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## NEWS RELEASE

# Holding company established as a result of the Date Palm Innovation Programme led by Strategic Innovation



MUSCAT, September 10, 2018 –

The Oman Dates Development Company has been established as a holding company and investment arm of the One Million Date Palms Project (see article in [Times of Oman](#)). This company was created to implement prioritised business opportunities to develop the date industry of Oman. Investment of around USD240 Million will directly impact date farmers, providing a more lucrative and secure future. On a larger scale, it will allow Oman to become more self-sufficient, producing animal feed and fertilisers, increase food security and introducing sustainable practices and waste utilisation.

“The establishment of the holding company and securing of this funding marks a big step toward more sustainable farming and added value product development.” Said Michala Techau, Director at Strategic Innovation. “We are very excited for the involved partners and the date farmers and for the world to experience delicious and nutritious date-based products – made in Oman.”

## About the Date Palm Innovation Programme

In 2017, Strategic Innovation (SI), formerly Systematic Innovation, embarked on a journey with the Industrial Innovation Centre of Oman (IIC), The Diwan of Royal Court and Oman National Investments Development Company (TANMIA). This journey was The Date Palm Innovation Programme and is part of the National Programme for Enhancing Economic Diversification (Tanfeedh), aiming to establish and develop non-petrochemical based industries in Oman. The key objective of our collaboration was to lead the innovation programme, enabling the dates industry to move up the value chain, valorise waste streams and develop new brands to put Oman onto the international food and beverage map.

The SI team undertook open innovation and global technology scouting activities to landscape and benchmark the date palm sector. We conducted several workshops with key stakeholders across industry, date farming, government and academia. With this input, the IIC and SI teams developed over 50 business concepts and prioritised 11 – capitalising on the unique nutritional value of Omani dates within snack bars, health drinks and syrup-based products.

In common with many date producing countries, date palm waste such as fronds, stems and trunks are typically burned, causing pollution and releasing CO<sub>2</sub>, or left to rot, harbouring pests and disease. Several of the businesses will turn this waste into a valuable resource, creating animal feed, fertiliser and construction materials – reducing Oman's reliance on imports, generating economic activity and jobs as well as introducing circular economy thinking in local new product development.

The IIC and SI teams identified and engaged with partner companies globally and developed detailed business plans to support the setup of the new businesses. The programme was initially centred around the One Million Date Palms Project but also enables traditional Omani farmers to obtain a better price for their dates and value for their waste.

For more information, visit: <https://strategic-innovation.co.uk/>

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