

## **Request for Interest**

### **Development of the Tennis Ecosystem in AlUla**

#### **1. Background**

---

##### **1.1. The AlUla project**

**AlUla county** spans a surface area of about 22,500 km<sup>2</sup> in the North-western parts of the Kingdom of Saudi Arabia (KSA). AlUla has a distinguished natural and human heritage spanning millennia of interactions between human and natural history. As a cornerstone of the Kingdom's cultural and touristic ambition,

**AlUla project** will develop an archaeological, cultural and touristic complex, the so called "open-air living museum". This major investment aims to make the AlUla region the Kingdom's cultural capital as per the 2030 vision.

**The 2030 vision of KSA** aims at i) developing AlUla as a global destination for history, heritage, culture, and ecotourism while adopting a sustainable and inclusive approach, ii) diversifying the local economy including agriculture, logistics, hospitality, sports, arts and culture; and iii) and preserving the natural heritage through responsible conservation of ecosystems and biodiversity, ecological restoration and reintroduction of wildlife.

**The Royal Commission for AlUla (RCU)** was established by a Royal Decree in July 2017 to lead and achieve the vision for AlUla project. As an integrated management agency for AlUla County, the RCU was established as a mechanism for coordination to transfer all the activities related to the Commission's jurisdiction from the relevant government bodies. RCU is responsible for the Strategy development for AlUla, its implementation and the development of successful partnerships. RCU's special nature authority and administrative independence enables it to efficiently drive the coordination and delivery of this major development project, as aligned with its vision and local requirements.

**The French Agency for AlUla Development (AFALULA)** was founded in July 2018 (in Paris) following a bilateral agreement between KSA & France signed on 10 April 2018 at the Elysée Palace. The agreement mandates France to support Saudi Arabia in the economic, touristic and cultural development of AlUla and its transformation into a worldwide cultural and touristic destination. The Agency's mission is to mobilize the full breadth of French expertise (specialists, operators, companies) and to support, within a co-constructed plan, its Saudi partner, The Royal Commission for AlUla (RCU).

##### **1.2. Sports in AlUla**

The RCU's Sports Sector was established in December 2023 and is aligned with RCU's overarching strategy and the National Sports Strategy in its mandate to drive economic and social development in AlUla through Sports. The Sports Sector's vision is to become an internationally recognized sports destination that contributes to achieving the national sports ambitions and its mission is to develop a comprehensive sports offer for residents and visitors. Through its Sports Sector, RCU is committed to ensuring that its sports initiatives contribute meaningfully to the social, cultural, and economic development of the AlUla region.

Sports directly contributes to two of the 9 Strategic Objectives recently approved from the AlUla Strategy Refresh, namely SO2: Enriching AlUla's cultural heritage, arts and sports, SO8: Improve AlUla's resident experience to national standards and indirectly to other SOs, including SO6: Continuing to develop AlUla as a vibrant boutique and authentic destination, SO7: Enabling an economically sustainable destination and SO9: Transitioning to a higher productivity, local economy. Out of the 40 KPIs approved to measure progress towards this Strategy, Sports' events will contribute to at least 12 of them, including number of residents and visitors engaged with sports (events and activities) or Community participation rate in sports and physical activities and

GDP of AIUla County. In line with the Kingdom's Vision 2030, the Sports Sector plays a pivotal role in promoting a healthier and more active lifestyle, fostering community engagement, and supporting the diversification of the local economy through sport tourism and increased visibility via international events. Furthermore, RCU's approach aligns with several of the United Nations Sustainable Development Goals (SDGs), including Good Health and Well-being (SDG 3), Decent Work and Economic Growth (SDG 8), Sustainable Cities and Communities (SDG 11), and Partnerships for the Goals (SDG 17). By embedding sustainability and inclusivity into its initiatives, the Sports Sector contributes to a resilient and future-ready AIUla.

RCU's Sports Sector is one of the main partners of the Human Capital & Sports Division within AFALULA's Territorial Development Department. The Human Capital Division, in close collaboration with RCU, is particularly committed to promoting inclusive development for local populations, in line with the objectives set forth by the Crown Prince's Vision 2030.

This commitment is reflected in the implementation of training and cooperation programs across various sectors of regional development, including the expansion of sports participation in AIUla. These initiatives aim to strengthen local capacities and enhance employability, thereby contributing to the sustainable and equitable growth of the destination.

The Sports Sector is in a transition from an operating role towards the role of a strategic enabler and facilitator. This shift positions the Sector as the architect of a multi-stakeholder sports ecosystem, overseeing the long-term development of sporting infrastructure, events, community programs, talent development, capacity building, and long-term job creation to strengthen local capabilities, ensure sustainable economic, social, and reputational impact, and support AIUla's international positioning in sport.

## **2. Purpose of the Request for Interest**

---

AFALULA, in close partnership with the RCU Sports Sector, seeks to identify and engage qualified organizations, agencies, consultants, and facility developers with proven experience in tennis development, sports ecosystem design, policy and governance analysis, commercial strategy, and facility development that ensures sustainable economic, social, and reputational outcomes. The aim is to strengthen AIUla's positioning as a distinctive and internationally relevant tennis destination by developing robust knowledge and strategic frameworks that support the sustainable, long-term growth of the tennis ecosystem. This initiative also contributes to the broader objectives of Saudi Vision 2030, including economic diversification, community well-being, capacity building, and increased private-sector participation in the sports industry. It should also align with AIUla's specific ecosystem by fostering local community engagement, strengthening capacity development, creating employment opportunities, and enhancing the destination's reputational strength and overall attractiveness.

The objective of this RFI is to:

- Identify organizations with demonstrated expertise in tennis development and ecosystem-level strategy.
- Gather innovative approaches, analytical frameworks, and methodologies relevant to tennis and sports ecosystem research, including the development of physical and non-physical assets.
- Provide the analytical foundation needed to inform the Sports Strategy—aligned with the RCU Sports Sector's operational plan—through a comprehensive study of the tennis ecosystem covering strategic direction, infrastructure planning, events, community engagement, talent-development pathways, sustainability and environmental stewardship, capacity building, commercial and economic growth, partnerships and multi-stakeholder engagement, as well as the economic, social, environmental, and reputational impact of tennis in AIUla.
- The study should define a long-term vision and the strategic objectives for the tennis ecosystem in AIUla, with a focus on clay tennis, while also (i) proposing "quick wins" that would start positioning AIUla on the national and regional tennis map, and (ii) considering the broader ecosystem, including other surfaces and related sports such as pickleball, padel.

This RFI does not constitute a formal solicitation or tender. Responses will be used to shortlist potential participants for future bidding processes or collaborative opportunities.

### 3 Eligibility and Qualifications

---

Respondents should demonstrate:

- Proven experience in sports-related research and development, particularly in tennis and broader ecosystem studies, including strategic visioning, governance frameworks, and long-term planning.
- A multidisciplinary team capable of addressing strategic foundations, defining the tennis ecosystem's relevant pillars, and developing an implementation roadmap, with expertise across areas such as sports development, public policy and governance, economics and commercial strategy, infrastructure and facility planning, digital and data systems, human capital development, community and organizational dynamics, events and programming, and sustainability.
- A track record in designing or assessing economic, operating, and governance models, ideally within multi-stakeholder or government-led environments.
- Prior work within the tennis ecosystem on a regional or international level (sport governing bodies, professional tour and events, tennis as a tourism driver, etc.) is mandatory.
- Knowledge and previous experience in GCC countries and Saudi Arabia would be a plus.

### 4 Submission Requirements

---

Interested parties should submit an Expression of Interest (EOI) including:

- **Organization profile**
- **Summary of relevant experience, previous or ongoing work in tennis** (up to 10)
- **Bios or CVs of key personnel** (up to 5)
- **Demonstrated ability to deploy experts in AIUla**
- **Complete contact information**, including email address and phone number

### 5 Submission Deadline

---

All expressions of interest must be submitted via email no later than **March 25 at 12:00 PM (CET)** to:  
[jerome.fay@afalula.com](mailto:jerome.fay@afalula.com)

Submissions will be evaluated based on their relevance, demonstrated experience, and alignment with the objectives outlined in this Terms of Reference. Selected respondents may be invited for further discussions and may subsequently be asked to participate in a Request for Proposal (RFP).

## 6 Contact Information

---

For inquiries related to this RFI, please contact:

Jerome FAY – Deputy Director Sport - Human Capital Department  
AFALULA  
82, rue de Courcelles  
75008 Paris  
Email: [Jerome.fay@afalula.com](mailto:Jerome.fay@afalula.com)