

ICT in Oman

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ICT in Oman

- The Sultanate of Oman organised its digital strategy through the eOman initiative that aims to significant improvement in the quality of services the government provides to the Omani citizens.
- The Information Technology Authority (ITA) was entrusted upon with the responsibility of digital strategy implementation and serves as a competency centre that provides consultancy to business units as well as a repository of information on best practices and methodology.

Information Technology Authority (ITA)-www.ita.gov.oc

- **Government IT Training & Certification in IT (Digital Literacy)** aims to provide internationally recognized digital literacy certification to all civil service employees in a phased manner during the period 2008-2011. **Targeting around 100000 employees.**
- **The Community IT Training Project** use of **25 Community Knowledge Centers** that will be established in all the governorates and various regions of the Sultanate.
- **eOman Awareness** organizing seminars, conferences and road shows throughout the country

ITA's key initiatives

- Setting up a unified e-Government architecture including IT infrastructure, applications and shareable databases of services and public information;
- Creating an IT governance framework, standards and guidelines for national information and communication technologies (ICT) sector infrastructure, and a security framework;
- Enabling customer-centric e-Government services for both individuals and businesses and streamlining them within the common IT infrastructure;
- Developing plans and policies for training and development of human resources in IT while enhancing existing competencies;
- Deploying ICT education and training programs suitable for various segments of the society based on systematic studies and comprehensive planning.

ICT developments

- National level e-Government initiatives are championed, executed and coordinated by the ITA.
- Knowledge Oasis-Muscat (KOM) is the Information Technology park of Oman. It is a public-private sector led initiative committed to creating a multi-stakeholder environment that currently hosts about 25 ICT based companies
- The Knowledge Mine (TKM) is an incubator facility for companies wishing to start an immediately before moving to a bigger space for full-scale operations. It is a community-based catalyst whose mission is to grow knowledge-based businesses.

ICT projects

- The Ministry of Education (MoE) in association with the Petroleum Development Oman (PDO) had set up a multimedia centre for developing educative materials using modern technologies.
- A state-of-the-art computer facility is operated at Al Wafa Technical Centre at Omar Ibn al Khatab Institute for visually impaired.
- The Oman Women's Association in Muscat (OWAM) is now equipped to train women across the country in IT skills and capabilities following collaboration with Microsoft Oman.
- Oman Information Communication Technology Society with representatives from the public and private sector.

ICT Research

ICT is one the research priorities of The Research Council of Oman as defined by the roadmap of Science and Technology Policies: top priority themes are :

1. ICT as enabler for other sectors (such as *Health, Environment, Energy, Education, Automation, Agriculture, (resources)Efficiency, etc*)
2. Grid computing
3. Medical IT technologies
4. Robotics
5. Nanotechnology

Objectives for ICT Sector

- Create and nurture an ICT sector that:
 - contributes to GDP and provides skilled employment
 - supports communication and IT needs of other sectors; and
 - links all parts of the Sultanate
- Enhance public expenditure for ICT development
- Reduce Digital Divide through public awareness, education and by reducing cost of the ICT
- Develop National Database for all information needs
- Enhance R&D in ICT and align ICT research with needs of other sectors
- Establish e-governance to provide on-line services to citizens and business
- Formulate e-legislation and ensure implementation to build the trust and confidence
- Develop an e-Society ensuring e-Business, B2B exchange, e-cargo, e-ticketing
- Develop international & regional cooperation in the ICT field
- Provide online public and private access to government services

Challenges facing the ICT Sector

- Lack of competitiveness of the Sector when compared to the region and the rest of the world;
- Lack of essential infrastructure;
- Shortage of skilled manpower and lack of technical awareness;
- Lack of ICT industry;
- Lack of funding for applied research;
- Shortage of entrepreneurs;
- Lack of Knowledge of putting together a proper business case;
 - Project Management;
- High cost of ICT services;
- High Digital Divide;
- Cultural & language barriers;