

Press release

MCIT Supervises the Implementation of EDUEgypt at Egyptian Universities

Cairo, 31 October 2009

Ministry of Information and Communications Technology (MCIT) has supervised a field research undertaken by a number of specialized international companies. The research analyzed the gap between students' readiness and IT companies' expectations.

The research overseen by MCIT contributed to the creation of EDUEgypt, a training program for Egyptian undergraduates that qualifies them to join the business process outsourcing (BPO) field.

The above process lies under the State's plan for boosting higher education to conform to the employment market constant development.

In this respect, a cooperation protocol had been signed between MCIT and Ministry of Higher Education and Scientific Research to introduce an "employability" skills program in the higher education stage.

The protocol outlines a general framework and an executive plan to conduct undergraduate training on soft skills, foreign languages and technical competence. The project aims at enhancing the employability of the Egyptian universities' graduates.

Minister of Communications and Information Technology Dr. Tarek Kamel stated that the Egyptian Government was keen to take effective measures through such a leading model to create thousands of distinguished job opportunities for Egypt's youth nationwide.

This target, he added, could be achieved through linking education to the employment market as well as meeting the actual needs of BPO through training university graduates on the skills needed for local and international companies.

For his part, Minister of Higher Education and Scientific Research Dr. Hani Helal stated that the effective cooperation between the two ministries has

been materialized in signing a number of agreements to raise the quality of education in Egypt and catch up with the standard of education in developing countries.

EDUEgypt has been one of the mechanisms of carrying out the strategy of MCIT to put Egypt on the map of countries operating in BPO. Such a strategy depends on attracting more foreign investments through facilitating thousands of well-trained human calibers.

Information Technology Institute (ITI) Director Dr. Mohamed Salem noted that the idea of the training program is based on training students before they graduate, instead of waiting for the post graduation stage, to meet the needs of the job market in Egypt and abroad.

Information Technology Industry Development Agency (ITIDA) CEO Dr. Hazem Abdelazim pointed out that EDUEgypt is a major pillar for attracting more direct foreign investments in IT.

Dr. Abdelazim added that the program facilitates for students the opportunity to acquire the skills required for working in this vital field.

ITIDA offers the necessary financial support for carrying out the program. The agency also coordinates with other parties as to undertaking the program strategy. A number of leading international companies like Firstsource, Infosys and IBM provide the training.

ITIDA Board Member Counselor Amin Khairallah said the program proves the information and communication technology (ICT) sector's keenness to benefit from the experience of international companies specialized in training professionals and human calibers.

Counselor Khairallah added that cooperation with such companies highly contributes to helping Egyptian trainers acquire international experience, which is positively reflected on the level of students enrolled in EDUEgypt. The first phase of EDUEgypt kicked off in the second semester of the academic year 2007/2008.

It included five faculties at Cairo and Ain Shams universities. A total of 3000 students were enrolled in the program. Only 12% of the program graduates haven't got jobs yet. Companies are followed up for finding suitable jobs for them.

The second phase of the program started in the first semester of the academic year 2008/2009. It encompassed 5000 final year students at 22 faculties in the seven universities of Cairo, Ain Shams, Helwan, Alexandria,

Zagazig, Mansoura and Assuit. This phase was featured by cooperation with three leading BPO companies in India.

These companies prepared and qualified 240 Egyptian trainees to work as trainers at Egyptian universities.

Training and testing processes for this stage were over in September. The employment meeting and program finalization is scheduled to be held in the second half of November, 2009.

Egyptian BPO companies were present from the very first step of designing the program. They contributed to the second phase during meetings with students and admission tests as to generate a recruitment mechanism that fits their needs. Most of these companies are expected to take part in an employment fair due in November.

This phase has witnessed a challenge due to the number of new colleges that joined the program. The success of this phase led to the expansion of the third phase.

In view of the program's achievements, the third phase will be carried out over three stages.

Stage one targets 10,000 students where the training content focuses on raising the students' language skills, and in turn, qualifying them to make the most of the program.

Stage two is dedicated to the fourth academic year. It targets the universities of Cairo, Ain Shams, Helwan, Alexandria, Mansoura, Zagazig, Suez Canal, Tanta, Assuit and Sohag. The program is offered this year to 10,000 students at 32 faculties in the 10 universities.

The third stage of the program, held during the time from October 16th, 2009 – October 25th, 2009, started by introductory meetings with more than 35,000 students attended by representatives of companies and former EDUEgypt graduates.

The meetings were followed by admission tests that started on October 24th. Tests will continue till November 13th, 2009. Based on the results of the tests, 10,000 students will be selected to join the program.

Training in the first semester will kick off on December 1st. It will be resumed on February 7th, 2010 for eight weeks. Another six weeks of training will be offered during summer starting June 28th.

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About ITIDA:

The Information Technology Industry Development Agency (ITIDA) is a governmental entity affiliated to Egypt's Ministry of Communications and Information Technology. It is responsible for growing and developing Egypt's position as a leading global outsourcing location by attracting foreign direct investment to the industry and maximizing the exports of IT services and applications.

Located in the heart of the modern business environment at Smart Village, the six hundred acre business park on the outskirts of Cairo, ITIDA is a self sustainable entity that drives the IT industry in Egypt and raises awareness among the Egyptian people of the benefits and use of ICT to advance socio-economic welfare of the whole community.

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