# **Opportunity to join UK Delegation to Red Sea International Film Festival, Saudi Arabia**

**Film in Saudi Arabia:**

British Council’s team in Saudi Arabia has been focussing on film since 2017, undertaking a series of projects to support the growing film sector in this rapidly changing country. These include providing UK films for the British Film Festival run by the UK’s Embassy; a film workshop in Saudi run by the London Film School; a Saudi delegation to Sheffield Doc/Fest including a mentorship programme; and a research study commissioned from Nordicity into the current film skills gaps in Saudi Arabia.

**We are now inviting applications from senior UK film industry specialists to join a short delegation to Saudi Arabia in March 2020 in order to better understand the landscape and develop potential new partnerships.**

**Background:**

In response to Saudi Arabia’s [2030 Vision](https://www.vision2030.gov.sa/en), the [Ministry of Culture](https://www.moc.gov.sa/en/About) was established by Royal Decree in June 2018 under the leadership of His Highness Prince Badr bin Abdullah bin Farhan Al Saud, the Kingdom of Saudi Arabia's first dedicated Minister of Culture. Following the establishment, the Minister has announced at a ceremony in Riyadh, several ambitious initiatives under a document entitled "Our Culture, Our Identity". These include a culture fund, scholarship programmes, arts prizes, and a residency scheme for Saudi and international artists to benefit, as well as other initiatives to develop the local film sector, including the Red Sea International Film Festival.

The film sector in Saudi was bolstered by a handful of influential key decision-makers across government, and, in parallel, in harmony with the Saudi Vision 2030, including the Ministry of Education, the Ministry of Culture, the General Culture Authority (GCA), and the Saudi Film Council (SFC). The last two have fallen under the auspices of the Ministry of Culture. SFC was running film programmes and activities before the launch of the new Ministry of Culture and continue to as their Film department, soon to be a stand-alone Commission/Authority.

Amongst many programmes designed to develop film infrastructure, the Ministry has launched the Talent Development Program which includes short term training courses and workshops in all disciplines of filmmaking in cooperation with premier universities and film institutes around the world.

As has been widely reported internationally, Cinemas were reintroduced to Saudi Arabia in 2018 after a 35-year gap. The country is now planning to open over 45 cinemas in 15 cities, by 2020.

Concurrently, the Minister of Culture has announced the establishment of an annual Film Festival ~~-~~ the Red Sea International Film Festival - which has its first edition in March 2020. The festival is organised by The Red Sea Film Foundation, Saudi Arabia’s first cultural non-profit foundation as part of its goal in supporting the growth of the film industry in the Kingdom.

With the fast track development of the film industry in Saudi, and anticipated growth and focus on sustainability, there are significant opportunities for UK expertise to make connections with the film industry in Saudi.

In order to begin to develop mutually beneficial connections, British Council Saudi Arabia will facilitate a delegation of talented UK film industry colleagues during the inaugural Red Sea International Film Festival. Senior leads from leading film organisations, working across fields, will be invited to be part of the delegation. The programme will be designed for them to connect with their counterparts, explore opportunities on site, and be part of the Red Sea International Film Festival that is designed to cater for local, regional and international audiences.

The delegation will consist of up to 15 participants and the visit will take place from 10-14 March (to include two travel days and a three-day programme). The British Council will cover economy travel, accommodation and meals. Travel within the UK as well as travel insurance is not covered and will need to be arranged by participants.

**The aims an objective of the visit are to:**

* Increase awareness in the UK about emerging Saudi Arabian film industry.
* Enable UK Film organisations to explore opportunities in Saudi and connect with potential partners for future collaborations.
* Create a better understanding of the current Saudi film landscape
* Widen knowledge of Saudi stakeholders about UK sector expertise
* Identify potential opportunities for collaboration

**Eligibility Criteria:**

* Be based in the UK.
* Film Practitioners working across fields (including Production, Exhibition and other creative fields e.g. Film Music, etc)
* Availability to attend the entire programme 10-14 March.
* Interest in working collaboratively with Saudi film practitioners

**Application process**

Please include the following:

* Name, address, contact information and nationality.
* A short biography detailing your professional and educational achievements (Maximum 300 words)
* A brief statement addressing the following questions (Maximum 700 words):
	1. What is the main drive for your application to be part of this delegation?
	2. What role do you have in the Film sector?
	3. What do you want to achieve through participating in this visit?
	4. Do you have experience of working in the Gulf/Saudi/Arab world or with partners from the region?

**N.B.** As soon as we confirm your selection we will require a copy of your **passport to be provided**. We need to receive this document swiftly in order to secure your visa (which will need to be submitted as soon as possible) and to book your international flights. Please ensure your passport is valid for six months when submitting your passport copy. We have appropriate data protection in place and all documents provided will be kept securely and destroyed when no longer required.

Please also let us know of:

1. additional support needs that you might have to allow you to fully participate in the visit e.g. BSL interpretation, accessible accommodation.
2. If you are requesting additional\* childcare costs, please provide evidence of these costs.

\* additional means costs not usually incurred, such as evening or overnight babysitting. It will not cover daytime childcare unless these are for a day that you do not usually work and incur these costs.

All applicants are responsible for obtaining their own travel and health insurance.

Please note:

* You will be required to undertake a survey to collect your feedback before and after the visit and/or interviewed after the visit.

**Criteria for selection**

* Expertise of applicant – track record in UK film sector.
* Applicant’s statement

The selection will be undertaken by a panel of British Council representatives from Saudi, Film and Music teams, and external representatives from the Red Sea Film Festival.

Please email your application to susan.hay@britishcouncil.org by 5pm BST on 8 Jan 2020 with **Red Sea Film Festival Delegation application** in the subject line.

**Timeline**

|  |  |
| --- | --- |
| Activity | Date  |
| Open call start date | 11 Dec 2019 |
| Deadline for applications | 08 Jan 2020 |
| Selection process | 09 – 13 Jan 2020 |
| Delegation informed | 13 Jan 2020 |
| Deadline for offer acceptance | 15 Jan 2020 |
| Apply for Visa | w/c 19 Jan (7 weeks) |
| delegation arrival to Saudi | 10 March 2020 |
| Visit duration  | 11 – 13 Mar 2020 |
| delegation depart to UK | 14 Mar 2020 |