

# Congress of Arabic & Creative Industries

Etihad Arena: 14 - 15 SEPT 2025











### **Congress ACI**

#### Congress of Arabic & Creative Industries 2025

The Congress of Arabic and Creative Industries (Congress ACI) is the leading global platform championing Arabic and its cultural expressions in the creative industries. The annual forum is organized by the Abu Dhabi Arabic Language Centre at the Department of Culture and Tourism aiming to showcase Arabic creativity and expression to global audiences, to support building a thriving ecosystem for the Arab cultural and creative industries in line with UAE's efforts to promote Arabic language. Ushering in its 4th year, under the under the theme "Arabic Creativity Reimagined: Innovation in Storytelling and Audience Engagement" the Congress is dedicated to sparking innovation, bringing together regional and international voices to inspire, connect, and advance the future of Arabic content.

#### The Congress rich program features:

- Discussions and conversations that bring together an elite group of creative economy experts, business leaders, technology pioneers, content creators, creative talents and entrepreneurs from a variety of cultural and creative domains.
- Specialized workshops and masterclasses presented by experts from leading organizations, aiming to enhance professional skillsets of students and young professionals
- An annual exhibition of new technologies and digital innovations in cultural and creative industries presented by leading global and regional brands and startups.

# كونفرس العربية والصناعات البراعية Congress Agenda والصناعات البراعية المواقعة الموا



DAY 1 - 14 SEPTEMBER 2025		
9:00 AM 9:45 AM	REGISTRATION & REFR	ESHMENTS
10:05 AM 10:10 AM	OPENING REMARKS  HE Dr Ali Bin Tamim, Chairman of Abu Dhabi Arabic Language Centre	
10:10 AM 11:00 AM	KEYNOTE DISCUSSION	
11:00 AM 11:15 AM	REFRESHMENTS BREAK / NETWORKING	
11:15 AM 12:15 PM	CONSCIOUS CONVERSATION Her Narrative: Women Reimagining Arabic Creativity	
	Moderator Sarah Dundarawy Media professional, Al Arabiya News Channel	Panelists Hend Sabry, Actress and producer Tima Shomali, Director, producer, and showrunner Butheina Kazim, Founder and managing director, Cinema Akil
12:15 PM 1:15 PM	CONSCIOUS CONVERSATION Whose Story Is It?	
	Moderator Mansoor Al Yabhouni Al Dhaheri Media Advisor, Film Director & Producer, CEO at Film Gate Productions & Al Kahlema Productions	Panelists Mariam Naoum, Screenwriter; Founder & CEO, Sard Rami Koussa, Scriptwriter, Author and Poet Rolla Karam, SVP, Content Acquisition & Arabic Channels Programming, OSN
1:15 PM 2:15 PM	LUNCH	
2:15 PM 3:00 PM	FIRESIDE DISCUSSION The Power of Personal Narrative in the age of Al	
	Featuring Mo Amer, Award winning actor, wr	iter, producer, director and stand-up comedian
	Interviewed by  Mo Gawdat, AI Expert; E Officer, Google X	Bestselling Author and Former Chief Business

3:00 PM 3:45 PM	CONSCIOUS CONVERSATIVE The Role of Creativity in	ATION Preserving Arabic Identity
	Moderator Caroline Faraj, Vice-President and Editor-in-Chief, CNN Arabic	Panelists Rasha Khalifa Al Mubarak, Chairwoman of Music Nation and Music City UAE Nadine Labaki, Director and actress
3:45 PM	End of Day 1	

DAY 2 - 15 SEPTEMBER 2025			
9:00 AM	9:45 AM	REGISTRATION & REFRESHMENTS	
10:00 AM	11:00 AM	CONSCIOUS CONVERSATION Creators, Capital, and Control: Who Wins in the New Economy?	
		Moderator Mazen Hayek, Consultant; Media Advisor; former MBC Group's Official Spokesman and Group Director	Panelists Hussein Freijeh, Vice President and General Manager MENA, at Snap Inc. Kinda Ibrahim, Regional General Manager of Operations, MEA, Turkey, Pakistan, Central & South Asia, at TikTok Moon Baz, Director of Global Partnerships, Meta
11:00 AM	12:00 PM	CONSCIOUS CONVERSATION  Arabic LLM: Can Al Adapt to the Wilds of Language?	
		Moderator Zeina Soufan Senior Anchor, Asharq Business with Bloomberg	Panelists Nour Al Hassan, Founder & CEO, Arabic.Al and Tarjama& Dr. Hakim Hacid, Chief Researcher at the Technology Innovation Institute (TII) Dr. Andrew Jackson, CEO, Inception (a G42 company)
12:00 PM	1:00 PM	LUNCH	

1:00 PM 2:00 PM	CONSCIOUS CONVERSATION Unlocking MENA's Audiobook Potential	
	Moderator Carlo Carrenho, Publishing Consultant and Audiobook Ambassador at Frankfurt Book Fair	Panelists Iria Alvarez, Vice President, Global Strategy & Corporate Development at Penguin Random House Paulo Lemgruber, Head of Regional Content for LATAM and Rest of World, at Audible Ammar Mardawi, Co-founder and General Manager of Rufoof, Arabic-focused platform for eBooks & Audiobooks
2:00 PM 2:45 PM	CONSCIOUS CONVERSA Arabic Language and th	
	Moderator Raya Rammal, Senior Presenter, Dubai Media Inc.	Panelists Dr Ali Bin Tamim, Chairman, Abu Dhabi Arabic Language Centre Dr Hanada Taha Thomure, Endowed Chair Professor of Arabic Language at Zayed University Marwa Khost, Communication Manager Google MENA; Forbes 30U30
2:45 PM 3:00 PM	REFRESHMENTS BREAK	/ NETWORKING
2:45 PM 3:00 PM 3:00 PM 3:30 PM	DEBATE	Pers: Rethinking Literary Value in Arabic
	DEBATE Bestsellers vs. Gatekee Fiction Panelists Dr Abdallah Al Ghadam of Criticism and Theory	
	DEBATE Bestsellers vs. Gatekee Fiction  Panelists Dr Abdallah Al Ghadam of Criticism and Theory Dr Rayida Al Amiri, Probabylon  3-WAY DISCUSSION	pers: Rethinking Literary Value in Arabic  i, Prominent Arab Critic and Scholar; Professor at King Saud University in Riyadh
3:00 PM 3:30 PM	DEBATE Bestsellers vs. Gatekee Fiction  Panelists Dr Abdallah Al Ghadam of Criticism and Theory Dr Rayida Al Amiri, Prof Babylon  3-WAY DISCUSSION Digitally Reframing the History  Panelists Dr Peter Magee, Director Dr Bilal Orfali, Sheikh Z the American University	pers: Rethinking Literary Value in Arabic  i, Prominent Arab Critic and Scholar; Professor at King Saud University in Riyadh fessor of Literary Criticism at University of  Past: Creative Explorations of Manuscript  or of Zayed National Museum fayed Chair for Arabic and Islamic Studies at of Beirut for Beirut



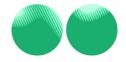


# CONGRESS PROGRAM





#### DAY 1 14 SEPTEMBER



#### **CONSCIOUS CONVERSATION**

#### Her Narrative: Women Reimagining Arabic Creativity

The panel celebrates the transformative role of Arab women in reshaping cultural and creative narratives across TV, film, and digital platforms. Featuring award-winning and game-changing female creators, the session will highlight their innovative approaches to storytelling, the challenges they've overcome, and their impact on the future of Arabic creative expression.



**Hend Sabry** Actress and producer



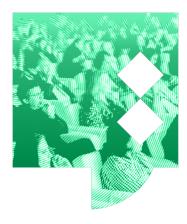
**Tima Shomali** Director, producer, and showrunner



**Butheina Kazim** Founder and managing director, Cinema Akil



Sarah Dundarawy Media professional, Al Arabiya News Channel





#### Whose Story Is It?

The panel confronts the challenge of balancing adaptation and originality in the Arabic television industry. It investigates whether localized remakes enrich the creative landscape or stifle the development of authentic Arabic narratives. Featuring insights from award-winning scriptwriters of original and Arabized content and perspectives from major streaming platforms, this session explores the crucial question of cultural identity and creative ownership in a globalized media market.



**Mariam Naoum** Screenwriter: Founder & CEO, Sard



Rami Koussa Scriptwriter, Author and Poet



**Rolla Karam** SVP. Content Acquisition & Arabic Channels Programming, OSN



Mansoor Al Yabhouni Al Dhaheri

Media Advisor, Film Director & Producer, CEO at Film Gate Productions & Al Kahlema Productions



#### FIRESIDE DISCUSSION

#### The Power of Personal Narrative in the Age of AI

The session aims to explore how storytelling serves as a powerful bridge between cultures, and how personal narratives shape the stories we tell. The discussion will delve into the role of comedy in breaking down barriers, how stories can preserve and elevate culturally rooted narratives in an era increasingly shaped by artificial intelligence, raising valid questions on prioritizing authenticity, diversity, and historical context in storytelling as opposed to accelerating technologies.



Mo Amer Award winning actor, writer, producer, director and stand-up comedian



Al Expert; Bestselling Author and Former Chief Business Officer, Google X



#### The Role of Creativity in Preserving Arabic Identity

This panel delves into how creativity plays a pivotal role in preserving and reimagining Arabic identity in a rapidly evolving world. The discussion will explore how investing in and exporting Arabic creative output can strengthen cultural presence globally, while fostering a resilient and thriving ecosystem for the region's creative sectors. The discussion will also highlight the importance of supporting local talent and narratives to ensure the continuity and relevance of Arab identity across generations and borders.



Muharak Chairwoman of Music Nation and Music City UAE

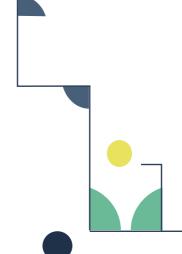
Rasha Khalifa Al



Nadine Labaki Director and actress



Caroline Farai Vice-President and Editor-in-Chief. CNN Arabic



#### Creators, Capital, and Control: Who Wins in the New Economy?

This dynamic panel explores the shifting power dynamics in today's rapidly evolving economic landscape, where creators, investors, and platforms intersect. As digital content, intellectual property, and personal brands become major drivers of value, who truly holds the power—those who create, those who fund, or those who control distribution? Join leading voices from the creative industries, venture capital, and technology to unpack the opportunities, tensions, and future of ownership in the new economy.



**Hussein Freijeh** Vice President, Middle East, Snap Inc.



Kinda Ibrahim Regional General Manager, TikTok



**Moon Baz** Director of Global Partnerships, Meta



Mazen Hayek Consultant; Media Advisor; former MBC Group's Official Spokesman and **Group Director** 



#### Arabic LLM: Can AI Adapt to the Wilds of Language?

This high-level discussion will spotlight breakthroughs in Arabic large language models (LLMs). Panellists will explore how AI is reshaping content production in Arabic, the linguistic intricacies that challenge machine learning, and if human expertise remains crucial for ensuring culturally accurate and nuanced outputs. We'll also delve into the future potential of Arabic LLMs and how regional innovators are contributing to global AI frontiers.



**Nour Al Hassan** Founder & CEO, Arabic.Al and Tarjama&



Dr. Hakim Hacid Chief Researcher at the Technology Innovation Institute (TII)



Dr. Andrew Jackson CEO, Inception (a G42 company)



Zeina Soufan Senior Anchor, Asharq Business with Bloomberg





#### **Unlocking MENA's Audiobook Potential**

The audiobook market is booming globally, offering new avenues for accessing stories and knowledge. Deriving from global trends and learnings, this panel will discuss the key trends to drive the growth for Arabic audiobooks. We will examine the increasing diversity of genres, the role of mobile platforms and accessibility features, the power of voice and performance, and the unique opportunities and challenges in reaching Arabicspeaking audiences globally.



Iria Alvarez Vice President, Global Strategy & Corporate Development at Penguin Random House



Paulo Lemgruber Head of Regional Content, Audible



**Ammar Mardawi** Co-founder and General Manager of Rufoof, Arabicfocused platform for eBooks & Audiobooks



**Carlo Carrenho** International Publishing consultant and Audiobook Ambassador at FBF





#### Arabic Language and the Coming Shift

This panel explores the rapid shifts occurring between Modern Standard Arabic and local dialects in the context of accelerating societal change. It examines the opportunities and challenges presented by this linguistic transformation and reflects on its impact on creative expression, cultural identity, and communication across the Arah world



**Dr Ali Bin Tamim** Chairman, Abu Dhabi Arabic Language Centre



**Dr Hanada Taha Thomure** Endowed Chair Professor of Arabic Language at Zayed University



**Marwa Khost** Communication Manager Google MENA; Forbes 30U30



Raya Rammal Senior Presenter, Dubai Media Inc.



#### **DEBATE**



#### Bestsellers vs. Gatekeepers: Rethinking Literary **Value in Arabic Fiction**

The panel discusses the ongoing controversy between audience demand and the critical establishment in Arabic literary genres, taking the Musallam controversy as a starting point. It investigates the influence of popular tastes on the development of Arabic literature and the way these challenges conventional critical approaches.



#### Dr Abdallah Al Ghadami

Prominent Arab Critic and Scholar: Professor of Criticism and Theory at King Saud University in Riyadh



#### **Dr Rayida Al Amiri**

Professor of Literary Criticism at University of Babylon





#### 3-WAY DISCUSSION

#### Digitally Reframing the Past: Creative Explorations of Manuscript History

This panel recasts our understanding of the history of civilization through manuscripts as powerful, material testaments to human imagination and knowledge. It explores how the material evidence in these ancient texts - from calligraphy and illuminations to marginalia and binding - offers important clues about ancient societies, beliefs, and inventions. The speakers will also critique the special worth and inherent bias of these primary sources, finally discovering how these creative works continue to shape and test our perception of history and tell the story of civilization.



**Dr Peter Magee** Director of Zayed National Museum



**Dr Bilal Orfali** Sheikh Zayed Chair for Arabic and Islamic Studies at the American University of Beirut



Dr Isra'a Alhamal Director of School of Gilding & Ornamentation, Fujairah Fine Arts Academy









# Tracks for Professional Capacity Building

# **Tracks for Professional Capacity Building**

Congress ACI offers a series of interactive sessions, masterclasses, and workshops led by experts from regional and global entities, including TikTok; Snap Inc.; Google; Amazon Web Services (AWS); Sard's Founder & CEO Mariam Naoum; Gaming Creative Director and Author Fawzi Mesmar; Lema Collective; and Adobe x Grapheast. The sessions are designed to enhance the professional and technical skills of a wide range of target groups, including university students, young professionals, content creators, aspiring writers, educators, design and gaming enthusiasts, publishers, and creative industry professionals.

#### The Tracks cover a wide spectrum of focus areas and topics, including: **Digital Content Creation & Platforms**

- TikTok strategies and best practices
- Snap School's content creation tools
- Snap Inc. Augmented Reality (AR) for creative storytelling
- Adobe Express for Arabic calligraphy and design

#### **Generative AI & Arabic Content**

- Google's Gemini and NotebookLM in Arabic
- AWS Al tools for Arabic content creation.
- AWS Al-powered innovations in Arabic education

#### Creativity, Writing & Storytelling

- Screenwriting inspiration and idea development
- Originality and creativity in game development

#### Future of Media & Business Models

Evolving content strategies and digital business innovation



In addition, the program will feature presentations of innovative project concepts and ideas by participants in the Congress X Youth Awards aimed to foster a lasting passion for the Arabic language. Participants will present to a panel of industry leaders in a live interactive session and will conclude with an awarding ceremony honoring the most promising youth-driven initiatives.



## **Schedule**

DAY 1 - 14 SEF	PTEMBER		
2:30 PM 5:30 PM	Workshop Finding the Spark: Sources of Ideas for Screenwriting By Mariam Naoum, Screenwriter; Founder & CEO of Sard	Negati paga	Arabic
3:30 PM 4:30 PM	Training and discussion session Mastering TikTok: From Basics to Breakthroughs By Donia Abi Nassif, Regional Programs & Education Lead	<b>♂</b> Tik <b>To</b> k	Arabic
3:30 PM 4:30 PM	Workshop Generative AI Tools for Arabic Content Creation By Rafik Soliman, AI/ML Sales Specialist Lead – UAE Enterprise and Gulf	aws	Arabic
4:30 PM 5:30 PM	Workshop Snap School for Content Creation By <b>Aya Kalouti</b> , Talent Partnerships Manager for MENA	SNAPCHAT	English
4:30 PM 5:30 PM	Workshop Arabic Education: From Traditional Learning to Al- Powered Classrooms By Mohamed Ezzat, Head of Al/ML Sales - Public Sector	aws	Arabic
DAY 2 - 15 SEF	PTEMBER		
3:30 PM 4:30 PM	Workshop Google Gen Al tools in Arabic: Gemini and NotebookLM By Marwa Khost Jarkas, Communications & Public Affairs Manager, MENA	Google	Arabic
3:30 PM 4:30 PM	Workshop Arabic Calligraphy Meets Digital Design with Adobe Express By Andrei Koziakov and Shadi Abu Hussein	Adobe  ×  grapheast	Arabic / English
3:30 PM 4:30 PM	Masterclass Demystifying Creativity: Originality in Game Development By Fawzi Mesmar, Gaming Creative Director and Author	مشمه استرو الإسداع مستحد	English
4:30 PM 5:30 PM	Masterclass Snap AR: Transform Your Creativity into Opportunity By Mohammed Bouarib, Regional Creative Strategy Lead; Leading Augmented Reality & Innovation MENA	SNAPCHAT	English
4:30 PM 5:30 PM	Masterclas Reimagining Content and Business Models for the Digital Age By Ani Attamian, Business Advisor guiding organizations to turn disruptive innovation into sustainable growth	LEMA' COLLECTIVE	English
4:30 PM 6:30 PM	Presentation and Awarding Session Congress X Youth Awards - Projects Pitches & Awarding Ceremony	مركز أبوظبي قــــــــــــــــــــــــــــــــــــ	Arabic / English

## **Detailed Program**

DAY 1 14 SEPTEMBER



#### TRACK ONE - 2:30 PM - 5:30 PM

#### Finding the Spark: Sources of Ideas for Screenwriting

Inspired by the socially grounded and emotionally rich storytelling of Mariam Naoum, this 3-hour intensive and interactive workshop explores how writers can find authentic and powerful ideas for screenwriting. Participants will examine everyday life, social realities, memory, novels, and personal experiences as key sources for storytelling. Through tailored introduction/session and open discussion, the workshop helps participants identify and shape initial ideas that reflect their voice and vision in their future writings.



Format	Workshop
Instructor	Mariam Naoum, Screenwriter; Founder & CEO of Sard
Language	Arabic
Who is it for	Beginner writers, emerging storytellers, and creatives interested in film and drama





#### TRACK TWO - 3:30 PM - 4:30 PM

#### Mastering TikTok: From Basics to Breakthroughs

This multi-format session combines two main elements to maximize engagement and knowledge. It will start with a hands-on training workshop, offering both practical tips, best practices and inspiring insights to help you master TikTok for content creation and growth. The session will wrap up with an engaging panel discussion, that puts the training into a real-life setting, joining Shehab Al Hashimi, TikTok's 2025 Gold Award winner for "Best Educational Content Creator", and Dia Haykal, Director of Brand and Partnerships at Majarra, the leading Arabic digital content publisher.



Format	Training and discussion session
Instructor	Donia Abi Nassif, Regional Programs & Education Lead
Language	Arabic
Who is it for	Content creators and publishers







#### TRACK THREE - 3:30 PM - 4:30 PM Generative Al Tools for Arabic Content

This session offers a comprehensive look at the generative AI landscape for Arabic content. It begins with an overview of current advancements, followed by a focus on prompt engineering tailored to Arabic language models. A live demonstration will showcase AWS-powered tools designed for Arabic storytelling and publishing. Key focus areas include Al-assisted Arabic creative writing, automated translation and localization of Arabic content, and optimizing publishing workflows through AWS services to support efficient and high-quality content production.



Format	Workshop
Instructor	Rafik Soliman, AI/ML Sales Specialist Lead – UAE Enterprise and Gulf
Language	Arabic
Who is it for	Tech professionals, Business professionals, University students, Content creators, media professionals, creative industry professionals





#### TRACK FOUR - 4:30 PM - 5:30 PM **Snap School for Content Creation**

This workshop is an exclusive Snap School session for you to learn Snap's latest best practices around content creation, to discover how to grow your audience, build your business, and turn your creativity into a career.



Format	Workshop
Instructor	Aya Kalouti, Talent Partnerships Manager for MENA
Language	English
Who is it for	Students, content creators and young professionals





#### TRACK FIVE - 4:30 PM - 5:30 PM

#### **Arabic Education: From Traditional Learning to AI-Powered Classrooms**

Explore how technology is reshaping Arabic language learning—from intelligent content generation to cloud-powered personalization. This session features an interactive demo using AWS AI services, along with a real-world case study on how institutions are building secure, scalable, and adaptive Arabic learning platforms with tools like Amazon Bedrock.



Format	Workshop
Instructor	Mohamed Ezzat, Head of AI/ML Sales - Public Sector
Language	Arabic
Who is it for	Educators, university students, EdTech professionals, cultural institutions



#### DAY 2 15 SEPTEMBER

#### TRACK SIX - 3:30 PM - 4:30 PM

#### Google Gen AI tools in Arabic: Gemini and NotebookLM

Step into the future of content creation with this hands-on workshop exploring Google's groundbreaking generative AI tools—Gemini and NotebookLM. Discover how to unlock smarter source discovery, effortlessly analyze Arabic and English texts, and turn written words into visually striking AI-generated videos and images. Whether you're a student or a creative professional, this session reveals the powerful potential of GenAl to elevate your Arabic content like never before.



Format	Workshop
Instructor	Marwa Khost Jarkas, Communications & Public Affairs Manager, MENA
Language	Arabic
Who is it for	Students and young professionals





#### TRACK SEVEN - 3:30 PM - 4:30 PM

#### Arabic Calligraphy Meets Digital Design with Adobe Express

This workshop explores how traditional Arabic calligraphy can be creatively reimagined through modern digital tools developed by Adobe. Tailored to anyone who wants to learn more about design, the session will feature a live demonstration on how to use Adobe Express and discover Adobe Firefly's Arabic-language generative AI capabilities, to produce culturally rich, modern compositions for social media, education, and more.



Format	Workshop
Instructor	Andrei Koziakov and Shadi Abu Hussein
Language	Arabic and English
Who is it for	Students and young professionals; aspiring designers





#### TRACK EIGHT - 3:30 PM - 4:30 PM

#### Demystifying Creativity: Originality in Game Development

Marking the launch of the Arabic edition of his best-selling book "Demystifying Creativity: Originality in Game Development", translated and published by Abu Dhabi Arabic Language Centre, the renowned Creative Director and Author Fawzi Mesmar will lead an interactive session exploring the practical and philosophical dimensions of creativity in game design. Drawing from his extensive experience in the global gaming industry, Mesmar will guide participants through frameworks and strategies for cultivating original ideas, overcoming creative blocks, and building culturally resonant content.

Participants will also get the chance to get a free signed copy of the Arabic edition.



Format	Masterclass
Instructor	Fawzi Mesmar, Gaming Creative Director and Author
Language	English
Who is it for	Game developers; gaming enthusiasts; students and young professionals







#### TRACK NINF - 4:30 PM - 5:30 PM

#### **Snap AR: Transform Your Creativity into Opportunity**

Join Snap's AR team for an inspiring masterclass on augmented reality. Discover how AR can transform storytelling, unleash your creativity, and open new career opportunities. Walk away with practical strategies to thrive within the Snap AR community.



Format	Masterclass
Instructor	Mohammed Bouarib, Regional Creative Strategy Lead; Leading Augmented Reality & Innovation MENA
Language	English
Who is it for	Students, content creators and young professionals

#### Presented by



#### TRACK TEN - 4:30 PM - 5:30 PM

#### Reimagining Content and Business Models for the Digital Age

This session explores how cultural heritage can be preserved and reimagined for contemporary audiences. Through discussions on modern storytelling formats, immersive technologies, and future-facing business strategies, it highlights practical approaches to engaging new generations while maintaining cultural authenticity and integrity.



Format	Masterclass
Instructor	Ani Attamian, Business Advisor guiding organizations to turn disruptive innovation into sustainable growth
Language	English
Who is it for	Content creators and publishers



#### 4:30 PM - 6:30 PM

#### Congress X Youth Awards: Projects Pitches & Awarding Ceremony

Congress ACI tracks will conclude with the Youth Awards, where youth have been invited to create innovative solutions on how we can leverage creativity and technology to inspire Arabic students to learn more. The most innovative solutions will be shortlisted, with the top entries invited to pitch on stage for awards and prizes.



Format	Presentation and Awarding Session
Language	Arabic & English
Who is it for	Students and Youth







#### **EVENT PARTNER**



#### **KNOWLEDGE PARTNER**



#### STRATEGIC MEDIA PARTNERS





#### MEDIA PARTNERS







#### PROFESSIONAL CAPACITY BUILDING TRACKS IN COLLABORATION WITH

















#### **CONGRESS EXPO PARTNERS**















