

A daily newsletter issued by the Abu Dhabi Arabic Language Centre, that brings you to the heart of the Abu Dhabi International Book Fair. Discover the latest releases, golden opportunities, and inspiring encounters. Stay up to date and craft your own story among the leading figures of the publishing industry.

Six Arab publishing houses honoured at the Abu Dhabi International BookFair 2025 for 520 years of contributions to the book industry

With this initiative, the Centre aims to promote sustainability in the Arab publishing sector and expand the presence and literary output of the Arabic language.



Abu Dhabi, UAE - 26 April 2025 - The Abu Dhabi International Book Fair (ADIBF) 2025 will honour six historic Arab publishing houses that have collectively contributed 520 years of service to the Arab publishing industry.

This forms part of the first phase of the 'Honouring Publishing Houses in the Arab World' initiative, which aims to strengthen Arab culture, expand the publishing industry, promote Arabic books, support their distribution, and encourage reading.

During the 34th edition of the fair, held from 26 April to 5 May 2025, the Abu Dhabi Arabic Language Centre (ALC) highlighted the contributions of Arab publishing houses in enriching the Arab cultural landscape, preserving Arabic content, and supporting the ongoing development of the Fair.

The six Arab publishing houses honoured this year are: Dar Sader (Lebanon), established in 1863; Dar Al Maaref (Egypt), established in 1890; Dar Al Fikr (Syria), established in 1956; Dubai Library (UAE), established in 1969; That Al Salasil (Kuwait), established in 1972; and Dar Al Shorok (Jordan), established in 1979.

The honour recognises the efforts of pioneering Arab publishing houses that have been active for 50 years or more in the sector and continue to contribute to the industry. It is also an appreciation of their contributions to the development, promotion, and marketing of the Arabic book industry.

The fair highlights their inspiring journeys, historical periods they have witnessed, and the challenges they have faced over the years. Reinforcing its position as one of the most diverse book fairs, the ADIBF also highlights the role of the Emirate of Abu Dhabi as a driving force behind the growth of the regional publishing sector, its commitment to supporting global initiatives related to the book industry, and its dedication to ensuring its long-term sustainability.

His Excellency Saeed Hamdan Al Tunajji, Executive Director of the ALC and Director of the ADIBF, said: "This recognition aligns with our strategy at the Abu Dhabi Arabic Language Centre to support the publishing industry as a cornerstone of cultural activity, and to celebrate inspiring and creative experiences. Honouring these institutions helps strengthen their presence and motivates them to expand their efforts to promote knowledge and enrich Arab libraries with new and distinguished works."

"Clear and precise criteria were established for selecting these publishing houses, taking into account their historical significance, years of service, and efforts made to advance Arab culture," H.E. Al Tunajji added. "We also considered their tangible contributions, which have greatly enriched Arab intellectual life. Throughout their journeys, these institutions have supported numerous authors and thinkers, paving the way for their creative expressions. This strengthens our confidence that supporting these publishing houses will play a vital role in achieving the goals of this initiative, which seeks to elevate their standing and strengthen their presence."

"This initiative complements the fair's pioneering journey," H.E. continued; "it supports the event's efforts to celebrate cultural institutions that have shaped Arab consciousness, while providing all necessary support to ensure

the sustainability of the publishing sector and the development of Arabic content. In its future editions, the fair will continue to endorse publishing houses, inspiring them to sustain their contributions and communicate our cultural and civilisational message to the world."

The Abu Dhabi International Book Fair provided comprehensive insight into the history of each publishing house through panel discussions and podcasts hosted by management teams from these establishments. The sessions focused on their inspiring journeys, the challenges they faced, and their most significant contributions and earliest publications. The event also provided a detailed narrative exploring their role in shaping Arab consciousness and strengthening Arab culture.

The fair followed specific procedures for selecting the publishing houses to be honoured, with criteria including their historical significance and activity, quality and cultural value of their content, their contribution to promoting conscious and balanced thought, ability to sustain operations and adapt to changes, and the volume of new publications.

Additional considerations included their respect for publishing and authorship rights, the absence of any violations or infringements

during previous participations in the fair, and adherence to UAE laws and regulations. The selection also took into account the need to maintain geographical diversity among exhibitors to ensure the participation of the widest possible number of countries.

Through its innovative initiatives, the Abu Dhabi Arabic Language Centre aims to revive Arab cultural heritage, promote the publishing industry, and honour its pioneers. This affirms that the Arabic book remains a powerful and competitive force, thriving despite the challenges of the digital age, underpinned by the inherent flexibility, creativity, and adaptability of the Arabic language.

In future editions, the Abu Dhabi International Book Fair will continue to honour creative figures in the fields of publishing and knowledge. Translators will be celebrated in 2026, followed by literary editors in 2027. In 2028, the fair will recognise outstanding cover designers, while 2029 will be dedicated to honouring distinguished printing presses.



Abu Dhabi International Book Fair 2025 unveils new programmes and corners to enrich visitor experience

The fair welcomes over 1400 exhibitors from 96 countries, speaking 60 languages, with 20 countries participating for the first time.

The Abu Dhabi International Book Fair (ADIBF), organised by the Abu Dhabi Arabic Language Centre (ALC) under the theme 'Knowledge Illuminates Our Community', has launched a series of innovative initiatives introduced for the first time as part of its 34th edition, taking place from 26 April to 5 May 2025 at ADNEC Centre Abu Dhabi.

The new initiatives align with the Centre's vision to promote innovation in the cultural sector, create a supportive environment for content creation, and expand regional and international collaboration in the publishing and knowledge industries. This aligns with Abu Dhabi's broader vision to promote the creative economy as a key pillar of sustainable development and to strengthen its position as a global hub for cultural and intellectual production.

This year's edition of the Fair features a launch of over eight interactive cultural and artistic corners and programmes, alongside more than 2,000 events designed to engage audiences of all ages and interests, covering a wide range of topics, including literature, science, arts, technology, and digital content creation.

This cultural movement is further elevated by the exceptional participation of over 1,400 exhibitors from 96 countries, representing more than 60 languages, reflecting the Fair's role as a global platform for cultural dialogue and a key conduit for the publishing industry, fostering the exchange of expertise among major publishers and content creators from around the world.

Countries participating for the first time

This year, the fair welcomes participants from 20 countries for the first time, representing four continents and speaking more than 25 languages. This reflects the growing international interest in the Fair as a gateway to Arab culture and a strategic platform for expanding into Arab markets.

The list of new countries includes Mexico, Lithuania, Kyrgyzstan, Kazakhstan, Czech Republic, Brazil, Bosnia and Herzegovina, Armenia, Albania, Mongolia, North Macedonia, Romania, Singapore, Slovakia, Slovenia, Sri Lanka, Tajikistan, Thailand, Kosovo, Uzbekistan, and Turkmenistan.

The significance of this participation goes beyond its geographic diversity, as it reflects the aspirations of new publishing houses to expand into Arab markets and benefit from the professional and cultural opportunities offered by the fair. With 25 literary agents from 13 countries and 28 international pavilions featuring publishers from around the globe, the ADIBF enhances meaningful partnerships and the exchange of experiences across the industry.

Electronic Entrance Gates and New Cultural Streets

This year, the fair has introduced a smart digital entry experience with electronic entrance gates that use scan Emirates ID cards. Visitors also have the option of registering on the website and scanning their entry ticket. This smooth and efficient process reflects the fair's commitment to cultural innovation and aligns with the UAE's vision for digital transformation and enhancing access to knowledge.

Among the new programmes and corners is Al-Mutanabbi Street, a space inspired by the iconic street in Baghdad, recreated with a unique design that captures its distinctive atmosphere. Iraqi publishers will line along the street, showcasing rare and heritage books in a tribute to the rich legacy of Iraqi literature and its historic role in the world of books. Another significant addition is the Poetry Nights Majlis, a programme featuring exceptional evenings that bring together Arab poets and their counterparts from diverse cultures in poetic dialogues that celebrate the diversity of cultural creativity.

The Under the Ghaf's Shade corner stands out as a daily open-air literary majlis under the shade of the iconic Ghaf tree, offering a unique experience, where authors read selected excerpts from their works, engage directly with their audience, and sign books, transforming each moment into a lasting memory that resonates deeply with the soul.

Through the World's Cuisine corner, the fair presents a unique cultural experience that brings together the arts of cooking and literature, based on recipes inspired by the publications of the ALC's Katilima Project for Translation, documenting the connection between culinary heritage and literary texts.

As part of its commitment to empowering youth, this year's edition launches the "Pioneers of Arabic Publishing" initiative, aimed at giving young people the opportunity to lead discus-

sions during the fair's sessions, helping them to develop their dialogue skills while connecting them with authors and notable figures from various fields.

The Educational Roadshow initiative adds a unique dimension to the academic content of the fair, taking the distinguished speakers on a dedicated tour of several Emirati universities, where they participate in interactive lectures covering literature, culture, innovation, and publishing. This provides students with the opportunity to interact with influential writers, enhances knowledge exchange, and strengthens the connection between the academic world and the literary and cultural scene.

The "Pioneers of Arabic Publishing" initiative was launched to honour distinguished Arab publishers at ADIBF 2025, recognising their outstanding contributions to the development of the publishing industry and supporting Arab culture.

Amid rapid digital transformations, the Fair hosts the Digitising Creativity conference, offering a comprehensive vision of how digitisation is reshaping arts and creative activities. The conference highlights how creativity is expanding beyond traditional boundaries and offering to artists, writers, and publishers new spaces to express themselves and reach a diverse audience through the digital space.

This year's edition of the fair also marks the launch of the first phase of the 'Community Campaign to Support Sustainable Reading', an initiative aimed at encouraging reading habits across all groups and establishing daily reading as an integral part of community life.

These corners and initiatives embody the Abu Dhabi International Book Fair's prominent position on the global cultural events map and its role in strengthening the global publishing industry. They also assert the Abu Dhabi Arabic Language Centre's commitment to supporting the sustainability of the cultural sector and creating an environment conducive to creativity, in alignment with the Year of Community initiative and reflects the UAE's priorities to empower human capital and enhance knowledge production.

Abu Dhabi Arabic Language Centre Opens Registration Period for Spotlight on Rights Grant from 25 April to 12 May 2025

The Abu Dhabi Arabic Language Centre (ALC) has announced that the Spotlight on Rights 2025 grant programme will be open for applications from 25 April to 12 May 2025 through the official website of the Abu Dhabi International Book Fair (ADIBF) - adbookfair.com held under the patronage of His Highness Sheikh Mohamed bin Zayed Al Nahyan, President of the UAE, under the theme 'Knowledge Illuminates Our Community'.

The grant aims to support efforts to translate literary content to and from Arabic, and convert print books into e-books and audio books, providing funding for all publishers participating in the ADIBF who submit an application for the programme through an electronic registration system, designed to ensure the highest levels of transparency and governance.

The programme aims to benefit the largest possible pool of applicants, allowing publishers to submit up to 25 applications each, provided they meet the initiative's terms and conditions. This year, the grant will support Emirati publishers in their efforts to digitise 500 book titles.

The Spotlight on Rights initiative aligns with the UAE's vision to support the cultural and creative industries as building blocks of the knowledge economy. It reinforces Abu Dhabi's role as a leading global hub for publishing and translation, reaffirms the UAE's commitment to protecting intellectual property rights, and strengthens collaboration among Arab and international publishers. It also supports the creation of innovative cultural content that meets the demands of digital transformation through high-quality products, contributing to the establishment of a sustainable creative economy.

Since its inception in 2009, the programme has enabled increased collaboration between the ALC and both Arab and international publishers, resulting in the publication of over 1,324 books by more than 190 publishers, covering a wide range of subjects that have enriched the Arab library and broadened access to diverse Arabic content. This reflects the UAE's efforts to empower the publishing industry, expand the global audience for Arabic content, meet the demands of digital transformation, and enable the transition of print books into new and innovative formats that appeal to the younger generations.

The Spotlight on Rights grant programme supports the ALC's objectives to provide references and literature for intellectual, literary, and scientific activity across all areas of human knowledge, in Arabic and other languages. It also encourages the exchange of intellectual prop-

erty rights among Arab and Western publishers to enable translation to and from Arabic, while also offering an opportunity to foster long-term collaboration among Arab and international publishers participating in the ADIBF.

His Excellency Saeed Hamdan Al Tunajji, Executive Director of the ALC, asserted that the Spotlight on Rights programme is a key pillar in the strategy to develop the publishing industry in the Arab region by enabling translation and digitisation, in line with the UAE's vision to protect intellectual property, while promoting Abu Dhabi's position as a world capital of culture and creativity.

"Through this initiative, the Abu Dhabi Arabic Language Centre aims to turn technological challenges into opportunities to support publishers and authors," H.E. added. "Our strategy for doing so relies on the established processes to streamline the exchange of digital copyrights, while protecting writers' and translators' rights, in accordance with local and international best practices."

"The goals of this initiative go beyond supporting translation as a bridge between civilisations; it also seeks to enrich the Arab library with quality content that promotes the presence of Arabic as a globally competitive language," H.E. Al Tunajji continued. "We strive to achieve these objectives by partnering with international publishing houses and working to overcome technical barriers to ensure the sector's sustainability. This initiative is a continuation of our leadership's vision to build on knowledge as a cornerstone of comprehensive development, reaffirming Abu Dhabi's role as an incubator of culture and creativity and a supporter of all initiatives that enrich minds and promote the values of intellectual diversity."

Grants for translation range from AED 9,200 to AED 14,700 per book, while grants for interactive digital books range from AED 3,700 to AED 7,400 per book, and grants for audio book range from AED 5,500 to AED 7,400 per book.

The Literary Agent: An author's link to the world

A panel discussion hosted by the Abu Dhabi International Book Fair 2025 explores the role literary agents and challenges they face.

Literary agents play a critical role in book production, acting as a link between the author and the world, asserted a panel of experts at the opening of the International Programme of the 34th Abu Dhabi International Book Fair (ADIBF), which runs until 5 May 2025.

The inaugural panel, titled 'The Era of the Literary Agent, saw panelists underscore the importance of understanding market trends and the aspirations of authors in order to harmonise both aspects, thereby facilitating publishing and distribution.

Moderated by Literary Agent Rola Al Banna, the discussion featured renowned Literary Agent Sarah Alhakami from Saudi Arabia, Emirati author Mana Al-Maeni, Founder & Literary Agent Katabeab Literary Agency; and Basssem El Kheshen, President and Literary Agent at Bears Factor Agency.

Alhakami initiated the session by sharing her journey, which began in 2024 at an agency specialising in speculative fiction and the buying and selling of translation rights for books. Recalling various experiences and challenges, she said: "Being a literary agent is not an easy task; it entails facing a range of challenges, including dealing with emerging authors who harbour significant ambitions, while the interactions are generally more pragmatic with seasoned writers."

For his part, Al-Maeni added: "I embarked on my journey in 2016 after facing several challenges that are typically encountered by emerging authors. Among these is the perception held by some publishers that the literary agent encroaches upon their role and limits their relationship with the writer. Additionally, there is another challenge related to the financial returns from publishing, which may not align with the authors' high expectations."



On the same note, El Kheshen said: "I started with foreign books by international authors, collaborating with prominent names on publishing rights. We negotiated with Arab publishers, and through all this, we managed to earn the trust of the Arab market. Currently, I work with several publishing houses, some of which focus on award-winning writers and other trends."

The challenges facing literary agents manifest in the fact that Arab publishers are accustomed to maintaining a direct connection with the author, El Kheshen explained, noting that "with the emergence of literary agents, this relationship has probably become somewhat strained, and their interactions have become more cautious, which calls for significant effort to clarify the role of the literary agent."

Book Sales 2021-2024

120,000 Al Ain Book Festival

59,000 Kutub Initiative

1,056,205

Books distributed as follows

732,205 Abu Dhabi International Book Fair

144,000 External Events