IC³

OMAN'S INFORMATION & TECHNOLOGY AUTHORITY IMPLEMENTS DIGITAL LITERACY TRAINING AND CERTIFICATION FOR CIVIL SERVICE WORKFORCE

"In association with the ITA, Global Skills has taken the initiative to lead the Sultanate of Oman into the digital age by training and certifying Omani's utilizing the IC³ program, internationally recognized digital standards. The Government IT Training & Certification Project has proven to be a very successful public-private partnership providing the necessary steps for increased economic development in Oman. A win-win situation for all concerned."

- Marie Taylor, Chief Executive Officer, Global Skills LLC.

Partner: Certiport Inc and Global Skills LLC
Program: Certiport IC³
Market Sector: Government Ministries
Sub-Sector: Postgraduate Universities, Colleges, and Institutes

BACKGROUND:

The Oman Information & Technology Authority (ITA) aims to transform the Sultanate of Oman into a sustainable knowledge society by leveraging information and communication technologies to enhance government services, businesses and individuals. In accordance with eOman, the Sultan of Oman's e-Governance initiative, the ITA approved Certiport's Internet and Computing Core Certification (IC³®) to ensure civil service employees possess foundational digital literacy skills to compete in today's world.

IC³ provides students and job-seekers with the foundation of knowledge they need to succeed in environments that require the use of computers and the Internet. The IC³ Global Standard , an internationally recognized standard for digital literacy, reflects the most relevant skills needed in today's academic and business environments including: Computing Fundamentals, Key Applications, and Living Online.

After examining several technical certifications, the ITA chose to partner with Global Skills LLC to deliver the IC³ exam as a training and achievement certificate for 93,000 civil service employees in Oman. As a Certiport Solution Provider, Global Skills offers individuals current and relevant digital skills and credentials for the competitive global workforce. Through the IC³ program, ITA will work to close the digital gap and spread digital literacy throughout Oman's government bodies and ultimately to the Omani people.

TOOLS FOR SUCCESS:

- Global Skills, a strong local partner with international expertise and a proven track record to drive the IC³ program
- Availability of 35 local Certiport Authorized Testing Centers
- A complete certification solution available in both English and Arabic to meet the needs of the marketplace
- A thorough understanding of local government procedures to improve digital literacy among civil service employees
- The ability to position Certiport IC³ as the ideal global standard for digital skills

STEPS TO SUCCESS

1. Problem Assessment: The ITA was established in May 2006 to provide leadership for Sultan Qaboos' eOman initiative and various other e-Governance projects. ITA

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performed an analysis of digital literacy skills in Oman and found the country lacked the skills necessary to create a successful digital government. Top officials and ministers in Oman agreed on the need for a program to train government workers on computer fundamentals.

2. Initiative: The National IT Training & Awareness Initiative was created to develop Information and Communication Technology (ICT) skills in Oman through two key projects – Government IT Training and Community IT Training. In July 2006, ITA conducted a market analysis of internationally-recognized digital literacy programs and vendors to determine the best fit for these projects.

3. Trial Period: The ITA piloted two digital literacy programs among Oman's civil service employees. After analyzing the results of the pilot, the ITA determined Certiport's IC³ exam was the most useful test and met their needs for certifying government employees.

4. Approval: On October 25th, 2008, the ITA partnered with Certiport Solution Provider Global Skills, and signed a three year implementation contract to provide digital literacy training and/or certification to 93,507 civil service employees under the Government IT Training & Certification (GITTC) Project.

5. Communication: Early in 2009, the ITA informed Oman government employees about the opportunity to achieve digital literacy certification through Certiport's IC³ exam. Since some Omani government employees did not see the value of the program, ITA and Global Skills worked together to continually communicate the importance and benefits of IC³ and how it would help government employees significantly in their daily duties.

6. Implementation: The ITA worked with Global Skills and the Oman Ministry of Education to establish training and testing centers throughout the country. Global Skills prepared all preparation materials and handled project logistics for a successful implementation of the IC³ exam.

RESULTS:

After 18 months, it is anticipated that there will be 50,000 civil servants participating in the GITTC Project. More than 20,000 civil servants will have completed the IC³ program by the end of October 2010. An impressive 35 Ministries of Oman are participating in the project, and 18 of them have provided a computer lab to offer in-house training to their employees.

To invest in Oman's future, only Omani nationals are employed and trained as IC³ instructors. As a result, 123 Omani job seekers have become IC³ Authorized Instructors and 10 have become Certified Professional Instructors. They are employed as trainers for the GITTC Project. In addition, 272 Ministry of Education teachers achieved their IC³ credential and are employed as part-time trainers for evening classes throughout Oman.

NEXT STEPS:

The Sultanate of Oman is working to become a digitally advanced country with expertise in information and communication technologies. By continuing to implement the IC³ program, a large portion of civil service employees will possess the basic digital literacy skills to ease Oman's transition into the digital age.

The second year of the project has been very successful and ITA and Global Skills are working to meet their original targets in three years, with the possibility of adding an additional year to the project.

Global Skills has built very strong relationships with Oman Ministry officials and now has a very strong team of Omani trainers and technical support, with local offices in all regions of Oman. The next phase of training began in September 2010 and the infrastructure is now in place to provide training for 10,000 civil servants in the program at any one time.