

# Arabterm: a technical dictionary for the Arab world

## Challenge

Access to global knowledge is a key factor in sustainable development. However, for the most part, young people in the Arab world face major obstacles in this respect. The language barrier isolates them from the advanced countries that engender the majority of technical innovations.

The Arab Human Development Report 2003 emphasised the fact that knowledge transfer cannot take place unless students, educators, academics and professionals master technical terminology in their own language.

When the project started in 2008, technical dictionaries and glossaries were not commonly available online and were often out of date. The aim of our partnership is to increase scientific digital Arabic content (DAC) and thereby enhance the development of scientific and technical Arabic.

Lead executing agency	Arab League Educational, Cultural and Scientific Organization(ALECSO)
Commissioned by	German Federal Ministry for Economic Cooperation and Development (BMZ)
Partners	Bureau for the Coordination of Arabisation (BCA) Cofinancing partner (2015–2016): OPEC Fund for International Development (OFID) Current technical partnerships with: Regional Center for Renewable Energy and Energy Efficiency (RCREEE), Arab Countries Water Utilities Association (ACWUA), Islamic Educational, Scientific and Cultural Organization (ISESCO) and Arab Industrial Development and Mining Organization (AIDMO)
Target areas	Arab, European and North American countries
Overall term	2008-2016

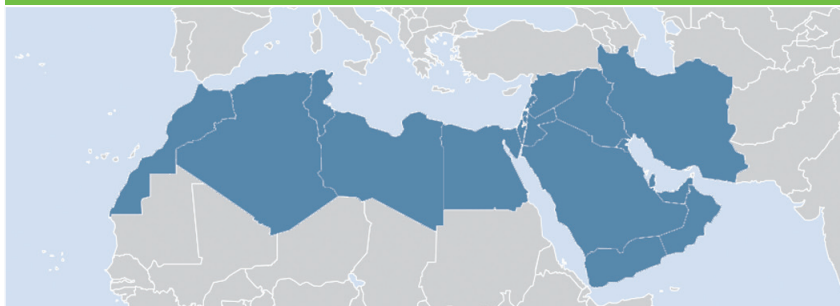
## GIZ

As a German federal enterprise, the Deutsche Gesellschaft für Internationale Zusammenarbeit (GIZ) GmbH offers workable, sustainable and effective solutions in political, economic and social change processes to its clients and commissioning parties. The wide range of services offered by GIZ are based on a wealth of regional and technical expertise and on tried and tested management know-how. Most of its work is commissioned by the German Federal Ministry for Economic Cooperation and Development (BMZ). However, GIZ also operates on behalf of other German ministries and clients in the public and private sectors. GIZ has been operating in Morocco since 1975.

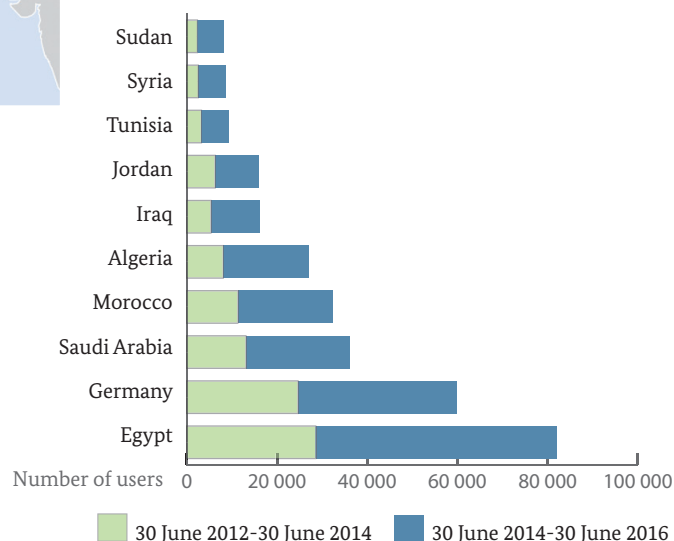
## Objective: improved access to global knowledge

On behalf of the German Federal Ministry for Economic Cooperation and Development (BMZ), GIZ is supporting the efforts of the Arab League Educational, Cultural and Scientific Organization (ALECSO) to standardise and unify Arabic technical terminology, improve the quality of education and vocational training and promote the integration of information technology into education, science and culture. The Bureau for the Coordination of Arabisation (BCA), the Moroccan branch of ALECSO, is working symbiotically with GIZ to achieve this goal.





### Number of users (Arab countries and Germany)



## Advantages and benefits

GIZ and BCA are working together to develop a free online technical dictionary in four languages for students, trainees, translators and engineers.

GIZ complements BCA's expertise in arabisation and terminology management, providing advice on the switch from the traditional to the virtual environment and on the choice of appropriate subjects for terminology development in order to reach new categories of potential users using new media technology.

## Success factors

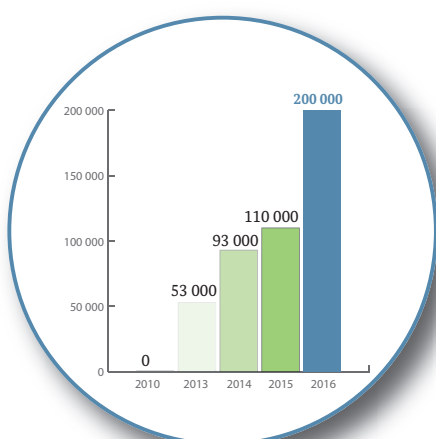
The success factors have been assessed on two occasions by independent evaluators. The [www.arabterm.org](http://www.arabterm.org) dictionary will be successful thanks to its:

- **Relevance:** a number of experts have confirmed that [www.arabterm.org](http://www.arabterm.org) is the only online Arabic technical dictionary with easy and direct public access. It is also available at [www.arabterm.org](http://www.arabterm.org) as an online app that runs on most smartphones. Proof of its relevance is the continuous increase in the number of users.
- **Sustainability:** in the short time since it was created, this monumental work has earned a place among established Arabic dictionaries. It now ranks among the top international databases

(e.g. UNTERM, IATE). Its overall scope is enhanced by the addition of new volumes on specific technical subject areas, and it is easy to expand and update the databases and create new target groups. The partner, BCA, guarantees sustainability by ensuring that the funding required to cover the budget is available.

- **Effectiveness:** Arabterm puts the focus on ambitious planning, inclusion of the maximum number of scientific concepts, very high-quality processing and careful cost management. Top Arab experts have been called in to compile the various volumes of the dictionary.
- **Efficiency:** collaborative efforts have been employed to take advantage of synergies with other projects implemented by GIZ and ALECSO partners, with a view to covering terminology in relevant subject areas in line with all agendas. The **Climate - Environment - Solid Waste Management** dictionary presented at COP 22 in November 2016 is one of the fruits of this collaboration.

### Increase in users worldwide between 2010 and 2016



### Key facts and figures

495 000 terms in four languages  
315 000 terms in three languages  
150 000 terms in Arabic  
105 000 scientific terms  
45 000 technical terms  
42 translators

### Categories of users

Most are  
50% are engineers and technicians  
50% are educators and trainers  
30,86% work in universities  
20,57% work in training centres  
18% work in engineering schools  
9% work in companies  
9% work in ministries

- Impact: the introduction of **www.arabterm.org**, now an indispensable terminology database, into the education systems of the 22 Arab League and ALECSO member countries is a long-term challenge that has only been partly met to date. This bottom-up approach ensures that young people with technical training working in Arabic are better prepared for the job market. It is, however, difficult to measure the effects of Arabterm on the job market.

## The benefits of OPEC cofinancing

The OPEC Fund for International Development (OFID) provided the Arabterm project with funding to clarify and refine technical terminology. The two volumes on Renewable Energies and Water Technologies were comprehensively revised and updated, resulting in the addition of a significant number of new entries. Specifically, 4,200 new terminological concepts, that is, 16,800 new terms, were standardised. These concepts came from the German Federal Institute for Geosciences and Natural Resources (BGR), the United Nations Economic and Social Commission for Western Asia (ESCWA), the Middle East Desalination Research Center (MEDRC) and the Renewable Energy and Energy Efficiency for the Middle East and North Africa Region (REMENA) programme. Eleven translator-revisors worked on refining the terminological data over a ten-month period.



## Contributing to Arab-European understanding

The aim of the project is to improve access to knowledge by making technical terminology available in Arabic.

Thanks to GIZ's intervention, the following positive changes have been achieved in partnership with BCA:

- Certification of terminology management according to international standards;
- Resources available online in the form of an extensive terminology database, accessible free of charge at **www.arabterm.org**;
- Updated workflows and the progressive adoption of virtual procedures;
- Increased efficiency in compiling dictionaries on specific technical subjects, with the time required shortened from an average of six to two years;
- Experience gained in managing large teams of specialised local technical translators and revisors;
- Networking with major stakeholders involved in this field, such as the United Nations UNTERM and European Union IATE terminology databases;
- Support for a local steering group, bringing together the organisations ALECSO, AIDMO and ISESCO in order to map their future needs in terms of terminology development.

**BIENVENUE À ARABTERM**  
Le dictionnaire technique quadrilingue en ligne

Cliquez sur le volume de votre choix :

**Nouveaux volumes prévus (2014-2016)**

 Volume sur la Technique Automobile	 Volume sur la Technologie de l'Eau	 Volume sur les Energies Renouvelables	 Volume sur le Climat, l'Environnement, et la Gestion des Déchets Solides	 Volume sur l'Industrie Textile	 Volume sur les Sciences de l'Éducation
 Volume sur l'Électrotechnique	 Volume sur le Transport et l'Infrastructure	 Volume sur le Génie Civil	 Volume sur la Technologie de l'Information	 Volume sur les Nanobiotechnologies	 Volume sur les Sciences Économiques
					 Volume sur l'Agriculture

Subject areas covered by the  
different Arabterm volumes

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## The technical dictionary for German-Arabic- French-English in nine volumes and for Arabic-French-English in forty volumes is a free tool available to all users

Arabterm provides a translation of terms into Modern Standard Arabic, along with a definition or explanation and an illustration. Some entries also display the term in the dialects of different Arab countries to further aid users.

The Arabisation Congress organised by the BCA involves expert committees, which bring together experts in each field on a regular basis to discuss contributions and update the data, with a view to ensuring the quality of the databases.

Interoperability with other major terminology databases is encouraged, for example with the United Nations (UNTERM) and European Union (IATE) databases.

The tool is also available at [www.arabterm.org](http://www.arabterm.org) as an online app that runs on most smartphones.

## Testimonial

*« This interactive technical dictionary is a masterpiece. It helps users in their search for information and, at the same time, promotes the development and expansion of knowledge by providing terminology in different scientific and technical fields, with IT tools for the management of information in four languages. We eagerly await the next addition. »*

His Excellency Dr Abdul Aziz Hassan Al-Tamimi, Director of the Supreme Education Council (SEC) International Educational Affairs Office and Secretary General of the National Commission for Education, Culture and Science, Qatar.

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