rates by role, delivered with accredited academies and on-the-job mentoring.
- ✓ M&E: Report training hours, credentialing rate, and post-training performance outcomes each quarter; link training completion to eligibility for promotion.
- ✓ Lead functions: HR/L&D, external providers, department heads.

• *M4. HRIS and quarterly KPI reporting*

- ✓ Action: Implement a basic HRIS capable of producing the dashboard specified in Table 1: Omanization rate by unit/role, training hours, credentialing rate, progression share, retention/tenure, vacancy fill time, and labor productivity (GVA or revenue per FTE).
- ✓ M&E: Establish data-quality checks (completeness, timeliness, consistency) and a quarterly management review against targets.
- ✓ Lead functions: HRIS/IT, HR analytics, finance.

• *M5. Retention Actions*

- ✓ Action: Improve schedule stability, mentoring, and structured on-the-job learning; where feasible, provide transport or housing solutions in remote destinations; conduct quarterly separation reviews to identify avoidable attrition.
- ✓ M&E: Track 12-month Omani retention, median tenure, and exit-interview codes; tie corrective actions to department scorecards.
- ✓ Lead functions: HR/operations, site managers, welfare/ER.

• *M6. Equity Focus*

- ✓ Action: Set female Omani participation targets by unit and role; create youth internship and cooperative education tracks aligned to entry-level pipelines; ensure safe-work and anti-harassment protocols are trained and enforced.

- ✓ M&E: Disaggregate all KPIs by gender and age; review pipeline conversion (interns to hires, hires to year-1 retention).
- ✓ Lead functions: HR, compliance, DEI committee.

These managerial actions operate within the same governance-measurement shell used throughout the Paper: Vision 2040 target setting, EFQM-aligned routines inside firms, and SF-MST-consistent indicators for transparent, comparable reporting.

➤ *Education and Training System Recommendations*

• *E1. Public–Private Apprenticeship Alliances*

- ✓ Action: Expand dual training pathways with guaranteed training-to-placement ratios agreed ex ante between employers and providers. Reserve funded apprenticeship seats by governorate to reflect local product strategies and embed mentoring and on-the-job learning plans in employer MoUs.
- ✓ M&E: Publish cohort-level KPIs enrolment, completion, placement within 90 days, 12-month retention, and wage progression-disaggregated by role, gender, and governorate (see Table 1).
- ✓ Lead actors: MoHT regional offices, employer associations (hotels, F&B, transport, tours, MICE, heritage/nature), accredited TVET/HE providers, NCSI (templates).

• *E2. Curriculum Alignment and Recognition of Prior Learning*

- ✓ Action: Align curricula with job-ladder skill taxonomies used by employers; prioritize language proficiency and digital service competencies matched to origin-market mix; formalize recognition of prior learning (RPL) and fast-track bridging modules for in-service Omanis.
- ✓ M&E: Track alignment KPIs: share of modules mapped to role competencies, assessment pass rates, RPL credits granted, and graduate placement by role/segment; review annually with employer panels.
- ✓ Lead actors: Ministries of education/HE/TVET, sector skills councils, employer curriculum boards, accreditation bodies.

• *E3. Accreditation and micro-credentials*

- ✓ Action: Map micro-credentials to specific role requirements and supervisory tracks; standardize assessment rubrics and credit values; ensure mutual recognition across providers and employers to support portability. Integrate micro-credentials into promotion criteria and HRIS records.
- ✓ M&E: Monitor credentialing rate for Omani staff, time-to-credential, and subsequent progression share into supervisory/technical roles; audit equivalence across providers to maintain standards (see Table 1).
- ✓ Lead actors: National accreditation authority, provider consortiums, major employers/chain groups, MoHT/NCSI (templates and audits).

These recommendations are designed to operate within the same governance-measurement shell used across the paper: Vision 2040 target setting, EFQM-aligned routines inside institutions, and SF-MST-consistent indicators for transparent, comparable reporting.

➤ *Implementation Roadmap*

• *Immediate (0-6 Months)*

- ✓ Actions: Approve SF-MST-consistent reporting templates; define the minimum KPI set and quarterly cadence (cf. Table 1); insert Omanization clauses into all new licensees, grants, and land-lease agreements; launch the MSME shared HRIS service; publish a draft national events/MICE calendar.
- ✓ M&E: Milestones. Baseline the KPI dashboard; template adoption rate across projects; share of new instruments containing Omanization clauses; number of MSMEs onboarded to HRIS; calendar publication and utilization metrics.
- ✓ Lead actors: MoHT, NCSI, investment/licensing authorities, event bureau.

• *Short Term (6-18 Months)*

- ✓ Actions: Roll out apprenticeship quotas and scholarship windows by governorate; operationalize independent audits of KPI packs; activate procurement and permitting incentives contingent on verified delivery; deploy micro-credentials linked to supervisory roles and promotion criteria.
- ✓ M&E: Milestones. Apprenticeship seats filled and placement rates (90-day and 12-month); audit coverage and compliance scores; incentive disbursement tied to verified KPIs; credentialing rate for Omani staff and progression share into supervisory/technical roles.
- ✓ Lead actors: Regional MoHT offices, accredited TVET/HE providers, employer associations, independent assurance providers, procurement authorities.

• *Medium Term (18-36 Months)*

- ✓ Actions: Review progression and retention trends; recalibrate governorate targets and intake/training ratios; scale digital/green process upgrades with associated credentials; integrate project dashboards with national statistics portals for portfolio-level transparency.
- ✓ M&E: Milestones. Year-over-year changes in Omani retention, median tenure, and progression share; labor-productivity trend; proportion of projects with verified digital/green upgrades; on-time publication of integrated dashboards.
- ✓ Lead actors: MoHT/NCSI (data integration), sector regulators, large operators and MSMEs, accreditation bodies.

This roadmap operationalizes the alignment matrix in Table 2 and the KPI specifications in Table 1, closing the governance-measurement-execution loop under Vision

2040, EFQM-aligned routines, and SF-MST-consistent reporting.

➤ *Risks and Mitigations*

• *R1. Nominal Localization without Competency Growth*

- ✓ Risk: Headcount targets are met but skills do not deepen, limiting progression and productivity.
- ✓ Mitigation: Tie promotion to credential attainment and competency assessments; mandate training-quality audits; publish credentialing rates and post-training performance; embed mentoring and supervised practice.
- ✓ M&E hooks: Credentialing rate, Omani progression share, post-training assessment pass rates (as Table 1).

• *R2. Measurement Burden or Gaming*

- ✓ Risk: Reporting becomes onerous or prone to manipulation, undermining comparability and learning.
- ✓ Mitigation: Use simplified, standardized templates aligned with SF-MST; require independent audits; apply sanctions and incentive claw-backs for non-compliance; institute routine data-quality checks (timeliness, completeness, consistency).
- ✓ M&E hooks: Audit-coverage KPI, data-quality scorecard, on-time filing rate (see Table 1).

• *R3. MSME Capacity Constraints*

- ✓ Risk: Smaller firms struggle to meet HRIS/reporting and training requirements.
- ✓ Mitigation: Provide shared HRIS, pooled academies, training vouchers, and technical assistance; phase onboarding with light-touch requirements initially; consider micro-grants for first-year compliance.
- ✓ M&E hooks: MSME uptake of shared services, training hours per Omani employee (MSME segment), reporting compliance rate.

• *R4. Persistent Seasonality*

- ✓ Risk: Volatile demand erodes hours and earnings, weakening retention and tenure.
- ✓ Mitigation: Develop off-season events/MICE programming, diversify products by segment and geography, and coordinate targeted airlift/route development; apply roster smoothing and cross-training.
- ✓ M&E hooks: Occupancy/visitation volatility index, 12-month Omani retention and median tenure, variance of hours/earnings.

Mitigation levers map to Table 2 (Alignment Matrix); monitoring relies on the KPIs specified in Table 1 (KPI Dashboard).

➤ *Monitoring and Evaluation*

- Core tool (Table 1): The KPI dashboard specified in Table 1 serves as the single source of truth for monitoring.

Reporting occurs quarterly, with required disaggregation (unit, role, gender, age, governorate) and an audit-coverage KPI to track the share of projects independently verified. Routine data-quality checks (completeness, timeliness, internal consistency) are documented each cycle.

- Governance (Table 2): The alignment matrix in Table 2 assigns actions, lead actors, collaborators, and EFQM-aligned routines. Program boards review delivery on a scheduled cadence (e.g., quarterly), record decisions, and log corrective actions with owners and deadlines.
- Learning cycle (annual): An annual learning review synthesizes KPI trends, adjusts Omanization targets and intake/training ratios, refines place-based pipelines, and recalibrates incentives and assurance requirements. Results are summarized in a public, aggregated dashboard while safeguarding firm confidentiality.
- Evaluation modalities: Periodic evaluations complement routine monitoring:
 - ✓ Thematic evaluations (training/credentialing effectiveness, retention measures).
 - ✓ Portfolio evaluations using quasi-experimental logic where feasible (before–after with comparison groups, matched projects, or difference-in-differences designs).
 - ✓ Process evaluations to assess EFQM-aligned routines and data governance.

Integration. Monitoring draws on SF-MST-consistent definitions (Table 1) and the governance/execution assignments in Table 2, ensuring comparability and auditability across projects and over time.

The recommendations and M&E arrangements above surface specific measurement and design gaps. The next section sets out priority research questions and suitable empirical designs to validate the propositions and strengthen policy learning.

VIII. FUTURE RESEARCH

A staged empirical agenda can translate the framework into actionable evidence for policy and managerial practice. The studies below map directly to P1-P6 and rely on SF-MST-consistent indicators and administrative HR/HRIS data.

➤ *Testing the Mediated Pathway (P1)*

Use quasi-experimental comparisons and panel models to estimate the effect of Omanization clauses in project design on workforce outcomes. Outcomes come from the KPI dashboard (e.g., Omanization rate, training intensity, certification, progression, retention, productivity), with controls for project scale, segment, and exogenous shocks (OECD, 2024; UNWTO & UNSD, 2024).

➤ *Training and Credentialing Effects on Progression (P2)*

Construct employer–employee matched panels and apply within-unit fixed effects to relate training intensity and credentialing rates to promotion of Omani staff into

supervisory and technical roles, addressing time-invariant confounders (UNWTO, 2023).

➤ *Demand Stability and Retention (P3)*

Exploit natural experiments arising from events/MICE programming, access/airlift changes, or source-market shocks. Interrupted time-series, matched comparison groups, or synthetic-control designs can estimate impacts on Omani retention and tenure (OECD, 2024).

➤ *Process–Technology Complementarity (P4)*

Run multi-site studies to test whether digital/green process upgrades, combined with role redesign and micro-credentials, increase the share of Omanis in skilled roles and improve labor productivity. Difference-in-differences models can compare adopters versus non-adopters across time (UNWTO & UNSD, 2024; OECD, 2024).

➤ *EFQM Alignment as an Amplifier (P5)*

Link organization-level assessments of leadership and strategy routines (EFQM-consistent) to Omanization outputs and workforce outcomes to quantify alignment as an effect modifier, testing interaction terms between EFQM scores and investment variables (EFQM, 2025).

➤ *Place-Based Heterogeneity (P6)*

Estimate multilevel models that distinguish unit, firm, and governorate variance components. Evaluate whether tailored pipelines aligned with local product strategies and labor-pool characteristics yield faster progression and retention than uniform targets (OECD, 2024).

➤ *Measurement and Data Infrastructure*

Validate KPI definitions, disaggregation, reporting cadence, and audit processes to reduce measurement error and harmonize firm HR/HRIS data with MoHT/NCSI releases under SF-MST standards. Priorities include audit-coverage metrics, timeliness and completeness checks, and reconciliation protocols (UNWTO & UNSD, 2024).

➤ *Design Notes*

- Data sources: firm HR/HRIS/L&D records, accreditation systems, MoHT/NCSI official statistics.
- Equity lens: Disaggregate by role, gender, age, and governorate; track youth and women's participation in all models (ILO, 2022).
- Causal identification: Prefer pre-analysis plans, registered hypotheses aligned to P1-P6, and transparent robustness checks.
- Ethics and confidentiality: Ensure anonymization and aggregation consistent with national data-protection norms.

IX. CONCLUSION

This study formalizes an Omanization-centered mechanism showing how mission-oriented tourism investment can deliver sustainable workforce development in Oman. Investment designs that specify Omanization clauses are expected to generate staged outputs—entry, upskilling,

progression, and retention—that cumulatively strengthen capability, equity, resilience, and productivity. Governance and measurement operate as an external shell-Vision 2040 target setting, EFQM leadership and strategy routines, and SF-MST indicator definitions-disciplining planning, execution, and disclosure without adding extra causal layers.

The contribution is threefold: an explicit mediation logic that locates Omanization as the proximate pathway from investment to outcomes; operational measurability via a compact, SF-MST-consistent dashboard (Table 1) and an alignment matrix (Table 2); and practical alignment between national priorities and organizational routines. Boundary conditions-demand stability and seasonality, governorate labor pools, MSME capacity, and HR/HRIS quality-underscore the need for place-based pipelines, demand smoothing, and shared services. As a conceptual contribution, the framework does not test causality but specifies how to do so; the proposed empirical agenda prioritizes quasi-experimental, and panel designs to evaluate P1-P6. Overall, contractualizing Omanization outputs, standardizing indicators, and embedding EFQM-aligned execution can steer investment toward sustained national participation, deeper competencies, and higher productivity, advancing Vision 2040 while strengthening sector resilience and competitiveness.

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