
20 firm line up for Batinah Railway study

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Reuter reported that plans for a major railway line in the Batinah region are set to make further headway with authorities expected to shortly appoint a consultant as a first step in the development of the ambitious project.

Around 20 local, regional and international consultancy firms are in the race for a contract to study the design requirements of the project, underlining the huge interest in Oman's maiden effort to introduce rail services in the country. Well known firm Consulting Engineering Services is the low bidder for the contract.

As per report, the bidding line up also includes Cowi & Partners, Hamdan Consulting, Scott Wilson Railway, WS Atkins, Mott MacDonald, Reinhardt Consultancy, Modern Engineering, Merrit International, Dornier Consulting, Italfeer, Khatib & Alami, Systra, Bovis, Sunjin, DB International, Parsons Brinkerhoff, LG International, RATES and Dar al Handasah.

The Supreme Committee for Town Planning is overseeing the conception and design of the Batinah Railway project on behalf of the Ministry of National Economy. Envisaged is an arterial railway that will run within the same corridor through which the proposed Batinah Expressway is planned. The roughly 260 kilometer long corridor running parallel to the existing Batinah Highway, starts from Halban Road near Naseem roundabout and travels north all the way to Khatmat Malaha on the border with the United Arab Emirates.

According to officials, the railway project will help alleviate traffic flows along the existing Batinah Highway which is presently the only major traffic corridor serving the wilayats of the Batinah region. The highway also serves as the main overland link between Oman and the UAE and other GCC states. A rail route officials point out will also minimize disruptions to traffic caused by major accidents or overflowing wadis that crisscross the highway.

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