



KUWAIT NATIONAL CULTURAL DISTRICT

SHEIKH JABER AL AHMAD CULTURAL CENTRE

DIRECTOR

CANDIDATE BRIEFING DOCUMENT



FEBRUARY 2017

1. Background

The overall vision for the new Kuwait National Cultural District (KNCD) is the development of a stunning range of world class facilities to improve the quality of life for all through cultural and artistic activities, support the pursuit of excellence, champion the tourism and creative industries and enhance the international profile, awareness and understanding of Kuwait.

The aims of the project are to:

- Showcase entertainment and the performing arts by creating a world class theatre, music and conference quarter in a spacious parkland setting (Sheikh Jaber Al Ahmad Cultural Centre)
- Create a new world class museum complex celebrating Kuwaiti, Islamic and Arab culture and history and embracing and showcasing the rich diversity of the world's finest cultural achievements (Sheikh Abdullah Al Salem Cultural Centre)
- Restore Al Salam Palace to its former glory and develop a new heritage experience which tells the history of Kuwait through its 15 rulers and allows visitors to follow in the footsteps of the heads of state and VIP's who visited the Palace in the past.
- Develop a world class urban park to provide a platform for the cultural scene in Kuwait by encouraging local, international and regional exchange of arts, history and music and provide new Museums to help new and old generations alike understand the story of their homeland and its natural and military heritages. (Al Shaheed Park and Museums)
- Inspire a passion and cultural pride for Kuwait – its past, present and future
- Increase access, awareness, appreciation and understanding of Kuwait's cultural heritage, its people and its stories – acting as a catalyst to change lives for the better
- Document, preserve, present and share Kuwait's culture, artistic activities and history with present and future generations
- Inspire and excite visitors and other users of the cultural facilities, helping them to enjoy the artistic sector and museum collections to the fullest extent, through well-presented and serviced event programmes, world class exhibitions, education programmes and publications and the imaginative use of media
- Create inspirational learning opportunities for all
- Facilitate worldwide access to Kuwait's resources, expertise and research
- Develop partnerships that extend and enhance Kuwait's cultural network and profile regionally, nationally and internationally
- Act as a catalyst for promoting Kuwait as an international and regional cultural tourist destination that takes pride in its culture and heritage traditions

The District has three cultural clusters:

- Western shores: Sheikh Jaber Al Ahmad Cultural Centre and Al Salam Palace
- Eastern shores: Sheikh Abdullah Al Salem Cultural Centre
- Edge of the City Centre: Al Shaheed Park Museums; Habitat Museum and Remembrance Museum

With a capital cost of more than US\$1 billion, the project is one of the largest cultural investments in the world today.

Sheikh Jaber Al Ahmad Cultural Centre

The Sheikh Jaber Al Ahmad Cultural Centre (JACC) will showcase the performing arts and create a world class theatre quarter in a spacious parkland setting. It was opened by HH Emir Sheikh Jaber Al-Ahmed Al-Jaber Al-Sabah on October 31st 2016. The centre includes:

- A state-of-the-art National Theatre with three auditoria seating 2,000, 700 and 300.
- A Music Centre with a 1,000 seat capacity
- Concert Hall and a 300 seat capacity Recital Hall
- A Conference Centre with a flexible main hall, a 400 seat Cinema and a Symposium Hall
- A Library and Archive

Sheikh Abdullah Al Salem Cultural Centre

A brand new complex of architecturally designed museums due to open in Spring 2018, this facility forms the main part of Kuwait's new museum district. Comprising six main buildings, the museums will celebrate Kuwaiti, Islamic and Arab culture and history. A Natural History Museum will feature wildlife and biodiversity, Arabian wildlife, artefacts from prehistory, and environmental exhibits. A Science Museum will showcase an experimental atrium and house sections on technology and transport, health and medicine, as well as the human body and mind. There will be a Museum of Islamic History and a Space Museum that will feature astronomy exhibits, among others. Finally, a Fine Arts Centre and Theatre will play host to shows, displays and events, becoming hubs for art and culture for locals and visitors alike.

Al Salam Palace

The restoration of the Al Salam Palace, located adjacent to the performing arts buildings, is a cause for great joy and celebration in Kuwait. The original landmark palace, built in the 1960s to accommodate visiting heads of state and foreign dignitaries, was severely damaged during the Iraqi invasion in the 1990s and has been abandoned for 30 years with little hope of repair. As part of its cultural project, the Amiri Diwan (Kuwaiti government) has announced that the palace, its famous chandelier and its extensive grounds, will be restored to their former beauty and splendour. Plans for the palace include a visitor centre, a museum, and a palace garden. The museum section will focus on the 15 rulers of Kuwait who have led the country since its foundation, and these exhibits will be displayed in galleries and the nine palace rooms of the complex.

Al Shaheed Park and Museums

Located on the periphery of Kuwait City, Al Shaheed Park is a key part of the Amiri Diwan's comprehensive cultural project. The largest park in Kuwait, Al Shaheed is intended as a safe location to attract the city's citizens to a platform for the cultural scene in Kuwait by encouraging local, regional and international exchange of arts, history and music.

The Al Shaheed Park Museums – the Habitat Museum at one end and Remembrance Museum at the other – will help new and old generations alike understand their homeland's natural and military heritages. The Habitat Museum is dedicated to the environment and bird migration in Kuwait and the Remembrance Museum provides visitors with more knowledge on the history of Kuwait, its past battles and the Gulf War. In order to preserve the country's historical and cultural values, the museum aims to collaborate with the public by offering dedicated booths where visitors can share their personal experiences to pass on to the next generation.

Further information on the Cultural District can be found at:

www.jacc-kw.com

www.sshic.com/projects/sheikh-jaber-al-ahmad-cultural-centre

There is a short video clip at the end of this web page which helps get a sense of the scale of the Cultural Centre.

2. The Role

The Director of Sheikh Jaber Al Ahmad Cultural Centre (JACC) is responsible for the successful artistic and operational management of the Cultural Centre – the Music Centre, the National Theatre, the Conference Centre, and the Library and Archive, as well as associated outdoor and community programming.

The Director will be responsible for setting the strategic artistic direction, overseeing the programming, leading a large staff team, marketing and budgeting for all the venues and for ensuring the Centre's activities meet the strategic ambitions for the Kuwait National Cultural District. The role will act as advocate and ambassador for the JACC, building and maintaining effective relationships with the Amiri Diwan and all stakeholders involved in the KNCD and for developing the Centre's profile, reputation and audiences locally, nationally and internationally.

3. Reporting Structure

The Director of JACC reports to the Managing Director of the Kuwait National Cultural District.

The Director is directly responsible for a senior management team of the Heads of Programming, Education, Event Production, Customer Relations, Marketing and Communications, Commercial Services and Facilities Liaison.

4. Job Description

Leadership and Vision

- Provide effective leadership and direction for JACC, ensuring artistic excellence, financial stability and market awareness through the development and implementation of an integrated artistic vision and business strategy.
- Develop an exciting artistic strategy for each venue with an appropriate mix of rentals, co-productions and in-house productions.
- Ensure a world-class programme of quality events that includes celebrity international artists and performance companies together with local artists and cultural groups.
- Develop a programming strand that will animate JACC's public spaces.
- Initiate and develop a community education and outreach programme for the JACC, offering school children and the adult population an opportunity to learn about their own and other international cultures.
- Consider, and as appropriate develop, a residency programme, forging longer-term relationships with international partners such as orchestras, dance, theatre and opera companies, encouraging regular visits, residencies and community work.
- Develop a strong commercial strand of hires, including conferences and events, which meets the strategic and financial ambitions for the venue.
- Be accountable for the success of the JACC and for securing long-term results.

Operations

- Take an active role in the recruitment of the senior management team and additional roles as the organisation grows.
- Lead the Centre's management team, creating a positive working environment for employees and ensuring best practice and equality of opportunity. Evaluate and appraise staff, providing training and development where required to enhance productivity and ensure targets are met and outcomes achieved.
- Together with the Chief Finance Officer, set annual budgets for JACC. Monitor budgets, ensuring cost control and the financial integrity and efficiency of the Centre.
- Ensure that operational policies and systems are in place and are effectively managed. Hold detailed records (e.g. equipment and supply inventories; contract documents; evaluation forms, etc) for the purposes of reporting requirements.
- Ensure the Centre is compliant with legal obligations and KNCD policy including Health, Safety, Environment Management, Insurance, Employment Law, Data Protection, etc.
- Maintain high standards of quality in all areas of operations, in accordance with KNCD policy.
- Develop and lead effective marketing and branding strategies for JACC, creating an imaginative approach to building local, regional and international audiences and growing the Centre's reputation and brand nationally and internationally.
- Attend and service board meetings as required, providing timely delivery of all relevant artistic, financial and managerial reports.

Strategic relations and representation

- Build and maintain positive relationships with all stakeholders including other KNCD cultural leaders, the Amiri Diwan, promoters, producers, performing arts companies, other regional arts venues, the local business community, etc.
- Develop productive relationships with the press and other media, acting as spokesperson for JACC where appropriate.
- Promote and advocate for the work of JACC, communicating its mission as a performance centre, community facility and business resource to all stakeholders and to the general public.
- Continually seek opportunities to develop partnerships with local, regional and international organisations and individuals who will help further the aims of JACC.
- Represent JACC at a wide variety of relevant meetings, conferences and other public forums, maximising opportunities to convey and gather information that will help build the profile and reputation of the Centre and inform recommendations and decision-making for its future benefit.

5. Person Specification

The ideal candidate will have held a leadership or senior management role in a large cultural organisation, ideally building-based, with experience of programming high-quality international work. He or she will have well-developed interpersonal, communication and diplomatic skills, proven marketing experience, and preferably will already have worked in a foreign country or have a good understanding of Middle Eastern culture. The ability to speak Arabic would be an advantage.

Essential Experience, Skills and Knowledge

- Substantial experience as a senior manager in a cultural organisation with a large team.
- A deep knowledge of all aspects of performing arts programming and production with experience of programming high-quality, international product and negotiating commercial contract deals.
- A wide range of networks and contacts amongst international promoters, agents and artist managers and a strong public profile internationally in the performing arts.
- Excellent financial and commercial skills and experience in managing a substantial budget.
- Demonstrable experience of growing an organisation through programming, commercial activity and marketing.
- Experience in responding to diverse and changing external influences.
- Experience of managing successful stakeholder relationships, establishing and managing strategic partnerships and networking at the highest political levels.
- Ability to work with a significant diversity of individuals and/or groups.
- Excellent written and spoken English.

Skills

- Leadership skills with the ability to inspire, challenge, excite and motivate.
- Strategic planning and creative thinking skills with the ability to see the 'big picture'.
- Proven team-building skills –committed to developing staff potential.
- Ability to manage risk intelligently.
- Able to demonstrate well-developed financial management skills.
- Strong marketing and media skills.
- Excellent interpersonal skills with demonstrated ability to build trust-based relationships both internally and externally.
- Excellent diplomatic skills with the ability to operate naturally and effectively within the highest political circles.
- Strong written and oral presentation skills both in-house and in the public arena.
- Good negotiating and advocacy skills.
- Ability to act as the figurehead for JACC, representing the Centre locally and internationally.

Desirable

- Previous experience of working in a performing arts venue.
- Experience of working internationally.
- Interest in and knowledge of performing arts traditions and culture in the Gulf region.
- Spoken Arabic.

6. Summary of terms

Contract: An open-ended contract terminated by either party in writing at six months' notice.

Salary: Competitive compensation aligned to regional market and industry benchmarking. Salary will be paid in US Dollars.

There is no personal income tax or national insurance equivalent in Kuwait.

Benefits: An ex-pat package of allowances and benefits will be available to include accommodation, car and private health insurance.

Relocation: A relocation package to Kuwait will be negotiable for the successful candidate.

7. Contact

For further information, please contact Heather Newill, Director, AEM International Ltd at hnewill@aeminternational.co.uk or +44 (0) 1728 660026.