

PARTNERSHIP IS THE WAY WE WORK

The Skills Framework for the Information Age was produced through a collaborative effort by members of the IT industry to satisfy the often-expressed need for a standardised way of describing IT skills. The SFIA Foundation was set up as a not-for-profit organisation to own and update SFIA. It was an early decision that an end user licence for the use of the English version of SFIA would be free of charge. SFIA had been produced by the industry, so the industry would have free access to it.

The concept was that The SFIA Foundation would be a minimal organisation with minimal costs, and that it would take care of ownership, distribution, maintenance and basic promotion of SFIA. The members are not permitted to take dividends. They were committed to giving financial support to SFIA, though the longer term aim was to break even.

The business model called for Accredited Partners, whose activities would promote SFIA, and for Accredited Consultants, who would provide support and advice to users.¹

SUCCESS

Since the launch of SFIA in June 2000 at the DTI Conference Centre, the growth of SFIA has exceeded all expectations. Many thousands of organisations in well over 100 countries have downloaded the framework. SFIA has been translated into Japanese and Chinese: a Spanish version for use in South America will be released in 2009.

The UK Government has adopted SFIA as its standard IT skills framework. Use of SFIA is also growing rapidly in local Government and is already well established in industry.

The International Professional Practice Partnership (IP3), a global initiative sponsored by the International Federation for Information Processing (IFIP), has adopted SFIA as the skills and competence reference for the international professional standard - the IP3P.

SFIA is used by the BCS for underpinning their assessment scheme for Chartered Information Technology Professionals.

The Australian and New Zealand Computer Societies use SFIA in similar ways.

SFIA is now an industry-wide phenomenon, whose presence tends to be assumed when managements discuss matters bearing on IT skills and professionalisms.

“SFIA provides a common, global language for describing professional IT skills. We are only at the beginning of the benefits for organisations using SFIA, and for suppliers providing related services.”



Donald H Taylor, Chairman of Learning and Skills Group, non-Executive Director of the Institute of IT Training and SFIA Council Member.

¹ Information about accreditation of consultants can be found on the SFIA web site

TALKING THE CLIENT'S LANGUAGE - SFIA

Partnership with The SFIA Foundation represents an opportunity for organisations offering products and services relevant to the management of IT capability to gain business leverage from this popular framework. Many organisations are now using SFIA: they expect that providers of HR-related services will have an understanding of the framework and how to use it. In particular they can:

- make some commercial exploitation of SFIA
- demonstrate awareness of this significant factor in IT management
- be seen as contributors and supporters of an industry-wide movement
- have their identities and contact details listed on the SFIA web site
- receive a complimentary ticket to the annual SFIA conference
- exhibit (space permitting) at the Partner's Exhibition attached to the SFIA Conference.

WHAT IT TAKES

If your organisation is active in this field and wishes to become an Accredited Partner of The SFIA Foundation, this is what it takes (prices are subject to VAT at the prevailing rate):

- A contribution of £1,000 per annum to The Foundation – this is formalised in a simple licence agreement
- Two members of staff trained in the concepts and usage of SFIA; this involves attendance on the official one-day SFIA workshop at a cost of £400 per head
- Provision of contact details for the SFIA web site

If you incorporate SFIA into a product and ship it as part of the product The Foundation might prefer a licence fee based on sales volumes.

The client's view: Leeds City Council

Implementing SFIA within the Council has contributed to significant improvements in staff satisfaction. 92% of staff now feel that they clearly understand what is expected of them in doing their job, and as the ICT unit has linked SFIA skills to relevant training opportunities this means that most staff believe there are opportunities to develop themselves further. Joanne Miklo, ICT Resources Manager states "Using SFIA to define your job roles can eliminate any ambiguity that exists between different jobs and ensure that staff focus on their core role. It also enables the organisation to determine where there are skills gaps and to address those that are a priority through a systematic approach." Joanne Miklo, Leeds City Council

A provider's view: Salary.com

SFIA represents a common language for IT professional skills. At Salary.com we've seen it transform our clients' IT departments, bringing clearer career planning, more focused training, and faster, smarter deployment of staff. Tom Sandman, Salary.com

SIGNING UP

Contact The Operations Manager, Ron McLaren at ops@sfia.org.uk