

## ICDL GCC Foundation is recognized for its successes in Gulf States at annual ECDL CEO Forum

GCC among the fastest growing regions in the world to adopt our computer literacy program says Jamil Ezzo.

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ICDL GCC Foundation, the regional office for the European Computer Driving Licence (ECDL) Foundation and the governing body of the International Computer Driving Licence (ICDL) program in the Gulf States was acknowledged for its successes in making the ICDL certification program a standard in the GCC region at the annual ECDL/ICDL CEO Forum held recently in Istanbul, Turkey.

The annual Forum is the principal gathering of the worldwide ICDL community, where representatives from ICDL member countries meet and discuss various topics including the progress of the ICDL programs and development of new computer literacy certification. The Forum provides an opportunity for the ICDL community to analyse ICDL case studies, sharing participants' expertise in the implementation of the ICDL program; and building upon the successes of each other's experiences. This year's Forum was organised under the theme: "Togetherness - building towards the future".

Recognising the success of ICDL in the GCC Countries, Jamil Ezzo, Director General, ICDL GCC Foundation, was invited to share his expertise at the Forum. Speaking at the event, Ezzo, said, "The GCC is one among the top regions in the world which have registered a dramatic increase in the implementation of the ICDL program. By working closely with policymakers in GCC countries, we were successful in making ICDL part of the education system and IT literacy programs. The ICDL program had also garnered overwhelming response from several sectors in the Arab World, in a bid to accelerate the pace of establishing an e-society in the region."

"In general, Arab countries lagged behind the western world in adopting IT as a key component of social and economic development. Considerable progress was made towards spreading computer literacy ever since the launch of ICDL program in the region. The key to our success in the GCC lies in the effectiveness and cohesiveness of the ICDL program while catering to the region's cultural and linguistic practices. This prompted key policymakers to incorporate the ICDL program in the education system and government employee training programs of their respective countries. We aim to sustain the momentum generated by ICDL and offer every citizen of the over 35 million people living in the GCC to become computer literate and be part of today's digital society," added Ezzo.

During the ECDL CEO Forum, the four-millionth ICDL Skills Card was presented to Dr. Abd?f Şener, State Minister and Deputy of Prime Minister of Turkey. Speaking during the event, Dr. Abd?f Şener said, "The future of society is dependent on creating an information-based social order that is based on international standards. The certificate provided by ECDL Foundation, is an internationally accepted proof of achieving that goal." The Minister also said that it is the goal of the Turkish Ministry of National

Education, to ensure that all teachers and students in Turkey are equipped with ICDL certification.

ICDL, with over 4 million participants, is by far the world's largest vendor-neutral end-user computer skills certification and is internationally recognised as the global IT proficiency benchmark. David Carpenter, Director and CEO, ECDL Foundation said, "ECDL is dedicated to raise the level of computer skills among the members of society worldwide. Being present in around 136 countries and in 36 languages, ICDL is the world's leading certification program. GCC countries have been progressing well and through our partnership with the local governments, we are on track towards achieving a goal of establishing e-society in the region and providing access for all to Information Society."

The UK National Health Service (UK NHS), the second largest employer in the world after Indian Railways, adopted ECDL as the reference standard for basic IT skills in 2001. Carol Hulm, ECDL Service Manager, UK NHS, speaking about implementation of the ECDL program in the organization said, "With the increased use of IT in the NHS it was important that staff were equipped with basic IT skills. The reference standard used by ECDL ensured that the staffers were able to adapt quickly to new IT and information systems and get quicker, easier access to the information they need to support patient care. Over the course of the next five years we expect to certify around 450,000 out of the 1.2 million NHS employees in ICDL Program."

Stephen Nolan, Executive Director, Global schools and Communication Initiative (GeSCI), a United Nations ICT Task Force endeavour, also attended the ECDL CEO Forum and spoke about GeSCI's mission to collaborate to improve education, empower communities and accelerate socio-economic development, through the widespread deployment of ICTs in schools, in a role similar to that played by ECDL. GeSCI works with local partners to facilitate the development of national education strategies, which are based on end-to-end Information and Communication Technologies for Education solutions, thereby supporting the achievement of the Millennium Development Goals by 2015.

#### **About ICDL**

International Computer Driving License (ICDL), is an internationally recognized computer proficiency standard that is owned by the European Computer Driving License (ECDL) and introduced by the UNESCO's Cairo Office (UCO) for Arab states in 2001. ICDL is gaining increasing acceptance in the Middle East, with several governments adopting as a requirement to their employees. The ICDL program exists in over 132 countries, and is offered in 32 languages, including Arabic. The programs offered are all based on one standard syllabus and question set. There are more than 15,000 centres worldwide, and over 10 million exams have been taken globally since the launch of the program.

#### **About ICDL GCC Foundation**

ICDL GCC Foundation was created by the ECDL Foundation, the not-for-profit global governing body of the ECDL and ICDL member countries dedicated to helping raise the general level of computer skills in societies and providing access for all to the information society, to serve the to the Gulf Cooperation Council (GCC) States with their implementation of ICDL and for providing them with localised support to ensure quality of ICDL programs. The ICDL-GCC Foundation is the sole ICDL licensee and accreditation body that is responsible to support ICDL accredited training and testing centres in the GCC. It also acts as the reviewing and approving body for the local adaptation of ICDL programs, including authorizing the sale of Arabic ICDL content and testing material in the region.

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