

Back with full throttle



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Head of The Centre for GIS

There is nothing like going back to work after the tough and long treatment period which lasted for a whole year (May 1998 until May 1999) and ended with full recovery by Allah's grace and compassion.

The wonderful support that I have received from all the GIS family in Qatar and Ministry of Municipal Affairs & Agriculture staff headed by His Excellency The Minister and His Excellency The Under-Secretary and Chairman of The National GIS Steering Committee, contributed in uplifting my spirits and aided me in overcoming the bad times of illness. My deepest thanks and gratitude to all of you.

It is satisfying to say that despite all obstacles, we managed to achieve our plans for last year, this is due to having a well qualified and cooperative team doing its best to keep this centre as successful as it has always been. Some of our major achievements were:

- The completion of Aerial Photography for the whole country with vast areas added compared to previous years.
- The renewal of The memorandum of Understanding between The Government of Qatar and The Canadian Government. The agreement was signed by HE Ali Bin Saeed Al-Khayarin, Minister of Municipal Affairs & Agriculture and Honorable Ralph Goodale, The Canadian Minister of Natural Resources during the 10th International Geomatics Conference on Geographic Infrastructure Data held in Ottawa, Canada.
- The huge participation in ESRI's 1998 User Conference in San Diego, USA which astounded all participants who exceeded 8000 people. During that conference we won ESRI's Presidential Award for GIS implementation where it was the first time this award goes to an agency outside the US for the last nine years, we also won the Best Internet Application Award.
- ESRI's endorsement for founding an International GIS Training Centre. The first of its kind outside the US covering the Gulf area at the initial stage, this world standard Centre is expected to be ready during the Summer and training of staff for certification had already started. There will also be a specialised GIS library with several titles on the subject.
- Starting studies for ISO 9000 Certification for The Centre for GIS which is expected to finish by year end.
- Starting the Y2K plan and the studies related to it which are expected to finish in June when final testing will start. The systems team played a tremendous role in achieving this despite the heavy work load.
- The dawn of a new stage for the GIS Program at the Computer Technology Department of Qatar University with the opening of the fully equipped GIS labs that are connected to GISnet.
- The founding of the GIS Planning Group which played a key role in reviewing what has been achieved during the past nine years of CGIS age and highlighting the shortcomings related to the process of Data Dictionaries and User Needs Studies creation and maintenance. The group also provides recommendations for proper GIS implementation methods.

That was a brief review of last year's events and I'm confident that, by Allah's blessing we will witness several achievements during the coming year due to the clear strategic plan that we have in hand and the wonderful people at CGIS and the presence of several agencies willing to cooperate and succeed.