

A RISING STAR

Egypt emerges as a project management force in the Middle East.

BY RANIA AL-MAGHRABY, ITIL, PMP

Egypt is a country with deep roots, excellent geographic location and many diverse resources that enable its bright present and future. And, as it is in many locations around the world, project management is growing in Egypt, both on the individual practitioner level and on the organizational level.

The number of Project Management Professional (PMP)SM certificants in Egypt as of December 2008 is approximately 1,400—with a long waiting list of exam takers, according to the PMI MENA Chapter in Cairo, Egypt. The number of trainees and credential holders is growing rapidly as awareness of the positive impacts of applying project management practices grows. The PMP[®] credential is recognized, valued and trusted in the Egyptian marketplace. But the standard qualification alone isn't enough, making experience and practice essential.

At the organizational level, a number of local and multinational organizations are launching or considering a project management office to act as a central point for orchestrating project management activities in a managed and controlled way. Xceed, a major Egyptian outsourcing provider, has established a programs office department aimed at using “project management and supportive functions to deliver state-of-the-art projects to its customers,” says Mohamed Ossama, PMP, programs director at Xceed.

The Egyptian government also is keen to follow project management practices in its local administrative and development projects. Thanks to a huge e-government project, for example, users can tap into an online portal to apply for, and receive, governmental and administrative services.

Not all sectors are at the same project management maturity level in Egypt, though. IT and construction, for example, are more mature than other sectors, such as manufacturing. Compared to other countries in the region,



Egypt falls in the middle range, after the Arabian Gulf countries, where more industrial applications mandate the practice of professional project management.

Foreign Influx

One of the key catalysts for improving project management practices in Egypt is the increasing foreign investment in the country.

“Project management is essential in Egypt because of several reasons. The first is the interest of foreign corporations in Egypt to introduce a base for their operations,” says El Namaki, Ph.D., professor, founder and former dean of Maastricht School of Management, the Netherlands, and currently president of the Drucker Society for Gulf States, Dubai, United Arab Emirates.

The Egyptian marketplace holds great promise for foreign investment, especially in the outsourcing field, perhaps most evident in business process and call center outsourcing. In October 2008, Egypt was named the outsourcing destination of the year by the British National Outsourcing Association.

The growing list of IT multinationals investing in Egypt—including Vodafone, Wipro, Satyam, Teleperformance, IBM, Microsoft, SQS and Valeo—is another testament to the country's unwavering efforts to establish itself as a modern business location.

The bottom line is that Egypt is a very strong player and rising star in the project management arena. By increasing awareness among the community, the profession will improve even more in the country. **PM**

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