



جائزة الشيخ زايد للكتاب  
Sheikh Zayed Book Award  
الذكرى العشريون | 20<sup>th</sup> Anniversary

Press release

# SUBMISSIONS OPEN FOR THE SHEIKH ZAYED BOOK AWARD'S 21<sup>st</sup> EDITION UNTIL 1<sup>ST</sup> SEPTEMBER 2026

- Submissions for the Sheikh Zayed Book Award are now open, with a final deadline of **1 September 2026**
- Following the milestone of its 20th anniversary and two decades of celebrated excellence, the Award is now entering a new decade.
- Authors, translators, researchers, publishers and institutions can submit across ten categories, with five open to international submissions.

Submissions are now officially open for the **21st edition of the Sheikh Zayed Book Award**, one of the most prestigious literary awards in the Arab world. Interested authors, translators, and publishers have until the final deadline of 1 September 2026 to submit their work.

Organised by the Abu Dhabi Arabic Language Centre (ALC) under the auspices of the Department of Culture and Tourism – Abu Dhabi (DCT Abu Dhabi), the Award recognises the exceptional contributions of writers, translators, researchers, academics, and publishers in advancing Arabic literature and culture across all fields of knowledge.

The 21st submission cycle marks a defining milestone as the Sheikh Zayed Book Award enters its third decade. Building on twenty years of cultural prestige and international impact, this new chapter invites authors, scholars, translators and publishers to contribute to an enduring legacy that continues to shape literary and intellectual excellence across cultures. Since its establishment in 2006, the Award has received more than **33,000** submissions and honoured **144** laureates, playing a pivotal role in advancing the global reception of Arab culture.

Since 2018, the Award has also promoted the Translation Grant, a programme that has successfully supported the translation of over **48** titles into **12** languages. Open for applications year-round, the

programme provides sustained support for the international circulation of Arabic literature and the wider exchange of knowledge across languages and cultures.

Submitting to the Award places literary work at the centre of a vital conduit between the Arab world and the global community.

The Award includes **ten** categories, of which **five are open to international applicants and non-Arabic books**. These include:

- The **Arab Culture in Other Languages** category is open to submissions in English, German, French, Italian, and Spanish of books published in the last five years. This category covers a broad range of disciplines relating to Arab culture, with recently shortlisted titles ranging from critical studies of Arabic poetry to histories of Arab cultural influence around the world. The 2026 laureate was the German author Stefan Weidner for *Der arabische Diwan: Die schönsten Gedichte aus vorislamischer Zeit*, an edited anthology which represents the most extensive collection of early Arabic poetry in the German-speaking world since the 19th Century.
- The **Translation category** is open to books translated **to or from** Arabic in the last two years. This category presents a unique opportunity for translators across all genres to gain recognition for their work. The Translation category is representative of the Sheikh Zayed Book Award's commitment to bridging linguistic divides and bringing cultures together through literature and scholarship. In 2026, Iraqi-American translator Nawal Nasrallah was recognised for her book *Smorgasbords of Andalusí and Maghribi Dishes and Their Salutary Benefits*, a translation of the 13th-century cookbook *Anwā' al-Şaydala fī Alwān al-Aṭīma*.
- The **Publishing and Technology category** is open to submissions from international publishers and organisations whose work demonstrates technological innovation in publishing and cultural production. Through this category, the Award supports the wider publishing ecosystem by recognising initiatives that expand access to knowledge, strengthen content dissemination, and advance the role of technology in the future of books, reading, and cultural exchange. Previous winners include the Emirates Literature Foundation (2026), British magazine Banipal (2020) and Dutch publisher Brill (2012) amongst others.
- The **Manuscripts, Encyclopaedia and Lexicons** category is dedicated to works that have made a clear contribution to the fields of editing of manuscripts and that constitute a significant addition to Arab culture and human knowledge. The category also includes the production of specialised and general lexicons. Submissions are judged for their ability to demonstrate familiarity with scientific methods applied to the editing of manuscripts or production of lexicons and can submit work in any language.
- **The Cultural Personality of the Year** honours a prominent Arab or international figure or institution that has made a transformative contribution to the advancement of Arabic culture,

embodying principles of tolerance and promoting peaceful coexistence through their work. This prestigious category is distinct in that recipients are selected through nominations submitted by academic institutions, literary and research organisations, or by three prominent figures from the cultural sphere. Previous laureates include the Japanese author Haruki Murakami (2025), the Spanish institution Casa Árabe (2024), and the Institut du Monde Arabe in France (2019). In 2026, the Egyptian artist Nagat El Saghira was awarded this title in recognition of her status as one of the Arab world's most distinguished vocal icons.

In addition to these, the Award includes **Arabic language-only categories:**

- Literature (including fiction and poetry)
- Young Author (for writers under the age of 40)
- Children's Literature
- Contribution to the Development of Nations
- Literary and Art Criticism

**His Excellency Dr Ali Bin Tamim, Secretary-General of the SZBA and Chairman of the ALC,** said:

"Marking twenty years of the Sheikh Zayed Book Award is not only a moment to reflect on its legacy, but also an opportunity to look ahead to its next chapter. As the Award enters its third decade, we invite authors, scholars, translators and publishers from around the world to contribute to a renewed era of literary and intellectual excellence. Through its international reach, the Award continues to serve as a global platform for distinguished voices across generations, strengthening the presence of Arabic literature and culture on the world stage."

More information about individual categories is available on the Sheikh Zayed Book Award [website](#), where authors and publishers can register and submit their application online by 1st September 2026.

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## **About the Sheikh Zayed Book Award**

The Sheikh Zayed Book Award is one of the world's leading prizes dedicated to Arabic literature and culture. Since 2006, the Award has brought recognition to outstanding work by authors, scholars, researchers, translators, publishers, and literary organisations around the world. The Award is organised by the Abu Dhabi Arabic Language Centre, under the auspices of the Department of Culture and Tourism - Abu Dhabi.

Across ten prize categories ranging from 'Children's Literature' to 'Translation' and 'Arabic Culture in Other Languages', the Award showcases a unique breadth of Arabic-language literature as well as books written in any language about Arabic culture. Each year, an international Committee of leading academics, authors and book industry professionals ensure the Award continues to recognise and foster creativity and originality in both academic and non-academic literature.

The Award not only promotes literary and cultural achievements but also aims to foster intercultural dialogue through strategic partnerships and support the publishing industry through its Translation Grant. Launched in 2018, the rolling Grant offers funding to translators and publishers around the world to translate, publish and promote any shortlisted or winning title from the Award's Literature and Children's Literature categories.

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#SZBA2026