



**UNESCO/Emir Jaber al-Ahmad al-Jaber al-Sabah Prize
for Digital Empowerment
of Persons with Disabilities**

**Application Guidelines
for 2020/2021**

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Objectives of the Prize

The purpose of the **UNESCO / Emir Jaber al-Ahmad al-Jaber al-Sabah Prize for Digital Empowerment of Persons with Disabilities** (hereafter the Prize) is to recognize the outstanding contributions of individuals and organizations in promoting the inclusion and enhancing the lives of persons with disabilities through the application of digital solutions, resources and technologies.

In line with UNESCO's strategic objectives and especially the Major Programme Communication and Information, this includes translating human rights and fundamental freedoms into action, with a particular emphasis on removing barriers to enable greater access to information and knowledge, as well as learning and participation in society through the effective application of Information and Communication Technologies (ICTs).

Applicants are encouraged to ensure that their submissions are in compliance with the Statutes of the Prize and these Application Guidelines.

The Prize builds on **three thematic axes** of importance in UNESCO's work with persons with disabilities:

- formulating policy, advocacy, co-operation and partnerships;
- creating and developing digital solutions, enabling environments and processes, including tools and resources;
- building and strengthening capacities of people to create, adapt and use digital solutions in a cost efficient and sustainable manner.

Applicants are encouraged to keep in mind these themes when preparing their applications.

The Prize

The Prize will be offered biennially in 2016/2017, 2018/2019 and 2020/2021. The Prize will be awarded in each biennial edition and will be divided equally to:

- An **Individual Person**; and
- An **Organization**.

These awards are for *individuals* and *organizations* (as defined in Section "Conceptual context of the Prize" below) and are not for projects or programmes. Successful individuals and organizations will usually have undertaken a series of relevant projects and programmes, developed appropriate tools or resources, and enhanced co-operation and partnerships that

will contribute to their achievements, but it is the overall personal or organizational contribution that will be assessed.

The total amount available for the Prize biennially is **US \$40,000**, which will be distributed equally between the individual and the organizational winner.

UNESCO will publicize the Prize winners, and will seek to work with them to enhance and promote their continued activities in the field of the digital empowerment of persons with disabilities.

Prize winners (Laureates) will be selected by the Director-General of UNESCO on the basis of the assessments and recommendations made by a Jury, the process for which is summarized in Section “Jury Assessment Process/Organization” below.

All processes relating to the administration of the Prize will adhere to UNESCO’s Statutes for the Prize available at <http://en.unesco.org/prizes/digital-empowerment>.

Conceptual context of the Prize

Definitions of digital empowerment, disabilities, digital solutions, resources and technologies, and organizations are complex, and applicants are encouraged to justify their own understandings of these concepts in their application forms should they so wish.

For the purposes of the Prize, the following conceptual context should be considered when preparing an application:

- **Digital Empowerment.** The Prize defines digital empowerment as the processes whereby people are able to have more power and control over their lives through the use of digital solutions, resources and technologies, particularly in terms of greater inclusion, participation and contribution to societal development as well as enhanced life experiences. UNESCO places particular emphasis on the ways through which information and knowledge can contribute to the empowerment of persons with disabilities notably by:
 - formulating policy, advocacy, co-operation and partnerships;
 - creating and developing digital solutions, enabling environments and processes, including tools and resources;
 - building and strengthening capacities of people to create, adapt and use digital solutions in a cost efficient and sustainable manner.
- **Persons with Disabilities.** The Prize uses a definition of persons with disabilities in alignment with the [UN Convention on the Rights of Persons with Disabilities](#) as “Persons

with disabilities include those who have long-term physical, mental, intellectual or sensory impairments which in interaction with various barriers may hinder their full and effective participation in society on an equal basis with others". Applicants are encouraged to clarify their own understandings and contexts of disability in their applications should they consider that this would be helpful.

- **Digital solutions, resources and technologies.** The Prize recognizes the converged nature of many ICTs and adopts a broad definition of the term digital solutions as a combination of:
 - *Digital technologies: any digital informational or communication device or application, including but not restricted to mobile phones, computers, laptops, televisions, radios, satellite systems, networks, hardware, software and applications;*
 - *Digital resources: content and information that are accessible through digital technologies; and*
 - *Enabling environments and processes: standards, tools, physical, technical and online infrastructures, resources and locations.*

Applicants are encouraged to justify their choice of digital resources, resources and/or technologies should these not self-evidently lie within this definition. It can be noted that UNESCO encourages the development and use of digital solutions based on open standards, accessible and openly licensed content and resources, and Free and Open Source Software (FOSS).

- **Organizations.** The Prize adopts a broad definition of organizations for the purpose of eligibility, including *government departments, non-governmental organizations* (including charitable organizations, faith-based organizations, research and educational organizations, trade unions, professional associations and foundations) and *companies* (both for-profit and social enterprises). Applicants must specify their formal registration details, and applications from informal groupings of people will not be considered. An individual may, though, be nominated as a representative of a group of people.

Nominations that do not justify their choice of definitions in their applications, should they not clearly satisfy these definitions, will be excluded from consideration. Nominating Entities (see below Section "Application and nomination process. Submission of applications forms to Nominating Entity") should take this into consideration in making their nominations.

Eligibility criteria

1. **Eligible applicants.** Eligible applicants are *individuals* (applying either individually, or representing a group of people) or *organizations* (an institution, non-governmental organization or other public or private entity).
2. **Conceptual context.** For the purposes of the Prize, the guidance in Section “Conceptual context of the Prize” above will apply, and applications that do not satisfy these directions will be excluded.
3. **Experience.** Individuals and organizations applying for the Prize must have been active in the field for a *minimum of five years*, and have proven results from their efforts and activities.
4. **Not eligible recipients.** Previous recipients of the UNESCO/Emir Jaber al-Ahmad al-Jaber al-Sabah Prize for *Digital Empowerment of Persons with Disabilities*, or the UNESCO/Emir Jaber al-Ahmad al-Jaber al-Sabah Prize to *Promote Quality Education for Persons with Intellectual Disabilities* are not eligible to apply. Anyone else who submitted an application to previous editions of these prizes can submit a new application.
5. **Not eligible recipients.** Members of staff of UNESCO as well as present and previous Jurors for this Prize may not apply.
6. **Number of applications.** Only *one application* may be submitted by any one individual, or by an organization, considered to include all of its parts. Should several entities within a single organization wish to be nominated, it is incumbent on the Head of that organization to select and authorize only one such application to be submitted on behalf of the organization. Should more than one application be received from an individual or from an organization, both will be excluded from consideration. Likewise, should both an individual and the organization which employs that individual apply, then both will be excluded.
7. **Respect of procedures.** Any nomination not submitted according to the procedures specified in Section “Application and nomination process” below and Statutes of the Prize will be excluded.
8. **Language.** All applications must be submitted in the *English or French* languages and on the application form specified. The preferred mode of submission is electronically, but if this is not possible then postal applications and nominations are also acceptable.

Application and nomination process

The Application process for the Prize is guided by the **principals of fairness, transparency and integrity**. The steps outlined below are intended to retain the integrity of the process whilst preserving a level of flexibility in the creation of an open and effective procedure.

The application process is composed of four steps:

1. Call for applicants
2. Completion of application forms
3. Submission of application forms to Nominating Entity
4. National endorsement and nomination

1. Call for applications

The Director-General of UNESCO will officially invite to submit applications to its Member and partners. The letter with a Call for Applications with relevant documents will be disseminated to the Governments of Member States, National Commissions of UNESCO, and Non-Governmental Organizations maintaining official partnerships with UNESCO and active in relevant fields covered by the Prize. The official call will also be disseminated through UNESCO's official communication channels such as its website, newsletters and other means. A special website dedicated for the Prize will contain full information:

<http://en.unesco.org/prizes/digital-empowerment> .

Applications are particularly encouraged from persons with disabilities in all parts of the world.

2. Completion of application forms

Individual applications should be completed on the individual application form and **organizational applications** on the organizational form (<https://en.unesco.org/prizes/digital-empowerment/nomination-process>).

For **organizational applications**, or for individuals employed by an organization, the Head of the organization must select and agree in the appropriate place on the application form that only one such application is being submitted on behalf of the organization.

The applicants are invited to **share their story** using the survey

(<https://story4development.org/>).

3. Submission of application forms to Nominating Entity

Completed application forms should be submitted electronically to a relevant *Nominating Entity* (Section “Application and Nomination Process. Submission of application forms to Nominating Entity”), which will then complete the relevant sections of the forms and submit them to <http://en.unesco.org/prizes/digital-empowerment/nomination-process> or by email: ict-pwd@unesco.org.

If it is not possible to submit applications electronically, they can be submitted to the relevant Nominating Entity by post, providing that in all instances the relevant deadlines are met. Potential applicants are encouraged to contact their respective Nominating Entity well in advance of the submission deadline, to discuss the appropriateness of their nomination and so that agencies can have sufficient time to make their selection and complete the forms.

Should Nominating Entities not have responded to such enquires from applicants two weeks prior to the submission deadline, applicants are invited to contact UNESCO directly (ict-pwd@unesco.org) at that point, so that UNESCO can then seek to engage the relevant Nominating Entity.

UNESCO will not consider any such requests received after the final submission deadline.

All applications should be submitted to **one of two types of Nominating Entity** before the deadline specified for final submission to UNESCO (Section “Timeline”):

- ***National Commissions for UNESCO***

A full list of contact details for National Commissions is available at

http://www.unesco.org/ncp/index.php??lc=E&module=national_commissions&showall=1,

- ***Non-Governmental Organizations maintaining official partnerships with UNESCO*** (a full list and contacts is available at

<https://en.unesco.org/partnerships/non-governmental-organizations>

4. National endorsement and nomination

All applications must be endorsed by the National Commissions for UNESCO or relevant Non-Governmental Organizations maintaining official partnerships with UNESCO (Nominating Entity), which will provide a written recommendation to UNESCO on the application form in support of the application. Self-endorsements cannot be considered.

Nominating Entities should complete the relevant sections of the application forms, outlining the reasons for their support of the applications.

Nominations should preferably be submitted digitally to UNESCO <http://en.unesco.org/prizes/digital-empowerment> by Nominating Entities prior to the deadline of **2 September 2020**. Any nominations received after this date for any reason will be excluded.

If it is impossible to submit nominations electronically, they may be submitted by post to the following address:

UNESCO/Emir Jaber al-Ahmad al-Jaber al-Sabah Prize for Digital Empowerment of Persons with Disabilities

Communication and Information Sector

UNESCO

7, place de Fontenoy

75352 Paris 07 SP

France

Inaccurate and false applications

Applications not submitted on the correct official form, incomplete applications, applications with inaccurate information, applications not submitted in English or French, or applications received after the deadline will be deemed to be ineligible and will not be considered.

If at any stage during the application process, any information contained within an application is found to be false or inaccurate, the application can be deemed invalid, and if the Prize has already been awarded it can be rescinded.

Selection criteria

Judgement of applications will be made upon an assessment of all aspects of the application relating to the digital empowerment of persons with disabilities. Applicants are therefore strongly recommended to ensure that they make maximum use of the space provided in each section. The application form specifically notes where items are intended merely for classification purposes and will not be used as part of the assessment process. Jurors will especially examine the extent to which individuals and organizations have shown evidence that they have delivered against twelve specific criteria:

1. ***Formulating policy, advocacy, co-operation and partnerships***: the extent to which the applicant's work has used digital solutions, resources and technologies to empower persons with disabilities through the formulation of policy, advocacy, co-operation and partnership-based solutions.

2. ***Creating and developing digital solutions, enabling environments and processes, including tools and resources:*** the extent to which the applicant's work has included creation and development of digital solutions, resources and technologies to empower persons with disabilities.
3. ***Building and strengthening the capacities of people to create, adapt and use digital solutions, resources and technologies:*** the extent to which the applicant's work has used digital solutions to empower persons with disabilities through building and strengthening capacities of people to create, adapt and use digital solutions in a cost efficient and sustainable manner such as leadership programmes, the training of trainers, and enhancing the learning of persons with disabilities.
4. ***Sustainability:*** the extent to which the applicant has ensured the long term financial continuity and environmental sustainability of their interventions.
5. ***Value for investment:*** the extent to which the applicant's interventions have been affordable by persons with disabilities, minimizing the cost of the solutions, resources and technologies used, and representing efficiency in the ratio between outputs and inputs.
6. ***Scale of impact:*** the extent to which the work of the applicant has been effective at scale in different parts of the world; this is a measure of the breadth of the applicant's work.
7. ***Intensity of impact:*** the extent of take up of the applicant's interventions amongst the user groups for which they have been intended; this is a measure of the depth of the applicant's work.
8. ***Accessibility:*** the extent to which the interventions are relevant to, and have been applied, across a broad range of user groups and disabilities, are intelligible in languages understood by persons with disabilities, and use of digital solutions including those which are based on open standards, accessible and openly licensed content and resources, and Free and Open Source Software (FOSS).
9. ***User-centric design and review:*** the extent to which people with disabilities have been involved in the original design, development and subsequent review of the applicant's interventions.
10. ***Monitoring and evaluation:*** evidence that the applicant has used monitoring and evaluation effectively in enhancing the quality of their interventions and in sharing information about their successes and failures.

11. **Ease of use:** the extent to which the applicant's interventions are easy to use by the intended user groups.
12. **Innovation:** the extent to which the applicant has been innovative in the design or practice of their approaches, and has thereby transformed traditional approaches to the empowerment of persons with disabilities.

Jury assessment process

Membership of Jury

- The nominated applications will be reviewed by a Jury of five independent members, who will be appointed by the Director General of UNESCO for an initial two-year period, with the possibility of two renewals so that they can serve for a maximum of six years. Jurors will be selected based on being personalities with a recognized reputation in the field covered, while also taking into consideration the need for equitable geographical distribution, gender equality and the principle of non-payment of honoraria. The Jury will include persons with disabilities.
- The Jury will elect the Chair and Deputy Chair of the Jury. Members shall receive no remuneration for their work, but will receive allowances for travel and accommodation, where required. A quorum of three Jurors present will be required for Jury deliberations to proceed. The working languages for deliberations by the Jury shall be English and French.
- Representatives and alternatives of Members of UNESCO's Executive Board cannot be appointed as Jurors.
- Jurors who have a conflict of interest in some way with one or more of the applications, should declare this to the Chair and, if the conflict of interest is deemed to be serious, they should recuse themselves from further consideration of the relevant application(s), or be asked by the Chair to do so. Jurors involved in a substantial real or potential conflict of interest with the overall Prize process shall recuse themselves from any discussion thereof, or be asked by the Director-General to do so. The Director-General may replace members of the Jury should a sound reason be identified.

Review of Applications

- There will be a separate process of review for applications from individuals and from organizations.

- The UNESCO Secretariat will review all applications against the eligibility criteria (Section “Eligibility criteria”), and will exclude any that do not meet the requirements for the Prize.
- If necessary, the UNESCO Secretariat, drawing on expert advice, will undertake a pre-selection of the best applications for consideration by the Jury.
- Jurors will each read up to applications, and score the contents against each twelve criterion listed in Section “Selection criteria” above.

Selection of Prize Winners

- The overall average scores from each Juror for each applicant will then be ranked to produce a short-list for further consideration by the Jury in a face-to-face meeting to be held at UNESCO’s Headquarters in Paris. In exceptional circumstances, if Jury members are not able to attend in person, they may attend by video-conference.
- Under normal circumstances, the Jury will consider at least the top ten ranked nominations for detailed discussion at this meeting. However, each member of the Jury may recommend that any of the nominations is included in this short-list.
- Based on these discussions, which will be held separately for the individual and for the organizational nominations, the Jury will propose winners for each Prize to the Director-General of UNESCO.

Award ceremony, recognition and visibility

UNESCO is committed, subject to available resources, to publicizing the award widely and providing further support to the Prize winners, because the purpose of the Prize is to promote the inclusion of persons with disabilities through the use of digital technologies. Some of the activities that may be developed include the following:

- **Prize Lecture.** In accordance with the Statutes, the Prize-winners, if possible, shall give a lecture on a subject relevant to the work for which the Prize has been awarded. Such a lecture shall be organized during, or in connection with, the Prize ceremony.
- **Prize Alumni network.** UNESCO will create a network of Prize winners, both to invite them to participate in ongoing relevant UNESCO activities, and also to share the Prize winners’ continuing achievements more widely. UNESCO will seek to involve Prize

winners in future discussions of policies and practices, and to draw on their work in exemplifying good practices in the use of ICTs to empower people with disabilities.

- ***Additional collaboration.*** UNESCO and Prize winners will work together to identify additional means through which the Prize process can contribute to more effective use of ICTs to empower persons with disabilities.

Acceptance of rules, data protection and dissemination

- ***Acceptance of rules.*** Applying for the Prize implies full acceptance of, and respect for, the Statutes and Application Guidelines associated with the Prize. Interpretation of these Statutes and Guidelines remains exclusively within the competence of UNESCO. No appeals shall be allowed against the decision of UNESCO with regard to the award of the Prize.
- ***Data protection.*** Applicants agree that their personal details and information contained within their applications may be included within a UNESCO database, and UNESCO will be the exclusive custodian of these details for the purposes of the Prize process. UNESCO will not make available any personal details to third parties for any purpose.
- ***Dissemination: communication and media.*** UNESCO may use the information contained within the applications for purposes of communication and information sharing about the Prize and with respect to UNESCO's work in empowering persons with disabilities through the use of ICTs. Any such communication that identifies specific information about individuals or organizations will be agreed with the relevant person or organization beforehand, but it is expected that any information contained within the original applications may be used for such purposes.

Timeline for the 2020/21 edition of the Prize

The timeline for the 2020/2021 edition of the Prize is:

- **June 2020** –
Announcement of call for applications
- **2 September 2020** –
Last date for submission of applications to Nominating Entities
- **15 September 2020** –
Last date for Nominating Entities to submit nominations to UNESCO
- **October to November 2020** –
Jury assessment
- **November 2020** –
Public announcement of Prize winners
- **3 December 2020** –
Award Ceremony at UNESCO Headquarters in Paris, France
- **January to December 2021** –
Dissemination

Weblinks

UNESCO/Emir Jaber al-Ahmad al-Jaber al-Sabah Prize for Digital Empowerment of Persons with Disabilities

<http://en.unesco.org/prizes/digital-empowerment>

National Commissions for UNESCO

http://www.unesco.org/ncp/index.php??lc=E&module=national_commissions&showall=1

Non-Governmental Organizations maintaining official partnerships with UNESCO

<https://en.unesco.org/partnerships/non-governmental-organizations>

Share your story for development using the survey

<https://story4development.org/>

