

الهيئة الملكية لمحافظة العلا  
Royal Commission for AlUla



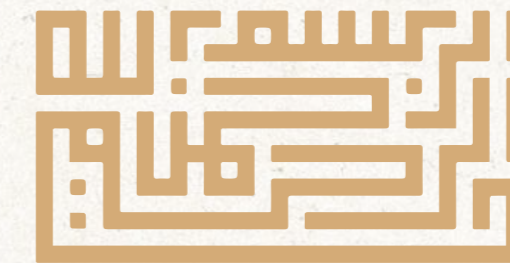
RCU ANNUAL  
**SUSTAINABILITY  
REPORT** **2023**



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*This report marks the inaugural publication of our efforts towards sustainability, highlighting the progress of RCU's dedicated journey to furthering cultural, social, economic and environmental sustainability. It reflects our first step to transparently report on our progress across RCU's operations. It showcases our achievements, real-life case studies, and strategic initiatives undertaken from RCU's inception up to 31 December 2023. We humbly acknowledge there are challenges we will need to overcome and that there are areas of improvement for us to work on. By sharing our aspirations, progress, and challenges, we aim to inspire and engage stakeholders, demonstrating our resolve to contribute positively to national and global sustainability efforts.*





# Preface



- ◊ Governor of the Royal Commission for AIUla's Message
- ◊ CEO of the Royal Commission for AIUla's Message



## Governor of the Royal Commission for AlUla's Message

The Royal Commission for AlUla County (from hereon RCU or, the Commission) is continuing its ambitious journey to achieve the goals of the AlUla Vision, emanating from the spirit of Saudi Vision 2030 to develop the governorate. With its rich history, culture and unique natural diversity, the governorate will become a global destination on the cultural tourism map and a champion of sustainability, bolstered by the unlimited support and guidance of His Royal Highness Prince Mohammed bin Salman bin Abdulaziz Al Saud, Crown Prince, Prime Minister and Chairman of RCU's Board of Directors, combined with the strategic partnership we have developed with the people of AlUla.

As the Kingdom of Saudi Arabia (the Kingdom) aims for a Net Zero future by 2060, RCU has developed its sustainability strategy and set a target to achieve Net Zero by 2035. In 2023, we witnessed the implementation of many sustainability projects and initiatives with the shared goal of preserving the heritage and nature of the governorate. This enhanced the historical and natural appeal of AlUla. Innovative solutions were adopted and important local, regional and international partnerships were forged with organisations including: UNESCO for the protection of cultural heritage; IUCN for the promotion of comprehensive regeneration; Red Sea Global (RSG) the collaboration in the areas of sustainability and environmental initiatives; Space for Giants for the protection of biodiversity; Artefact for driving Artificial Intelligence (AI) and data transformation; Thales Group for safeguarding heritage sites and historical buildings; and many others.

In terms of enhancing and preserving environmental diversity, RCU has achieved a significant milestone in meeting the targets of rehabilitating environmental systems and has continued to implement many initiatives and projects to restore ecosystems. For example, since the Arabian Leopard Conservation Breeding Centre opened in 2019, it has successfully bred several new leopard cubs, bringing the total number of Arabian leopards under care to 27 this year. This fulfilled RCU's aim of protecting these wild cat populations from extinction and is memorialised through the adoption of February 10<sup>th</sup> as International Day of the Arabian Leopard, as designated by the United Nations (UN).

The AlUla Journey Through Time Masterplan, with its iconic districts, five heritage sites, 15 cultural assets, and 10 million square meters of green and open spaces, is the largest living

museum in the world, offering vast opportunities to create memories and experiences to be shared. AlUla is creating a new legacy, preserving the Kingdom's natural, historical and cultural heritage to build a more resilient, inclusive and sustainable future for our people and our planet.

Our local community and unique landscape are amongst our most valuable assets. Therefore, we are committed to empowering our community and enriching our environment, utilising our unique expertise as well as deploying innovative and cutting-edge technology. Sourcing inspiration from our AlUla family and pristine nature, we strive to serve as a model of prosperous sustainable development and equitable economic growth, contributing to Saudi Vision 2030 goals of a vibrant society, a thriving economy and an ambitious nation.

Sustainability is at the heart of our approach and encompasses cultural, social, economic, and environmental dimensions all supported by strong governance that seeks to ensure responsible stewardship. Our community and youth are our strength and empowering them is our duty. We are committed to sustainably and responsibly developing AlUla and share our cultural legacy with the world, reviving the historical incense route and becoming a crossroad of civilisations, cultures and minds.

Our first Sustainability Report is a testament to our commitment to sustainability. It showcases our ambitions, goals and activities in this field for our generation and the ones to come. I would like to express my heartfelt gratitude and admiration to our wise leadership for their unwavering support of RCU, to the people and youth of AlUla, our strategic partners, and the whole RCU team, as you all deserve my appreciation for the great achievements of this past year in the sustainability field.

HH Prince

**Badr bin Abdullah bin Farhan Al Saud**  
Minister of Culture,  
Governor of the Royal Commission for AlUla

## CEO of the Royal Commission for AIUla's Message

Sustainability is an integral part of our mandate and strategy. It is embedded in everything we do and the way we do it. It is our north star that underpins our commitment to safeguarding the natural environment and cultural treasures of AIUla as well as our community and economy.

RCU's commitment to sustainability recognises the interconnectedness of social, environmental, economic, and cultural imperatives. By protecting the cultural heritage from our past, and enhancing the natural and social potential of our people and place, we ensure a sustainable future for the many aspects of life in AIUla.

Our commitment to environmental stewardship underscores our responsibility to safeguard the natural wonders of AIUla for generations to come. Through sustainable practices and innovative conservation efforts, we strive to preserve the delicate balance of ecosystems, protect biodiversity, and mitigate the impacts of climate change.

The regeneration of AIUla as a leading global destination for cultural and natural heritage is guided by the principles of the AIUla Sustainability Charter. By adhering to the Charter we will bring AIUla to carbon neutrality on local emissions by 2035. In this way we serve the goals of the Saudi Green Initiative and Vision 2030, and advance from ambition to action.

Furthermore, we recognise the pivotal role of economic sustainability in empowering communities, fostering sustainable growth, and creating opportunities for prosperity. By

promoting sustainable livelihoods, supporting local businesses and employment, and driving economic diversification, we aim to build a resilient and thriving economy in line with the objectives of Vision 2030. Through investments in education, health, and social infrastructure, we seek to empower individuals, enhance quality of life, and promote social cohesion and inclusion.

Our first annual sustainability report is a testament to our dedication to sustainability and our ambition to drive positive action for our people and planet, supported by our local and international partners as we do believe in the power of collaboration to achieve ambitious targets.

**Abeer AlAkel**  
Acting CEO of the Royal Commission for AIUla





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# 1

## About Us



- ◇ About AIUla
- ◇ About the Royal Commission for AIUla



## About AIUla

AIUla is a distinguished treasury of human history and cultural legacy within the Arabian Peninsula, tracing its origins back over 200,000 years. Positioned in the northwest of Saudi Arabia, AIUla city is the capital of AIUla County (the County) and is located approximately 300 km north of Madinah. AIUla has served as a pivotal intersection for various civilisations, each contributing to the region's distinct historical and cultural fabric. AIUla's significance is underscored by its historical role as a route for trade caravans dating back to the first millennium BCE, as a crucial site on the Hajj pilgrimage route with the emergence of Islam.

Distinct from many historical locations, AIUla is unique for its landscape, scattered with

ancient structures and relics of bygone societies, providing a direct glimpse into the lives of ancient inhabitants.

Among its heritage treasure is the Old Town, the Cultural Oasis, Hegra, Dadan, Jabal Ikma, the Khaybar Oasis, Tayma, Wadi AlNaam, and Elephant Rock. The conservation of these historical assets allows residents, visitors and researchers to explore a seamless narrative of human history, unsullied by modern developments and preservation efforts that might otherwise have diluted its stories.

AIUla's unique blend of natural beauty and archaeological significance makes it not only a place of historical interest, but a living museum where the legacy of human achievement is deeply woven into the fabric of the land.

**200,000**  
years



A true icon of AIUla, Elephant Rock (Jabal AlFil) stands 52 m high - Near AlMu'tadil

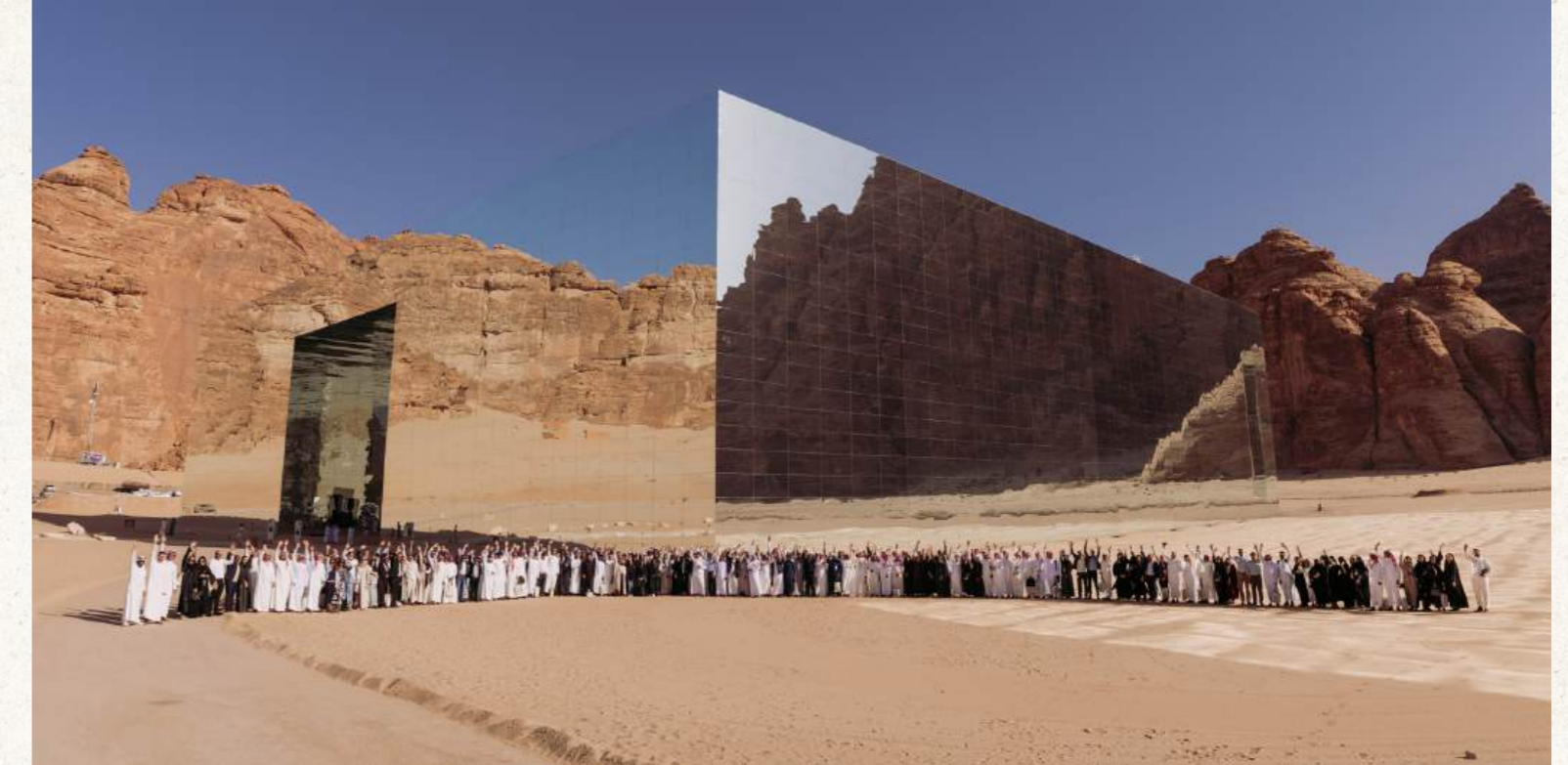
## About the Royal Commission for AIUla



The Royal Commission for AIUla was established by Royal Decree on 20 July 2017. Its primary objective includes the conservation and enhancement of AIUla, leading its sustainable evolution as one of the Kingdom's foremost archaeological, cultural, and environmental landmarks. RCU's efforts are guided by AIUla's historical significance and are aligned with the AIUla Vision, advancing its economic, social and cultural objectives in harmony with Saudi Vision 2030.

We are embarking on a long-term plan to develop and deliver a sensitive, sustainable transformation of AIUla, reaffirming it as one of the Kingdom's most formidable touristic and cultural attraction, welcoming visitors from around the world.

With the fulfilment of AIUla Vision by 2035, we aim to welcome two



RCU Tribe gathering at "Together, we create a sustainable impact" - Maraya Concert Hall

million annual visits to AIUla, add 150 billion Saudi Arabian Riyals (SAR) cumulative contributions to the Kingdom's Gross Domestic Product (GDP), and create 40,500 new jobs across various sectors in AIUla.

A key priority for us is the creation of positive social and economic impacts by supporting and empowering the local community of AIUla. Additionally, we aim to maximise the responsible utilisation of

AIUla's rich historical heritage, environmental, natural, tourism, sports, and artistic resources. These efforts are aimed at fostering a prosperous and sustainable economy that actively engages the community

in the development process. We endeavour to establish a lasting legacy for AIUla, positioning it as the world's largest open museum.



# 2

RCU

## Organisation



- ◇ Board of Directors
- ◇ Advisory Board Members
- ◇ Organisational Structure
- ◇ Sustainability Planning Department

## RCU Board of Directors



**His Royal Highness Prince Mohammed bin Salman bin Abdulaziz Al Saud**

The Crown Prince, Prime Minister, and Chairman of the Board of the Royal Commission for AIUla



**His Highness Prince Badr bin Abdullah bin Farhan Al Saud**

Governor and Member of Board of Directors of the Royal Commission for AIUla



**His Excellency Dr. Hamad bin Mohammed Al-Sheikh**



**His Excellency Eng. Ibrahim bin Muhammad AlSultan**



**His Excellency Dr. Fahd bin Abdullah Tounsi**



**Dr. Eid bin Hamad AlYahya**



**Eng. John Pagano**



**Dr. Khaled Omar Azzam**

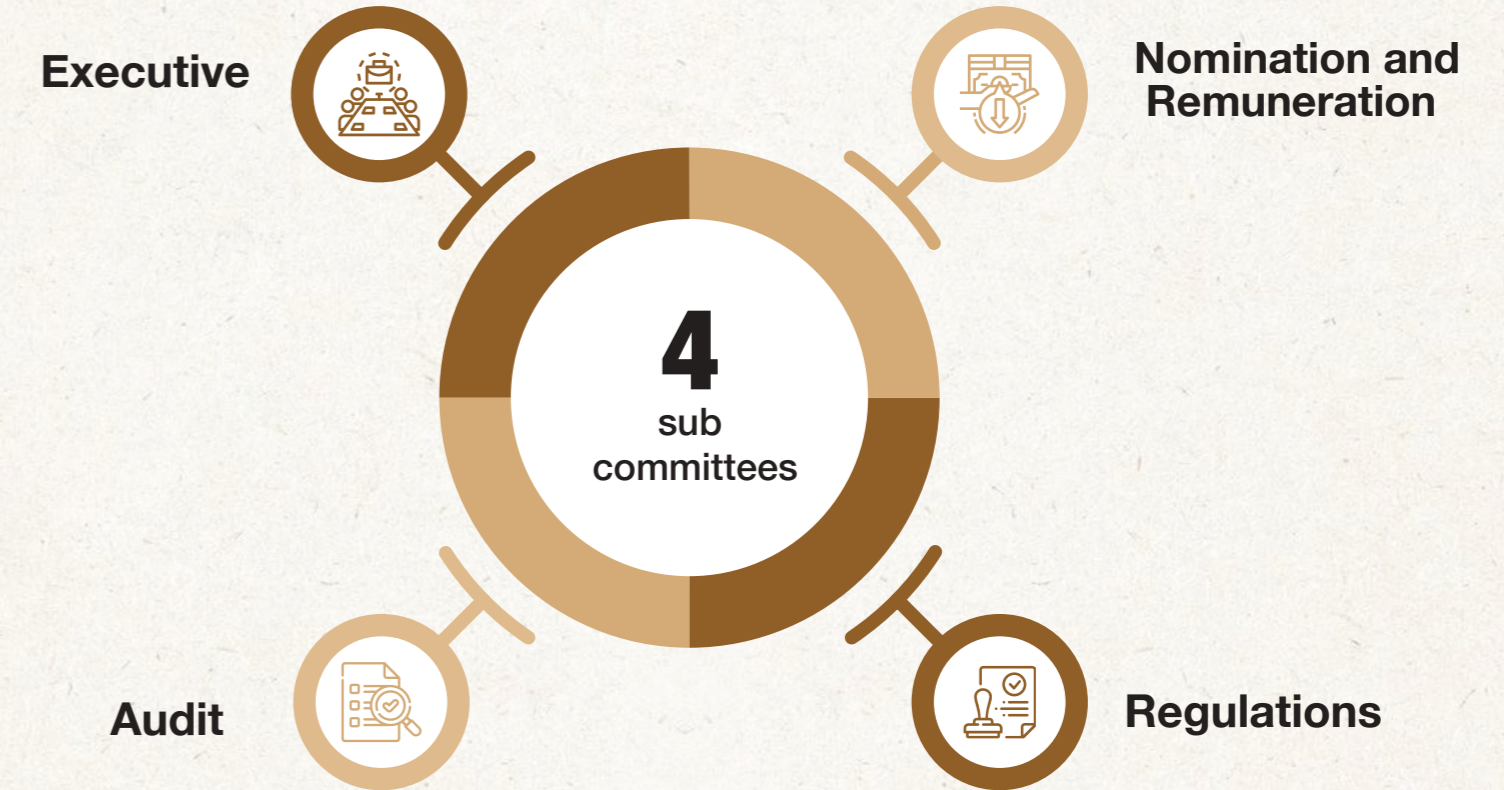


**Dr. Saad bin Abdullah AlSowayan**



**Eng. Mousa bin Omran AlOmran**

Four sub committees have been established by the Commission's Board of Directors consisting of Board and independent members possessing the required expertise and competencies to fulfil the mandated activities of each committee.



## Advisory Board Members

The Advisory Board is formed by a resolution of the Commission's Board of Directors and aims to provide advice and recommendations to the Board, the Governor, and the executive management regarding the Commission's vision and all strategic aspects related to its operations. This is to maximise opportunities for success and provide a wide range of support and expertise to RCU. It is composed of eight members: two women, and six men.



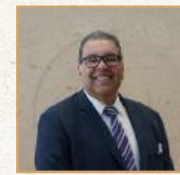
**Her Highness Sheikha Mai Al Khalifa**

- President of Shaikh Ebrahim Bin Mohammed Al-Khalifa Centre for Culture and Research



**Lauren Sorkin**

- CEO of Resilient Cities Network, Rockefeller Foundation
- Expert in regional administration and development



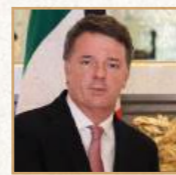
**Naheed Nenshi**

- Former Mayor of Calgary
- Founder of The Ascend Group
- Expert in governance and city administration



**Arvind Gupta**

- Co-founder of Digital India Foundation
- Expert in transformation and city management



**Senator Matteo Renzi**

- Former Italian Prime Minister
- Expert in governance and city administration



**Arthur Hollingsworth**

- Administrative Partner of Lone Star Investment Advisors LLC
- Expert in tourism and city management



**Jean-Yves Le Drian – Honorary Member**

- President of the French Agency for AIUla Development (AfALULA)
- International Relations Expert



**Ricardo Hausmann**

- Professor and Founder of Harvard Growth Lab
- Expert in economic and social development



**25%**

Women

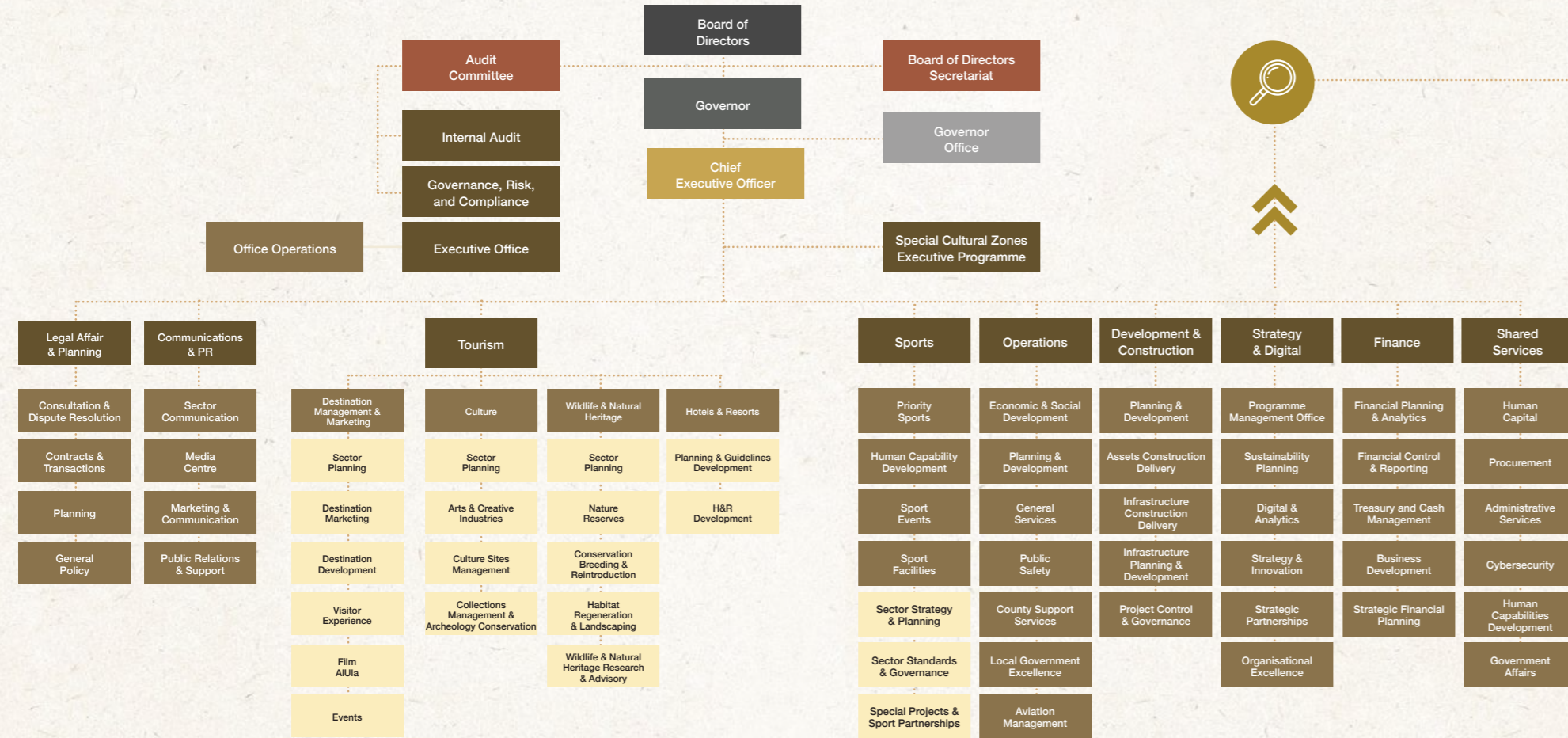
**8**

Members



RCU Main Building Entrance - RCU Campus

# Organisational Structure



■ N-1 ■ N-2 ■ N-3

# Strategy and Digital Sector



■ N-1 ■ N-2 ■ N-3



# 3

## RCU's Approach to **Sustainability**



- ◇ Sustainability Statement
- ◇ Key Sustainability Milestones
- ◇ Key Highlights
- ◇ Report Methodology
- ◇ Alignment with United Nations Sustainable Development Goals
- ◇ Alignment with Saudi Vision 2030
- ◇ ESG Maturity Diagnostic Assessment
- ◇ Governance

# Sustainability Statement

Sustainability at RCU is a journey through time. It is inspired by an ethos of innovation. This ethos is living and breathing. It is built upon ancestral wisdom and traditional ways of living. The journey of sustainability at RCU is also underscored by the many civilisations that thrived here before us. These include the Neolithic people, the Kingdoms of Dadan and Lihyan, and the Nabataean civilisation. Enshrined at the helm of our mission and at the heart of all strategic decision-making lies the safeguarding of AIUla's natural and cultural treasures whilst celebrating its heritage, culture, art, community and biodiversity.

Guided by our Strategic Framework Plan and its 12 Strategic Principles, we strive to integrate sustainable practices into every aspect of our day-to-day activity, ensuring that our efforts align with the long-term wellbeing of AIUla, its people, the Kingdom at large, and our future generations. Connecting past, present, and future, the AIUla Sustainability Charter communicates our comprehensive approach to responsible development, while also respecting AIUla's timeless authenticity, and protecting its cultural and natural resources. For each of the 12 Principles, a set of objectives, policies and spatial decisions have been developed. The sustainability roadmap for AIUla is being developed to stimulate curiosity, creativity, innovation, and positive action for ongoing and future development. Our natural environment, our extraordinary cultural heritage,

and our community are our assets, and we are committed to enriching and empowering AIUla; that is why our definition of sustainability encompasses four dimensions, each unique but also intimately entwined:

**Cultural**  
**Social**  
**Economic**  
**Environmental**

These are all supported by strong governance that seeks to safeguard responsible stewardship.



## Our Sustainability Department's Mandate

The focus of the Sustainability Planning Department is to safeguard the wellbeing of the AIUla community, ensure a balanced use of natural resources, enable the preservation of cultural heritage, norms and values, and support practices that encourage long-term economic growth. This department is responsible for planning and developing the sustainability strategy as well as monitoring the execution of environmental, cultural, economic, and social sustainability initiatives while supporting sectors and programmes by advising on innovative sustainability solutions and providing technical expertise to accelerate RCU's sustainability goals.

Our Long-Term Strategy and Strategic Direction can be summarised as follows:

**Transition:**  
RCU is shifting from an entrepreneurial commission to a civic administrator for sustainable development. This transformative approach represents a strategic combination of enhancing the present while preserving the rich legacy of AIUla. We seek to cultivate a community that honours its unique heritage and environment, and creating a sustainable future.

- Strategic Pillars:**
- Core pillars: tourism, heritage, arts & culture, nature & wildlife, and economic & social development
  - Enabling pillars: spatial development, enabling services, and institutional excellence



Vestigial remnants of one of the County's many cultural heritage assets - the Old Town

RCU's robust governance policies include a comprehensive Code of Conduct and Ethics for employees, contractors, and supply chain partners ensuring operational compliance across the entire value chain.

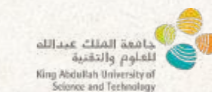
We embrace principles of transparency, accountability and inclusivity, and promote strong governance practices that serve as the basis for sustainable development.

We cannot do this alone. To achieve our ambitious sustainability targets, we are supported by our leadership, National Ministries, as well as local, regional, and international partners and institutions such as, amongst others:

- The United Nations Educational, Scientific and Cultural Organisation (UNESCO)
- The International Union for Conservation of Nature (IUCN)
- The International Council on Monuments and Sites (ICOMOS)
- King Abdullah University of Science and Technology (KAUST)

Every sustainability journey encompasses a learning curve. At RCU, we recognise our approach to sustainability and where we stand today, with an unwavering commitment to work across the Commission to build on our performance. We feel strongly about broadening our horizons and building on our capabilities as we develop over the coming years. We open our doors to collaborate with like-minded, passionate, and strategically

aligned organisations from across the world, to help protect and preserve AIUla for future generations to come. This report is a reflection on our commitment to creating a sustainable future for our community, preserving our natural environment and cultural heritage assets, and contributing to the overall economy and sustainable growth of our nation.



## Key Sustainability Milestones

Biodiversity and culture intertwined with sustainability are embedded in our ethos



A collage of biodiversity and cultural moments - AIUla



MoU\*: Memorandum of Understanding; ESIA: Environmental, Social Impact Assessment



**Key Highlights**

# Governance



Something along the lines of 'Everyone in RCU has a significant role to play in its healthy governance - Maraya Concert Hall'



Advocated for more diverse and inclusive leadership such as introducing an international member within the Board of Directors and increasing gender representation, with women making up 25% of the Advisory Board



Deployed the Environment, Social, Governance (ESG) Maturity Diagnostic Tool to assess the overall maturity of sustainability within the Commission



Published 60% of required institutional policies to guide decision-making and set standards while fostering a culture of Governance, Risk Management, and Compliance - a total of 48 published policies in 2023



Started our sustainability reporting journey with the development of this Annual Sustainability Report



Implemented robust anti-corruption measures that prohibit abuse of decision-making powers for personal gain



Developed policies that cover whistleblowing, anti-bribery, anti-fraud and anti-money laundering

**Key Highlights**

# Cultural



Saudi Arabian sword dance (known as the 'ardha') - the Cultural Oasis



25 major and permanent monuments provided with comprehensive protection plans, exceeding our 2023 target set at ten tangible assets



Eleven activated arts and culture assets including Elephant Rock, Daimumah - Phase 1, AIManshiyah District, AlJadidah Arts District, AlJadidah Gallery Space, Cinema AlJadidah, Madrasat Addeera - Phase 1, Music Hub, Maraya Concert Hall, Wadi AlFann, and the Museum Collections Storage



32 heritage research articles published in scholarly journals



18,101 items added to the heritage and archaeological collections management system, surpassing the initial target of 15,600



Eight heritage sites opened to visitors in AIUla including the Heritage Oasis Trails, Jabal Ikmah, Dadan, Hegra, Tayma, Khaybar, Wadi AlNaam, and Incense Road Market



Development of the Telemetric Environmental Monitoring System (TEMS) to monitor RCU's heritage collection sites from Riyadh and the United Kingdom



150,000 visitors participated in cultural events and celebrations



370 training hours provided to narrators and storytellers



Scored 75% on the Heritage Sustainability Index, surpassing our target of 63%



96% visitor satisfaction rate at AIUla's heritage sites



422 heritage preservation and protection activities logged


## Key Highlights

# Social





RCU Annual Town Hall Gathering - Maraya Concert Hall


 Transferring ownership of the AIUla Football Club to RCU


 30% of RCU's workforce are women


 Achieved 90% overall resident satisfaction level


 90% employee retention rate

 Established community sports infrastructure including a volleyball court, a clay tennis court, Mughayra Heritage Sports Village, the Knights Village for Equestrians, as well as a 45 km cycling path


 Achieved a robust emergency response timing of 6.5 minutes, surpassing the targeted goal of 16 minutes by establishing the Public Safety Operations Centre and the Unified Security Operations Centre


 747 students given access to 117 prestigious international institutions through the AIUla Scholarship Programme

 647 employees participated in specialised individual training, while 760 employees participated in in-house training sessions

 Extended pedestrian pathways per capita to 36.86 m, exceeding the targeted figure of 28 m


 RCU's digital transformation score rose from 88% to 90% in 2023


 Ranked among the top 3 economic and development entities in the Kingdom, significantly progressing their digital transformation journey during the Digital Government Forum

 19 events encompassing sport, culture, and heritage have been organised in 2023 such as the World Cup for Horseback Archery and AIUla Dates Festival

 19,000 visitors and local families attended Foundation Day 2023 where traditional clothes and foods were sold

 The Hammayah Programme was attended by 1,400 leaders in 2023 and generated 2,500 employment opportunities

 Activation of Mahd Academy, which aims to discover and develop the next generation of Saudi sport talents

 79% of RCU's workforce are Saudi nationals

**Key Highlights**

# Economic



Alfa Lounge - near Elephant Rock



Established Vibes AIUla, an entrepreneurship platform that activates and enables AIUla's entrepreneurial ecosystem, which trained 80 entrepreneurs and supported 60 micro and small businesses



Participated in the 7<sup>th</sup> edition of the Future Investment Forum, which resulted in a 159 million SAR security integration project with Thales and a partnership with Alstom to enhance AIUla's transportation infrastructure



Launching the Opportunities Platform to bridge business owners with potential beneficiaries, collectively paving the way for a resilient and innovative future for AIUla



83% wireless broadband area coverage in AIUla powered by enhanced connective infrastructure



Achieved a 94% tourist satisfaction rating in AIUla across culture, accommodation, city, hospitality, arts, adventures and heritage categories



AIUla recorded 265,429 total visits in 2023 compared to a target of 250,000



Collaborating with Cartier's Les Bases à Parfumer to position AIUla as a global hub for exceptional natural ingredients derived from AIUla's *Moringa peregrina* tree



Achieved a Net Promoter Score (NPS) of 68 against a target score of 38, reflecting the rise in AIUla's level of attractiveness through visitor experience surveys



37% of total visits accounted for off-season tourism



1,664 jobs generated within AIUla's tourism sector

**Key Highlights**

# Economic



Locally produced and sold arts, crafts and tapestries at the heart of AIUla - the Old Town



556 Micro, Small, and Medium-sized Enterprises (MSMEs) have been operating for more than three years in AIUla



7.048 billion SAR contributed to the GDP from non-tourism sectors such as manufacturing, agriculture, education, and healthcare



6,123 jobs generated by tourism-allied sectors such as hospitality, transportation, and entertainment



13.4 million SAR revenue generated by Vibes AIUla, with 24% of participating businesses securing their first revenue stream directly through the programme



Vibes AIUla has led to the creation of 198 new local job opportunities, the establishment of 246 partnerships, and the launch of 154 new products



Developed a local building material strategy that responsibly sources local construction material, resulting in the assessment of a new quarry location for aggregates, sand, and ornamental rock to obtain permitting in 2024



336 new MSMEs established in AIUla in 2023




90% of RCU spending directed towards local suppliers, surpassing the target of 77%


## Key Highlights

# Environmental





Monolithic rock formations dating back to the third century BCE - Sharaan Nature Reserve


 58% of AIUla's 22,561 km<sup>2</sup> territory listed as protected areas through the establishment of five Nature Reserves, and one Geopark


 42,909 Tonnes of Carbon dioxide equivalent (tCO<sub>2</sub>e) emissions have been reduced in line with the target to achieve Net Zero carbon emissions by 2035


 Birth of seven Arabian leopard cubs at the Arabian Leopard Conservation Breeding Centre in Taif - owned by the National Wildlife Centre (NWC) and managed by RCU


 By 2023, the total number of animals released in AIUla since 2019: 108 Arabian gazelles, 385 Sand gazelles, 328 Arabian oryxes and 59 Nubian ibexes


 Achieved 95% water distribution network coverage rate for the total population


 Dark Sky Strategy for AIUla initiated, to preserve the beauty of AIUla's dark sky, reduce light pollution, and create sustainable tourism opportunities linked to stargazing activities


 Initiated the "Environmental Awareness Campaign Project" to promote environmental consciousness, foster community involvement, and safeguard AIUla's natural and cultural heritage


 RCU Reintroduction team collaborated with IUCN to develop a vision: "To establish thriving populations of native flagship wildlife in support of rewilding AIUla by 2030"


 Identified minimum sustainability and green building certification requirements (such as water and energy efficiency) for various asset and infrastructure types across AIUla


 Establishment of a temporary plant nursery and seed bank, developing native plant seed conservation and propagation techniques and producing native tree and shrub seedlings at a current capacity of 300,000 seedlings/year


 111,684 trees representing 56 different native species have been planted in protected areas


 Launched the Sustainability Certification Label for Buildings, Communities and Infrastructure Project, to evaluate and adopt local and global green building rating systems

 Collaborated with Lucid Motors on the provision of a fleet of 30 electric cars and the installation of ten charging stations across RCU facilities

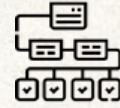
 Participated in the UN COP28 conference and the Saudi Green Initiative Exhibition, presenting and discussing AIUla's sustainability ambitions and role in achieving the Kingdom's climate goals

 By the end of 2023, we had reintroduced four species with the intention to reintroduce another four species by 2030: Ostriches, Barbary falcons, Arabian leopards, and Houbara bustards

 MoU signed with Space for Giants for a three-year partnership to enhance biodiversity protection

 18.83 m<sup>2</sup> of urban green area per capita provided, surpassing the target of 2 m<sup>2</sup> per person

# Report Methodology



## SCOPE

This Sustainability Report provides an in-depth overview of our sustainability strategy and ambitions.

The report demonstrates our commitment to transparently communicate AIUla's cultural, social, economic, and environmental initiatives as well as those related to governance, and their impacts on AIUla and its stakeholders up to the year ending 31 December 2023.

We provide a detailed overview of our annual sustainability performance and progress towards achieving RCU's sustainability ambitions.



## METHODOLOGY

We employed a bespoke methodology in preparing this sustainability report that was tailored to identify, collate and present the sustainability dimensions pertinent to RCU's operations.

Our methods involved conducting systematic and comprehensive qualitative and quantitative analyses of key sustainability dimensions, including the selection of pertinent indicators, in line with international best practices, as well as aligning with the Kingdom's national strategies and initiatives.

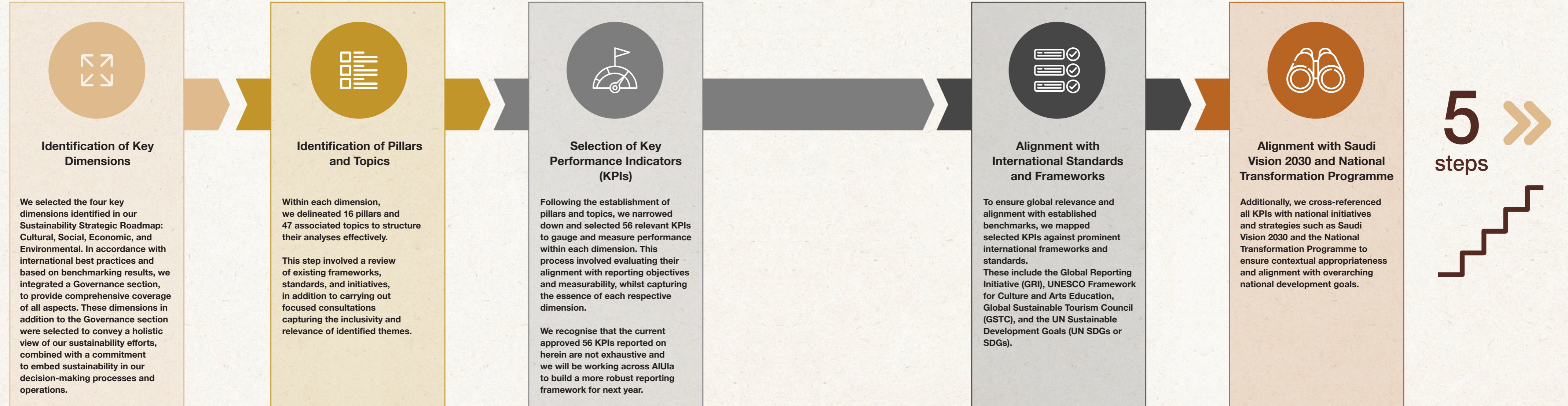
As a first step in our journey into sustainability tracking and performance monitoring, we undertook an ESG Maturity Assessment using a customised tool. The vigour of that assessment provided valuable sustainability insights into the Commission's operational performance.

We recognise that there will always be areas of improvement, and this report serves as a stepping stone to enhanced performance reporting in the coming years.

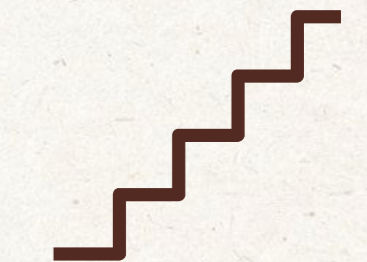


AIUla scenic view point overlooking the Old Town - Harrat Uwayrid

## The Report follows a 5-step methodology



5 steps





**RCU sustainability is composed of four dimensions in addition to Governance, 16 pillars, 47 topics and 56 KPIs**



**Governance**

**1. Transparency and Accountability**

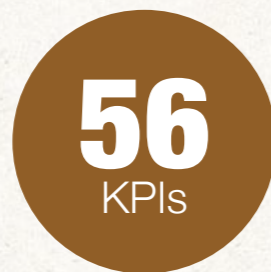
- Sustainable Compliance and Reporting
- Leadership Diversity and Independence

**2. Internal Governance**

- Compliance with the Code of Ethics
- Internal Policies and Regulations
- Anti-Bribery and Corruption
- Whistleblower Programme

**3. Ecosystem Governance**

- Responsible Procurement and Supply Chain



**1. Cultural**

**1. Heritage Conservation**

- Tangible Heritage Conservation
- Intangible Heritage Conservation

**2. Local Access and Contribution**

- Cultural Education
- Cultural Infrastructure and Facilities
- Local Participation

**3. Cultural Development**

- Self-Sufficiency
- Public Support and Private Sponsorship
- International Visibility



**2. Social**

**1. Health and Wellbeing**

- Good Health
- Quality of Life

**2. Social Advancement**

- Poverty Reduction
- Access to Social and Municipal Services
- Diversity and Inclusion
- Inclusive Education

**3. Engagement and Cooperation**

- Community Engagement
- Access to Information
- International Cooperation



**3. Economic**

**1. Long-Term Value Creation**

- Financial Sustainability
- Tourism
- Diversification and Innovation
- Infrastructure and Service Quality

**2. Local Content**

- Entrepreneurship and Local SMEs
- Local Production and Consumption
- Local Job Creation

**3. Skills and Excellence**

- Knowledge Transfer and Upskilling
- Labour Conditions



**4. Environmental**

**1. Water**

- Water Network
- Water Source
- Water Use

**2. Biodiversity**

- Protection
- Rewilding
- Restoration
- Sustainable Urban Development
- Conservation

**3. Waste and Circular Economy**

- Waste Generation
- Waste Collection
- Diversion from Landfill

**4. Carbon Footprint**

- Green Buildings
- Green Mobility
- Carbon Neutral

## The mix of international standards and frameworks used for this report includes GRI, GSTC, UN SDGs and UNESCO

### Reporting Standards

1

#### The Global Reporting Initiative:

An independent international organisation that has pioneered sustainability reporting since 1997 and is one of the most widely used ESG reporting standards globally. GRI comprehensively addresses the majority of RCU's dimensions, pillars, and standards (i.e., GHG Protocol and IUCN Green list, etc.), suggesting a strong alignment between the GRI framework and RCU's sustainability activities. This alignment underscores the relevance and applicability of GRI standards to capture the breadth and depth of our sustainability efforts.



2

#### The Global Sustainable Tourism Council:

Establishes and manages global standards for sustainable travel and tourism, and encompasses two sets of criteria: Industry and Destination. The GSTC framework comprehensively covers all of RCU's dimensions and pillars, and we have an existing GSTC programme that aims to achieve certification.



### Reporting Frameworks

3

#### UNESCO Framework for Culture and Arts Education:

Contributes to peace and security by promoting international collaboration in education, sciences, culture, communication and information. Our Cultural dimension remains unaddressed within conventional reporting standards and has been mapped to the UNESCO framework that has been considered in many of RCU's strategic and sustainability documents.



4

#### The United Nations Sustainable Development Goals:

A set of 17 interconnected global objectives aimed at addressing pressing social, economic, and environmental challenges to achieve a more sustainable future for all. The SDGs extensively encompass all of RCU's dimensions and are directly linked to the GRI. They are among the most relevant and widely adopted international sustainability framework and help measure our national and international contribution to sustainable development.



## Aligning with UN SDGs

The 17 SDGs are part of the 2030 Agenda for Sustainable Development adopted by UN member states that comprises the world's comprehensive plan of action to achieving sustainable development.

In promoting the preservation of cultural heritage, social inclusion, and sustainable development on local, regional, and global scales, RCU aligns its sustainability strategy and practices with the UN SDGs.

RCU aims to establish a comprehensive and inclusive model of sustainable development that benefits both present and future generations and contributing to localising the SDGs.

RCU demonstrates a comprehensive commitment to the UN SDGs across the four dimensions, Cultural, Social, Economic and Environmental, supported by strong Governance, which together constitute RCU's definition of sustainability in addition to the related 16 pillars, 47 topics and 56 KPIs.

In addition, RCU continually seeks collaborations with varying stakeholders, including government agencies, Non-profit Organisations (NGOs) and private sector companies, to further demonstrate its role in achieving the UN SDGs.

The SDGs provide a global framework for addressing pressing sustainability challenges, including poverty, inequality, climate change, and environmental degradation.

Many institutions and organisations align their sustainability strategies and reporting with specific SDGs to demonstrate their contributions to global sustainable development.

The SDGs offer a common language and framework for businesses to integrate sustainability considerations into their operations and strategies.



AIUla's development targets align with the UN SDGs - Daimumah in the Cultural Oasis



# Aligning with UN SDGs

Topic	Relevant UN SDG(s)
<b>Governance</b>	
1 Sustainable Compliance and Reporting	
2 Leadership Diversity and Independence	
3 Compliance with the Code of Ethics	
4 Internal Policies and Regulations	
5 Anti-bribery and Corruption	
6 Whistleblower Programme	
7 Responsible Procurement and Supply Chain	












Topic	Relevant UN SDG(s)
<b>Cultural</b>	
1 Tangible Heritage Conservation	
2 Intangible Heritage Conservation	
3 Cultural Education	
4 Cultural Infrastructure and Facilities	
5 Local Participation	
6 Self-sufficiency	
7 Public Support and Private Sponsorship	
8 International Visibility	

Topic	Relevant UN SDG(s)
<b>Social</b>	
1 Good Health	
2 Quality of Life	
3 Poverty Reduction	
4 Access to Social and Municipal Services	
5 Diversity and Inclusion	
6 Inclusive Education	
7 Community Engagement	
8 Access to Information	
9 International Cooperation	

Topic	Relevant UN SDG(s)
<b>Economic</b>	
1 Financial Sustainability	
2 Tourism	
3 Diversification and Innovation	
4 Infrastructure and Service Quality	
5 Entrepreneurship and Local SMEs	
6 Local Production and Consumption	
7 Local Job Creation	
8 Knowledge Transfer and Upskilling	
9 Labour Conditions	

## Aligning with UN SDGs

Topic	Relevant UN SDG(s)
<b>Environmental</b>	
1 Water Network	  
2 Water Source	  
3 Water Use	 
4 Protection	
5 Rewilding	
6 Restoration	 
7 Sustainable Urban Development	 

Topic	Relevant UN SDG(s)
<b>Environmental</b>	
8 Conservation	 
9 Diversion from Landfill	
10 Waste Collection	
11 Waste Generation	 
12 Green Buildings	 
13 Green Mobility	 
14 Carbon Neutral	



## Aligning with Saudi Vision 2030

AIUla is playing a key role in contributing to Saudi Vision 2030, a transformative roadmap aimed at diversifying the Kingdom's economy and enriching its social and cultural landscape. Through strategic initiatives and efforts geared towards sustainable development, RCU is steadfast in its commitment to aligning with the pillars of Vision 2030. By protecting AIUla's unique natural landscape, historical significance, and cultural heritage, we are not only driving economic growth but also promoting environmental, social, and cultural sustainability. In harmony with Saudi Vision 2030, we are shaping AIUla into a beacon of progress, innovation, and prosperity.



	Topic	Vision 2030 Objectives
1	Sustainable Compliance and Reporting	Enhance government effectiveness
2	Internal Policies and Regulations	Enhance government effectiveness
3	Leadership Diversity and Independence	Grow & diversify the Economy
4	Compliance with the Code of Ethics	Enable social responsibility
5	Anti-bribery and Corruption	Enable social responsibility
6	Whistleblower Programme	Enable social responsibility
7	Responsible Procurement and Supply Chain	Enhance government effectiveness
8	Tangible Heritage Conservation	Strengthen Islamic Values & National Identity
9	Intangible Heritage Conservation	Strengthen Islamic Values & National Identity
10	Cultural Education	Offer a fulfilling & healthy life
11	Cultural Infrastructure and Facilities	Strengthen Islamic Values & National Identity
12	Local Participation	Offer a fulfilling & healthy life
13	Self-sufficiency	Grow & diversify the Economy
14	Public Support and Private Sponsorship	Enhance government effectiveness
15	International Visibility	Grow & diversify the Economy
16	Good Health	Offer a fulfilling & healthy life
17	Quality of Life	Offer a fulfilling & healthy life
18	Poverty Reduction	Enable social responsibility

	Topic	Vision 2030 Objectives
19	Access to Social and Municipal Services	Offer a fulfilling & healthy life
20	Diversity and Inclusion	Enable social responsibility
21	Inclusive Education	Increase employment
22	Community Engagement	Enhance government effectiveness
23	Access to Information	Enhance government effectiveness
24	International Cooperation	Grow & diversify the Economy
25	Financial Sustainability	Enhance government effectiveness
26	Tourism	Grow & diversify the Economy
27	Diversification and Innovation	Grow & diversify the Economy
28	Infrastructure and Service Quality	Enhance government effectiveness
29	Entrepreneurship and Local SMEs	Grow & diversify the Economy
30	Local Production and Consumption	Grow & diversify the Economy
31	Local Job Creation	Increase employment
32	Knowledge Transfer and Upskilling	Increase employment
33	Labour Conditions	Increase employment
34	Water Network	Offer a fulfilling & healthy life
35	Water Source	Offer a fulfilling & healthy life
36	Water Use	Offer a fulfilling & healthy life
37	Protection	Offer a fulfilling & healthy life
38	Rewilding	Offer a fulfilling & healthy life

	Topic	Vision 2030 Objectives
39	Restoration	Offer a fulfilling & healthy life
40	Sustainable Urban Development	Offer a fulfilling & healthy life
41	Conservation	Offer a fulfilling & healthy life
42	Diversion from Landfill	Offer a fulfilling & healthy life
43	Waste Collection	Offer a fulfilling & healthy life
44	Waste Generation	Offer a fulfilling & healthy life
45	Green Buildings	Grow & diversify the Economy
46	Green Mobility	Grow & diversify the Economy
47	Carbon Neutral	Offer a fulfilling & healthy life

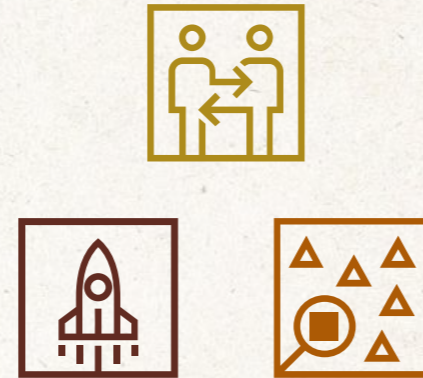
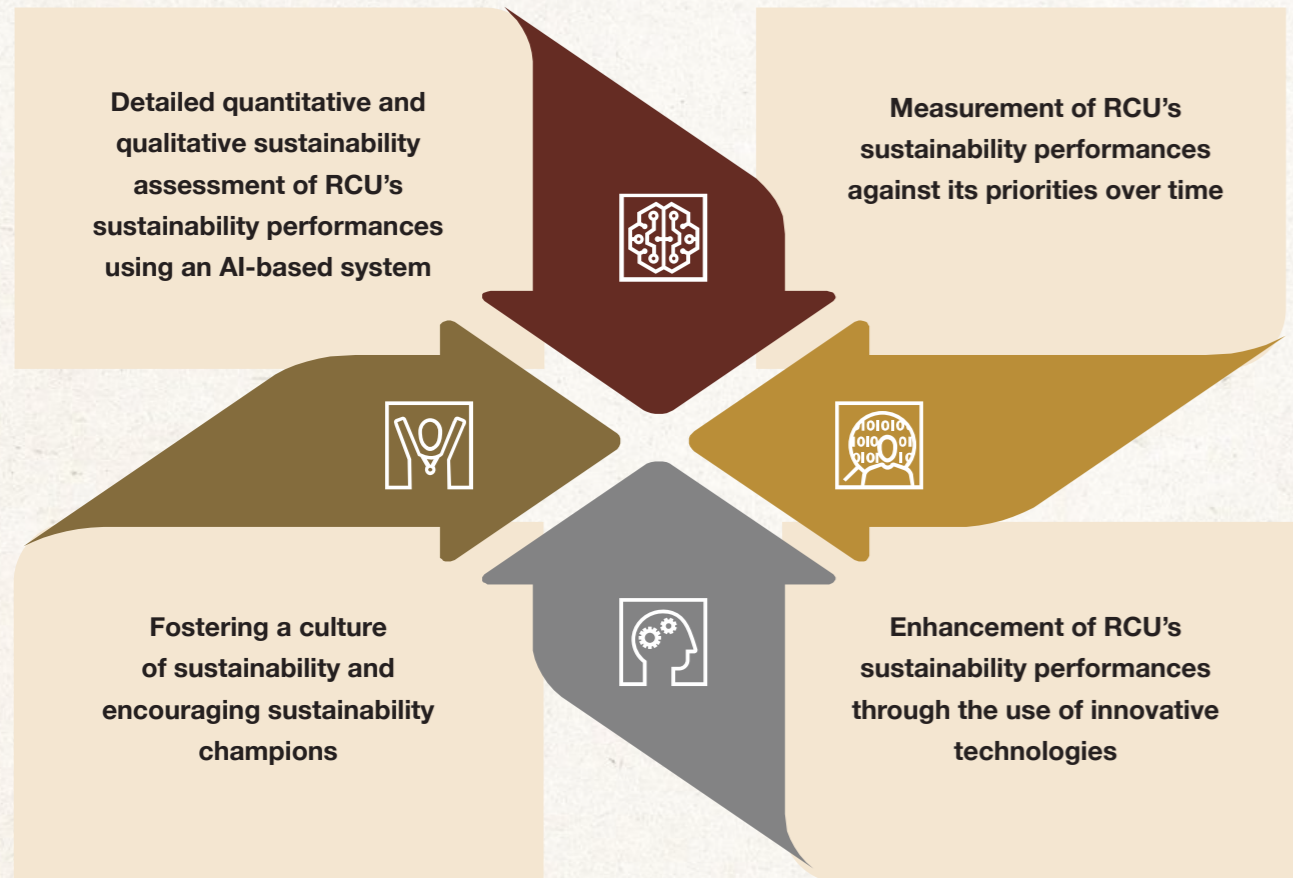


Regeneration of AIUla's farms is key to achieving integrated sustainable agriculture - the Cultural Oasis

## ESG Maturity Diagnostic Assessment

As a first step in our journey in sustainability performance tracking and monitoring, we undertook an ESG Maturity Assessment using a custom designed tool.

### Objectives of the assessment



With the support of subject-matter experts, we conducted an assessment against our own priorities and targets, utilising an innovative AI-based digital tool. The results identified areas of strength, and for improvement, that were considered during the development and publication of this Sustainability Report.

### How does the ESG Maturity Diagnostic Tool work?

A customised ESG Maturity Assessment was developed in accordance with the Commission's specific needs and requirements and was deployed with the support of RCU's Sustainability Planning Team and a number of internal stakeholders.

The customised assessment consisted of 204 questions covering:

**4 domains**

ESG Overview (awareness, readiness, integration, procurement), Environment, Social and Governance.

**32 sustainability criteria**

The set of criteria was defined based on engagement with stakeholders and the analysis of current trends, best practices, and international standards to provide the Commission with impactful insights to take measurable actions and make informed decisions.

**6 key functions**

Relevant to RCU were pinpointed and validated with key stakeholders to ensure the maturity assessment acknowledged value chain components that reflect recorded performances across different criteria:

- Strategy / Planning / Policymaking
- Investing / Financing / Attracting capital
- Service delivery / Product offer
- Internal policies and operations
- Measuring, monitoring and reporting
- Enforcement

### Environment

Water	Biodiversity	Waste & Circular Economy	Carbon Footprint
Irrigation Optimisation	Sustainable Urban Development	Sustainable Municipal Waste Management	Carbon Neutral Buildings
Urban Water Rationalisation	Nature Protection	Sustainable Organic Waste Management	Sustainable Tourism
Groundwater Protection	Nature Regeneration	Sustainable Construction Waste Management	Green Mobility
			Renewable Energy
			Sustainable Food & Agriculture

### Social

Diversity and Inclusion	Gender Empowerment	Human Capital Development
Citizen Centricity, Happiness and Wellbeing	Localisation and in Country Value (ICV)	Data Privacy and Security
Fair Working Conditions	Community Impact	Sustainable Procurement and Supply Chain

### Governance

Transparency and Accountability	ESG Compliance and Reporting	Compliance with the Code of Ethics
Anti-bribery and Corruption	Ecosystem Governance	Internal Governance
Responsible Procurement and Supply Chain	Whistleblower Programmes	Leadership Diversity and Independence

The 32 ESG criteria selected and customised by RCU



# Governance





**RCU's Governance: Actions aimed at pioneering transparency, integrity and independence. It means accountability and ethical conduct in decision-making processes while also prioritising inclusivity, stakeholder engagement, and continuous improvement**



RCU Town Hall Ideation Workshop - Maraya Concert Hall



The Governance dimension is composed of three pillars and seven topics, monitored through one KPI\*.



\* While we have identified one KPI for 2023, we acknowledge this is not aligned with global benchmarks and we will be building upon this in the coming reporting cycles.

## This annual sustainability report represents RCU's commitment to sustainability compliance and reporting

Governance is an integral part of our definition of, and approach to sustainability. Our governance strategy is aligned with UN SDG 16: *Peace, Justice, and Strong Institutions*, Saudi Vision 2030, the Saudi National Transformation Programme, and RCU's Strategic Principle N.12: *Embed Resilience*.

With this report, we aim to effectively communicate to both internal and external stakeholders, RCU's sustainability ambitions, initiatives, targets and performances, showcasing important achievements for AIUa as well as identifying areas for improvement.

We want to continue creating long-term value for our community and stakeholders whilst holding ourselves accountable for the consequences of our operations.



"Together, we create a sustainable impact" Town Hall - Maraya Concert Hall



## Diversity and independence are an important part of RCU's vow of transparency and accountability



RCU Tribe attending leadership keynote speeches - Maraya Concert Hall

Leadership diversity and independence are key fundamentals for RCU, and contribute to SDG 5: *Gender Equality*, SDG 10: *Reduced Inequality*, and SDG 16: *Peace, Justice and Strong Institutions*. They also support Saudi Vision 2030, the Saudi National Transformation Programme, and RCU's Strategic Principle N.12: *Embed Resilience*.

Our leadership structure reflects this diversity: our Acting CEO (2024), two representatives on the Advisory Board, and one member of the Audit Committee are women. We also value international perspectives and insights, which is why we have introduced a non-Saudi member to our Board of Directors. By embracing diversity as a catalyst for innovation and inclusive decision-making, we uphold the principles of independence. This ensures that leadership decisions are made with integrity and consider all stakeholders.

We have a mature multi-tier governance model consisting of separate checks and

balances that oversees our operations and regulates our activities. This ensures the Commission is executing its responsibilities in alignment with defined objectives, strategies, and regulatory mandates. Our governance framework is designed to strengthen internal control mechanisms and consistently evaluate our institutional maturity across all facets.

At the heart of our governance structure lies the Board of Directors, entrusted with the pivotal task of steering the Commission towards achieving AIUla's goals whilst upholding regulatory compliance and ethical standards. The Board, supported by the Governance Department, an independent function overseeing governance practices within RCU, rigorously supervises the governance framework and practices of the Commission and its affiliated entities.

**10** Board of Directors Members



### Governance

Oversees operations

Regulates activities

Executes responsibilities

Evaluates consistently



The Commission's institutional maturity across all facets

## 4

Committees



Audit



Executive



Nomination & Remuneration



Regulation

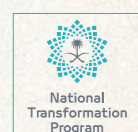
The Board is also supported by four Committees: the Executive, Audit, Nomination & Remuneration, and Regulation Committees, as well as an appointed Advisory Board with broad expertise who provide executive consultations and recommendations on matters relating to RCU's vision and projects.

This interconnected level of oversight supports the overall adherence to prescribed regulations, risk management practices, and the safeguarding of the Commission's interests and its stakeholders' welfare.

Leadership diversity and independence fortify RCU's governance framework, making it resilient and capable of upholding the highest standards of accountability and integrity.



Empowering the next generation of female leaders - Maraya Concert Hall



## RCU is devoted to prioritising ethics through compliance with the Code of Professional Conduct and internal policies and regulations

In alignment with the evolving regulatory landscape and the ambitious goals set forth by UN SDG 16: *Peace, Justice and Strong Institutions*, Saudi Vision 2030, the Saudi National Transformation Programme, and RCU Strategic Principle N.12: *Embed Resilience*, RCU embarked on a plan to strengthen compliance with its internal policies, regulations, and ethical standards by setting specific targets to measure performance and progress.

Developing comprehensive policies to guide decision-making and set standards while fostering a culture of healthy governance within the Commission, we published a total of 48 out of 80 policies, equivalent to 60% and nearly double our target of 30%.

Integral to compliance efforts is our Code of Professional Conduct, defining behavioural frameworks and principles vital to maintaining professional integrity and ethical values within the Commission. This code, developed in accordance with the Labour Law, embodies



RCU Tribe play a pivotal role in shaping and upholding our workplace ethics - Maraya Concert Hall

our devotion to ethical business practices. Maintaining adequate and available channels of communication to report suspicious behaviour or any breaches to the Code of Professional Conduct is important to us and we have put in place processes to investigate such breaches, demonstrating our continued efforts to maintaining the highest standards of accountability and conduct.

In addition to our Code of Professional Conduct, the Policy for Conflict of Interest and the Human Capital Services & Work Relationships and Behaviours Policy, enhance our internal governance by embedding core values in our approach to operations.

The Commission's commitment to global standards and best practices in managing governance is evidenced

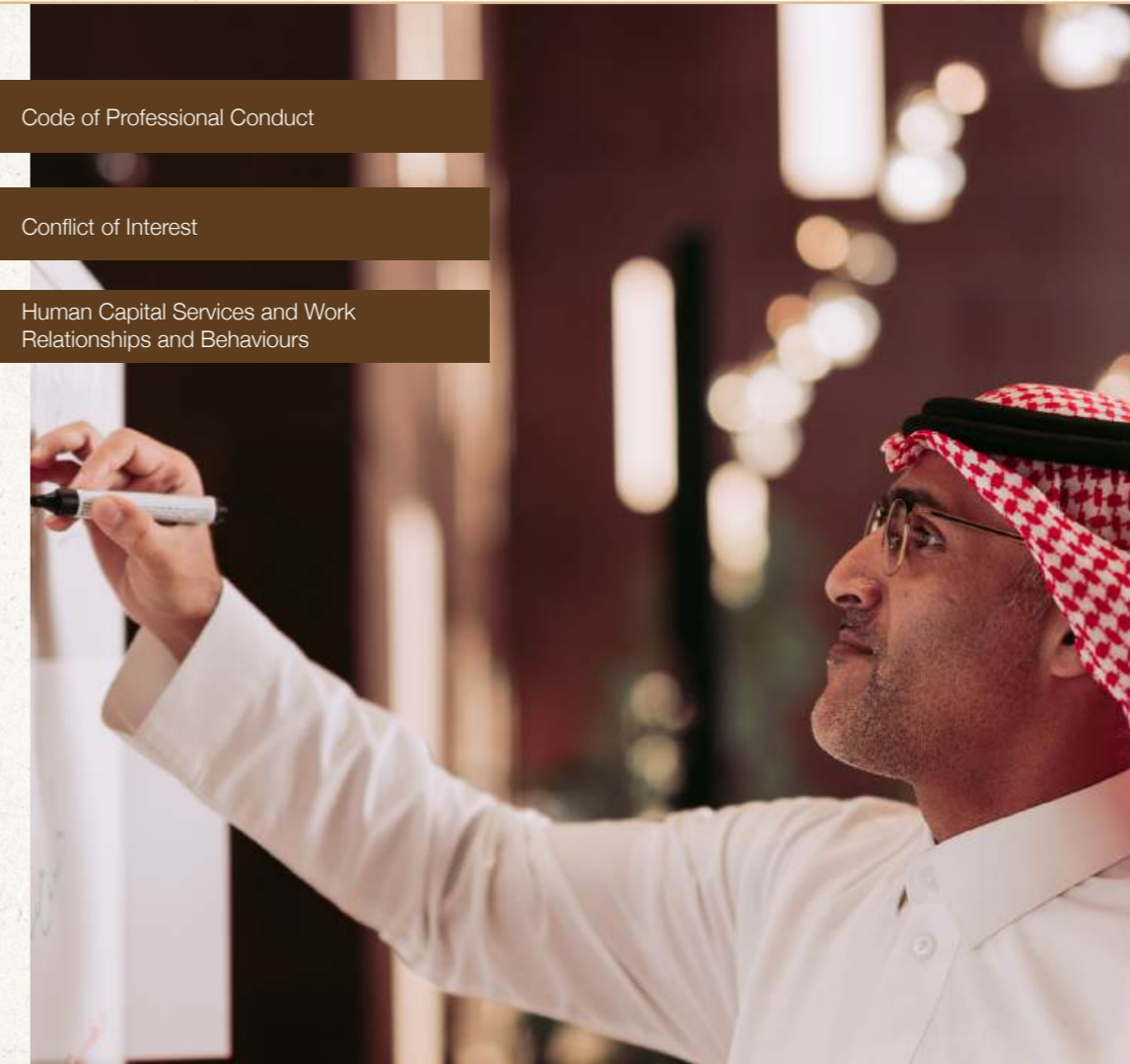
through its achievement of the ISO 37000:2021 certification for Governance Management, showcasing values of ethical and responsible behaviour. As part of our initiatives to drive adherence to regulations and internal policies, trainings are regularly provided to all staff to maintain and uphold governance, risk, and compliance policies and procedures.



- 3 Policies
- 1 Code of Professional Conduct
  - 2 Conflict of Interest
  - 3 Human Capital Services and Work Relationships and Behaviours

We rely on internal communication channels to keep our employees well-informed of their responsibilities and obligations. Our ethics and governance standards are ingrained and upheld thanks to the conscientious work of the Internal Audit and Corporate Ethics and Compliance department (CEC), which actively monitors and evaluates conformity to set policies and regulations.

We acknowledge that there will always be areas for improvement and embrace the continual challenge of seeking the betterment of our governance and institutional health.



A healthy culture of compliance is strengthened with training and regular communication - Maraya Concert Hall



KPIs

Percentage of RCU policies published

## RCU is dedicated to combating corruption by implementing anti-bribery and corruption measures



RCU Tribe gathering at "Together, we create a sustainable impact" Town Hall - Maraya Concert Hall

At RCU, we firmly believe that the essential cornerstones of effective governance are integrity, accountability, and ethical behaviour, and we maintain a zero-tolerance policy for corruption and bribery. We uphold rigorous standards for integrity and ethics in areas of our activities, including procurement, contracts and stakeholder interaction, in alignment with SDG 16: *Peace, Justice and Strong Institutions*, Saudi Vision 2030, the Saudi National Transformation Programme, as well as RCU's Strategic Principle N.12: *Embed Resilience*.

We implemented robust anti-corruption measures and internal controls to prevent, detect, and address instances of corruption or bribery, including the Anti-bribery, Anti-corruption, and Anti-fraud Policy. This policy contains stringent measures to prevent bribery, corruption, and fraud, such as prohibiting improper benefits and conducting thorough due diligence checks before engaging with third parties.

The abuse of decision-making powers for personal gain is not tolerated.

To guarantee the understanding of basic responsibilities in maintaining ethics, as well as notifying any suspected infringements or misconduct, we offer frequent comprehensive training and awareness programmes for employees to extensively communicate our policies and promote their widespread implementation.

Fairness and integrity underpin how we conduct our business. As such, fostering a healthy culture of integrity and ethical behaviour is foundational to achieving our mission and enabling us to effectively perform our fiduciary duty and prevent corruption and bribery.

### Our Governance Principles



RCU believes that fostering a culture of integrity and ethical behaviour is essential to effectively performing its fiduciary duty and to achieving its mission of regulating and delivering essential services to residents and visitors alike



## RCU is committed to empowering ethical responsibility through its Whistleblower Programme

RCU is committed to strengthening internal controls and programmes in alignment with SDG 16: *Peace, Justice and Strong Institutions*, Saudi Vision 2030, the Saudi National Transformation Programme, as well as RCU's Strategic Principle N.12: *Embed Resilience*.

Our commitment includes a comprehensive Whistleblower Programme, featuring a clear policy, a digital reporting platform, and a structured process for handling violations. The Whistleblowing Policy covers seven key aspects: Reportable Violations, Whistleblowing, Dealing with Reportable Violations, Confidentiality, Controls for Detering and/or Limiting Non-retaliation, Record Keeping and Reporting, and Final Controls.

The programme is in place to provide a secure digital mechanism whereby employees, contractors and other stakeholders can raise concerns about infringements of the laws, regulations, policies or directives applicable to RCU.

We encourage the reporting of any unethical or suspicious behaviour and protect those who speak up against disciplinary action while dealing with reported violations in a timely, professional, and confidential manner.

Apart from fraud, solicitation, financial and administrative corruption, the programme also addresses aspects of procurement and dealing with inabilities to comply with regulatory obligations such as the failure to meet contractual terms and conditions.

We value the input and concerns of our employees and stakeholders and recognise the importance of providing safe avenues for them to speak up without fear of retaliation. As a Royal Commission, we actively promote a culture of integrity and accountability, enabling individuals to play an active role in upholding ethical standards and protecting AIUla's reputation.



### Whistleblower Programme

We seek to address all reported violations in a timely, professional and confidential manner



We encourage the RCU Tribe to speak up against wrongdoing to maintain a safe and sound AIUla - Al Jadidah House



## RCU promotes responsible procurement and supply chain standards

Sustainability stewardship serves as a fundamental component of our mission. At the core of RCU's ethical governance lies the ESG Supplier Code of Conduct Policy, guiding suppliers towards RCU's vision of the future. Through this policy, suppliers commit to reducing carbon emissions, combating pollution, and preserving AIUla's delicate ecosystems. This aligns with SDG 12: *Responsible Consumption and Production*, Saudi Vision 2030, the Saudi National Transformation Programme, as well as RCU's Strategic Principle N.12: *Embed Resilience*.



The journey begins with acknowledging the ESG Supplier Code of Conduct, where suppliers pledge to adhere to the principles outlined therein (e.g., labour and human rights, health and safety, environmental sourcing, and so on). These principles promote transparent responsibility in our procurement activities.

Social responsibility serves as another cornerstone of our ethos, and our suppliers are held to the highest social standards covering topics of human rights, health, safety, and diversity. We have zero tolerance for forced or child labour; it is important to us that paid wages are fair and just, reflecting our support for the wellbeing of individuals in our supply chains.



Diversity and inclusion are celebrated as integral components of a thriving AIUla community and governance standards serve as the framework by which the Commission and its suppliers navigate the complexities of business ethics and integrity. Transparency is paramount, and suppliers are expected to disclose pertinent information regarding their business activities and financial standing at frequent checkpoints. Compliance with laws and regulations is non-negotiable, as is the adherence to fair competition practices and ethical sourcing.



Suppliers are encouraged to source material locally, in line with our ESG Supplier Code of Conduct - the Old Town



**Compliance with laws** and regulations is **non-negotiable**, as is the adherence to fair competition practices and ethical sourcing

We strive to constantly review our policies and check that the principles outlined in our ESG Supplier Code of Conduct translate into outcomes that positively shape responsible procurement and supply chain management within AIUla and beyond.

### Suppliers commit to:

Reducing carbon emissions



Combating pollution



Preserving the region's delicate ecosystems



Local artisans are a key aspect of our economy and our heritage - the Old Town





# 4

## RCU's Sustainability **Dimensions**, Pillars & Topics



- ◇ Cultural
- ◇ Social
- ◇ Economic
- ◇ Environmental



## RCU's approach to sustainability: embracing Cultural, Social, Economic, and Environmental dimensions

We acknowledge there will be areas for improvement in the following sustainability dimensions and this report is a stepping stone to enhanced performance and reporting in the coming years.



### Cultural

Involves conserving AIUla's tangible and intangible cultural heritage, norms and values, supporting cultural accessibility as well as the long-term viability of the cultural sector.



### Social

Involves safeguarding the wellbeing of AIUla's community while promoting social justice, diversity, inclusivity, and community engagement.



### Economic

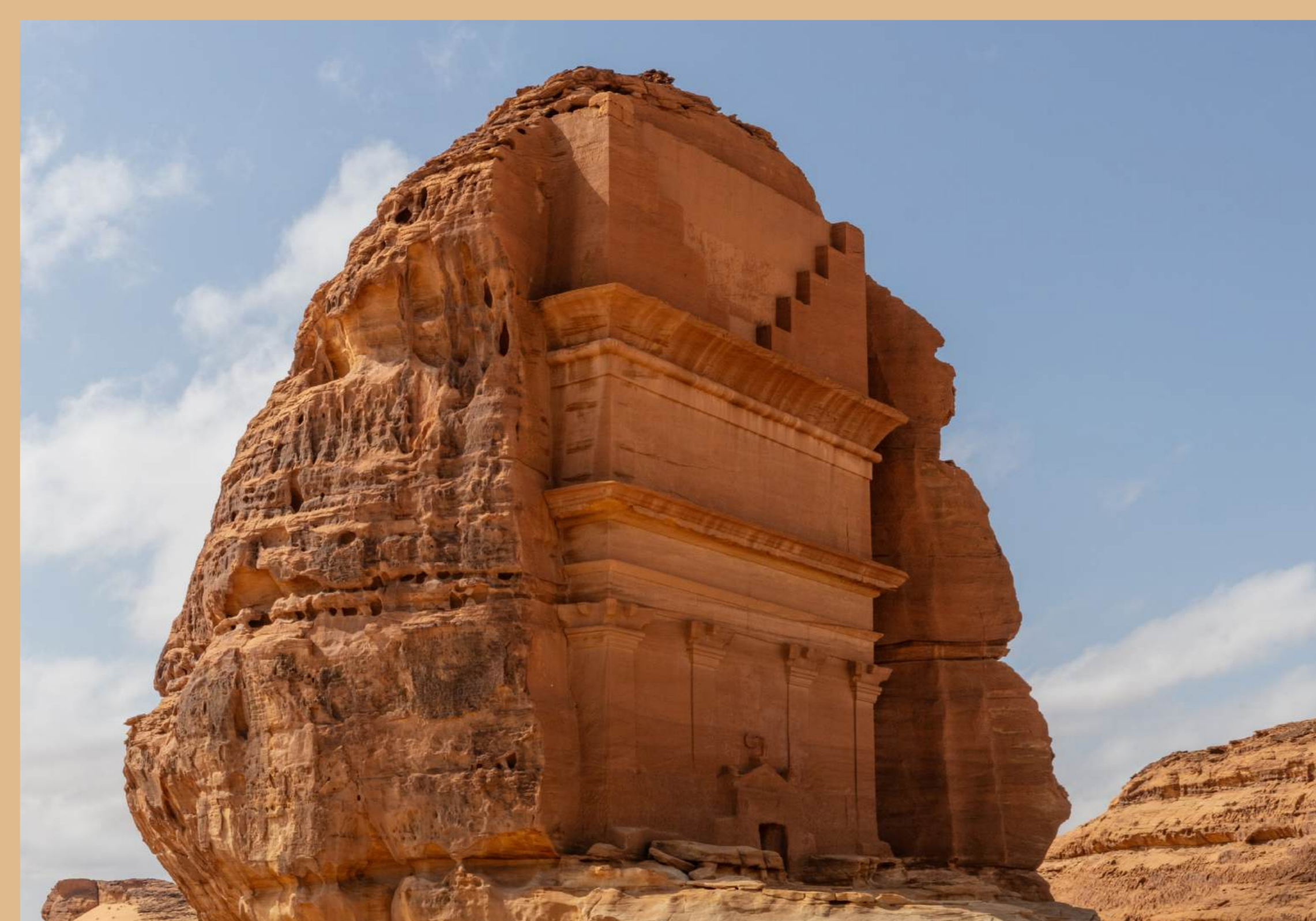
Involves supporting AIUla's economic growth by harnessing development factors,\* to mitigate negative externalities and promote financial sustainability.



### Environmental

Involves protecting ecosystems, promoting biodiversity, and conserving AIUla's resources while driving sustainable development that enables humans and nature to thrive in harmony.

\* such as technology, infrastructure, education, natural resources, trade, entrepreneurship, and the regulatory environment



# Cultural



## RCU's Cultural Dimension: Conserving AIUla's Tangible and Intangible Heritage, While Bridging Cultural Access Across Populations



The century-old Ibn Rumman Palace - Tayma

**3**  
Pillars

**8**  
Topics

**14**  
KPIs

The Cultural dimension is composed of three pillars and eight topics, monitored through 14 KPIs.



## RCU is committed to the conservation and environmental management of AIUla's tangible heritage

Conservation and effective management are key to AIUla's sustainable development. RCU acknowledges the importance of maintaining AIUla's historical sites, responsibly managing them, and safeguarding the proper storage of AIUla's cultural collections. This aligns with the UNESCO Framework, SDG 11: *Sustainable Cities and Communities*, Saudi Vision 2030, the Saudi National Transformation Programme, as well as RCU's Strategic Principle N.1: *Safeguarding the Natural and Cultural Landscape*, and N.2: *Celebrate Heritage, Culture and Arts as a Global Destination*.

The Heritage Sustainability Index gauges the efficacy of our efforts to preserve AIUla's cultural heritage by measuring the percentage of implemented corporate policies on heritage protection. By scoring 75%, we surpassed our target of 63%, reflecting the strides made in safeguarding AIUla's heritage assets.



Carefully restored ancient mudbrick dwellings at Dar Tantora The House Hotel - the Old Town

More than 422 heritage preservation and protection activities were logged in 2023. These included operations such as protecting AIUla's collections, to cleaning heritage sites, to removing graffiti in Ashar Tented Resort, Wadi AlFann, Hegra Visitor Centre and Tabuk Road, to conserving mural paintings in the Old Town, and

implementing water mitigation measures in Hegra, keeping AIUla's cultural legacy intact and revered.

Implementing effective and responsible management plans is vital to conserving heritage sites. The Heritage Management Plan for the Old Town is an example of finding the right balance between

preserving the past and making the Old Town accessible and safe, guiding both conservation and future development. We have increased the number of AIUla's heritage sites under safe management and conservation, up to six at the end of 2023. Twenty-five major and permanent monuments, including Hegra Conservation and Archaeological Project,

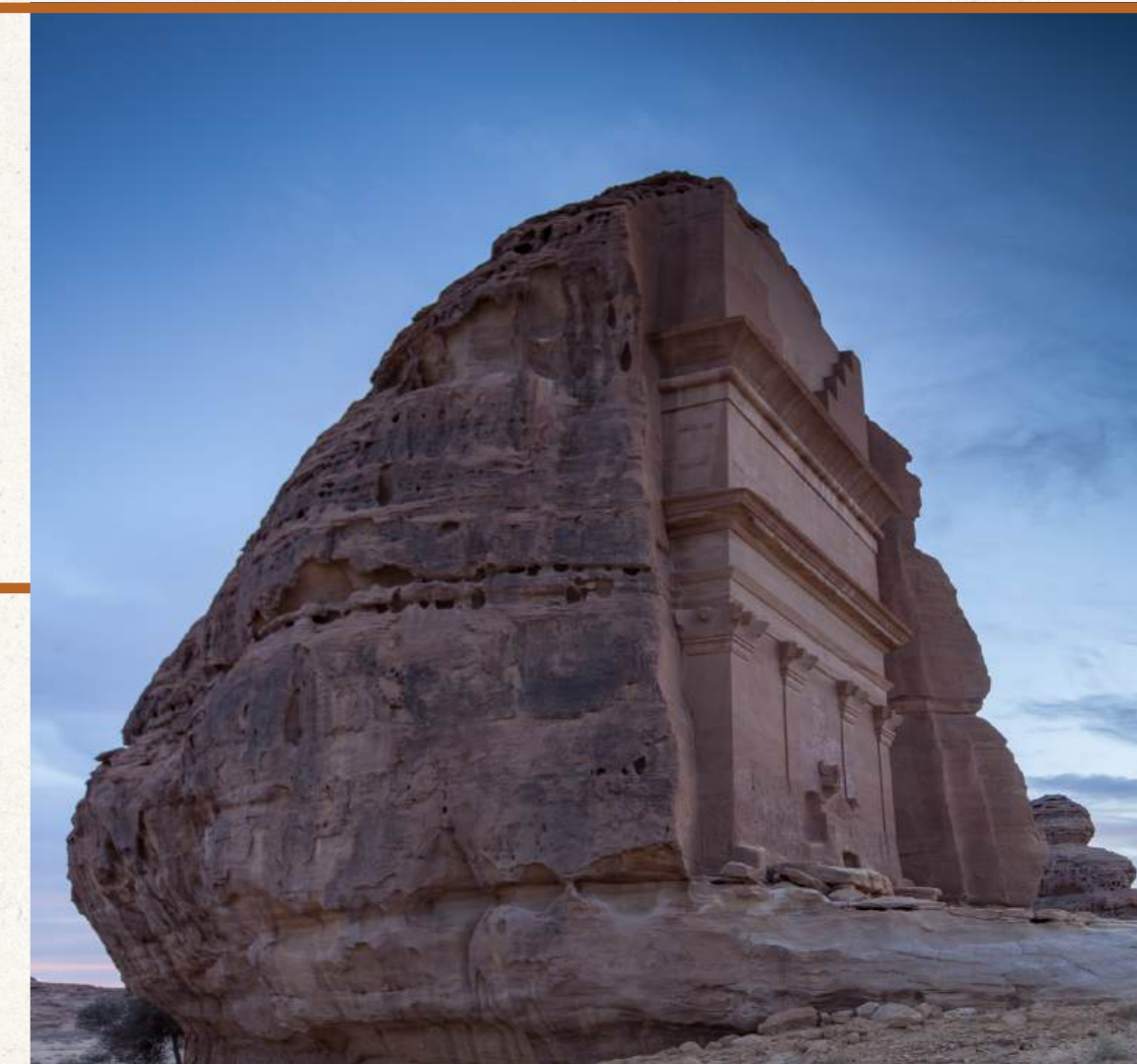
are secure with comprehensive protection plans exceeding our 2023 target set at ten tangible assets.

One of AIUla's notable tangible heritage relics, the Hegra Railway, built to connect Damascus with Medina to facilitate the pilgrimage to Mecca, remains well intact and secure.

### Heritage Sustainability Index Score



The railway stands as a historical feat of engineering, reflecting the early 20<sup>th</sup> century efforts to enhance transportation and connectivity in the region. The vestigial remnants in AIUla, with intact stations and tracks, are a testament to the historically ambitious project, offering insights into the visionary socio-economic and cultural impacts that such an infrastructure project had during its time.



Tomb of Lihyan son of Kuza from the Nabataean Kingdom dating back to the first century AD - Hegra



### KPIs



Heritage Sustainability Index



# of Heritage/ Archeological Sites with management plan



% of collections stored to environmental standards



# of items added to the Collections Management System



# of heritage preservation and protection activities



# of major and permanent monuments containing clear protection plans



# of movable art and heritage assets with a condition assessment

## RCU is committed to the conservation and environmental management of AIUla's tangible heritage

The ancient city of Dadan, known to have been the capital of the Dadan and Lihyan kingdoms, is a hallmark of AIUla's treasured cultural heritage. The archaeological site is home to tombs, inscriptions, and urban dwellings built from locally-quarried stone and carved into the rocks, showcasing the advanced societal and architectural accomplishments of its inhabitants. Dadan offers a window into the lives of ancient communities, their beliefs, and their interactions with the surrounding environment and neighbouring civilisations.

We have expanded and enriched AIUla's cultural inventory, having assessed the conditions of 9,997 artistic and heritage assets, surpassing our initial target of 8,000. Furthermore, we accessioned 52,268 items in the Collections Management System featuring:

- 21,405 object records
- 2,304 library records, and
- 28,559 digital assets.



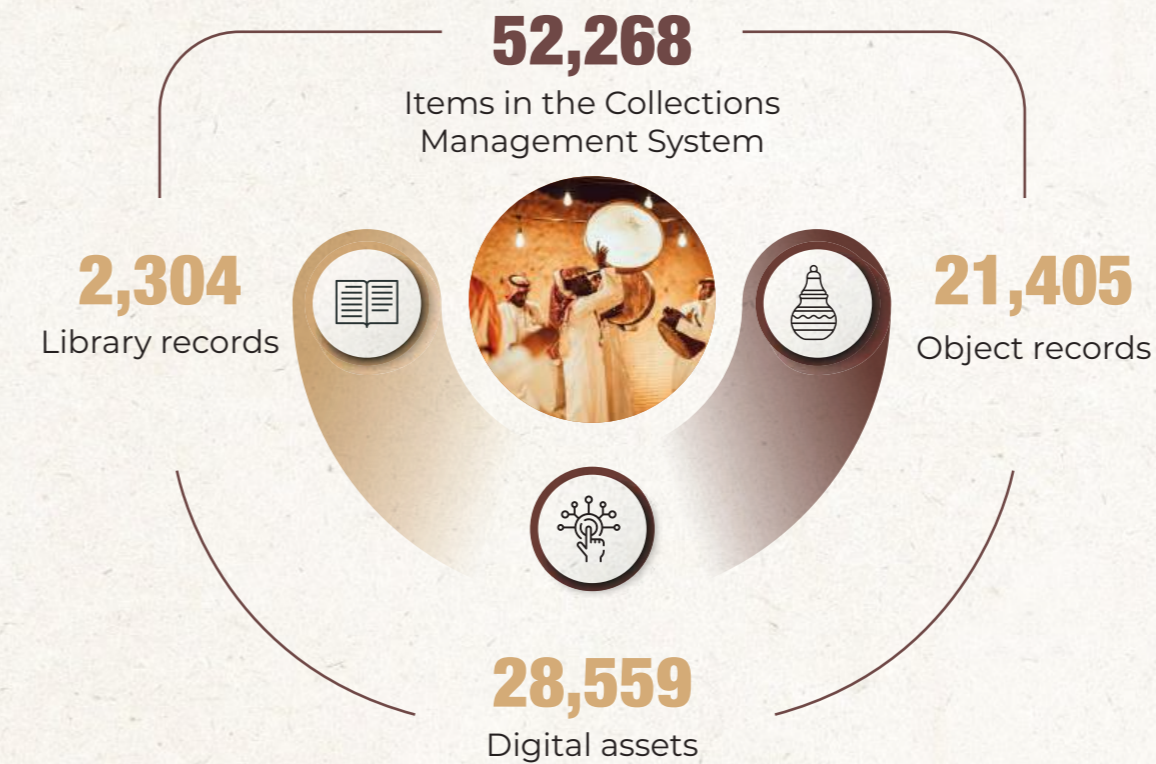
Ancient Dadanitic tombs decorated with reliefs of lions - Dadan

Proper storage of cultural artefacts and collections is critical for their long-term preservation. Currently, 1% of the Commission's collections

are stored under correct environmental standards, falling short of the 2023 target of 25%. The gap between current practices and desired

standards incentivises us to work harder towards the target. Bridging the gap will require investing in innovative solutions, facilities and

infrastructure necessary to meet the environmental storage standards for the preservation of AIUla's cultural artefacts and collections.



The AIUla Collections Facility, now in its final design stages, will serve as a key hub for storing and exhibiting managed assets, marking a cornerstone of cultural preservation. On its way to achieving Leadership in Energy and Environmental Design (LEED)

Gold certification, it is designed to be a highly sustainable international storage and conservation facility.

The King AbdulAziz Foundation (Darah) and RCU are partnering to conserve and digitise treasured local collections in AIUla. This

initiative includes a three-year service contract with Darah and the development of a new Manuscript and Archival Materials Conservation Centre. This centre will offer various conservation activities and serve as a valuable community resource for learning and engagement.

The project aims to showcase the historical and cultural significance of these collections, fostering a deeper connection to local identity, belonging, and memory. By conserving, preserving and making these collections accessible, the project ensures their legacy for current and future generations.

We assessed **9,997** art and heritage assets for their condition, exceeding our initial target of **8,000**



- ### KPIs
- Heritage Sustainability Index
  - # of Heritage/ Archeological Sites with management plan
  - % of collections stored to environmental standards
  - # of items added to the Collections Management System
  - # of heritage preservation and protection activities
  - # of major and permanent monuments containing clear protection plans
  - # of movable art and heritage assets with a condition assessment

## RCU is committed to safeguarding AIUla's tangible heritage through conservation and environmental management

This three-year partnership agreement with Darah includes implementing the Journey Through Time Masterplan, which will establish a dedicated urban core promoting AIUla's archaeological, tourism, culture, education, arts and environmental sectors.

Heritage Impact Assessment, that balances heritage protection against the impacts of new construction, guiding decision-making on long-term protection of World Heritage assets and contribution to the knowledge space.

RCU's partnership with ICOMOS has several objectives. These include raising awareness within the AIUla community about heritage conservation through scientific lectures and publications; co-organising conferences and symposiums;

and enhancing capabilities in heritage conservation by facilitating access to expertise and best practices.

Environmental management is a critical aspect of heritage preservation. In collaboration

with Eltek Ltd, RCU developed the Telemetric Environmental Monitoring System (TEMS), featuring the installation of monitoring devices in multiple storage facilities and heritage collection sites in the Kingdom and abroad.

Analysing real-time data collected transmitted via an array of sensors connected to the cloud, TEMS utilises Darca Connect software to monitor and relay information on collections' storage and display conditions. The system monitors parameters such as humidity, temperature, light, and Ultraviolet (UV) levels, crucial to maintaining the integrity of the cultural artefacts. Alarms alert personnel of any deviations, prompting timely responses to safeguard artefacts and heritage sites from any damage.

**TEMS** plays a vital role in preserving cultural heritage by monitoring environmental conditions crucial for the preservation of artefacts and heritage sites in AIUla



The Lion Tombs - Dadan



AIUla Art Gallery and Exhibition - Design Space in AlJadidah



We are expanding our reach through additional international partnerships. Among these, the strategic partnership between RCU and ICOMOS, a professional association that works towards conserving and protecting cultural heritage sites around the world, signifies a pivotal step forward in the conservation and promotion of AIUla's cultural heritage. Anchored within a three-year MoU, this collaboration establishes AIUla as a hub of knowledge in heritage conservation in the region. The partnership features six programmes; one of which is the

### Efforts



Innovative solutions to monitor heritage collection sites



International partnerships to gain best practices



### KPIs



Heritage Sustainability Index



# of Heritage/ Archeological Sites with management plan



% of collections stored to environmental standards



# of items added to the Collections Management System



# of heritage preservation and protection activities



# of major and permanent monuments containing clear protection plans



# of movable art and heritage assets with a condition assessment

## RCU is committed to showcasing, safeguarding, preserving and promoting the intangible cultural wealth and breadth of AIUla

RCU has developed a comprehensive, multifaceted strategy to preserve AIUla's intangible heritage, complete with clear objectives and measurable indicators. This aligns with the UNESCO Framework, SDG 11: *Sustainable Cities and Communities*, Saudi Vision 2030, the Saudi National Transformation Programme, as well as RCU's Strategic Principle N.1: *Safeguarding the Natural and Cultural Landscape*, and Principle N.2: *Celebrate Heritage, Culture and Arts as a Global Destination*.



Two distinct projects have been central to our efforts: the Oral History and Cultural Intangible Heritage Collection Campaign, and the Arabian Poetry Campaign.

The first phase of the Oral History and Intangible Cultural Heritage Collection Campaign focused on key locales within AIUla, namely the Old Town and the Cultural

Oasis. Driven by meticulous recovery, documentation, and preservation efforts, we compiled more than 150 inventory cards as well as published two comprehensive

books (AIUla Wonder of Arabia, and Beijing Edition of the Exhibition Catalogue). These resources are timeless repositories of AIUla's oratory traditions.

Community engagement is pivotal to our initiatives. We hosted curated workshops that equipped local residents with the skills to inventories and document AIUla's long-living

intangible cultural heritage. Our inaugural workshop brought participants from AIUla, Tayma, and Khaybar, propagating a collective sense of empowered ownership and pride.

As part of the Arabian Poetry Campaign, the Commission carried out extensive historical research, focusing on the early Islamic era, revealing invaluable insights into the region's poetic heritage. Subsequently, the rich tradition of Arabian poetry in AIUla was further explored by conducting interviews with over 30 local poets, unearthing a treasure trove of poetic compositions and narratives. Collating, understanding, preserving, and communicating AIUla's poetic legacy keeps this storied tradition alive for current and future generations.

RCU's awareness-raising initiatives include media outreach and scholarly discussions. Originally aiming to publish 120 media-related advertisements and messages in 2023, we surpassed this target, sharing 154 intangible heritage-related communications globally.

In the realm of academia, we set a target to publish 24 research papers; we exceeded this goal, publishing 32 insightful articles. Each publication added to the tapestry of knowledge and appreciation for AIUla's cultural legacy, ensuring its stories are preserved and celebrated far and wide.



**150**  
Inventory cards



**2**  
Comprehensive books



**32**  
Articles published



**154**  
Media messages



Extensive historical research, focused particularly on the early Islamic era, provided invaluable insights into the region's poetic heritage



Arabian poetry and theatre sharing AIUla's preserved history and values - AlJadidah

**30**  
Local poets interviewed



### KPIs



# of advertisements and media messages related to cultural heritage



# of heritage research articles published in scholarly journals

## RCU is devoted to cultivating cultural enlightenment through enhancing education in AIUla

Through collaborative efforts, AIUla has become a cultural hub, enriching both locals and visitors with diverse educational programmes. The Commission's approach to furthering cultural education is aligned with the UNESCO Framework, SDG 4: *Quality Education*, SDG 11: *Sustainable Cities and Communities*, Saudi Vision 2030, the Saudi National Transformation Programme, as well as RCU's Strategic Principle N.2: *Celebrate Heritage, Culture and Arts as a Global Destination* and N.8: *Enable the Local Community*.

One of RCU's notable initiatives in cultural education is its comprehensive training programme for narrators and storytellers (i.e., Rawis). In 2023 alone, the programme delivered more than 370 hours of training. RCU partnered with esteemed institutions like the Carnegie Foundation for the Advancement of Teaching to provide this training. This programme aims to equip individuals with skills that leave a lasting impression, focusing on the art of storytelling by



FAME: Andy Warhol Exhibition in AIUla - Maraya Concert Hall

blending history, tradition, and innovation.

Recognising the significance of engaging families and youth in exploring AIUla's heritage, we tailored content and delivery methods to enhance experiences at AIUla's heritage sites. Interactive activities and workshops provide

insightful and appealing cultural education for all ages. These workshops, held at various heritage sites, offer families and children immersive journeys through time, enriching their understanding of AIUla's cultural tapestry. Bespoke content has been integrated into school curricula as well, offering first-hand learning experiences.

Additionally, the AIUla Public Library, now open to the public and housed in a renovated AlJadidah house, boasts a diverse collection of over 2,000 books and journals. Covering a wide range of subjects, including archaeology, arts, and sciences in multiple languages, the library invites visitors to explore, connect, and engage in intellectual pursuits.

that foster creativity and cultural exchange. With a focus on showcasing the literary wealth of Saudi Arabia and AIUla, the library invites visitors to explore, connect, and engage in intellectual pursuits.

**370**  
Hours of narrator training



**2,000**  
Books and journals

Our commitment to cultural education is reflected in our partnerships with neighbouring education departments to design inclusive school programmes. These programmes integrate cultural activities and guided visits to heritage sites, fostering a deeper connection to the rich cultural legacies of Saudi Arabia and AIUla. Through the Art of Story Conservation Project, efforts to preserve AIUla's cultural heritage offer a deeper look at original scientific exploration techniques and laboratory analysis methods.

Our initiatives are not limited to local efforts but also extend to international collaborations, showcasing AIUla's cultural significance on a global stage. In a notable collaboration, RCU partnered with the Andy Warhol Museum to host the Andy Warhol Exhibition in AIUla. This exhibition honored the renowned artist, film director, and producer, highlighting his significant impact on pop art and culture. The exhibition also provided educational



**AIUla Public Library serves as**

a vibrant community hub

a space for workshops and events

a platform for creativity and cultural exchange

a showcase of Saudi Arabia's literary wealth

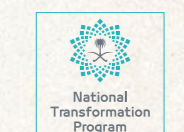
a repository of literature from around the world

workshops, enriching the local art scene and fostering creativity.

AIUla stands as a beacon of cultural education, guaranteeing that its heritage is not only preserved but also celebrated and shared for generations to come.



AIUla Art Gallery and Exhibition - Design Space in AlJadidah





## RCU is committed to increasing accessibility by enhancing AIUla's cultural infrastructure and facilities

In alignment with the UNESCO Framework, SDG 9: *Industry, Innovation, and Infrastructure*, SDG 11: *Sustainable Cities and Communities*, Saudi Vision 2030, the Saudi National Transformation Programme and RCU's Strategic Principle N.2: *Celebrate Heritage, Culture and Arts as a Global Destination* and N.6: *Ensure Subtle Connectivity and Accessibility*, RCU is dedicated to uncovering and activating the cultural heritage of Saudi Arabia and AIUla. This mission is embedded within its strategic objectives and supports its roadmap to cultural development.

With a clear vision for enhancing cultural experiences in AIUla, we have opened and activated eleven arts and culture assets by 2023. These include Maraya Concert Hall (2018), Wadi AlFann (2020), Elephant Rock (2017), Museum Collections Storage (2022), Daimumah - Phase 1 (2023), AlManshiyah District (2022), AlJadidah Arts District (2019), AlJadidah Gallery Space (2022), Cinema AlJadidah (2022), Madrasat Addeera -

**11**  
Arts and cultural assets activated

**8**  
Heritage sites opened

Phase 1 (2019), and Music Hub (2023). In addition, we have opened eight heritage sites such as the Old Town - Incense Road Market (2021), Heritage Oasis Trails (2021), Hegra Welcome Centre (2019), Dadan Welcome Centre (2019), Jabal Ikmah Welcome Centre (2019), Khaybar Visitor Centre (2022), Tayma Visitor Centre (2022), and Wadi AlNaam Visitor Centre (2023).

These initiatives have exceeded the initial target of six arts and culture assets to be opened and



Night-time view of the ancient Jabal AlFil - near Al AIMu'tadil

activated and met the target of eight heritage assets to open by 2023. Additionally, two more heritage sites - AlRadam Palace, and Ibn Rumman Palace - are planned for activation soon.

**Jabal Ikmah:** An open air library of thousands of ancient inscriptions, carvings and rock art

**Dadan:** An ancient city and the capital of the Dadanite and Lihyanite Kingdoms, known for its tombs carved into red sandstone cliffs

**Hegra:** The Kingdom's first UNESCO World Heritage site, featuring well-preserved tombs from the Nabataean civilisation

**Tayma:** An ancient oasis town dating back to at least the Bronze Age, known for well-preserved ruins and inscriptions

**The Khaybar Oasis:** A geological treasure surrounded by ancient volcanic terrain that supports an abundance of native plant and animal life

**Wadi AlNaam:** A picturesque valley characterised by unique rock formations, lush vegetation and historical significance

**Incense Road Market:** A recreation of the vibrant commercial atmosphere of the ancestral trade of aromatics like frankincense and myrrh that once thrived in the Old Town

**Heritage Oasis Trails:** A lush area within the desert landscape, supported by natural springs and traditional irrigation systems

**Elephant Rock:** A natural sandstone formation shaped like an elephant stretching up to 52 m

**Museum Collections Storage:** AIUla's current operational centre for collection-related activities

**Daimumah:** A living, breathing farm steeped in rich history, that weaves together art, nature, and heritage in the scenic and serene heart of the Oasis

**AlManshiyah District:** A lively community space with restaurants, cafes, and playgrounds, as well as featuring the carefully preserved AIUla Railway Station and a bustling farmers' market

**AlJadidah Arts District:** A vibrant art district, with murals and curated street art that tell stories through calligraphy and paint. Its streets are home to the world's largest hand-painted carpet and offer a variety of galleries, pop-up exhibitions, restaurants, and cafes

**AlJadidah Gallery Space:** A permanent gallery space, located in the AlJadidah Art District, sharing a building with Design Space AIUla

**Cinema AlJadidah:** An enchanting outdoor movie theatre featuring a blend of art-house films, blockbusters, Arabic cinema, and interactive workshops under the night sky



Blending old architecture with modern facilities - the Old Town



### KPIs



# of open and activated Arts and Culture Assets at AIUla



# of Heritage Sites open to visitors

## RCU is committed to increasing accessibility by enhancing AIUla's cultural infrastructure and facilities

**Madrasat Addeera:**  
A tranquil art and design space for the local community, where people rediscover the region's traditional crafts, reviving these once-forgotten techniques

**Music Hub:**  
A dynamic hub dedicated to fostering local talents, hosting transformative art events, and bridging global music communities through various music lessons, workshops, and cultural exchanges

**Maraya Concert Hall:**  
An architectural marvel featuring the world's largest mirrored facade reflecting the surrounding landscape

**Wadi AlFann:**  
An expansive cultural valley showcasing large-scale art installations by renowned artists

Through a series of major projects, RCU continues to develop and manage cultural sites across Tayma, Khaybar and AIUla, balancing their preservation and accessibility.



Ancient rock inscriptions from the Dadanitic and Lihyanite civilisations dating back to the second half of the first millennium BCE - Jabal Ikmah

Notable projects, such as the Museum of the Incense Road, is underway, reconnecting with ancestral stories of ancient travel and trade of aromatics like frankincense and myrrh. The Museum of the Incense Road will

serve as a centre for preserving and showcasing the historical significance of the incense trade, featuring exhibits that illustrate the cultural exchanges facilitated by this ancient route. Additionally, the Contemporary

Art Museum, designed as a series of pavilion galleries set among artist gardens, will showcase a diverse array of global art. It features three main collections: "Three Seas," focusing on 21<sup>st</sup> century artists

connected to the regions of the Red Sea, the Arabian Sea, and the Eastern Mediterranean; "Continents", highlighting artists from around the world with a global perspective; and a collection of land art works.

Moreover, other transformative projects are underway such as the Old Town Revival Project and the restoration of AlMuadham Fort. Meticulously planned, these initiatives aim to preserve and revitalise the historical essence of ancient locations such as Khaybar and Tayma, thereby enhancing AIUla's cultural infrastructure and accessibility to well-preserved facilities.



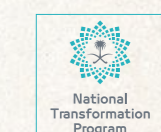
Supporting preservation, conservation, and discovery efforts, two state-of-the-art facilities are underway: the previously mentioned AIUla Collections Facility, and the Archaeological Fieldwork Basecamp, which will serve as a hub for offices, research, training and accommodation, catering to the needs of lodging research teams. The Basecamp will also act as a launching pad for media, community, and other public engagements.

These initiatives are part of a broader effort to enhance AIUla's cultural infrastructure, supporting heritage preservation and celebration through various forms of media and public engagement. The Two Stage Film Studio brings Saudi Arabia's rich heritage to life through cinematic endeavours, capturing and sharing the nation's vibrant cultural narratives. By doing so, it complements other efforts to create an immersive experience of AIUla's past, such as the Dadan and Ikmah Interpretation Centres, designed by visionary architects like Asif Khan, Kengo Kuma, and Clement Virgili. These Centres will offer visitors deep and engaging insights into AIUla's storied history.

The commitment to AIUla's community and its natural environment remains central to infrastructural development, safeguarding their legacy for future generations.



Details of carved lions above an ancient tomb dating back 2,600 years - Dadan



### KPIs



# of open and activated Arts and Culture Assets at AIUla



# of Heritage Sites open to visitors

## RCU is committed to empowering AIUla's local talent and fostering cultural vibrancy through community-driven initiatives

Integrating local communities into the cultural and economic fabric of the County is a key focus for RCU. This aligns with the strategic objectives of the UNESCO Framework, SDG 8: *Decent Work and Economic Growth*, SDG 10: *Reduced Inequality*, SDG 11: *Sustainable Cities and Communities*, Saudi Vision 2030, and the Saudi National Transformation Programme along with RCU's Strategic Principle N.8: *Enable the Local Community*. Through these, RCU empowers local talent and supports the enrichment of cultural diversity through active community participation in cultural endeavours.

We facilitated the involvement of 170 residents in arts and culture vocational training, providing opportunities for creative expression and professional growth. Additionally, we introduced the School and Family Activity Programmes aimed at deepening the local community's connection to, and appreciation of AIUla's heritage.



Daimumah Village - the Cultural Oasis



Madrasat Addeera volunteers learning traditional craftsmanship - the Old Town



170

Residents participated in arts and culture vocational training



42

Local artisans trained in traditional craftsmanship

Supporting the empowerment of **local talent** and the enhancement of cultural diversity through active community **participation** in cultural endeavors

These programmes educate and cultivate a sense of ownership and pride amongst residents, encouraging them to actively participate in the cultural preservation and promotion of AIUla's traditions and heritage.

Furthermore, RCU's collaboration with Turquoise Mountain, a Scottish NGO, led to craft workshops for 42 local artisans at Madrasat Addeera in AlJadidah. This initiative focused on empowering local



Floor painting youth community programmes - AlJadidah

artisans while preserving AIUla's traditional craftsmanship. By enhancing artisanal skills, we support local talent and their contributions to AIUla's cultural sector and economy,

safeguarding intangible cultural wealth and strengthening the local economy.

Collectively, these efforts highlight the need for a dynamic,

innovative approach to cultural development, focusing on broadening local talent, promoting inclusivity, and fostering a vibrant, self-sustaining cultural ecosystem in AIUla.



## RCU is dedicated to promoting cultural vibrancy and achieving self-sufficiency through the development of AIUla's arts and culture sectors

RCU champions the growth of AIUla's arts and culture sectors as vital sources of employment, in alignment with the UNESCO Framework, SDG 8: *Decent Work and Economic Growth*, SDG 10: *Reduced Inequality*, SDG 11: *Sustainable Cities and Communities*, Saudi Vision 2030, the Saudi National Transformation Programme, and RCU's Strategic Principle N.2: *Celebrate Heritage, Culture and Arts as a Global Destination*, and N.8: *Enable the Local Community*.



Surpassing an initial target of creating 66 new jobs in 2023, RCU successfully generated 96 positions within AIUla's arts and culture sectors. This accomplishment underscores the pivotal role of culture as a driver for economic growth and self-sufficiency. It aligns with the broader goals of Saudi Vision



Catwalk exhibition, a light show journey through the life of the Arabian leopard - Ashar Valley

2030, which highlights the arts and culture sector's importance in fostering economic diversification and supporting livelihoods.

Key initiatives, such as the Scholarships Programme, have been crucial in this achievement. This programme invests in AIUla's human capital by

sending students to prestigious international institutions to study disciplines including tourism, hospitality, history, arts, archaeology, museums,

architecture, and urban planning. These students return with valuable international insights that contribute to AIUla's cultural and economic development.

AIUla's culture and arts sector supports job creation through the development of major museums, such as the Museum of the Incense Road and the Contemporary Art Museum, which are currently underway.



Beyond job creation, our initiatives seek to enhance the cultural vibrancy of AIUla. The attendance of 150,000 visitors at cultural events and celebrations stands as a testament to this success. This influx of visitors not only boosted local and regional contributions to the Kingdom's economic growth but also enriched the cultural experience through increased tourism and engagement with cultural offerings.



Collectively, these efforts highlight the critical role of cultural development in achieving economic self-sufficiency and resilience.



**96**  
New jobs created



**150,000**  
Visitors at cultural events and celebrations



**2**  
Major museum initiatives launched



The culture and arts sector supports local arts & crafts ventures - AIUla



### KPIs



# of jobs generated from the Arts and Culture sectors

## RCU is committed to enhancing public participation and leveraging private contributions through impactful cultural initiatives and alliances

RCU emphasises cultural development through strategic public support and private sponsorship initiatives, aligning with the objectives of the UNESCO Framework, SDG 8: *Decent Work and Economic Growth*, SDG 10: *Reduced Inequality*, SDG 11: *Sustainable Cities and Communities*, SDG 17: *Partnerships for the Goals*, Saudi Vision 2030, and the Saudi National Transformation Programme. Guided by RCU's Strategic Principle N.2: *Celebrate Heritage, Culture and Arts as a Global Destination*, and Principle N.8: *Enable the Local Community*, our efforts promote AIUla's cultural sectors, encourage innovation and boost national pride.



Hosting a diverse array of cultural events and activities has stimulated economic diversification and the enhancement of societal wellbeing. We have championed numerous initiatives by hosting agriculture-themed



Various farmers markets across AIUla act as platforms that drive our vibrant economy and social fabric - AIManshiyah



events such as the AIUla Dates Festival, AIUla Citrus Festival, and the AIManshiyah Fresh Food Market. These events celebrated AIUla's rich agricultural heritage and provided local farmers with

opportunities to showcase and promote their products.

RCU-led sponsorships helped create jobs, promoted tourism, and fostered a sense of unity within the AIUla community. We

sponsored numerous cultural events throughout the year aimed at enriching the County's traditional identity. Examples of these events include the Winter at Tantora Festival, a highlight of the year, that featured a series

of concerts, art exhibitions, and traditional performances; the AIUla Skies Festival that offered breathtaking hot air balloon rides and astronomy events, connecting visitors with the region's natural beauty and celestial wonders;



AIUla Dates Exhibition - Riyadh

Through strategic investments and collaborative partnerships, RCU continues to position AIUla as a dynamic cultural hub

and the AIUla Wellness Festival that focused on holistic health and wellbeing, blending ancient healing traditions with modern practices through workshops and fitness sessions.

Support and sponsorship initiatives within the cultural sector demonstrate our dedication to positioning AIUla as a dynamic cultural hub.



AIUla farmers play a critical role in supporting our planting projects - AIUla's native plant nursery adjacent to Sharaan Nature Reserve



## RCU continues to enhance AIUla's international visibility and experience through innovative projects and global partnerships

RCU has strategically enhanced AIUla's tourism and heritage management, aligning with the UNESCO Framework, SDG 8: *Decent Work and Economic Growth*, SDG 10: *Reduced Inequality*, SDG 11: *Sustainable Cities and Communities*, SDG 17: *Partnerships for the Goals*, Saudi Vision 2030, the Saudi National Transformation Programme, and RCU's Strategic Principle N.2: *Celebrate Heritage, Culture and Arts as a Global Destination*, and N.8: *Enable the Local Community*.



Visitor satisfaction is a key indicator of successful tourism. Demonstrating exceptional stewardship and visitor engagement, AIUla achieved a visitor satisfaction rate at heritage sites of nearly 96%, surpassing the targeted 85%. Our initiatives focused on improving all aspects of the visitor experience - from the moment of arrival in AIUla to the time of departure.



RCU's team of guides are the cornerstone of visitor satisfaction at our heritage sites - Hegra

To amplify AIUla's cultural essence globally, we participated in four international forums, surpassing our initial target of three. Notable participations included the IUCN Leaders Forum in Geneva and the inaugural AIUla World Archaeology Summit 2023. These events highlighted RCU's strategic use of cultural diplomacy to showcase AIUla's rich arts and heritage, promote



**96%**  
Visitor satisfaction with Heritage Sites experience

global cultural exchanges, and enhance the visibility of Saudi Arabia's cultural identity.

Our international collaborations and cultural projects include initiatives such as enlisting Jabal Ikmah in UNESCO's Memory of the World Register and forming partnerships with prestigious institutions. One such institution is the Louvre Museum where a

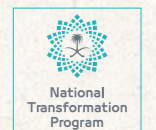
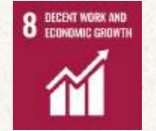


five-year agreement was signed to display a sculpture from the Lihyanite period. Another example is our collaboration with the city of Matera in southern Italy, known for its ancient cave dwellings and stunning panoramic views, providing opportunities for the people of AIUla and Matera to develop intercultural and interpersonal relationships. Additionally, RCU's partnership with the Université Paris 1 Panthéon-Sorbonne facilitates knowledge exchange, training, and research in cultural heritage conservation.

AIUla's historical richness and artistic diversity anchor it as a beacon of cultural heritage. We remain committed to enhancing its international profile and fostering a greater appreciation for Saudi Arabia's cultural legacy.



International cooperations boost AIUla's global visibility - Dubai



### KPIs



Visitor satisfaction with Heritage Sites experience



# of participations of local artistic, local art pieces or official representation in overseas arts and culture events, exhibitions, or festivals



# Social

**RCU's Social Dimension: Focusing on safeguarding the wellbeing of the AIUla community while promoting social justice, inclusivity, community engagement, and access to essential infrastructure**



Community engagement is at the heart of AlUla - the Old Town

**3**  
Pillars

**9**  
Topics

**12**  
KPIs

The Social dimension is composed of three pillars and nine topics, monitored through 12 KPIs.





## The health and wellbeing of the AIUla community and its visitors are important pillars of the Social dimension and strategic priorities for RCU

Building a vibrant society where living a healthy lifestyle can be realised is a key strategic pursuit for RCU. This aligns with global goals such as SDG 1: *No Poverty*, SDG 3: *Good Health and Wellbeing*, SDG 10: *Reduced Inequality*, alongside Saudi Vision 2030, and the Saudi National Transformation Programme.

We imagine AIUla as a community where every individual is at the heart of an inclusive, inspiring, and empowering environment. Prioritising both physical and mental health, we provide infrastructure and sport facilities to foster and sustain healthy lifestyles.

Our efforts to promote good health for the community and visitors are at various stages of development. Notably, we are advancing healthcare infrastructure through initiatives such as the Tharba Medical Centre, poised to become a beacon of healthcare excellence in the County. To date, we have launched initiatives to distribute medical tools and equipment to



Prince Abdulmuhsin Hospital - West of Al Aziziyah

those in need, in collaboration with reputable NGOs like Al Rawabi Health Centre. We have also led functional and aesthetic enhancements of existing healthcare facilities, including the Prince Abdulmuhsin Hospital and Health Care Centre in Shikrat and AlManshiyah.

In 2023, our efforts to enhance emergency response mechanisms took significant strides. Establishing the Public Safety Operations Centre and the Unified Security Operations Centre (911) marked a pivotal advancement. These centres, along with our air medical evacuation services, support

more swift and timely access to critical healthcare. Additionally, we formalised action frameworks with ambulance service providers, optimising emergency response protocols that resulted in an impressive emergency response time of six and a half minutes, surpassing our target of 16 minutes.

Emergency response timing of **6.5** minutes surpassing the targeted goal of 16 minutes

Our strategic initiatives also focused on nurturing the next generation of healthcare professionals. We launched an internship programme to provide aspiring practitioners with hands-on experience and skill development opportunities.

We also recognise the essential role of mental wellbeing and as such introduced the annual AIUla Wellness Festival.

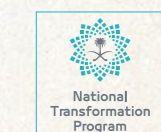
This festival celebrates holistic practices, utilising the serene beauty of AIUla's natural landscapes like the Harrat Viewpoint to foster inner peace, balance, and harmony.

Sport plays a vital role in fostering health and wellbeing in AIUla. We have curated a series of flagship international, national and local sporting events that encourage health and wellbeing. Among the distinguished events were:

- **AIUla Camel Cup:** a prestigious annual event celebrating the tradition of camel racing amidst the ancient landscapes of AIUla.
- **The Custodian of the Two Holy Mosques International Endurance Cup:** uniting equestrian enthusiasts from around the world in a 120 km endurance competition against the backdrop of AIUla's historic sites.
- **The AIUla Tent Pegging Championship:** highlights the skill and precision of riders as they compete in the traditional equestrian sport.



Collage of international and national events aimed to promote a healthy lifestyle for our people - AIUla



### KPIs



Targeted average response time for emergency situations in AIUla

## The health and wellbeing of the AIUla community and its visitors are important pillars of the Social dimension and strategic priorities for RCU

- **The AIUla Desert Blaze 2023:** hosted during peak summer, it tests the endurance of the very toughest of runners throughout AIUla in 5 km, 10 km, 21 km and 40 km races.
- **The AIUla Trail Race:** brings together running, heritage and nature for local, national and international athletes in five categories: 5 km, 10 km, 20 km, 50 km and 100 km races.

**Organised**  
a number  
of leading  
**international  
and national  
sporting  
events**  
linked to Saudi  
tradition and  
heritage

- **The World Cup for Horseback Archery:** where skilled archers showcase their prowess while riding at full gallop, held in Mughayra.
- **The Richard Mille AIUla Desert Polo:** beautifully combining the elegance of polo with AIUla's historic landscapes in Hegra.

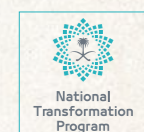


Horseback Archery is a deep-rooted Saudi Arabian tradition - Equestrian Village



- 1 AIUla Camel Cup
- 2 The Custodian of the Two Holy Mosques International Endurance Cup
- 3 AIUla International Tent Pegging Championship
- 4 The World Cup for Horseback Archery
- 5 Richard Mille AIUla Desert Polo
- 6 AIUla Desert Blaze 2023
- 7 AIUla Trail Race

Camel Cup Racetrack - Mughayra Heritage Sports Village



### KPIs



Targeted average response time for emergency situations in AIUla

## The health and wellbeing of the AIUla community and its visitors are important pillars of the Social dimension and strategic priorities for RCU

Other sport-related initiatives featured the activation of the Mahd Academy, dedicated to discovering and nurturing the next generation of Saudi sporting talent, with the aim of becoming one of the world's leading sports institutions. Leveraging this, we launched projects that enhanced local community participation in sports and boosted the potential for competitive sports. Such projects included establishing community sports infrastructure like volleyball and clay tennis courts, creating Mughayra Heritage Sports Village for hosting sporting events, and developing the Knights Village for Equestrians. Additionally, we have initiated community engagement programmes such as bicycle distribution and organised cycling tours.



AIUla is at the forefront of reviving heritage sports such as Horseback archery - Mughayra Heritage Sports Village



RCU also acquired the AIUla Football Club's sponsorship and partnered with the Saudi Camel Racing Federation to establish the first camel training centre in AIUla. These efforts aim to host global endurance competitions and offer a variety of engaging activities for residents and

tourists, bolstering AIUla's sports identity on regional, national, and global stages.

We are committed to enhancing the health and wellbeing of our employees and have

constructed an on-campus facility featuring a 350m running track, four sport courts including paddle and basketball, two gymnasiums, and two swimming pools. These sports facilities act as vibrant hubs

where RCU's staff can enjoy healthy recreational activities.

Whether through team sports, individual pursuits, or recreational activities, sport and recreation provide a

common ground for AIUla's residents, visitors and RCU staff. Through these initiatives, we are dedicated to cultivating a society where health and wellbeing are paramount.



State-of-the-art leisure and wellbeing facilities - RCU Campus



### KPIs



Targeted average response time for emergency situations in AIUla

## RCU is committed to providing AIUla's community and its visitors with an enhanced quality of life

RCU is dedicated to enhancing the quality of life in AIUla, in alignment with global goals such as SDG 3: *Good Health and Wellbeing* Goal 9: *Industry, Innovation and Infrastructure*, SDG 11: *Sustainable Cities and Communities*, Saudi Vision 2030, the Saudi National Transformation Programme, and RCU's Strategic Principles N.8: *Enable the Local Community*, N.10: *Integrate Invisible Security*, and N.11: *Design Safe and Healthy Environments within the Circular Economy*.



To achieve this vision, we have unveiled an ambitious urban development plan for the central and southern regions of AIUla (Master Plan 2), called "Path to Prosperity." This Master Plan focuses on developing both the people and the County, balancing economic prosperity with environmental sustainability and cultural preservation.



AIUla's theatrical plays and musical displays lie at the heart of culture and entertainment - the Cultural Oasis

A key aspect of this Master Plan is prioritising pedestrian-friendly infrastructure with improved metrics such as lengthening pedestrian paths per capita to 36.86 m, which surpassed our initial target of 28 m. These inviting spaces encourage exploration and engagement with AIUla's surroundings in less carbon-intensive ways.



A comprehensive set of initiatives prioritise safety and wellbeing within the community. One featured initiative seeks to reduce car accident fatalities. AIUla's car accident fatalities per 1,000 inhabitants stand at 0.32, outperforming the target of 0.35. The national average and the global average are 0.19 and 0.15, respectively. We acknowledge this as an area for improvement in the coming years.

Minimising public risks and maintaining a healthy environment are central to our community-shaping agenda. We are actively implementing

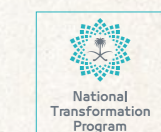
**"Path to Prosperity"**  
aims to foster simultaneous development of both the people and the County

safety measures in public health and safety management, such as managing hazardous areas, installing warning signs, and fencing construction sites to protect the public.

Improvements in essential services like healthcare, energy, and infrastructure management are contributing to the overall quality of life in AIUla, e.g., our focus on sanitation services has led to an increase in sanitation network coverage across the County of up to 10%, surpassing our initial target of 1%.



Community safe space for youth and entrepreneurial workshops - Vibes AIUla



### KPIs



Length of pedestrian paths per capita  
GRI 203-1



% of sanitation coverage to population



# of car accident fatalities per 1,000 inhabitants  
GRI 403-9



Resident satisfaction level



Satisfaction level with local regulations

## RCU is committed to providing AIUla's community and its visitors with an enhanced quality of life

We have adopted a multifaceted approach to urban development, sanitation improvement, safety enhancement, infrastructure investment, and job creation. This comprehensive strategy has contributed to a resident satisfaction level of 90%, surpassing our target of 86%. Additionally, the overall satisfaction with local regulations stands at 84%, exceeding the target of 66%, demonstrating our commitment to effective regulation, healthy governance, and fostering trust within the community. We will continue to engage with the community to improve livelihoods and wellbeing in the coming years.



RCU's ongoing partnership with the French Agency for AIUla Development (AfALULA) has brought several key projects to life. These include RATPDev's 360Mobility Plan, the Centre



Public realms - Cultural Oasis, east of AlJadidah

Pompidou's future Museum of Contemporary Art in AIUla, the idverde Group's sustainable landscaping projects, and the FERRANDI Paris establishment of a culinary arts, hotel management, and tourism training college. These projects

lay the foundation for further innovation and improved quality of life.

Beyond infrastructure enhancements, we also support local economic and social development projects

that prioritise job creation and human capital development. Initiatives like Vibes AIUla, an entrepreneurship platform, activate and enable AIUla's entrepreneurial ecosystem through mentorship. By increasing employment



opportunities, we empower local businesses and contribute to community prosperity and wellbeing.



Residents and visitors enjoying AIUla's local coffee shops and amenities - the Old Town



### KPIs



Length of pedestrian paths per capita  
GRI 203-1



% of sanitation coverage to population



# of car accident fatalities per 1,000 inhabitants  
GRI 403-9



Resident satisfaction level



Satisfaction level with local regulations

## RCU is committed to improving social advancement and reducing poverty

AlUla's population stands at 41,740, with women accounting for 45% (18,783 individuals) and youth constituting 58% (24,209 individuals). Individuals with disabilities account for 6.05% (2,527 individuals) of the population. Recognising the importance of inclusivity, RCU is addressing poverty through targeted initiatives aimed at empowering vulnerable segments and beneficiaries of social security (4,865 individuals). These initiatives align with the goals of SDG 1: *No Poverty*, SDG 10: *Reduced Inequality*, Saudi Vision 2030, the Saudi National Transformation Programme and RCU's Strategic Principle N.8: *Enable the Local Community*.



Median monthly income per capita is a key metric for measuring economic wellbeing. Both nationally and within the County, addressing income inequality is paramount to improving living standards



Education is key to poverty alleviation and sustainable development - AlFaris International School



Our youth are key to shaping our future – AlJadidah

and advancing sustainable development. Currently, the median monthly income per capita in AlUla is 6,581 SAR. By targeting economic development and job creation, we aim to uplift income levels across all segments of the population. Our vision emphasises the importance

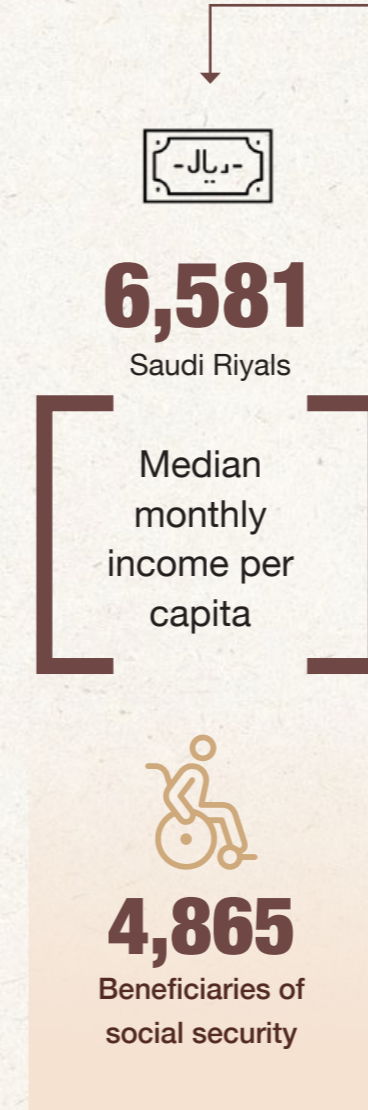
of inclusive growth, ensuring economic opportunities are accessible to residents across the County.

Our strategy focuses on localised economic development, stimulating economic growth, and enhancing income opportunities

by leveraging AlUla's unique cultural and natural heritage. This involves investments in tourism, infrastructure, and other sectors that can create jobs, promote social equality, and drive economic prosperity.

As we grow, it will be critical to maintain affordability. We

are developing an affordability roadmap to tackle critical concepts such as poverty and employment for the local population. By concentrating on these key areas, we aim to enhance the quality of life for residents and make economic opportunities equal and accessible within the community.



Economic prosperity fueled by a vibrant market place of local and artisanal shops - the Old Town



### KPIs



Median monthly income per capita  
GRI 203-2

## RCU is set on empowering AIUla's communities by ensuring access to social and municipal services

With a vision rooted in state-of-the-art infrastructure, sustainability, and citizen-centric services, RCU is transforming the landscape of accessibility and inclusivity in AIUla. Through ongoing planning and implementation, the Commission aims to ensure that roads, utility services, telecommunications, supporting infrastructure and public spaces, made available to the entire community, blend in with surrounding landscapes, minimally impacting AIUla's social and natural environment. This aligns with the goals of SDG 1: *No Poverty*, SDG 10: *Reduced Inequality*, Saudi Vision 2030, the Saudi National Transformation Programme, and RCU's Strategic Principle N.8: *Enable the Local Community*.

To provide residents with full access to essential municipal services, we have leveraged AI and big data. We are in the process of automating municipal services to streamline access and provide procedural transparency throughout service delivery.



Through interactive storytelling, AI will play a crucial role in our digital transformation - COP28 Dubai

**89.90%**  
Digital transformation score

- 1 Blended infrastructure design
- 2 Digital transformation
- 3 Smart and cognitive technologies
- 4 Automated services

RCU's digital transformation score increased from 87.55% to 89.90% in 2023. This positions RCU amongst the top three economic and development entities in the Kingdom, reflecting our commitment to innovation and our ability to promote digital transformation while contributing to the development of digital governance.

In addition to municipal advancements, social services are of equal importance to community satisfaction. Well-designed public spaces and facilities are central to AIUla's community development efforts. These realms are integrated and programmed to maximise community use, promoting active lifestyles and fostering a sense of belonging and inclusivity. They provide safe, physical environments for locals and tourists to meet, share, and enjoy communal activities. Whether it's telecommunications, waste management, water services, or energy, we seek to align with international standards and best practice to exceed residents' expectations.

To ensure equitable access to services and programmes, barriers - whether physical, environmental, economic, social or cultural - must be minimised. Our approach involves continuous assessment and improvement of service accessibility to support social advancement.

Complementing these efforts, NGOs play a vital role in empowering marginalised communities by providing resources and skills to improve quality of life. Through vocational training, microfinance initiatives, and community development projects, NGOs are helping enable individuals to become self-sufficient and active participants in AIUla's society. As such, we aim to increase the presence of NGOs in AIUla, targeting a ratio of one NGO per 1,000 residents.

We are committed to enhancing services access for our community, supporting every resident in benefiting from our comprehensive development initiatives.



## RCU is devoted to enhancing diversity and inclusion both within the Commission and AIUla's community

Diversity and Inclusion are foundational components for RCU, aligning with SDG 5: Gender Equality, SDG 10: Reduced Inequality, Saudi Vision 2030, the Saudi National Transformation Programme, and RCU's Strategic Principle N.8: *Enable the Local Community*. We acknowledge the richness of perspectives and experiences that come from embracing individuals of varied backgrounds, cultures, and identities.

With a workforce totalling 1,245 employees spanning 44 nationalities, of which 30% are women and 79% are Saudi nationals, RCU strives for diversity, gender empowerment and inclusivity, cultivating an environment where all individuals can thrive and contribute to AIUla's prosperity. RCU has prioritised supporting all members of AIUla's community, regardless of gender or background, aiming to provide equal opportunities to participate in, and benefit from, its transformation.

RCU has achieved a Full-Time Equivalent (FTE) hire of 108%,



Women in AIUla are a key driver in the community's growing workforce - the Old Town

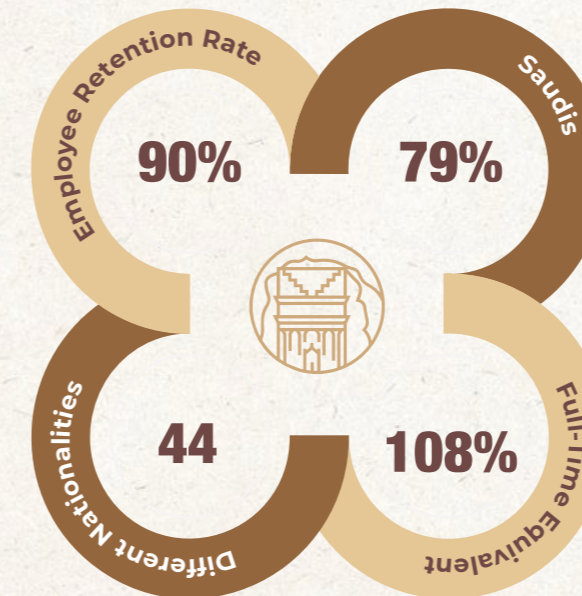
outperforming our initial target of 90%, a reflection on our efficient workforce planning and resource utilisation. Providing ample employment opportunities is important to us and signifies our emphasis on

cultivating a skilled, productive, and satisfied workforce. Our dedication to employee welfare is further demonstrated through an employee retention rate of 90%, surpassing our target of 78%.



**30%**  
Female workforce  
in RCU

**1,245** Employees



Orange farming initiatives led by AIUla's women - Daimumah in the Cultural Oasis

Essential to maintaining operational excellence, we strive to nurture a strong organisational culture supported by a workforce motivated by ongoing professional development opportunities.

The percentage of AIUla's women participating in the labour market serves as a barometer for societal advancement and economic vitality within the County.



### KPIs



% of FTEs hired vs planned amount in RCU  
GRI 401-1



Employee Retention Rate



% of women's participation in the labour market



## RCU is devoted to enhancing diversity and inclusion both within the Commission and AIUla's community

As AIUla experiences a naissance in tourism, heritage preservation, and sustainable development, women participating in the workforce becomes increasingly important. At a rate of 35%, in line with the national rate (35.9%), the participation of women in AIUla's labour market signifies efforts made towards inclusivity and gender equality,

with aspirations to further improve this percentage in the coming years.

The Social Habilitation Centre in AIUla, currently under construction, is a groundbreaking project aimed at integrating individuals with disabilities into supportive communities. The Centre encompasses a vast area of

20,000 m<sup>2</sup> and comprises three distinct buildings: the Early Childhood Education and Therapeutic Centre, and two separate Adult Training and Vocational Habilitation Centres for men and women. In addition to indoor state-of-the-art facilities, the Centre also features dedicated outdoor spaces for after-school activities and training,

supporting a holistic approach to development and integration. With its comprehensive range of services, this project addresses the diverse needs of people with disabilities, providing them with opportunities for growth, learning, and social engagement. Notably, this project holds the distinction of being the second largest of its kind in the Kingdom.



RCU's Executive Leadership Team Training (2023) - Riyadh

Promoting ongoing professional development opportunities in a **supportive work environment**



Bolstering morale



Encouraging growth



Driving innovation



Fostering collaboration



The **Social Habilitation Centre** helps individuals with disabilities integrate into supportive communities



spanning a vast area of **20,000 m<sup>2</sup>**



Fostering community-led initiatives and a venue for exploration - Maraya Concert Hall



### KPIs



% of FTEs hired vs planned amount in RCU  
GRI 401-1



Employee Retention Rate



% of women's participation in the labour market

## RCU is committed to empowering AIUla's community through advancing inclusive education

In alignment with SDG 4: Quality Education, SDG 5: Gender Equality, SDG 10: Reduced Inequality, Saudi Vision 2030, the Saudi National Transformation Programme, and RCU's Strategic Principle N.8: *Enable the Local Community*, we prioritise the educational needs of both youth (representing 58% of AIUla's population) and persons with disabilities (representing 6.05% of AIUla's population). This priority recognises the role which inclusive education plays in strengthening and empowering AIUla's youth and persons with disabilities in inclusive environments. By fostering a more united community where diversity is embraced, each individual has the chance to flourish academically and socially.

We have adopted and sponsored various educational and capacity-building initiatives to enhance and empower local skills and competencies, addressing the needs of the labour market in promoting educational advancement in AIUla. Key initiatives include the



State-of-the-art educational facilities - AlFaris International School

third phase of the Hammayah Programme, the AIUla Scholarships Programme, and the Education Development Programme carried-out in partnership with the Ministry of Education.

The Hammayah Programme is a community advocacy and engagement initiative that has engaged 1,400 leaders and participants,

providing 2,500 employment opportunities for the people of AIUla. By encouraging AIUla locals to become stewards of the County's cultural and natural heritage, this programme increases community engagement and empowerment.



Inclusive education to empower our community – AlFaris International School

## Hammayah programme



**2,500**  
Employment opportunities thanks to Hammayah

**1,400**  
Leaders and participants attended organised workshops

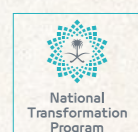
The AIUla Scholarship Programme, has facilitated the enrollment of 69 graduates and facilitated access for 747 students to 117 prestigious international institutions across various countries. By strategically selecting field of studies that resonate with AIUla's future vision, we aim to equip AIUla's youth with the knowledge and skills necessary to support its growth and prosperity upon completing their studies.

The Education Development Programme, developed in collaboration with the Ministry of Education, aims to enhance AIUla's overall public education ecosystem. Providing professional development programmes to over 350 of AIUla's Education Department employees, the programme also features vocational training through a collaboration with the Colleges of Excellence based in Riyadh. This approach contributes to the growth of both students and educators.

Our collaborations extend to the Education and Training

Evaluation Commission, aiming to elevate AIUla's quality of education and school performance. Partnerships with the AlFaris International School and the Social Habilitation Centre help establish an education unit for individuals with disabilities, ensuring no one is left behind.

Investments in educational infrastructure include refurbishing and expanding kindergartens to accommodate AIUla's growing population. As an example, the first phase of developing and improving our educational transportation system included upgrading our school bus system, which consisted of modernising a fleet of 74 school buses, equipping each bus with an Automatic Vehicle Location (AVL) system. The AVL system monitors vehicle speed and location through Global Positioning System (GPS) satellite signals, offering parents visibility on bus arrivals and safety in real-time. Furthermore, upgraded school buses now have easily identifiable logos, photography, and branding on their exterior.



## RCU is committed to empowering AIUla's community through advancing inclusive education

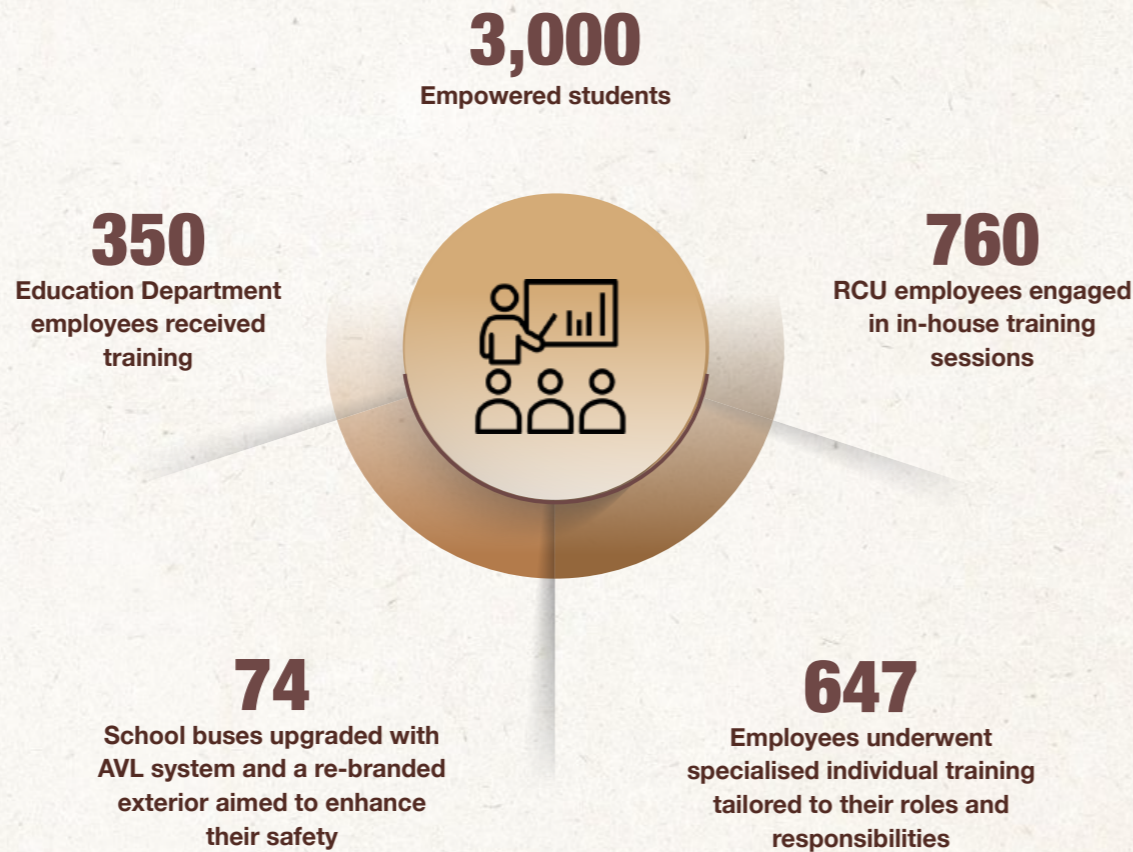
Our training initiatives demonstrate our emphasis on nurturing the skills and expertise of our workforce. Comprehensive training programmes cover a broad spectrum of competencies and disciplines, featuring targeted sessions by leading specialists.

In 2023 alone, 647 employees underwent specialised training tailored to their roles, with 760 employees completing in-house training sessions.



To support employee development, we established a Learning and Development Policy, outlining controls, rules, and standards essential for employee growth. This Policy promotes a culture of continuous improvement and institutional growth by providing clarity and consistency in learning interventions, from enrollment criteria to programme controls.

Our commitment to employee development and cultural education supports a current and future workforce equipped with the knowledge and skills needed to achieve AIUla's ambitious objectives.



The Hammayah Programme Annual Event - Riyadh



MoU signing between RCU and RAFED to upgrade AIUla school buses - Jabal Aifil



Educating visitors and bystanders at the Saudi Green Initiative Pavilion - COP28 Dubai



## A number of events have been organised by RCU to enhance community engagement and promote social development

Community engagement is a cornerstone of social development, driving both residents' and tourists' satisfaction, in alignment with SDG 3: *Good Health and Wellbeing*, SDG 8: *Decent Work and Economic Growth*, SDG 11: *Sustainable Cities and Communities*, SDG 16: *Peace, Justice, and Strong Institutions*, Saudi Vision 2030, the Saudi National Transformation Programme, and RCU's Strategic Principle N.8: *Enable the Local Community*.

Nineteen community-centric events were organised in 2023, surpassing the initial target of 18. These events spanned sports, culture, and heritage, offering various platforms for community engagement and cultural exchange. A selection of these is described further below.

Hands-on historical tours are offered to tourists and residents, providing immersive experiences of AIUla's culture and traditions. These tours journeyed participants between the Old and New Town and the



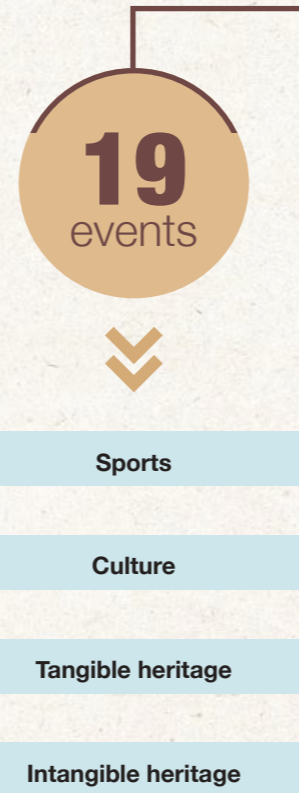
Celebrating KSA Founding Day in the heart of AIUla - the Cultural Oasis

Cultural Oasis, On the special occasion of the Kingdom's National Day, we hosted seven events featuring the talents of Nabati and other classical poets, showcasing AIUla's cultural tapestry and living traditions.

Seasonal programmes organised with the community included: the AIUla Arts Festival, the Ancient Kingdoms Festival, and the Tantora Winter Festival. Each festival, with its unique focus and theme, showcased AIUla's

heritage and natural beauty, drawing viewers to engage with the community and tourists from around the world, thus promoting social cohesion and cultural pride. The AIUla Arts Festival presents cutting-edge exhibitions, artworks

and creative workshops in AIUla's natural landscapes. The Ancient Kingdoms Festival is a celebration of legends and legacies delivering mesmerising experiences in the landscapes that have made history.



Founding Day celebrations showcase the community coming together and celebrating the Kingdom's rich tradition - the Cultural Oasis



**KPIs**  
# of calendar events

## A number of events have been organised by RCU to enhance community engagement and promote social development



Community youth celebrations during annual festivities - Daimumah in the Cultural Oasis

Named after the ancient sundial in AIUla that marks the start of the winter season, **Tantora Winter Festival** has been celebrated for centuries by the local community to mark the winter solstice.

**Eid al-Adha** emphasised the importance of compassion and giving back to the community. In the spirit of sacrifice, AIUla's community participated in charitable acts by donating food, money, or clothing to

those in need. Similarly, we organised the distribution of 350 gifts, spreading joy and camaraderie, and celebrated the renovation of the Sa'id Mosque.

To foster collaboration and support local entrepreneurs, we organised the **Anwar AIUla event**, which illuminated AIUla's skies and cultural assets. Over 20,000 visitors participated in 14 organised sub-events, with overall event-generated sales totalling 11,000 SAR, directly benefited over 50 participating local families.

**Founding Day** celebrations brought together more than 19,000 visitors and local families, immersing them in a variety of engaging activities such as the sales of traditional attire, culinary delights, poetry and musical festivities. With the rising popularity of AIUla's trade and industry, events like this one provide an important avenue for local businesses to share their products, increase popularity, form social connections, and engage in a surge of economic activity.



Catwalk exhibition, a light show celebrating the life of the Arabian leopard - Ashar Valley

We hosted the **Arabian Leopard Week**, celebrating the Arabian leopard, which is rare and indigenous to AIUla and critically endangered according to the IUCN. Through supporting sub-events such as the digital exhibition and the celebration trail in AIUla's Sharaan Nature Reserve, we showcased the beauty and vulnerability of the Arabian leopard and our plans to help recover the species in AIUla.

The various events held in 2023 demonstrate the importance of cultural celebration and community engagement in AIUla. These initiatives create lasting memories that both residents and visitors can share with the world, ensuring that AIUla remains a thriving hub of community spirit and social development.



The AIUla Skies Festival against a backdrop of ancient mountains - Hegra



### KPIs



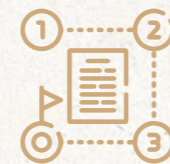
# of calendar events

## RCU is committed to enhancing access to information and promoting a more transparent regulatory system



Upholding institutional transparency through public events - Future Investment Initiative in Riyadh

Access to information is a fundamental component of social advancement, fostering transparency, trust, and collaboration within the community. RCU will advance these aspects in alignment with SDG 16: *Peace, Justice, and Strong Institutions*, Saudi Vision 2030, the Saudi National Transformation Programme, and RCU's Strategic Principle N.12: *Embed Resilience*.



The performance score for measuring the transparency of a regulatory framework considers regulatory compliance processes, internal standards and codes of conduct, as well as transparency and reporting. RCU's performance score stands at 0.81, surpassing the targeted 0.65.

To further enhance access to information, we implemented several initiatives aimed at making regulatory processes

more transparent and inclusive. These initiatives provide stakeholders with easy access to information, fostering a culture of openness where individuals can rely on the integrity and fairness of AIUla's institutions.



Digital platforms and technologies enable residents to easily access regulatory documents, participate in consultations, and provide feedback on various initiatives. Our digital transformation enhances civic engagement, making it easier for the community to stay informed and involved in AIUla's development.

Transparency, continuous improvement, and a model of open governance support the social advancement of AIUla, nurturing a resilient, inclusive, and well-informed community.



RCU Tribe attending seminars at the Town Hall Gathering - Maraya Concert Hall



RCU's performance score for measuring the transparency level of its regulatory system stands at **0.81**, ahead of target **0.65**



### KPIs



Transparency level of regulatory system  
GRI 2-26

## RCU is developing a number of national and international partnerships to exchange best practices and acquire expertise

The Commission seeks meaningful partnerships, both locally and internationally, to elevate AIUla's stature as global destination, in alignment with SDG 17: *Partnerships for the Goals*, Saudi Vision 2030, and the Saudi National Transformation Programme.



Concerted efforts to preserve AIUla's cultural heritage and natural environment require the assembly of a comprehensive network of global partnerships, each bringing a unique angle and specific resources to the table. By exchanging best practices, expertise, and innovative ideas, these partnerships leverage our collective strengths, tackling complex challenges and seizing sustainable growth opportunities. Among these partners are international organisations such as UNESCO, ICOMOS, IUCN, and the World Bank, all sharing our commitment to AIUla's cultural



Saudi Arabian ICOMOS building - the Old Town

preservation, nature-based protection, and sustainable development.

RCU's partnership with UNESCO leverages cross-organisational expertise in cultural preservation and sustainable cultural tourism

practices. So far, this collaboration has resulted in the designation of two UNESCO World Heritage Sites in AIUla: Jabal Ikmah and Hegra. These designations showcase their universal value and protect and preserve the sites for current and future generations.

The ICOMOS partnership involves capacity building, awareness-raising, and the provision of technical support for heritage conservation. This partnership also extends to the protection of AIUla's archaeological monuments and cultural treasures.

The conservation of AIUla's natural ecosystems and wildlife is supported through our partnership with IUCN.



These collaborations are instrumental in safeguarding AIUla's cultural heritage



Artists from all over the world come to AIUla to exhibit their work - Wadi AlFann



## RCU is developing a number of national and international partnerships to exchange best practices and acquire expertise

This collaboration aims to protect biodiversity, sustainably manage AIUla's natural resources, and engage local communities in conservation. Initiatives in AIUla's conservation space gained traction after related partnerships with Space for Giants and Panthera, specifically targeting the Arabian leopard and other key native species.

The World Bank's partnership with RCU is designed to promote comprehensive economic, social, and environmental development in AIUla. Through this alliance, we have received and exchanged access to global best practices and frameworks for sustainable tourism development, emphasising socio-environmental development.

Our collaboration with the French government and esteemed institutions such as the Louvre Museum, Centre Pompidou, and Université Paris 1 Panthéon-Sorbonne, has been central to the scope of



Exchanging best practice drives our international collaborations - The Louvre (Paris)

our international engagements. These partnerships serve to elevate AIUla's cultural and sustainable tourism, supporting us in managing AIUla's assets responsibly. Notable achievements include the establishment of the Hegra Villa Foundation Board of

Trustees, and the creation of AIAtheeb Equestrian Village. The AfALULA initiative harnesses French expertise across various sectors, embodying a cooperative development model that prioritises environmental preservation and community involvement.

The partnership with the Italian city of Matera, that, involves an array of international cultural exchanges and cooperative development frameworks. Leveraging the similarities between AIUla and Matera, this partnership has supported the exchange of knowledge



**Our IUCN partnership focuses on conserving AIUla's natural ecosystems**

in tourism management, community engagement, and heritage conservation, demonstrating how cultural heritage can be a catalyst for economic development and prosperity.

Our strategic partnerships, each with a specific focus, contribute to the multifaceted development of AIUla, ensuring growth is balanced with cultural preservation, environmental sustainability, and community welfare.



Conserving and sharing AIUla's heritage worldwide with our esteemed partners - The Louvre (Paris)







# Economic

## RCU's Economic Dimension: Supporting long-term economic growth through development factors\* and human capital to promote financial sustainability



Local fruits and vegetable store in the traditional marketplace - the Old Town



\*Development factors include: technology, infrastructure, education, natural resources, trade, entrepreneurship, and the regulatory environment

The Economic dimension is composed of three pillars and nine topics, monitored through 20 KPIs.



## RCU is dedicated to supporting the transformation of AIUla through the growth of its tourism industry

RCU is committed to transforming AIUla into a thriving tourism hub, fostering sustainable development. This aligns with the UNESCO Framework, GSTC global standards, and various SDGs including Decent Work and Economic Growth (SDG 8), *Industry, Innovation and Infrastructure* (SDG 9), and *Sustainable Cities and Communities* (SDG 11). These efforts are part of Saudi Vision 2030 and RCU's Strategic Principle N.5: *Develop Light Touch Tourism*.

Our array of sport, cultural, film production, and entertainment events, as well as our diverse activities supplementing AIUla's unique touristic offering have contributed to an increase in AIUla's appeal and attractiveness, reporting a Net Promoter Score (NPS) of 68 against the industry average of 30 and our target score of 38. As the County's allure captivates audiences worldwide, AIUla's cinematic charm continues to draw inspiration from around the globe, with 26 films produced across the County, eclipsing our 2023 target of 19.



Moments from international and national film production sets - across AIUla

We have scheduled an array of international and national **sports, arts, cultural, film, and entertainment** events



AIUla is a destination with a unique portfolio of resorts that combine luxurious hospitality with increasingly-sustainable tourism practices, attracting 265,429 visitors annually. This surpassed our target of 250,000 visitors for 2023, with off-season tourism accounting for a notable 36.7% of total visits. We anticipate a robust year-over-year growth rate of 16% in visitors. Accommodating this rise in popularity, 693 hotel rooms are spread across unique resorts like Our Habitas AIUla, Shaden Resort, Banyan Tree AIUla, Sahary AIUla Resort, and Cloud7 Residence.

Merging tourism and heritage is reflected in both established hospitality offerings as well as those underway, notable examples include:

- **Our Habitas AIUla:** a luxurious eco-friendly resort offering immersive cultural experiences amidst AIUla's desert landscapes.
- **Shaden Resort:** a premium desert retreat offering elegant accommodations and panoramic views of the surrounding sandstone mountains.
- **Banyan Tree AIUla:** offering elegant villas with private pools and stunning views of the Ashar Valley, this resort provides a blend of wellness and cultural experiences amidst AIUla's landscapes.



Captivating views of AIUla's natural landscape with modern amenities - Our Habitas AIUla

**265,429**  
Visitors in 2023



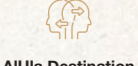
### KPIs



# of hotel rooms  
GRI 201



AIUla Positive Sentiment indicator  
GRI 203-2



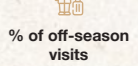
AIUla Destination Awareness  
GRI 203-2



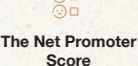
# of visits per year  
GRI 203-2



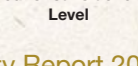
# of films produced in AIUla  
GRI 203-2



% of off-season visits  
GRI 203-2



The Net Promoter Score



Tourist Satisfaction Level

## RCU is committed to support the transformation of AIUla through the enhancement of the tourism industry

- **Dar Tantara The House Hotel:** situated in a renovated section of the Old Town, it demonstrates AIUla's dedication to sustainably preserving heritage while providing modern comforts. The mudbrick buildings in this special part of the Old Town have been meticulously restored into boutique-style accommodation. Set to open at full capacity in 2024.

Unlike the previously mentioned heritage sites satisfaction levels, the overall tourist satisfaction in AIUla stands at 94%, as determined by satisfaction surveys. This surpasses our 75% target. Additionally, AIUla achieved a 79% positive sentiment indicator, outperforming our target of 31% for 2023.

Building on these achievements, we are advancing AIUla's global brand campaign to target a 41% awareness rate across 12 key markets.



Dar Tantara The House Hotel, blending heritage with modern luxury, set to fully open in 2024 - the Old Town

As we look forward, we are preparing to unveil various hospitality offerings:

**Sharaan Resort**  
**Chedi Hegra Boutique Hotel**



**26**  
Films produced



**693**  
Hotel rooms



**94%**  
Overall tourist satisfaction levels



AIUla's hospitality offerings combine exploration and comfort - Banyan Tree AIUla



### KPIs



# of hotel rooms  
GRI 201



AIUla Positive Sentiment indicator  
GRI 203-2



AIUla Destination Awareness  
GRI 203-2



# of visits per year  
GRI 203-2



# films produced in AIUla  
GRI 203-2



% of off-season visits  
GRI 203-2



The Net Promoter Score



Tourist Satisfaction Level

## RCU is committed to driving long-term value creation through economic diversification and innovation

Our contribution to economic diversification drives local and regional opportunities for long-term value creation to support AIUla's economic, social and heritage goals, in alignment with the UNESCO Framework, GStC global standards, SDG 8: *Decent Work and Economic Growth*, SDG 9: *Industry, Innovation and Infrastructure*, SDG 11: *Sustainable Cities and Communities*, Saudi Vision 2030, the Saudi National Transformation Programme, and RCU's Strategic Principle N.5: *Develop Light Touch Tourism*.

The tourism sector has been central to our transformation, generating 7,787 jobs, directly and through affiliated, supporting sectors. We have performed better than expected, exceeding our 2023 job creation target of 1,980, as well as our 2035 tourism-specific job creation target of 2,512.

A healthy and diverse economic ecosystem requires understanding market demands and engaging with the community. Built upon social, economic, and ecological

principles, our strategic roadmap will drive AIUla's development and tourism, supporting the Kingdom's efforts to diversify beyond oil. This strategy comprises three main elements: tourism, heritage, and nature; local community; and economic diversification.

Our diversification efforts have generated a cumulative value adding GDP of 7 billion SAR in 2023. While this figure represents a significant milestone, it fell short of our ambitious target to generate 39.6 billion SAR. Given this gap, we have made adjustments with short- and long-term alterations to our strategy for the coming years. For example, enhancing infrastructure to support emerging solutions, promoting educational and vocational training programmes, and encouraging research and development initiatives that align with our sustainability goals.

We introduced the Opportunities Platform, a space that bridges local business owners with



potential beneficiaries. Additionally, we launched the Cloud Services Project, which will provide smart services to AIUla's community, visitors, and investors, and transfer data and AI know-how to create skilled jobs.

Our commitment to economic diversification and innovation is reflected in our ongoing efforts to attract investment and promote entrepreneurship. We have streamlined regulatory processes and provided support for local businesses, fostering an environment conducive to innovation and growth.



Bridging culture and art across generations in AIUla's public realm - Daimumah in the Cultural Oasis



Virtual reality showcasing AIUla's CO<sub>2</sub> reduction efforts - COP28 Dubai

### Fostering innovation



Opportunities Platform



Cloud Services Project



Local entrepreneurs are an important element to economic diversification – La Pazzia, a seasonal coffee house in AlJadidah

### KPIs



# of jobs generated by the tourism sector  
GRI 203-2



Cumulative # of jobs generated by other non-tourism sectors  
GRI 203-2



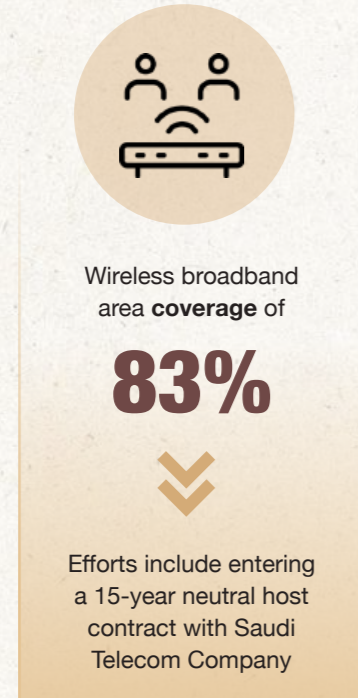
Cumulative value added (GDP) from other non-tourism sectors  
GRI 203-2

## RCU is devoted to enhancing connective infrastructure in support of AIUla's local community and tourism industry, for long-term value creation

In alignment with SDG 9: *Industry, Innovation and Infrastructure*, SDG 11: *Sustainable Cities and Communities*, Saudi Vision 2030, and the Saudi Transformation Programme, RCU's target of improving government effectiveness and enhancing AIUla's connective infrastructure and services is driven by RCU's Strategic Principles N.6: *Ensure Subtle Connectivity and Accessibility*.

Recognising the role of communication networks in spurring innovation and enhancing the overall touristic experience and resident quality of life, proactive measures have been undertaken to drive continuous improvement, as evidenced by achieving a wireless broadband area coverage of 83%.

We are advancing the telecommunications infrastructure for AIUla by signing a 15-year neutral host agreement with Saudi Telecom Company (STC). This initiative includes deploying fibre optics infrastructure across AIUla,



involving the construction of phased underground tunnels with fibre cables. This will facilitate the transition to advanced fibre connectivity across the County, maximising communications benefits for residents, businesses, and visitors alike.



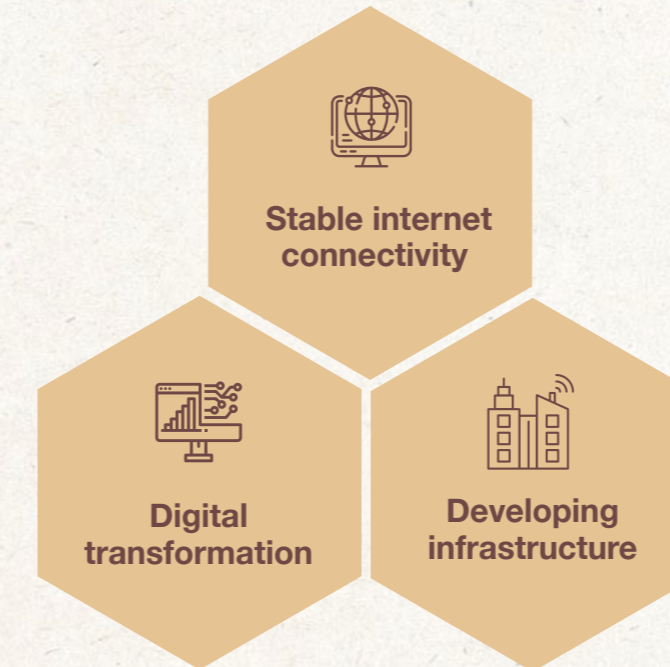
AIUla's community enjoys wide-reaching network coverage across the County - AlJadidah

TAWAL is undertaking the design, build, and construction of consolidated telecom infrastructure in the County. TAWAL's work will redefine mobile connectivity through a unified tower infrastructure

initiative throughout AIUla. This initiative will streamline service provision and minimise redundant infrastructure investments. Furthermore, initiatives such as the Continuous Update (CU) and the Metaverse

Activations Project, are redefining our digital maturity through digital transformation and advancing digital infrastructure.

### Enhancing infrastructure



Telecom towers camouflaged as rocks - Ashar Valley

#### KPIs

% of wireless broadband coverage  
GRI 203-1

## RCU is committed to diversifying the economy and promoting entrepreneurship in accordance with Saudi Vision 2030

RCU is empowering individuals and MSMEs in AIUla to transform their ideas into tangible ventures, in alignment with SDG 8: *Decent Work and Economic Growth*, SDG 9: *Industry, Innovation and Infrastructure*, SDG 11: *Sustainable Cities and Communities*, Saudi Vision 2030, the Saudi National Transformation Programme, and Strategic Principle N.8: *Enable the Local Community*, enhancing productivity and competitiveness.

AIUla experienced significant growth in its entrepreneurial landscape, with 336 new MSMEs opening up in 2023. These ventures comprise event management services, hotel apartments, handmade candles, honey production, local arts and crafts, souvenirs, food and beverage (F&B) outlets, media production, and travel agencies. This was double the 2023 target set at 165 new MSMEs.

AIUla's 2023 MSMEs were distributed across various categories and sizes.



Local startups and entrepreneurs are an important element to economic diversification - the Cultural Oasis



**Entrepreneurship** empowers individuals to transform ideas into tangible ventures, enhancing productivity and competitiveness

Of the 336 new MSMEs: 245 were classified as micro-enterprises, representing the majority; 79 were classified as small enterprises; and 12 were classified as medium enterprises.

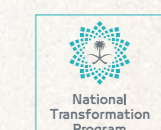
Promoting MSMEs is key to transforming the economy, empowering local entrepreneurs and creating jobs in various sectors. We have been tracking the performance of 556 MSMEs over the past three years, surpassing our target of tracking 213 MSMEs for 2023, and on course to track 285 by 2035. This growth can be attributed

to the strategic interventions made to foster and facilitate the expansion of MSMEs in AIUla.

The establishment of Vibes AIUla, an entrepreneurship platform, has made impacts in activating and boosting AIUla's entrepreneurial ecosystem. By providing shared mentorship, programmes, services, and office spaces, Vibes AIUla has trained approximately 80 entrepreneurs in a range of first-step business principles and helped 60 micro- and small businesses foster investment and partnership agreements.



Entrepreneurial packaging products made by Daimumah locals - the Cultural Oasis



### KPIs



# of active MSMEs for 3 years or more in AIUla

GRI 201-1



# of new MSMEs in AIUla

GRI 201-1

## RCU is committed to diversifying the economy and promoting entrepreneurship in accordance with Saudi Vision 2030

Fifteen of those businesses have received deep-dive support as they evolve into newly strengthened entities. We expect approximately 700 individuals to engage with the MSME initiation process and 45 enterprises to receive enhancements to their business skills in the coming phases.



Furthermore, Vibes AIUla's programme nurtured 42 profitable businesses within AIUla's ecosystem, 22 of which were newly launched during the programme and 23 of which were founded by women. Vibes AIUla helped generate 13.4 million SAR in revenue in 2023, with 24% of participating businesses securing their first revenue stream directly through the programme. Additionally, the hub led to the creation of 198 new local job opportunities, the launching of 154 new products and the establishment of 246 partnerships.



Saudi nationals form the backbone of AIUla's economy - the Cultural Oasis

**45**  
MSMEs were selected to receive enhancements to their business skills in the coming year



Six key sectors in AIUla are benefiting from Vibes AIUla's contribution. These are:

### Number of MSMEs established per sector

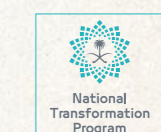
- Hospitality & Tourism: Eight MSMEs, with 237 accommodation spaces created**
- Agriculture: Four MSMEs, with 41 agricultural products being locally sourced and produced**
- Film & Media: Two MSMEs, with 60 projects in film and media completed**
- Food & Beverage Services: 17 MSMEs**
- Art & Culture: 23 MSMEs, with 62 cultural products created and sold across the Kingdom**
- Sports: Five MSMEs, including three equestrian farms**



AIUla Peregrina Trading stands poised to redefine cosmetics using AIUla's abundant natural resources - Hegra

These MSMEs have expanded their reach and driven revenue growth through local, regional, and international partnerships. For example, among key international partners, is the MENA e-commerce giant, Noon, that has partnered with three of Vibes AIUla's MSMEs. Furthermore, Vibes AIUla

joined forces with TikTok to organise workshops that offer comprehensive insights into the platform's potential for businesses. As a result, MSMEs were equipped with actionable strategies to elevate their online visibility, expand their customer reach and grow their revenues.



### KPIs



# of active MSMEs for 3 years or more in AIUla

GRI 201-1



# of new MSMEs in AIUla

GRI 201-1



## RCU is committed to diversifying the economy and promoting entrepreneurship in accordance with Saudi Vision 2030

Vibes AIUla continues to play a fundamental role in helping MSMEs integrate into the broader ecosystem through a series of activities and post-programme support events. Within the framework of a partnership with the AIUla Camel Cup 2023, eight SMEs showcased their culinary products and delights during race events. Additionally, Vibes AIUla helped organise five community events facilitating MSMEs pitch and display their ideas to 30 companies, culminating in 11 SMEs serving as vendors across AIUla cultural events and three becoming official RCU vendors.

In an initiative to empower female entrepreneurs in the County, Vibes AIUla collaborated with AECOM to organise mCircles, an event that brought together 38 female entrepreneurs, fostering a dynamic environment conducive to collaboration and mutual support.

Among other collaborations, the flagship programme Empretec designed to nurture



entrepreneurial mindsets, was implemented in AIUla in collaboration with the UN and the Social Development Bank, culminating in the graduation of 60 beneficiaries. This programme emphasises the

importance of entrepreneurial education in fostering long-term economic growth.

Collaborations with entities like Zid, a Saudi holding company, aim to empower MSMEs in

the retail sector by providing digital support and fostering digital business opportunities. RCU formed an agreement with 50 local MSMEs to empower business opportunity projects in the retail sector through



Local pottery artworks - AIUla

providing digital support across AIUla, Tayma, and Khaybar. These partnerships highlight the importance of digital transformation in supporting entrepreneurial growth and long-term value creation.

Our initiatives to promote local talent included supporting eight MSMEs participate in renowned events such as The Global Entrepreneurship Congress and the Biban Forum 2023, which ended with a local MSME - Ghosayn Alban - winning a 100,000 SAR grant and generating over 10,000 SAR in sales.



Local MSME displays its local products and post-modern brands - the Old Town



### KPIs



# of active MSMEs for 3 years or more in AIUla

GRI 201-1



# of new MSMEs in AIUla

GRI 201-1

## RCU is dedicated to developing local capabilities, offering prosperous career opportunities, and promoting a culture of learning and development

AIUla's strategic emphasis on promoting local businesses and encouraging economic growth aligns with SDG 8: *Decent Work and Economic Growth*, SDG 9: *Industry, Innovation and Infrastructure*, SDG 10: *Reduced Inequality*, SDG 11: *Sustainable Cities and Communities*, Saudi Vision 2030's economic goals, the Saudi National Transformation Programme, as well as RCU's Strategic Principles N.4: *Maintain Balanced Agriculture*, N.7: *Revitalize, Restore and Regenerate the Built Environment*, and N.8: *Enable the Local Community*.

Tourism offers a unique blend of historical insights and modern reflections, fostering both local and regional development. Building on this strong foundation, we have proactively enhanced the tourism experience. A strategic roadmap has been laid out with goals of achieving a growth of 2,700 SAR in tourist spend per day over the next five years.

In 2023, AIUla achieved a milestone by directing 89.9%



of its spending towards local suppliers, surpassing the targeted 77%. This achievement highlights AIUla's drive to supporting its local economy and fostering homegrown production.

AIUla Peregrina Trading, will redefine cosmetics manufacturing through the use of AIUla's abundant natural resources, particularly components of *Moringa*

*peregrina* (a flowering plant native to AIUla). The company aims to position AIUla as a global hub for exceptional natural ingredients. An example is the collaboration with Cartier's Les Bases à Parfumer, one of the most anticipated beauty launches of the year. Their products offer body oil, body cream and four perfume-oil tinctures, each of which contains a generous measure of Peregrina oil.

By weaving together threads of local production and consumption, AIUla not only strengthens its economic framework but supports a sustainable and prosperous future for its community.



Artisanal arts, crafts, and tapestries sold within AIUla - the Old Town



### KPIs



% of spend on local suppliers

GRI 201-1

GRI 204-1



Average tourist spend per day

GRI 201-1

## RCU is advancing AIUla's local economy, promoting local production and fostering sustainable growth

The Commission's approach to creating local jobs is in alignment with SDG 8: *Decent Work and Economic Growth*, SDG 9: *Industry, Innovation and Infrastructure*, SDG 10: *Reduced Inequality*, SDG

11: *Sustainable Cities and Communities*, Saudi Vision 2030, the Saudi National Transformation Programme, as well as RCU's Strategic Principle N.8: *Enable the Local Community*.

Unemployment adversely affects the disposable income of families, erodes purchasing power, diminishes employee morale, and reduces an economy's output. RCU is working with stakeholders

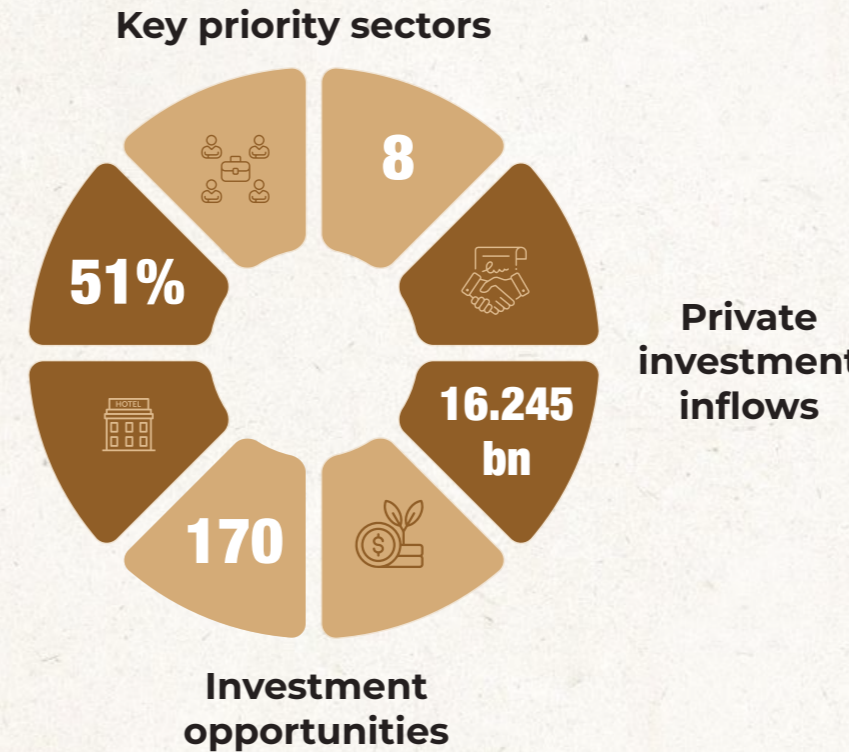
and investors to strengthen economic opportunities and boost job creation across the County in line with a detailed economic roadmap. AIUla's unemployment rate was 9% in the third quarter of 2023,

reflecting a 2% decrease from the fourth quarter of 2022. This was achieved through our ongoing efforts to provide job opportunities and enhance the skills of the local workforce, with a special emphasis on females and youth. By focusing on job creation and empowerment through upskilling programmes and local business collaborations through initiatives like the Human Capability Development Programme, the Quality of Life Programme, and several other ventures led by the Public Investment Fund, we aim to further reduce AIUla's unemployment rate.



The current employment rate of Saudi residents in AIUla's hospitality sector was reported at 51%, below the desired target of 70%. This shortfall within this sector emphasises the need to strengthen ongoing efforts at fostering local involvement and a sense of community ownership within AIUla's hospitality sector.

**Current employment in Hotels & Resorts**



Opportunities for upskilling and job creation extend across key priority sectors such as logistics, local construction and materials, arts and crafts, scientific research, agriculture, equestrianism, specialised education, and cinema production.

Private investment inflows to AIUla have shown progress despite falling short at 16.245 billion SAR, compared to the targeted 34.308 billion SAR. By focusing on tourism, cultural heritage, and art, key strategic initiatives alongside the AIUla Strategy are set to create new

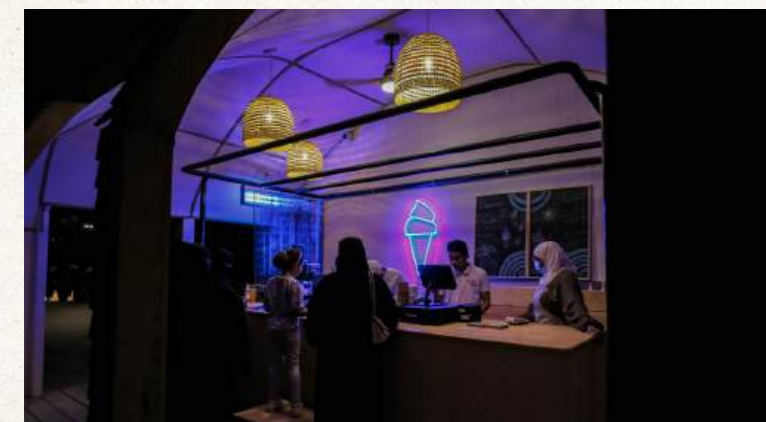
employment opportunities. Over 170 local content investment projects have been identified, promoting MSME participation in key exhibitions such as the Biban Forum 2023. It is important for us to continue promoting MSMEs, while also supporting established MSMEs

progress into SMEs, since fostering an entrepreneurial environment stimulates economic activity and supports local job creation.

In terms of generating employment opportunities via investment strategies and business pursuits, the participation in the 7<sup>th</sup> edition of the Future Investment Initiative Forum in 2023 shines a light on our prioritisation of attracting investment and driving innovation in AIUla. At this forum, we signed a 159 million SAR agreement with the French group Thales, to help safeguard AIUla's world-renowned collection of ancient artefacts and cultural asset. Additionally, we established a significant partnership with the French group Alstom, a global leader in integrated transport systems, to enhance AIUla's transportation infrastructure. Agreements as such play a crucial role in driving further investment. These investments lead to infrastructure development and the creation of high-quality jobs.



The 7<sup>th</sup> edition of **The Future Investment Initiative Forum in 2023** further highlighted the prioritisation of attracting investment and driving innovation in AIUla



The participation of local talent in AIUla's economy bolsters resilience - AlJadidah

## RCU is committed to empowering communities, through upskilling programmes, to enhance their contribution to AIUla's growth

Knowledge transfer and upskilling initiatives are vital to promoting innovation, fostering excellence, and ultimately uplifting AIUla's economic capabilities. RCU is investing in strategic initiatives that drive the upskilling and reskilling of AIUla's workforce, in alignment with SDG 4: *Quality Education*, SDG 8: *Decent Work and Economic Growth*, SDG 9: *Industry, Innovation and Infrastructure*, SDG 10: *Reduced Inequality*, SDG 11: *Sustainable Cities and Communities*, Saudi Vision 2030, the Saudi National Transformation Programme, and RCU's Strategic Principle N.8: *Enable the Local Community*.

The number of residents graduating from AIUla's advanced upskilling programmes has surpassed 2023 targets, with an impressive 4,811 individuals completed these programmes compared to the targeted 479. The power of AIUla's development lies in the power of its community and its people. We are dedicated to enhancing the skills and employability of AIUla's local

workforce and empowering them through comprehensive training, education, and skill-building programmes. AIUla's Advanced Training Centre (AATC) is a knowledge hub for technical and business expertise training and plays a pivotal role in empowering the local community. Through workshops aimed at transferring knowledge and enhancing communication methods for managing and operating sites in AIUla, Tayma, and Khaybar, residents gain valuable expertise to guide their contribution to AIUla's sustainable development.

AIUla is also home to two institutions that offer Tourism and Hospitality focused diploma degrees: Taibah University AIUla Branch and the Technical College and Secondary Industrial Institute. In 2023, Taibah University AIUla Branch and the Technical College and Secondary Industrial Institute witnessed the graduation of three and 39 students, respectively, from their Tourism and Hospitality programmes.



Farmer initiatives and upskilling programmes encourage sustainable behaviours and responsible waste management - Daimumah in the Cultural Oasis

### AIUla's Advanced Training Centre

4,811

Individuals completed advanced upskilling programmes



Build a more resilient and prosperous future for AIUla and its residents



RCU Rangers' safety talk ahead of a venture - Sharaan Nature Reserve

- 1 Empowering the local community
- 2 Transferring knowledge and enhancing communication
- 3 Human capital development and workforce productivity

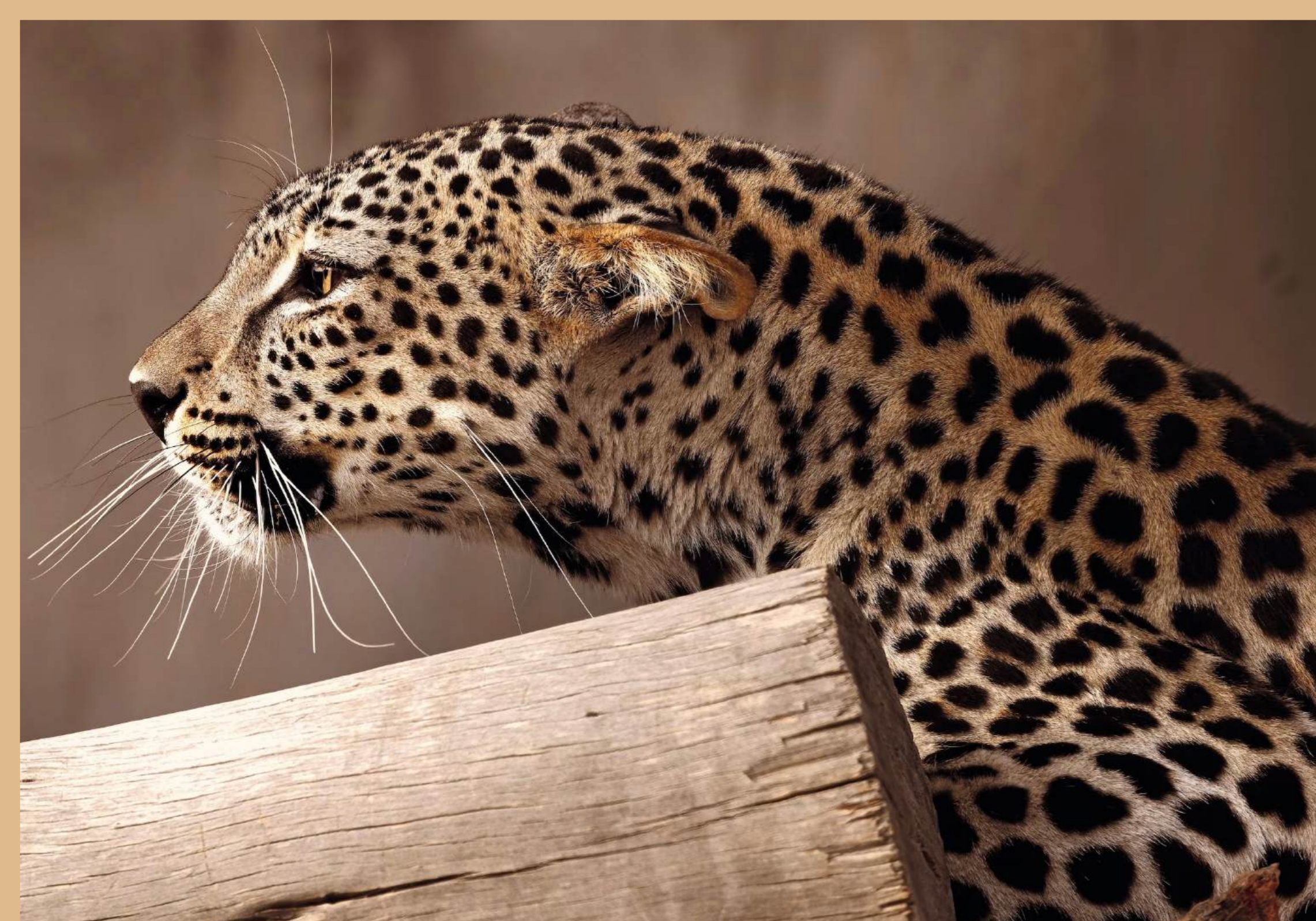


### KPIs



# of residents graduated from AIUla advanced upskilling programmes

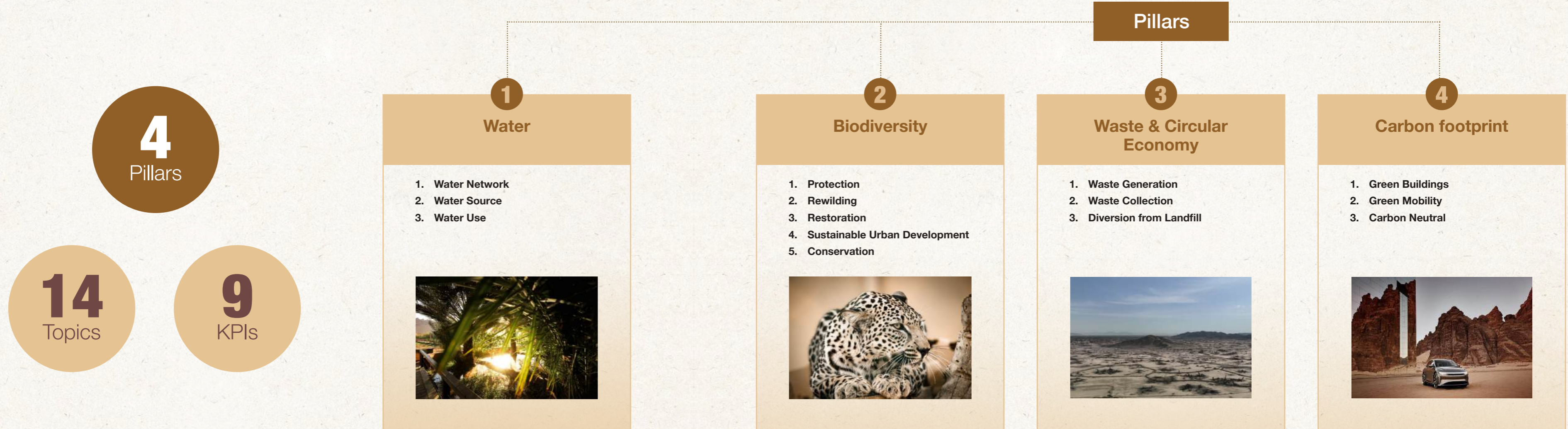
GRI 404-1  
GRI 404-2



# Environmental

# RCU's Environmental Dimension: Protecting AIUla's ecosystems, promoting biodiversity, conserving AIUla's resources, and minimising AIUla's carbon footprint to support sustainable development

The Environmental dimension is composed of four pillars and 14 topics monitored through nine KPIs.



## RCU is committed to protecting AIUla's water resources while providing a continuous, healthy and sustainable supply to the community

KSA is ranked among the top 25 nations facing severe water stress by the World Resource Institute. Water is a challenge for an arid climate, especially for inland areas isolated from the coastline, like AIUla.



The Commission embraces a holistic strategy aligned with SDG 6: *Clean Water and Sanitation*, SDG 9: *Industry, Innovation and Infrastructure*, SDG 11: *Sustainable Cities and Communities*, the Saudi Vision 2030 and the National Transformation Programme, addressing all facets of water scarcity, to respond to water challenges and recognise the imperative of providing water services to the residents of AIUla.

In line with our Strategic Principles N.1: *Safeguard the Natural and Cultural Landscape* N.3: *Sustain Ecosystems and Wildlife*, N.7: *Revitalise, Restore, and Regenerate the*



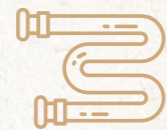
Water treatment facilities - Ashar Valley



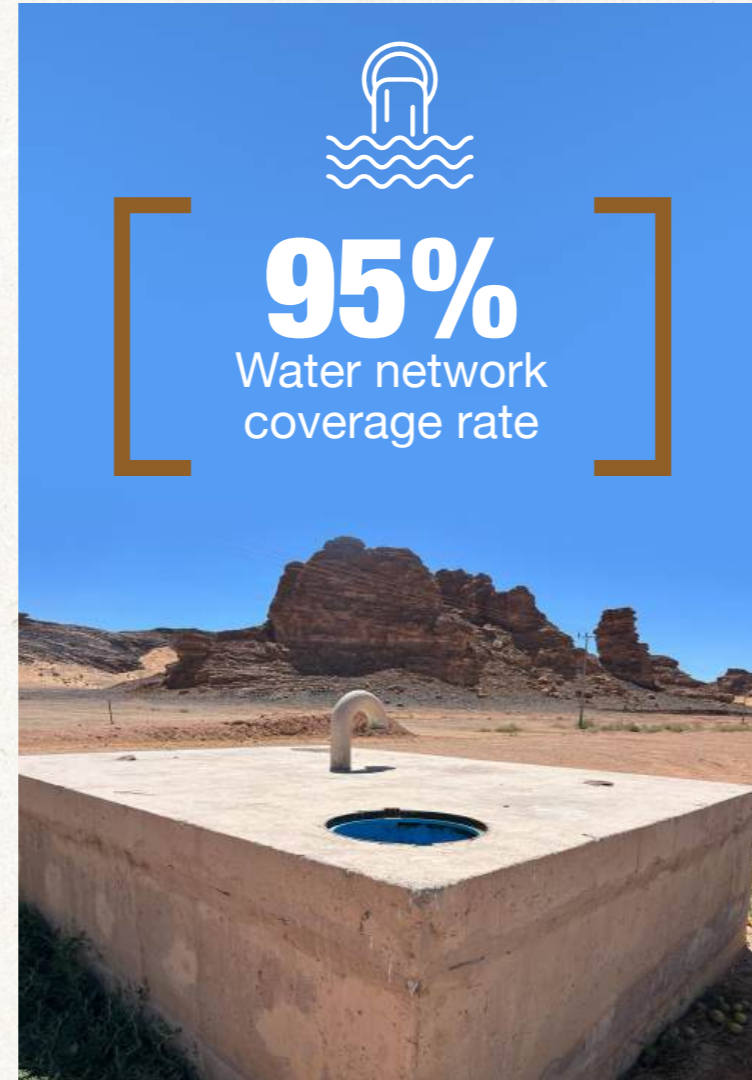
Water treatment facilities - Ashar Valley

**Built Environment** and N.8: *Enable the Local Community*, water resources stand-out as vital within the realm of environmental conservation, representing one of the four pillars in our Environment dimension.

As such, we place water responsibility at the forefront of our priorities. We acknowledge this challenge and are working through an Integrated Water Management Strategy to not only secure a sustainable water supply, but also promote more efficient and reduced consumption and strategically develop sewage and water infrastructure across the County. This holistic strategy tackles elements along the entire water lifecycle such as water sources, water networks and distribution, as well as water use, treatment and reuse.



With an impressive 95% water network coverage rate achieved across AIUla in 2023, far surpassing the initial target of 45%, residents of AIUla gained access to enhanced water networks, services, and infrastructure.

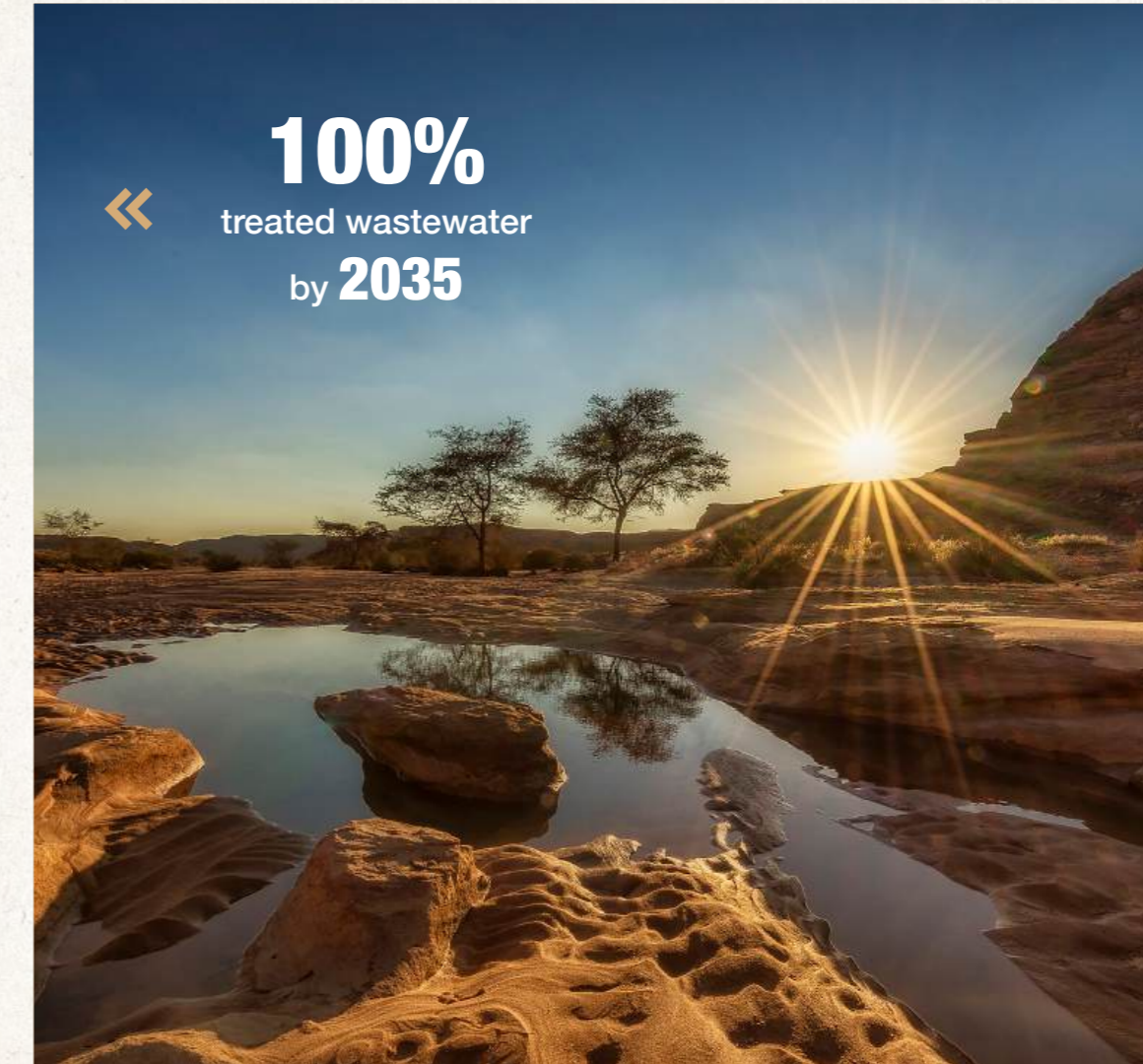


Water tanks and pipelines are strategically positioned across the County - Qaraqir Valley

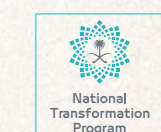


Water treatment facilities - Ashar Valley

Building on this, we will need to further enhance AIUla's infrastructure by next developing wastewater collection and treatment systems to achieve our 100% collection and repurposing target by 2035.



AIUla's precious water sources demand a careful approach to management - Hegra



### KPIs



% of water services coverage to population  
GRI 203-1



% of reuse of treated sewage water  
GRI 303-2  
GRI 303-5

## RCU is devoted to supporting sustainable water use in agriculture to optimise water consumption and safeguard AIUla's natural resources

The importance of water extends beyond its basic necessity for life as it forms the basis for agricultural productivity, supporting the livelihoods of AIUla's farmers and the community's day-to-day life. This commitment is underpinned by AIUla's Strategic Principles, specifically Principle N.1: *Safeguard the Natural and Cultural Landscape* Principle N.4: *Maintain Balanced Agriculture* and Principle N.12: *Embed Resilience*, guiding our efforts to protect the preservation and sustainable interaction with the environment for future generations to come.



In fact, agricultural water consumption represents the vast majority of water usage in the County, accounting for more than 90%, quantified at approximately 26,500 m<sup>3</sup>/ha annually. Reducing this consumption to efficient but effective levels is a delicate exercise and requires engagement with, and buy-in from, the local community.

We are dedicated to this collaboration and to reducing the current irrigation water usage through the implementation of various initiatives.

Among these initiatives is the launch of a Crop-shift Support Programme aimed at incentivising farmers to transition towards high value, less water-intensive crops. We have formulated and are executing AIUla's Southern Irrigation Transformation Plan, facilitating sustainable water management practices such as: drip irrigation systems, equipping agricultural wells with meter systems to regulate groundwater extraction, and establishing licensing regulations for their operations.

Currently, only 0.35% of all agricultural wells are licensed, of which 6% are equipped with meters meeting the 2023 target. We will continue our efforts through the various initiatives as we strive towards a vibrant community and thriving agricultural sector through sustainable water use.



2,500-year-old Haddaj well - Tayma



**26,500** m<sup>3</sup>/ha  
Annual agricultural water consumption



**0.35%**  
Licensed agricultural wells  
**100%** >> 2030 target



**6%**  
Agricultural wells equipped



Transitioning to sustainable irrigation is critical to reduce AIUla's demand on water - Daimumah in the Cultural Oasis

### Agricultural water consumption reduction initiatives

- 1 Launch the Crop-shift Support Programme
- 2 Develop AIUla's Southern Irrigation Transformation Plan
- 3 Promote sustainable water management practices



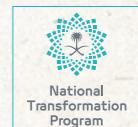
Drip irrigation systems



Meters on agricultural wells



Agricultural well licensing





## RCU is dedicated to protecting and restoring AIUla's natural resources, while finding harmony between human development and nature

Aligning with SDG 15: *Life on Land*, Saudi Vision 2030 and the Saudi Green Initiative, RCU is dedicated to the protection and restoration of AIUla's ecosystems and biodiversity. This commitment is underpinned by AIUla's Strategic Principles, specifically Principle N.1: *Safeguard the Natural and Cultural Landscape* and Principle N.3: *Sustain Ecosystems and Wildlife*.

So far, significant milestones have been achieved towards these principles, including amongst others, the identification and inauguration of five nature reserves: Sharaan Nature Reserve, Harrat AlZabin Nature Reserve, Harrat Uwayrid (a UNESCO Man and Biosphere Nature Reserve), AlGharameel Nature Reserve, Wadi Nakhlah Nature Reserve, and one Geopark - Khaybar Nature Reserve (which is a National Geopark recognised by the Royal Court and pursuing its designation as a UNESCO Global Geopark). These valued designations hold immense significance for both the conservation of nature and human wellbeing.



Wildlife and vegetation are supported to thrive in the County - Arabian gazelle in Sharaan Nature Reserve

RCU has drafted the Executive Regulation for the Protection of Biodiversity (the Regulation). This will provide the regulatory framework for the protection of biodiversity and the conservation of ecosystems within the RCU jurisdictions.

Aspects within the regulation include: biodiversity protection, protected areas along with their categorisation criteria, environmental conservation, biodiversity sites register, and mitigation and ecological compensation.

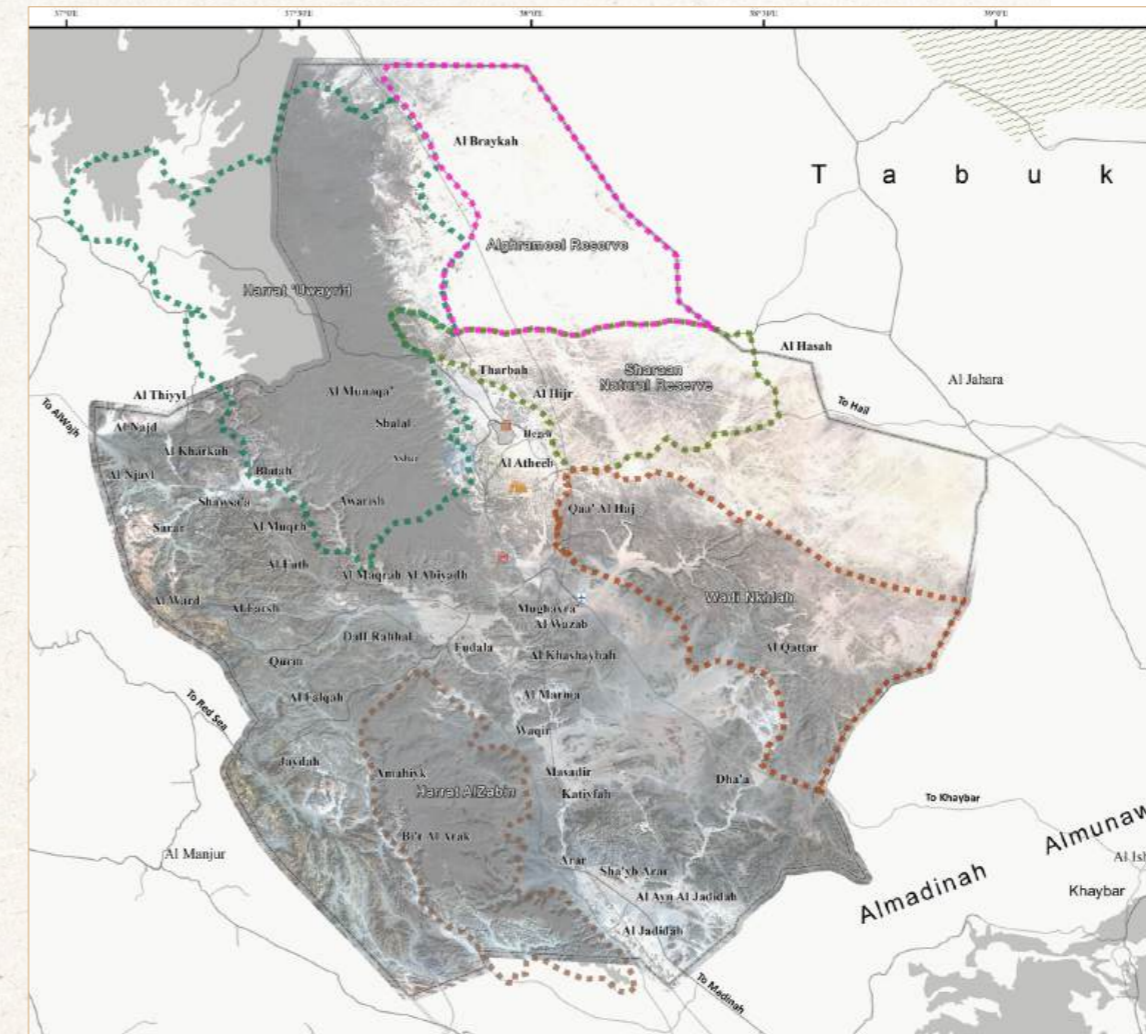
**13,040 km<sup>2</sup>**      **22,561 km<sup>2</sup>**

Protected and conserved areas achieved by 2023      AIUla's total territory

**57.8%**

Exceeding the 30% global target of the Kunming-Montreal Global Biodiversity Framework for protected area coverage

### Location Map of AIUla's Nature Reserves



Geospatial and Digital Department at Royal Commission for AIUla (RCU)  
GCS WGS 1984  
WKID: 4326 Authority: EPSG  
Datum:D WGS 1984

AlGharameel Nature Reserve  
(2115.82 km<sup>2</sup>)

Harrat Uwayrid Nature Reserve  
(4680.13 km<sup>2</sup>)

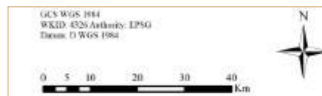
Wadi Nakhlah Nature Reserve  
(2426.55 km<sup>2</sup>)

Harrat AlZabin Nature Reserve  
(1677.02 km<sup>2</sup>)

Sharaan Nature Reserve  
(1524.97 km<sup>2</sup>)

County

Road Network



### KPIs



Protected and conserved areas (PCAs) in % of total territory

GRI 304-3

## RCU is dedicated to protecting and restoring AIUla's natural resources, while finding harmony between human development and nature



Echiium rauwolfii - Sharaan Nature Reserve



Anthemis deserti - Sharaan Nature Reserve



Natural meadows - Sharaan Nature Reserve



Retama raetem - Harrat Uwayrid



AIUla's night sky - AlGharameel

In alignment with the UN SDG 15: *Life on Land*, RCU will protect or conserve 19,000 km<sup>2</sup>, or 84.2% of our total territory of 22,561 km<sup>2</sup>, by 2035. As of 31 December 2023, 13,040 km<sup>2</sup> were protected under nature reserve status; this is short of our 2023 target (15,000 km<sup>2</sup>) but represents 68.6% of our 2035 target. This is equivalent to 57.8% of our total territory, and a key accomplishment in support of global targets such as the Kunming-Montreal Global Biodiversity Framework

(GBF), which aims for countries to target 30% of their territories under protection or conservation.

Our alignment with GBF and the Ministry of Environment, Water and Agriculture's (MEWA) National Centre for Vegetation Cover & Combating Desertification (NCVC) targets demonstrates our desire to implement global best practices in the protection and safeguarding of our territories for the benefit of

our community, and global biodiversity as a whole.

Fundamental to maintaining this synergy and the sustainability of the six Nature Reserves is the

development of comprehensive management plans, as well nature-based tourism plans, tailored to their specific needs and characteristics.

Protected areas that also form masterplans (such as Harrat Uwayrid, Sharaan and Khaybar), undergo Strategic

Environmental Assessments (SEAs) concurrently and in integration with masterplan design as due diligence to integrate positive sustainability outcomes. An SEA was completed for Sharaan Nature Reserve in 2022, feeding alternative development options into the final masterplan.

Two SEAs were initiated in 2023 and are currently in progress for Harrat Uwayrid Nature Reserve and Khaybar Nature Reserve. We are committed to this diligent and thorough planning process that includes SEAs.

We have embarked on a journey to certify the Nature Reserves

under IUCN's global standard for protected area excellence. At the time of preparing this report, Sharaan Nature Reserve has made significant progress towards achieving this listing and is expected to be certified in 2024-2025. As part of the process, RCU's Wildlife & Natural Heritage team worked

with IUCN to develop the IBEX tool; this new software replaces the previous excel-based version of the Green List. Additionally, we are upgrading our current Wildlife & Natural Heritage Database to centralise collected data for use in monitoring and for reporting



Seeking two certifications: the "Dark Sky Community" and the "Dark Sky Parks" from Dark Sky International (DSI)

performance. We will use the data to better inform future conservation and rehabilitation plans, as well as facilitate knowledge transfer between the Nature Reserves. These initiatives demonstrate our efforts towards biodiversity protection and acknowledge its critical role in sustaining AIUla's ecosystems.

Our dark sky initiative is a key component of our environment that serves both human and wildlife wellbeing. Included in our efforts to protect AIUla from various types of pollution such as light pollution, we have engaged with Dark Sky International (DSI) to develop an AIUla Dark Sky Strategy. The Strategy seeks two targeted international certifications: the Dark Sky Community, covering the whole County; and the Dark Sky Parks, for two of AIUla's Nature Reserves (Harrat AlZabin and AlGharameel). The objective is to preserve the beauty and critical function of AIUla's skies, reduce light pollution through controls, and maintain resident enjoyment of their heritage while also promoting sustainable tourism opportunities e.g., stargazing activities.



### KPIs



Protected and conserved areas (PCAs) in % of total territory

GRI 304-3

## RCU is committed to protecting and rewilding AIUla's vulnerable and endangered wildlife species by fostering resilient and sustainable ecosystems



Arabian gazelle release to preliminary holding pens - Sharaan Nature Reserve

In line with the objectives of SDG 15: *Life on Land*, Saudi Vision 2030 and the Saudi Green Initiative's goal of enhancing wildlife conservation, and our Strategic Framework Plan which details related goals including Biodiversity Net Gain / No Net Loss, the rewilding initiatives being undertaken in AIUla play a key role in preserving and restoring biodiversity. This aligns with our Strategic Principles including Principle N.1: *Safeguard the Natural and Cultural Landscape* and Principle N.3: *Sustain Ecosystems and Wildlife*.

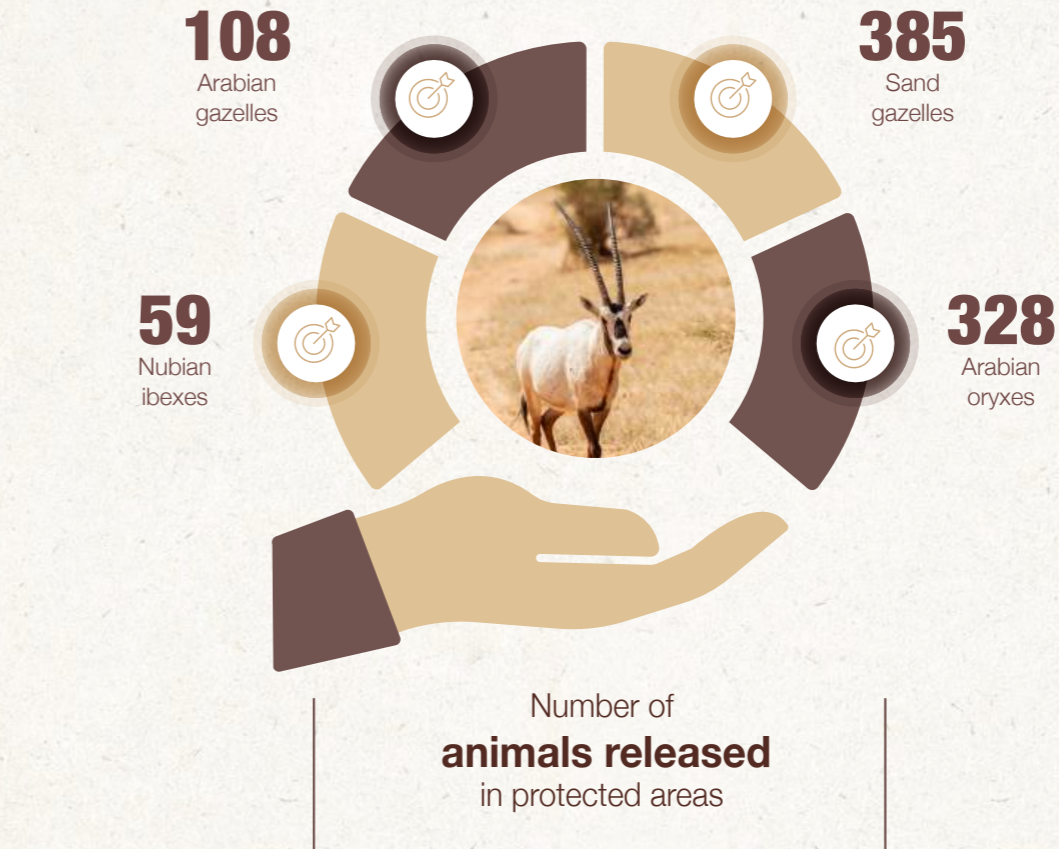
Key wildlife achievements to date include population rehabilitations through the release of a total of 108 Arabian gazelles, 385 Sand gazelles, 328 Arabian oryxes and 59 Nubian ibexes between 2019 and 2023 across AIUla's Sharaan, Wadi Nakhlah and AlGharameel Nature Reserves. Reintroduction programmes for the Ostriches, Barbary falcons, Arabian leopards, and Houbara bustards have also been developed.

In support of these achievements, RCU formalised a three-year partnership with Space for Giants to cultivate and embed world-class biodiversity protection practices across AIUla.



Furthermore, a conservation breeding programme was established for the critically-endangered Arabian leopards. With the signing of a ten-year MoU with Panthera, we are focused with our partners on recovering this key species in the wild. In 2023, we celebrated a milestone in our conservation efforts with the birth of seven Arabian leopard cubs at the Arabian Leopard Conservation Breeding Centre in Taif. This achievement, along with other efforts, increased the population of Arabian leopards in care from 14 in 2020 to 27 in 2023.

The United Nations recognised February 10<sup>th</sup> as the International Day of the Arabian Leopard, a first in 2023 and



significant achievement for this species as whole.

This supports broader recognition of the species and unites efforts towards

conserving the Arabian leopard across the Arabian Peninsula. The significance of this success is only further celebrated by the fact that the Arabian leopard is indigenous

to AIUla and critically endangered, with only a few hundred mature individuals remaining in the wild and which continue to face population pressures.



RCU is committed to protecting and rewilding AIUla's vulnerable and endangered wildlife species by fostering resilient and sustainable ecosystems



Nubien ibex release - Wadi Nakhlah Nature Reserve

**880**  
Animals  
across  
**4** species  
reintroduced in AIUla

The aforementioned accomplishments demonstrate the commitment we have as a community in adhering to international standards and frameworks, working towards the protection of AIUla's priority conservation species. These species are considered vulnerable, threatened, endangered or critically endangered under the IUCN Red List of Threatened Species and / or as high conservation priority species under national conservation lists.



We aspire to be a global benchmark in sustainable conservation; a community that comes together with its partners striving for the preservation of AIUla's natural heritage for future generations.

Sharaan Nature Reserve is home to a variety of wildlife



Arabian oryx



Arabian red fox



Imperial eagle



Egyptian rock agama



Sharaan Nature Reserve Park Rangers and RCU Staff



Rock hyrax



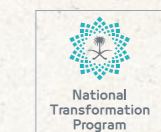
Idmi (mountain) gazelle



Nubian ibex



Sand gazelle



## RCU is committed to countering desertification and biodiversity loss through restoration efforts

Biodiversity is the cornerstone of ecosystems, nurturing resilience and harmony in nature. It is also a key focus area under SDG 5: *Life on Land*, SDG 11: *Sustainable Cities and Communities*, Saudi Vision 2030, Saudi Green Initiative and National Net Zero 2060 Commitment. Yet, practices such as unplanned urban development, livestock overgrazing, and poaching have depleted AIUla's biodiversity, leading to vegetation loss, native flora decline, and desertification.

To address the depletion of AIUla's biodiversity, RCU has made significant progress, exceeding its 2023 goal by restoring 1,000 ha of rangelands against a target of 600 ha. This accomplishment supports our Strategic Principles, namely Principle N.1: *Safeguard the Natural and Cultural Landscape* Principle N.3: *Sustain Ecosystems and Wildlife*, and Principle N.12: *Embed Resilience*, as well as our Strategic Framework Plan which details related goals including Biodiversity Net Gain / No Net Loss.

We are contributing to the national fight against desertification having undertaken a substantial ecological restoration project which included the planting of 111,684 trees (as of 31 December 2023), surpassing our initial target of 70,000 trees planted in AIUla's protected areas by 2023. Moving forward, our total target is to plant ten million trees, shrubs, and annual plants as part of development projects, roads, and urban areas by 2030, reinforcing our commitment to the national environmental agenda.

To support this target, we have developed a temporary nursery with a current production capacity of 300,000 seedlings/year. This includes the advancement of techniques for native plant seed conservation and propagation as well as a protocol for the production of native trees, shrubs and seedlings. To date, we have planted 56 different native species, achieving the set target for 2023.

Recognising the imperative role of native flora in biodiversity



Native species planting initiatives - Sharaan Nature Reserve



AIUla's native plants nursery - adjacent to Sharaan Nature Reserve

**1,000** ha  
Restored rangelands in 2023

restoration and carbon sequestration, we are designing a permanent, dedicated nursery and seed bank with a targeted production capacity of 31 million seedlings by 2035.



Satellite monitoring of vegetation growth - Sharaan Nature Reserve



**11%**  
Increase in vegetation



Positive changes in vegetation cover in response to our ecological restoration efforts - Sharaan Nature Reserve



### KPIs



# of planted trees in AIUla protected areas

GRI 304-3



Area of restored rangeland within AIUla

GRI 304-3



# of flora species revegetated in AIUla

GRI 304-3

## RCU is dedicated to building a sustainable and liveable urban environment that thrives in harmony with AIUla's nature



Daimumah wooden eco-lodge - Daimumah in the Cultural Oasis

Sustainable urban development is a key tenet to protecting AIUla's rich biodiversity and preventing habitat degradation, fragmentation, and pollution. In alignment with SDG 5: *Life on Land*, SDG 11: *Sustainable Cities and Communities*, Saudi Vision 2030, the Saudi National Transformation Programme, and the National Net Zero Commitment by 2060 which emphasise the expansion of urban green spaces, RCU is

developing 10 million m<sup>2</sup> of green and public spaces.

We are striving to combat biodiversity loss by integrating green infrastructure into urban fabric, conserving natural areas, and adopting eco-friendly practices in line with our Strategic Principles N.9: *Incorporate Imaginative Infrastructure*, and Principle N.11: *Design Safe and Healthy Environments within the Circular Economy*.



AIUla's community enjoying recreational facilities - Daimumah in the Cultural Oasis



Developing **10,000,000** m<sup>2</sup> of green and public spaces

AIUla's masterplans and Framework Policy - Strategic Principle N.1: *Safeguard the Natural and Cultural Landscape*, harmonise development with nature and reflect the ambitious initiatives we are undertaking (such as AIUla's Wadi of Hospitality, the Incense Museum and Gardens, and the Contemporary Art Museum) to improve the health of the built environment.



Our published urban planning guidelines have a dual purpose: promoting the minimum landscaping requirements; and the preservation of protected views while also enhancing air quality, creating healthy environments for our community. In 2023, we further enhanced the urban environment by launching a campaign to raise the urban green area per capita to achieve the set target of 2 m<sup>2</sup> per person by 2030. We are proud to have surpassed that target, reaching 18.83 m<sup>2</sup> per capita at the end of 2023.



Community recreational facilities - Daimumah in the Cultural Oasis



### KPIs



Urban green area per capita

GRI 203-1

## RCU is committed to moving from a linear economy to a circular one, starting with sustainable waste management solutions in AIUla

In line with SDG 11: *Sustainable Cities and Communities*, SDG 12: *Responsible Consumption and Production*, Saudi Vision 2030 objectives, the Saudi Green Initiative and our Strategic Principle N.11: *Design Safe and Healthy Environments within the Circular Economy*, managing waste responsibly stands as a key pillar of the Environmental dimension.



In our community, every stakeholder group has a contribution to make towards solving the challenge of waste management. Waste is nearly completely linear in AIUla and we acknowledge great effort is needed to create the foundation off of which circularity can grow. RCU is addressing this through both the encouragement of behavioural changes through environmental awareness across all stakeholders (e.g. farmers), and technical solutions.



Agricultural waste composting facility - Mughayra



### 4 agricultural composting facilities in AIUla

Technical solutions for waste management include: classifying AIUla's waste streams, deployment of monitoring tools, and the use of digital platforms to guide the development of waste infrastructure.

These technical solutions include a number of individual initiatives such as: onsite waste segregation, composting solutions, and expert-led workshops on sustainable waste management.



Key informant interviews with farmers turning organic waste into compost - the Cultural Oasis



#### KPIs



Waste conversion rate

GRI 306-1  
GRI 306-2  
GRI 306-4

## RCU is committed to moving from a linear economy to a circular one, starting with sustainable waste management solutions in AIUla

Behavioural change requires awareness. We have designed a two-year environmental awareness campaign aimed at promoting circular economy practices in all sectors of AIUla. We have worked with stakeholders (workers, school students, hotel operators, residents) to create relevant messaging that are published through various media platforms (e.g. AIUla FM). The feedback gathered has been integrated into our Strategy.



Our agricultural waste collection and composting programme has been a key success story: four agricultural waste composting facilities have been established in AIUla and are showing effectiveness. One of them, the Mughayra Agricultural Waste Composting Facility, spans 1,500 ha and has a collection capacity of 135,000 m<sup>3</sup>.

**Sustainable waste management workshops**

across the County

Workshops with local farmers on agricultural waste management - the Cultural Oasis

### Agricultural waste management

Operational area	<b>1,500 ha</b>
Cleaning achievement	<b>1,300 ha</b>
Waste collection	<b>135,000 m<sup>3</sup></b>
Shredding	<b>14,000 m<sup>3</sup></b>
Compost	<b>700 m<sup>3</sup></b>



Collecting agricultural waste - Mughayra

These composting facilities help mitigate negative environmental impacts associated with uncontrolled dumping of agricultural waste, in addition to alleviating pressures on farmlands typically associated with pests e.g., the red palm weevil and the palm borer. All of the resulting compost is returned to AIUla's farmers free of charge as mulch, enhancing the retention of moisture and nutrients in the soil where applied, boosting microbiological activity and reducing water consumption, leading to better crop yield and quality.

Much more will be completed in the coming years with the support of our community and partners.



Agricultural waste composting facility - Mughayra



Open air turner machine composting - Mughayra



#### KPIs



Waste conversion rate

GRI 306-1  
GRI 306-2  
GRI 306-4



## RCU is devoted to transforming AIUla into a model of sustainable innovation through strategic green building initiatives

Buildings are responsible for 37% (source: United Nations Environment Programme) of carbon emissions through the materials used, energy consumption and other factors. RCU aims to differentiate and position AIUla as a leading community in green development and sustainable tourism by 2035. To achieve this, and in alignment with the ratified 2015 Paris Climate Agreement, SDG 11: *Sustainable Cities and Communities*, SDG 13: *Climate Action*, the Kingdom's Net Zero Strategy by 2060 and AIUla's Net Zero Strategy by 2035, we strive to lower AIUla's carbon footprint by promoting energy solutions that are effective, cost efficient and low-emitting.

At the heart of our effort, and core to our Strategic Principle N.7 *Revitalise, Restore, and Regenerate the Built Environment*, is the Sustainability Certification Label for Buildings, Communities & Infrastructure Project. The project evaluated a range of green building

standards to identify the green building certification that best fits the development projects in AIUla, and supports their aims for sustainable development through the design process. Through benchmarking 12 local and international green building rating systems, we selected and adopted the following: all new and refurbished buildings, infrastructure, and community projects must be certified, as a minimum, to LEED Gold or MOSTADAM Gold, with specific cases targeting EarthCheck (for heritage buildings) and Envision certifications (for infrastructure projects).

Earthen architecture is a key focus in AIUla. We welcome artists and architects to AIUla to explore and experiment with local building materials and research circular-centric traditional methods of restoring both heritage assets and new buildings. Bioclimatic architecture and preservation initiatives investigate energy efficient designs that draw on readily available, traditional, locally-sourced materials,



Dating back to the 8th century

Restored mosque - the Cultural Oasis

whilst also offering educational and training programmes to residents and visitors. This is a burgeoning approach throughout the Arabian Peninsula region and a growing global area of sustainable practices.

The above initiatives, along with our Local Building Materials Strategy, 360Mobility Plan, and Net Zero Carbon Strategy all contribute to reducing the effects of climate change to support a healthy, clean environment for residents of and visitors to AIUla.



A dense maze of ancient mud, stone and wood buildings that contained

- 900** houses
- 500** shops
- 5** town squares

dating back 900 years

Restoring iconic historic structures through traditional construction methods - the Old Town



## RCU is dedicated to promoting green mobility to reduce carbon emissions and enhance AIUla's overall quality of life for residents and visitors alike

In harmony with SDG 11: *Sustainable Cities and Communities*, SDG 13: *Climate Action*, Saudi Vision 2030, the Saudi Green Initiative add the Kingdom's Net Zero Strategy by 2060, RCU is dedicated to implementing green mobility initiatives that provide healthier and cleaner modes of transport. Enhancing AIUla's overall quality of life is at the core of RCU's mandate as we strive towards decarbonising AIUla's transportation sector as well as achieving AIUla's 2035 Net Zero Strategy.

Guided by our Strategic Principles, including Principle N.3: *Sustaining Ecosystems and Wildlife*, Principle N.7: *Revitalise, Restore and Regenerate the Built Environment*, Principle N.9: *Incorporate Imaginative Infrastructure*, Principle N.11: *Design Safe and Healthy Environments within the Circular Economy*, and Principle N.12: *Embed Resilience*, we are developing green mobility infrastructure and environmentally-conscious modes of transport.



AIUla Experiential Tramway rendering and designed route serving 17 stops across the County

We have advanced to the final design stages of a new battery-operated tramway that will connect the County across key destinations and high-traffic areas. The AIUla Experiential Tramway project, spanning 22.4 km, is set to become

the world's longest battery-operated, cable-free tram line and will serve 17 strategically-positioned stations. These stations are targeting LEED Gold certification following a detailed Sustainability Plan, providing access to AIUla's five

main historical areas. These areas feature the following heritage sites: AIUla Old Town (District 1), Dadan (District 2), Jabal Ikmah (District 3), the Nabataean Horizon (District 4), and Hegra (District 5).



The AIUla Experiential Tramway, with its efficient and eco-friendly operations, presents a paradigm shift in urban transportation and promises to revolutionise inter-County mobility, leading the way for future endeavours.

We introduced an autonomous electric vehicle (EV) pods service for guests in the historic AIUla Old Town and the ancient Dadan archaeological site. Additionally, 30 EVs were deployed in collaboration with Lucid Motors and 10 EV charging points were installed across AIUla. The introduction of EVs into our fleet contributes to the sector's decarbonisation in addition to promoting public health, reducing air and noise pollution, and providing the start of cleaner transportation alternatives for AIUla's community.

The appeal of EV products and their growing market in the Kingdom is not only part of the Kingdom's Net Zero Strategy, but ours as well.

Establishing green mobility infrastructure, such as the provision of ample and

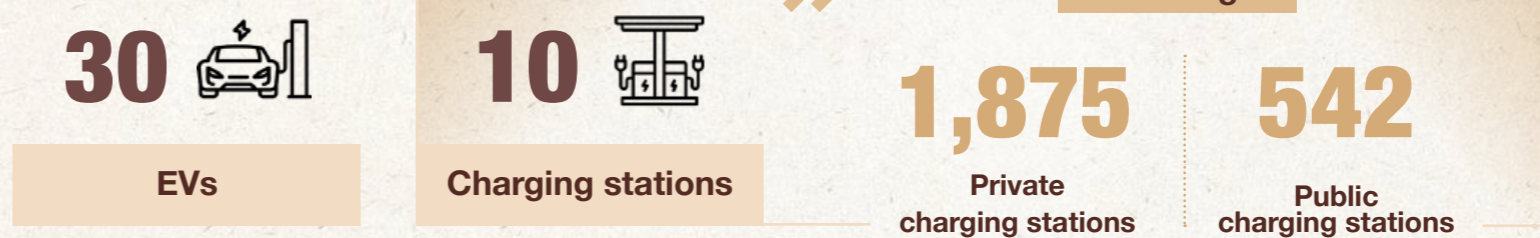
convenient EV charging stations, is helping incentivise the spreading popularity of EVs in AIUla. The proliferation of said infrastructure feeds back into our plans for developing cleaner, greener transport options and offering AIUla commuters reassurances of EV conveniences and benefits.



The growing advocacy for EV ownership and use in AIUla is stimulating local economic activity. We seek to capitalise on anticipated growth in potential employment opportunities for residents in this sector include those in EV sales, maintenance, infrastructure installation and operation, transport, and aftermarket services.



Installation of charging stations to support a fleet of electric vehicles - RCU Campus



## RCU is committed to combating climate change and achieving zero local carbon emissions by 2035



Providing an autonomous EV service - the Old Town

The Kingdom has committed to significant actions in energy efficiency, renewable energy, and greenhouse gas (GHG) emissions reductions by 2030. In the context of the ratified 2015 Paris Accords, the Kingdom's commitments include ambitious targets such as reducing GHG emissions by 278 million tonnes of equivalent CO<sub>2</sub> annually by 2030 and becoming net zero by 2060. RCU's 2035 Net Zero Strategy is steering AIUla towards a carbon-neutral and sustainable future in line with SDG 13: *Climate Action*, Saudi Vision 2030 and Saudi Green Initiative.

These commitments represent the implementation of many of our Strategic Principles: Principle N.3: *Sustaining Ecosystems and Wildlife* Principle N.6: *Ensure Subtle Connectivity and Accessibility*, Principle N.7: *Revitalise, Restore and Regenerate the Built Environment*, Principle N.8: *Enable the Local Community*, Principle N.9: *Incorporate Imaginative Infrastructure*, Principle N.11: *Design Safe*



# 42,909

Tonnes of carbon dioxide equivalent



# Estimated reductions in 2023

and Healthy Environments within the Circular Economy, and Principle N.12: *Embed Resilience*.

The imperative for carbon reduction is a central tenet of sustainable development. From agriculture and tourism to transportation and building,



Graduation ceremony for autonomous pod operators - the Old Town

each sector significantly impacts AIUla's carbon footprint. We built a detailed, cross-sectoral strategy that takes advantage of synergies and opportunities to scale through wide-ranging initiatives that minimise AIUla's carbon footprint and reduce its reliance on non-renewable sources of energy.

These initiatives include energy and water efficiency, circular waste management practices, decarbonisation, and collaborations with academic research institutions to advance innovations in construction and low carbon-emitting building materials such as Carbon Cured Concrete.

We set GHG reduction targets starting with net zero localised emissions and no increase in GHG emissions per capita by 2035, targeting AIUla's high emitting sectors (such as energy, construction, waste, transportation, water and agriculture).



### KPIs



CO<sub>2</sub> emissions reduced (tons of CO<sub>2</sub> equivalent)

GRI 305-5

## RCU is committed to combating climate change and achieving zero local carbon emissions by 2035

In our most recent carbon measurement project, we estimated a reduction of 42,909 t CO<sub>2</sub>e (Tonnes of carbon dioxide equivalent) in 2023 against the initial target of 281,727 t CO<sub>2</sub>e. This prompted a reassessment of AIUla's carbon baseline which will serve as a more accurate benchmark for future reporting cycles.



Agriculture, Forestry and Other Land Use (AFOLU) accounts for 14% of global GHG emissions (source: UNFCCC), accounting for significant anthropogenic methane and nitrous oxide emissions. Given agriculture's importance to AIUla's community, the carbon baseline reassessment is examining agriculture's potential to enhance carbon sequestration.

According to the UN Environmental Programme, the construction sector accounts for 37% of global carbon emissions. As we continue to promote AIUla's tourism sector

and bring new developments to life, innovations in sustainable materials, green buildings, and construction methods are paramount.



At RCU, we encourage a healthier lifestyle and are promoting low-carbon transportation by supporting the proliferation of EVs, expanding walking and cycling tracks, and planning the development of the electric AIUla Experiential Tramway. We have seen a healthy rise in the community's utilisation of AIUla's cycling tracks, as a means of commute and leisure.

As a Royal Commission that is involved in international cooperations, we intend to actively participate in diplomacy and strengthen the role of our multiple efforts across all sectors. We will continue combating climate change and improve our work along the way, for a brighter and greener future ahead.



AIUla's public cycling trail encourages cleaner, greener and healthier mobility options - AlRuzayqiyah

**Tackling GHG emissions reduction in carbon intensive sectors such as stationary energy, transportation, waste, AFOLU, construction, and water**



AIUla's South Cycling Station - AlRuzayqiyah

Planting native species seedlings in AIUla's natural habitats to regenerate ecosystems, supporting GHG sequestration



Planting native species plays a critical role in AIUla's fight against climate change, improving air and soil quality, providing habitats for wildlife, and sequestering carbon



Vegetation cover development project - Sharaan Nature Reserve



KPIs



CO<sub>2</sub> emissions reduced (tons of CO<sub>2</sub> equivalent)

GRI 305-5



# 5

Future  
**Commitments**  
and **Initiatives**



Looking ahead, we are excited to outline our future commitments and initiatives that will guide our journey towards a more sustainable future for our people and our planet. This section provides a sample of such initiatives.

**NET ZERO** BY  
**2035**  
NET-ZERO  
EMISSIONS  
BY 2035

**Net Zero  
by 2035**

Achieving Net Zero greenhouse gas emissions by 2035, aligning with the national Net Zero Commitment by 2060, and contribute to global efforts to mitigate climate change and limit global warming below 2°C.



**“Journey Through Time  
Masterplan” - five Districts by 2035**

Realising the Journey Through Time Masterplan, which will consist of five distinct districts—AIUla Old Town, Dadan, Jabal Ikamah, the Nabataean Horizon, and Hegra Historical City. Each district will be meticulously crafted to embody an architectural philosophy and character inspired by AIUla’s rich past civilisations. Two of these districts are already certified UNESCO heritage sites or are candidates for such recognition, underscoring our dedication to protecting and celebrating our cultural heritage.



**Kingdoms  
Institute**

Establishing The Kingdoms Institute as a global hub for archaeological and conservation research. This world-class scientific centre will be dedicated to studying the history and prehistory of the Arabian Peninsula, with a primary goal of preserving its legacy as a pivotal crossroads connecting three continents. Through this Institute we strive to enhance cultural awareness, education and preservation, while providing a deeper understanding and appreciation of our shared cultural heritage.



**Expansion of  
AIUla Airport**

Developing AIUla into an international aviation hub for northwest Saudi Arabia supported through the expansion of the runway, aprons and terminal with the annual capacity increasing from 100,000 to 400,000 passengers. By enhancing infrastructure and connectivity, we aim to attract more visitors to AIUla, stimulating economic activity, creating job opportunities, and fostering the growth of tourism-related industries. This strategic investment not only positions AIUla as a premier destination but also contributes to the region’s economic prosperity and long-term sustainability.



**International Scholarship  
Programme**

Providing every year, for five years 1,000 students of exceptional potential from AIUla with the opportunity to travel and receive a world-class education through our International Scholarship Programme with the aim to enhance access to quality education and empower future leaders in our community.



**Dar Tantora  
The House Hotel**

Launching Dar Tantora the House Hotel in 2024, a hidden gem in the Old Town, and a breathtaking destination that offers a unique blend of natural beauty and historical significance.



### Revitalising AIUla Old Town

Revitalising AIUla Old Town involves creating contemporary relevance through conservation efforts. We are dedicated to reviving memories of the community to establish a vibrant destination for dining, arts, and cultural entertainment.



### The Global Fund for the Arabian Leopard

Investing 20 million USD over the next ten years to support The Global Fund for the Arabian leopard to ensure the viability and sustainable management of the Arabian leopard's population, its wild prey, and natural habitats. This ongoing commitment emphasises our dedication to fostering coexistence between the leopard population and local communities while preserving the region's rich biodiversity.



### Supporting our Agriculture

Building on the momentum of the Moringa project that involves reviving the heritage of *Moringa peregrina*, and following the launch of our Crop-shift Support Programme aimed at incentivising farmers to transition towards high value, less water-intensive crops, we are supporting the plantation of *Moringa peregrina* as a native species and ensuring the ongoing production of Peregrina Oil in AIUla. Furthermore, our dedication to the local Dates Festival remains steadfast as we continue to elevate the regional economy, support farmers, promote AIUla's date products, and empower artisans.



### AIUla Experiential Tramway Project

Launching the visionary AIUla Experiential Tramway project, spanning 22.4 km and set to become the world's longest battery-powered, cable-free tramway. This project will include 17 strategically positioned stations, offering unparalleled access to AIUla's five key historical districts. The tramway will connect AIUla's prized UNESCO World Heritage sites, such as AIUla Old Town (District 1), Dadan (District 2), Jabal Ikmah (District 3), the Nabataean Horizon (District 4), and Hegra Historical City (District 5), highlighting our dedication to preserving and sharing our rich heritage.



### Vibes AIUla

Continuing to activate and enable AIUla's entrepreneurial ecosystem through the provision of shared mentorship, programmes, services, and office spaces.



### AIUla: Wonder of Arabia Exhibition

Participated in the exhibition held in Beijing from 5 January to 24 March, 2024, where for the first time, AIUla showcased its spectacular natural landscapes, rare archaeological artefacts and rich cultural heritage in China.



### AIRadam Palace

Activation of AIRadam Palace in Tayma, a historic structure known for its distinctive architecture and cultural significance. The site dates back to the mid-first millennium BCE and is an important heritage site, offering insights into the historical lifestyle and architectural practices in Tayma.



### Ibn Rumman Palace

Activation of Ibn Rumman Palace, a traditional structure constructed of stones and mud that contains towers and walls of a traditional urban style. The site is more than a century old, holding substantial historical value as it was not only the residence of the ruling family at the time but also played a crucial role in administrative and governance activities.



### Museum of Incense Road

Targeting to be the world's first museum dedicated to the epic millenia-old network of major land and sea trading routes, the Museum of the Incense Road will bring to life the ancient and modern histories that saw AIUla as a crossroads for trade, culture, and knowledge exchange, while offering a dynamic presentation of ongoing excavations in AIUla through findings among its various archaeological sites and the cultural importance of the Incense Road.



### The Contemporary Art Museum

Launching a series of garden pavilions, the Contemporary Art Museum will present a constant interplay between art and nature, capturing the essence of AIUla. The Contemporary Art Museum will boast a core collection of works by artists from regions adjoining the Red Sea, the Arabian Sea, and the Eastern Mediterranean, and will constitute the primary art museum in AIUla.



### The AIUla Collections Facility

Developing an advanced facility for the storage and exhibition of AIUla's managed cultural assets, the AIUla Collections Facility is designed to adhere to international best practice standards due to the conservation of cultural heritage, incorporating principles of sustainability and eco-friendly building practices (targeting LEED Gold certification).

It will house current collections and have the capacity to accommodate future acquisitions and archaeological deposits.



### Sharaan Resort

Launching of Sharaan Resort, envisioned by renowned French architect, Jean Nouvel and his team, will be an integral component of a meticulously planned eco-destination, offering 40 accommodations comprising 25 suites, 10 pavilions, and five resort residential estates. Embracing biomimicry philosophy rooted in nature, the development will showcase architectural innovation, enhancing AIUla's global presence in the hospitality sector. Set to open at full capacity in 2030.





### New Manuscript and Archival Materials Conservation Centre

Realising a state-of-the-art facility dedicated to the preservation, restoration, and study of historical manuscripts and archival materials from AIUla. The centre is part of the broader Kingdom's Institute initiative that focuses on conserving and interpreting AIUla's rich cultural heritage.



### AlMuadham Fort Restoration Project

Restoring AlMuadham Fort involves rehabilitating the ancient structure established in 1622 AD as a station for pilgrims and Umrah performers to rest. AlMuadham Fort typifies the detail of Islamic architecture and reflects the interest of the late Islamic eras in serving pilgrims on the Levant route. It also served as a headquarters for military barracks to secure the way to and from Madinah and Makkah.



### The Archaeological Fieldwork Basecamp

Designing an advanced facility to support the extensive archaeological activities in AIUla, AIUla's Archaeological Fieldwork Basecamp will provide modern amenities to researchers, including lodging, laboratories, and training spaces, ensuring they have the resources for detailed archaeological study and preservation work.



### The Social Habilitation Centre

Designing the Social Habilitation Centre, as part of a broader effort under the Journey Through Time Masterplan, to foster the integration of individuals with disabilities into supportive communities. Spanning a vast area of 20,000 m<sup>2</sup>, the facilities are designed to provide a comprehensive range of services, addressing the diverse needs of individuals with disabilities and offering opportunities for growth, learning, and social engagement.



### The Chedi Hegra Boutique Hotel

Launching the Chedi Hegra Boutique Hotel in 2024 will feature the hotel nestled within the captivating surroundings of Hegra, a UNESCO World Heritage Site. The hotel will serve 35 uniquely crafted guest rooms intertwined with the Hegra landscape and offering panoramic views of the surrounding desert and rock formations. Set to open at full capacity in 2024.



### The Cloud Services Project

Launching the Cloud Services Project as part of a broader digital transformation strategy aimed at integrating digital and data solutions into everyday life in AIUla. The project is designed to provide advanced digital and smart services to the community, visitors and investors and involves deploying cutting-edge technologies, including AI and cloud services, to create a seamless and integrated digital environment.



# 6

## Appendix



- ◇ KPIs Mapping
- ◇ Awards and Certifications
- ◇ Partnerships
- ◇ Stakeholder Engagement
- ◇ Acronyms and Abbreviations

**This Appendix presents the outcomes of the KPIs mapping exercise conducted against the international standards and frameworks used**

Section	Pillar	Topic	KPI	International Standards	UN SDGs
<b>Governance</b>	<b>Transparency and Accountability</b>	Sustainable Compliance and Reporting	-	-	UN SDG 16: Peace, Justice, and Strong Institutions
		Leadership Diversity and independence	-	-	UN SDG 5: Gender Equality, UN SDG 10: Reduced Inequalities, UN SDG 16: Peace, Justice, and Strong Institutions
	<b>Internal Governance</b>	Compliance with the Code of Ethics	Percentage of RCU policies published	-	UN SDG 16: Peace, Justice, and Strong Institutions
		Internal Policies and Regulations	Percentage of RCU policies published	-	UN SDG 16: Peace, Justice, and Strong Institutions
		Anti-bribery and Corruption	-	-	UN SDG 16: Peace, Justice, and Strong Institutions
		Whistleblower Programme	-	-	UN SDG 16: Peace, Justice, and Strong Institutions
	<b>Ecosystem Governance</b>	Responsible Procurement and Supply Chain	-	-	UN SDG 12: Responsible Consumption and Production



Dimension	Pillar	Topic	KPI	International Standards	UN SDGs
<b>Cultural</b>	<b>Heritage Conservation</b>	Tangible Heritage Conservation	Heritage sustainability index, # of heritage preservation and protection activities, # of heritage/archeological sites with Management Plan, # of major and permanent monuments containing clear protection plans, % of collections stored to environmental standards, # of movable art and heritage assets with a condition assessment, # of items added to the collections management system	UNESCO: Sustainable management of heritage	UN SDG 11: Sustainable Cities and Communities
		Intangible Heritage Conservation	Number of advertisements and media messages related to cultural heritage, Number of heritage research articles published in a scholarly journal	UNESCO: Sustainable management of heritage	UN SDG 11: Sustainable Cities and Communities
	<b>Local Access and Contribution</b>	Cultural Education	-	UNESCO: Cultural & artistic education	UN SDG 4: Quality Education, UN SDG 11: Sustainable Cities and Communities
		Cultural Infrastructure and Facilities	Number of open and activated arts and culture assets at AIUla Number of heritage sites open to visitors	UNESCO: Cultural facilities	UN SDG 9: Industry Innovation & Infrastructure, UN SDG 11: Sustainable Cities and Communities
		Local Participation	-	UNESCO: Cultural participation UNESCO: Participatory processes	UN SDG 8: Decent Work and Economic Growth, UN SDG 10: Reduced Inequalities, UN SDG 11: Sustainable Cities and Communities

Appendix - KPIs Mapping

Dimension	Pillar	Topic	KPI	International Standards	UN SDGs
Cultural	Cultural Development	Self-Sufficiency	Number of jobs generated from the arts and culture sectors	UNESCO: Cultural participation	UN SDG 8: Decent Work and Economic Growth, UN SDG 10: Reduced Inequalities, UN SDG 11: Sustainable Cities and Communities
		Public Support and Private Sponsorship	-	UNESCO: Cultural participation UNESCO: Expenditure on heritage UNESCO: Public finance for culture	UN SDG 8: Decent Work and Economic Growth, UN SDG 10: Reduced Inequalities, UN SDG 11: Sustainable Cities and Communities, UN SDG 17: Partnership for the Goals
		International Visibility	Visitors Satisfaction with Heritage Sites Experience, Number of participations of local artistic, Local art pieces or official representation in overseas arts and culture events, exhibitions/ festivals	UNESCO: Participatory processes	UN SDG 8: Decent Work and Economic Growth, UN SDG 10: Reduced Inequalities, UN SDG 11: Sustainable Cities and Communities, UN SDG 17: Partnership for the Goals
Social	Health and Wellbeing	Good Health	Targeted average response time for emergency situations in AIUla	-	UN SDGs 1: No Poverty, UN SDG 3: Good Health and Wellbeing, UN SDG 10: Reduced Inequalities
		Quality of Life	Length of pedestrian paths per capita, Percentage of sanitation coverage to population, Number of car accident fatalities per 1,000 inhabitants Resident satisfaction level, Satisfaction level with local regulations	GRI 203-1 Infrastructure investments and services supported GRI 403-9 Occupational Health and Safety	UN SDG 3: Good Health and Wellbeing, UN SDG 9: Industry Innovation & Infrastructure, UN SDG 11: Sustainable Cities and Communities
	Social Advancement	Poverty Reduction	Median monthly income per capita	GRI 203-2 Significant indirect economic impacts	UN SDGs 1: No Poverty, UN SDG 10: Reduced Inequalities
		Access to Social and Municipal Services	-	-	UN SDGs 1: No Poverty, UN SDG 10: Reduced Inequalities
Social	Social Advancement	Diversity and Inclusion	Percentage of FTEs hired vs planned amount in RCU, Employee Retention Rate, Percentage of women's participation in the labour market	GRI 401-1 New employee hires and employee turnover	UN SDG 5: Gender Equality, UN SDG 8: Decent Work and Economic Growth

Dimension	Pillar	Topic	KPI	International Standards	UN SDGs
Social	Social Advancement	Inclusive Education	-	-	UN SDG 4: Quality Education, UN SDG 5: Gender Equality, UN SDG 10: Reduced Inequalities
	Engagement and Cooperation	Community Engagement	Number of calendar events	-	UN SDG 3: Good Health and Wellbeing, UN SDG 8: Decent Work and Economic Growth, UN SDG 11: Sustainable Cities and Communities, UN SDG 16: Peace, Justice, and Strong Institutions
		Access to Information	Transparency level of regulatory system	GRI 2-26 Mechanisms for seeking advice and raising concerns	UN SDG 16: Peace, Justice, and Strong Institutions
		International Cooperation	-	-	UN SDG 17: Partnership for the Goals
Economic	Long Term Value Creation	Financial Sustainability	-	-	-
		Tourism	# of hotel rooms, AIUla Positive Sentiment indicator, AIUla Destination Awareness, # of visits per year, # films produced in AIUla, % of off-season visits, The Net Promoter Score, Tourist satisfaction level	GRI 201 Economic Performance GRI 203-2 Significant indirect economic impacts GSTC Pillar(s): Sustainable Management, GSTC Pillar(s): Socioeconomic Impacts UNESCO: Expenditure on heritage	UN SDG 8: Decent Work and Economic Growth, UN SDG 9: Industry Innovation & Infrastructure, UN SDG 11: Sustainable Cities and Communities

Appendix - KPIs Mapping

Dimension	Pillar	Topic	KPI	International Standards	UN SDGs	
Economic	Long Term Value Creation	Diversification and Innovation	Number of jobs generated by the tourism sector, Cumulative # of jobs generated by other non-tourism sectors, Cumulative value added (GDP) from other non-tourism sectors	GRI 203-2 Significant indirect economic impacts GSTC Pillar(s): Sustainable Management, GSTC Pillar(s): Socioeconomic Impacts UNESCO: Expenditure on heritage	UN SDG 8: Decent Work and Economic Growth, UN SDG 9: Industry Innovation & Infrastructure, UN SDG 11: Sustainable Cities and Communities	
		Infrastructure and Service Quality	Percentage of wireless broadband coverage	GRI 203-1 Infrastructure investments and services supported	UN SDG 9: Industry Innovation & Infrastructure, UN SDG 11: Sustainable Cities and Communities	
	Local Content	Entrepreneurship and Local SMEs	Number of active MSMEs for 3 years or more in AIUla, Number of new MSMEs in AIUla	GRI 201-1: Direct Value Generated	UN SDG 8: Decent Work and Economic Growth, UN SDG 9: Industry Innovation & Infrastructure, UN SDG 11: Sustainable Cities and Communities	
		Local Production and Consumption	Percentage of spend on local suppliers, Average tourist spend per day	GRI 201-1 Direct economic value generated and distributed GRI 204-1 Proportion of spending on local suppliers	UN SDG 8: Decent Work and Economic Growth, UN SDG 9: Industry Innovation & Infrastructure, UN SDG 10: Reduced Inequalities, UN SDG 11: Sustainable Cities and Communities	
		Local Job Creation	Unemployment rate, Percentage of Saudi residents engaged in AIUla Hotels & Resorts, Amount of private investment inflows to AIUla	GRI 201-1 Direct economic value generated and distributed	UN SDG 8: Decent Work and Economic Growth, UN SDG 9: Industry Innovation & Infrastructure, UN SDG 10: Reduced Inequalities, UN SDG 11: Sustainable Cities and Communities	
	Skills and Excellence	Knowledge Transfer and Upskilling	Number of residents graduated from AIUla advanced upskilling programmes	GRI 404-1 Average hours of training per year per employee GRI 404-2 Programmes for upgrading employee skills and transition assistance Programmes	UN SDG 4: Quality Education, UN SDG 8: Decent Work and Economic Growth, UN SDG 9: Industry Innovation & Infrastructure, UN SDG 10: Reduced Inequalities, UN SDG 11: Sustainable Cities and Communities	
		Labour Conditions	-	-	UN SDG 8: Decent Work and Economic Growth	
	Environmental	Water	Water Network	Percentage of water services coverage to population	GRI 203-1 Infrastructure investments and services supported	UN SDG 6: Clean Water and Sanitation, UN SDG 9: Industry Innovation & Infrastructure, UN SDG 11: Sustainable Cities and Communities
			Water Source	Percentage of reuse of treated sewage water	GRI 303-2: Management of water discharge related impacts GRI 303-5: Water recycling and reuse	UN SDG 6: Clean Water and Sanitation, UN SDG 9: Industry Innovation & Infrastructure, UN SDG 11: Sustainable Cities and Communities

Dimension	Pillar	Topic	KPI	International Standards	UN SDGs	
Environmental	Water	Water Use	-	-	UN SDG 6: Clean Water and Sanitation , UN SDG 12: Responsible Consumption and Production	
		Protection	Protected and conserved areas (PCAs) in % of total territory	GRI 304-3 Habitats protected or restored	UN SDG 15: Life on Land	
	Biodiversity	Rewilding				UN SDG 15: Life on Land
		Restoration	Number of planted trees in AIUla protected areas, Area of restored rangeland within AIUla, Number of flora species revegetated in AIUla	GRI 304-3 Habitats protected or restored	UN SDG 11: Sustainable Cities and Communities, UN SDG 15: Life on Land	
		Sustainable Urban Development	Urban green area per capita	GRI 203-1 Infrastructure investments and services supported	UN SDG 11: Sustainable Cities and Communities, UN SDG 15: Life on Land	
		Conservation	-	-	UN SDG 2: No Hunger, UN SDG 15: Life on Land	
	Waste and Circular Economy	Diversion from Landfill	-	GRI 306-2 Management of Significant Waste related impacts GRI 306-4 Waste Diverted	UN SDG 12: Responsible Consumption and Production	
		Waste Collection	-	GRI 306-2 Management of Significant Waste related impacts	UN SDG 11: Sustainable Cities and Communities	
		Waste Generation	Waste conversion rate	-	UN SDG 11: Sustainable Cities and Communities, UN SDG 12: Responsible Consumption and Production	
	Carbon Footprint	Green Buildings	-	-	UN SDG 11: Sustainable Cities and Communities, UN SDG 13: Climate Action	
		Green Mobility	-	-	UN SDG 11: Sustainable Cities and Communities, UN SDG 13: Climate Action	
		Carbon Neutral	CO <sub>2</sub> emissions reduced (tonnes of CO <sub>2</sub> equivalent)	GRI 305-5 Reduction of GHG emissions	UN SDG 13: Climate Action	

**RCU's efforts in sustainability are showcased through the wide range of regional and international awards and certifications received up to 31 December 2023**

Awards and Certifications						
	<p><b>European Foundation for Quality Management EFQM (5 stars)</b></p>	<p><b>ISO 31000: Risk Management</b></p>	<p><b>The PMO Global Awards - PMO Global Alliance</b></p>	<p><b>ISO 22301:2019 Security and Resilience (Business Continuity Management System)</b></p>	<p><b>Airport Council International (ACI) – Airport Customer Experience Accreditation</b></p>	<p><b>ISO 37000:2021 Certification for Governance Management</b></p>
<p><b>Description</b></p>	<p>Provides a framework for assessing and promoting organisational excellence by helping organisations understand their current performance, identify areas for improvement, and achieve sustainable success.</p>	<p>Guides organisations in systematically identifying, assessing, and managing risks to enhance decision-making and achieve targeted objectives.</p>	<p>Recognises and celebrates excellence in Project Management Offices (PMOs) worldwide, fostering global collaboration and best practices. At RCU, our PMO has been vital in spearheading strategic initiatives from conception through implementation, leading AIUla through the rapid modernisation, advancement and touristic boom that it has experienced.</p>	<p>Guides organisations globally in establishing and maintaining effective Business Continuity Management Systems, ensuring resilience and preparedness for potential disruptions.</p>	<p>Acknowledges airports worldwide for providing exceptional customer experiences and maintaining high standards in service quality.</p>	<p>Provides guidance on the effective management of an organisation, including risk management, measurement and evaluation of performance, and decision-making processes.</p>
<p><b>Associated Region</b></p>	<p>International</p>	<p>International</p>	<p>International</p>	<p>International</p>	<p>International</p>	<p>International</p>

**Awards and Certifications**



**ISO 37120  
World Council  
on City Data**

Defines and establishes methodologies for a set of indicators to steer and measure the performance of city services and quality of life.

**Description**

**Associated Region**

**International**



**ISO 37120:  
City Data  
Management**

Provides guidelines for effective City Data Management, allowing cities globally to measure, monitor, and enhance their sustainability and quality of life through a standardised set of indicators.

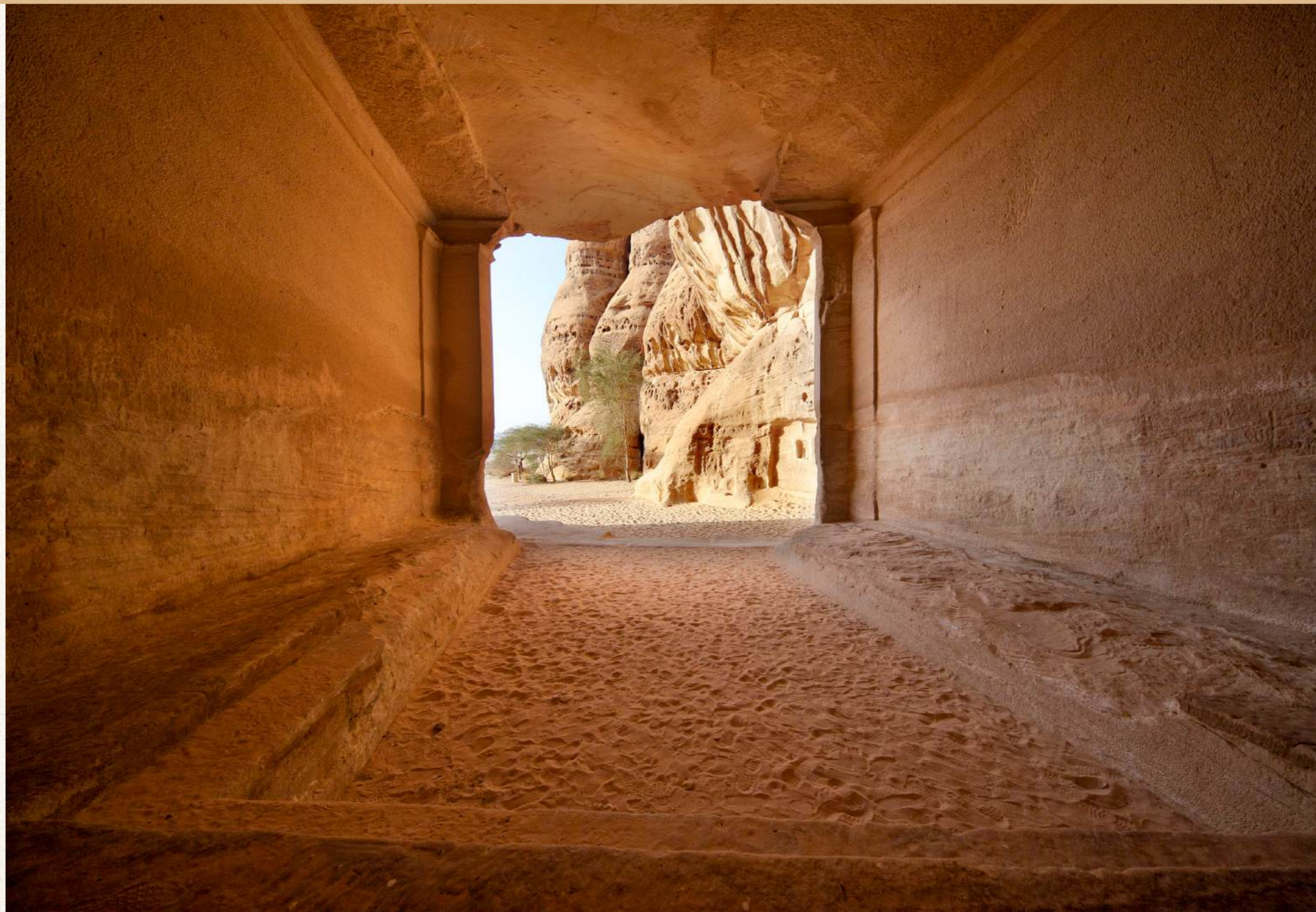
**International**



**Arab Bike  
City Award**

Recognises AIUla's commitment to cycling infrastructure, its exceptional environment and location, and its remarkable event hosting and logistical capabilities. A vital component of striving to be a sustainability champion and environmental steward is minimising environmental impacts and promoting a healthier environment and modes of living, that's exactly what RCU envisions for AIUla with the attention to green mobility initiatives such as biking and walking.

**Middle East**



**In the pursuit of our ambitious sustainability goals, collaboration stands as a cornerstone principle for RCU and is supported by a number of international partnerships and MoUs. Among them are:**



### World Bank

The long-term strategic partnership with the World Bank aims to promote economic growth, social wellbeing, and environmental regeneration, providing frameworks for development and fostering the growing tourism sector. It supports RCU in improving environmental sustainability, economic and social inclusion, and climate resilience in AIUla, alongside facilitating tourism development through the development of an executive programme across all sectors of the Commission, enabling systematic assessment of the current status of the developmental sustainability within the Commission, identifying approaches to address gaps, and determining next steps.



### UNESCO

In a pivotal multi-sector strategic collaboration with UNESCO, RCU aims to elevate AIUla's stature as a sustainable heritage tourism destination. This partnership emphasises the preservation and promotion of cultural heritage while fostering sustainable tourism practices. As a result, AIUla boasts the distinction of having two UNESCO-certified World Heritage Sites, Jabal Ikmah and Hegra further solidifying its significance on the global stage of cultural and historical preservation.



### ICOMOS

In collaboration with ICOMOS, RCU endeavors to protect and enhance AIUla's cultural heritage. Through initiatives aimed at raising awareness, capacity-building, and research support, this partnership seeks to safeguard AIUla's archaeological sites and cultural legacy. It consists of the launch of six programmes that support scientific research, the translation of academic works on the preservation of antiquities into Arabic, and the education of students and experts in the field of heritage and antiquities.



### Panthera

The MoU aims to support the revitalisation of the Arabian leopard through a number of initiatives, such as investing 20 million USD over the next ten years in setting-up of an international fund aimed at protecting and enhancing the remaining wild populations, captive breeding programmes, international partnerships, community-based conservation projects, scientific research to support the future of this rare species and the cautious release of Arabian leopards back into the wild.



### IUCN

In partnership with IUCN, RCU is committed to conserving AIUla's natural ecosystems and wildlife. Through a multi-sector approach, this collaboration focuses on biodiversity protection, sustainability, and community engagement to ensure the preservation of AIUla's heritage and natural resources.



### Space for Giants

The MoU aims to preserve biodiversity and establish and execute programmes to manage, safeguard, and monitor the environment and biodiversity over the next three years. Both parties will work together to align their efforts with international standards, Saudi Vision 2030, and the Saudi Green Initiative by designing and implementing joint activities focused on managing, protecting, and monitoring biodiversity and natural environments.





## GOVERNEMENT

*Liberté  
Égalité  
Fraternité*

### French Government

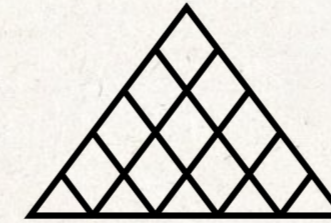
Aligned with the Saudi-French governmental agreement, RCU's partnership with France aims to elevate AIUla's global profile through knowledge exchange, capacity-building, and technology transfer. This collaboration facilitates the implementation of regulatory frameworks and fosters expertise exchange to enhance AIUla's cultural and tourism offerings.

Through this strategic partnership, RCU has achieved remarkable milestones, such as:

- Execution of art projects with on-site presence, offering legal advice and sustainable financial planning recommendations, and implementing technological solutions.

- Signing an agreement with the Centre Pompidou as a strategic partner for a contemporary art exhibition in AIUla.
- Hosting archaeological missions and presenting research papers at international conferences, including the 13th International Congresses on the Archaeology of the Ancient Near East (ICAANE).
- Establishment of the Hegra Villa Foundation Board of Trustees.
- Contract signing for the implementation of the Sharaan Resort project and the Sharaan Summit Hall for Conferences with the French company Bouygues, designed by Jean Nouvel.
- Organising an event in Paris with over 160 attendees, including the screening of the

- documentary film "The Ancient City of Dadan | Lost Treasures of Arabia" by National Geographic.
- Training of three technicians on agricultural collection standards, seed and root quality assessment, preservation, testing, and cultivation.
- Publication of approximately 167 articles in the French press about AIUla, reaching a cumulative readership of around 365 million readers.
- Launch of the strategy and vision of AIAtheeb Equestrian Village led by the French company Egis.



### Louvre Museum

A five-year agreement with the Paris-based Louvre Museum, which features the displaying of a sculpture from the Lihyanite period, drawing the attention of the nearly ten million visitors that the museum receives each year. The statue was found at the Dadan archaeological site in AIUla and is believed to represent the king of the Lihyanite population and dates to the fifth to third century BCE.

### Centre Pompidou



### Centre Pompidou

A commitment to formally develop, reinforce, and broaden cooperation and knowledge sharing prior to the building of a new modern art museum in AIUla in 2027. The museum will set new benchmarks in sustainable design by demonstrating how architecture can be a catalyst for environmental and urban regeneration and by providing opportunities for community engagement through workshops, school programmes, and other events.



### Université Paris 1 Panthéon-Sorbonne

The partnership aims to establish an integrated systems for knowledge transfer, training, and research while pursuing new avenues for cooperation and extending shared objectives in cultural and heritage conservation. The agreement will also see the establishment of the Jausen & Savignac Archaeological Research Centre both in France and AIUla. The centre will act as a focal point for the unique comprehensive research, publication, and circulation of scholarly work relevant to north-west KSA.



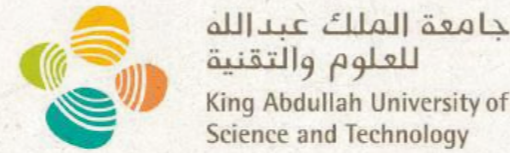
### AfALULA

Designed to gather French expertise in culture and heritage, architecture and urban development, tourism and hospitality, security and safety, human capital, environment and infrastructures, botanical products, agriculture, archeology, equestrian projects, and development, the initiative aims to assist RCU in a cooperative development mindset. It implements a new model of economic and tourist development with an emphasis on preservation of the environment, reverence for the past and the land, and involvement of the local community.



### Matera

The partnership, between RCU and Italian city of Matera, aims to establish a worldwide destination in ways that are advantageous to the AIUla community, economy, and environment. AIUla and Matera will work together to promote common prosperity, while giving the people of both towns opportunities to organise cultural exchanges, co-create initiatives, and exchange knowledge on range of cooperation areas.



### KAUST

Addressing critical agricultural challenges through two primary initiatives focused on pest and water management, the partnership provides solutions that safeguard the environment and cultural heritage while combining sustainability and efficiency. It promotes the use of traditional and innovative materials such as KAUST's cement blend, sandstone blocks, and earthen architecture.



### Red Sea Global

Seeks to expedite Saudi Arabia's rise to prominence as a preferred destination for travellers and investors worldwide, assisting both groups in their endeavours to establish new benchmarks for responsible development and fulfilling their roles as pillars of Vision 2030. Cooperating with RSG on a multi-sectoral level and leveraging its ambitious vision to become the global leader in regenerative tourism, the partnership aims to co-design and implement joint projects, bridging RCU and RSG's high-level expertise. It aims to develop specific areas of collaboration and projects between RCU's Sustainability Planning Department and RSG in coordination with the Partnership

Team, demonstrating both parties' mutual commitment towards a more sustainable future. By showcasing how responsible and regenerative development can uplift communities, drive economies, and enhance the environment, it aims to achieve the mutually committed sustainable objectives across four main pillars:

- Regional Recycling Programme
- Natural Habitat Mapping
- Establish an Industrial Ecosystem
- Climate Change Forum

## We acknowledge and highlight the contributions of various stakeholders who played a crucial role in preparing, reviewing, and refining the content and design of this sustainability report

The stakeholders' expertise, insights, and collaborative efforts were instrumental in ensuring the accuracy, comprehensiveness, and overall quality of the report. The following table presents the key stakeholders, their roles, and their contributions to the sustainability report.

Name	Role	Contribution
Waleed AIDayel	Chief Strategy and Digital Officer	Provided strategic guidance and ensured alignment with the Commission's goals and sustainability objectives
Abdulrahman Altrairi	Chief Communications and Public Relations Officer	
Abdulaziz Haddadi	Sustainability Planning VP (Acting)	
Catherine Cone	Sustainability Director	Served as the core project team that helped deliver, review and refine the sustainability report in addition to having facilitated all internal and external stakeholder engagement throughout all phases of the report's development.
Carla Korpijaakko	Ecological Impact Assessment Consultant, Planning and Development	
Hiba Tiro	Sustainability Planning Manager	
Rakan Shokor	Project Manager	
Doha Shaabien	Senior Sustainability Specialist	
Talel Stambouli	Irrigation and Infrastructure Manager	Provided specialised knowledge and insights on Water-related topics under the Environmental dimension
Abdullah Alzouri	Utilities Operations Manager	Provided specialised knowledge and insights on Waste-related topics under the Environmental dimension
Fahad Algaed	Facilities Maintenance Lead	
Harpreet Hanjra	Infrastructure and Utilities Director	
AbdulMajed AlHamri	City Environmental Services Senior Manager	
Omar Alobudi	Maintenance and Operations Manager	
Osama Mohammed	Infrastructure Development Manager	
Abdullah Alzouri	Utilities Operations Manager	

Name	Role	Contribution
Amin Elniema	Roads and Traffic Manager	Provided specialised knowledge and insights on Carbon-related topics under the Environmental dimension
Hiba Tiro	Sustainability Planning Manager	Provided specialised knowledge and insights on Biodiversity-related topics under the Environmental dimension
Shauna K Rees	Plant Restoration Ecologist Lead	
Louren Du Preez van Hessen	Wildlife and Natural Heritage Research Advisory Director	
Jose Ferreira	Conservation Breeding & Reintroduction Director	
Mohammed Zaarour	Nature Reserve Director	
Benjamin Yihan	Habitat Regeneration and Landscaping Director	Provided specialised knowledge and insights on Sustainability-related topics under the Environmental dimension
Josh Kempinski	Wildlife and Natural Heritage Advisor	
Carla Korpijaakko	Ecological Impact Assessment Lead Consultant, Planning and Development	
Ayman AlHeji	Sustainability Planning Consultant	
Reine Youssef	Sustainability Content Consultant	Provided specialised knowledge and insights on the Cultural dimension
Doha Shaabien	Senior Sustainability Specialist	
Kirk Roberts	Heritage Administration Director	
Myrto D Tsitsinaki	Conservation Director	
Eddy Van Hamersveld	Culture Planning Intelligence Advisor	
Jonathan Wilson	Collections Senior Manager	
Guilia Edimond	Care and Conservation Manager	
Rebecca Foote	Archaeologist	
Kate Hall Tipping	Cultural Planning Consultant	Provided specialised knowledge and insights on the Social dimension
Zuhur Alanazi	Sector Planning & Performance Senior Specialist	
Aara Mansouri	Economic and Social Development Vice President	

## Appendix - Stakeholder Engagement

Name	Role	Contribution
Eibtihal Balol	Community Engagement Lead	Provided specialised knowledge and insights on the Social dimension
AbdulMalik Alhammad	Healthcare Director	
Manal Shams	Wellbeing Senior Manager	
Abdullah Ramadan	Economic Development Programme Manager	
Hamam Adam	Community Development Programmes & Partnership Manager	
Nader Bakkar	Project Manager	
Rami AlMoallim	Destinations Management and Marketing Vice President	
Richard Kadongola	Monitoring and Assessment Lead	Provided specialised knowledge and insights on the Economic dimension
Nizar Fakhoury	Destinations Management and Marketing Development Executive Director	
Yuri D Horowitz	Destinations Management and Marketing Development Director	
Abdullah Ramadan	Economic Development Programme Manager	
Noura AlRuwaitea	AIUa Events Manager	
Kholoud AlManea	AIUa Events Manager	
Hector Paris	AIUa Events Manager	
Claudio Chittaro	Strategy and Performance Executive Director	Conducted thorough reviews and provided feedback on the report's content and design through the lens of Strategy
Hussain Mustafa	Senior Organisational Performance Specialist	
Yasser Sahaht	Strategic Performance Management Consultant	
Ghada Alnaimi	Awards and Accreditation Manager	Conducted thorough reviews and provided feedback on the report's content and design through the lens of Organisational Excellence
Shatha Alharbi	Senior Organisational Excellence Specialist	Conducted thorough reviews and provided feedback on the report's content and design through the lens of Organisational Excellence
Khaled Althenayan	Policy Development Senior Specialist	
Nouf Khan	Governance General Manager	Conducted thorough reviews and provided feedback on the report's content and design through the lens of Governance, Risk and Compliance
Ali G Faour	Governance Manager	
Luai Qusti	Centre Documentation Archives and Correspondence Manager	

Name	Role	Contribution
Ahmad Ruhaiyem	Data Management and Intelligence Director	Conducted thorough reviews and provided feedback on the report's content and design through the lens of Data, Digital and Analytics
Saud AlMajed	Senior Data Management Specialist	
Adwaa Binkharssan	Senior IT Business Analyst, Digital & Analytics	
Momen Eid	Planning Policy and Regulations Director	Conducted thorough reviews and provided feedback on the report's content and design through the lens of Planning
Maher R AlSubhi	Planning and Development Consultant	
Marta Alvarez	Consultant - Vendor	Conducted thorough reviews and provided feedback on the report's content and design through the lens of Destination Management and Marketing
Gretel Posadas	International and Strategic Partnership Advisor	Conducted thorough reviews and provided feedback on the report's content and design as representatives from the CEO's office
Board Secretariat	Board Secretariat	Facilitated engagement and feedback from the Board of Directors
Amal Alsayegh	Corporate Communications Senior Manager, Marketing & Communication	Conducted thorough reviews and provided feedback on the report's content and design through the lens of Public Relations, Branding, and Corporate Communications
Wedjan Alhawtan	Corporate Communications Manager	
Ridad Alem	Corporate Brand Manager, Marketing & Communication	
Khalil Nabelsi	Senior Consultant Marketing and Communication, Marketing & Communication	



Acronyms and  
**Abbreviations**



## Acronyms and Abbreviations

Terms	Definition
<b>AATC</b>	AIUla's Advanced Training Centre
<b>AD</b>	Anno Domini
<b>ACI</b>	Airport Council International
<b>AfALULA</b>	French Agency for AIUla Development
<b>AFOLU</b>	Agriculture, Forestry and Other Land Use
<b>AI</b>	Artificial Intelligence
<b>AVL</b>	Automatic Vehicle Location
<b>BCE</b>	Before the Common Era
<b>BoD</b>	Board of Directors
<b>CEC</b>	Corporate Ethics Compliance department
<b>CEO</b>	Chief Executive Officer
<b>CU</b>	Continuous Update
<b>CO<sub>2</sub></b>	Carbon Dioxide
<b>DMM</b>	Destination Management and Marketing
<b>DSI</b>	Dark Sky International

Terms	Definition
<b>ESD</b>	Economic and Social Development
<b>ESG</b>	Environment, Social, Governance
<b>ESIA</b>	Environmental and Social Impact Assessment
<b>EV</b>	Electric Vehicle
<b>F&amp;B</b>	Food and Beverages
<b>FM</b>	Frequency Modulation
<b>FTE</b>	Full-time Employee
<b>GBF</b>	Global Biodiversity Framework
<b>GDP</b>	Gross Domestic Product
<b>GHG</b>	Greenhouse Gas
<b>GPS</b>	Global Positioning System
<b>GRC</b>	Governance, Risk and Compliance
<b>GRI</b>	Global Reporting Initiative
<b>GSTC</b>	Global Sustainable Tourism Council
<b>ICOMOS</b>	International Council on Monuments and Sites

Terms	Definition
<b>ISO</b>	International Organisation for Standardisation
<b>IUCN</b>	International Union for Conservation of Nature
<b>KPI</b>	Key Performance Indicator
<b>KSA</b>	Kingdom of Saudi Arabia
<b>LEED</b>	Leadership in Energy and Environmental Design
<b>MoU</b>	Memorandum of Understanding
<b>MENA</b>	Middle East and North Africa
<b>MEWA</b>	Ministry of Environment, Water and Agriculture
<b>MSME</b>	Micro, Small or Medium-sized Enterprise
<b>NGO</b>	Non-governmental Organisation
<b>NCVC</b>	National Centre for Vegetation Cover Development & Combating Desertification
<b>NPS</b>	Net Promoter Score
<b>NWC</b>	National Wildlife Centre
<b>PMO</b>	Project Management Office
<b>RCU</b>	The Royal Commision for AIUla

Terms	Definition
<b>RSG</b>	Red Sea Global
<b>SAR</b>	Saudi Arabian Riyals
<b>SEA</b>	Strategic Environmental Assessment
<b>STC</b>	Saudi Telecommunication Company
<b>tCO<sub>2</sub>e</b>	Tonnes of Carbon Dioxide Equivalent
<b>TEMS</b>	Telemetric Environmental Monitoring System
<b>UN</b>	United Nations
<b>UN COP28</b>	28 <sup>th</sup> meeting of the United Nations Conference of the Parties
<b>UNEP</b>	United Nations Environment Programme
<b>UNFCCC</b>	United Nations Framework Convention on Climate Change
<b>UN SDG</b>	United Nations Sustainable Development Goal
<b>UNESCO</b>	The United Nations Educational, Scientific and Cultural Organisation
<b>USD</b>	United States Dollar
<b>UV</b>	Ultraviolet



## Report disclaimer

This report aims to institutionalise sustainability best practices and enhance transparency and accountability across the municipality and its stakeholders.

This report is not intended in any way or form for accreditation purposes nor is it intended for any public listing.

