



Press Release

Saudi Arabia debuts at Cannes Film Festival

Saudi Arabia marks first ever participation at Cannes with a curated pavilion, a range of industry events and a selection of Saudi films

April 9, 2018, Paris – The Kingdom of Saudi Arabia has announced today that it will participate in the 71st edition of the Cannes Film Festival from May 8-19. The Kingdom's presence is in line with its strategy to develop a vibrant and sustainable film industry in Saudi Arabia, as well as to engage the global international film community.

"We are delighted to participate at the 71st edition of the Cannes Film Festival, one of the world's leading film festivals and largest gatherings of industry professionals. The Kingdom looks forward to its debut presence at the festival, celebrating and supporting the diversity of talent and opportunities within the Saudi film industry," said Dr. Awwad Alawwad, Minister of Culture and Information and Chairman of the Board of Directors of the General Culture Authority. "With a rich tradition of storytelling, Saudi Arabia is embarking on the development of a sustainable and dynamic industry that supports and encourages all stages of a film cycle and offers an incredible range of locations for the world's filmmakers to discover."

The Saudi Film Council (SFC) pavilion will offer several opportunities for delegates to interact with Saudi filmmakers, participate in roundtables with the Saudi industry representatives and to understand the Kingdom's industry ambitions through its various initiatives and programs.

A selection of nine short films by Saudi Arabia's young filmmakers, demonstrating the incredible spectrum of the country's stories, voices and creative talent, will screen at Cannes' Short Film Corner on May 14 and May 15.

Thierry Fremaux, Cannes Film Festival General Delegate, commented on the Saudi Film Council's confirmed attendance at Cannes: "I am thrilled that Saudi Arabia has launched the Saudi Film Council with a clear focus on nurturing its filmmaking talent and sharing Saudi stories with the world. Saudi Film Council's participation at the 2018 edition at the Cannes Film Festival is a great way of opening up global opportunities for its creative talent. The many young filmmakers among the Saudi delegation will have access to the world's most prestigious film festival, including meaningful interactions with leading, international film industry professionals."

The Saudi Film Council was launched in March, as part of the Kingdom of Saudi Arabia's drive to develop a vibrant society and propel economic diversification through new industries under Vision 2030. It was launched by the General Culture Authority (GCA) of Saudi Arabia as one of its five key cultural industry sector entities.



-Ends-

For further media information, please contact:

media@gca.gov.sa

KSA: +966-50-922-2266

International: +97152-156-5021

About the General Culture Authority

The General Culture Authority's role is to preserve, protect, enrich and promote the Kingdom's cultural sector, nurturing cultural talent, supporting cultural diversity and Saudi identity through the arts. It seeks to enhance the cultural standing of the Kingdom by extending bridges and opening channels of communication regionally and globally, contributing to the development of a vibrant society, in line with Saudi Arabia's Vision 2030. Please visit us at www.gca.gov.sa or @GCA_Saudi

About the Saudi Film Council

The Saudi Film Council (SFC) will harness and channel the creative talent of the Kingdom to support the establishment of Saudi Arabia's film and content industry through sustained and strategic development and investment. SFC, an entity under the General Culture Authority, will enable Saudis to explore and promote their creativity and diversity both at home and abroad, while growing an industry that will impact socio-economic growth in the country in line with Vision 2030.



Press Release

SAUDI ARABIA WELCOMES GLOBAL FILM INDUSTRY WITH LAUNCH OF A REBATE PROGRAM AMONG THE MOST ATTRACTIVE IN THE WORLD

35% Baseline Cash Rebate Program to Incentivize International Film Production in the Kingdom, 50% Rebate Available for Spend on Saudi Labor

Grant Program for Saudi Filmmakers for Production in the Kingdom

Partnership Programs with Leading Global Film Institutes for Saudi Talent Development

May 11, 2018, Cannes – The Saudi Film Council (SFC) announced today, during its debut at the Cannes Film Festival, the launch of several key programs that will benefit both local filmmakers and film industry development in the Kingdom, as well as international filmmakers, production companies and studios that will look to the country as an important, emerging global production location. The new initiatives are expected to have significant positive impact on production growth in the local market through a newly established 35% baseline cash rebate program, and on domestic talent development through a grant program and international skill-building partnerships.

As a key component of SFC's strategy, the initiatives will contribute to building a sustainable industry that will bring economic contributions including job creation, services spend and industry infrastructure development. The initiatives will also drive the development of Saudi stories for audiences both at home and globally, introducing a new Saudi narrative in film to the world.

"We are very excited to mark our first appearance at the Cannes Film Festival and Marche du Film with the launch of initiatives that support our overall goals for talent development and film and content production in the Kingdom including one of the most attractive rebate programs in the world," said Ahmad Al-Maziad, CEO of the General Culture Authority, which oversees SFC. "They highlight two of our key pillars – nurturing and empowering our rich talent pool of aspiring and established filmmakers and introducing the international industry to the world of opportunities the Kingdom has to offer, as we seek to build an industry that draws on our heritage and supports the unique needs of our country, while at the same time plays a vital role within the global film community."

The cash rebate program will apply to productions that will be filmed in KSA, offering a baseline of 35% for all spend used and consumed in the country, with the ability for productions to realize higher rebates by meeting certain criteria. A 50% rebate will also be available for spend on Saudi labor employed on productions. The rebate is expected to bring productions to the Kingdom, including feature films, documentaries, episodic series and animated content, as well as encourage production companies to employ local crew. Details on the program rollout will be made available in the coming weeks.



The rebate program will drive greater visibility of the country as locations are featured in films and TV programs, that will further attract international productions and impact the country's nascent tourism sector. As in-country spend grows, it is expected to have a follow-on effect on industry infrastructure development such as studios and service providers, including hotels and accommodation, catering, transportation and other support services. The program is in line with SFC's strategy to develop a vibrant and sustainable film industry in Saudi Arabia, as well as to engage the global international film community.

Talent development is a key area of focus for SFC, as a critical element in building a sustainable sector. The National Grant and talent partnership programs for Saudi nationals will lay a solid foundation for growth through education and skill-building to foster and enhance the local community. A deep industry talent pool will not only put an added spotlight on the creative capacity of Saudis and support increased local content development, it will also ensure that international productions can source local talent, resulting in increased domestic job opportunities.

The National Grant Program will be open to KSA nationals who produce or post-produce content in the Kingdom and meet the Program's eligibility criteria.

Talent development partnerships with global film institutes, including The University of Southern California, the Studio School and Film Independent in the United States, and La Femis and Les Gobelins in France, are providing critical skills training for aspiring and established Saudi filmmakers, as well as 'train the trainers' programs to add further domestic skill building capacity. In 2018, trainings and multi-week "summer camps" will be undertaken in Saudi Arabia, Los Angeles and Paris covering the full spectrum of skills required for film production, including directing, editing, screenwriting, sound design, VR/AR and 2D/3D animation.

The Saudi Film Council was launched in March 2018, as part of the Kingdom of Saudi Arabia's drive to develop a vibrant society and propel economic diversification through new industries under Vision 2030. It was launched by the General Culture Authority (GCA) of Saudi Arabia as one of its five key cultural industry sector entities.

-Ends-

For further media information and interview opportunities, please contact:

KSA:

media@gca.gov.sa

+966-50-922-2266

International:

GCA@consulum.com

+97158-833-9938

or

SFC@rogersandcowan.com

+1-617-827-8024



About the Saudi Film Council

The Saudi Film Council (SFC) will harness and channel the creative talent of the Kingdom to support the establishment of Saudi Arabia's film and content industry through sustained and strategic development and investment. SFC, an entity under the General Culture Authority, will enable Saudis to explore and promote their creativity and diversity both at home and abroad, while growing an industry that will impact socio-economic growth in the country in line with Vision 2030. www.film.sa or @SFC_Saudi

About the General Culture Authority

The General Culture Authority's role is to preserve, protect, enrich and promote the Kingdom's cultural sector, nurturing cultural talent, supporting cultural diversity and Saudi identity through the arts. It seeks to enhance the cultural standing of the Kingdom by extending bridges and opening channels of communication regionally and globally, contributing to the development of a vibrant society, in line with Saudi Arabia's Vision 2030. Please visit us at www.gca.gov.sa or @GCA_Saudi