

About Information Technology Authority

Information Technology Authority (ITA) is set up by the Royal Decree 52/ 2006 as an autonomous legal body.

ITA is responsible for implementing national IT infrastructure projects and supervising all projects related to implementation of the Digital Oman Strategy while providing professional leadership to various other e-Governance initiatives of the Sultanate.

ITA serves as a competency center on best practices in e-Governance and in harnessing Information and Communication Technologies (ICT), thereby offering efficient and timely services, integrating processes and improving efficiency in service delivery.

ITA undertakes several projects to increase technology penetration and empower its people with required digital literacy and higher levels of competence through training and innovation centers.

The eOman awareness campaign and the associated activities connect ITA to both local and international communities closely leading to successful participation and support in building Oman's knowledge society.

The following are some of the projects in the anvil towards ITA's journey to building the digital society of Oman:

- eOman Awareness (eOMAN)
- e-Government Services Portal (UBAR)
- National e-Payment Gateway (NePG)
- Convergent Government Network (CGN)
- Disaster Recovery Center (DRC)
- Innovation and Support Center (ISC)
- National IT Training & Awareness (NITTA)
- Standards Framework (STDF)
- Information Security Management Framework (ISMF)
- e-transactions Law (eLAW)

eOman Awareness

eOman Awareness activities aim to bring about success in all e-Government initiatives by preparing businesses and people to participate fully within the digital society. The activities also aim toward building ICT capacity within the nation by organizing seminars, conferences and road shows throughout the country.

The first phase of the eOman road show, flagged off to coincide with the first World Information Society Day in May 2006 covered all the regions of Oman over a period from May 2006 to February 2007.

The ITA team organised several informative seminars and presentations during the road shows to reach out to different sectors of the community. The event created a forum for direct public interaction which resulted in exchange of ideas and opinions about public e-services.

Focus-group meetings with the corporate, public and private sectors form part of the agenda of the eOman road shows. ITA actively participated in prestigious events such as Comex 2006, Khareef Salalah Festival 2007 and ArabTelsat 2007 and networked with the attendees sharing the vision and progress of eOman.

ITA organises forums such as the Executive Round table Forum and several educative seminars in association with local and International companies. These events help improve cooperation with the private sector.

Project Benefits

- Promotes eOman within Oman and internationally
- Creates an effective link between the public and private sector for digital initiatives
- Creates an ICT awareness within society and enables people to perceive benefits
- Educates and empowers public sector employees and the community at large to participate in the knowledge society
- Showcases e-services in Oman and increases adoption of IT and e-services
- Creates opportunities for public and private sector enterprises to interact with the public and thus bridges the digital divide

e-Government Services Portal

Through Ubar, the e-Government e-services portal, both citizens and businesses can access government information and services online.

These services may be provided via the Ubar portal either by integrating with other government entities or providing links to their websites.

Anytime, anywhere access to the portal can occur through multiple channels such as the web and mobile devices. Navigation on the portal site will be simplified through a live event service delivery model and searchable content.

Project Benefits

- Public access to Government services through a single entry point and facilitation of transactions with maximum ease and time savings, at any time
- Delivery of services in a seamless, integrated, secure and transparent manner that maximizes public convenience and increases trust in the process
- Integration of electronic systems and services of all government agencies so that customers can be served in a standardized manner with a common look and feel

National e-Payment Gateway

The National e-Payment Gateway will enable Citizens, Residents and Businesses to make online payments to the Government and the private sector.

NePG enable secure online payments accessible through the Ubar Portal for government e-services in an integrated manner.

It will support the use of multiple payment instruments utilizing Ubar Portal access channels such as Internet and mobile devices.

Project Benefits

- Provides robust, efficient and secure e-Payment services to Citizens, Residents and Businesses to pay for Government goods and services offered on the e-Government Services Portal via the Internet
- Accepts all major global payment channels such as Credit Cards and Debit Cards
- In its future phase, this gateway will accept payments through SMS / IVR and other payment technologies
- Interfaces to Oman's e-Payments infrastructure for processing functions such as the Switching, Clearing and Settlement Systems
- Adopts state-of-the-art security and authentication systems
- Helps reducing cash as a payment mechanism; particularly in ministries and other Government organizations

Convergent Government Network

The Government Network project involves implementation of a nation-wide telecommunication infrastructure interconnecting government agencies called Convergent Government Network (CGN).

CGN will link all Ministries and Government entities and enhance the delivery of a range of e-services provided by them.

This state-of-the-art network service will have the capability of supporting data, voice and video over the same infrastructure and will ensure service delivery according to predefined Service Level Agreements (SLAs).

Project Benefits

- Foundation of a secure and reliable network which government agencies can rely upon
- Reduces capital expenditure by saving on the depreciation of the hardware and reduces cost of software procurement and licensing
- Reduces operational expenditure by saving on the cost of training required to manage the network efficiently
- Provides access to a management portal where the parameters such as availability, performance and bandwidth utilization can be monitored
- Relieves users from burdensome tasks such as follow-up with service providers
- Establishes solid service level commitments for ensuring quality of service

DRC

Disaster Recovery Center

The Disaster Recovery Center (DRC) is a collection of key IT assets that are critical to the business operations of ITA and information assets of other related public sector organizations.

It houses a centralized business engine and repository for mission critical information and is also the hub for mission critical IT applications and corporate data.

Project Benefits

- Provides business continuity, improved efficiency and reduced costs
- Improves the integration and scalability of applications
- Provides access to secure e-services at all times
- Protects Confidentiality, Integrity, Availability and Privacy of citizen data

Innovation and Support Center

The Innovation and Support Center (ISC) has been established by ITA to provide for ICT incubators of local entrepreneurs and nurture skill and knowledge transfer within the community.

The first center, established in association with Microsoft Corporation, houses consultants who work with a local team to identify, design and implement new innovative solutions to benefit the Government of Oman.

A technical support unit will be established to provide service at three levels namely: web-based, call center based and premier in-field service.

Project Benefits

- Creates jobs opportunities for local Omanis and provides exposure to international best practices, processes and systems
- Creates the opportunity to work closely on projects with consultants (continuous on-the-job knowledge transfer)
- Provides readiness and specialized training programs on infrastructure, support and applications
- Provides technical support services to Government organizations on Microsoft products

Government Training

The National IT Training & Awareness Framework (NITTA) initiative is a governmental nation-wide eOman initiative aimed at developing information communication technology skills, capability and increasing ICT awareness and proficiency within the Government and the community.

The Government IT Training and Certification (GITTC) is one of the projects under NITTA. It aims to provide internationally recognized digital literacy certification to all civil service employees in a phased manner during the period 2008 - 2011.

Project Benefits

- Improves the skills and performance of civil servants
- Empowers civil servants under the Ministry of Civil Services with ICT knowledge and skills to enable delivery of public sector e-services
- Gives an equal chance of training for all civil servants
- Helps ITA utilize GITC findings relating to infrastructure, Processes, scheduling and observations for other training programs

Standards Framework

ITA documents, reviews and publishes Standards Framework for ITA.

It also documents, reviews and publishes XML Messaging Schema guidelines, develops the Standards Management Manual and implements the Community of Interest (COI) Development Methodology.

It ensures seamless integration of e-services from public sector entities by establishing the Interoperability Framework, the IP Schema and IP Schema Messaging Guidelines by forming working groups consisting of relevant members from various offices of ITA.

Project Benefits

- Adopts and complies with International standards and related guidelines and specifications
- Ensures interoperability within applications across the enterprise and government
- Ensures platform independence and vendor neutrality for ensuring compatibility with different technologies
- Increases flexibility and reduces risk so that applications will become easier to manage, maintain and re-design
- Ensures robustness, quality and durability of applications
- Makes efficient use of existing resources by ensuring re-use of existing applications
- Improves communication amongst project teams due to compliance with widely adopted, mature industry and technology standards

Information Security Management Framework

The Information Security Management Framework is part of the overall ITA standards framework and has been derived based on a structured collection of independent guidelines, processes and practices and primarily from the Information Security Management System Standard ISO 27001.

The framework aims to ensure the protection of information assets from unauthorized access to or modification information, whether in storage, processing, or transit. It also aims to protect against the denial of service to authorized users or the provision of service to unauthorized users, including those measures necessary to detect, document and counter such threats.

The framework is based on existing accepted standards, guidelines, and collections of practices and reflects the behavior of an initial community of high performing organizations. Both business and government organizations can implement the framework with practices they choose or are required to use for their market sector and country.

Project Benefits

- Creates a secure and organized working environment
- Protects information and information assets
- Reduces internal and external security breaches
- Creates confidence among staff and clients when running business operations
- Integrates disaster recovery / business continuity
- Prevents an information security incident from occurring
- Detects an incident occurring and measure its effects
- Responds to an incident and minimize business damage
- Embeds continuous improvement in information security processes
- Complies with rules, laws and regulations

e-transactions Law

The Law of Electronic Transactions aims to legalize the use of electronic transactions. It is designed to ensure that a transaction is not invalid simply because it took place by means of electronic form of communication.

Project Benefits

- Facilitates the use of electronic transactions
- Promotes business and the community's confidence in the use of electronic transactions
- Provides protection for the various entities in the use of Information and Communication Technology for official and personal communication and transactions
- Addresses key issues such as recognition for electronic signatures, admissibility and evidential value of data messages and electronic payments validity
- Protects privacy of individuals involved in electronic transactions

The National PC initiative

The National PC initiative aims to address two main issues in ITA's strategy, namely, capacity building and ICT sector enhancement.

The programme intends to build capacity in the general population by creating a PC bundle offer that is affordable, provides value and includes a basic training module. The latter is designed to get the citizen off to a 'fast start' in his ability to use the core system and the Internet.

This initiative will also contribute to ICT sector enhancement by developing a locally based capability to deliver associated services (hardware, training, others) and software.

The project aims to increase PC and Internet penetration while building a local ICT industry in the provision of PCs and its maintenance related services.

It is expected to provide better employment for existing educated, unemployed Omani citizens and in turn build the Sultanate's knowledge economy

International Relations

ITA liaises with Regional and International organizations in matters related to ICT. It is the focal point of World Summit Information Society (WSIS) which is under auspices of the United Nations (UN).

The WSIS body was set up by the UN especially to oversee all ICT related issues in member countries and try to bridge the digital divide gap of member countries. As a focal point of WSIS, ITA is responsible of the technical and logistic arrangements of Oman's representation in WSIS events; conferences, workshops and exhibitions.

ITA publishes the ITA Digital Society Report for showcasing ITA projects and the Sultanate as a whole. The role of ITA is vital in monitoring international and regional publications reporting on Oman's ICT status and undertakes activities to compile ICT Core Indicators under the WSIS - Geneva declaration of Principles, the Plan of Action for all member countries.

Project benefits

- Provides a structured reporting mechanism to International Agencies on ICT matters
- Compiles and publishes ICT core indicators which will help in planning and decision making
- Provides a comprehensive image about the level of ICT penetration and the use of technology within the Sultanate
- Bridges the digital divide by disseminating data online free for access
- Updates the Plan of Action database with IT projects from the Sultanate in line with WSIS action plan

Community Knowledge Centre

The National IT Training & Awareness Framework (NITTA) initiative is a governmental nation-wide eOman initiative aimed at developing information communication technology skills, capability and increasing ICT awareness and proficiency within the Government and the community.

The Community IT Training Project aims to provide opportunities to the citizens of Oman in order for them to fully participate in a digital, knowledge-based society.

The initiative aims to deliver digital literacy training programs to the community through the use of Community Knowledge Centers that will be established in all the governorates and various regions of the Sultanate.

Project Benefits

- Reduces computer illiteracy and provides ICT training opportunities to all citizens of Oman
- Creates employment opportunities for the youth of Oman
- Creates adequate ICT awareness in order to prepare the community for a knowledge society