

# ANNUAL REPORT 2023

الهيئة الملكية لمحافظة العلا  
Royal Commission for AlUla



**In the name of Allah, the Most Gracious, the Most Merciful**

“

We have confidence in the abilities of the Saudi citizens, and we place great hopes in this nation to build our country with sense of responsibility. Every citizen in our country, and every part of our beloved nation, is the focus of my attention and care. We look forward to everyone contributing to serving this nation.

”

**King Salman bin Abdulaziz Al Saud**  
Custodian of the Two Holy Mosques



“

The Kingdom is witnessing a paradigm shift in new and promising sectors due to its unique cultural heritage, geographic diversity, and distinctive demographics; this enables the Kingdom to be among the leading countries in tourism, culture, sports, entertainment, and other sectors.

”

**Mohammed bin Salman bin Abdulaziz Al Saud**

His Royal Highness, the Crown Prince, President of the Council of Ministers, and Chairman of the Board of Royal Commission for AIUla





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**01**

Preamble

## Speech of His Highness the Governor of the Royal Commission for AIUla

The Royal Commission for AIUla (RCU) continues to make substantial progress in realizing the goals outlined in AIUla Vision, stemming from the Saudi Vision 2030, to develop the county that is rich in history, culture, and stunning natural diversity, into a leading global destination on the cultural tourism map. This is guided and supported by the custodian of the Two Holy Mosques, King Salman bin Abdulaziz Al Saud and His Royal Highness Prince Mohammed bin Salman bin Abdulaziz Al Saud, the Crown Prince, Prime Minister of the Kingdom of Saudi Arabia and Chairman of the Board of Directors of the Royal Commission for AIUla, and in a strategic partnership with the people of AIUla.

In the year 2023, numerous strategic projects and initiatives were implemented, with a primary focus on preserving AIUla's heritage and natural treasures. Notably, these efforts resulted in the growing presence of AIUla, with its historic and natural sites, in the circle of interest of global cultural and tourist organizations, such as the "Old Town" being recognized among the world's finest tourist villages, while "Jabal Ikma" earned a place in the United Nations Educational, Scientific and Cultural Organization's (UNESCO) "Memory of the World" register. This accomplishment adds to the inscribed historical site of "Hegra" on UNESCO's World Heritage List in 2008. Furthermore, in 2022, the "Harrat Uwayrid" reserve was included in the Man and Biosphere Programme (map).

Within the scope of tourism and sports development, several resorts and hotels have been unveiled. Notable among them are the "Sharaan Resort", "Azulik," "The Chedi Hegra," and others. These developments are the result of the partnerships forged with both local and international sectors. Furthermore, the sports sector is being harnessed to its full potential through a comprehensive national approach. As part of this effort, the ownership of "AIUla Club" has been transferred to RCU, and major championships for authentic popular sports, such as AIUla Camel Cup and the announcement of AIUla's falconry tournament.

In its commitment to enhancing the quality of life in AIUla, RCU has unveiled an urban development plan for the central and southern regions of the county. This plan, operating under the banner of "Towards a prosperous society," aims to foster the simultaneous development of both the people and the region. Additionally, significant agreements have been reached with local and international partners to bolster and improve various services. These include strengthening healthcare services, enhancing energy and electrical services, and implementing better infrastructure management. In terms of promoting and preserving environmental diversity, RCU continued to implement numerous initiatives and projects to restore ecosystems, by resettling some organisms in their natural habitats. This is evidenced by the successful implementation of the "Arabian Leopard" strategy, which has led to the announcement of several births, aligning with RCU's vision to protect this species from extinction. Additionally, the United Nations has recognized February 10th as the International Day of the Arabian Leopard.

In conclusion, I would like to express my sincere appreciation for the unwavering support that RCU has received from our wise leadership that has been a driving force behind all our achievements. I also extend my gratitude to the people of AIUla, the strategic partners of RCU, and my dedicated teammates who have demonstrated remarkable effort, resulting in the notable accomplishments of the past year.



**His Highness Prince Badr bin Abdullah bin Farhan Al Saud**  
Governor of the Royal Commission for AIUla



## Glossary and Abbreviations

Terms	Definition
<b>Report</b>	The annual report of the fiscal year 2023
<b>RCU</b>	Royal Commission for AIUla
<b>AIUla</b>	AIUla Governorate
<b>Local Community</b>	The locals and residents in AIUla Governorate
<b>Visitors</b>	Local and international tourists interested in visiting AIUla
<b>Portfolio</b>	A set of projects, programs, and other operations that achieve a specific strategic objective among RCU goals
<b>Gross Domestic Product</b>	The monetary value of all goods and services produced within the borders of the kingdom during a specific period of time
<b>Tangible Cultural Heritage</b>	All material traces such as archaeological sites and crafts
<b>Intangible Cultural Heritage</b>	The practices, traditions, knowledge, and skills created by a particular group or unidentified individuals within a specific society, reflecting the identity of this group, thereby constituting its cultural heritage
<b>Nature Reserves</b>	A protected area designated for the conservation of certain species of animals or plants, as well as for preserving the components of the environmental habitat suitable for them
<b>Seedling</b>	A young plant grown from a seed that is 30 cm to 1 m in length
<b>Habitats</b>	The natural environment in which an organism lives, including forests, grasslands, deserts, and bodies of water, providing it with food, water, and shelter to survive, grow, and reproduce
<b>Metaverse</b>	A virtual two or three dimensional environment for communication and interaction, providing users with immersive experiences in various fields

Terms	Definition
<b>Leopard cubs</b>	A young leopard
<b>Squill (scientific name: plicosepalus acaciae)</b>	Semi-invasive plant lives on acacias, has no roots and absorbs nutrients from host plant
<b>Social Researcher</b>	A specialist responsible for studying human behavior and interactions among individuals in society, using scientific methodologies to understand and analyze social challenges and propose solutions



Under the enchanting sky of AIUla, and among its towering mountains; the AIUla Summer Football Championship is held



## Summary

As part of RCU's strategic objectives to develop AIUla and enhance related activities and services within its jurisdiction, in light of the historical and natural significance of AIUla and its archaeological and natural sites, and to ensure the provision of services to the local community, residents and visitors at the highest levels, through a promising "AIUla Vision". The past year has been marked by high levels of key performance indicators. Furthermore, in accordance with Saudi Vision 2030, RCU's accomplishments meet certain objectives of the National Tourism Strategy and the National Environment Strategy. RCU has also overcome numerous challenges and enhanced future success through innovative approaches and advanced solutions to enhance future positive impact.

### Prominent KPIs and Actual Targeted Values for 2023

Indicator	Actual Value 2023	Targeted Value 2023
Number of calendar events	19	18
Number of heritage sites open to visitors	8	6
Number of heritage sites recognized by international organizations	6	4
Number of resettled animals in nature reserves	1,260	Not identified

Indicator	Actual Value 2023	Targeted Value 2023
Percentage of variance from overall development milestones	11%	10%
Number of active SMEs for 3 years or more in AIUla	556	213
Satisfaction level with local regulations	84%	66%



AIUla, home to traditional sports on the world map.

**Milestones**



**(UNESCO) has officially registered “Jabal Ikmah” in its World Memory Register**



**RCU has achieved the European Foundation for Quality Management (EFQM) Institutional Excellence Award at a 5-star level**



**AIUla obtained the WCCD ISO 37120 Gold Certification**, due to its commitment to high-quality data and excellence in planning, management, and governance



**AIUla Sports Club ownership has been transferred** to AIUla Sports Clubs Company that is owned by RCU



**A collaboration agreement was signed between RCU and Colleges of Excellence**, within the Technical and Vocational Education Development Program



**+150,000 visitors** attended RCU events and celebrations in AIUla



**150% increase in sales at the AIUla Dates Festival compared to the previous year**, with +1,255 tons of local dates sold and attendance exceeding 20,000 visitors



**889 wild animals from 4 species released** in Sharaan and Wadi Nakhlah nature reserves



**Producing approximately 300,000 native plants** of 80 native species



**Preparing for the opening of 3 luxury hotels** during 2024



**Developing the annual sustainability report**, based on the principle of transparency regarding global issues

**RCU main priorities for the year 2030 are focused on achieving the following:**

**1.2**

Million visits annually and 60 events

**130**

Native plant species will be produced in RCU nursery

**5/5**

Overall data maturity level for RCU and AIUla

**9**

Heritage sites open to visitors

**10,170**

Graduates from training programs

**90%**

Digital Transformation Index

**16**

Open cultural and artistic assets

**240**

Newly established small and medium-sized enterprises

**90%**

Of full-time employees

**75%**

Of the target attendance for art and cultural exhibitions

**90%**

Satisfaction rate among residents

**6**

Activated natural reserves

**5,500**

Hotel rooms

**3,673**

Animals released into natural reserves

**95%**

Satisfaction rate among residents regarding security and safety services

**2.5**

Million trees planted in protected areas

**80%**

Satisfaction rate regarding digital tools and services







02

Detailed Report





## Report Preparation Methodology

In reference to the Second Clause of the 29th Article of the Law of the Council of Ministers, which stipulates that all ministries and government agencies shall submit to the President of the Council of Ministers, within 90 days from the beginning of each fiscal year, a report on their achievements considering the general development plan for the past fiscal year. The report shall include the difficulties encountered and proposals to ensure the proper conduct of business. The annual report for 2023 of RCU was prepared through a detailed methodology ensuring the achievement of relevant standards. Coordination was facilitated by the Department of Organizational Excellence, with support from the senior management of RCU across all sectors and departments.

It is noteworthy here that RCU relies on the Annual Report Preparation Guide for Public Agencies in preparing its annual report, issued by the Council of Ministers under Resolution No. (233) dated 18/04/1443H, while adhering to the guidelines for publishing annual reports of public agencies issued by the National Center for Performance Management (Aada) dated 01/12/1444H

**Report preparation methodology includes 9 stages, namely:**

**1**

Preparing necessary templates for collecting content, through which data and information could be accessible

**2**

Holding workshops with all sectors and departments of RCU

**3**

Gathering report content in two stages and build its structure

**4**

Ensuring the inclusion of all required content and its compliance with the specified standards

**5**

Reviewing and proofreading the content linguistically and grammatically

**6**

Developing appropriate design and images

**7**

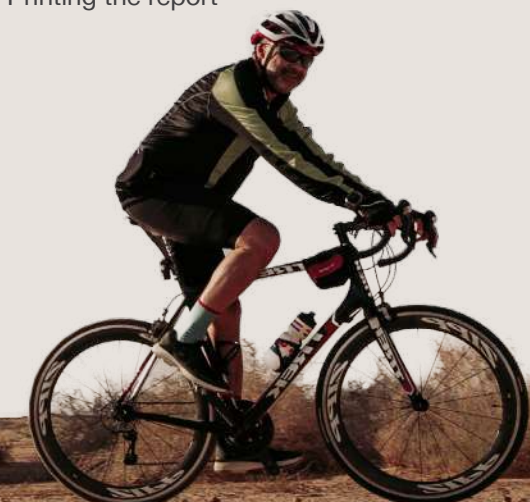
Obtaining necessary approvals from authorized persons

**8**

Preparing an electronic version of the annual report for publication on RCU's website

**9**

Printing the report





## The Royal Commission for AlUla

The Royal Commission for AlUla was established by Royal Decree No. (A/296) dated 26 Shawwal 1438H on July 20, 2017. Its main goals are to conserve and develop AlUla, as well as to accomplish a sustainable transformation into one of Saudi Arabia's most important archaeological, cultural, and environmental attractions. All efforts are put forth with historical relevance and at the pace of accomplishing the AlUla vision and its economic and cultural objectives in line with Saudi Vision 2030. A key priority for RCU is to create a positive social

and economic impact by supporting and empowering the local community of AlUla. Additionally, it aims to maximize the utilization of AlUla's rich historical, heritage, environmental, natural, tourism, sports, and artistic resources. The goal is to build a prosperous and sustainable economy by actively involving the community in the development process. This endeavor will establish a lasting legacy for AlUla, positioning it as the world's largest open museum.

## About AlUla

AlUla has deep historical roots spanning more than 200,000 years. It is replete with human and historical heritage and countless historical treasures. In ancient times, AlUla location was a meeting point for civilizations in the northwest of the Arabian Peninsula, embodying this description through those civilized nations that inhabited this region and built its structures and civilizations in a way that captivated the attention of all those who passed through it, observers, explorers, or researchers.

AlUla is one of the few areas in the world where history is deeply and profoundly embodied without the interference of the present in distorting, erasing, or falsifying it. Since the first millennium BC, AlUla has been a significant route for trade caravans, and since the emergence of Islam, it has been a major center and one of the most important sites along the Hajj route.





## Strategic Direction

RCU developed an integrated strategy to achieve its lofty vision, "Vision of AIUla", and turn it into a reality. The strategy includes a set of pillars, strategic objectives, and performance indicators, which aim to develop many economic sectors in AIUla, improve the quality of life of the local community, and contribute to achieving the objectives of Saudi Vision 2030. The three main goals for 2035 are the following:

### 2 million annual visits

#### to AIUla:

- 53% National
- 37% International
- 10% GCC Countries

### SAR 150 billion

Cumulative contributions to GDP

### 40,500 new jobs

## Vision

AIUla - a natural and cultural environment.  
A Journey Through Time in the largest open museum.

## Mission

To enable AIUla development for its residents and visitors through activating and protecting its cultural landscape and providing the quality of life.

## Values

### Diligence

We work thoroughly and rigorously to consistently deliver

### Grit

We set audacious goals, and we work with determination and resolve to make them happen

### Surprising

Our curiosity and innovative ways of working create surprising and memorable experiences

### Nurturing

We are driven by the responsibility we feel for our heritage, the environment, the community, and each other

### Engaging

We work together as one; we craft our journey together and welcome everyone to be part of it

### Accountable

We take full responsibility for all our actions, and we practice honest and open communication

### Clarity

We keep it real by focusing on what really matters

## Strategy Implementation Stages\*

### First Phase:

- Build a luxury brand (2018-2023), through:
- 250,000 visits per year by the end of the first phase
  - 1,050 hotel rooms
  - Focus on hyper-luxury sectors
  - Major tourism, infrastructure, and accompanying assets offerings

### Second Phase:

- Unlock the potentials of the proposed value (2024-2030), through:
- 1.2 million visits per year by the end of the second phase
  - 5,500 hotel rooms
  - Transition from hyper-luxury sectors to upper leisure sectors
  - Luxury resorts and new heritage discoveries

### Third Phase:

- Grow capacity and competency (2030-2035), through:
- 2 million visits per year by the end of the third phase
  - 8,500 hotel rooms
  - Transition from hyper-luxury sectors to midscale leisure sectors
  - Continuous enhancement and expansion to meet demand

## Transitioning to the second phase of implementing the strategy

In line with the completion of the first phase of the strategy, **RCU has identified its key priorities to ensure a smooth transition into the second phase**, whereas, a comprehensive analysis of the elements has been conducted to ensure their seamless alignment with the overarching strategy and address the key success factors for the first phase.

## Key priorities of the first phase have been identified to ensure a successful transition to the second phase, which include:

1

Completing of Masterplans

3

Issuing licenses and permits

5

Developing the strategic and digital sector to support decision-making and facilitate service delivery

2

Updating AIUla development framework

4

Land expropriation and Management



\* RCU's achievements will be reviewed according to the targets for the year 2023 in the Key Performance Indicators (KPIs) section.



RCU also proactively developed a plan and followed a clear methodology to ensure the success of its projects. This led to the creation of the Integrated Development Plan, which is updated quarterly; to reflect the updates of target integration elements. The integrated development plan serves as a close bridge that translates the objectives across the three phases of the strategy and into an integrated development plan, in terms of priorities, developmental









considerations, infrastructure, and necessary services for the development of assets and public facilities. This contributes to shaping an appropriate development pattern to achieve RCU's vision, taking into account quality of life, social needs, economic growth, resource efficiency, and sustainability. As a result, it establishes a clear phased sequence for project implementation phases.

**Objectives of the Integrated Development Plan:**

- 1**  
Integrating the 3 stages of RCU strategy and the sectoral strategies of RCU
- 2**  
Ensuring the formation of an appropriate development pattern for AIUla, considering the priorities and challenges
- 3**  
Establishing advanced infrastructure and facilitating access to services
- 4**  
Developing a clear plan for project implementation based on approved priorities
- 5**  
Achieving sustainable economic and social benefits

**Economic Development Sectors**

The vision of RCU extends beyond developing the tourism sector, as eight additional sectors have been identified to provide thousands of jobs by 2035.

 Logistics	 Local construction and materials	 Arts and crafts	 Scientific research
 Agriculture	 Equestrianism	 Specialized education	 Filmmaking and cinema production

**Strategic Principles**

- Safeguard and preserve the natural and humanitarian heritage
- Maintain balanced agriculture
- Develop, and restore the urban and architectural areas
- Introduce advanced and smart safety and security systems
- Celebrate a global destination of heritage, culture, and arts
- Develop sustainable tourism
- Enable the local community
- Design safe and healthy work environments within the circular economy
- Sustain ecosystems and wildlife
- Adopt environmentally-friendly transportation
- Foster innovative infrastructure
- Adopt proactive design methodology

**The contribution of RCU's key performance indicators to the national strategies**

**The National Tourism Strategy**

- Tourist satisfaction level
- Number of jobs generated by the tourism sector
- The Net promotional score index
- Number of heritage sites open to visitors
- Cumulative added value from the tourism sector

**National Environment Strategy**

- Number of plant species reintroduced into the environment
- Kilometers squared of terrestrial protected area
- Number of protected animal species reintroduced into the environment
- The area of rehabilitated grazing areas within AIUla

**Strategic pillars and objectives, and their alignment with Saudi Vision 2030 \***

RCU's Strategic Pillars	RCU's Strategic Objectives	Alignment of RCU's Sectors/Departments to Strategic Objectives	Alignment to the Strategic Objectives of Saudi Vision 2030
<b>Tourism</b>	1- Develop a successful and responsible global tourism destination	Destination Management & Marketing	2.5.1 Develop and diversify entertainment opportunities to meet population's needs 3.3.6 Enable the Development of the tourism sector 5.1.4 Diversification of government revenues
	2- Discover, activate, and conserve heritage	- Archaeology Collections & Conservation - Culture Sites Management	1.3.2 Conserve and promote Islamic, Arab and national heritage of the Kingdom
	3- Conserve nature and wildlife ecosystems	- Arts & Creative Industries	2.5.1 Develop and diversify entertainment opportunities to meet residents needs 2.5.2 Grow Saudi contribution to arts and culture
<b>Nature &amp; Wildlife</b>	4- Conserve nature and wildlife ecosystems	- Wildlife & Natural Heritage	2.4.2 Safeguard the environment from natural hazards 2.4.3 Protect and rehabilitate natural landscapes
	5- Develop a vibrant, prosperous, and engaged community	- Operations - Economic & Social Development - Hotels & Resorts - Shared Services	2.6.4 Empower citizens through the welfare system 4.1.1 Build a comprehensive educational journey 4.1.2 Improve equal access to education 4.2.1 Improve readiness of youth to enter the labor market 4.2.2 Increase women's participation in the labor market 4.2.3 Enable the integration of people with disabilities into the labor market 6.1.2 Encourage volunteering
<b>Economic &amp; Social Development</b>	6- Develop a sustainable economy	- Shared Services - Economic & Social Development	3.1.1 Enhance ease of doing business 3.1.5 Enable financial institutions to support the private sector growth 4.3.2 Grow SME contribution to the economy 4.3.3 Grow productive families' contribution to the economy 5.3.2 Strengthen communication channels with citizens & business community 6.3.1 Support growth of non-profit sector

Enabling Pillars	RCU's Strategic Objectives	Alignment of RCU's Sectors/Departments to Strategic Objectives	Alignment to the Strategic Objectives of Saudi Vision 2030
<b>Spatial Development</b>	7- Ensure sustainable spatial development	- Development & Construction - Planning & Development - Hotels & Resorts	2.3.2 Improve the urban landscape in Saudi cities 2.3.1 Reduce all types of pollution 5.4.2 Ensure sustainable use of water resources
	8- Attract investment and funding for AIUla	- Finance - Hotels and Resorts	3.1.2 Unlock state-owned assets for private sector 3.1.3 Privatize selected government services 3.1.4 Develop advanced financial market 3.1.5 Enable financial institutions to support private sector growth 3.1.6 Attract foreign direct investment (FDI) 3.6.3 Develop economic ties with global partners
<b>Enabling Services</b>	9- Regulate effectively	- Legal Affairs & Regulations	1.1.3 Foster values of equity and transparency 5.3.1 Enhance transparency across government roles
	10- Provide streamlined county services in AIUla	- Operations	2.1.1 Facilitate access to healthcare services 2.3.1 Improve the quality of services provided in Saudi cities 5.2.5 Improve the quality of services provided to citizens
	11- Ensure security and safety for residents and visitors	- Operations	2.1.1 Facilitate access to healthcare services 2.3.4 Enhance traffic safety
<b>Institutional Excellence</b>	12- Attain human capital excellence	- Shared Services	1.1.4 Foster values of determination and perseverance
	13- Attain organizational excellence	- Finance - Strategy & Digital - Shared Services - Communications & PR	1.2.1 Foster the values of excellence and discipline 1.1.3 Foster values of equity and transparency
	14- Foster innovation	- Strategic Partnerships	3.3.2 Develop the digital economy 4.1.5 Develop our brightest minds in priority fields 4.3.1 Nurture and support innovation and entrepreneurship culture

\*RCU's achievements will be reviewed according to the targets for the year 2023 in the Key Performance Indicators (KPIs) section.

## Key Works and Achievements

**800+**

Achievement

**8**

Portfolio

### RCU Portfolios

RCU strives towards developing the unique cultural and touristic components in AlUla and preserving its heritage and legacy. It also contributes to supporting creative and artistic talents, building local capacities within an effective institutional framework that achieves performance excellence and enhances service quality, thereby, achieving economic and social development in AlUla. Throughout the year 2023, RCU worked on achieving numerous accomplishments within the scope of its diverse activities and projects, which fall under various portfolios dedicated to its sectors and business units. These achievements can be summarized as follows:





Through its **Tourism Destination portfolio**, RCU has undertaken a range of projects and initiatives within the framework of its strategic objectives, encompassing various domains within its **tourism** strategic pillar. It has focused on **developing tourism and marketing tourist destinations** through several projects, including the **management and operation of the Film Studio** (with its two theaters), as well as the **design project for the Meetings and Exhibitions Facility in the Oasis Development**. Furthermore, it has undertaken **the design, construction, and operation of the Al Mua'azam Hunting Lodge**, along with the development of the **Ashar Valley Dialogue, Ashar Valley Forum, and AIUla beacon (Al Manara)**. **Through these efforts, RCU has achieved the following in 2023:**

Gaining a significant international press and media coverage and developing a film production line for three years starting in 2024	Agreeing on the activity sites preliminary plan within the Al Mua'azam Fort & Hunting Reserve's	Developing the event's design, enhancing the website, and initiating the logistical arrangements for guests attending the Ashar Valley Dialogue and Forum
Identifying the targeted visitor demographics and defining the framework of activities related to visitor experience for the AIUla Manara project	Working on the economic and financial model, and on a feasibility study to achieve sustainability, and linking it to the economic and social impact of AIUla within the AIUla Manara project	Working on the architectural identity of AIUla's Manara by initiating a competitive design competition for distinguished architectural designs with international architectural firms

In line with its commitment to supporting the digital transformation journey and enabling the digital infrastructure of AIUla, RCU worked on executing the **Metaverse Events** project as part of its **innovation** efforts. Additionally, RCU launched cultural events that empower and enhance the participation of the local community in heritage sites, such as **celebrating the Year of Arabic Poetry**. **Through these efforts, RCU has achieved the following in 2023:**

Launching the Balloon experience project in the Metaverse in collaboration with the "Sahab" Foundation, along with the release of the Balloon game as part of the AIUla Skies Festival events	Launching a live presentation for the Saudi Tour in the Metaverse	Meeting with poets to develop a plan aligned with the Year of Arabic Poetry and establishing a comprehensive plan comprising a variety of activities, events, and occasions
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In its pursuit of enhancing tourism and improving the visitor experience by providing a luxurious tourist environment, RCU worked on establishing and developing various **hotels and resorts** in AIUla. This was achieved through several projects, including the **Sharaan Resort**, the **Cloud (7) Residences Hotel**, the **Chedi Hegra**, and the **Dar Tantoura hotel**. **Through these efforts, RCU has achieved the following in 2023:**

Completing the initial design work for the Sharaan Resort, and commencing construction, excavation, and geotechnical studies	Preparing to open Cloud (7) Residence Hotel with <b>301</b> hotel rooms in 2024	Preparing to open Chedi Hegra Hotel at full capacity in 2024, consisting of <b>36</b> hotel rooms
Preparing to open Dar Tantoura Hotel at full capacity in 2024, consisting of <b>30</b> hotel rooms		



Wadi Ashar Dialogue and Forum



Film Studio in AIUla



Dar Tantoura The House Hotel



Cloud 7 Hotel

Through its **Arts, Culture, and Heritage portfolio**, RCU worked on a variety of projects and initiatives related to artistic, cultural, and heritage fields within the framework of its future vision. Significant work has been undertaken in these areas on both global and local levels. Among these projects, **the registration of Jabal Ikmah in the UNESCO World Memory Register** stands out, along with agreements such as the **Louvre Museum loan agreement** and the **AIUla Exhibition: “Wonders Oasis” held in the “Forbidden City” in China (AIUla Exhibition in Beijing)**. As part of local efforts to enhance the value of national heritage, RCU launched the **Institutional Preparation and Activation Roadmap project for the Kingdoms Institute, the Kingdoms Institute building, conservation and restoration science workshops, the Cultural Landscape Detection Project in Northwestern Arabia, and the Arab League Summit (Media Center and Exhibition)**. Through these efforts, RCU has achieved the following in 2023:

- 1**  
Officially announcing Jabal Ikmah’s registration on UNESCO’s Memory of the World
- 2**  
Conducting annual review of the loan agreement issued with the museum, under the Louvre Museum loan agreement, and reviewing all reports related to the statue’s safety
- 3**  
Holding AIUla Exhibition in the Forbidden City in China, as well as preparing and designing a new catalog in three languages, including Arabic, English, and Chinese
- 4**  
Completing the preliminary report for the Institutional Preparation and Activation Roadmap of the Kingdoms Institute, including authorization, strategy, business model, and legal structure options
- 5**  
Completing the strategic definition for the Kingdoms Institute building, along with the preparation of the architectural description
- 6**  
Presenting the first workshop, over a period of 3 weeks, on heritage and its preservation, accompanied by a large-scale media campaign that achieved widespread success
- 7**  
Publishing a volume of research on AIUla and Khaybar, including 7 peer-reviewed papers
- 8**  
Successful completion and execution of the Displaying archaeological collections’ plan.

The registration of Jabal Ikmah in the UNESCO World Memory Register



Through its unwavering efforts in **heritage exploration**, RCU has worked on various projects including **maintenance and preservation projects for collections, conservation, and restoration operations**. Additionally, it embarked on projects such as the **Dadan archaeological project**, the **archaeological fieldwork facility, preservation of Hegra and antiquities** and the **water impact mitigation operations in Hegra**. Moreover, it conducted an **inventory of archaeological collections for King Saud University**, established a **warehouse for storing and preserving archaeological pieces for AIUla collections**, and conducted a **survey of the southern oasis area in AIUla (Qurh)**. Regarding heritage management, RCU worked on a **heritage management plan project in the old town**. It also implemented projects related to construction, restoration, and development, including the **phased restoration project for Oasis and Old Town sites**, the **development and implementation of remote environmental monitoring system**, and a **health protection program (signage for Phase 1 and Phase 2)** to protect archaeological sites. Through these efforts, RCU has achieved the following in 2023:

- 1**  
Completing the management of conservation operations for maintaining and preserving collections
- 2**  
Carrying out the cleaning work of heritage sites and removing graffiti in Ashar Resort, Wadi AlFann, and Hegra Visitor Center, as well as graffiti on Tabuk Road, in addition to maintaining Tell Saq cemetery, restoring the frescoes in the old city, and water mitigation operations in Hegra
- 3**  
Completing the study and limited excavation season for tombs, discovery of a human skeletal structure, and restoration of statues as part of the Dadan archaeological project
- 4**  
Expressing interest was disseminated to **8** institutions with faculty members possessing relevant expertise, with 3 of them showing interest in the subject matter
- 5**  
Constructing a series of small, invisible water flow detention units using sandbags and wooden panels in several areas in Diwan and Siq, while establishing a sand pressure test area
- 6**  
Approving the technical proposal for KSU Collection Inventory project
- 7**  
Working at the design preparation stage for the construction of AIUla Collections Facility
- 8**  
Discovering a **200,000**-year-old hand ax, dating back to the Paleolithic era, and completing an intensive survey of AIUla South Oasis Area (Qurh)
- 9**  
Understanding the Heritage Management Plan for the Old Town, reviewing the procedures, guidelines, evaluation criteria, and statement of significance, and examining the current policies and governance of the project
- 10**  
Identifying the main issues in the Heritage Management Plan for the Old Town project management and policies and proposing an immediate, medium, and long-term action plan to address these issues
- 11**  
Completing the temporary stabilization, archaeological cleansing and field investigation of **18** units on Yellow Street



# 12

Completing the initial stages of developing and implementing the remote environmental monitoring system, by installing monitoring devices at heritage conservation sites affiliated with RCU in Riyadh and the United Kingdom

# 13

Completing Health Safeguarding program's content

In addition, the efforts of RCU in preserving cultural heritage included launching a project for a campaign for collecting oral history and intangible cultural heritage, as well as a campaign for collecting Arabic poetry. **Through these efforts, RCU has achieved the following in 2023:**

## 1

Completing the first phase of Oral History and Intangible Cultural Heritage Collection Campaign, targeting the Old Town and AIUla Cultural Oasis

## 2

Working is underway on more than **150** inventory cards for items, or manuscripts, based on what has been collected and inventoried through the oral history and intangible cultural heritage campaigns in the rural and urban areas of AIUla

## 3

Completing drafting the strategy, setting objectives, and identifying relevant indicators for the intangible cultural heritage project

## 4

Training the community on performing inventory over intangible cultural heritage through carefully designed workshops. The inaugural workshop included **29** participants from AIUla, Tayma, and Khaybar

## 5

Completing a comprehensive historical research on the Early Islamic Era and conducting interviews with over **30** poets from AIUla to document Arabic poetry and understand AIUla's poetic characteristics

Further, and in its efforts to discover and activate Saudi heritage from within its scope, RCU worked on developing and managing **cultural sites and special cultural areas** Tayma, Khaybar, and AIUla. These include the **Incense Road Museum, Incense Road Market, the Two Stage Film Studio, Dadan & Ikma Interpretation Centers, Wadi AlNaam Activation, and Hegra Wildlife & Nature Tour**. In addition, RCU executed several projects in site activation, such as **the Heritage sites activation in Khaybar and Tayma (Phase 2)** and **Sites Management & Operation Plans**. RCU's efforts included reviving areas and restoring utilities and infrastructure through these projects: **Hegra Gateway, Old Town Revival Project, and Restoration of Old Town's Mosque in the Fort Zone**, in addition to **Infrastructure Projects in the Old Town**. Nevertheless, projects aimed at enhancing visitor experience on tourism heritage tours include **Narrators and Protectors Team Development, F&B options & shops**. RCU's efforts also included launching School and Family Activity Programs to involve the local community in discovering and promoting heritage sites in AIUla. In addition, RCU implemented the **Art of Story Conservation at Old Town Homes** to raise awareness about cultural heritage. RCU's projects also include many activities, such as the **Ancient Kingdoms Festival, and Tantora festival**, in addition to **Ramadan, Eid AlFitr, and Eid AlAdha celebrations**. As to special cultural zones, RCU established **Alula Manara**. **Through these efforts, RCU has achieved the following in 2023:**

## 1

Approving architects Asif Khan for Incense Road Museum, Kengo Kuma for Hegra Gateway, and Clement Virgili for Dadan and Ikma Interpretation Centers by the BoD

## 2

Preparing the vision of reviving the old Town, finalizing buildings and streets preparations, and improving the access roads, parking lots, and roads in the core area, in addition to managing rainwater and flooding, while providing an inviting environment, training and developing local experts, developing the architectural survey, and cleaning and monitoring antiquities

## 3

Completing restoration, maintenance, and renovation works for buildings and facilities in Phase 2 of the Incense Road Market project, alongside finishing the preparation of buildings and streets, restoring and activating the amphitheater, designing and updating facilities and infrastructure

## 4

Completing all design drawings for the film studio in AIUla is underway, with work progressing on finalizing the construction phase of the project

## 5

Activating Wadi AlNaam site and opening it to visitors seeking to explore the valley's history and experience an exceptional adventure amidst the terrain and unique archaeological landmarks in the heart of Jabal Ikma, recently inscribed on the UNESCO World Heritage List

## 6

Preparing and expanding AlRawan Oasis path in Phase 2 of activating heritage sites in Khaybar, ensuring compliance with heritage conservation and protection principles

Safari Tour of Wildlife and Nature



Wadi AlNaam



Khaybar 2023 - Phase 2



Tayma 2023 - Phase 2





**7**

Activating and operating wildlife and nature tours at Hegra site for visitors to enjoy its unique heritage

**8**

Expanding the visitor center and adding attraction elements such as cultural and entertainment events in Phase 2 of Heritage Sites Activation in Khaybar

**9**

Preparing and activating several heritage sites, such as ARradam Palace, AlTaqqa Palace, Ibn Rumman Palace, and the houses of Al Najm Market and adding attractions elements such as food & beverage options, as well as cultural and entertainment events in Phase 2 of Heritage Sites Activations in Tayma

**10**

Preparing operational plans for all activated heritage sites in AlUla, Tayma, and Khaybar

**11**

Choosing Kengo Kuma as the architect for Incense Road Museum competition by the BoD

**12**

Presenting a temporary exhibition at Hegra Welcome Center, exploring the Nabataean Face Reconstruction Project as the world's first known digital and physical reconstruction of a Nabataean woman

**13**

Completing the initial installation and evaluation of **49** units and designing and restoring **49** units, in addition to finalizing the archaeological cleaning of **9** units, the final installation of 33 units, and restoring **49** units as part of the Old Town Revival work for Alitham Mosque restoration project

**14**

Conducting archaeological cleaning of **48** units, installing **48** units, restoring **7** units, and activating **7** commercial units for the Old Town Revival project

**15**

Conducting archaeological cleaning of **60** units, installing **36** units, restoring **4** units, and activating **4** commercial units for Incense Road Market project

**16**

Conducting archaeological cleaning of **9** units, stabilizing **9** units, restoring **9** units, and activating **9** commercial units for Huna Complex project

**17**

Conducting archaeological cleaning of **30** units, and installing 30 units for Mud Houses Stabilization in the Old Town from the eastern road to the northern gate

**18**

Conducting archaeological cleaning for **22** units, installing **22** units, restoring **18** units, and activating **18** commercial units for the Area restoration project from the Old Town's mosque to AlUla Fort Zone

**19**

Installing **100** cooling units in the homes of the Old Town, distributed among commercial units and offices, to preserve the heritage and visual identity of the Old Town as part of the infrastructure projects

**20**

Installing **162** speakers distributed in Incense Road, Abu AlHassan Market, and the eastern side of the Old Town, to offer visitors an enjoyable experience with calm music combined with the heritage character of the site as part of the infrastructure projects

**21**

Developing the infrastructure for the sewage and water networks along the Incense Road to facilitate all utilities within the infrastructure projects in the Old Town

**22**

Using eco-friendly methods and materials to reduce dust stirred up on Incense Road path, aiming to provide a healthy environment for visitors as part of the infrastructure projects in the Old Town

**23**

Preparing workshops to transfer knowledge and activating methods of communication to implement plans for managing and operating sites in AlUla, Tayma, and Khyber

Incense Road Museum



### 24

Supplying and installing two electrical substations to meet the requirements of activities and events in the Old Town as part of the infrastructure projects

### 25

Providing more than 370 hours of training for narrators and protectors teams in cooperation with several international educational institutions, such as Dale Carnegie, and with experts at RCU

### 26

Adding **+20** options to the portfolio of F&B and shops distributed across the heritage sites in AIUla, Tayma, and Khaybar by providing diverse culinary and shopping experiences locally and internationally

### 27

Preparing content relevant to families' activities to enhance their experience of heritage sites, and activating innovative ways to deliver heritage content to children

### 28

Providing cultural workshops at different heritage sites to offer an immersive cultural experience for families and children within school and family activities programs

### 29

Cooperating with the Education Departments in AIUla, Tayma, Khaybar, Medina, and Tabuk, as well as designing school programs to experience cultural workshop activities and visit heritage sites

### 30

Establishing a scientific working mechanism approved by the concerned parties at RCU, and conducting scientific laboratory analysis to understand the original implementation techniques for the storytelling preservation project in the homes of the Old Town

### 31

Surveying the Old Town homes and determining the number of murals and painting restorations in approximately **300** homes

### 32

Simulating the original materials used in the story (murals), and scientifically supervising the methodology used through experts

### 33

Holding Ancient Kingdoms Festival, which included immersive experiences, activities, and unveiling of heritage sites

### 34

Attracting **+5000** visitors to Ancient Kingdoms Festival, with local and international media coverage

### 35

Hosting the Winter Tanoura Festival at an exceptional location to showcase the latest outcomes of heritage preservation efforts in AIUla

### 36

Celebrating the winter season in AIUla in the Old Town for 10 days with the participation of all segments of the local community and visitors

### 37

Hosting Ramadan events and evenings with a total attendance of 5,528 visitors

### 38

Organizing diverse events to embody the cultural spirit in AIUla with a total of **5,948** visitors during Eid Al-Fitr celebrations

### 39

Approximately a total of 29,536 visitors attended the activities and events held during the Ramadan, Eid Al-Fitr, and Eid Al-Adha celebrations

The portfolio includes options for food, beverages, and shops distributed across heritage sites



Ancient Kingdoms Festival



Ramadan Activations



Tantorah Festival





In addition to the continuous efforts of RCU towards encouraging and developing local potentials and enhancing the contribution of artistic and cultural communities, it has worked within the framework of its strategic goals to develop the **arts and creativity** in AIUla. This has been achieved through a variety of projects, including the **Zaha Hadid Pavilion**, the **art exhibition**, and the **Water Pavilion**, which hosts a range of exhibitions, events, and both closed and open meetings. This effort is complemented by **AIUla Academy of Arts**, **AIUla Arts Foundation**, and the **Hegra Villa** establishment, which is designated to establish a first-class Saudi-French institution dedicated to arts and culture in AIUla. Additionally, RCU is working on the **restoration project of the Madrasat Addeera**, **Madrasat Addeera programs**, and the **Arts and Design Center in Madrasat Addeera**, along with the **Contemporary Art Museum** and the Art Valley. **Through these efforts, RCU has achieved the following in 2023:**

**1**

Completing the evaluation of the condition of **41** transport containers stored in Jeddah as part of the Zaha Hadid Designer Pavilion project

**2**

Activating Daimumah, Phase 1 of Water Pavilion assets development

**3**

A total of **64,411** visitors attended the Water Pavilion, with **12,168** visitors to the “Daimumah” exhibition, and **10,449** participants benefited from workshops, with a total of **89** workshops

**4**

Completing RIBA 3 design for James Turrell, RIBA 4 for Michael Heizer’s project, RIBA 1 for Manal Al-Dhowayan’s project, and RIBA 1 for Wadi AlFann’s Masterplan

**5**

Cooperation with “Turquoise Mountain” to offer traditional arts workshops to **52** local artisans at Madrasat Addeera

**6**

Completing the cooperation with “Turquoise Mountain” in the traditional arts production program with **22** artists joining the production program

**7**

The International Institute of Perfumes and Flavors presented **4** perfume programs dedicated to AIUla’s community, with more than **32** people participated in the workshop at Madrasat Addeera

**8**

Presented **4** pieces as editions of Madrasat Addeera in Paris during Paris Design Week

**9**

Completing the architectural engineers’ competition procedures, with the decision to appoint architect “Lina Ghotmeh” from the responsible committee for the Contemporary Art Museum project

**10**

Official announcement of Lina Ghotmah as museum architect at Venice Architecture Biennale

**11**

Handover of Museum of Visual and Contemporary Art’s assets to the Development and Construction Department

**12**

Obtaining **56** artworks for the Museum of Visual and Contemporary Arts, bringing the total number to **179** artworks, and there’s another **50** artworks in the contracting phase, while **108** artworks are currently being studied for acquisition by the curation team

**13**

Appointing “Ferial Foudil” as the CEO for both the Saudi and French parties, and announcement of the primary architectural engineers for the Villa Hegra Establishment project

**14**

Completing the Villa Hegra BoD by appointing “Mona Khazindar” and Princess “Haifa Al-Muqrin”

**15**

Completing RIBA standards and pre-concept validation phase, and approving the preliminary design for the Villa Hegra by the Design Panel

**16**

Working on Madrasat Addeera Renovation project design

**17**

Working is underway to develop a public art strategy for Madrasat Addeera to build a statement of work, identify all locations, and install the Art pieces in AIUla urban Fabric

**18**

Collaborating with Turquoise Mountain to deliver craft workshops for 42 local artisans at Madrasat Addeera

**19**

Cooperating between Prince’s School Foundation for Traditional Arts and Turquoise Mountain to deliver craft workshops and conduct training programs and public programs at various locations in AIUla

**20**

Introducing perfume programs from the International Institute of Perfumes and Flavors to the arts and creative industries team at the Arts and Design Center as part of the Madrasat Addeera restoration project

**21**

Working is underway to implement Madrasat Addeera’s collections project through designing and providing prototypes consisting of 4 distinctive pieces, creating a product catalogue, and delivering AIUla Canon YPP program through Creative Dialogue Agency

**22**

Supervising the construction design during Wadi AlFann construction phases

**23**

Announcement of the selection of Architects and launching a global museum at the Venice Architecture Biennale exhibition as part of the Contemporary Art Museum project

**24**

Developing collections comprising **19** gathered artworks, awaiting the completion of the Visual and Contemporary Art Museum for their display, along with **67** approved artworks



**The Nature & Wildlife portfolio** includes projects and activities aimed at protecting and conserving the **natural environment and wildlife ecosystems** as part of RCU's strategic objectives. This is done through RCU endeavors to protect and rehabilitate natural landscapes and wildlife by executing these projects: **Strategy and Execution Plan of Ecosystem Restoration for AIUla, Assessment and Action Plan of Habitat Restoration and Wildlife Reintroduction at Ashar**, and the **System Plan for AIUla Nature Reserves**, in addition to **designing and building Veterinary Clinic in AIUla** and **Inventory Of AIUla Flora & Fauna** projects. **Through these efforts, RCU has achieved the following in 2023:**

Contracting with IUCN to implement Ecosystem Restoration project in AIUla	Working is underway to implement the first output of Ecosystem Restoration project in AIUla to analyze the current state of ecosystems and conducting desk studies to collect and assess available data	Completing research on ecosystem status and desk studies on vegetation cover and wildlife
Preparing maps of vegetation cover, soil, and natural habitats in Ashar	Developing legal and institutional frameworks to support a network of protected areas, and establishing standardized operating procedures (SOPs) for their management	Preparing Green list nomination file for Sharaan Nature Reserve
Completing the veterinary complex construction in AIUla	Mapping natural reserves habitats and vegetation cover and proposing areas to protect them, supported by Geographical Information Systems (GIS)	Creating detailed lists of fauna and flora species in AIUla and their conditions according to IUCN standards
Recording and studying fauna and flora species expected to be newly discovered globally		

Moreover, RCU focuses on promoting **wildlife development and ecosystem sustainability** by working on many key projects. These include **Wildlife Species Reintroduction and Reinforcement**, the **Design for AIUla Wildlife Breeding Center**, and the **Operation of Arabian Leopard Breeding Center in Taif**. In terms of nature reserve sustainability, RCU executed **AIUla Native Plant Nursery** and **Seed Bank and Vegetation Development and Afforestation of 500K Trees at AIUla Nature Reserves**. **Through these efforts, RCU has achieved the following in 2023:**

Releasing <b>889</b> wild animals of <b>4</b> species into Sharaan and Wadi Nakhlah reserves	Completing Phase 1 of the master plan for AIUla Breeding Center location and design	<b>7</b> leopard cubs were born during 2023 as a result of improving care and breeding conditions for all leopards
Launching an exchange program for leopards from the UAE and Oman	Producing approximately <b>300K</b> native plants from <b>80</b> native species, collecting and preserving more than <b>100</b> native plant species of seeds with genetic origins, supplying more than <b>15K</b> native plants for various projects, and welcoming approximately <b>300</b> visitors to various activities in AIUla as part of AIUla Native Plant Nursery and Seed Bank project	
Evaluating 110K seedlings of wild plants grown in Sharaan Nature Reserve, with a <b>91%</b> survival rate	Preparing and equipping Al-Majiz site in Sharaan Natural Reserve to cultivate <b>500K</b> seedlings on 5K hectares by the end of 2024	

As part of RCU's efforts to **enhance wildlife and natural heritage**, several projects have been launched aimed at raising awareness about the importance of plant and animal species and to engage the local community in their conservation. These include the **Sharaan Welcome Center**, as well as the **design of visitor centers and security gates for the Sharaan Reserve**, which serves as the first world-class visitor center. **Through these efforts, RCU has achieved the following in 2023:**

Completing the Sharaan Welcome Center design	Increasing the scope of work at the designated site in the master plan for the Sharaan Reserve
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The birth of 7 Arabian leopard cubs



Preparation and setup of the Sharaan Nature Reserve site

Furthermore, RCU has worked through the **Economic and Social Development portfolio** on a variety of projects and initiatives aligned with its strategic objectives, focusing on several aspects including supporting local community engagement. This encompassed various projects such as the **Community Engagement Strategy, preparation to open a vocational and educational development center for talented individuals from the community**, the **Social Researchers** Project; to train and develop the local community in AIUla, as well as the **Social Fund** project. Additionally, RCU has been keen on involving and empowering all segments of society through multiple initiatives, such as the **Archery Sports Initiative**; to encourage voluntary participation and support for people with disabilities, **community vitality programs, women's sports**, and the **Social Rehabilitation Center**. Moreover, efforts have been made to implement a project for **studying poverty lines in AIUla and its surrounding areas**, alongside the **development of local content policies**. **Through these efforts, RCU has achieved the following in 2023:**

- 1**  
Completing the community development strategy project and awaiting approval by the CEO
- 2**  
Establishing and allocating space for a private creative center to support talents and owners of small and medium enterprises within the local community in AIUla
- 3**  
Organizing training courses on the needs and interests of AIUla women
- 4**  
Welcoming more than **190** visitors to the first day of the Archery Sport Initiative and honoring participants
- 5**  
Initiating the first phase of planning to execute an event that offers a specialized vitality program for women to enhance quality of life
- 6**  
Completing the design stages for the Social Rehabilitation Center, with ongoing efforts towards its implementation
- 7**  
Completing 6 out of 10 outputs for the study of poverty lines in AIUla and its affiliated areas, including data gap identification and survey review, social services assessment report, identification of initial poverty indicators and lines, social interaction guide, internal guidelines for the regional coordination unit for assessing and measuring social impact, and identification of final poverty indicators and lines in AIUla
- 8**  
Identifying over **170** opportunities for local content opportunities within AIUla and the development of a local content policy
- 9**  
Automating local content requirements in RCU's procurement system
- 10**  
Developing tools, models, and guidelines, and conducting several workshops to raise awareness amongst stakeholders in regards to local content requirements and its mechanisms, with the participation of over **1,800** individuals from inside and outside RCU

In addition to RCU's efforts in **infrastructure** projects, it has established a **fuel station in South AIUla** with advanced infrastructure systems, a **residential film complex**, and an **Eid prayer mosque**. Furthermore, it has undertaken the **development and construction of roads and infrastructure for the Hegra area**. **Through these efforts, RCU has achieved the following in 2023:**

- 1**  
Completing the design phase and commencement of implementation, with completing of fuel tanks construction for the establishment of a fuel station in South AIUla
- 2**  
Completing the residential film complex and Eid prayer Mosque design phases, and working is underway to implement them
- 3**  
Completing the design phase of the Eid Prayer Mosque, and construction work is underway
- 4**  
Completing the design phase and implementing the construction work on roads and infrastructure in Hegra



RCU offers a unique cultural and tourist experience through 'AIUla Sky' festival



RCU is eager to foster **economic and social development** through various activities, including **Anwar AIUla Event, AIUla Dates Festival 2023, and Biban Fourm 2023**. Moreover, RCU's celebrated various occasions with the local community, such as the **Inauguration and Renovation Celebration of Sa'id Mosque with the Community**, as part of **Shiekh Saeed Abduldaim Mosque Upgrade** project, **Foundation Day Celebration 2023, Saudi National Day Celebration 2023**, as well as **Eid AlAdha Celebration**. **Through these efforts, RCU has achieved the following in 2023:**

- 1**

More than **20k** visitors, organizing over **14** events, and achieving high sales amounting to **11k** Saudi riyals for over **50** families participating in Anwar AIUla Event
- 2**

Achieving sales up to **300k** Saudi riyals within a month at Anwar AIUla Event
- 3**

**150%** increased sales compared to last year, selling more than **1,255** tons of AIUla dates, and exceeding 20k visitors at AIUla Dates Festival
- 4**

Achieving **+2,500** visitors to RCU and Vibes AIUla platforms, **24** Saudi small and medium enterprises applied to benefit from the incentive program, **10** local projects participated, and achieving over **10k** Saudi riyals in sales at Biban Forum 2023
- 5**

Welcoming **150** high-profile guests to visit AIUla within one day at Biban Forum 2023
- 6**

Promoting the local content of AIUla through the participation of local small and medium enterprises in implementing parts of Biban Forum 2023 activities
- 7**

Completing the full renovation of Sa'id Abdul Dayim Mosque in collaboration with the local community, participation in its inauguration, and official opening ceremony
- 8**

**+19k** visitors and productive families from the local community participated during Foundation Day 2023 activities by selling traditional clothes and traditional foods
- 9**

Providing a historical tour between the Old & New Town and the Cultural Oasis, with hands-on activities for two days as part of Foundation Day Celebration activities



Celebrating AIUla Dates Festival



Celebrating Eid AlAdha

**10**

Increasing viewer engagement on social media platforms by publishing promotional video clips for the founding day, noting the high interaction from the youth demographic

**11**

Implementing more than **7** activities on National Day with the presence of Nabati and classical poets

**12**

Distributing **350** gifts around Eid AlAdha celebration areas

To **develop and empower local capabilities**, RCU has worked on several education and capability development projects that cater to the labor market and drive **education development in AIUla**. These include the Education Development Program, in cooperation with the Ministry of Education, **AIUla Scholarship Program**, in cooperation with leading international institutions, **Hammayah Program (Phase 3)**, in partnership with the local community in AIUla, Khaybar, and Tayma. In addition to **AIUla Languages Institute**. **Through these efforts, RCU has achieved the following in 2023:**

**1**

Cooperating with the Colleges of Excellence as part of the Education Development Program

**2**

**+350** employees of the Education Department in AIUla benefited from professional development programs to support public education and achieve RCU's objectives

**3**

Providing **+3k** students from the local community in AIUla with skills in critical thinking, programming, and leadership through four training programs aimed at empowering and preparing them for the future

**4**

Teaching **153** students at Al-Faris International School using the International Baccalaureate (IB) curriculum

**5**

Collaboration between Al-Faris International School and the Social Rehabilitation Center in AIUla to develop an educational unit catering to students with special needs. Additionally, the school partnered with the Education and Training Evaluation Commission (ETEC) to enhance the quality of education and school performance, aiming to deliver high-quality educational services

**6**

Completing Phase 1 of developing and managing public education transportation in AIUla by developing **74** school buses to improve access to academic activities and provide safe transportation services according to best practices and standards

**7**

Renovating **5** kindergarten buildings according to approved standards, adding indoor and outdoor amenities, and increasing classes to accommodate AIUla's population growth

**8**

Registering in **117** educational institutions as part of AIUla Scholarship Program



**9**

Granting scholarships to 726 students, and graduating **114** students in AIUla Scholarship Program

**10**

Involving **1,400** leaders and participants in Phase 3 of the Hammayah Program

**11**

Initiating the preparation phase for leaders in October, launching Phase 3 of Hammayah Program in AIUla, and starting the preparation phase for participants in December

**12**

Providing **5** different languages at AIUla Language Institute

**13**

**1,758** students benefited from the program in various languages since the inception of the institute's establishment

In terms of **innovation**, RCU implemented **AgriTech Development** as one of its key projects to achieve economic sustainability in agriculture. **Through these efforts, RCU has achieved the following in 2023:**

**1**

Developing and testing two "Edama" pathways for organic composite solutions, as well as the optical detection of red palm weevil infestation, were carried out as part of the agricultural technology project

**2**

Achieving better acidity levels for agricultural crops compared to previous crops planted in AIUla

**3**

Placing optical detectors on **150** palm trees in two different farms Installing optical detection devices on **150** palm trees in two different farms





**The County Services portfolio** includes various projects and works that focus on serving AIUla and the local community as part of RCU's strategic pillars. Within AIUla's policies and regulations, RCU's worked on these projects: **Transfer of Authorities Program, RCU Regulatory Framework Activation, and Transferring the Authorities of Municipal Services & Responsibilities and Integration Management Report**, in addition to **setting up the municipal inspection, audit, and control program**. Also, these projects include Governorate's management Governance model for designing, organizing and managing effective and sustainable governance, in addition to developing a strategy for AIUla management that involves a unified and comprehensive operations plan, which yields tangible outcomes by 2023. **Through these efforts, RCU has achieved the following in 2023:**

Finalizing the transferring of all tasks and authorities of activities related to the tourism and entertainment sectors to RCU and the starting the work

Finalizing the transferring of employees from related sectors, assets, and contracts and working is underway to transfer budgets from MOMRA and MEWA

Transferring employees from related sectors, transferring assets and transferring contracts from the Ministry of Culture

Activating capability building, tools and resources, knowledge management, and framework implementation

Initiating the Transferring of Authorities of Municipal Services project and submitting a report on authorities and integration management, allocating authorities within County operations, assigning employees to RCU's departments, designing the operational due diligence framework, and qualifying the Integration Management Office team, while identifying project risks and mitigation measures

Integrating **40%** of information technology and cybersecurity requirements into the Inspection platform as part of setting up the municipal inspection, audit, and control program

Developing the spatial element and the prosperity of the community and visitors together within the governorate management governance model project, while providing a set of specific recommendations and a roadmap to streamline implementation

Designing a model for local and municipal management as part of the governorate management governance model project

Launching new operating model in 3 neighborhoods in AIUla as part of AIUla management strategy development. The model is supported by new technology and processes, and has shown a **20%** improvement in resident satisfaction

As part of its continued efforts to promoting **sustainability** in AIUla, RCU executed projects, including **Environment and Sustainability Guidelines, RCU Sustainability Reporting, Updating the SSR, and Sustainability Implementation Pilot Projects (Phase 1)**. RCU's worked on Identifying and Implementing **Resource Recovery Value Chains (RRVC) in AI Ula County**, and **Environmental & Sustainability Compliance Assurance Program (ESCAP)**, in addition to **organizing training sessions for RCU departments' top management, with leading specialists** in sustainability areas to protect the environment and establish sustainability requirements in RCU's policies and procedures, and **Sustainability Certification Label for Buildings, Communities and Infrastructure in AIUla**. Also, RCU executed projects aimed at environmental restoration and sustainability, including **Integrated Water Management Strategy Project, Mitigation and Ecological Compensation Program, CO2 Re-baseline (Phase 4), Dark sky certification**. In addition, several research projects were conducted, one of them the **Renewable Energy Technology and Green Credit Analysis** as well as launching the **Environmental Awareness Campaign**. **Through these efforts, RCU has achieved the following in 2023:**

Developing **8** environmental and sustainability guidelines aimed at enhancing the concept of sustainability in RCU's procedures

Developing the annual sustainability report, based on the principle of transparency regarding global issues

Holding preliminary meetings and working to prepare the scope of work and formulate the brochure for training sessions in sustainability as part of the Organizing training sessions for RCU departments' top management, with leading specialists

Collecting information for 5 projects in Phase 1 of the pilot projects to implement sustainability requirements, determining a baseline based on the project life cycle assessment, and then evaluating the impact of implementing sustainability measures and monitoring performance

Working is underway to develop tools and a platform for environmental monitoring

Launching the CO2 Re-baseline project

Launching the environmental awareness campaign project, and work is underway to collect data

Preparing the initial report to assess the current status of water supply in AIUla





In the realm of **environmental protection**, RCU's worked on a range of projects, through the assessment of heritage and social impact in AIUla. **These include the Local Building Materials Strategy (Phase 1), Heritage Impact Assessment for local building material strategy, Geotechnical Investigations for the Local Building Materials Strategy, and SIA Engagement Guideline and Toolkit.**

RCU's also worked on a range of projects including the **MP (1-5) Autumn 2022 Baseline Ecology, Strategic Environmental Assessment for Harrat Uwayrid Masterplan Project, AIUla Airport City (2023 Spring Ecology Baseline Field Program and Strategic Environmental Assessment), Strategic Environmental Assessment for (12) Detailed Masterplans, and the Strategic Environmental Assessments of the Masterplans (4&5).** Through these efforts, RCU has achieved the following in 2023:

Completing the first draft of Phase 1 of the local building materials strategy	Conducting a full site survey and developing a site environmental impact report required for the Heritage impact assessment for local building materials strategy	Conducting a geotechnical survey for three quarry sites to extract raw materials from them, and developing geological and archaeological reports for the three sites as part of Geotechnical Investigations for the Local Building Materials Strategy project
Developing a guide and tools to support social assessment and decision-making processes	Completing the field survey of the MP (1-5) Baseline Ecology site and working is underway to develop the final report on the environmental and social impact of the project	Working is underway to develop the final environmental and social impact report for the Strategic Environmental Assessment for Harrat Uwayrid Masterplan Project
Completing the field survey of the Strategic Environmental Assessments site and developing reports on the environmental impact of the Masterplans (1,2,3)		

RCU also focused on **construction, development, and restoration** through several projects, including **Special Forces for Security and Protection Campuses (AlHijr, Shalal, Sharaan, Khaybar, Burikah), Harrat Uwayrid Masterplan Development, Land acquisition and citizen housing program (Phase 2), Transfer of Authority, transfer assets and operating AIUla International Airport for RCU**, in addition to **AIUla Center of Excellence in Earthen Architecture and Sustainable Construction.** Through these efforts, RCU has achieved the following in 2023:

Completing the field survey and submitting engineering designs for the locations of the Special Forces For Security and Protection Campuses in AlHijr, Shalal, Sharaan, Khaybar, and Burikah	Completing Phase 1 and Phase 2 of the master plan for Harrat Uwayrid and finalizing data collection	Identifying the lands earmarked for expropriation for Phase 2 of the Land Expropriation and Compensation Project and conducting the social and economic survey
Expanding the offices of Tanmiah work teams, appointing and training them, and providing logistical support for the teams as part of the Land expropriation and compensation project	Developing Tanmiah's implementation plan for Phase 2 of expropriation and approving it in accordance with the royal decree	Completing the legal, financial and operational due diligence work, and supervising the management of the airport's business, acquisitions and transportation. This is until the completion of work on the transfer of assets and operating AIUla International Airport for RCU
Completing the preparation phase for the AIUla Center for Excellence in Earthen Architecture and Sustainable.	Completing the preparation of Phase 1 report on water, waste and biodiversity indicators has been completed, and work is underway to launch Phase 2	Completing Phase 1 of removing visual distortions and random structures has been achieved, and work is underway to initiate Phase 2



On the other hand, RCU worked on improving **healthcare services** in the province through various projects. RCU's worked on the **Private General Hospital Project (Phase 1), renovating and enhancing the efficiency of Prince Abdul Mohsen Hospital**, as well as the **Skhirat and Al AIManshiya Health Centers**. Additionally, RCU focused on **upgrading the existing facilities of the Ministry of Health** and establishing the **Tharba Medical Center**. **Through these efforts, RCU has achieved the following in 2023:**

Identifying and allocating the private general hospital land location and finalizing the operating model and initial business case

Completing the design stages and initiating the renovation and enhancement of the efficiency of Prince Abdul Mohsen Hospital and Health Care Center in Skhirat and AIManshiya

Reopening Skhirat Primary Health Care Center after the completion of maintenance and development works to receive beneficiaries around the clock

Completing the contracting phase with the main contractor (Rezayat) in order to launch RIBA5 phase

Completing the design and construction work for Thirba Medical Center development

Developing the Public Safety Operations Center, operating the Unified Security Operations Center 911, and implementing more than 20 internal and external emergency propositions in cooperation with the relevant security authorities

Providing air medical evacuation services to beneficiaries in AIUla

Signing frameworks of action with ambulance service providers at public venues

Furthermore, RCU has been keen on supporting digital transformation in line with national targets. RCU's worked on enhancing its digital infrastructure through the **Smart City platform**, finalizing **internal policies for the Smart City**, as well as **the licensing platform** and the **Digital Twin** project. In the geospatial aspect, efforts were directed towards the **Geographic Information System (GIS)** project. Additionally, RCU initiated the Integrated Security Systems project by developing advanced security systems and integrating them through a unified platform. **Through these efforts, RCU has achieved the following in 2023:**

Working is underway to finalize Smart County's Internal Policy and obtain the required approvals from relevant authorities for Smart County codes

Developing a system containing **47** services for issuing tourist and entertainment licenses and permits, linking the system with Absher and Yaqeen platforms, and providing an electronic payment gateway

Implementing the Digital Twin project, and achieving a series of initial successes, such as communicating with citizens through Digital Twin technology

Launching a geographical application to follow up on heritage management projects in AIUla and the Old Town. It will also monitor animal and plant wealth, veterinary clinic operations, as well as animal movements in AIUla's reserves

Launching an electronic platform to illustrate the phases of AIUla's development on a map

Developing a new geographical system to review the locations and internal plans of RCU's buildings

Adding a map feature to the "Experience AIUla" application

Allowing the Unified Control Center (UCC) team to monitor all sites, receive alerts, analyze data, generate and submit detailed reports, and obtain accurate statistics from all systems

Allowing the UCC team to monitor sites that are difficult to reach through human resources, as well as secure, protect, and monitor all nine sites, and respond quickly to any type of emergency

Training all UCC employees to use the enhanced security systems through an integrated training program



AIUla... Where sports bloom in the roots of heritage



**The Institutional Excellence** Portfolio includes projects and works within the framework of RCU'S strategic objectives to achieve **excellence in institutional performance**, placing it in a competitive position. It has achieved numerous accomplishments, including recognition from the **EFQM Award**. This is for its exceptional efforts in operational excellence and commitment to development and innovation. In addition to **several ISO certifications such as (ISO37120), (ISO31000), and (ISO22301)**. Also, the launching of the 7th edition of **the Future Investment Initiative Forum 2023**. Additionally, RCU has worked on implementing multiple projects, including the **Innovation Strategy, Global Orientations Report (Aljadi), Live Museum Project**, along with the **International Council of Airports (Airport Customer Experience Accreditation)**, and as part of its pursuit of **institutional excellence**, RCU launched the establishment project for **Institutional Excellence Management (Phase 2)**. In the realm of **innovation**, RCU developed an **opportunities platform connecting business owners and beneficiaries**, as well as the **Cloud Services Project**, and several systems, such as **the Inventory and Warehouse Management System, Governance, Risk, and Compliance System**, and the **Integrated Protection Initiative System**. **Through these efforts, RCU has achieved the following in 2023:**

- 1**  
RCU's attainment of the Institutional Excellence Award from the European Foundation for Quality Management (EFQM) at the 5-star level
- 2**  
AIUla has been awarded the ISO 37120 Gold Certification for Smart Cities, recognizing its commitment to high-quality data and excellence in planning, management, and governance
- 3**  
RCU obtained the (ISO31000) certification for Enterprise Risk Management System
- 4**  
RCU obtained the (ISO22301) certification for Business Continuity Management System
- 5**  
Defining and implementing the Innovation Management Strategy within RCU, establishing an Innovation Advisory Committee, and developing an initiative and project assessment tool to prioritize projects
- 6**  
issuing the Global Orientations Report (Aljadi)
- 7**  
Completing the development of the Communication Strategies Guide through engaging content on the Live Museum Platform
- 8**  
AIUla Airport obtaining official accreditation for the airport customer experience
- 9**  
Continuing the ongoing efforts, **78** core RCU policies have been adopted
- 10**  
Organizing **+110** training workshops for policy preparation and **+311** facilitation sessions to review policy content
- 11**  
Continuing the ongoing efforts, **205** work procedures have been enhanced and developed, while **59** new procedures, including essential, administrative, and supportive procedures, have been established and implemented within RCU
- 12**  
Developing a mechanism to monitor and measure the performance indicators of key procedures

- 13**  
Establishing a performance indicator library for all approved procedures within RCU
- 14**  
Providing a job platform, training courses platform, and business platform through an opportunities platform
- 15**  
Launching the cloud services system in collaboration with Oracle to host a number of RCU's systems on the Oracle platform
- 16**  
Launching the Inventory and Warehouse Management System, which fully automated the processes of receiving, ordering, and issuing all materials and assets
- 17**  
Assessing the current status of the governance, risk, and compliance sector, and developing a strategy to enhance the required maturity level
- 18**  
Reviewing policies and procedures, updating and approving them, in addition to developing performance indicators and monitoring their results
- 19**  
Reviewing RCU's risk tolerance levels, enhancing them, and securing approval
- 20**  
Establishing a plan to monitor compliance and workplace ethics; to gauge adherence to legislative, regulatory, and internal policy requirements within RCU, securing approval, and implementing it
- 21**  
Creating an internal control framework, assessing and improving it to preserve an effective regulatory environment within RCU's sectors and departments
- 22**  
Increasing awareness of the importance of the governance, risk, and compliance sector, and training RCU's staff to ensure full familiarity with governance, risk, and compliance policies and procedures within RCU
- 23**  
Adding a feature for registering and managing personal profiles, as well as managing events, within the system of Hammayah's initiative, and integrating the system with the Ministry of Education, Ministry of Commerce, Absher, Yaqeen, and the General Organization for Social Insurance (GOSI)



Through **the Sports Portfolio**, RCU has undertaken a variety of activities and projects across different sports disciplines. These include **establishing AIUla Arabian Camel Racetrack**, hosting **AIUla Cup for Camel Racing**, hosting the **Custodian of the Two Holy Mosques International Endurance Cup**, **AIUla International Falconry Championship**, and the **World Cup for Horseback Archery**. Additionally, RCU has executed projects aimed at fostering local community participation and enhancing sports capabilities. These projects involve **establishing and sustaining community sports, developing community sports fields in neighborhoods, and implementing sports sustainability programs.**

Furthermore, initiatives such as the **Mawhiba Academy in AIUla, enhancing sports in AIUla's schools, designing a football stadium and training facilities for AIUla Club**, launching the **first clay tennis court in AIUla**, and introducing **volleyball have been part of the sports development efforts.** in addition to the development of the football sector. Projects under the sports portfolio umbrella encompass the Equestrian Village and first phase of constructing the Mughira Heritage Village, which aims to provide semi-permanent facilities for hosting sports events. Moreover, there have been efforts towards **transferring the ownership of al AIUla club to RCU**, important agreements with Saudi federations, **French partnerships, sponsorship contracts, AIUla Sports Strategy**, and **AIUla Tennis Strategy.** **Through these efforts, RCU has achieved the following:**

Completing the design work, the camel racing track and its access roads, and the execution of the race within the specified timeframe

Participating **391** camel owners, **438** camels, **2,500** participants, and offering the world's highest prize money in camel racing and sports

Attracting **440** participants and reaching **5 to 10 million** views during AIUla Camel Cup race across **6** sports channels

**2,336** visitors, **214** VIP guests, and **252** students, totaling **105,990** Saudi Riyals from ticket sales during the AIUla Camel Cup

Achieving 39 million impressions, **118 million** special activation appearances, and selling **2,280** tickets for the media campaign, **21** press releases, **+33** interviews, and publishing **2.116** article about AIUla Camel Cup

The International Federation for Equestrian Sports (FEI) has awarded the Custodian of the Two Holy Mosques' International Endurance Cup Championship, hosted by AIUla, a two-star rating, recognizing the level of preparation and competition

AIUla hosting a new season of the Endurance Championship, offering the highest cash prize in the world for the race

Boosting community sports in AIUla

Final design of community sports fields and implementation of the project on the ground

The average daily number of visitors to the stadiums reached **100** visitors

Improving and renovating of sports facilities in **11** schools were carried out in Phase 1 of developing sports in AIUla's schools

A site for the football stadium and training facilities for AIUla Club was selected in the Housing District south of AIUla, and a deed was issued for it. Three preliminary design options for Phase 1 and Phase 2 were developed

Establishing the first clay tennis court in AIUla in the Kingdom

Developing falconry in the Mughayra Heritage Sports Village

Development work in the Mughayra Village for Traditional Sports included falconry races, which had the highest prizes and rounds

Developing a comprehensive conceptual plan for Mughayra Village with a futuristic vision, to accommodate various sports such as Salouqi (Greyhound) racing, falconry racing, archery and shooting, a veterinary clinic for camels, a celebration theater, and a residential facility for visitors with **80-120** keys

Improving the location of the polo field, horse racing track, and stables in the Knights Equestrian Village; to host additional sports such as archery and shooting

Transferring AIUla Sports Club ownership to AIUla Sports Clubs Company owned by RCU

Granting the approval for the transfer of ownership of AIUla Club shares to AIUla Sports Clubs Company, pursuant to Supervisory Committee Resolution No. (1-14T/1445)

Signing the agreement and meeting minutes about transferring the ownership of AIUla Sports Club by all relevant parties in 2023

Signing multiple MoUs at both the local and international levels

Launching the AIAtheeb Equestrian Village strategy within the French partnership

Launching a training program for horse riding by selecting **30** male and female students from the French Racing Horse Stables Employees Training Association (AFASEC)

Completing the development of the sports sector strategy, and the formulation and implementation of the AIUla Tennis Strategy

**1000** bicycles were distributed to the local community members in AI Ula, to encourage cycling, and **150** students participated in cycling tours. Moreover, community participation was increased, and the local community was integrated into historical sports tournaments through organizing school visits by athletes, conducting inspirational sessions, and arranging school trips for students to visit and attend the competitions



AIUla Cup for Camel Racing



World Cup for Horseback Archery



RCU has embarked on a range of qualitative projects within diverse cultural domains through its **Special Cultural Zones Portfolio**, aligning with its strategic goals. These endeavors have focused on fostering development in of **cultural assets and areas** in AlUla. This is by bridging nature and culture, to enhance the cultural landscape through agricultural development. Within its framework, several projects have been implemented, including **establishing the Cultural Oasis Regeneration Center** to oversee agricultural activities and related tourism activities in AlUla. Additionally, RCU designed the concept of **“Slow Food”** to develop Slow Food Farm area’s project summary and conceptual design to achieve the concept of sustainable food. Moreover, projects such as the **Agricultural Oasis Complex** which includes Old Town Façade as well as comprehensive planning has been undertaken for the **Dadan and Jabal Ikmah plan**. Also, **design of public facilities in the cultural oasis area** have been implemented, along with the **renovation of mosques in AlJadeedah area**. In conjunction with designing the conceptual plan for the Hegra and Nabataean village areas, alongside an initiative to enhance the urban scenery and major thoroughfares as part of the “Journey Through Time” masterplan. This endeavor seeks to elevate visual allure and enhance the overall experience for both residents and visitors. **Through these efforts, RCU has achieved the following in 2023:**

**1**

Delivering the authorization report, business model template, legal and governance affairs report, strategy and financial projections, organizational structure, and roadmap for implementing the Cultural Oasis Regeneration Center Project

**2**

Completing the preparation of a development summary for the “Slow Food” Center project for the upcoming season, and completing the signing of a partnership agreement with the Slow Food International Organization

**3**

Contracting with the main designer of the Agricultural Oasis Complex project, and developing and approving the initial report on the project design concept

**4**

Designing and implementing early works packages for the season of 2023 as part of the public facilities project in the Cultural Oasis area. A significant step was kickstarting the Phase 1 of the Old Town Façade project. It contributed to launching the season’s activities on the eastern façade. In addition to integrating the archaeological excavation area within the town façade site and combine it with visitor experience through interpretive panels

**5**

Completing Phase 1 of the initiative to enhance the urban scenery and major thoroughfares as part of the “Journey Through Time” masterplan. It aims to raise visual appeal and improve the experience for residents and visitors

**6**

Completing the comprehensive planning project for Dadan and Jabal Ikmah Plan, along with finalizing the detailed master plan with the project’s overall objectives obtaining the approval of RCU’s Board of Directors

**7**

Completing the development of the conceptual plan for the Hegra and Nabatean Village Plan, and obtaining the approval of RCU’s Board of Directors

**8**

Completing the preparation program of renovating the mosques in AlJadeedah area and completing the reviving of one of them within Al-Jadidah area, while starting to prepare designs to modernize additional mosques within the Al-Manshiya and Al-Mahash areas





## Other Related Works and Achievements in 2023

In 2023, RCU achieved a range of qualitative accomplishments aimed at enhancing the heritage, cultural, and civilizational aspects of AIUla, as well as its historical, archaeological, and natural sites. These efforts were geared towards creating unique experiences and services for the local community and visitors to enhance the quality of life and elevate the well-being in the region. RCU focused on improving its institutional performance and digital services, enhancing the continuity of its operations, and raising the level of governance in its technological systems. Additionally, it aimed at enhancing infrastructure and constructing facilities across various sectors. This was achieved through the implementation of various diverse projects and initiatives across its sectors, alongside fostering local and international partnerships to strengthen its presence locally and globally. **Through these efforts, RCU has achieved the following:**

### Digital Transformation and Technological Systems:

In line with the objectives of Saudi Vision 2030 and as part of supporting the digital transformation efforts in the Kingdom, RCU has worked on launching and implementing several projects and initiatives aimed at enhancing digital infrastructure and governance while improving service quality. These initiatives encompassed the **establishment of a data platform, analytical applications to support decision-making, activation of a data governance program, data partnerships and integration, statistical analysis, data collection**, as well as the implementation of the **correspondence system (Hegra)**. Additionally, efforts were directed towards activating a **disaster recovery center**, launching the **living museum platform**, deploying the **“Experience AIUla” application**, implementing a **digital signature system**, and automating internal services within RCU. **Through these efforts, RCU has achieved the following in 2023:**

# 1

Implementing the data platform and the launch of a range of data products designed to provide tailored insights and analytics to support decision-making across RCU's departments

# 2

Developing of more than **5** analytical applications across multiple sectors

# 3

The achievement of a compliance rate of **67%** with the National Data Management Office

# 4

Implementing over **40** controls and standards, along with the development of **8** policies and **18** processes for the National Data Management Office

# 5

Identifying and assigning over **23** data domains to RCU's data subjects

# 6

Defining more than **450** terms from the business glossary in the datahub tool

# 7

Achieving full compliance with the Data and Artificial Intelligence Management Office through adherence to all standards related to the Digital Transformation Index

# 8

Signing more than **6** agreements for data sharing and initiating the process of linking and collecting data for over **6** government entities

# 9

Issuing **14** reports on the Consumer Price Index and releasing the results and final report of the survey on household income and expenditure through statistical analysis and data collection

# 10

Launching the upgraded version of the correspondence system, which enables RCU to communicate electronically with government agencies and apply higher security standards for documents

# 11

Activating the Disaster Recovery Center fully, with high availability of RCU's main systems and services

# 12

Launching the Living Museum platform along with transferring content from the old website version to the new one

# 13

Introducing a new design and additional services aligned with technological trends, along with launching tools that enable managing sector-specific content in the “Experience AIUla” application

# 14

Integrating of the “Experience AIUla” application with the Geographic Information System

# 15

Providing electronic signature services for documents in the Digital Signature system, which have been authenticated by the National Nafath System

# 16

Protecting the signed documents from any alterations in the Digital Signature system

# 17

Integrating the Digital Signature system with relevant internal systems to streamline the user experience.

# 18

Renewal of the **ISO 20000** certificate in the Information Technology Governance system

# 19

Automating of **90%** of internal operations and services within RCU

### Development and Improvement Works in 2023

With a keen focus on enhancing and delivering top-notch services to facilitate and improve the quality of life for the local community and enhance the visitor experience, RCU has embarked on implementing a range of qualitative projects and initiatives. These include the **construction of the Nabatean Village, capacity building and skills development programs**, and the **improvement of the guest management**, which aims at designing a new journey for visitors and aligns with RCU's brand and values. Additionally, the establishment of a building for development and construction management was undertaken as part of these initiatives. **Through these efforts, RCU has achieved the following in 2023:**

Completing the summary of the Nabatean Village project as part of the structural plan

Conducting **+20** awareness sessions to introduce the Data Office as part of the Capacity Building and Skills Development project, and collaborating with **+15** business representatives from various sectors

The design work has been completed, and construction work is underway for the Development and Construction Management building



**Local and International Partnerships in 2023**

RCU has formed several partnerships to develop the tourism sector in the Kingdom and to preserve cultural and heritage in AIUla. This includes a multi-sector strategic partnership with the United Nations Educational, Scientific and Cultural Organization UNESCO to enhance AIUla’s status as a sustainable heritage tourism destination. The International Union for Conservation of Nature IUCN has also established a multi-sector strategic partnership to conserve nature and wildlife. It also aims to preserve heritage through biodiversity protection and sustainability in collaboration with the local community. Through awareness, capacity building, and research support in the field of archaeological site protection, AIUla’s cultural heritage can be preserved and improved through a multi-sector strategic partnership with **the Saudi National Committee of the International Council on Monuments and Sites (ICOMOS)**. The **French partnership** is also based on the Saudi-French governmental agreement, and the purpose of the partnership is to enhance AIUla’s global status through the exchange of expertise, capacity building, technology transfer, and regulatory frameworks. **Through these efforts, RCU has achieved the following in 2023:**

- 1** Executing art projects with a field presence, providing legal advice and recommendations for sustainable financial plans, and programs for technological solutions
- 2** Translating **3** documents from English to Arabic within the scientific document translation program
- 3** Signing an agreement with the Centre Pompidou as a strategic partner for the contemporary art exhibition in AIUla
- 4** The Kingdom hosted several archaeological missions that conducted fieldwork at various sites, such as the Old Town, the Oasis, and Dadan
- 5** Archaeological mission experts presented **10** research papers at the 13th International Congresses on the Archaeology of the Ancient Near East (ICAANE) held in Copenhagen
- 6** Completing the Hegra Villa Foundation Board of Trustees
- 7** Signing a contract for the implementation of the Sharaan Resort project and the Sharaan Summit Hall for Conferences with the French company Bouygues. The hall was designed by Jean Nouvel in a style that harmonizes with the nature and rich history of the region
- 8** **+160** participants have attended an event in paris, which included the screening of the documentary film “Lost Treasures of the Arabian Peninsula - Ancient City of Dadan” by Nat Geo
- 9** Training three technicians on agricultural yield standards, quality assessment of seeds and roots, sorting, preservation, testing, and cultivation processes
- 10** Publishing approximately **167** articles about AIUla in the French press, representing cumulative readership coverage estimated at around 365 million readers
- 11** Launching the strategy and vision of Al Atheeb Equestrian Village led by the French company EGIS

**RCU executive regulations, policies, and mandates in 2023**

As a result of RCU's commitment to developing clear and effective standards for governance and operations implementation, a variety of notable projects and works have been implemented. The most prominent of these projects is the **policy development, research, and regulatory framework strategy**. **Through these efforts, RCU has achieved the following in 2023:**

- Regulatory framework development
- Developing the function of policy and research

**Key Events and Engagements on a Local and Global Level in 2023**

In order to raise awareness about AIUla’s heritage and historical value, RCU has implemented a variety of projects and works. Among them are the **Best Tourism Villages ceremony, Cityscape Global Exhibition 2023, Arabian Leopard Day, Eid Al-Fitr, Eid Al-Adha, and the National Day**. **Through these efforts, RCU has achieved the following in 2023:**

- 1** **+230** participants attended AIUla’s “Best Tourism Villages” ceremony, establishing AIUla as a regional and global tourism destination
- 2** Raising awareness during Cityscape Global 2023 about AIUla as a city that accelerates business activities and supports economies
- 3** Campaigns to increase awareness of the endangered Arabian leopard on the global stage from AIUla. Educational videos are displayed at Piccadilly Square in London and Nasdaq Stock Exchange in New York
- 4** Exceeding the digital performance index by **180** through active engagement on social media platforms during the Arabian Leopard Day 2023 event
- 5** Distributing **1,600** gifts in 16 regions in AIUla during Eid Al-Fitr, and **5,900** gifts in **40** locations during Eid Al-Adha
- 6** Launching the Living Museum platform and transferring content from the old website to the updated version
- 7** Organizing events, competitions, and activities in Anwar AIUla Park and in the Old town, including Saudi traditional dance performances “The Saudi Ardah”

Arabian Leopard Day



**Complying with Digital Government Authority requirements in 2023**

In accordance with Saudi Vision 2030 and based on its commitment to support the national transformation journey, RCU has excelled in its services and digital infrastructure through launching significant projects and initiatives packages in the fields of technology and innovation, contributing to enhancing governance and digital services. Due to its outstanding performance in digital transformation, RCU achieved several notable accomplishments, including **the Digital Transformation Index. Through these efforts, RCU has achieved the following in 2023:**

- 1

The Digital Transformation Index of RCU increased from **87.55%** in 2022 to **89.80%** in 2023
- 2

RCU ranked **third** among the economic and development entities
- 3

RCU ranked **18th** out of **226** government entities in the field of digital transformation
- 4

**82%** user satisfaction rate with digital services
- 5

**24-hour** Service Level Agreement (SLA) for digital services
- 6

The average time required to complete digital services is **140 minutes**

**AIUla comprehensive service center satisfaction rate in 2023**

Striving to enhance the quality of life and provide necessary facilities for the local community and visitors to AIUla, RCU works to improve its services to the highest quality standards and deliver them through the Comprehensive Services Center. **Through these efforts, RCU has achieved the following in 2023:**

- Beneficiaries' satisfaction rate with the center's services is **93%**
- The percentage of residents utilizing the center's services and reception is **32%**
- Beneficiaries' satisfaction rate with the welcome and reception is **98%**
- The average waiting time is **56** seconds
- The average service time is **5.25** seconds
- A total of **18,740** incoming requests to the center
- A total of **11** community events were held
- A total of **1,779** beneficiaries and visitors attended the events held





## Sustainability

As part of its responsibilities, RCU maintained its commitment to promote the environmental sustainability principles and objectives in AIUla. This commitment is in recognition of sustainable practices significance and aims to foster a more sustainable future.

RCU's commitment to sustainability appears within the "AIUla Vision," its strategic principles and goals aligned with the national directions; to promote a sustainable future that preserves natural resources and heritage treasures, creates diverse and sustainable economic opportunities, as well as enables individuals to build a vibrant, prosperous and active society.

In addition, RCU outlines its vision through the strategic roadmap for environmental sustainability in AIUla, which represents a comprehensive environmental approach aiming to transform AIUla into a global destination and a sustainability leader by 2035 in terms of sustainable tourism, renewable energy, reducing carbon emissions, water resources management and green buildings.

RCU is committed to continuing its efforts and making a greater impact on sustainability in AIUla. It includes aspects of economic, social, and cultural sustainability, which are as equally important as environmental sustainability.

RCU strives continuously to furthering its aspirations in this area and broadening the concept of sustainability in AIUla. This entails incorporating economic, social, and cultural sustainability alongside environmental sustainability. Over several years, RCU has worked to restructure sustainability, positioning it as a sector that falls under the Strategy and Enterprise Project Management Office, with a dedicated department for Environmental Affairs. Moreover, the Authority is working to secure additional resources that will certainly support the design and activation of a comprehensive sustainability approach throughout AIUla.



An endurance rider through one of the Custodian of the Two Holy Mosques International Endurance Cup's racetracks in AIUla

## AIUla Strategic Sustainability Roadmap

In 2023, RCU updated its sustainability strategic roadmap in AIUla to include social, economic, and cultural dimensions alongside environmental ones.

Dimensions	Goals	
<p><b>1</b></p> <p><b>Environmental</b></p>	<p><b>Reduce waste to lower waste percentage</b></p> <p><b>Preserve biodiversity and natural resources</b></p> <p><b>Adopt sustainable transportation</b></p>	<p><b>Promote the concept of circular economy</b></p> <p><b>Promote long-term agricultural practices</b></p> <p><b>Reduce carbon footprint associated with CO2 emissions</b></p>
<p><b>2</b></p> <p><b>Social</b></p>	<p><b>Health &amp; Well-being</b> Improve and maintain local community's overall state of physical, mental, and social wellness</p> <p><b>Engagement &amp; Cooperation</b> Engage with local communities in the decision-making process and promote cooperation with international stakeholders</p>	<p><b>Social Advancement</b> Enable access to equal opportunities for everybody</p>
<p><b>3</b></p> <p><b>Economic</b></p>	<p><b>Long-term Value Creation</b> Drive long-term economic diversification and improve infrastructure and service quality</p>	<p><b>Local Content</b> Promote local content and create new source of employment</p> <p><b>Skills and Excellence</b> Increase access to key skills and sufficient source of qualified talent</p>
<p><b>4</b></p> <p><b>Cultural</b></p>	<p><b>Heritage Conservation</b> Preserve and activate tangible (e.g., sites) and intangible (e.g., traditions) heritage</p> <p><b>Cultural Development</b> Ensure the long-term viability and vibrancy of the cultural sector</p>	<p><b>Local Access &amp; Contribution</b> Facilitate access to culture for the local community and support its involvement in cultural production</p>

## Environmental Dimension

### KPIs of the Environmental Dimension

14 Tier-1 key performance indicators developed, to be used for external communication  
In addition to 85 Tier-2 & Tier-3 KPIs

#### Biodiversity

##### Protection:

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

##### Conservation:

Agriculture soil fertility

##### Restoration:

Of native trees planted in AIUla protected areas

##### Restoration:

- Of wildlife species recovery with the IUCN Green Status of Species (viability, functionality)
- Of flora species revegetated in AIUla
- Of individuals of Arabian leopard successfully reintroduced

##### Sustainability Urban Development:

Landscapes and parks, in % of total urban area

#### Waste Recycling & Circular Economy

##### Collection:

Waste collection rate

##### Diversion:

- % of waste diverted from landfill
- % of CD&E waste valorized

#### Water

##### Source:

- % of treated wastewater reused
- Potable water service coverage

##### Use:

- Residents water consumption L / day / capita
- Agriculture water consumption (m3 / year)

#### Net Zero Carbon emissions Plan

Achieve net zero carbon emissions by 2035 in line with the national objective of net zero emissions by 2060. This is done through AIUla's Net Zero strategy, which aims to:

- Reduce greenhouse gases resulting from AIUla's local emissions (excluding air travel and food imports)
- Achieve a stable "per capita share of greenhouse gas emissions" between 2022 and 2035, preventing increases in per capita emissions

## Social, Economic, Cultural Dimensions

### KPIs of Social, Economic, Cultural Dimensions

218 primary performance indicators selected, to be developed in cooperation with stakeholders

#### Dimensions

#### KPIs Pillars

##### Social

- Health & Well-being
- Social Advancement
- Engagement & Cooperation

**109**  
Total KPIs

##### Economic

- Long-term Value Creation
- Local Content
- Skills and Excellence

**54**  
Total KPIs

##### Cultural

- Heritage Conservation
- Local Access & Contribution
- Cultural Development

**55**  
Total KPIs

Each dimension is in line with UN SDGs and KSA national strategies

#### 9 Pillars (social, economic, cultural)

#### UN Sustainability Development Goal

Each one of the 9 pillars can be mapped into one or several SDGs

#### KSA National Strategies

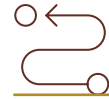
The 9 pillars are included in the KSA national strategies priorities

#### Main national strategies include:

- Social: Ministry of Health Strategy; Ministry of Education Strategy; Ministry of Human Resources and Social Development Strategy; Ministry of Municipal Rural Affairs and Housing Strategy; Ministry of Justice Strategy; Housing Program
- Economic: National Investment Strategy; Ministry of Finance Strategy; National Industrial Strategy
- Cultural: Ministry of Culture Strategy



## Key achievements in 2023



### Defining sustainability Requirements roadmap at assets, infrastructure, communities, and residential areas levels:

RCU has defined the required green certification label based on asset types and outlined the key performance indicators (KPIs) and its minimum sustainability requirements. Further, RCU has completed pilot projects in addition to finalizing the Environmental Sustainability Implementation Plan.



### Completing the Sustainability Master Policy:

RCU defined the main controls, rules, and standards necessary for managing sustainability in a manner that will ensure proper governance of activities within its geographic boundaries across the environment, social, cultural, and economic sustainability pillars.



### Developing the Local Building Materials Strategy:

RCU identified the demand for local building materials for its priority projects, the potential sources of supply, and required actions for implementing the strategy going forward, including responsibilities for identification of new quarry areas, establishing regional building material platforms to support the circular economy, and processes for permits issuance.

As part of the project, a new quarry location for aggregates, sand, and ornamental rock has been assessed and will be handed over to MIM by early 2024 to initiate the licensing process.

In the next phase, the strategy will include the development of an e-platform to document building materials needs and surpluses, thereby directly contributing to circular economy principles and reducing construction waste.



### RCU's successful participation in Cop28 and SGI:

RCU participated in the United Nations "COP28" conference on climate change and in the Saudi Green Initiative exhibition, where it outlined its comprehensive methodology for achieving sustainability, as well as discussed its role in achieving the Kingdom's climate goals. These participations also enabled RCU to consolidate its status as a major environmental and sustainability contributor within the framework of Saudi Vision 2030. In addition, it was an opportunity to review RCU's current and future projects to reach net zero carbon.



### Finalizing the (ESG) Maturity

#### Assessment:

RCU finalized the Environment, Social, and Governance (ESG) Maturity assessment as part of its programs and projects. The goal is to enhance its contribution to the application of sustainability practices and its various dimensions.



### Strengthening the ESIA process:

RCU identified the social and environmental impacts of projects that need to be disclosed to the community as per the best international practices. The procedure for stakeholder engagement was defined through the SIA guidelines, which has eventually contributed to strengthening the ESIA process.

## Key works & Initiatives



### Buildings Sustainability Certificates Project:

The project aims to identify and evaluate the most appropriate and applicable green building systems for all types of assets in AIUla in line with RCU's sustainability principles.

This initiative evaluated twelve local and international rating systems. These systems were identified and grouped according to the targeted assets into four groups: newly constructed buildings, existing buildings, new communities, and infrastructure. Subsequently, a thorough assessment and comparison were carried out for each rating system. This is according to the criteria of applicability at the lowest cost and in fastest time, in addition to compliance with AIUla's strategic plans and principles.

It is worth mentioning that all of the assessed rating systems have provisions supporting and complying with the Saudi Green Building Code and with AIUla's net zero-carbon strategy in terms of materials used for infrastructure, best practices to support sustainability in the stages of design, execution, operation, and clean energy generation.



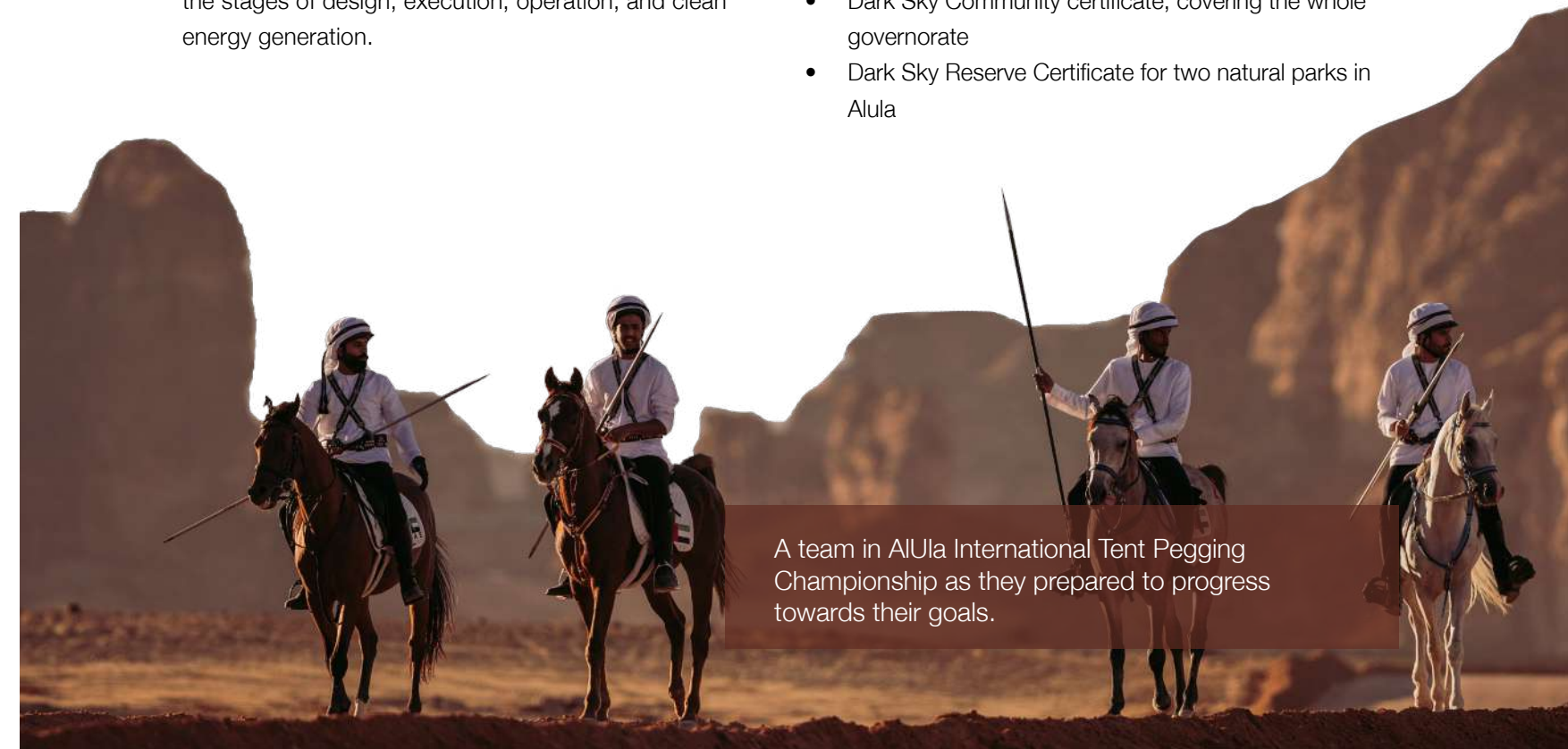
### Developing the Dark Sky strategy in AIUla:

The strategy aims to preserve the nature and beauty of the dark sky in AIUla, reduce light pollution, and create sustainable tourism opportunities linked to stargazing activities, protect the environment and assist in preserving nocturnal ecological corridors for wildlife movement, while celebrating the ancestral way of life in AIUla.

Therefore, and as part of its efforts to protect AIUla from various forms of pollution, RCU seeks to register AIUla among the Dark Sky Cities and obtain international accreditation from the International Dark-Sky Association (IDA). This will contribute to making AIUla a unique tourist destination free from light pollution, benefiting the local community, visitors, and wildlife.

During 2023, RCU worked with the International Dark Sky Association (IDA) to confirm the required accreditation and conduct light pollution surveys across the governorate as a first step in the application process. In agreement with the IDA, RCU seeks to obtain two certifications, namely:

- Dark Sky Community certificate, covering the whole governorate
- Dark Sky Reserve Certificate for two natural parks in Alula



A team in AIUla International Tent Pegging Championship as they prepared to progress towards their goals.

## Performance of Sustainability Projects

### Project

#### RCU's Sustainability Report 2023

**30%**

% of completion until the end of 2023

#### Phase IV CO2 Re-baseline

**58%**

% of completion until the end of 2023

#### Identify and implement resources recovery value chains in AIUla project

**58%**

% of completion until the end of 2023

#### Environmental Awareness Campaign Strategy and Implementation Plan Development

**49%**

% of completion until the end of 2023

#### Integrated Water Management Strategy

**50%**

% of completion until the end of 2023

### Key Next Steps by 2024

- Complete the data collection process and prepare the required designs
- Issue the report
- Scenarios aimed at reducing the level of greenhouse gases and reaching zero carbon neutrality to be finalized
- Finalize the waste baseline assessment report
- Complete the options appraisal report
- Campaign Name, logo and visual identity to be finalized
- Hold workshops with relevant stakeholders to discuss the strategy outcomes
- Finalize the preparation of scenarios for water and resources management in accordance with stakeholders feedback to finalize and approve the final report

A horse participating in the Custodian of the Two Holy Mosques International Endurance Cup and ready for pre-race examination

## RCU's Projects Included in Saudi Green Initiative (SGI)

Throughout 2023, RCU worked on numerous diverse projects and initiatives to contribute to the achievements of the Saudi Green Initiative (SGI) objectives and to realize the aspirations of Saudi Vision 2030. These projects are as follows:



### Establishing a Nursery and Seed Bank:

RCU contributed to the development of preserving and propagating local plant seeds techniques, a protocol for producing seedlings of local trees and shrubs, and the production of seedlings from local trees and shrubs at a rate of 300,000 seedlings per year in the temporary plant nursery, which will reach 10 million seedlings by the year 2035.



### Ashar Valley Environmental Assessment:

RCU contributed directly and indirectly by providing recommendations for environmental management approaches and assessing the ecological linkage of Wadi Ashar with Harrat Uwayrid Nature Reserve.

### Through an interactive model of AIUla Cultural Oasis, the following projects were reviewed:

- Renewing and reviving the Cultural Oasis
- 360 Mobility plan
- Daimumah Oasis
- Locally sourced building materials
- Agricultural composting facility that aims to achieve 100% recycling of agricultural waste



### Study of Oak Tree Mortality and Possible Solutions:

RCU contributed to studying oak trees infection from diseases and insects. Approximately 6000 tree samples were collected and their infection levels were determined. This initiative will recommend scientific solutions, management strategies, and conservation plans for oak trees to enhance the natural landscapes.



### Establishing and Managing Nature Reserves in a Sustainable Manner:

RCU contributed to designing a network of protected areas that are effectively managed to preserve wildlife and protect biodiversity.



### Examples of projects that reflect RCU's application of the strategic principle specified in the AIUla Framework Plan SP11 - Circular Economy:

In addition to the projects mentioned above, RCU's participation in the Green Saudi Initiative 2023 was tangible evidence of its commitment to implementing Strategic Principle 11 (Circular Economy) and Strategic Principle 12 (Embedding resilience). This is done through several projects that adopted and embodied these principles, focusing in particular on reducing waste and improving material efficiency.



### Ecological Restoration:

RCU contributed to developing several innovative approaches for ecological restoration of degraded arid land. This is through the establishment of a 100-hectare site initiation in Sharaan Nature Reserve. The project outcomes will contribute to the SGI target and will support the rehabilitating of 40 million hectares of land and the planting of 10 billion trees in the coming decades.



### Inventory of AIUla Flora & Fauna:

RCU contributed to completing the preliminary review vegetation list of AIUla, registering 497 species, studying 27 landscape units, and discovering 5 new species (under study).



## Opportunities and Enablers

In the context of RCU's continuous concern and aspirations for a promising future for AIUla's prosperity, and in line with its strategic goals and Saudi Vision 2030. RCU has worked to identify its future opportunities and the expected impacts, based on its business sectors.

### Key future opportunities include:

**Intensifying public sports facilities**, through coordination with the Ministry of Sports, the Ministry of Education, and urban planning to develop sports facilities, enable the use of school facilities, and raise awareness of sports and health

**Establishing a market for local agricultural products in AIUla**, by leveraging AIUla's brand reputation and AIUla as a tourist destination

**Improving planning, resource allocation, and project performance** through the implementation of strong data governance, data integration across departments, and leveraging data analytics, in addition to investing in IT infrastructure, attracting technical talents, and adopting AI, big data, and digital twin

**Obtaining Dark Sky Certification for the protection of the nocturnal ecosystem and promoting sustainable development practices within AIUla**, by attracting environmentally-conscious tourists and those who seek extraordinary and unique experiences. This will boost tourism revenues and economic growth, through sufficient budget allocations to provide lighting equipment, technical solutions, continuous infrastructure maintenance, and the establishment of partnerships and cooperation agreements with local and international suppliers to ensure the local market's access to essential equipment at reasonable costs

**Developing large-scale hotel projects in AIUla**, by harnessing major plans and allocating them to hospitality projects, obtaining appropriate licensing and classification to meet visitor expectations

**Expanding scientific research on the effects of northwestern Saudi Arabia**, through an upcoming agreement with Sorbonne University, France

**Positioning AIUla as an advanced model and significant benchmark in digital maturity nationally and globally**, by enabling a stable internet connection, developing robust infrastructure for it, and allocating a sufficient budget and technical support unit to support updating technical solutions and continuous maintenance; which facilitates the cooperation with international partners, researchers, and investors, and the partnership with communication companies and technology providers

**Making RCU a leading model in sustainable construction practices**, by using local materials to minimize environmental impact, preserving aesthetics, increasing resource efficiency, and creating job opportunities while increasing the demand for local construction materials, encouraging local companies, and diversifying the local economy, with sufficient budget allocations for research, development, infrastructure upgrades, and support programs that encourage the production of local goods and materials

**Making AIUla a prime destination for stargazing tourism, scientific discoveries, and research**, by enhancing its position as a tourist and global destination for innovative and distinguished businesses

**Providing job opportunities for the local community in AIUla, diversifying economic sectors, and enhancing the efficiency of human resources to meet the needs of the labor market** by aligning with and leveraging the Human Capability Development Program and Quality of Life Program -both are of Saudi Vision 2030's programs-, as well as the initiatives of the Public Investment Fund, and increasing job opportunities for the local community in AIUla, Tayma, and Khaybar by creating jobs as a standard to define projects' priorities

**Enhancing huge potentials for sustainable tourism in AIUla**, by prioritizing environmentally-friendly practices related to unique landscapes and geological formations, such as providing eco-friendly accommodations

**Establishing a unified system for classifying environments and supporting biodiversity sustainability**, through a partnership with the Red Sea Global company, resulting in the identification of extended wildlife lanes beyond the province boundaries, aiming for a broader regional approach that could be later adopted as a national and regional standard for identifying environmental/wildlife lanes

**Reducing reliance on non-renewable sources** by using solar or wind energy to power backup facilities, and implementing efficient waste management systems to reduce environmental impact

**Enhancing the role of AIUla and making it part of national tourist attractions**, by leveraging initiatives of the Public Investment Fund, cooperating with the Ministry of Tourism, and utilizing traveler profiles to activate targeted proposals year-round, as well as cooperating with national tourism councils to better leverage tourism activity and extended visits

**Supporting and enhancing sustainability and cultural heritage in AIUla**, through a partnership with the World Bank to develop an executive program across all sectors of RCU, allowing systematic assessment of the current status of the developmental sustainability within RCU, identifying appropriate approaches to address gaps, and determining next steps

### Key Expected future impacts include:

Increasing tourism spending and visits

Establishing AIUla as a global model for sustainable development in the field of eco-tourism

Enhancing the comprehensive visitor experience and supporting the growing tourism industry

Improving the economic and social impact in AIUla

Enhancing brand awareness locally and internationally

Increasing satisfaction levels among the local community and visitors

Attracting top local and international talents

Improving accessibility and communication within AIUla

Improving the perception of AIUla as a distinguished area for residence and tourism

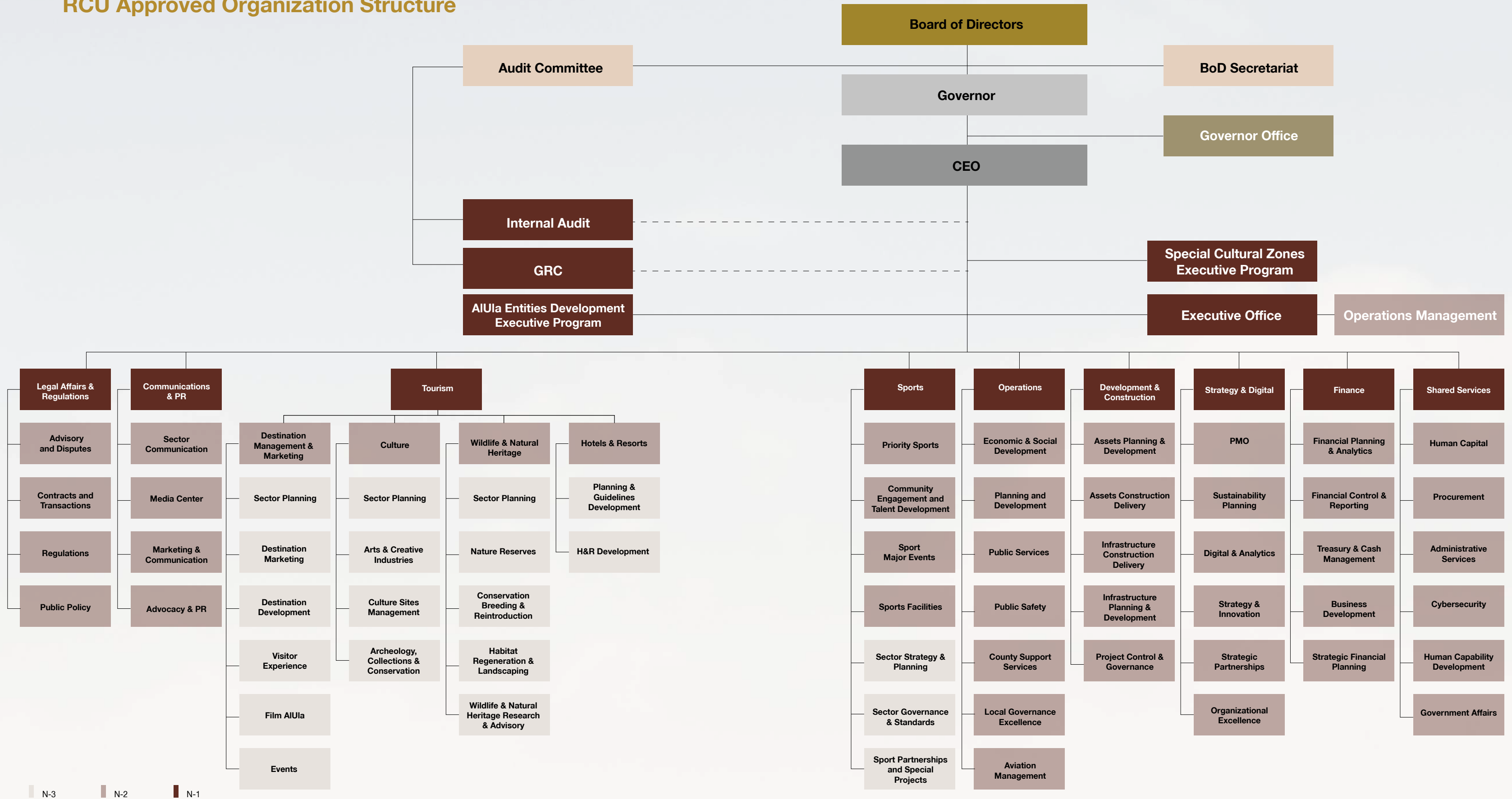
# 03

Overview of the  
Current State





# RCU Approved Organization Structure



## About RCU Governance

RCU adopts a governance model that enables it to perform its supervisory, regulatory, and executive duties to achieve its objectives, strategies, and mandated roles stipulated in its regulation. This is accomplished through adopting and enhancing the best practices in public sector governance, activating internal control roles, and continuously assessing the institutional maturity level of RCU at all levels and dimensions.

## About the Board of Directors

RCU's Board of Directors devotes complete attention to carrying out its tasks and responsibilities in accordance with RCU's regulation. It exercises its role in overseeing the governance framework of RCU and its subsidiaries, determining its strategic direction, ensuring compliance with relevant laws and regulations, and providing necessary support to the executive management. This is achieved through leveraging the expertise of the Board and committees members.





**Board of Directors Chairman and Members**



**H.R.H. Mohammed bin Salman bin Abdulaziz Al Saud**  
Chairman



**H.H. Badr bin Abdullah bin Farhan Al Saud**  
Member and Governor



**H.E. Dr. Hamad bin Mohammed Al-Sheikh**  
Member



**H.E. Eng. Ibrahim bin Mohammed Al Sultan**  
Member



**H.E. Dr. Fahad bin Abdullah Toonsi**  
Member



**Dr. Eid bin Hamad Al Yahya**  
Member



**Eng. Mousa bin Omran Al Omran**  
Member



**Dr. Saad bin Abdullah Al Sawayan**  
Member



**Dr. Khaled bin Omar Azzam**  
Member



**Eng. John Pagano**  
Member

## Board of Directors Committees

RCU's Board of Directors has established four committees comprised of board members and other independent members with the required expertise and competence for each Committee's work. These committees were formed in accordance with the general procedures outlined by the Board. Each Committee's activities revolve around its designated tasks and responsibilities in accordance with their Charters. Additionally, they provide full support to the Board on all matters referred to them and submit the necessary recommendations. Below is a brief description of the approved committees and their functions:

### The Executive Committee:

The Executive Committee was formed on 4 Rabi' al-Thani 1440H, corresponding to December 11, 2018. The Committee is responsible for overseeing and reviewing RCU's strategy and financial and operational work plans, in addition to reviewing expansion projects and investment-related topics. The Committee is also in charge of reviewing RCU's estimated annual budget and financial performance, reviewing requests for the establishment of entities, submitting recommendations to the Board, and executing any other tasks that the Board assigns to it.

#### Members:

H.H. Bader bin Abdullallah bin Farhan Al Saud  
Chairman

H.E. Eng. Ibrahim bin Mohammed Al Sultan  
Member

H.E. Dr. Fahad bin Abdullah Toonsi  
Member

Dr. Khaled bin Omar Azzam  
Member

Eng. Mousa bin Omran Al Omran  
Member

### The Audit Committee:

The Audit Committee was established on 23 Ramadan 1439H, corresponding to June 8, 2018. The Committee is responsible for overseeing the financial and accounting reports, financial statements, and audits. It ensures RCU's compliance with relevant regulations and instructions, verifies the adequacy and effectiveness of RCU's internal control and risk management systems, in addition to submitting recommendations to the Board, and executing any other tasks that the Board assigns to them. The Internal Audit department aims to provide its confirmatory, advisory, independent, and objective services to enhance RCU's operations, and support it in achieving its objectives by adopting a systematic and disciplined approach that contributes to evaluating and improving the effectiveness of the risk management, internal controls, and governance operations.

#### Members:

H.E. Mr. Abdulaziz Al Furaih  
Chairman

Dr. Saleh Al Shanifi  
Member

Mr. Yousef Al mubarak  
Member

Dr. Maryam Ali Fiocociello  
Member

### The Nominations and Remunerations Committee:

The Nominations and Remunerations Committee was formed on 23 Ramadan 1439H, corresponding to June 8, 2018.

The Committee is responsible for overseeing administrative aspects and employee affairs. It also supervises the governance framework at the level of the Board and its committees, and RCU and its Subsidiaries. This includes plans and initiatives related to human resources, governance, and their strategies. Additionally, it involves reviewing organizational structures, nomination and evaluation policies, succession plans, and remuneration. It supervises the appointment and evaluation processes of RCU's Board and Committees, subsidiary boards, advisory board members, the CEO, and Sectors' Chiefs. It is also responsible for submitting relevant recommendations to the Board, and executing any other tasks that the Board assigns to them.

#### Members:

H.E. Eng. Ibrahim bin Mohammed Al Sultan  
Chairman

H.E. Dr. Fahad bin Abdullah Toonsi  
Member

H.E. Mr. Abdulhadi Al Mansoori  
Member

### The Regulations Committee:

The Regulations Committee was formed on 27 Jumada Al'Ula 1442H, which corresponds to February 9, 2021. The Committee is responsible for reviewing draft regulations, MoU related to the regulations, and their equivalents. In addition to reviewing the draft regulations proposed by the Executive Management, and any other regulatory proposals, and submitting relevant recommendations to the Board, and executing any other tasks that the Board assigns to them.

#### Members:

Mr. Megren Al Shaalan  
Chairman

H.E. Dr. Salaheddin Al Bashir  
Member

Dr. Meshari Al Fawaz  
Member

Mr. Sultan Al Qahtani  
Member



Sports... Exciting prospects  
engaging the community of AIUla



## Advisory Board

The Advisory Board is formed by a resolution of RCU's Board of Directors and aims to provide advice and recommendations to the Board, the Governor, and the executive management regarding RCU's vision and all strategic aspects related to its operations. This is to maximize opportunities for success and provide a wide range of support and expertise to RCU.



**H.E. Sheikha Mai Al Khalifah**

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



**Lauren Sorkin**

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



**Arvind Gupta**

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



**Ricardo Hausmann**

- Professor and Lab Manager at Harvard Growth  
- Expert in economic and social development



**Senator Matteo Renzi**

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



**Naheed Nenshi**

- Former Mayor of Calgary  
- Founder of The Ascend Group  
- 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

## Subsidiaries

RCU has established a number of subsidiary companies to serve as operational and investment arms, contributing to the development of its strategy and achieving its goals in the best interest of AIUla. These companies include AIUla Peregrina Trading, Arabian Leopard Fund, AIUla Sports Club, in addition to the Museum of Visual and Contemporary Arts. Details of each can be reviewed as follows:

### Museum of Visual and Contemporary Arts



The company aims for the Visual and Contemporary Arts Museum to be the primary destination for art acquisitions, procuring artworks from artists, art exhibitions, and international auction houses according to the requirements of RCU.

### The Company's Contribution to the Development of RCU Strategy

Celebrating a global cultural and artistic tourist destination

Increasing the number of art sites that are accessible to the public

Establishing international and local arts partnerships to benefit tourism sector

Creating new jobs in the museum and arts sectors

### Key Achievements in 2023:

Acquiring 34 artworks as part of the acquisition process for the Incense Road Museum and the Contemporary Arts Museum

Signing a contract with the Carnegie Foundation to host an Andy Warhol Exhibition in AIUla, and providing educational and informative workshops to enhance the development of the arts sector

Signing a bailment agreement between MVCA and RCU to establish a framework that outlines the roles and responsibilities of both parties regarding the acquired artworks

Developing and approving the necessary requirements for the establishment phase of the company, enabling it to become independent from RCU, some of these requirements include:

- The regulatory guidelines and the financial and human resources authority matrix
- The policy on incentives, remuneration, and professional conduct
- The organizational structure and the recruitment plan
- Assessment of the current status of the company and establishment of a strategic development plan intended to identify opportunities and challenges in local and international sectors
- Development of a work plan for financial management and activation initiatives within the framework of financial operations development





**AUla Peregrina Trading:**



In response to the needs of local, international, and other cosmetic markets, AUla Peregrina Trading’s activities focus on manufacturing cosmetic ingredients and products. Through its mission, it aims to develop the first supply chain for Arabian Peregrina in AUla, by nurturing the Arabian desert and transforming its roots into unique components.

The company envisions to make AUla a globally recognized primary destination as a sustainable source of unique natural ingredients extracted from the Arabian desert and establishing the Arabian Peregrina tree as one of its most important social and economic assets.

**The Company’s Contribution to the Development of RCU Strategie:**

The company works towards achieving impact across several pillars and objectives, including tourism, arts, culture and heritage, as well as nature and wildlife, economic and social development, and institutional excellence, encompassing:

Building AUla’s identity for luxurious living and increasing awareness about it, by associating it with components extracted from sustainable local sources of high quality, and with luxury brands, such as (Cartier)

Reviving the heritage of Moringa Peregrina use in cosmetics and medicinal product, reflecting its historical and cultural aspects

Supporting plantation of Moringa Peregrina as a native species

100% company from AUla

Achieving 90% of the company’s human resources through local staff

Partnering with the Economic Development and Agricultural sectors of RCU to empower Arabian Moringa Peregrina as one of AUla’s assets

Training in the fields of business expertise and technology

Bringing innovation to AUla (Patents and assets)

**Products Provided by the Company:**

**Moringa Peregrina ingredients and extracts**

(Virgin Peregrina Oil, Hydrolyzed Peregrina Extract, Lipophilic Peregrina Extract)

**Spa amenities products for health resorts.**

(Hydrating Body Lotion, Peregrina Shampoo, Hair Conditioner, Peregrina Hand and Bath Gel)

**Key Achievements in 2023:**

**Establishing solid foundations required in the field of sales of luxury components on a global level, offering high-quality proven components from the Arabian Peregrina tree to meet the needs of the luxury cosmetics market, including:**

- 3 Premium active elements for Skin and Hair care
- 4 patents (3x cosmetics / 1x Pharma)
- Intellectual property rights for "AUla Peregrina" brand and logo
- Certified ingredients by ECOCERT, a global organization dedicated to accrediting cosmetic products according to specific environmental and social standards
- Ingredients compliant with the standards of organic cosmetic products (COSMOS Approved)

**Establishing traceable supply chains to ensure the source and quality of seeds, including:**

- Established standards and regular training for farmers
- 156 local farms within the AUla Peregrina program
- Purchasing 70 tons of seeds, valued at 2.8 million Saudi Riyals for the farmers
- High purity level of seeds at 96%
- Accreditation Certification from Union for Ethical BioTrade (UEBT)

**Developing a robust infrastructure capable of producing luxury-grade products, including:**

- ISO 9001 Certification
- 90% of employees are from the local community
- The company is fully set up in accordance with international standards

**Exclusive strategic deal with Cartier for the launch of skincare products using Winterized Peregrina Oil. These include:**

- 3 Premium cosmetics products: Pure Oil for Face and Hair, Face cream, and Fragrances in oil

**Collaborating with other brands for sales including the following:**

- Hemptress in the United States
- Celeste in the United Kingdom
- RCU Retail Products

**Signing agreements to sell spa amenities products to luxury hotels in AUla, Saudi Arabia, and abroad, including:**

- Providing 100% natural and Saudi-made amenities for "Banyan Tree", "Habitat", and "The Chedi Hegra Hotels"
- Conducting advanced discussions with „Ritz Redsea“, „Six Senses“, and „Banyan Tree“ hotels in the UAE, Qatar, and Moroccan regional regions

**Signing agreements for the development of brands and distribution of the Company’s ingredients including the following:**

- Signing a MOU with "Avalon Pharma company" to develop the first set of Arabian Peregrina products
- Participating in trade shows in Europe and Asia to enhance brand awareness in the global cosmetics markets
- Engaging in advanced discussions to sign agreements with global distributors of cosmetic ingredients in the People’s Republic of China, South Korea, Southeast Asia, and the United States

**AIUla Sports Club**



In pursuit of becoming one of the top competitive football clubs in the Saudi Professional League by 2028, the club is working on launching the Excellence Performance Center, aiming for the center to become an advanced facility equipped with state-of-the-art technologies. This is part of the mission to develop athletes in multiple sports while maintaining economic sustainability.

Its vision is to be a pioneering, excellence-driven organization. The club aspires to uphold sporting excellence and sustainability, fostering a strong sense of pride within AIUla’s community.

**The Club's Contribution to the Development of RCU Strategy:**

The club operates through many strategic pillars that intersect implicitly with the efforts and initiatives of RCU to develop the sports sector. These pillars include the following:

Developing the first football tea	Building and developing women's football	Creating world-class academies for AIUla Club
Promoting and creating a variety of sports activities	Offering a work environment that is productive and exceptional	Establishing a marketing brand
Getting community involvement and expanding the fan base	Designing and constructing sports facilities adhering to international standards	

**Key Achievements in 2023:**

The club has achieved numerous accomplishments within its projects and core programs at the sports sector level in AIUla, targeting various segments of the local community. This contributes to increasing the number of athletes, enhancing competitiveness, and achieving championships in various sports, including:

**Football:**

- The establishment of a technical and administrative staff capable of building a team for the future
- Achievement of regional championships in both the youth and junior categories
- Qualification for the three age groups for the Kingdom's promotion finals

**The establishment of volleyball game:**

- Recruitment of players, administrators, technical and medical personnel
- Provision of equipment and facilities
- Participation in competitions
- Qualification for the Saudi League First Division after winning the Medina Region volleyball championship

**The establishment of basketball:**

- Advancement to the Premier League
- Participation in international basketball competitions as a representative of the Kingdom
- Establishing the Saudi League Second Division after winning the regional championship

**The establishment of archery:**

- During the South and West Region Championships in Abha, player Alanoud Al-Balawi was able to finish third and win the bronze medal

**The establishment of AIUla Club stores:**

- Producing 21 products under the club's brand
- Establishing a club store in Old Town
- Selling products in 9 stores in Riyadh and the Eastern Province through an authorized distributor and their online platform
- Distributing of club jerseys at various social responsibility events

**The Saudi Games:**

- Successfully participated in the Saudi Games in futsal, athletics, cycling, judo, and taekwondo
- Participating 45 male and female players in Saudi sports competitions
- Achieving eighth place, including 5 gold medals, 3 silver medals, and 5 bronze medals

**The establishment of the first Women's Football Team:**

- The establishment of a team that is capable of winning the first division league championship, comprising 20 players, including 5 professionals
- Securing the leading position in the league with one round remaining in the initial phase

**The development of indoor football (Futsal):**

- Final qualification for the Premier League
- Reaching the semi-finals of the Saudi Federation Cup

**The establishment of the Women's Basketball Tea:**

- Participation in Saudi League First Division basketball

**The establishment of the Different Games Sector:**

- Activating 15 different games
- 518 players participated in a variety of game teams
- Five male and female players contributed to the national teams of across three national federations
- Involving in Different Games initiative as part of the club's support program
- Increasing participation, discovering talents, and promoting community involvement in a greater variety of sports, by increasing the level of available opportunities
- Recruiting professional coaches to develop players and refine their talents
- Activating youth categories in different games
- Activating three new women's sports to bring the total number of activated sports for women to five. These sports are (basketball, athletics, archery, taekwondo, and karate)
- Ascending the Kingdom's Second Division League. Qualification of the first team to join the First Division League by winning the Medina Region Championship, and qualifying the youth and junior divisions by achieving second place
- Kingdom Championship qualifying rounds for all teams
- During the Kingdom's under-17 Golden Championship for Triathlon Weapons (Fencing), Saeed Aldeen Mohammed Ahmed won the bronze medal
- At the Qatar International Open Championship, the Taekwondo team won four medals



**The Arabian Leopard Fund**



To mitigate the growing risk of extinction facing the Arabian leopard, with estimates of fewer than 120 Arabian leopards remaining in the wild according to the updated Red List of the International Union for Conservation of Nature (IUCN); The fund was established on 04/12/1441H, by Royal Order No. (65063). The fund aims to enable visions, partnerships, and effective actions to support the long-term conservation of the Arabian leopard. It also aims to support local and international efforts and encourage communities to contribute to preserving one of the most endangered ecosystems within the framework of Saudi Vision 2030. This vision seeks to enhance environmental sustainability and support the growth of non-profit sectors in the Kingdom.

The fund envisions a world containing sustainable and growing populations of the Arabian leopard across its range, as part of both cultural and natural heritage.

**The Fund's Contribution to the Development of RCU Strategy:**

The fund operates through several strategic pillars that intersect implicitly with RCU's efforts and activities to conserve the Arabian leopard in the long term, including:

Coordinating strategies, action plans, and effective partnerships

Enabling effective practical actions

Exchanging knowledge and best practices

**Key Achievements in 2023:**

**The fund works on an initiative to finance capacity-building programs for sectoral stakeholders involved in the conservation of the Arabian leopard in the Arabian Peninsula, through partnerships with prestigious educational institutions such as the University of Oxford and the Durrell Academy for Conservation Leadership. This initiative includes:**

- Providing full scholarships to beneficiaries from Oman and Saudi Arabia to enroll in the Durrell Endangered Species Management Graduate Certificate Program (DESMAN) held in Jersey, United Kingdom
- Launching the first training program for Arabian leopard care skills, with the aim of providing valuable practical educational opportunities and developing skills for those responsible for caring for leopards in the Arabian Peninsula
- Developing the scholarship program, in the field of Arabian leopard conservation and wildlife, within AIUla Scholarship Program, including the provision of 50 scholarships to AIUla residents, covering a variety of disciplines and academic levels that meet the needs and challenges of Arabian leopard conservation

**The fund has also worked on an initiative to conserve the Arabian leopard through:**

- Developing an Advocacy strategy for the Arabian leopard based on global best practices and research in advocacy and behavior change
- Funding the writing and publication of a book about the Arabian leopard, expected to be released in 2024
- Participating in the Saudi Green Gallery held in Dubai as part of COP28 to advocate and raise awareness on the dangers facing the Arabian Leopards and existing efforts to conserve them. The gallery had a total of 50,000 visitors over two weeks

**The fund has also worked on conserving the Arabian leopard through:**

- Providing a regional veterinary care rapid response unit for the Arabian leopard, to offer necessary medical care, vaccinations, and consultations for leopard care
- Launching the first cycle of the grants program for research and initiatives dedicated to conserving the Arabian leopard, aimed at enriching scientific content and developing the necessary data and initiatives to achieve the Fund's goals in protecting and sustaining the Arabian leopard







04

Conclusion



## Conclusion

RCU prepared the annual report to meet the requirements of the Council of Ministers' Law. In its preparation, RCU adhered to a detailed methodology to ensure the fulfillment of the specified standards. Coordination among all sectors and departments within RCU was facilitated by the Organizational Excellence Department, and with the support of senior management.

Within this report, RCU highlighted its most notable achievements during 2023, aiming to develop and enhance the targeted sectors in AIUla, in alignment with the objectives of Saudi Vision 2030.

In addition to showing the challenges RCU has faced, and the proposed solutions to overcome obstacles and enhance workflow, RCU outlined its aspirations for the prosperity of AIUla by aligning with the stages of implementing its strategy. This strategy aims to build a luxurious identity for AIUla, unleash its competitive advantages, develop its capabilities, and enhance its capacity.

The strategy plan for the year 2024 is anchored on clear priorities within its seven strategic pillars, ensuring focused business trajectory and attainment of objectives. This includes enhancing the tourism assets of AIUla, developing its offerings, and increasing visitor numbers. Additionally, it aims at activating the cultural heritage of AIUla and enhancing its global presence. RCU also seeks to preserve the environmental systems and biodiversity while empowering the local community to ensure prosperity and economic development. Furthermore, RCU focuses on developing major plans for AIUla and achieving urban and architectural transformation, in addition to RCU's commitment to enhancing safety, infrastructure development, and improving the quality of life in AIUla.

Finally, ensuring operational efficiency, talent management, and achieving excellence globally; which will be realized through the concerted efforts of the national workforce and international expertise within RCU, where their endeavor involves implementing a precise and sustainable plan that considers the cultural, economic, and heritage development in AIUla, all under the generous and continuous support of the wise leadership.



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