

REQUEST FOR PROPOSAL (RFP)

Scenographic Design and Exhibition Production

RFP Timeline

- **Release Date:** July 29th 2026
- **Confirmation of interest / participation:** August 24th 2026
- **Explanation / Q&A meeting:** Week of September 14th (TBC) 2026
- **Submission Deadline:** September 25th 2026
- **Designer Selection:** October 5th 2026
- **Contract Award:** October 31st 2026

Project Timeline

- **Concept Design (RIBA 2):** October 5th – October 23rd 2026
- **Developed Design (RIBA 3):** October 26th – November 27th 2026
- **Technical Design (RIBA 4):** November 30th 2026 – December 18th 2026
- **Scenography Fabrication and Installation:** 4 January – 19 March 2027
- **Vernissage:** 22 March 2027
- **Public Opening:** 23 March 2027
- **Disinstallation:** end of June – mid July (TBC)

Contact Information

AFALULA

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I. Presentation of Entities

The **French Agency for the Development of AIUla** (Afalula – “The Client”) is a simplified joint stock company whose registered office is located at 82 rue de Courcelles 75008 Paris and whose identification number is 841 021 454 RCS Paris. ("AFALULA") was created following the April 2018 intergovernmental agreement between the Government of the Kingdom of Saudi Arabia and the Government of the French Republic. This agreement provides for French excellence to be associated with the project to develop and enhance the AIUla territory (Saudi Arabia) in terms of tourism, infrastructure, economy, environment, arts and culture. The aim is to develop AIUla in an innovative way and make it a leading tourist, cultural, and sustainable destination.

This mission of Afalula includes promoting French expertise and know-how in all the fields covered by the AIUla project and in the context of this RFP, arts and culture.

To achieve this, the agency is co-constructing the project with the **Royal Commission for AlUla (RCU)**. Established in July 2017 by Royal Decree, RCU oversees the AlUla project. RCU was established by royal decree in July 2017 to protect and preserve AlUla. The RCU is working on a long-term plan to develop and implement a sensitive and sustainable transformation of the region, reaffirming it as one of the country's most significant archaeological and cultural destinations and preparing it to welcome visitors from around the world. The RCU's development work in AlUla spans a wide range of initiatives in archaeology, tourism, culture, education, and the arts, reflecting the ambitious commitment to develop tourism and leisure in Saudi Arabia, as envisioned in Vision 2030.

Together Afalula and RCU coproduce an exhibition **AlUla: Wonder of Arabia (AWOA)** previously presented in Paris (Institut du Monde Arabe, 2019) and Beijing (Forbidden City, 2024).

In March 2027, the exhibition will be presented in Rome, in collaboration with the Museo Nazionale Romano, Terme di Diocleziano. Creating an immersive experience of AlUla's landscapes, ancient kingdoms and cultural heritage, the exhibition in Rome positions AlUla not only as a place of extraordinary archaeological depth, but as a centre of contemporary heritage expertise and international collaboration.

Context and Description of the Project

AlUla is located approximately 325km north of Madinah. It is a place of extraordinary human and natural heritage. The Wadi Al-Qura (the Valley of Villages) has been a famed and important valley since ancient times. The AlUla valley is framed by sandstone mountains, which have fundamentally influenced thousands of years of human history and a setting for civilizations to flourish: Dadanites, Lihyanites and Nabataeans all built cities in this valley, over many centuries.

AlUla has been a natural crossroads for commercial activity for millennia, forming the site of important trading routes used from the first millennium BCE. Positioned on the ancient Incense Route from Southern Arabia into Egypt and beyond, AlUla became a hub of commercial and cultural exchange. Its settlements and oases were important destinations for traders of frankincense, myrrh, and other precious commodities.

Most famous among its settlements is Hegra, Saudi Arabia's first UNESCO World Heritage Site. A 52-hectare ancient city, Hegra was the most important Nabataean city in the south of the Nabataean Kingdom from at least the 1st century BCE. It is best known for more than 100 beautiful and remarkably well-preserved tombs. These tombs have elaborate facades cut into or out of sandstone outcrops which surround the walled urban settlement.

Researchers have established that Hegra was the most southern outpost of the Roman Empire. In addition to Hegra, AlUla is home to a series of other important historical and archaeological sites, such as Al-Khuraybah (ancient Dadan), the capital of the Dadanite and Lihyanite Kingdoms: Dadan is considered likely to be one of the most developed 1st

millennium BCE cities of the Arabian Peninsula. The Dadanites and Lihyanites built their ancient city in stone, and left many examples of sculpture, inscriptions, and other achievements.

Across AlUla at numerous sites there are thousands of inscriptions in Aramaic, Dadanitic, 'Thamudic', Minaic, Nabataean, Greek, Latin, and Arabic. Al-Aqra'a, a mountain north of the AlUla Valley, has more than 450 early Arabic inscriptions. Jabal 'Ikma has been identified as one of the largest open air 'libraries' in Saudi Arabia and perhaps the most significant epigraphic site, containing hundreds of inscribed and relief inscriptions, mainly in Dadanitic and/or Lihyanic.

After Islam was established in the seventh century CE and Mecca became its spiritual capital, two settlements in the oasis valley - Qurh and AlUla - became important places along the pilgrimage route. Today, AlUla Old Town is an abandoned, atmospheric labyrinth of streets tightly packed behind its defensive wall, built over the ruins of an ancient settlement. It was continuously inhabited from at least the 12th century CE, until the last inhabitants left in the 1980s.

The AlUla Valley is also significant in the history of the Hijaz Railway. Construction of the railway began in 1900. It ran over 1300km from Damascus to Medina, through AlUla. There is also an AlUla branch line to Haifa on the Mediterranean Sea. The goal was to reach the holy city of Mecca; however, construction was halted during the First World War. Twelve railway stations were built in the AlUla area. After the First World War, and until as recently as 1971, several attempts were made to revive the railway, but the scheme proved too difficult and too expensive. Road transport was soon established and, by the 1970's aviation had made rapid progress. The railway was soon abandoned, and the huge old steam locomotives sat and rusted. But the romance of the railway remains alive.

Today, teams of international and local archaeologists are currently working in AlUla to meticulously record and document the area. This work will help to better understand the region's intriguing past and has already revealed sites that have been lost, lying dormant and untouched for thousands of years. The cultural legacies from these former civilizations are progressively being uncovered and it is vital that AlUla's natural and historic sites are protected for future generations. The RCU's aim is to enable visitors from all over the world to enjoy these important sites.

The RCU is working closely with local and international archaeologists on heritage conservation, preservation, architecture, and master planning, to deliver an environmentally and historically sensitive transformation of AlUla. In close consultation with the local community, the RCU is investing in education for AlUla's next generation by creating employment opportunities for its people. This development plan will provide a framework for the commissioning of the infrastructure and visitor amenities that will ensure AlUla's future success, while protecting its natural beauty and historic sites.

A. Exhibition Concept – AlUla: Wonder of Arabia

The AWOA exhibition is also a flagship cultural diplomatic initiative developed to showcase how heritage, science, and international partnerships shape AlUla's global presence. The exhibition will affirm the mature and trusted partnership between Saudi Arabia and Italy, grounded in shared values of conservation excellence, research leadership, and knowledge exchange.

This exhibition is also being developed in collaboration with Rome's **Museo Nazionale Romano**, as part of a wider partnership between AlUla and the Italian Ministry of Culture. The exhibition will be held in the **Terme di Diocleziano**, **Rome's** monumental Roman bath complex and will occupy two large historic exhibition halls. This venue provides exceptional architectural character and a unique historical dialogue between AlUla and Rome, in particular with the Roman funerary monuments permanently displayed in Hall X.

The exhibition will:

- Be accessible and engaging for all visitors.
- Focus on AlUla's ancient kingdoms and archaeological discoveries.
- Integrate voices and memories of AlUla's inhabitants.
- Include high-quality interpretation, multimedia, and immersive design.
- Highlight the historical and contemporary connections between Italy and the Kingdom of Saudi Arabia.
- Be offered in Italian and English
- Meet international museum standards of interpretation and presentation
- Respect the physical limitations of the MNR's galleries, which include the presence of immovable archaeological features (mosaics and tombs), constraints on exhibition construction within the protected historic fabric, and natural lighting conditions requiring careful environmental control for sensitive objects.
- Include the design and delivery of environmentally controlled showcases for a portion of RCU's sensitive artifacts (such as organic materials and textiles), as the exhibition galleries themselves are not environmentally controlled.

B. Exhibition Themes and zoning

The zoning in Annex 1 is provided for information purposes only and may be subject to change, given the historic buildings in which the exhibition will be held.

Annex 1

II. Overview of Deliverables

AFALULA invites qualified vendors to submit proposals for the exhibition's scenographic design, production management, and installation.

The selected vendor will be responsible for the following:

Deliverable 1 — Exhibition Concept: Design and Scenography

- Overall scenographic concept
- Visitor journey, spatial narrative and exhibition zoning
- Approach to the integration and display of artifacts and multimedia installations
- Art direction and approach to graphic design (imagery, maps and typography)
- Lighting and atmosphere design
- Accessibility and visitor experience design
- One online Client Concept workshop
- Weekly progress meetings
- Preliminary production budget estimate and ventilation

Deliverable 2 — Design Development

- Schematic design
- Detailed design development
- Detailed artifact showcase layouts (with mounting details)
- Graphic design typologies and layouts

Deliverable 3 — Technical Documentation

- Technical drawings and plans
- 3D renderings and visualizations

- Materials and finishes specifications
- One online Client Schematic workshop and Design Detail workshop
- Weekly progress meetings
- Final production budget

Deliverable 4 — Production and Installation Supervision

- Coordination of fabrication and production (sets, showcases)
- Approval coordination and printing of graphic design panels
- Installation supervision (artifact installation will be managed and supervised by RCU and MNR collections teams.)
- Technical coordination with venue, Afalula, RCU and artifact installation vendor
- Integration and installation of all multimedia and immersive elements

III. Timeline Overview

Program	Date	Details
RFP Release	30 July 2026	Publication of the tender
Proposal Deadline	25 september 2026	Submission of proposals
Designer Selection	30 september 2026	Evaluation and contract award
Concept Design (RIBA 2)	23 october 2026	Development of the scenographic concept
Developed Design (RIBA 3)	27 November 2026	Detailed design development
Technical Design (RIBA 4)	18 December 2026	Technical documentation and plans
Scenography Fabrication & Installation	4 January – 19 march 2027	On-site installation of scenography and artworks. The scenographer must be present throughout this phase.
Vernissage	22 March 2027	Opening event
Public Opening	23 March 2027	Exhibition opens

IV. Vendor Role and Responsibility

The selected vendor shall act as a commercial service provider and will not be credited as a project organizer or partner.

The vendor shall be responsible for:

- Developing a scenographic exhibition design concept that creates an immersive visitor journey, where contemporary design artfully dialogues with the heritage nature of the Terme di Diocleziano.
- Highlighting the heritage and archaeological discoveries of AlUla
- Ensuring effective coordination between all project stakeholders
- Providing a detailed technical and financial proposal
- Complying with all conservation, accessibility, and safety standards
- Collaborating, where required, with experts designated by the client
- Fabricate, install, integrate and des-install the exhibition

The client reserves the right to require collaboration with specific experts or subcontractors.

Exclusions

All media productions will be handed-over to the vendor and will be produced separately.

Annex 1 exhibition concept

Annex 2 -Previsional list of objects

Annex 3 -plan of the Terme di Diaceziano

Annex 4 — Vendor Application Dossier Requirements

Interested vendors are invited to submit their proposals electronically to claire.pinault@afalula.com, with simon.garcia@afalula.com and margaux.falciassecca@afalula.com copied, no later than **25 september 2026 at 11:59 PM (CET)**. Late submissions will not be considered.

Interested vendors must submit:

Administrative Documents

- Company registration documents
- Company profile
- Subcontractors' details (if applicable)

Commitment Form

- Signed Act of Engagement

Financial Offer

The technical offer (PPT or PDF) comprising:

- ☐ Dossier in the form of PPT presentation or PDF
- ☐ Company presentation and valorization
- ☐ Project team / organizational chart with defined roles & responsibilities
- ☐ Relevant projects & examples of exhibition scenography and exhibition art direction (graphic design)
- ☐ Methodology
- ☐ Detailed proposition
- ☐ Detailed installation schedule

Annex 5 — Process and Criteria of Application Assessment

Process

A 1-hour Q/A session will be held during the **week of 14 September 2026**, where Afalula will be available to answer any questions applicants may have about the project.

A panel of experts from Afalula will review the proposals. Afalula reserves the right to reject all proposals, to waive any and all formalities outlined in the RFP and in the selection process and generally to make the award that in its judgment will best meet the objectives stated in this RFP

After verification of the conformity of the administrative, technical, and financial files, compliant bids will be evaluated in accordance with Afalula's internal procedures.

- Afalula reserves the right to ask candidates for additional explanatory and/or supporting documents.
- Afalula reserves the right to organize additional meetings and questioning sessions with shortlisted candidates prior to the final selection of the winner. Or any relevant meeting not mentioned in this RFP, should the need arise

2.3 Criteria:

All applications will be reviewed through the lens of the following criteria:

CRITERIA	PERCENTAGE (%)
1. TECHNICAL OFFER	70%
1.1. RELEVANCE OF COMPANY, PROJECT UNDERSTANDING, & RELEVANT SIMILAR REFERENCES	15%
1.2. TEAM MEMBERS / EXPERT'S CVs	10%
1.3. DELIVRABLES	45%
• Technical proposal	30%
• Project Management Skills and methodology	15%
2 FINANCIAL OFFER	30%

Annex 5. Commitment Form / Act of Engagement Form

Acte d'Engagement

(À signer et joindre au dossier de candidature)

Je soussigné(prénom, nom et
qualité au sein de l'entreprise), agissant au nom et pour le
..... compte
de.....
.....(raison sociale et forme juridique de la société, adresse) confirme avoir
pris connaissance du dossier de consultation – « Scenographic Design and Exhibition Production
»).

Par la présente, notre société s'engage, une fois sélectionnée par AFALULA, à exécuter
les prestations prévues conformément aux exigences du règlement de consultation et aux
termes indiqués dans la réponse ci-jointe composée :

- Du dossier administratif
- De l'offre technique
- De l'offre financière

Fait à

.....le.....

(Signature du représentant légal du candidat)

Commitment Form

(To be signed and included in submission)

I, the undersigned (first name, last name, and position within the company), acting on behalf of (company name, legal form, and address), hereby confirm that I have reviewed the consultation documents relating to the project entitled “Scenographic Design and Exhibition Production”/

By signing this document, our company commits, if selected by AFALULA, to carrying out the required services in full compliance with the terms of the consultation guidelines and in accordance with the conditions set out in our application, composed of:

- The administrative file
- The technical proposal
- The financial offer

Done in, on

(Signature of the legal representative of the applicant)