



### **Press Release:**

## **New Government Initiatives to Upsurge Digital Awareness in Iraq**

### ***Key ministries endorse ICDL to spread ICT skills among government employees, public school teachers and the general public***

Dubai, UAE (6<sup>th</sup> of January, 2013) - ICDL GCC Foundation, the governing body and certification authority responsible for advocating digital skills and promoting the worldwide recognized ICDL certification programs across the GCC and Iraq, received resounding endorsements for its IT Literacy dissemination efforts with the signing of three new strategic agreements with the governments of Iraq and the Region of Kurdistan. The new collaborations in Iraq are in line with governmental and educational reforms as they aim at empowering government employees, public education teachers, and various social groups such as women, jobseeker, retirees and the disabled, with essential ICT skills.

The signing of the three key agreements took place during a recent visit by an ICDL GCC Foundation delegation to Erbil headed by ICDL GCC Director General Mr. Jamil Ezzo, to inaugurate two Teachers Certification Workshops organized in partnership with Ministry of Education in Baghdad and in support of the results accomplished under the 'ICT in Education for Iraq' project.

Education has been at the heart of economic and social development in Iraq with notable efforts to integrate ICTs in the fabric of government and learning. ICDL GCC Foundation has established partnerships with Ministries of Education (MoE) in Iraq and the Region of Kurdistan region since 2007 under the 'ICT In Education for Iraq' project introduced by the United Nations Educational, Scientific and Cultural Organization (UNESCO) and the United Nations Social Commission for Western Asia (UNESWA) in partnership with the Ministry with the collective aim to build sustainable capacity within MoE by improving ICT skills of staff, teachers and students. ICDL GCC Foundation also established a partnership with the Ministry of Higher Education and Scientific Research (MOHESR) three years ago where its office currently being hosted to support the implementation of the ICDL programme for thousands of university students.



The first agreement was signed by Iraq Ministry of Science and Technology (MOST), the body responsible for enabling the country to advance on e-government readiness by providing public servants with key ICT skills and increasing digital awareness among the general public. The ministry will operate ICDL training and testing internally initially targeting its own employees; and then extending the services to other ministries' employees. ICDL GCC will also provide "Train the Trainer programme" to build the ministry's capacity to expand the initiative and work with the ministry on different fronts in support of its e-government readiness aspirations. The agreement was signed by Dr. Mahmoud Sharief, Director General of Information Technology, Iraq Ministry of Science and Technology.

The Ministry of Education in the Region of Kurdistan had also signed an agreement with ICDL, building on its prior five years partnership, whereby the ministry and ICDL now plan to train teachers and admin staff on advanced ICT skills and IT security programmes. ICDL and the ministry will also work together on localising approved ICDL training and testing material in the Kurdish language; and on developing ICT awareness campaigns targeting the students population as well as their parents. The agreement was signed by Dr. Ismat Mohammed Khaled, H. E. Minister of Education, Kurdistan.

Another ICDL collaborative agreement was signed by the Information Technology Academy (ITA) of Kurdish Regional Government, a government organisation established under the jurisdiction of the Region of Kurdistan Ministers' Council, by which ITA will operate an accredited ICDL training and test centre to offer services to all government employees and jobseekers. ICDL will also work with ITA on the localized version of ICDL approved material and on conducting nationwide awareness campaigns, leveraging several public announcements and media platforms. The agreement was signed by Mr. Ladi Hassan, Deputy Director General of the IT Department at the Academy.

Commenting on the signing of these three key agreements, Mr. Jamil Ezzo, Director General of ICDL GCC, said "We are truly honoured to have signed these major, strategic agreements in Iraq and the Region of Kurdistan and proud of the ongoing trust placed on us to build upon the solid progress we have made together in recent years. These new agreements will certainly bring dramatic growth in digital awareness across the country. We aim to work hand in hand with all the concerned authorities to ensure that no Iraqi is left behind and excluded from the digital society."

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**The International Computer Driving License (ICDL) concept is a global computer literacy initiative developed to raise the level of knowledge about Information Technology (IT) and increase the level of competence in using personal computers and common computer applications for all the citizens of the world. The ICDL GCC Foundation is the sole body to implement and disseminate the program across the GCC States and Iraq with the support of leading educational institutions and accredited bodies. The ICDL GCC Foundation mission is to enable proficient use of Information and Communications Technology that empowers individuals, organizations and society, through the development, promotion and delivery of quality certification programs throughout the world.**