

MASAR AL'AN  
COOPERATION PROGRAM

WITH THE  
ARAB WORLD

مسار اللدمل مهرجان امال مسار اللدمل مهرجان

MASAR AL'AN COOPERATION PROGRAM WITH THE ARAB WORLD

| ARAGUANAY FOUNDATION AND THE SPANISH AGENCY FOR INTERNATIONAL COOPERATION (AECID)

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# RESEARCH OUTLINE

The research focused on developing a mapping study towards the development of an **Arab focus “Script Lab”** to capitalize on opportunities in the creative industries, scriptwriting, and audio-visual projects. The initiative aims to create access to meaningful and dignified jobs for young people, particularly young women, in the Arab world. It **offers mentorship opportunities** to selected participants engaged in script creation and the promotion and production of audio-visual projects. This project aligns with and operates within the framework of the **“AMAL Euro-Arab Film Festival”**.



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# RESEARCH SCOPE

Aimed at providing the **Araguaney Foundation** and **The Spanish Agency for International Cooperation AECID** with an in-depth analysis of scriptwriting competencies in the Arab world.

01

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To identify key actors and institutions within the audio-visual production sector.

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02

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Address and analyze the sector's needs and challenges.

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03

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Developing some key recommendations and define program structure.

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# RESEARCH METHODOLOGY

## Stakeholders Interviews



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Engaging **16 industry** professionals from **Egypt, Lebanon, and Palestine**.

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Mainly within the categories of; Scriptwriters, Film Directors, Producers, Visual Artists, Regional Institutions and laboratories.

## Extensive Internet Research



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Examining existing programs, initiatives, and relevant case studies.

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## Data Compilation & Analysis



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Developing a final report with findings, insights, and actionable recommendations.

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# RESEARCH FINDINGS

The findings of this research highlight a **strong need for structured support, mentorship, and co-production opportunities for scriptwriters in the Arab world.** The MASAR AL AMAL

Script Laboratory will serve as a pioneering initiative bridging talent with industry stakeholders, ensuring sustainability, and enhancing the visibility of Arab stories on a global

stage. The next steps involve:



## Stakeholder Workshop (March 2025)

Validate findings and refine the lab structure.



## Establishing Strategic Partnerships

With funding bodies, film institutions, script labs and production studios.



## Launching A Pilot Edition

The Script Lab with a diverse selection of participants.

**90%** of the respondents confirmed relevance and the need in establishing a dedicated Scriptwriting Laboratory for the Mashreq region (**Egypt, Syria, Jordan, Lebanon, and Palestine**).

**40%** of the respondents are supporting expanding the laboratory to include the Maghreb countries (**Tunisia, Morocco, Algeria**).

**20%** of the respondents are suggesting to include the Gulf countries such as **Saudi Arabia** and **Qatar**, given that they are new markets with various available resources.





# STATE OF PLAY

Significant  
Stakeholders

Doha Film Institute: Scriptwriting Lab  
(Qatar)

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Sundance Lab (USA)

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RAWI- Royal Film Commission (Jordan)

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Mediterranean Film Institute- MFI  
(Greece)

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Red Sea Labs (Saudi Arabia)

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Torino Film Lab (Italy)

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Sud Ecriture (Tunisia)

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Berlinale Script Station (Germany)

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ATLAS Script Lab (Morocco)



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# STATE OF PLAY

## Needs & Challenges

### Lack of formalized scriptwriting education & training

While many Arab filmmakers pursue film studies, dedicated scriptwriting programs are scarce. This gap results in a shortage of professionally trained scriptwriters, limiting the depth and quality of storytelling.

### Limited access to mentorship & industry feedback

Unlike in established film markets, Arab writers often lack opportunities to receive professional script consultation, leading to challenges in structuring and refining their narratives.

### Funding constraints & dependence on European co-productions

Many Arab films rely on European and International funding, which sometimes shifts narratives to fit external perspectives, rather than reflecting authentic local storytelling.

### Absence of a dedicated networking platform

Festivals provide a temporary incubator for filmmakers and industry professionals, but the Arab film industry lacks a year-round hub for continuous collaboration and development. Interactions are limited to festival schedules, restricting long-term partnerships and project growth.

### Challenges in distribution and audience reach

Even well-developed scripts face difficulties in reaching their intended audience due to limited regional distribution networks, deficiency in the number of distributors compared to the number of films produced and certainly the competition from international cinemas.

### Weak regional collaboration

Arab-Arab co-productions are less common than Arab-European/ International partnerships, which reduces the opportunities for culturally rooted storytelling to thrive independently.

# STATE OF PLAY

## Needs & Challenges

### Lack of Structured Support

The industry relies heavily on informal networks, highlighting the need for structured mentorship and training programs to support scriptwriters and filmmakers.

### Role of Scriptwriters

There is an urgent need to **rehabilitate** and redefine the role of scriptwriters as independent creatives, ensuring they receive recognition and fair compensation for their contributions. To promote again the individual role of the scriptwriter in separation from the film director.

### Intellectual Property Protection

A lack of strong copyright and NDA enforcement puts scriptwriters at risk, making it difficult to protect their work and maintain creative control.

### Political Instability

Changing political landscapes impact long-term script development and production feasibility, making it difficult for filmmakers to plan and execute projects with confidence. Arab countries at war are often have to suspend their projects for years before pre-development.

### Film vs. TV Series Dominance

TV series attract more funding and employment opportunities than independent films, shifting the industry's focus away from feature film development. The presence of digital platforms that exclusively produces series, have resulted in a more structured industry.

### Limited Distribution Channels

**Only 1% is the quota of distributors in the Arab region. Amid 400 films produced, there are only 4 distribution agencies. Making it challenging for filmmakers to reach their intended audiences and achieve financial sustainability.**

# THE COMPETITIVE EDGE:

## RECOMMENDATIONS

To ensure that the AMAL Script Lab stands out as a unique initiative in the region, it must offer distinct characteristics that differentiate it from existing script development programs. It is recommended that the competitive advantages of the AMAL Script Lab may include:

### Arab-Arab Cooperation

Unlike many labs where European mentors shape Arab scripts, this program prioritizes Arab experts and script doctors, ensuring cultural authenticity and strengthening regional storytelling.

01

### Focus on Distribution and Market Access

While many script labs focus solely on writing, AMAL integrates training on distribution strategies, sales agents, and market positioning to help participants bring their films to audiences worldwide.

03

### Inclusivity and Underrepresented Voices

The lab actively promotes **gender diversity** and **supports vulnerable storytellers**, ensuring a broad spectrum of perspectives is included in the filmmaking process.

05

### Accepting scripts in Arabic Language

Most of the scripts are often presented in English or French due to the fact that most script incubators are led by Europeans. Translating an original text and re-translating back to Arabic often counts a burden on the scriptwriter and thus on the context.

02

### Bridging European and Ibero American Markets

Establishing connections with Ibero American film networks creates an unprecedented opportunity for Arab filmmakers to reach new audiences and access co-production partnerships beyond traditional Arab-European channels.

04

### Practical, Industry-Oriented Approach

Through direct engagement with distributors, producers, and sales agents, the program offers tangible career opportunities rather than just theoretical script development. Differentiating between “Industry Players” and “Content Creators”

06

# GENERAL RECOMMENDATIONS

To ensure that the AMAL Script Lab stands out as a unique initiative in the region, it must offer distinct characteristics that differentiate it from existing script development programs. It is recommended that the competitive advantages of the AMAL Script Lab may include:

## Festival Integration

As part of the AMAL Euro Arab Film Festival, the lab provides immediate exposure to industry professionals and potential collaborators.

07

## Integration of AI as an Innovative Tool for Scriptwriting

A unique aspect of the AMAL Script Lab will be its exploration of AI as a tool for enhancing storytelling, script analysis, and industry competitiveness. This innovation will position the program at the forefront of modern script development methodologies.

09

## Create a Mediterranean collaboration model to foster regional networking

11

## Youth Talent Discovery & Career Support

To serve as a “youth discovery initiative”, identifying early-career talents and accompanying them throughout their professional journey. By offering continued mentorship, networking opportunities, and career support, AMAL Script Lab ensures that young filmmakers have long-term guidance and industry access beyond the initial lab experience.

08

## Advocate for an alternative “distribution outlets”

Beyond cinemas and festivals.

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شكراً جزيلاً

THANK YOU