

Press release

Paris, 7th October 2019

Cultural Manifesto released by the Royal Commission for AIUla

“The cultural manifesto published by the Royal Commission for AIUla captures the global scale of this major project.”

The French Agency for AIUla Development (Afalula) is delighted to announce the publication of the cultural manifesto drafted by the Royal Commission for AIUla, outlining this project’s broad cultural endeavours and unveiling the principal museums that will be constructed over the next ten years in this unique region, which is part of UNESCO’s global heritage. Under the 10 April 2018 bilateral agreement between France and Saudi Arabia, the French Agency for AIUla Development, will, in close partnership with the Royal Commission, co-build each stage of this major cultural programme and will have a role in the productions that stem from it.

Chairman of the French Agency for AIUla Development, **Gérard Mestrallet** stated:

“The cultural manifesto published by the Royal Commission for AIUla captures the global scale of this major project.” By signing the 10 April 2018 treaty, France has seized the opportunity to contribute to an unparalleled project, something the French public as a whole will be able to appreciate through the “AIUla Wonder of Arabia” exhibition at the Arab World Institute. All of the know-how France has always committed to culture will find in AIUla fertile ground for expression, an incomparable wealth of inspiration, and resources that lend themselves to work of the highest quality.”



About IMA (Arab World Institute)

The Arab World Institute was established to foster strong and durable cultural ties while developing constructive dialogue between the Arab World, France, and Europe. This multidisciplinary space is the ideal place for the development of cultural projects, in collaboration with institutions, creators, and thinkers from the Arab world. The Arab World Institute is fully anchored in the present. It aims to reflect the Arab world's current dynamics. It intends to make a distinctive contribution to the institutional cultural landscape. No other organisation in the world offers such a wide range of events relating to the Arab world. Debates, colloquia, seminars, conferences, dance shows, concerts, films, books, meetings, language and culture courses, and major exhibitions all contribute to raising awareness of this unique and vibrant world.

About RCU (the Royal Commission for AlUla)

The Royal Commission for AlUla (RCU) was established in July 2017 to protect and safeguard AlUla, a region of outstanding natural and cultural significance in North-West Saudi Arabia. RCU has embarked on a long-term plan to develop and deliver a sensitive, sustainable transformation of the region, reaffirming it as one of the country's most important archaeological and cultural destinations and preparing it to welcome visitors from around the world. Since its inception RCU's development work in AlUla has encompassed a broad range of initiatives across archaeology, nature, tourism, culture, education and the arts. A major programme incorporating extensive archaeological fieldwork and survey of the biodiversity of AlUla is currently underway by RCU, with the support of expert teams from around the globe. The creation of nature reserves and animal conservation initiatives are amongst efforts to protect habitats and safeguard endangered species. Local skills development for the AlUla community include the Hamayah workshop programme, training male and female citizens in heritage awareness; the Scholarship Programme for AlUla students to study at world-leading institutions abroad and the training of local tour guides, the 'AlRowah' group in AlUla; as guardians of AlUla's history.

About AFALULA (French Agency for AlUla development)

The French Agency for AlUla Development (Afalula) was founded in Paris in July 2018 following an intergovernmental agreement signed by France and Saudi Arabia in April of that year. Afalula aims to support its Saudi partner, The Royal Commission for AlUla (RCU), in the co-construction of the economic, touristic and cultural development of AlUla, a region located in the North-West of Saudi Arabia which benefits from outstanding natural and cultural heritage. The agency's mission is to mobilize French knowledge and expertise and to gather the finest operators and companies in the fields of archaeology, museography, architecture, environment, tourism, hospitality, infrastructure, education, security, agriculture, botany and the sustainable management of natural resources.

Press contacts:

Mathias Curnier (AFALULA) mathias.curnier@afalula.com, tel: +33 6 77 04 56 18

Olivier Labesse (DGM CONSEIL), mail@dgmconseil.com, tel: +33 6 16 26 33 58

Quentin Hua (DGM CONSEIL), mail@dgmconseil.com, tel: +33 6 28 63 27 29

afalula.com