



**Press Release**

**More IT-driven private-public partnerships needed to sustain  
GCC's growth**

***ICDL GCC calls on industry players to embrace joint initiatives as the region's  
IT services sector sets to achieve a CAGR of 6-10 per cent through 2015***

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The GCC area is expected to become a hotspot for public-private partnerships (PPPs) in 2012 and beyond amidst the region-wide pursuit of broader and more sustainable infrastructural growth. Since the early 2000s the MENA region has witnessed only modest growth in PPP, with most partnerships focused on telecommunications, water and sewerage. While Gulf economies have taken huge steps towards the concept in the last 10 years, more PPPs are needed in key sectors such as IT.

PPPs have proven to be highly effective in achieving results and promoting innovation and economic diversity. They offer a win-win proposition for partners as they optimize public assets while generating jobs for the private sector. ICDL GCC Foundation, the governing body and the certification authority of the International Computer Driving License program in the Gulf region and Iraq, is urging all members of the information and communications technology (ICT) sector to embrace more partnerships with governments to accelerate and sustain growth.

The Foundation points to a report by Business Monitor International (BMI), which predicts a healthy 6 to 10 per cent Compound Annual Growth Rate (CAGR) for the IT services sector of Gulf States through 2015, with Saudi Arabia, the UAE and Kuwait – the region's top IT markets – to lead growth. According to BMI, the Saudi IT market value is expected to reach USD 4.9 billion by 2015, with per capita IT spend to hit USD 186, followed by the UAE and Kuwait where demand for IT products and services continues to grow. These three countries currently account for over 75 per cent of the Gulf's IT services market.

“Governments, private companies and institutions each have their own important roles to play in the region's development. But their greater responsibility is to create an environment of

cooperation, collaboration and trust. Digital competence is one area that requires more attention as GCC governments pursue their transformation into knowledge-based societies. We urge the region's ICT players to join hands with government and at the same time support our Foundation's vision of establishing a new ICT landscape in the region that strongly promotes digital readiness," said Jamil Ezzo, Director General of ICDL GCC Foundation.

ICT deserves more attention as a PPP beneficiary given its huge potential to energize the region's employment landscape. Although GCC member states have successfully created almost 70 million jobs over the past decade, less than two million of them went to GCC citizens. Based on ongoing initiatives across the region, the International Monetary Fund predicts employment to increase by almost 6 million through 2015<sup>1</sup>. The Gulf is partly addressing the unemployment issues – especially for its nationals – by pursuing further enhancements to its educational system with particular focus on improving competitiveness in the sciences and aligning curricula with the needs of modern industry.

For the past few years, ICDL GCC Foundation has been a driving force in the inclusion of the ICDL program in Gulf curricula. The program is recognized by more than 22,000 universities and schools worldwide and enjoys the endorsement of the Arab Bureau of Education for the Gulf States. Over 45 educational institutions in the Gulf have already integrated ICDL modules in their academic programs. The Foundation also conducts several activities to align the IT competencies of youths with ICDL standards, including its annual ICDL Summer Camps which it organizes in cooperation with leading Gulf universities and academic institutions.

“By placing IT skills-building as an integral part of Gulf education, we prepare youths to become more competitive in their future careers. In the same manner, by promoting ICT-oriented PPPs, we make Gulf States more responsive to the needs of today's predominantly IT-dependent business environments. By engaging in more joint initiatives, the ICT community helps create a mutually-beneficial framework for region-wide development,” concluded Ezzo.

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