

## **GCC poised to increase use of ‘smart’ devices in classrooms to 100 per cent by 2017**

***GCC education sector’s IT investment total to USD 616 million***

***UAE to spend AED 253 million by 2015 to integrate ‘smart’ learning into public schools***

**UAE, February, 2015** According to a recent study, the GCC’s education sector is set to increase the use of ‘smart’ devices for teaching and learning purposes to 100 percent by 2017. ICDL Arabia, the governing body and certification authority for the ICDL certificate program in Egypt, GCC States and Iraq, has welcomed this move, stating that the increased use of information and communications technology (ICT) will help in delivering quality education and raising the bar in line with international standards.

The GCC education sector witnessed investment in the region of USD 616 million, accounting for nearly 2.3 per cent of total investments, and is expected to grow at an annual rate of the GCC 10.4 per cent between 2013 and 2017. This is at par with global IT investment in the education sector which is set at 2.5 per cent or USD 51 billion. Over 90 per cent of the region’s educational institutions utilize laptops and tablets in order to transform from a teacher to a learner -centric learning approach.

Jamil Ezzo, Director General, ICDL Arabia, said: “ICDL Arabia commends the GCC education sector’s move towards ‘smart’ literacy to ensure a more informative and interactive way of learning. The use of ICT technology in schools and educational institutions will also mean an increased utilization of ‘smart’ devices for transfer of knowledge from teachers to students. Such a move should be supported by appropriate training programs of teachers for a successful transition so that they quickly adapt to the new changes in their educational environment and curriculum.”

## Press Release

Nationwide, the UAE Ministry of Education has expanded its programme to bring ‘smart’ learning to classrooms for the 2014-2015 Academic Year, providing almost 25,000 students with tablets. Nearly 123 more schools will be integrated under the three-year programme which has been allocated a budget of AED 253 million and will conclude in September 2015. The government has plans to integrate all its 440 public schools with ‘smart’ technology by 2020. Qatar, on the other hand, has earmarked USD 7.2 billion for its education sector in 2014 with a 100 per cent increase for the next five years. Lastly, Kuwait’s expenditure on education is expected to touch USD 8.3 billion by 2016.

ICDL has worked closely with a number of educational and vocational standards authorities across the world and designed a certification program specifically for educators so that they are able to employ mobile devices in the class room. The program offers a range of skills involving smart devices such as smart boards, projectors, personal computers and tablets. In addition, the new ICDL skills program combines skills in IT Security and Online Collaboration so that teachers can guide students on the safe and secure use of modern devices and social media.

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