

[timesofoman.com](http://timesofoman.com)

## Oman plans railway network for freight movement

by A E JAMES/businesseditor@timesofoman.com

January 16, 2017 | 6:16 PM

Hilal Al Busaidi, chief executive officer of Public Authority for Mining. — Shabin E/Times of Oman



**Muscat:** Discussions between the Public Authority for Mining and Oman Rail are on for building a railway line for transporting minerals to Duqm Port for onward export to overseas markets.

“We are right now discussing (on building) a section of railway line from Al Shuwaymiya and Manji to the Duqm area,” Hilal Al Busaidi, chief executive officer of the PAM told journalists on the sidelines of Oman Minerals and Mining Exhibition and Conference on Monday.

Shuwaymiyah and Manji areas have rich mineral deposits.

“We have a well-established infrastructure in terms of ports and roads, but some of the minerals are located in

areas where there is a need for logistics support. Rail is one way of transporting these minerals to the ports from where these can be exported,” added the PAM chief.

The Sultanate’s national diversification initiative, Tanfeedh, recently mooted a 337-kilometre-long freight railway line between Duqm and Shuwaymiyah region.

The National Railway project, which was proposed a few years ago, took a back seat in recent years.

Nasser bin Khamis Al Jashmi, undersecretary at the Ministry of Finance, opened the second edition of Oman expo’s Oman Minerals and Mining Exhibition and Conference on Monday at the new Oman Convention and Exhibition Centre.

The opening was attended by several government and embassy officials, as well as represented by top executives from the biggest mining companies in Oman.

Hilal Al Busaidi delivered the keynote address at the conference while Abdulsattar Al Murshidi, chairman of the Oman Mining Company, talked about the potential of the mining industry in Oman.

After the success of the first edition, this edition is expected to be even more successful with about 51 companies participating, up from 37 in 2015.

The two-day conference, running concurrently to the exhibition, features a qualified lineup of 26 local and international speakers representing various segments and companies from the mining sector.

These included Dean Cunningham, CEO, Kunooz Oman Holding; Ali Al Wily, CEO, Oman Mining Company; Jesse Damsky, Chief Commercial Officer, Port of Salalah; Marc Evertse, Executive Commercial Manager, Sohar Port and Free Zone; Reggy Vermeulen, CEO, Port of Duqm; and Mohammed Al Shabibi, CEO, Gulf Mining Group.

The topics to be presented include “Investing in Oman’s Mining Sector,” “Mining and Related Infrastructure Development,” “Technology Solutions for the Mining Industry,” “Project Opportunities,” “Human Resource Development and HSE in the Mining Sector.”

Oman Minerals and Mining Exhibition & Conference comes close on the heels of the government’s efforts to focus on sectors that will contribute a major share to Oman’s gross domestic product, and thus help shift away from oil.

This also comes amidst reports of recently discovered mineral deposits and a foreseen increase in bulk mineral

exports at Oman's gateway ports—Sohar Port and Freezone, Port of Duqm and Port of Salalah—where there is a lot of opportunity for investment in mineral development, mining and quarrying exploration and operations.

The event is organised in partnership with the Public Authority for Mining and co-organised with Awtad Geoquest.