



山东电力建设第三工程公司  
SEPCOIII Electric Power Construction Corporation

**Customer:** SEPCOIII (JLT branch)

**Website:** [www.sepco3.com/english.asp](http://www.sepco3.com/english.asp)

**Customer Size:** 5,800 employees

**Country or Region:** United Arab Emirates and China

**Industry:** Power and utilities

**Partner:** LiveRoute

#### Customer Profile

Based in Qingdao, China, SEPCOIII designs and builds power plants around the world. The company currently has projects in China, the Middle East, India, and Africa.

#### Software and Services

- Microsoft Office 365
  - Microsoft Exchange Online
  - Microsoft Lync Online
  - Microsoft SharePoint Online
  - Microsoft Office 365 ProPlus

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## Energy Company Boosts Employee Productivity with Switch from Gmail to Office 365

**“We are so relieved to be using Office 365. It’s a great platform that we can rely on.”**

Pradeep Parmar, Director of Management Information Systems, SEPCOIII

SEPCOIII wanted to give its employees a single solution that they could use to communicate and collaborate with other employees, partners, and customers around the world. Employees had been using Gmail for external communication, but found it unreliable and cumbersome. By implementing Microsoft Office 365, SEPCOIII now has a dependable and robust cloud-based solution that significantly reduces costs and boosts employee productivity.

#### Business Needs

Founded in 1985, SEPCOIII was originally the electric utility company for the Shandong province of China. The company eventually shifted into designing and building power plants across China. In 2011, SEPCOIII decided to take its business global, by opening a branch in Dubai in the United Arab Emirates to lead the company’s international expansion.

Employees had been using a combination of IBM Lotus Notes for internal communication and individual Google Mail (Gmail) accounts for external communication, but it wasn’t meeting their needs. “Gmail was very unreliable, and employees were losing email,” says Pradeep Parmar, Director of Management Information Systems for SEPCOIII. “Most

found the calendar feature cumbersome and weren’t even using it. Employees were frustrated that the company didn’t have a stable, reliable email solution.”

In addition, Gmail provided only limited offline functionality, making it difficult for employees to work at project sites, where there was often no Internet connection. “Because files were being transferred by email, it was difficult to get things done at project sites where there was no Internet access,” says Parmar. “As a result, it was taking days and weeks to complete tasks that should have taken only a few hours.”

SEPCOIII employees had been storing business-related files on their own laptops that they brought to work. This made it difficult to keep company information

secure. It also meant that documents were dispersed all across the organization, making it difficult for employees to access information that they needed. And when employees left the company, SEPCOIII would lose information stored on their computers.

As it grew, the company decided it needed a single, modern solution that would make it easy for employees to communicate and collaborate with other employees, partners, and customers—no matter where they are based. “As IT is not our core business, we needed a solution that required minimum capital investment yet offered world-class capability, reliability, and availability,” says Parmar. “It also needed to scale up as the company grew internationally.”

## Solution

The first step was to choose a new solution for the Dubai regional office. Given employees’ negative experiences with Gmail, Parmar immediately ruled out Google Apps. He instead compared an on-premises Office solution with Microsoft Office 365 in the cloud, choosing the latter because of cost and the ability to work efficiently from anywhere.

In June 2012, the company enlisted LiveRoute, a member of the Microsoft Partner Network, to deploy Office 365 in its Dubai office. A subscription-based offering from Microsoft, Office 365 includes Microsoft Exchange Online, SharePoint Online, Lync Online, and Office 365 ProPlus. “The migration went very smoothly,” says Faisal Zafar, Director of Operations at LiveRoute. With Exchange Online, the Dubai regional office now has a professional email system that enables employees to communicate reliably with other employees, partners, and customers all over the world.

Employees are using SharePoint Online as a central portal in which to store documents. Using My Sites, a feature of SharePoint Online, they can access documents offline at project sites and have the changes automatically synchronized once they reconnect to the Internet. LiveRoute has also built business solutions on top of SharePoint Online, moving SEPCOIII to a paperless office. “The company was able to reduce tasks that took days down to hours,” says Zafar.

Employees are using Lync Online to hold videoconferences and collaborate virtually with other employees and subcontractors at project sites. And they’re using Office 365 ProPlus to easily create and share documents.

SEPCOIII continues to move employees to Office 365, with the goal of moving all 5,800 employees by the end of 2013. “We are so relieved to be using Office 365,” Parmar says. “It’s a great platform that we can rely on. Everyone is really happy because now they can access information online or offline, from almost any device anywhere.”

## Benefits

By moving from Gmail and Lotus Notes to Office 365, SEPCOIII now has a robust and reliable email and collaboration solution that helps improve productivity and provides better access to company information. With the switch, the company has significantly lowered IT costs and decreased travel costs. Specifically, SEPCOIII is seeing these benefits:

**Improved productivity.** With the offline capabilities of Office 365, workers can now stay productive even when there’s no Internet connection. In addition,

employees no longer worry about losing email and have begun using shared calendars to quickly schedule meetings. And with Lync, employees can collaborate more efficiently with people at project sites, whether they’re in Egypt, Saudi Arabia, or China. “They can share their desktop, their documents, and their presentations,” Parmar says. “All of this is helping people to be far more productive.”

**Better access to information.** Contracts, design plans, and purchase order documents now are stored within a central portal, giving employees access to the documents they need, when they need them. “Now our information is organized and always available within the company,” Parmar says. “If someone leaves the company, it doesn’t matter. If someone loses their laptop, it doesn’t matter. The information is stored in a world-class data center that people can access wherever they are, from any device.”

**Reduced IT costs.** By implementing Office 365, SEPCOIII reduced IT hardware and administrative costs at its Dubai office by an estimated 80 percent over a six-year period. “Rather than purchasing our own servers and building a large multi-skilled IT team, our information is in the cloud and managed by Microsoft,” says Parmar. “And the service is available for a predictable monthly cost that’s based on what people actually use.”

**Lower travel costs.** SEPCOIII has been able to replace the majority of in-person meetings with videoconferences, significantly reducing travel requirements. “When you think about the time people spend to organize their travel and then the travel time itself, the savings are enormous,” says Parmar.