

Qatari Ministry of Municipal Affairs and Agriculture endorses ICDL global standard

ICDL program to improve IT skills of all Ministry employees

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The Ministry of Municipal Affairs and Agriculture (MMAA) in Qatar has signed a cooperation agreement with ICDL GCC Foundation, the governing body and the certification authority of the International Computer Driving Licence (ICDL) program in the Gulf States, by which the MMAA will endorse and deliver ICDL program for all its employees. The agreement was signed between H.E. Dr. Sultan Bin Hasan Al Dabet Al Dosari, Minister of Municipal Affairs and Agriculture and Jamil Ezzo, Director General, ICDL Foundation at an event held today (Sunday, 18 June 2006) at the Ministry in Doha in the presence of Fadel Hajes Al Kaabi, Director of the Development Institution, Department Super Intendent for Information Systems Department and executive Manger of the ICDL training centers.

Through this agreement, the MMAA, considered to be one of the largest service ministries in Qatar endorses ICDL as the benchmark for IT literacy and basic computer skills for all its employees. Under the terms of the cooperative agreement, ICDL GCC Foundation accredits two in-house training and testing centers within the ministry. ICDL GCC Foundation will also work closely with the ministry to manage the training, testing activities and the certification of around 2000 ministry employees initially.

Speaking at the signing ceremony, H.E. Dr Sultan Bin Hasan Al Dosari said, "The State of Qatar is undergoing growth and development. The Ministry's decision to adopt ICDL global digital literacy standard for its employees is part of our commitment to provide outstanding service to the country's rapidly growing economy. The Ministry is delighted to partner with a reputable organisation such as ICDL GCC Foundation, as we share with them, the same goals of spreading IT awareness in society."

The MMAA has chosen the ICDL program as part of its vision to enhance the competency of employees to better use the IT systems adopted by the ministry, increase interactivity with the public and raise the quality of the ministry's services. The move by the ministry is expected to have a major impact on the quality and timely completion of various projects in the country, greater streamlining of its processes and improving efficiencies of its staff members.

"IT solutions are central to the Ministry's functioning and over the years we have been adopting and implementing state-of-the-art Information Technology tools being hardware, software, methodologies and techniques. The ICDL program will have a direct impact on the workings of the department as we are convinced that it will improve the productivity of our staff and improve the quality of our service. In addition, the Ministry is totally committed to the e-Governance vision adopted by the Government of Qatar, and therefore adopting the ICDL program is an important step taken in the direction of deriving benefits from e-governance," Dr. Al Dosari added.

Jamil Ezzo, Director General, ICDL GCC Foundation, said: "The endorsement of the ICDL program by the Ministry of Municipal Affairs and Agriculture is yet another important step in the region wide acceptance of ICDL as a unified standard for computer literacy. Presently 37 per cent of government departments in the GCC region have chosen the ICDL and this partnership sends an affirmative message to other governmental entities in the region about the positive impact of adopting and implementing the ICDL program. Through this step, the Ministry has taken a step in leading governmental organisations in Qatar towards achieving excellence."

Fadel Al Kaabi said, "The move comes in line with our strategy to implement the vision of His Excellency the Minister of Municipal Affairs and Agriculture to develop the services of the Ministry through a comprehensive plan. Improving the capabilities and competencies of the staff is a key objective of the Ministry, especially after its various departments and municipalities achieved the ISO 9001-2000 certification, beginning with the Minister's office and the IT department."

The agreement includes the accreditation of two centres specialized in training and testing on the various usages of computers and aims at ensuring that the holder of the ICDL certification has sufficient knowledge about computers and is equipped with basic IT skills.

Al Kaabi added, "The training and testing covers various aspects of the computer to ensure that the employee is confident in using the computer. It also seeks to enhance their efficiency and productivity at the workplace, whether at the administrative level or at the decision-making level."

The world-renowned certification comprises seven test modules, which include Basic Concepts of Information Technology (IT), Using the Computer and Managing Files, Word Processing, Spreadsheets, Database, Presentation, and Information and Communication.

Engineer Fadel explained the training mechanism at the Ministry whereby the employees will be divided into three categories - employees knowledgeable about the basic applications of computers but do not have the certification, employees with relatively modest knowledge of computers, and employees who do not at all have any knowledge of computers.

After sorting the employees according to special assessment tests, the number of training hours required for each employee and the subjects to be included in their curriculum will be determined. Upon completion of the required training, each employee will undertake tests and, if successful, will be awarded the ICDL certification.

Fadel added: "A key reason why we have chosen the ICDL GCC Foundation to provide support and supervision of the training and testing is that the content of the program is in step with the needs of the ministry. The Foundation maintains world-class standards and the program is continuously updated and revised to keep pace with technological and computer application development. Moreover, the Foundation, which enjoys the support of the UNESCO, has an advanced supervision mechanism and offers innovative training methods. The program will include all Ministry employees, with more than 2,000 personnel to undergo the training over the next two years."