



## Kalima Factsheet

### About Kalima

- Kalima – “word” in Arabic – is an ambitious, non-profit initiative seeded by a grant from the Abu Dhabi Authority for Culture and Heritage
- With a mission to revive translation in the Arab world, Kalima funds the translation, publication, and distribution of high-quality works of classic and contemporary writing from other languages into Arabic. Kalima plans to select 100 candidate titles for translation and publication each year
- The idea and vision for Kalima came from Karim Nagy, an Abu Dhabi based businessman and passionate reader and collector of books, and Jumaa Abdulla Al Qubaisi, the Director of the Abu Dhabi Book Fair

### Why Kalima?

- Throughout Europe’s “Dark Ages” and until the end of the first millennium, Arab cultures led the world in translating, producing and preserving knowledge in science, medicine, philosophy and the arts. Since then however, very few foreign works have found their way into Arabic
- There is much debate about the scale of the problem. However according to the UNDP, Spain translates in one year, the same number of books that have been translated in to Arabic in the last thousand years; and Greece, with a population of 11 million, translates five times more books each year than the Arab world which has a population of over 300 million
- Currently in most Arabic countries, “great works” of world literature or academia are only available in the original language, restricting access to these books to a select group of society. Arabic is also a beautiful, expressive language, and one that should be valued more by giving readers a greater choice of quality titles in translation

### The Business Model

Kalima’s mission to become the largest translation foundation is pinned on a basic business model;

- Selecting quality titles across all genres
- Funding quality publishing houses to translate, print, and distribute selected titles
- Introducing new and effective ways for distribution channels and upgrading existing ones
- Investing in new translators
- Becoming the first “marketers” of books in Arabic on a major scale

### Title Selection

- 100 titles were selected by Kalima and its partner publishers as candidates for translation in year one
- As the initiative develops Kalima will put in place an editorial committee of eminent writers and academics to manage the candidate title selection process
- Each selection consists of a diverse mix of literature, academic texts, and business books, taking into account the current gaps that exist, and the types of titles that will appeal to readers



- Our approach is pragmatic, picking high quality titles which are recognised as excellent works, by well-respected authors
- The title selection process is rigorous and consists of five steps:
  - Long listing
  - Cross-checking the long-list against existing translations
  - Defining filters (e.g. classic vs contemporary; genre balance)
  - Applying filters
  - Grouping and selecting titles