

Press release

Paris, October 24, 2023

During the 7th edition of the FII Forum, the Royal Commission for AIUla signs a major strategic partnership with the French group Alstom, world leader in integrated transport systems.

- 22.5 km of immersive tramway experience, seamlessly connecting AIUla's UNESCO World Heritage Sites, historic oasis towns, and contemporary urban centres
- Designed as a core component of the Journey Through Time masterplan, echoing AIUla's unique blend of culture, heritage, and nature
- Leading French transport manufacturer Alstom contracted to provide trains and systems that align with AIUla's sustainability objectives

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

Born from this agreement, the French Agency for the Development of AIUla (AFALULA) aims to mobilize all French expertise (experts, operators, companies) and to support, within a co-construction framework, its Saudi partner, the Royal Commission for AIUla (RCU).

The Agency brings together some of the world's best experts in all the key areas of the project: museography, archaeology, architecture and urban planning, agriculture and botany, tourism, education, infrastructure, horses, security, water and environmental management.

The joint desire of Saudi Arabia and France is to implement, through the AIUla project, a new model of economic and touristic development focused on the preservation of the environment, respectful of history, territories and inclusive of the local population. This component of sustainable development is at the heart of the bilateral agreement signed between the two nations.

On October 24, 2023, during the 7th edition of the FII Forum held in Riyadh, an ambitious partnership covering the creation of a responsible experiential tramway in AIUla was signed with leading French group Alstom.

“The signing of this major contract with the French group Alstom testifies to the shared ambition of Saudi Arabia and France to offer AIUla smart and innovative solutions in the fields of mobility and regional planning for the benefit of AIUla’s inhabitants and international visitors. It is also a reminder of the excellence of our French companies in cutting-edge technologies designed to create responsible environments and unique living spaces for all.” **Jean-Yves Le Drian, Chairman of AFALULA**

The contract signed with Alstom covers the creation of a responsible experiential tramway in AIUla.



The Royal Commission for AlUla (RCU) shared the progress of its ambitious AlUla Experiential Tramway project. With 20 state-of-the-art trains running on a 22.5 km line featuring 17 strategic stations and stops, the initiative encapsulates luxury, history, and green mobility like no other.

The low-carbon AlUla Tramway will be powered by trains and systems provided by Alstom, a global leader in sustainable transportation. The tramway draws inspiration from the historic Hijaz railway; passengers will be immersed in a journey encapsulating AlUla's profound connection to its history. The tram will connect AlUla's five core historical districts, promising an authentic, visual experience from oasis to desert while capturing the essence of pilgrimages from centuries past.

AlUla's Experiential Tramway stands as a testament to RCU's innovation and commitment to sustainable transportation. This emphasis on multi-mobility options underscores Saudi Arabia's drive towards environmental sustainability and heritage conservation.

Envisioned as the catalyst of RCU's expansive Journey Through Time masterplan, the tramway offers visitors and residents a luxurious passage through the world's largest living museum: AlUla.

About AFALULA (French Agency for AlUla Development)

Born as a result of an intergovernmental agreement signed by France and Saudi Arabia in April 2018, the French Agency for AlUla 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 AlUla (RCU), in the sustainable economic, tourism, and cultural development of AlUla, 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 know-how and to bring together the best operators and companies in the fields of archaeology, museography, architecture, urban planning, tourism, hotel management, infrastructure, education, security, agriculture, botany, and sustainable natural resource management.

About the RCU (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.

About Alstom

ALSTOM is a world-renowned company specializing in the electrical, mechanical and electronic construction of rail transport equipment. A promoter of sustainable mobility, Alstom designs and offers systems, equipment and services for the transport sector. Alstom offers a complete range of solutions (from high-speed trains to metros, streetcars and e-buses), customized services (maintenance, modernization...) as well as offers dedicated to passengers, infrastructure solutions, digital mobility and signalling. Alstom is positioned as a world leader in integrated transport systems. In 2017/18, the company generated sales of €8 billion and booked orders worth €7.2 billion. Headquartered in France, Alstom is present in over 60 countries and currently employs 34,500 people.



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