

# Poised for transformation

*Oman could leverage the IT knowledge by replicating the Indian model through knowledge hubs and knowledge society, says Durga Prasad, Director and CEO, Bahwan CyberTek. Excerpt from an Interview:*

## **How has Bahwan Cybertek performed in the last two years against the background of the global financial crisis?**

In the last two years, we were not different from the rest of the industry in our predominant markets in the USA and the Middle East. Our strategic initiatives taken prior to the global crisis such as organising our business lines into industry verticals, hybrid business models, product initiatives, GEO expansion and most importantly creating sustained value for our clients have resulted in BCT recording a CAGR of 25.67 per cent, which is far higher than the industry average, during 2007-2010. Having delivered solutions in 20 countries and with 1350 associates world over, Bahwan Cybertek has emerged as the largest privately held software company in the region. In this period BCT acquired more than 50 new customers.

## **What is your opinion about Oman's development in the ICT sector?**

By releasing its Vision 2020, in the year 1995, the government of Oman kick started a surge of changes in various areas, particularly the ICT sector. There have been enhancements in the ICT, infrastructure and human resources leading to a sustainable development of the national economy. It can also lay the foundation to become a mature entity capable of addressing the needs of its neighbours



through an IP led approach.

**India is a leader in IT. How can Oman benefit from the expertise of India?**

India has become a knowledge hub for the western countries. And Oman could leverage the IT knowledge by replicating the Indian model through knowledge hubs and knowledge society. The Indian leadership in IT has been predominantly built by the knowledge society created by the pool of science and engineering graduates built over many decades and conscious investments made by the government and private sector to create, rather than import, technology. Oman's investments

led to building our centre of excellence in Chennai, India, with capabilities to build world class products and to address mission critical applications globally, which resulted in creating a customer base of 330+ in twenty countries.

The centre of excellence has built the knowledge repository based on solutions delivered by us globally, while building the talent in parallel for the four industry verticals (domains) that we address. Our Oracle practice, based in Chennai, has been recognised by Oracle by rating us to be their Platinum partners, the highest level of relationship with Oracle. Our Cuecent research and development centre

the budgeted plan of RO6.38bn. It is definitely poised for a faster growth considering the Digital Oman initiative and strategy by Omani government to diversify the economy. The IT hardware market is estimated to be around \$190mn, while the software market is at \$62mn and the services market is at \$75mn.

**Can you name some future trends in the IT sector?**

Very strong trends are emerging in the IT industry. They could change the way IT works and the way it would be delivered. Smart sourcing is likely to increase manifold. A higher proportion of IT business will flow into low-cost nations and will gain a greater proportion of the international technology market. Oman could leverage this for its neighbouring market where costs are higher and skilled resources could be created in Oman. Creation of intellectual property will be absolutely key to the knowledge economy. Technology factors such as the rise of social computing, increasing environmental concerns, communication convergence and integration will continuously transform the landscape and evolution of technology.

We would see a lot of technology developments related to the use of consumer-based products such as mobile phones and wireless internet access. Androids and iPhones would rule the future application space.

There is a greater opportunity for the global IT industry leading to technology-enabled business transformation, innovation and technology-intensive products and services across all sectors. In this scenario, some of the most promising technologies that would emerge are Software as a Service (SaaS), cloud computing and virtualisation. ■

*The ICT sector has the potential to become a good contributor to the GDP and provide great employment opportunities to a large section of the population*

in building knowledge society and in the education sector can lead to creating knowledge assets for the country provided these resources are deployed in creating value out of Oman than just supporting the import of solutions.

**What about your India operations?**

We were the first and probably the only Omani software company to have been assessed at CMMI Level 5 standards, by Carnegie Mellon, the highest level of accreditation for a software company in the industry for quality assurance. This commitment to standards has

is based here as well. Through our remote infrastructure management contracts we manage customers' data centres and applications in the USA and ME from Chennai. The Indian Business Unit formed recently caters to the local market and has won more than 20 customers within the last couple of years.

**What is the value of the IT market in Oman? Is it overvalued or undervalued?**

The total size of Oman IT market in 2010 as estimated by Business Monitor International (BMI) report stands at around \$327mn. This would be approximately 2 per cent of the GDP in 2010 at