

Oman utility plans first-ever hydropower pilot

CONRAD PRABHU
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Majis Industrial Services (MIS), a wholly Omani government-owned water services utility, says it plans to pilot — possibly for the first time in the Sultanate — the generation of hydropower from the sprawling cooling water delivery channel that it operates within Sohar Port and Freezone.

According to Majis Chief Executive Officer, Eng Ahmed Saif al Mazrouie (pictured), the pilot is one of several initiatives being pursued by the utility in support of low-carbon and sustainable energy goals.

“Majis’ mandate as the sole water utility services provider in Sohar Port and Freezone is to supply our customers with sustainable and eco-friendly water solutions. In line with this goal, we have launched a number of projects designed to reduce our environmental footprint and lower emissions from our operations in the



GREEN POWER: Majis embarks on several low-carbon and renewables-based initiatives

industrial port,” said the CEO.

The lengthy canal delivers seawater for cooling purposes to the petrochemical and other heavy industries operating in the port, while channeling the outflow back into



the sea. A massive pumping system installed at the mouth of the channel allows for the seawater water to be pumped at the rate of 60,000 cubic metres/day.

“Within a week, we plan to pilot what we believe is the first hydropower pilot in Oman,” said Al Mazrouie. “We are just now fabricating the frame that will hold the turbine. It is being assembled before we lower it into the canal and see how it behaves,” the CEO

stated.

Speaking to the *Observer*, Al Mazrouie said the pilot is part of a substantial portfolio of low-carbon initiatives currently under various stages of planning and implementation. Notable is a tender for the design, supply, installation, testing and commissioning of a grid-connected 1.3 MWp (megawatt-peak) per day capacity solar power plant. “Majis recently floated a tender for this

solar power project to compensate for power consumption from the grid,” said Al Mazrouie.

Majis is also embarking on a plan to cover the expansive seawater delivery channel with solar PV panels to generate electricity. Additionally, the utility is collaborating with research students of Sohar University, as well as a Dutch research institution, in studying the potential for harnessing deep ocean water for cooling purposes.

“We are also looking at energy demand side management by reducing consumption during peak hours — when higher Cost Reflective Tariffs (CRT) come into play — and switching our operations when possible to off-peak hours, when the tariffs are lower. Also as part of our energy conservation efforts, we have been using energy efficient LED lighting systems in our concession areas,” he added.

A leader in industrial water services, Majis has invested sizable amounts in the development of a full-fledged and well-diversified water services infrastructure that is indispensable to the successful operation of industries and factories located within the Sohar Industrial Port Area (SIPA) and the adjoining Sohar Freezone. The utility currently provides five types of water services to customers in the industrial port area: potable drinking water, process water, effluent management, irrigation water, and industrial cooling water.

Six properties compete for CW Oman Hospitality Awards

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As many as six properties are in the race for the coveted ‘Hospitality Project of the Year’ awards to be announced on March 25 as part of the Construction Week Oman Awards 2019 ceremony.

In the shortlist are Muscat’s Kempinski Hotel and Apartments and Mysk by Shaza. Local civil contractor Douglas OHI has nominated its work on the renovation of the Crowne Plaza Muscat. Also in the running is Oman-based consultancy Hoehler + Al Salmi for its work on the hotel.

Kempinski Hotel & Apartments is another high-profile name appearing on the 2019 hospitality shortlist. It has been nominated by mechanical,

electrical, and plumbing (MEP) giant Voltas, which delivered MEP services in line with the client’s required international standards and codes.

A joint venture of Murray Roberts and Bahwan Contracting Company is also in the running for its work on the construction of Oman Convention and Exhibition Centre Package 4: Hotel 1. W Hotel Muscat features as the final hospitality project on the 2019 shortlist, nominated by government-owned Oman Tourism Development Company (Omrn). Voltas also nominated itself for its work on Muscat hotel Mysk by Shaza.

Now in their eighth year, the Construction Week Oman Awards 2019 will be held at Kempinski Hotel Muscat.

Omantel bags IoT Security Champions award

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On the sidelines of ‘MWC19’ in Barcelona this week, Omantel received the ‘IoT Security Champions Award’ from GSMA in recognition of its contribution to the GSMA IoT working group and successful adoption of the GSMA IoT Security Guidelines & Assessment Scheme. The company now stands among the top 14 operators worldwide that have adopted these guidelines.

GSMA, an organisation that represents the interests of mobile operators worldwide, has prepared a set of best practices for the secure design, development and deployment of IoT services.

According to GSMA, there will be 25.3 billion IoT connections by 2025 worldwide, paving the way for smart cities, more efficient transportation and revolutionised healthcare. However, without adequate security, the huge potential of the IoT



to enhance our lives through the development of smart cities, connected cars, smart healthcare and Industry 4.0 will not be realised.

Samy al Ghassani, Chief Operations Officer at Omantel, said: “With track record achievements in ICT solutions that Omantel boasts, we will continue to empower our digital ecosystem and build bridges toward a ‘Digital Oman’, where promising projects, like smart cities and e-Government, as

well as businesses and other entities can operate safely with up to date systems that can deter risks associated with new technologies.”

“At Omantel, we strive to setup a full-fledged digital ecosystem that will enable harnessing the Fourth Industrial Revolution to achieve digital transformation and business growth, and keep the Sultanate on track toward ‘Oman 2040’ vision in which technology plays a major role,” he concluded.

Abdullah al Barwani, General-Manager at Omantel’s Corporate Security Unit, said: “Having an adequate IoT security environment is an absolute necessity for projects such as smart cities and healthcare, that must remain secure at all times. GSMA IoT Security specifically focus on ensuring security of IoT services in a low cost and power consumption manner, which had always been a challenge. It also helps in achieving an efficient security environment and device protection that are vulnerable to logical and physical attacks.”

POINT of VIEW



Yasser Zeineldin

Building a cloud strategy to boost digital innovation

“On the flip side, many enterprise CIOs have still to announce and formulate a well-defined cloud strategy for their internal IT and business end users.”

YASSER ZEINELDIN
CEO, eHosting DataFort

The role of cloud as an IT and business tool is now more than a decade old. Globally, IT departments are migrating their business applications from on-premises to public cloud platforms at a continuous pace. Gartner, a global market research player, expects this rate to pick up as legacy systems reach their end of life support and migration projects get underway.

However, on the flip side, many enterprise CIOs have still to announce and formulate a well-defined cloud strategy for their internal IT and business end users. If well thought out and articulated, a cloud strategy can become a blueprint for the roll out of revamped and forward looking, digital processes, job roles and change in organisational structure.

Here is a checklist of pointers on how CIOs can build their cloud strategies:

1. List the expected business outcomes

The starting point for any cloud strategy is to get a complete picture of the desired business outcomes over a short and medium term. At this stage it is important to focus on the benefits from the point of view of the business end users rather than IT end users. A successful cloud strategy sets up a culture of self-service across the organisation, adding in new business end users into the organisation’s connected network, thereby fostering a culture of self-driven innovation.

2. Is your cloud and digital



(For illustration only)

strategy aligned?

The biggest obstacle for a successful cloud strategy is to develop it without aligning with the digital innovation strategy of the organisation. The organisation’s cloud platform enables the rest of the digital experience and digital work processes to be built upon it. Lack of alignment of the two strategies in terms of requirements of scalability, application workloads, reliability, geographic responsiveness will lead to the failure of the digital innovation strategy and lack of any business return from the cloud roll out strategy.

3. Is business more agile than IT?

Who is driving innovation in the organisation? If it is the business that is moving faster than IT, then key business decision makers need to be

involved during the formulation of the organisational cloud strategy. By bringing business decision makers at an early stage into the development of the cloud strategy, it is more likely that the investments required for the cloud roll out can be justified against the investments required for the digital business innovation.

4. Plan out your critical and supporting workloads

A cloud strategy is not meant to be an IT showcase of sorts. The prime purpose is business innovation, business agility, and significant improvement in IT operations and cost. A cloud strategy that does not include and plan for business facing application workloads will have no returns from business. It may be promptly shelved as yet another IT operational initiative that can wait for better times or forwarded

to business pending further discussion on a rainy and dull day.

5. Cloud implementation is not strategy

A cloud strategy document that goes deep dive into the process of technology, platform, and supplier selection is going down the wrong side of the road. An implementation document cannot substitute for a strategic document that describes the business goals and the longer-term innovation benefits for the organisation. IT cannot follow a wild west approach, where all pending IT objectives and innovation goals are piggybacked onto the cloud roll out project. This will lead to huge project and architecture overruns, associated with capital debt, and return on investment failures.

6. Internal IT and business audit

Like any IT project initiative, it is necessary to capture the states of the IT and business organisation before and after the start of the roll out. The internal audit should be able to determine answers to the following questions from various end users: what the benefits are you are seeking from cloud; why is the organisation implementing a cloud framework; what is the decision-making criteria for application workloads; what is the readiness of the application portfolio; as an IT and business end-user are you ready to use the cloud?

7. Do you need an external supplier?

Lastly, the launch of a successful cloud strategy requires a trusted partner to ensure that the vision gets converted into reality. Cloud has various models of consumption and configuration and this is also driven by internal requirements and policies. Legacy data needs to be migrated and configured on whichever cloud platform is selected for implementation. Multiple cloud platforms may also need to be introduced into the organisation. Increasingly cloud brokers and managed service providers are playing an important role, at least in the early and middle stages of a cloud roll out.

By following some of these measures, CIOs may be able to formulate an effective cloud strategy. This will act as a bridge between IT and business and kicks start the organisation into digital innovation. (Yasser Zeineldin, CEO of eHosting DataFort)