

Professional Services Companies

A qualified professional can form a professional services company individually or jointly with one or more professionals. It is also possible to form a joint professional company with a foreign company. Omani and GCC nationals are permitted to form a professional services company either individually or jointly.

The four main categories of professional services companies are mentioned below:

1. Engineering Consultancy
2. Audit and Accountancy
3. Legal Consultancy*
4. Other Consultancy Offices/Companies (Economic/ Management / Finance/Marketing etc)

General Conditions/Regulations

The conditions /regulations for registering a professional services company are mentioned below:

a. Individual Professional Services Offices

An owner of a consultancy office applying for registration shall fulfill the following conditions:

- Should be an Omani or GCC national and he/she shall not be employed anywhere else. This restriction is not applicable for activities classified under 'Other Consultancy Offices'.
- Should be holder of bachelor's degree in the respective field.
- Should have at least, five years experience in the field for graduates – three years for Master's Degree holders. In the case of Audit/Accountancy offices the minimum experience required is two years. The experience condition is not mandatory for economic consultancy offices.

b. Joint Professional Services Companies

More than once individual, Omani or GCC Nationals, can own a consultancy company jointly. The conditions to be fulfilled to register a joint consultancy company are:

- All the owners to be Omani or GCC nationals. They shall not be employed elsewhere.
- The qualification and experience requirements for each of the partners are the same as indicated for individual offices.

c. Joint Professional Service Companies with Foreign participation

An individual and a foreign company can form a joint professional services company. The regulations to register such companies include:

- Omani partner shall be authorized to practice such profession and shall not be employed elsewhere.
- Share of Omani partner shall not be less than 35% of the capital.
- Foreign office shall have 10 years experience in the same profession.
- Authorized representative of the foreign office should be in Oman as Resident Manager.
- The partnership shall take the form of a professional company subject to the following rules.
 - The company shall adopt any of the commercial companies form except the joint venture and the joint stock companies.
 - The provisions of the Commercial Companies Law shall apply.
 - The provision of the Foreign Business and Investment Law shall not apply to these companies.

Specific conditions/regulations

a. Engineering Consultancy

- Resident Manager in the Sultanate shall have at least a Bachelor's Degree and ten-years experience after graduation.
- Foreign engineers employed shall have at least five years experience.
- Omani Nationals, holding a Bachelor's Degree in engineering or an equivalent degree may be employed in engineering consultancy offices regardless of the experience requirement.

b. Audit/Accountancy

- Resident Manager in the Sultanate shall have a ten-years experience in the field in the case of graduates or six years experience for Masters Degree holders or three years experience for PhD holders.
- In all cases Resident Manager should be a holder of a Chartered Accountant's certificate or its equivalent.
- If the Manager is an Omani citizen, he shall then satisfy the conditions of the Omani Accountants Association according to the law regulating the profession.
- Foreigners employed in such offices shall have five years experience.

c. Other Consultancy

Resident Manager in the Sultanate shall have ten-years experience in the field or six years experience for Masters Degree holders or three years experience for PhD holders.

Licence/Registration for Professional Services Office/Company

The Ministry of Commerce and Industry issues the registration documents for professional services companies, except for legal consultancy Department of lawyers Affairs at the Ministry of Justice, is the authority to issue permission for the legal consultancy services offices.

The Crafts and Professions Section, Commercial Registration Secretariat located on the ground floor of MOCI is responsible for licensing and regulating professional services companies. The contact details are:

Contact: Head of Crafts and Professions Section
Commercial Registration Secretariat
Ministry of Commerce and Industry,
P.O. B ox 550, PC: 113, Muscat
Tel: +968 – 774166

Location: MBD Area, Muscat

I. Registration of Professional Services Companies – Ministry of Commerce and Industry.

The registration procedure is almost the same for all types of professional service companies, irrespective of their activity and location. However, the requirement for documents varies with the legal status.

a. Individual Professional Services Offices

Documents to be submitted:

- Application form including specimen signature form
- Copies of Passport /ID card
- Copy of degree certificate with mark sheets and Curriculum Vitae of the applicant indicating work history.
- Experience certificates as applicable.
- Declaration in the standard format stating that the applicant has not been convicted for nay misdemeanor or breach of trust.
- In the case of GCC Nationals, a declaration stating that the applicant is not employed with any government/ private agency is required.
- For GCC Nationals, copy of lease agreement, or any other document is required to prove that the applicant is a permanent resident of the Sultanate.

Procedure

- Submit the above documents to the head of the department mentioned above.
- Applications for engineering consultancy and audit offices are referred to the committee for evaluation and recommendations. The committee meeting is held depending upon the number of cases.
- An approval/rejection letter is issued depending upon the evaluation results.
- Applicant is required to fill in the registration documents.
- Registration free of RO 50 irrespective of the activity, is to be paid.
- The department issues the registration certificates

Validity: A period of 5 years from the date of issue.

b. Joint Professional Services Companies

Documents to be submitted:

- Application form including specimen signature form.
- Copies of Passport /ID Card of all partners.
- Copy of degree certificates and mark sheets of all partners
- Experience certificates and C.V's of all partners
- Copy of the registration certificate of the foreign partner in their home country and memorandum of association or basic systems, incase of foreign partner.
- In the case of a Foreign Company, a letter from the authority concerned from the country of origin stating that the company is still registered and that its experience is not less than 10 years in the same field.
- A list of projects undertaken by the foreign partner during the past years.
- Authorization from the foreign partner to the Resident Manager who would represent them in Oman.
- Copy of degree and experience certificates of the authorized Resident Manager
- Declaration in the standard format stating that the Omani partner(s) was /were not convicted for any misdemeanour or breach of trust.

Procedure

- Procedure is the same as in the case of individual companies mentioned above.
- In addition to registration documents of Professional Services Companies, the department issues Commercial Registration and related documents.
- Fee for joint companies is RO 250 for 100% Omani companies and RO 500 for foreign shareholding.

Validity: 5 years from date of issue.