

Film Commission launches incentive program to support Saudi, international productions

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CANNES — The Film Commission announced commencing the application of a financial refund incentive program with up to 40% of qualified expenses to support film production, which will make Saudi Arabia a global destination for film production.

The program provides big support to local, regional and international film producers to shoot their works inside the Kingdom in a way that guarantees the growth of the film production, increases its competitive capability in the international arena, and develops the creative economy in the country.

The commission called on Saudi and international production companies that are planning to partially or fully shoot in Saudi Arabia to apply for the incentive program through the website www.film.sa so as to benefit from the financial refunds of up to 40% of expenses eligible for incentives according to conditions that include cooperating with local staff and talents and highlighting geographical and cultural landmarks in the Kingdom.

CEO of the commission Eng. Abdullah Al Ayyaf said: "We are happy to welcome local, regional and international production companies to apply for the incentive program and produce in the Kingdom of Saudi Arabia."

He added, "The Saudi film sector is growing in a big way as we continue to invest in developing the local efficiencies, infrastructure and regulations to ensure our ability to support all business sectors."

The incentive program will help empower local efficiencies, attract global expertise, develop the film sector, showcase gorgeous sites, and deliver the culture of Saudi Arabia to the world.

The commission made the announcement while concluding its participation in the 2022 Cannes Film Festival that witnessed a huge turnout from media outlets, filmmakers and specialists.

The cinema industry in Saudi Arabia is considered the fastest growing in the Middle East and enjoys attractive elements for international production companies, where digital broadcast platforms seek to enhance their presence in the region through investing in developing the content and working with rising local talents to respond to the increasing demand on the local and Arab content.

Over the last 18 months Saudi Arabia has provided the backdrop for three major Hollywood films. Ric Roman Waugh's action thriller 'Kandahar' filmed in the extraordinary landscape of AlUla, home to the UNESCO World Heritage Site, Hegra, and Jeddah, Rupert Wyatt's historical epic 'Desert Warrior' shot in the incredible new city state of Neom and the region of Tabuk, and the Russo Brothers' crime drama 'Cherry' shot in AlUla and the capital Riyadh.

In addition, 8 local feature films have reached completion in the last 12 months and are ready to hit the festival circuit along with a slate of documentaries, commercials and local productions including 'Norah' written and directed by Tawfik Alzaidi and 'Within Sand' directed by Moe Alatawi. Both films were recipients of a fund award at the Saudi Film Commission's Daw' Film Competition, an initiative launched by Saudi Arabia's Ministry of Culture to support Saudi film production. — SPA