



FOR IMMEDIATE RELEASE

Villa Hagra and the Saudi Cinema Association Forge Strategic Partnership to Advance Cinema Culture and Talent Development in Saudi Arabia

Al-Khobar, Saudi Arabia – June 27, 2026: Villa Hagra and the Saudi Cinema Association announce a project of a new strategic partnership supported by AFALULA, during the 12th edition of the Saudi Film Festival, establishing a long-term framework for collaboration in support of Saudi Arabia's growing cinema sector.

The agreement brings together two organizations committed to strengthening cinema culture, supporting creative talent, and expanding opportunities for filmmakers and audiences across the Kingdom, and particularly within AIUla.

The announcement follows Villa Hagra's recent unveiling at the Cannes Film Festival of its international and regional scriptwriting residencies, developed in partnership with Film AIUla and delivered by Le Groupe Ouest. Together, these initiatives reflect Villa Hagra's expanding commitment to supporting cinema across the creative journey, from script development and artistic creation to cultural exchange and audience engagement.

Through the partnership supported by AFALULA - the French agency for AIUla development, Villa Hagra and the Saudi Cinema Association will collaborate on artistic residencies, screenplay development initiatives, screenings, public programs, and cinematic exchanges designed to foster creativity and strengthen connections between Saudi, French, and international film communities.

A Shared Vision for Saudi Cinema

The partnership is founded on a shared ambition to contribute to the continued growth of Saudi Arabia's film industry by supporting filmmakers at different stages of their careers and facilitating access to regional and international networks.

By combining Villa Hagra's expertise in cultural exchange and creative development with the Saudi Cinema Association's leadership in film culture and community engagement, the collaboration will create new opportunities for artistic exploration and development in cinema. This partnership further strengthens Villa Hagra's role as a platform for creative exchange and collaboration.

For the Saudi Cinema Association, the agreement supports its mission to nurture film culture across the Kingdom and empower the next generation of Saudi filmmakers through meaningful local and international partnerships.

Together, Villa Hagra and the Saudi Cinema Association will contribute to a more connected and dynamic cinema ecosystem, creating opportunities for filmmakers and audiences while supporting the continued evolution of Saudi cinema.

--

About Villa Hegra

Villa Hegra is the first institution dedicated to cross-cultural dialogue and creative exchange between Saudi Arabia and France, located in AIUla, Saudi Arabia.

Founded through an intergovernmental agreement signed in 2021, Villa Hegra develops residencies and public programs across the fields of arts, cinema, research, and creative industries, encouraging long-term collaboration between Saudi and French cultural ecosystems.

Villa Hegra fosters encounter between local practices, emerging generations and international perspectives, contributing to AIUla's development as a leading cultural destination both in Saudi Arabia and on a global scale.

In 2025, Villa Hegra opened its doors in central AIUla: spanning more than 2,300 square meters, its venue hosts AIUla's first indoor cinema and first performing arts studio, alongside artist residencies and studios, workshops and exhibition spaces.

Villa Hegra is a member of the international network of residencies Viva Villa alongside Villa Medici (Rome), Villa Kujoyama (Kyoto), Casa de Velázquez (Madrid), Villa Albertine (United States) and Villa Swagatam (India).

<https://www.villahegra.org/>

About the Saudi Cinema Association

The Saudi Cinema Association is one of the Kingdom's leading organizations dedicated to supporting film culture, nurturing creative talent, and advancing the development of the Saudi film sector. Through festivals, training programs, cultural initiatives, and industry engagement, the Association plays a key role in fostering appreciation for cinema and supporting the growth of the Kingdom's cinematic ecosystem.

<https://www.cinemaassoc.com/>

About the Saudi Film Festival

The Saudi Film Festival is one of the Kingdom's premier cinematic events, dedicated to celebrating Saudi and Arab filmmaking while fostering dialogue between creators, audiences, and industry professionals. Through its film program, competitions, educational initiatives, and industry activities, the festival plays an important role in supporting talent development and strengthening Saudi Arabia's evolving film ecosystem.

<https://en.saudifilmfestival.org/>

About AFALULA

The French Agency for AIUla Development (AFALULA) was established to support its Saudi partner, the Royal Commission for AIUla, in transforming the AIUla region into a world-class cultural and tourism destination. The Agency is structured around specialized areas of expertise, including architecture, planning, culture and archaeology, tourism, human capital, infrastructure and environment, agriculture and botany, the equestrian sector, and security.



<https://www.afalula.com/en/> <https://horizon-afalula.com/logbooks.html>

Press Contacts:

Villa Hegra - susan.schell@afalula.com

Cinema Association - naouresrouissi@cinemaassoc.org nada@saudifilmfestival.org

AFALULA – jeanne.garcin@afalula.com claudine.ripert-landler@afalula.com