



# **THE 2013 DIGITAL ARABIC CONTENT COMPETITION**

***THINKING DIGITAL? LET'S INNOVATE IN ARABIC!***



**This is a generic application form.  
Please refer to your relevant country for the national application form.**

## **LAUNCHING THE 2013 DIGITAL ARABIC CONTENT COMPETITION**

### **I. Background**

The 2013 Digital Arabic Content (DAC) Competition is part of the second phase of ESCWA's project on the Promotion of Digital Arabic Content Industry through Incubation. The competition is open to young entrepreneurs as well as university and college graduates who have a project idea or a concept that would contribute to the development of the DAC industry. As part of phase one, ESCWA, in collaboration with national technology and business incubators, organized similar national competitions in 2008 to support the incubation of the best DAC projects for a period of one year.

Based on the success and positive feedback received in phase one of this project, this competition will be run for a second time. For this year, ESCWA will partner with business incubators from selected member countries to implement this competition.

### **II. The Competition's Objectives**

The DAC competition aims to reinforce and continue the growing global popularity of digital content, and in particular the DAC industry by:

- Raising awareness of the importance of DAC and promoting the industry in the region;
- Encouraging university graduates and young and risk-averse entrepreneurs to work in the DAC domain;
- Giving confidence to entrepreneurs and guiding them towards new investment opportunities;
- Promoting the value of DAC projects to technology/business incubators;
- Supporting DAC projects which offer the best chance to succeed with an incubation grant of six to twelve months;
- Creating the space for showcasing creativity, innovation and entrepreneurial skills;
- Encourage the use of emerging technologies and in particular mobile applications.

### **III. Submission Requirements**

ESCWA encourages all applicants to cooperate with a mentor who may be a university instructor or someone with previous project incubation experience. Applicants must keep in mind the following submission requirements:

- Applications will be accepted from young entrepreneurs as well as university and college graduates who have a project idea or a concept that would contribute to the development of the DAC industry;
- Eligible candidates may be individuals, but groups of individuals working as a team are encouraged and may be prioritised;
- Submitted project ideas and concepts must generate a DAC product or an ICT service that is directly related to the DAC industry including:
  - digital content applications or electronic services in mobile and/or web format such as e/m-government, e/m-learning, and e/m-health;
  - applications for the processing of the Arabic language;
  - software for the development of DAC using emerging technologies, particularly mobile applications;

- utilizing the potential of open source software in the development of DAC applications;
- evidence of creativity and entrepreneurial potential in the field of DAC;
- other innovative DAC development proposals<sup>1</sup>.

#### IV. **Application Modalities and Project Selection**

Applicants must fill and submit an application form to the incubator<sup>2</sup>. An evaluation committee will evaluate and select projects in two stages, as indicated below:

##### A. STAGE I

Stage I allows candidates to present their ideas in a concise manner and permits evaluators to efficiently review the maximum number of proposals. Stage I includes the following steps:

1. Applicants will:
  - Fill a simple application form (refer to Annex II);
  - If necessary, prepare supplementary documentation to better present and explain the idea or concept at hand;
  - Submit all documentation in electronic form by email (a hardcopy maybe presented to the incubator's administration). Please refer to the national application form for the submission deadline.
2. The evaluation committee will:
  - Review all submitted applications;
  - Evaluate them in accordance with pre-set criteria<sup>3</sup>;
  - Retain those which are in compliance with the requirements of the project;
  - Inform all applicants of the results of this stage of the evaluation process.
3. Candidates with successful proposals will move to the next stage. The pass mark is set based on the relative score of other proposals i.e. proposals which receive the highest grade from that particular batch of proposals.

##### B. STAGE II

Stage II allows the evaluation committee to meet face-to-face with candidates whose applications were accepted in stage I. Candidates will be given a platform to present ideas, work samples and other prototypes. Evaluators will be able to experience firsthand the communication and presentation skills of candidates and to better ascertain the maturity level of their proposals. Stage II includes the following steps:

1. Candidates selected in Stage I will prepare and present to the evaluation committee a 10 to 15 minute presentation detailing their selected proposal. The presentation may include samples of the proposed final product that may take the form of: a) a couple of pages of developed digital Arabic content; b) a few screenshots showing the

<sup>1</sup> For a non-exhaustive list of suggestions and examples of DAC project categories, refer to Annex I.

<sup>2</sup> Annex II includes the Application Form to the DAC competition.

<sup>3</sup> Annex III includes the criteria for evaluating stages I and II.

functionalities of the proposed product/application in Arabic; c) a prototype, if already available; or d) other samples that may be relevant to the product that is being proposed by the potential incubatee.

2. The evaluation committee will interact with applicants to:
  - Verify their understanding and command of their proposals;
  - Clarify matters that may have been unclear in the application and other submitted documentation;
  - Rate their business sense and communication skills;
  - Assess their commitment and drive;
  - Assess their ability to successfully work together as a team.
3. The evaluation committee will:
  - Conduct a final review of all applications that were selected in Stage I;
  - Use the results of the live presentation and interaction to make final recommendations on the proposals to be retained for incubation;
  - Inform all interviewed candidates of the results of this stage of the evaluation process.
4. Successful candidates will move to the incubation phase.

#### C. INCUBATION

The team(s) selected as winners of the national DAC competition will start their incubation period at the partner technology incubator as soon as the results are announced. The incubation duration will be specified by both the incubator and ESCWA according to the complexity of the proposed product and may vary between 6 to 12 months.

The winners will have to bear in mind that the first 30 days of incubation will be probationary. A quick evaluation will be conducted at the end of this probation period to determine the level of progress and mostly the commitment of the team working on the project. In case the winning team does not demonstrate serious commitment to the development of the product, the incubation award may be withdrawn at the discretion of ESCWA and the partner incubator.

## **Annex I**

As part of both phases of its project, ESCWA undertook several studies addressing different aspects of the DAC industry. Starting from the most recent studies<sup>4</sup> these are<sup>5</sup>:

- Status of the Digital Arabic Content Industry in the Arab Region;
- New Business Models for the Digital Arabic Content Industry.
- A Survey on Digital Arabic Content: software, applications and needs assessment;
- Models for Business Plan, Marketing and Multi-Stakeholder Partnerships for the Digital Arabic Content Industry;
- Hardware & Software Incubation Requirements and Training Needs.

Below is a non-exhaustive list of incubation suggestions.

### **DAC Categories and Project Suggestions**

- **Projects for Arabic content acquisition:** Smart Arabic OCR; Automatic Arabic Proofreader.
- **Projects for Arabic content development:** Smart Arabic Indexing; Hypertexting and Inter-textual Support System; Arabic Text Formulation; Automatic Filtering of Arabic Content.
- **Projects for searching Arabic content:** Advanced Arabic Search Engine; Arabic Browser for Mobile Phones; Arabic Speech Search; Advanced Arabic Text-to-Speech (T-T-S) and Speech-to-Text; Automatic Document Categorization; and Automatic Translation.
- **Knowledge generation applications:** Automatic Knowledge Discovery Systems; Automatic Abridgement Systems.
- **Language infrastructure applications:** Concept-based Arabic Dictionary; Interactive Dictionary and Thesaurus; Terminology Support Systems;
- **Miscellaneous applications:** Virtual Historical Reconstruction; Mental Entertainment Systems.

### **Suggestions for Existing DAC Enterprises**

- **SME Support Content:** SME Science and Technology Information Centre; SME Ideas Bank.
- **E-Commerce Support Content:** Smart Electronic Catalogue; “What’s New” (Website based on the “one-stop-shop” concept); E-payment Middleman.
- **Science and Technology Cultural Education:** Post-Editing Service Websites; Movies and Documentaries Translation Centre; Museum Kiosks; Arabic Electronic Book.
- **Geographic Information Systems:** Smart City; Smart Neighborhood.
- **Education and Continued education Content:** Virtual Labs; Educational Internet Cafés; Educational Open Source Bank; Arabic Manager Support Site; Virtual Club for Professionals.
- **Media Content:** Community Media Website; Unified Media Archive; Governmental Documents Repository.
- **Social Groups Content:** Arabization of Social Group Websites (women, children and youth); Electronic Children Encyclopedia.
- **Speech-Enabled Library.**

<sup>4</sup> <http://www.escwa.un.org/information/pubaction.asp?PubID=1236>

<sup>5</sup> <http://www.escwa.un.org/divisions/projects/dac/docs.asp>

## Annex II

### DIGITAL ARABIC CONTENT COMPETITION 2013

### APPLICATION FORM

#### Administrative Information

1. General Information	
Your Full Name	
Street Address	
City	
Postal Code	
Telephone	
Mobile Phone	
Fax	
E-mail	
Current Employer (if any)	
Your Work Title	
Your highest level of education	

2. Project information	
Name of Project	
Availability of Business Plan	<input type="checkbox"/> Yes <input type="checkbox"/> No    (if yes, attach business plan)
Current Status of Project	<input type="checkbox"/> Idea <input type="checkbox"/> Pilot/Prototype Ready <input type="checkbox"/> Already funded    (if yes, attach details)

3. Composition of Project Team (Please attach a CV for each member of the proposed project team)			
Full Name	Role	Educational Level	E-mail Address

## Substantive Information

(Attach additional sheets if necessary)

### A. Technical Aspects

A.1 Elaborate on the status of your product/service (concept, prototype, already at market, etc.)

A.2 Describe your product/service and list its functions and properties.

A.3 How does your product contribute to the development of the DAC industry?

A.4 Describe the technology platform(s) you have used and list the main technologies utilized.

A.5 How do/will the different technologies interact and interface with one another?

### B. Business Aspects

B.1 Provide a simplified SWOT (strengths, weaknesses, opportunity, threats) analysis of your project.

B.2 What are the risks that may prevent the success of your idea?

B.3 Specify the budget needed to start developing your product (provide details).

B.4 What are your sales or market expectations within 1 year of launching your product/service?		
B.5 Fill out the table below to indicate your return on investment for year 1		
<b>Income</b>	<b>Estimate per month</b>	<b>Estimate for 12 months</b>
Sales Revenue		
Other Income		
<b>Total Income (1)</b>		
<b>Expenses</b>		
Marketing and promotion		
Bank loan payment		
Running costs (such as electricity + rent + etc)		
Staff costs		
Other costs		
<b>Depreciation</b>		
Fixed assets		
Equipment		
<b>Total Expenses (2)</b>		
<b>Net Profit (1) - (2)</b>		
B.6 What is your product's 'unique selling point' and business niche?		

### C. Marketing Aspects

C.1 What is the target market for your product and how did you established this?
C.2 Briefly describe your on-going and overall marketing strategy, including the communication mediums which you have/will utilized.



C.3 Briefly describe one of your specific marketing campaigns, including the target demographic and elements of the campaign.

C.4 Who are your stakeholders, how did you identify them and how will/have you secured their commitment?

#### **D. Project Management Skills**

D.1 – D.5 How have/will you manage this project and ensure its successful delivery?

D.6 What are the identified strengths of your team members, how did you utilise this and how did you resolve any potential conflicts within the team?

### **Annex III**

#### **Evaluation of Proposals**

To assess submitted applications, the aforementioned evaluation committee will use the grading and criteria suggested in the sections and tables below.

#### A. STAGE I – GRADE DISTRIBUTION

The evaluation process of Stage I will consist of the assessment of the merit of submitted applications and accompanying documentation. The evaluation committee will grade all received applications. The distribution of grades is in accordance with the structure of the application form and is detailed below in Tables 1 to 4. The total grade for Stage I is 160 out of a total of 250.

##### *1. Grading of Technical Aspects - Details*

The total grade for technical aspects is specified as 65 and distributed as indicated in Table 1.

**Table 1: Technical Aspects - Distribution of Grades**

<b>Corresponding Application Form Section</b>	<b>Description</b>	<b>Grade</b>
A.1	Project Status	10
A.2	Project description	20
A.3	Contributes to the development of the DAC industry	15
A.4	Use of emerging technologies	15
A.5	Technical creativity	5
<b>Sub-total of Technical Aspects</b>		<b>65</b>

N.B. The grade distribution maybe modified in view of the project type. The total; however, remains the same.

The following is indicative of the type of questions that evaluation committee will use for the assessment of the technical aspects of submitted proposals:

<b>Items</b>	<b>Example Questions</b>
Project Status	How close is the product to a proof of concept stage?
Project description	Is the product/service description clear?
Contributes to the development of the DAC industry	Does the product/service contribute to the development of the DAC industry?
Use of emerging technologies	Does the product use new and emerging technologies?
Technical feasibility	Is the product feasible from the technical viewpoint?
Technical creativity	How creative have the developers been with their use of the technology?

##### *2. Grading of Business Aspects - Details*

The total grade for business aspects is specified as 45 and distributed as indicated in Table 2.

**Table 2: Business Aspects - Distribution of Grades**

<b>Corresponding</b>		
----------------------	--	--

<b>Application Form Section</b>	<b>Description</b>	<b>Grade</b>
B.1	Business plan (SWOT analysis)	15
B.2	Risk analysis	3
B.3	Start-up costs	2
B.4	Sales expectations	2
B.5	Return on Investment	3
B.6	Unique selling point	7
B.7	Entrepreneurial potential	5
B.8	Investment attractiveness	8
<b>Sub-total of Business Aspects</b>		<b>45</b>

N.B. The grade distribution may be modified in view of the project type. The total; however, remains the same.

N.B. B7 and B8 to be assessed subjectively by the evaluators in stages I and II based on their interpretations.

The following is indicative of the type of questions that evaluation committee will use for the assessment of the business aspects of submitted proposals:

<b>Items</b>	<b>Example Questions</b>
Business Plan Analysis	Is there a clear attempt at providing a SWOT analysis? Is the business idea realistic and feasible? Is there a clear market opportunity, demand or niche?
Risk analysis	Has a thorough risk analysis been performed? How will these risks be mitigated?
Start-up costs	Have all the relevant start-up costs been accounted for? Is there a strategy for attracting investors?
Sales expectations	Have expected sales been appropriately and realistically calculated? Is there growth potential for the company?
Return on Investment	Is there evidence of on-going or projected return on investment calculations? What is the amount of up-front capital investment required? How profitable is the product?
Unique selling point	Is there a unique selling point for this product? Is there a particular business niche?
Entrepreneurial potential	How are/will the identified risks be fully exploited? Is there a strategy for attracting on-going investment?
Investment attractiveness	Are there competitors in the local or regional market? Can the new product/service co-exist with the product of competitors? Is the product an attractive concept for investment?

### *3. Grading of Marketing Aspects - Details*

The total grade for marketing aspects is specified as 30 and distributed as indicated in Table 3.

**Table 3: Marketing Aspects - Distribution of Grades**

<b>Corresponding Application Form</b>		
---------------------------------------	--	--

Section	Description	Grade
C.1	Target Market Analysis	10
C.2	Marketing strategy	10
C.3	Marketing campaign	5
C.4	Networking and partnerships	5
<b>Sub-total of Marketing Aspects</b>		<b>30</b>

N.B. The grade distribution maybe modified in view of the project type. The total; however, remains the same.

The following is indicative of the type of questions that evaluation committee will use for the assessment of the marketing aspects of submitted proposals:

Items	Example Questions
Target Market Analysis	Has the market segment or target group of consumers been identified? How was the target market established? How relevant is the target market? Has the correct size and segment of target market been chosen? Are there other significant markets which can be explored?
Marketing strategy	Is there a marketing strategy for different phases of the project? Is there evidence of utilising multiple marketing platforms?
Marketing campaign	Are marketing campaigns directed towards the relevant and identified target market? Is the marketing campaign clear?
Networking and partnerships	Is there evidence of identifying all stakeholders of the project? Is there a plan for engaging with these stakeholders?

### 3. Grading of Management Skills - Details

The total grade for management skills is specified as 20 and distributed as indicated in Table 4.

**Table 4: Project Management Skills – Distribution of Grades**

Corresponding Application Form Section	Description	Grade
D.1	Work breakdown	3
D.2	Task scheduling	3
D.3	Allocation of tasks to resources	3
D.4	Task follow-up	3
D.5	Completion of project	3
D.6	Team management	5
<b>Sub-total of Management Skills</b>		<b>20</b>

N.B. The grade distribution maybe modified in view of the project type. The total; however, remains the same.

The following is indicative of the type of questions that evaluation committee will use for the assessment of the applicant's management skills:

Items	Example Questions
Work breakdown	Were all tasks identified at the beginning of the project?
Task scheduling	Is there a timeline of tasks?

	Were all prerequisite tasks identified correctly?
Allocation of tasks to resources	Were individual tasks allocated to certain individuals appropriately?
Task follow-up	Will there be periodic review of the work against the established timeline? Is there evidence of adjusting the timeline based on changes
Completion of project	Is the project or concept going to be completed on time, budget and to the desired quality?
Team management	Is there evidence of good team management?

#### B. STAGE II – GRADE DISTRIBUTION

The evaluation process of Stage II will consist of the assessment of the aforementioned interview, oral presentation and accompanying exhibits. The distribution of grades is detailed in Table 5. With the exception of the total grade, the grading within the table below is indicative and may be subject to minor alterations by the evaluation committee prior to the beginning of the interview process. The total grade for Stage II is 90 out of a total of 250.

**Table 5: Interview – Distribution of Grades**

Description	Grade
Presentation skills	20
Technical merit	30
Business aspects	25
Marketing skills	10
Project management skills	5
<b>Sub-total of Interview/Oral Presentation</b>	<b>90</b>

N.B. The grade distribution may be modified in view of the project type. The total; however, remains the same.

#### C. FINAL ASSESSMENT

The evaluation committee will tally the results of the evaluation process of those candidates who have sat through and received passing grades for Stages I and II. Candidates scoring the highest grade out of a possible total combined score of 250 (refer to table 6) will be selected.

**Table 6: Final Tally – Distribution of Grades**

Stage	Description	Grade
Stage I	Sub-total of Technical Aspects	65
	Sub-total of Business Aspects	45
	Sub-total of Marketing Aspects	30
	Sub-total of Management Skills	20
Stage II	Sub-total of Interview/Oral Presentation	90
<b>Stages I &amp; II</b>	<b>Grand Total</b>	<b>250</b>