



Press Release

e-Commerce in GCC to reach USD 100 billion in 2010

ICDL signifies e-Commerce as an integral part for economic growth and reducing unemployment in the Gulf region

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ICDL GCC Foundation, the governing body and certification authority of the International Computer Driving Licence (ICDL) program in the Gulf region and Iraq, has drawn attention to the significant development currently underway in the region with the use of Information and Communication Technology (ICT) for commercial transactions. The Foundation cited a recent study by Business Monitor International (BMI), which projects the volume of electronic commercial transactions in the GCC to rise to USD 100 billion in goods and services this year.

ICDL has reported that the imminent electronic transformation and the growing digital awareness are the primary contributing factors to the growth of e-Commerce. This growth has prompted further investments in both modern technologies that help expand trade over the Internet and also in the provision of the required infrastructure, shaping the Gulf region into a successful model for ICT implementations among other Arab countries.

Because e-Commerce has become an integral component of the global economy, the World Trade Organization (WTO) is considering how it fits into the multilateral trade framework and what commercial rules or regulations should apply. It has gone further to appoint councils from each 'cross-cutting' issue to investigate the effect of e-Commerce on global trade. These councils include the Council on Trade in Goods; the Council on Trade in Services; the Council on Trade-Related Intellectual Property; and the Committee on Trade and Development.

The growth of e-Commerce in the region has led to increased focus on strategic planning to promote digital awareness in an attempt to reach a knowledge-based economy, which already had a positive impact on various e-Government initiatives launched in the region. In the same context, trade experts saw that the GCC member states are diligently working on further developing e-Commerce to realize higher levels of efficiency and productivity. Consequently, in an open world economy dominated by competitive pressure to achieve profitability, promoting this means of commerce has become an urgent need, specifically in the areas of trade, finance and purchasing over the Internet.

Jamil Ezzo, Director General of ICDL GCC Foundation, said: "Promoting digital awareness within the Gulf society and establishing the basis for a knowledge-based economy, including e-Commerce, have become significant components in sustaining economic development in the region. It is therefore crucial to set a strategic direction that ensures a strong commitment by all stakeholders to cultivate socio-economic growth by adopting new digital solutions and by leveraging the Internet in various commercial and non-commercial activities."

Ezzo added: "The current boom in e-Commerce in the region has reflected on the growing use of other trade media, such as telephone, fax, television and electronic payment. It has also generated new entrepreneurial and employment opportunities; and created significant changes in the skills required in today's job market. Hence, it must be noted that the success of e-Commerce is not only contingent on general public awareness, but equally important is the presence of qualified human resources that can support the dynamics in the job market which ultimately leads to reducing unemployment."

The Gulf region is considered as one of the leading regions in terms of developing a robust environment for information and communication technology by implementing a series of training programs and forging strategic partnerships with leading regional and international organisations that specialise in modern techniques and technology. There are many variables that could be leveraged in the process of nationalising e-Commerce, which contribute in the equal distribution of general services and reducing the prices of goods and high costs in marketing and advertising operations.

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About ICDL:

ICDL is internationally recognised as the global benchmark in developing IT literacy programs and has emerged as the world's largest vendor-neutral end-user computer skills certification with more than 10 million registered candidates from all over the world. Endorsed by education ministries, universities and government organisations in more than 168 countries and available in over 48 languages including Arabic, ICDL seeks to globally promote digital literacy based on unified, world-class standards of competence and integrity.