

ICDL in Saudi Arabia receives Presidential recognition

ECDL Foundation recognizes institutions from the Public, Private and Academic sectors in Saudi Arabia and the region

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The International Computer Driving Licence (ICDL) program in Saudi Arabia received a high profile boost during the Presidential Trade Mission of Mrs. Mary McAleese, President of the Republic of Ireland, to the Kingdom of Saudi Arabia and the Hashemite Kingdom of Jordan in February 2006.



Names from left to right: Gerry Murphy, Director, International Sales & Partnering, Enterprise Ireland. Jamil Ezzo, Director General, ICDL GCC Foundation. H.E. Dr. Ali Nasir Al-Ghafis, Governor of the General Organization of Technical Education and Vocational Training (GOTEVOT). H.E. Mary McAleese, President of Ireland. Dr Martin McAleese. Dr Sulaiman Al-Dhalaan, Managing Director, ICDL Saudi Arabia. David Carpenter, CEO, ECDL Foundation. Michael Ahern T.D., Irish Minister for Trade & Commerce

The Presidential visit provided an opportunity for some of the leading supporters of ICDL in the Kingdom to be recognised for their exceptional effort in promoting nationwide digital literacy programmes and advocacy of the ICDL concept in Saudi Arabia and the region.

ICDL is recognised in Saudi Arabia as the standard for digital literacy and is the most widely adopted end-user computer skills certification in the Kingdom with over 100,000 Candidates undergoing the program. As the leading IT certification in the Gulf region, the ICDL program has contributed to a significant rise in digital literacy levels across the Gulf States, including Saudi Arabia. During 2005, over 37 per cent of the government organizations in the region have adopted the ICDL program as the benchmark for their employees' computer skills which has increased efficiency, driven up the quality of services and reduced costs of IT support. The ICDL programme has also been widely received by the academic sector in the region with more than 32,000 educators enrolled in the ICDL certification program last year alone.

During the Presidential visit, representatives from the European Computer Driving Licence Foundation (ECDL-F), the global governing body of the ICDL, as well as those from ICDL GCC Foundation, the governing body of ICDL in the Gulf region, and ICDL Saudi were invited to a Business Breakfast held in Riyadh attended by President McAleese.

Furthermore, a number of leading supporters of ICDL in Saudi Arabia were honoured with an invitation to the Presidential Business Breakfast in recognition of their ongoing support for digital literacy and the ICDL concept. Those honoured were H.E. Dr. Ali Nasir Al-Ghafis, Governor of the General Organisation of Technical Education and Vocational Training

(GOTEVOT) and Dr. Khaled H. Al-Angari, Deputy Governor of GOTEVOT.

In addition, ICDL Saudi used the occasion of the President's visit to recognise and present awards to six leading Saudi organisations for their invaluable support for the ICDL digital literacy program at an Awards ceremony held on February 12th.

The event, which was hosted by ICDL Saudi MD, Dr Sulaiman M. Al Dhalaan at the Marriott Hotel in Riyadh, was attended by more than 100 dignitaries including Princes, Deputy Ministers and Assistant Deputy Ministers, University Rectors and Vice-Rectors, Governors and Deputy Governors and senior figures in the government, military and private sectors. The guests of honour at the event were ECDL-F CEO, Mr David Carpenter, and ICDL GCC Foundation, Mr. Jamil Ezzo, the Director General for the Gulf region.

Mr. Ezzo, said, "The GCC region is considered the third in the world in terms of advancement in digital literacy. We were able to achieve this due to the unstinting support of the GCC governments and its policymakers to adopt the ICDL standard for digital literacy program of employees. However, we still believe there is much left to be accomplished in making the region ready for a viable eSociety. On behalf of the ICDL GCC Foundation, I would like to extend our appreciation to Her Excellency, Mrs. Mary McAleese, President of the Republic of Ireland for extending her support to our cause of spreading digital literacy in the region; we also congratulate all the digital literacy awards winners in Saudi Arabia."

Dr. Suleiman Al Dhalaan, Managing Director ICDL Saudi said, "The Kingdom of Saudi Arabia is undergoing rapid transformation in its drive to achieve a fully functional and viable e-society. ICDL programs achieved the outstanding success in the kingdom due to untiring efforts of ICDL GCC Foundation to mainstream IT literacy as a tool for development, and enhanced productivity. The Foundation is working closely with governmental organisations, educational institutions, and the public and private sectors to ensure that the ICDL program is widely adopted and geared towards enhancing people's personal and professional lives."

Six organisations in different categories were honoured for their contributions to raising digital literacy levels in the Kingdom through their support for the ICDL concept. All six have made ICDL certification mandatory for their employees/students.

The Technical Education Award was accepted by Governor H.E Dr. Ali Nasir Al-Ghafis on behalf of the General Organisation of Technical Education and Vocational Training (GOTEVOT). The Award for Universities was accepted by H.E Dr. Khaled S. Al-Sultan on behalf of King Fahed University of Petroleum and Minerals (KFUPM). The Private Training Centre Award was accepted by Shaikh Ahmad A. Rahman Al Taweel, Managing Director of the Al Faisal International Academy. The Award for Provincial Projects was presented to Madina e-Government and was accepted by Engineer Ibrahim Al Ahmadi, Undersecretary for Area Services and Head of the Executive e-services Desk. The Private Universities Award was accepted by College President, Dr. Ahmed M. Al-Eisa on behalf of Al Yamamah College. The e-Government in the Public Sector Award was accepted by HE Engineer Abdullah Al Mousa Vice President for IT of the Supreme Commission for Tourism.

Speaking at the Awards ceremony, ECDL-F CEO Mr. David Carpenter said, "The success of the ICDL concept in Saudi Arabia is a testament to the vision, commitment and hard work of all the partners involved. The ICDL concept has been embraced by the public, private sectors and the academic communities in the region who have recognised its benefits for citizens, businesses and society. Thanks to the energy and hard work of our ICDL team in the Gulf region,, the ICDL programme has become instrumental in raising levels of digital literacy in the various GCC countries. On the occasion of the State visit of Mrs. Mary McAleese, President of Ireland, to Saudi Arabia we take the opportunity to honour the efforts that our representatives and their partners in the region have exerted to extend the ICDL vision of knowledge based and IT literate societies around the world."