

Oman plans fog-harvesting project to ease water shortage

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Muscat Oman will become the first country in the region to tap into fog-harvesting technology to make stored water available for nearly 300 days, according to Ali Bin Amor Al Kiyumi, director general of nature conservation at the Environment and Climate Affairs Ministry.

Al Kiyumi told Gulf News that an experiment was carried out by imitating the nature's way of accumulating water on plant leaves in condensed form in Salalah in the south of the country.

"Our experiment was successful in condensing fog water on to mesh net and then converting that into water in an artificial pond," he said.

He hopes to store 300 cubic metres of water that would last for over 300 days. "It would mainly be used for irrigation purpose and also as a source of drinking water for the animals in the southern region of the country," he said.

Al Kiyumi reckons that with the use of harvested fog water, there would be less pressure on the other water resources in the region.

"This is the first time in the region such an experiment is being carried out successfully because we, besides Yemen, probably are the only country to have so much fog," he said.

According to him, the Mitsubishi's General Trading Company has adopted the project for the next five years.

Oman's top conservationist also stressed that the project was one of the mechanisms developed to combat desertification in the southern region.

Private sector

"It comes within the Ministry's anti-desertification methods being applied in co-operation with international and regional organisations, as well as the private sector in Oman," he said.

Al Kiyumi pointed out that the National Action Plan for Combating Desertification included efforts to survey projects proposed to guarantee the development of desert areas, planting drought-resistant and salt-tolerant plants.

He added that the plans also include the rational use of potable water, continuous exploration of new resources of groundwater, expansion of waste water use in landscaping, and remote sensing to monitor and assess the status of vegetation, lands and water. Al Kiyumi said the stored water would be used in a green belt project for 1,000 metres annually.

"At the end of the five-year project, we hope to create 4,000 metres of green belt that would have about 1,000 trees," he said.