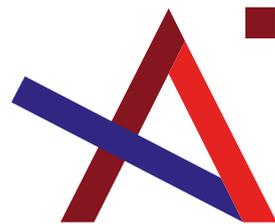
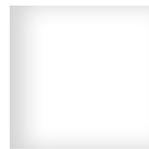


FRENCH
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ALULA
DEVELOPMENT

PRESS KIT



AFALULA

FRENCH AGENCY
FOR ALULA
DEVELOPMENT

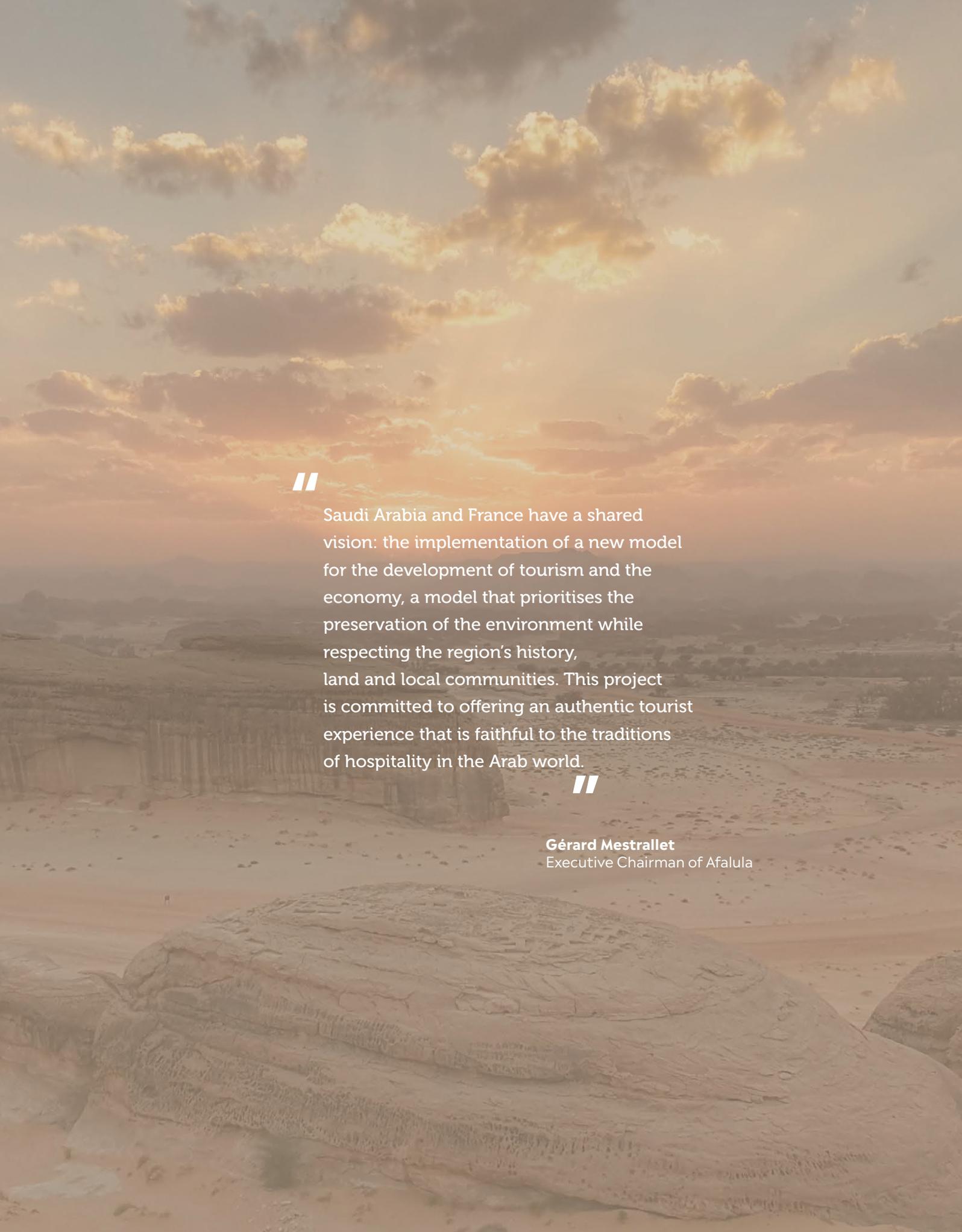
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PRESS CONTACTS

AFALULA: Mathias Curnier - +33 (0)6 77 04 56 18

DGM: Olivier Labesse / Hugues Schmitt - +33 (0)1 40 70 11 89

A wide-angle photograph of a desert landscape at sunset. The sky is filled with large, golden-brown clouds, and the sun is low on the horizon, casting a warm glow over the scene. In the foreground, there are large, flat rock formations with intricate ancient rock art or petroglyphs. The ground is sandy and dotted with small rocks. The overall atmosphere is serene and historical.

//

Saudi Arabia and France have a shared vision: the implementation of a new model for the development of tourism and the economy, a model that prioritises the preservation of the environment while respecting the region's history, land and local communities. This project is committed to offering an authentic tourist experience that is faithful to the traditions of hospitality in the Arab world.

//

G rard Mestrallet
Executive Chairman of Afalula

A FRENCH-SAUDI PARTNERSHIP

The French agency Afalula was founded in Paris in July 2018, one outcome of a bilateral agreement signed at the Elysee Palace on 10 April earlier that year. Its mission is to support Saudi Arabia in the sustainable economic, cultural and tourism development of AlUla, a region of outstanding natural and cultural heritage in the North-West of the Kingdom.

It sets out an historic cooperation between the two nations which aims to strengthen Saudi cultural and historic outreach and make the AlUla region a world-class destination, appreciated by visitors from around the globe.



EMMANUEL MACRON, PRESIDENT OF FRANCE, PRESS CONFERENCE ON 10 APRIL 2018 AT THE ELYSEE PALACE - IN THE PRESENCE OF HIS ROYAL HIGHNESS PRINCE MOHAMMED BIN SALMAN

“With the launch of the French-Saudi partnership to promote the remarkable Mada’in Saleh site in the governorate of AlUla - a major settlement of the Nabataean civilization - we are demonstrating our commitment to a partnership that is focussed on archaeology, heritage and culture, in addition to tourism and the economy, and that forms part of a Saudi initiative aimed at showcasing its rich culture and its roots in some of the most ancient civilisations on the planet.”

“Today sees the creation of an agency in partnership with the Saudi Royal Commission that is dedicated to this endeavour. It will be led by Mr Gérard Mestrallet and will commence operations immediately.”



// Qasr Al-Farid:
towering Nabataean tomb
with decorated frontage
- Hegra site



AN INTERGOVERNMENTAL TREATY

EXCERPT FROM THE BILATERAL TREATY
SIGNED BY FRANCE AND SAUDI ARABIA
ON 10 APRIL 2018

“Whereas the Kingdom of Saudi Arabia wishes to carry out an ambitious development project in partnership with the French Government, aimed at promoting the economy, tourism and culture of the governorate of AlUla, and improving the management of its vast heritage and natural resources, so as to develop the governorate in an innovative and sustainable way and transform it into a world-leading destination for tourism, culture and art, (...) the Parties declare that they wish to make the Project a symbol of the unique partnership between the French Government and the Government of the Kingdom of Saudi Arabia.”



// Nabataean tombs
with decorated frontages
- Hegra site



EXCERPT FROM AN INTERVIEW WITH AMR ALMADANI,
CEO OF THE ROYAL COMMISSION FOR ALULA,
IN THE MAGAZINE “LEADERS” - FEBRUARY 2019 -
ISSUE 26

“My hope is that people from across the world will be touched by the transcendental beauty of AlUla. It is truly a humbling destination. When you visit, you immediately understand why civilization after civilization chose to make this magnificent place their home. AlUla leaves a lasting mark on those who visit it and we are working diligently every day to ensure that people from across the world can come and leave their mark on this special part of the world.”

GÉRARD MESTRALLET,
EXECUTIVE CHAIRMAN OF AFALULA

“AlUla is a region the size of Belgium, full of archaeological treasures from the Dadanite, Nabataean, Roman and Islamic civilisations nestled amongst the staggeringly beautiful desert landscapes. The area has unique potential that remains untapped. Located at the crossroads of major routes through the Middle East, AlUla has served as a grand meeting point for caravans, merchants and pilgrims. One of the Kingdom’s flagship projects is to promote the heritage of this region, to transform AlUla into one of the country’s cultural capitals.”



THE ALULA REGION

AlUla is a region covering **22,561 km²**, making it almost as large as Belgium.

Its capital, AlUla City, is located in the Wadi al-Qura valley, **1,100 km** north of Riyadh, **725 km** from Mecca and **375 km** from Medina.

The shores of the Red Sea are approximately **200 km** west of AlUla.

Population: **64,300**

AlUla is served by the Majeed Bin Abdulaziz airport.



THE GREAT HISTORY OF ALULA

THE MEMORY OF CIVILIZATIONS

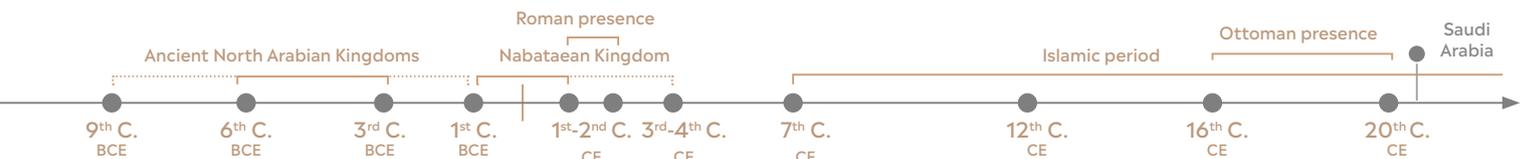
Evidence shows that AlUla has been occupied by humans since the Palaeolithic period. It is at the centre of a network of oases in northern Saudi Arabia, which flourished thanks to the tapping of deep water tables and the long trade routes between Egypt, Mesopotamia and the eastern shores of the Mediterranean.

The high canyons and volcanic landforms of Harrat ‘Uwayrid have been inhabited since the Palaeolithic period (approximately 200,000 years BCE) and are testament to the region’s long history of human settlement, which left behind many inscriptions, petroglyphs and stone structures.

AlUla was the capital of the Dadanite and Lihyanite civilizations from the 6th to the 2nd century BCE, as evidenced by the sites at Dadan, Jabal Ikma and Umm Daraj, where several hundred petroglyphs and inscriptions can be found. The enormous Lion Tombs and the statues discovered at the Dadan site demonstrate the art and sophistication of these pre-Islamic Arabian cultures.

AlUla is best known for being the major economic and cultural centre of the Nabataean civilization from the 2nd century BCE to the 1st century CE, a civilization that also established the better-known city of Petra in Jordan. The Nabataean city of Hegra (now known as Al-Hijr and Mada’in Saleh), located a few dozen kilometres from AlUla, is almost as significant as its famous sister city in Jordan, and boasts numerous tombs with decorative frontages carved into the rock. Excavations as part of the French-Saudi Archaeological Project have enabled experts to identify and showcase more than 100 tombs carved into the rocky mounds that rise out of the desert sands, as well as several remains of walls and fortifications and many inscriptions in Aramaic, Greek, Latin and Arabic. Mada’in Saleh, which once marked the southern border of the Nabataean Kingdom, later became one of the last outposts of the Roman empire.

After the advent of Islam, the cities of Qurh (6th-12th century) and Al-Dirah (AlUla’s old city, 10th-20th century) were flourishing settlements and welcomed pilgrims returning from Mecca and Medina. Abandoned in the 1980s when the new city was constructed, AlUla’s citadel is a maze of narrow alleys and mudbrick houses.



Laïla Nehmé, an archaeologist specialising in Nabataean civilization, Director of Research at CNRS and Co-Director of the French-Saudi archaeological mission at Mada'in Saleh, has been excavating Hegra and its surrounding areas since 2002. With the agreement signed in April 2018, Saudi Arabia has once again entrusted France with the continuing archaeological exploration of this vast area.



// AlUla desert:
expanse of sand and rocks

// Qasr Al-Farid - Hegra site



// Inscriptions carved into
the rock - Jabal Ikamah site,
the largest open-air library
in Saudi Arabia

THE ALULA PROJECT

The Royal Commission for AlUla was created by royal decree in July 2017 to revitalize this unique region and to showcase its impressive heritage as part of the Saudi Vision 2030 plan.

The Commission aims to transform AlUla into a leading tourist destination, to reveal the region's extraordinary rich heritage and diversity, and to establish a development programme that protects the region's identity and archaeological artefacts, safeguards the needs of local communities, and respects the significant environmental constraints.

France supports the Royal Commission through the French Agency for AlUla Development, helping the Commission to deliver this huge project together and to choose the best people and best solutions in all areas.





// Arch carved into the rock



INTERVIEW

GÉRARD MESTRALLET

Executive Chairman of Afalula

What was it about the AIUla project that caught your attention?

I discovered the AIUla region, located in North-West Saudi Arabia, when the French President Emmanuel Macron appointed me as the Special Envoy of the Presidency to negotiate an agreement with the Kingdom of Saudi Arabia as part of the AIUla project. This collaboration took the form of an intergovernmental treaty, which was signed by France and Saudi Arabia on 10 April 2018.

It was really important to me to be part of such a key moment in this country's history. The AIUla historical, cultural and tourism project comes at a time when Saudi Arabia is transforming and becoming more open. His Royal Highness Prince Mohammed Bin Salman, the Crown Prince of the Kingdom, has started pushing for change, focusing on the future and on young people.

What does France contribute to Saudi Arabia through Afalula?

France is working to transform Saudi Arabia through the agency and the AIUla Project. The agency has a dual role with its Saudi partner: it is helping to deliver the AIUla Project together with its Saudi counterparts while aiming to mobilise all French expertise – experts, operators and companies – in each area covered by the project, including cultural engineering, archaeology, architecture and urban planning, agriculture and botany, tourism, education, security, and water and environmental resource management.

For example, I was part of an international jury that selected French architect Jean Nouvel last February to design a hotel complex in the Sharaan nature reserve.

How do you reconcile tourism development with the conservation of this site?

By developing the region in a sophisticated manner that is respectful of its history, its environment, its land and its local communities. AIUla is poised to become a unique destination in the international tourist landscape – a place for relaxation and rejuvenation, a place of tranquillity, where natural environments remain untouched and where culture is celebrated. As a result, any human intervention needs to be as unobtrusive as possible. That is why sustainable development is one of the cornerstones of the project and is at the heart of the bilateral treaty.

Saudi Arabia and France have a shared vision: the implementation of a new model for the development of tourism and the economy, a model that prioritises the preservation of the environment while respecting the region's history and local communities. This project is committed to offering an authentic tourist experience that is faithful to the traditions of hospitality in the Arab world.

The AIUla project is part of the Saudi Vision 2030 plan. What will be the project's different stages of development?

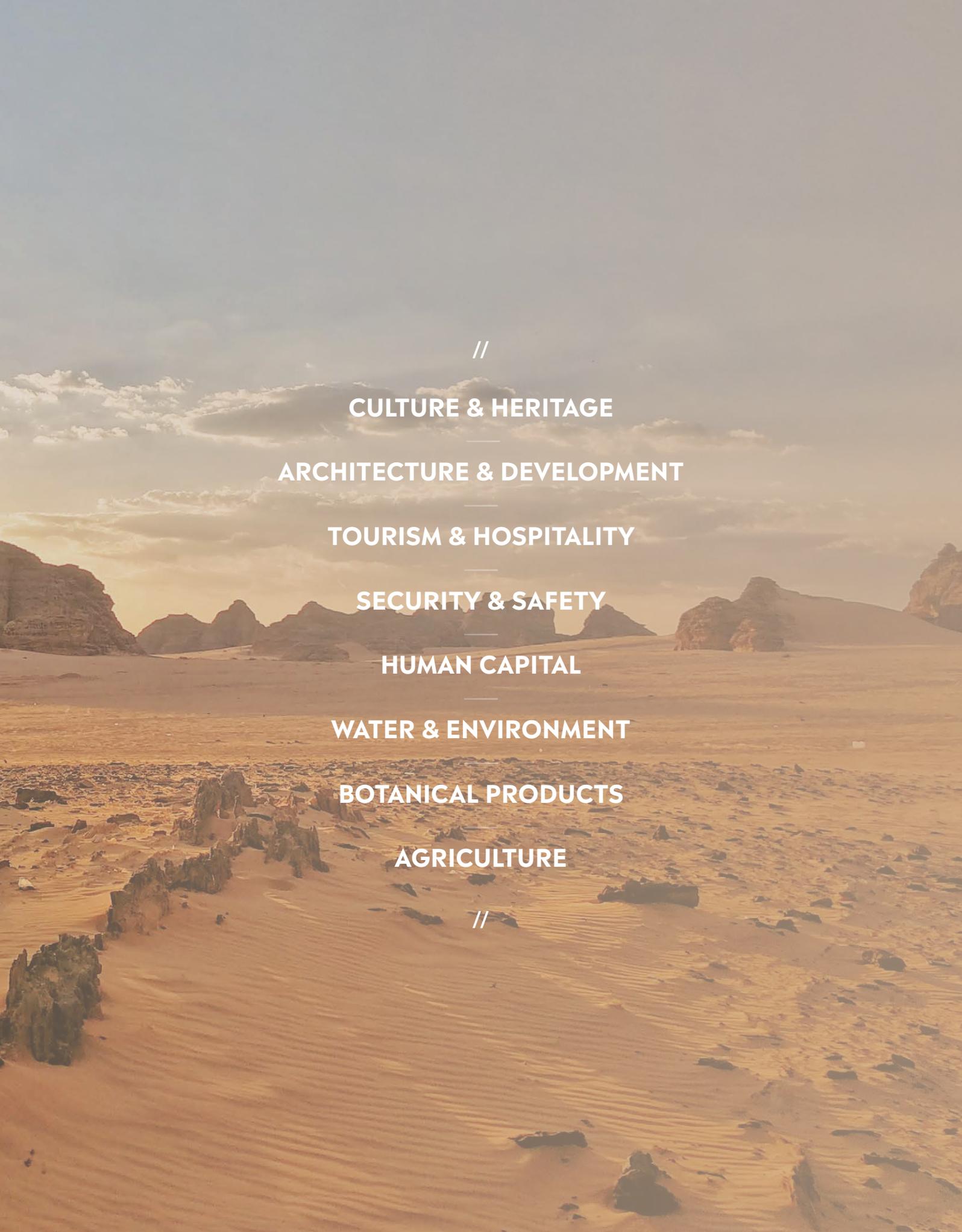
The aim is to make AIUla a world-class destination by 2035. It will be a luxury cultural destination that will take its guests on a journey through over 5,000 years of history. We are anticipating two million visitors every year, with half coming from abroad. They will be invited to enjoy an authentic experience like no other in the heart of the extraordinary surroundings. It's an ambitious project that will create more than 35,000 permanent jobs.



// Oasis as seen from the Dadan Kingdom

THE AGENCY'S CORE **EXPERTISE**

// Jabal Al-Feel site



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CULTURE & HERITAGE

ARCHITECTURE & DEVELOPMENT

TOURISM & HOSPITALITY

SECURITY & SAFETY

HUMAN CAPITAL

WATER & ENVIRONMENT

BOTANICAL PRODUCTS

AGRICULTURE

//

CULTURE & HERITAGE

Conserving AIUla's heritage
Developing archaeological sites and a museum complex around a centre for research

HEAD OF DEPARTMENT :

JEAN-FRANÇOIS CHARNIER

Jean-François Charnier is a certified national general curator of heritage, having graduated with a degree in Art History and Archaeology from the École du Louvre and a degree in Anthropology from Paris Nanterre University. His first job was in the area of preventive archaeology and heritage coordination, later becoming the director of the Agriculture and Environment Department at the Museum of European and Mediterranean Civilisations (MUCEM). He joined Agence France-Muséums in 2008 and brought together experts from national museums in France, such as the Louvre, Centre Pompidou and the Musée d'Orsay, to create the Louvre Abu Dhabi. He was appointed Scientific Director of Agence France-Muséums and the project in 2013, going on to curate the contents of the museum and to manage the teams responsible for museography, artwork acquisition, programmes and publications for the Louvre Abu Dhabi, which opened its doors in November 2017. He joined Afalula in August 2018.

TOURISM & HOSPITALITY

Developing tourism to make AIUla a global destination and a leader in sustainable tourism

HEAD OF DEPARTMENT :

NICOLAS LEFEBVRE

Nicolas Lefebvre has over thirteen years' experience in the tourism industry. As CEO of the Société d'Exploitation de la Tour Eiffel (SETE) and then as CEO of the Paris Convention and Visitors Bureau, he directly helped to promote Paris as a city for tourists and conventions. He has served on the boards of European Cities Marketing, Paris & Co and the World Federation of Great Towers, and has acted as an advisor to the French Ministry for the Economy, Finance and Industry. He joined Afalula in January 2019.

ARCHITECTURE & DEVELOPMENT

Conserving and promoting the site's historical and natural assets
Planning sustainable tourism infrastructure and socio-economic development

HEAD OF DEPARTMENT :

ETIENNE TRICAUD

After one year working as a design engineer at Ove Arup in London and RFR in Paris, Etienne Tricaud joined the French national railway company, SNCF, as a project manager before taking over as head of the SNCF Station Design Office. He and Jean-Marie Duthilleul founded AREP within the SNCF Group in 1997, becoming the group's Executive Director. He managed architectural, engineering and urban planning projects and oversaw the design of major developments in various sectors: train stations (TGV Méditerranéen, TGV Est, TGV Rhin-Rhône, major Parisian railway stations), public buildings and infrastructure, offices and shops, and surveys of major urban developments for SNCF in France as well as public and private sector clients in France and around the world. He was appointed Chairman of the AREP Group in 2012. He joined Afalula in January 2019.

SECURITY & SAFETY

Developing a security strategy and plan

HEAD OF DEPARTMENT :

BERNARD PETIT

After studying Public Law and Classical Literature at university, Bernard Petit joined the French National Police Academy (École Nationale Supérieure de la Police - ENSP), graduating in 1986. He held various management positions within the French National Police, where he became well-known for his expertise in combatting terrorism, drug trafficking and organised crime. He was then appointed as an advisor to the French Prime Minister and oversaw several international cooperation programmes, particularly in South Africa, as head of the International Relations Department. After a forty-year career, Bernard Petit was promoted to chief of the Police Judiciaire de Paris in 2015. He has also been awarded the French National Police Medal of Honour and was made a Chevalier de la Légion d'Honneur (Knight of the Legion of Honour). He joined Afalula in November 2018.

HUMAN CAPITAL

Building and reinforcing the governorate's human resources and training capacities

HEAD OF DEPARTMENT:

RÉGIS DANTAUX

After studying the history of the Arab-Muslim world and Arabic at university and completing a course at the Department of Arab Studies in Cairo, Régis Dantaux held several positions in the areas of cooperation and development at the French Ministry for Europe and Foreign Affairs. Régis Dantaux joined Afalula in October 2018 after spending time stationed in the Palestinian territories, Morocco, Lebanon, Qatar and Cameroon and working in the Ministry's North Africa and Middle East Department.

WATER & ENVIRONMENT

Managing water, energy, resources and natural environments sustainably

HEAD OF DEPARTMENT:

CHARLES CHAUMIN

Charles Chaumin is an engineer with degrees from the École Polytechnique and the École Nationale des Ponts et Chaussées in Paris, and holds an MSc in Water Resources Engineering from the University of Newcastle, UK. He has devoted his entire professional career to managing water resources and the environment, primarily with the SUEZ Group. He has developed extensive expertise in planning, designing, managing, coordinating and financing urban water, sanitation and waste services. He has worked for various organisations: Agence de l'Eau Seine-Normandie, followed by the Lyonnaise des Eaux Group, and finally SUEZ from 1981 to 2017 in several continents, including Europe, North and South America and Asia. He finished his career as Senior Vice-President for Strategy at the SUEZ Group. He joined Afalula in November 2018.

BOTANICAL PRODUCTS

Developing products and concepts based on incense and myrrh trading routes showcasing local natural resources

HEAD OF DEPARTMENT:

ELISABETH DODINET

Elisabeth Dodinet has over twenty years' experience in archaeo-ethnobotany and aromatic plant research, both as a consultant for the perfume and cosmetics industry and as an independent researcher for programmes funded by the French National Research Agency. She founded the Fédération des Conservatoires Botaniques Nationaux (French National Federation of Botanical Conservatories) in 2008, which she managed for two years. She is also a member of the IUCN Species Survival Commission and collaborates with teams of scientists and archaeologists, as well as the private sector, on various projects. She joined Afalula in September 2018.

AGRICULTURE

Developing sustainable and economically viable agriculture

HEAD OF DEPARTMENT:

STÉPHANE FORMAN

Stéphane Forman is a doctor of veterinary medicine and an expert in the agricultural sector. He has more than fifteen years' experience in international development and sustainable, rural and agricultural development. Graduating from the École Nationale Vétérinaire d'Alfort (ENVA) with a degree in veterinary science, he has worked in a variety of international organisations, including the World Organisation for Animal Health (OIE) and the World Bank, which he joined in 2008. He is an expert in developing dry agropastoral areas and has acquired particular skills in managing agricultural projects, agrobusiness, livestock breeding and animal health and food safety and security. He recently held the position of Senior Agricultural Specialist at the World Bank in Sydney, Australia, where he coordinated the agricultural portfolio in the Pacific region and Papua New Guinea. He joined Afalula in August 2019.



// Nabataean tombs with decorated frontages - Hegra site



// Inside a Nabataean tomb - Hegra site



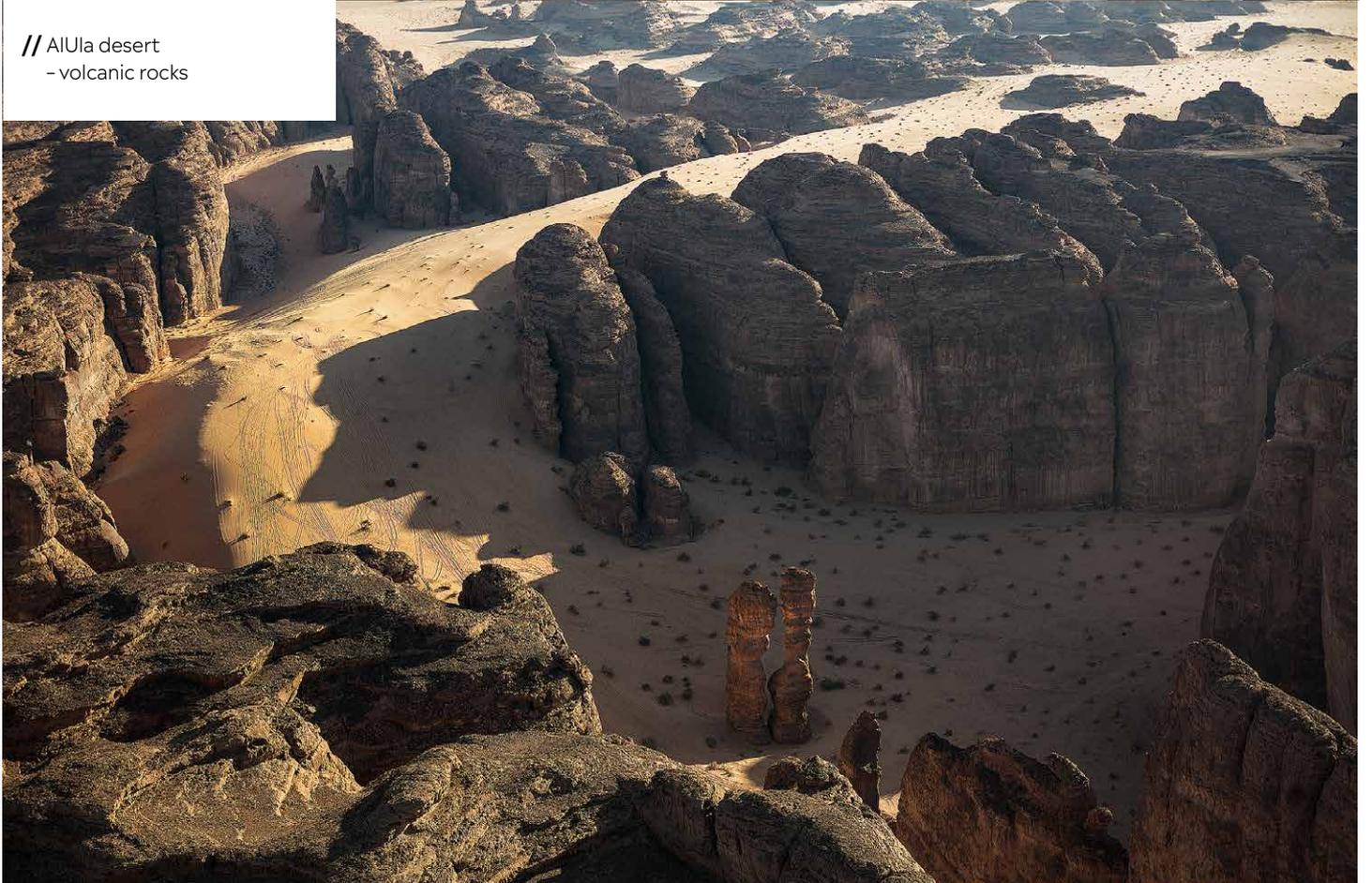
// Inside a Nabataean tomb
- Hegra site



// Panorama - view of
the oasis, city and rocky
desert of AlUla



// AlUla Old town
dating from the 13th century



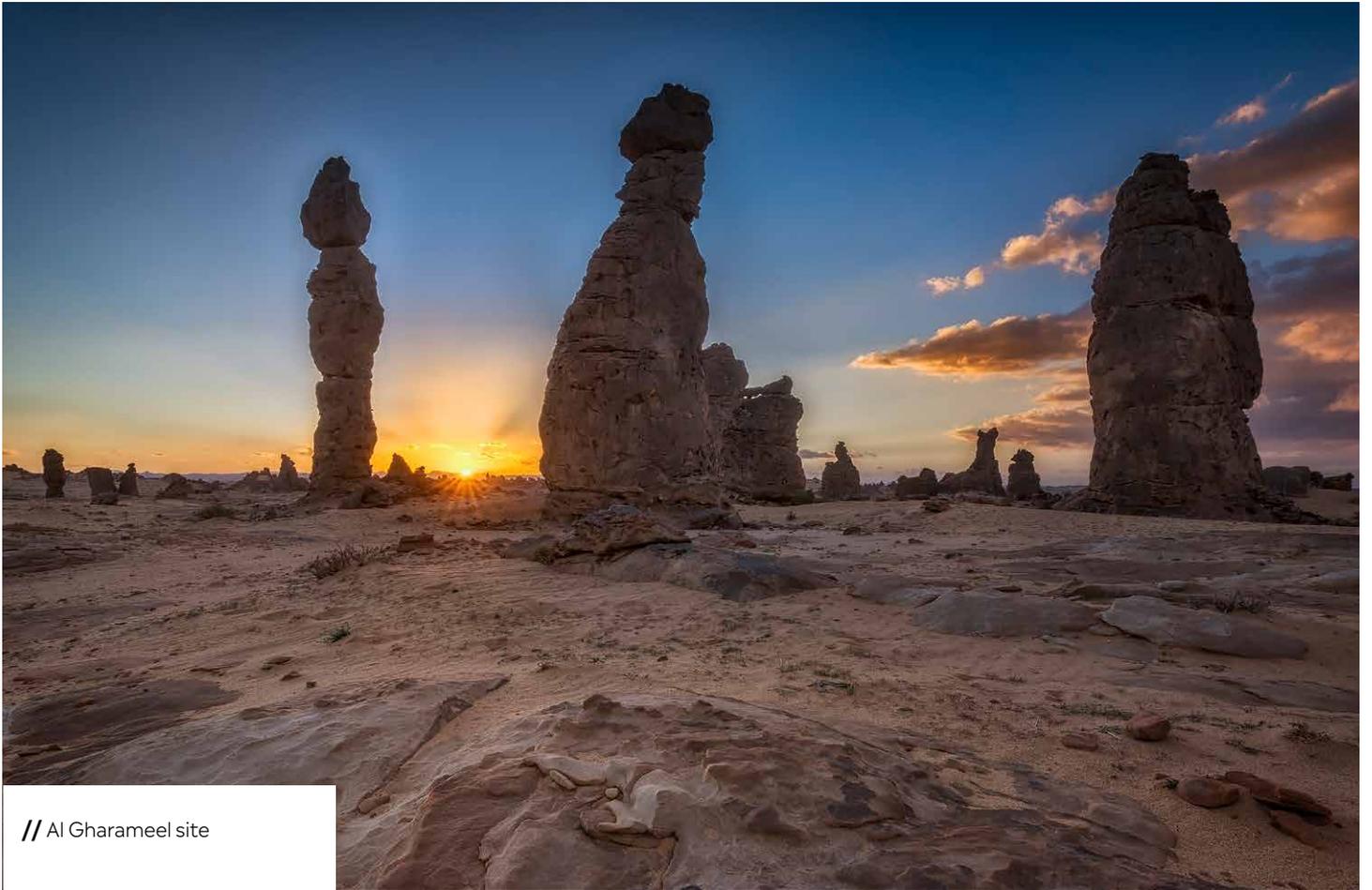
// AlUla desert
- volcanic rocks



// Row of Nabataean tombs
with decorated frontages
- Hegra site



// Glimpse of a Nabataean
tomb - Hegra site



// Al Gharameel site

// Old Town – the view from
inside a house on the site

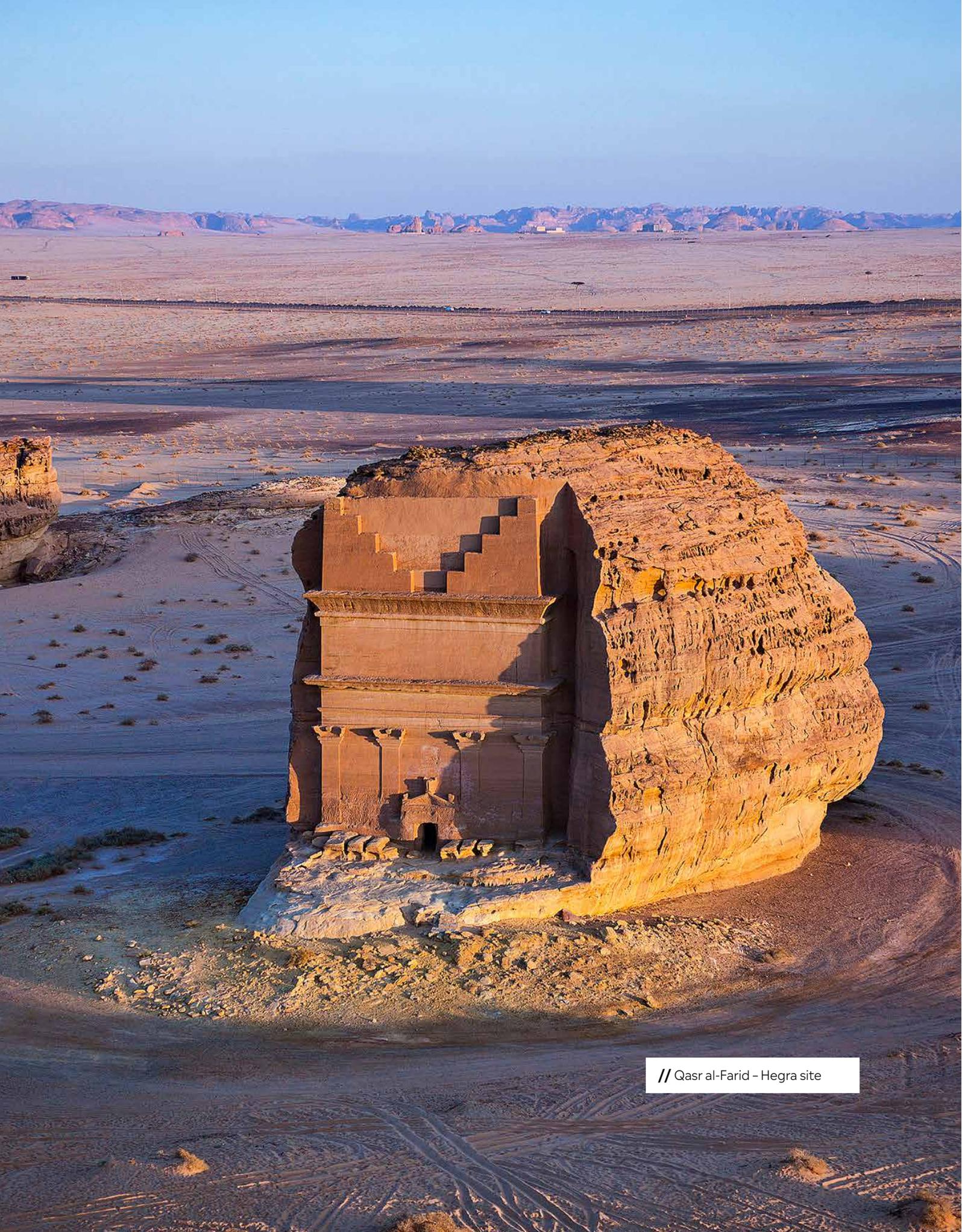




// Jabal Al-Feel site



// Elephant Rock
- Jabal Al-Feel site



// Qasr al-Farid - Hegra site



FRENCH
AGENCY
FOR
ALULA
DEVELOPMENT

82, RUE DE COURCELLES
75 008 PARIS - FRANCE

Tel. : +33 (0)1 44 55 08 15
Email : mathias.curnier@afalula.com

www.afalula.com