**Bibliotheca Alexandrina**

History

The idea of reviving the old library dates back to 1974, when a committee set up by Alexandria University selected a plot of land for its new library, between the campus and the seafront, close to where the ancient library once stood. The recreation of the ancient library was not only adopted by other individuals and agencies, it garnered support from Egyptian politicians. One leading supporter of the project was former Egyptian President Hosni Mubarak; UNESCO was also quick to embrace the concept of endowing the Mediterranean region with a center of cultural and scientific excellence. An architectural design competition was organized by UNESCO in 1988 to choose a design worthy of the site and its heritage. The competition was won by Snøhetta, a Norwegian architectural office, from among more than 1,400 entries. The first pledges were made for funding the project at a conference held in 1990 in Aswan: USD $65 million, mostly from the MENA states. Construction work began in 1995 and, after some US$220 million had been spent, the complex was officially inaugurated on 16 October 2002.

Building and library features

Internet Archive partnership

Library Services