

Press release

Paris, the 27th October 2020

The French Agency for AlUla Development salutes the architectural, environmental and cultural ambition of the new Resort project presented by Jean Nouvel for the Sharaan site.

By revealing his Resort project in the Sharaan reserve of AlUla, Jean Nouvel unveils the promise of a global masterpiece of contextual architecture.

Entirely carved into the rock, the project adapts Nabataean techniques to today's and tomorrow's challenges with an absolute respect for the environment, the history and the existing landscapes.

A journey through time in which visitors from all over the world will be able to experience the beauty and raw authenticity of AlUla.



@AteliersJeanNouvel



Jean Nouvel has presented to the **Royal Commission for AIUla** his ambition for the prestigious hotel he will realize in the heart of the natural reserve of Sharaan in the course of 2024 as part of the opening of AIUla region to international tourism. This project, selected by the Royal Commission following an international competition in 2018, is one of the most emblematic aspects of the collaboration between Saudi Arabia and France which was sealed by an intergovernmental agreement on April 10, 2018.

Gérard Mestrallet, Executive President of Afalula, said: "As a member of the international jury in charge of selecting the most relevant project for the Sharaan Reserve, I had the pleasure to discover Jean Nouvel's very first architectural intentions and to appreciate his keen interest in the territory and culture of the province of AIUla. He then had an incredible understanding of the location and was eager to bring it to life with a unique accomplishment.

The detailed project Jean Nouvel has just submitted for approval to the Royal Commission offers a truly modern and sensorial interpretation of the landscapes of Sharaan, of its mystery and Nabataean heritage. By leveraging the spectacular natural environment, Jean Nouvel has been able to showcase the beauty and the diversity of Sharaan lines, shadows and textures with a strong cultural act. It also underlines, as part of the co-construction of AIUla's future, the strong commitment of Afalula to bring to his Saudi partner projects and talents that demonstrate a deep understanding of Saudi heritage as well as best-in-class technical expertise. "



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About AIUla

The French Agency for AIUla 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 AIUla (RCU), in the co-construction of the economic, touristic and cultural development of AIUla, 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.

About RCU (Royal Commission for AIUla)

The Royal Commission for AIUla (RCU) was established in July 2017 to protect and safeguard AIUla, 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 AIUla 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 AIUla 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 AIUla community include the Hammayah workshop programme, training male and female citizens in heritage awareness; the Scholarship Programme for AIUla students to study at world-leading institutions abroad and the training of local tour guides, the 'AIRowah' group in AIUla; as guardians of AIUla's history.

About AFALULA (French Agency for AIUla)

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