

Annex 2**UNESCO / Kingdoms Institute: Kingdom of Saudi Arabia – AIUla Fellowships
Programme 2025****Terms of Reference for Fellowship Rotation 1****GENERAL INFORMATION**

Title/Field of expertise	:	Research Fellowship
Duration	:	6 months
Location	:	AIUla, the Kingdom of Saudi Arabia
Supervisor	:	Archaeology, Collection and Conservation Department (ACC), Royal Commission for AIUla (RCU)

BACKGROUND INFORMATION

Within the framework of cooperation agreement signed between UNESCO and the Royal Commission for AIUla (RCU) of Saudi Arabia to protect, develop and promote AIUla in UNESCO's field of competence and to contribute to the achievement of the 2030 Agenda for Sustainable Development, UNESCO and the RCU initiated the UNESCO / Kingdoms Institute: Kingdom of Saudi Arabia – AIUla Fellowships Programme in 2022. This initiative was created with the vision to improve the scientific knowledge on Heritage Research and Conservation, strengthen World Heritage management capacity and foster knowledge sharing and intercultural dialogue through the empowerment of young heritage professionals and researchers.

In the 2nd edition of this Programme, RCU will host 10 fellows with the following research profiles:

- Management of World Heritage Sites (2 fellowships);
- Immovable Heritage Research (Archaeology/Built Heritage/Intangible Cultural Heritage) (2 fellowships);
- Immovable Heritage Conservation, including with regards to emergency preparedness and response. (2 fellowships);
- Intangible Cultural Heritage (2 fellowships);
- Oases as Cultural Landscapes: risk management and conservation (2 fellowships);

DESCRIPTION OF THE RESEARCH-BASED FELLOWSHIP IN ALULA

During the 6-month rotation in AIUla, fellows will carry out their self-proposed research projects related to AIUla. Immersed in AIUla's rich heritage landscape, they will benefit from the research/vocational training, workshops and activities organized by RCU that highlights state-of-the-art methods and techniques in heritage research and conservation.

Based on their area of specialization and presented goals and interests in their respective scientific research proposal, fellows will collaborate with the local and international specialists, engage with the local community, and contribute to surveys, excavations, site conservation and related analyses that aligned with the ongoing research, protection and development endeavors of Royal Commission for AIUla.

Under the auspices of the Royal Commission for AIUla and the direct supervision of the Archaeology, Collection and Conservation Department (ACC), a concise research plan and

objective for the 6-month fellowship will be established and agreed upon in consultation with the incumbent at the beginning of their tenure.

LEARNING OBJECTIVES

After the 6-month fellowship, the incumbents will have:

- Become familiar with the collections, content, and detailed storyline of AIUla.
- Gained first-hand experience working with the variety of heritage sites and manifestations in AIUla, and contributed to cutting-edge research, conservation efforts, and heritage management strategies.
- Acquired knowledge of science and art of research process and conservational practice within the scope of work of RCU's Archaeology, Collection and Conservation Department.
- Developed the ability and skills to implement innovation and sustainability in heritage-related study and programmes.
- Enhanced intercultural dialogue and knowledge sharing by engaging with local communities, international specialists, and researchers, fostering collaborative approaches to heritage challenges.

ADDITIONAL INFORMATION

About AIUla

Saudi Arabia has been described as a crossroads of civilizations. The region of AIUla is an extraordinary example of a cultural landscape, where it is possible to trace human interaction with the environment for thousands of years.

AIUla is a county covering an area of around 23,000 km² in north-west Saudi Arabia. The capital, AIUla city, is located in the Wadi Al-Qura, approximately 325km north of Madinah, 750km from Makkah and 1,100km from Riyadh. AIUla Valley and the surrounding area constitute a place of extraordinary human and natural heritage. Its landscape includes a lush oasis and spectacular sandstone mountains that have influenced thousands of years of human history.

Sites dating from the Paleolithic period, possibly upwards of 200,000 years old, demonstrate the range of time for which human populations may have used and occupied this landscape, which are significant and relatively unknown in the region. A good example is the Harrat 'Uwayrid lava fields, where there is evidence of prehistoric sites with lithic artefacts, stone structures, petroglyphs, and inscriptions.

Notable sites also include Dadan, the capital of the Dadan and Lihyan kingdoms, Jabal Ikmaḥ, Qurh and Umm Daraj, as well as more than 20,000 megalithic structures and thousands of ancient inscriptions and rock art. Hegra Archaeological Site (al-Hijr / Madā' in Ṣāliḥ) is Saudi Arabia's first UNESCO World Heritage Site, the Nabataean city.

About The Royal Commission for AIUla

The Royal Commission for AIUla (RCU) was established by royal decree in July 2017 to protect and safeguard AIUla, a region of outstanding natural and cultural significance in North-West Saudi Arabia. RCU is embarking on a long-term plan to develop and deliver a sensitive, sustainable transformation of the region, reaffirming it as one of the country's most important archaeological and cultural destinations and preparing it to welcome visitors from around the world. RCU's development work in AIUla encompasses a broad range of initiatives across archaeology, tourism,

culture, education and the arts, reflecting the ambitious commitment to cultivate tourism and leisure in Saudi Arabia, outlined in Vision 2030.

About The Archaeology, Collections and Conservation Department

The Archaeology, Collections and Conservation (ACC) department is mandated to investigate, assess, conserve, curate and promote the cultural heritage of AlUla County and the areas of Khaybar and Tayma under RCU's jurisdiction for the benefit of Saudi Arabia and the broader international community.

ACC commissions best-practice scientific research, partnering with leading global institutions, and in collaboration with RCU Culture Sector Planning, develops cultural heritage management policies, guidelines and strategies that guide research and practice in archaeology, urban heritage and site conservation. ACC fosters knowledge sharing, intercultural dialogue, and scientific cooperation and ensures the long-term preservation of the region's significant immovable cultural heritage.

In addition, ACC receives, acquires, manages, conserves and investigates moveable cultural heritage artefacts and art collections for their long-term preservation, and as a beneficial resource for researchers and public engagement.

The department is committed to enabling Saudi-led study and management of cultural heritage going forward by building capacity and engagement through educational programmes, professional development, fellowships, community contact, communications and cultural heritage diplomacy.

About the Kingdoms Institute:

The Kingdoms Institute will be the first scientific institution in Saudi Arabia specifically focused on science applied to heritage research and conservation. It is intended to become a hub of research, education, outreach, and scientific cooperation from the Kingdom of Saudi Arabia to the World.

As part of the Royal Commission for AlUla, the Kingdoms Institute will assume the responsibilities of ACC Department, and its core mandate will be to research, conserve and disseminate the immense value to be found in the heritage of AlUla, Khaybar and Tayma, implementing innovation, local values and sustainability as strategic formulas for its programmes and projects.

The Kingdoms Institute integrates the core values of Saudi Arabian's Vision 2030 ambitions and the invaluable heritage of AlUla as a unique tool for stability, dialogue and growth through scientific knowledge sharing and communication.

For more information, please visit: www.rcu.gov.sa