



Royal Commission for AlUla announces contractor and begins construction on Sharaan Resort and International Summit Centre

- *Designs are finalized and construction is underway for the ambitious luxury resort*
- *Built directly into the mountains of Sharaan Nature Reserve, the project follows the AlUla Sustainability Charter with efficient heating and cooling, and zero wastewater*

AlUla, Saudi Arabia, 7 June 2023: The Royal Commission for AlUla (RCU) has begun construction of its Sharaan Resort and International Summit Centre designed by French architect Jean Nouvel. The project will be built directly into the mountains of Sharaan Nature Reserve and aims to meet ambitious sustainability goals for the construction phase and resort operations.

In a ceremony at Sharaan Nature Reserve, RCU signed an agreement with Bouygues Construction, a French engineering group, which will manage construction of the resort through a joint venture with Almabani, a leading Saudi engineering firm. Bouygues Construction brings a unique combination of experience in tunneling and construction of ultra-luxury hotels, both required for this complex development.

RCU's Development and Construction sector is spearheading this project with consultation from Canadian firm WSP and with program management support from Jasara, a Saudi firm. Together they will deliver the masterful vision which will immerse guests in the natural and cultural heritage of Sharaan Nature Reserve.

Just as the Nabataean civilisation carved structures into nearby sandstone more than 2,000 years ago, Sharaan resort will carve a new chapter in stone for AlUla's living museum while preserving the natural scenery and native flora and fauna at the heart of RCU's vision for Sharaan. RCU consulted with the world's top experts in mining and excavation to engineer solutions in line with the architectural vision.

Built into a mountain dating back 500 million years, the Sharaan resort will offer a memorable and timeless experience with 38 suites, a spa and wellness center, kids club, sport centre, all-day dining restaurant and business centre. In addition, a signature fine-dining restaurant will sit atop the mountain with panoramic views of Sharaan. A unique glass elevator will connect the resort with a geologic and artistic experience, offering views of ancient sedimentary layers and niches filled with art and engravings.

Inside an adjacent mountain, the Sharaan International Summit Centre will host events and leaders from around the world. With a completely secure and private environment, its design will enable chance encounters and private interaction for guests with shared leisure activities in an informal setting. Facilities will include an auditorium, meeting rooms, majlis (sitting room), library, and a sport and leisure area.

The Summit Centre will also have 13 total hospitality pavilions and two private villas will be constructed nearby, completing the project with 53 total hospitality keys.

Aligned with Saudi Arabia's Vision 2030 and the Sustainability Charter for AlUla, the Sharaan Resort and International Summit Centre is designed in harmony with its natural environment. Discreet studies of the site have informed the design of passive strategies and natural geological heat transfer to efficiently cool the property in summer and provide warmth in the winter. The project also aims for zero wastewater by using potable water only when needed and by recycling all treatable wastewater for irrigation and other purposes.

Mohammed Altheeb, RCU Chief Development and Construction Officer, said: "Sharaan resort is our most ambitious project currently under construction. The resort was designed with complete reverence for the human and natural history of AlUla, and we are committed to sustainable building practices in line with this same philosophy. RCU and its partners are excited to unveil a new chapter in the story of these ancient mountains, where guests will experience the wonders of Sharaan Nature Reserve."



Pierre-Eric Saint-André, Deputy CEO of Bouygues Construction, said:

“We are grateful to be part of the ambitious cultural and tourism project of AlUla, and in particular to have been chosen by the Royal Commission of AlUla with our partner Almagrani to build the iconic Sharaan Resort and International Summit Centre. The bold vision of Jean Nouvel's architectural firm – with whom we have already had the opportunity to work on the Paris Philharmonic Center for example – is a great source of inspiration for us, since the technical prowess it requires are absolutely unique and incredibly stimulating. We are confident that we will be able to bring our passion for challenges and our state-of-the-art expertise acquired over 70 years on all continents to ensure that this great project becomes an iconic reference in terms of exclusive tourist experience, respect for the environment and harmonious integration within grandiose landscapes.”

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For media enquiries please contact publicrelations@rcu.gov.sa

Noted for editors:

It is always AlUla / not Al-Ula

About the Royal Commission for AlUla

The Royal Commission for AlUla (RCU) was established by royal decree in July 2017 to preserve and develop AlUla, a region of outstanding natural and cultural significance in north-west Saudi Arabia. RCU's long-term plan outlines a responsible, sustainable, and sensitive approach to urban and economic development that preserves the area's natural and historic heritage while establishing AlUla as a desirable location to live, work, and visit. This encompasses a broad range of initiatives across archaeology, tourism, culture, education, and the arts, reflecting a commitment to meeting the economic diversification, local community empowerment, and heritage preservation priorities of the Kingdom of Saudi Arabia's Vision 2030 programme.