

Press release

Paris, March 14, 2023

The French Agency for AIUla Development (AFALULA) welcomes the signing, during the visit of the French Minister of Culture, Rima Abdul Malak, to Riyadh and AIUla, of a partnership agreement between the Centre Pompidou and the Royal Commission for AIUla (RCU) for the development of a contemporary art museum in AIUla, for which AFALULA has been working for nearly two years

Saudi Arabia and France signed an intergovernmental agreement in April 2018 on the sustainable development of the AIUla region and its transformation into a world-class cultural and tourism destination.

As a result of this agreement, the French Agency for AIUla Development (AFALULA) was created to mobilize all French know-how (experts, operators, companies) and to support its Saudi partner, the Royal Commission for AIUla (RCU), in a spirit of collaborative development.

In developing AIUla, it is the joint desire of Saudi Arabia and France to implement a new model of economic and tourism development, focused on environmental conservation, respect for history and the land, and inclusion of the local population. This approach is at the heart of the bilateral agreement signed between the two governments.

On March 12, 2023, during the visit to Riyadh and AIUla of the French Minister of Culture, Rima Abdul Malak, a partnership agreement was signed between the RCU and the Centre Pompidou in the framework of the project to create a museum of contemporary art in AIUla.

The agreement was signed by Laurent Le Bon, President of the Centre Pompidou, and Nora Aldabal, Arts and Creative Planning Director at RCU, in presence of Rima Abdul Malak, French Minister of Culture and H.H. Prince Badr bin Farhan Al Saud, Saudi Minister of Culture and Governor of RCU, and Gérard Mestrallet, Executive chairman of AFALULA.

This partnership, facilitated by AFALULA, aims to support the enhancement and development of the cultural, artistic and creative aspects of the AIUla site. The Centre Pompidou will contribute its scientific and technical expertise in the training of staff, particularly in the areas of conservation management of collections and mediation. It may also provide support for the organisation of cultural and event programming.

"I am delighted with the signing of this partnership, which once again demonstrates the strengthening of Franco-Saudi cooperation in the field of art and culture. France will bring to Saudi Arabia its world-renowned know-how regarding museums and contemporary creation. As a leading cultural institution, the Centre Pompidou will support the Royal Commission for AIUla in the field of museum management and in the implementation of an ambitious project: the creation of a modern art museum in AIUla, the Perspectives Galleries, whose influence will extend throughout the Middle East and beyond and which will contribute to making AIUla, with the support of AFALULA, a major cultural destination." **Gérard Mestrallet, Executive chairman of AFALULA**



About AFALULA, the French Agency for AIUla Development

Born as a result of an intergovernmental agreement signed by France and Saudi Arabia in April 2018, the French Agency for AIUla Development (AFALULA) was founded in Paris in July 2018. In the spirit of collaborative development, Afalula's objective is to support its Saudi partner, the Royal Commission for AIUla (RCU), in the sustainable economic, tourism, and cultural development of AIUla, a region with an exceptional natural and cultural heritage located in the north-west of Saudi Arabia. The Agency's mission is to mobilize all of France's expertise and savoir-faire and to bring together the best operators and companies in the fields of archeology, museography, architecture, urban planning, tourism, hotel management, infrastructure, education, security, agriculture, botany, and sustainable natural resource management.

About the RCU (Royal Commission for AIUla)

The Royal Commission for AIUla (RCU) was established by royal decree in July 2017 to preserve and develop AIUla, an area of outstanding natural and cultural heritage, located in north-western Saudi Arabia. The RCU's long-term plan takes a sensitive, sustainable, and responsible approach to urban and economic development to preserve the region's natural and historic heritage, while making AIUla a great place to live, work, and visit. The plan encompasses numerous initiatives in the fields of archeology, tourism, culture, education, and the arts to address various priorities in economic diversification, empowerment of local communities, and heritage preservation as part of the Kingdom of Saudi Arabia's Vision 2030 program.

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