

Heritage management as a force for economic and social resilience



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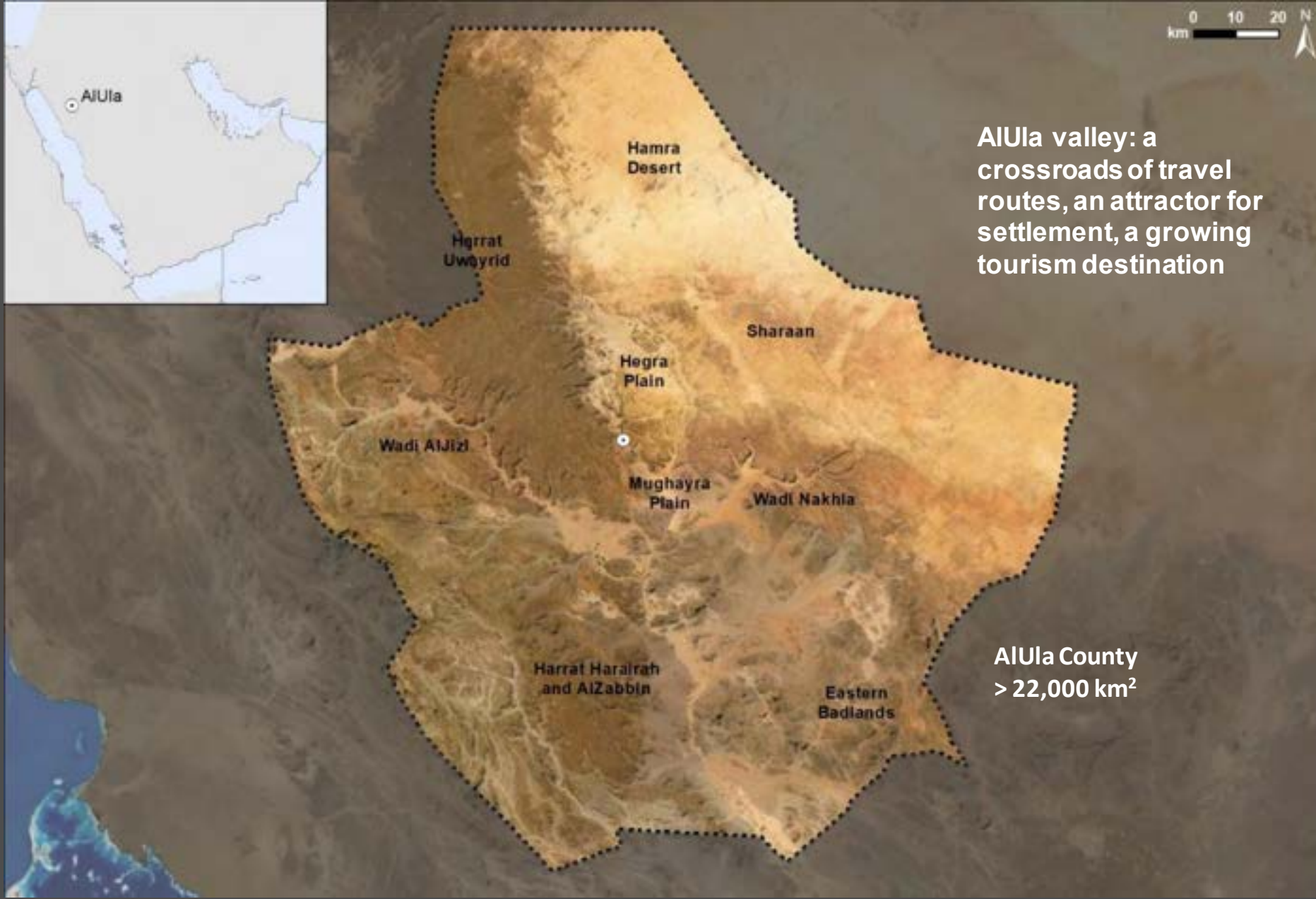


Presentation Outline

- AlUla: Geographic context and strategic direction
- AlUla: Heritage overview
- AlUla: Socio-Economic context
- The role of RCU Cultural Heritage Department in promoting:
 - Resilience of assets and landscapes*
 - Socio-economic resilience*
 - Resilience of memory*
- Final remarks



AIUla – Geographic context





Core Pillars & Principles



Tourism



Heritage, Arts & Culture



Nature & Wildlife



Economic & Social Development

1



Safeguard the Natural & Cultural Landscape

2



Heritage, Culture & Arts Global Destination

3



Restoring & Sustaining Ecosystems & Wildlife

4



Balanced Agriculture

5



Light-Touch Tourism

6



Subtle Connectivity

7



Revitalisation, Restoration & Regeneration

8



Local Community Development

9



Imaginative Infrastructure

10



Invisible Security

SOCIOECONOMIC FOUNDATIONS

Population & Employment

Demographics

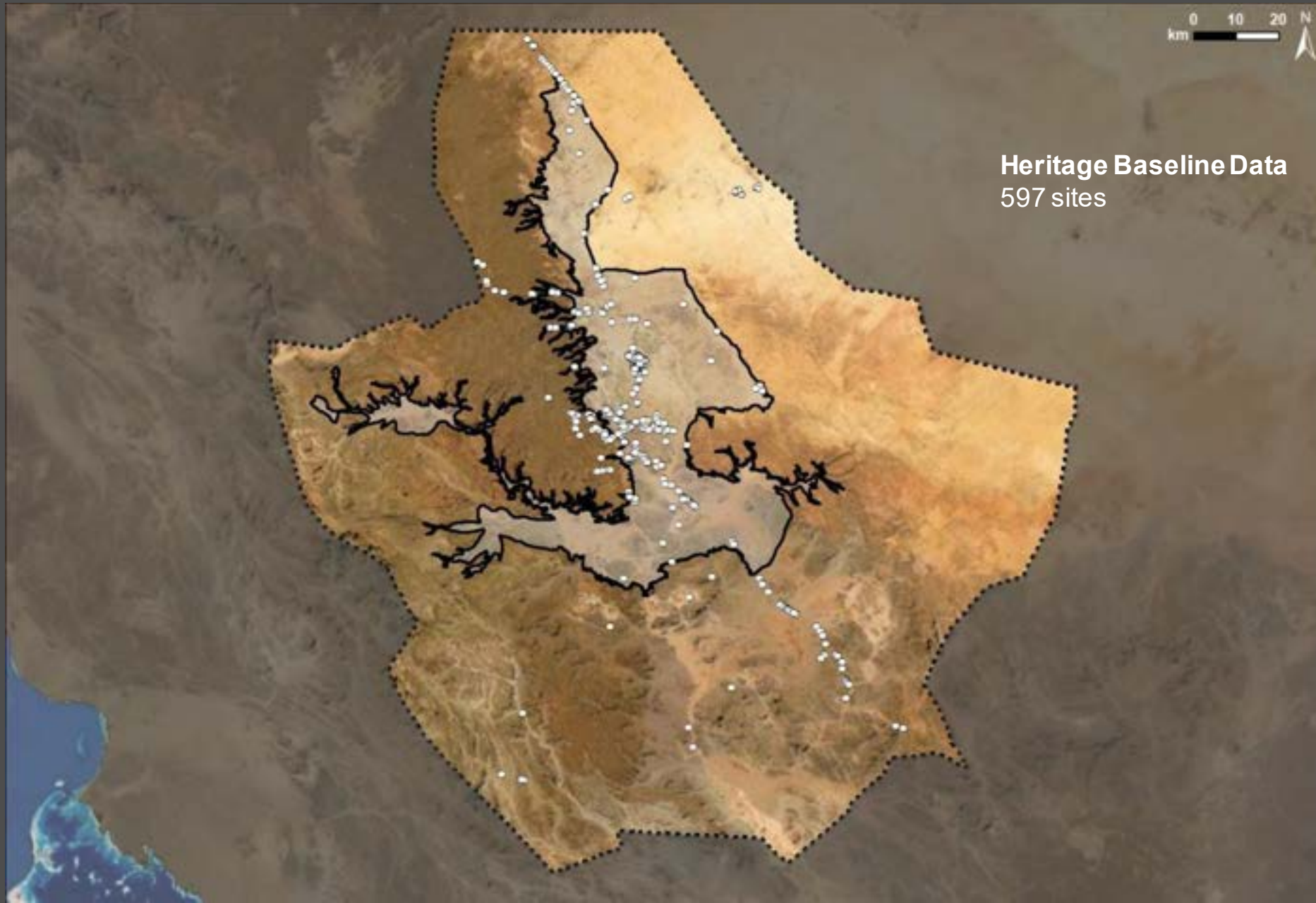
Labour & Skills

Quality of Life

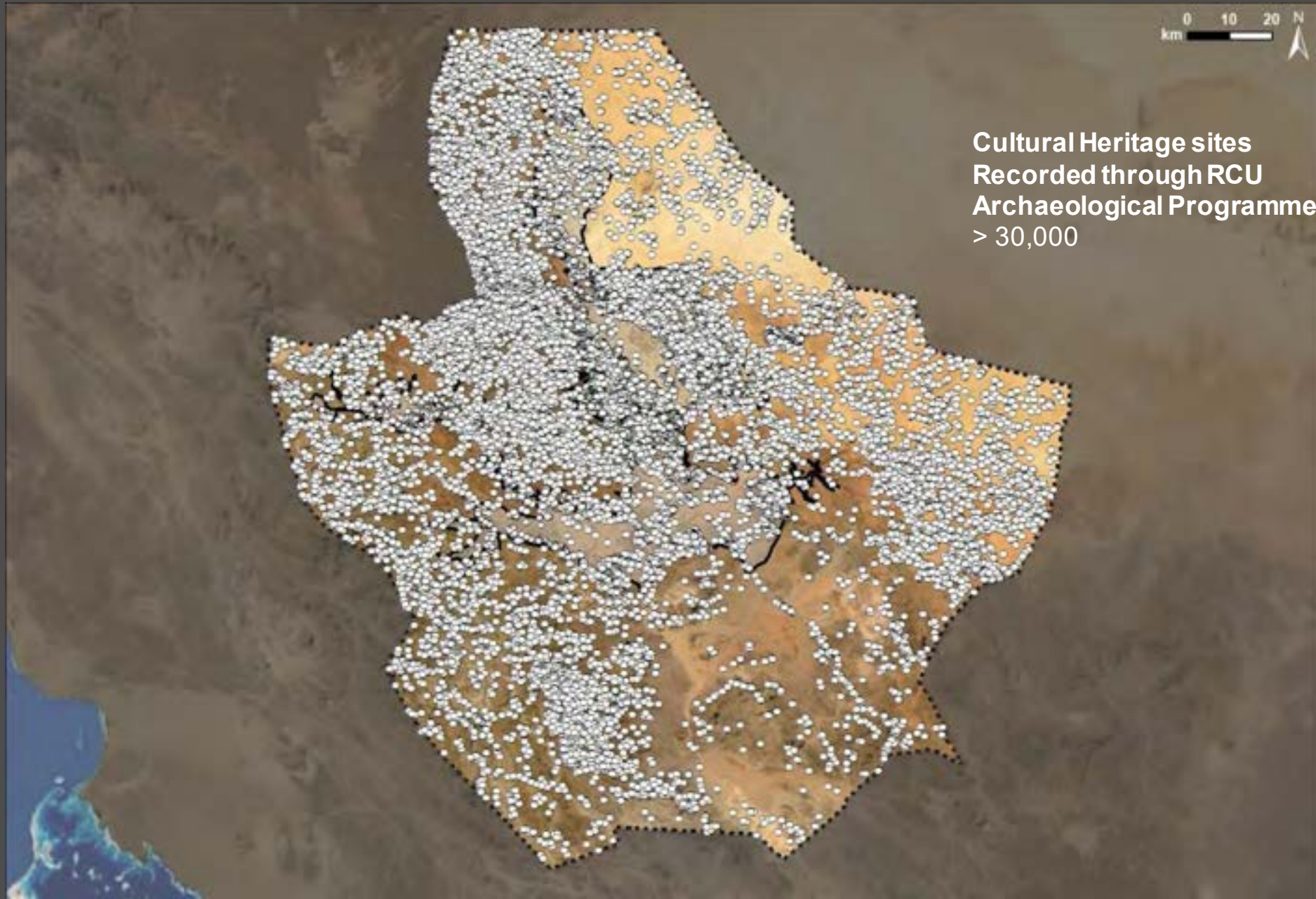
Entrepreneurship

Learning & Development

AIUla - Heritage overview



AIUla - Heritage overview



AIUla - Heritage overview



**Communication/
Artistic
71%**

Techniques include:

- Carving
- Painting
- Relief

Interpretations include:

- Rock Art
- Inscription
- Inscription/Rock Art/Relief

Themes include:

- Humans & Animals
- Symbols (e.g. geometric, tribal)
- Objects (e.g. weapons)

Inscriptions include:

Arabic, Aramaic, Dadanitic, Greek,
Hebrew, Latin, Minaic, Nabataean,
Syriac, Thamudic





**Funerary/
Memorial**
21%

Features include:

- Cairns
- Stone Piles
- Pits/Shafts
- & more

Interpretations include:

- "Tower Tombs"
- Ringed "Tower Tombs"
- Tomb Associated Features
- Covered Cave Graves
- Tomb/Graves/Burials
- Common Graves
- & more

Mostly looted, both in antiquity and recently

Locations vary (based on chronology?)

AIUla - Heritage overview



**Defensive/
Fortification**
0.6%

**Agricultural/
Pastoral and
Domestic**
9%

**Infrastructure/
Transport**
0.5%

Unknown
4.3%

Other
0.8%

Including:

- Defensive
- Infrastructure/Transport
- Production sites
- Water management
- Ritual
- Hunting/Fishing
- & more

Chronology:

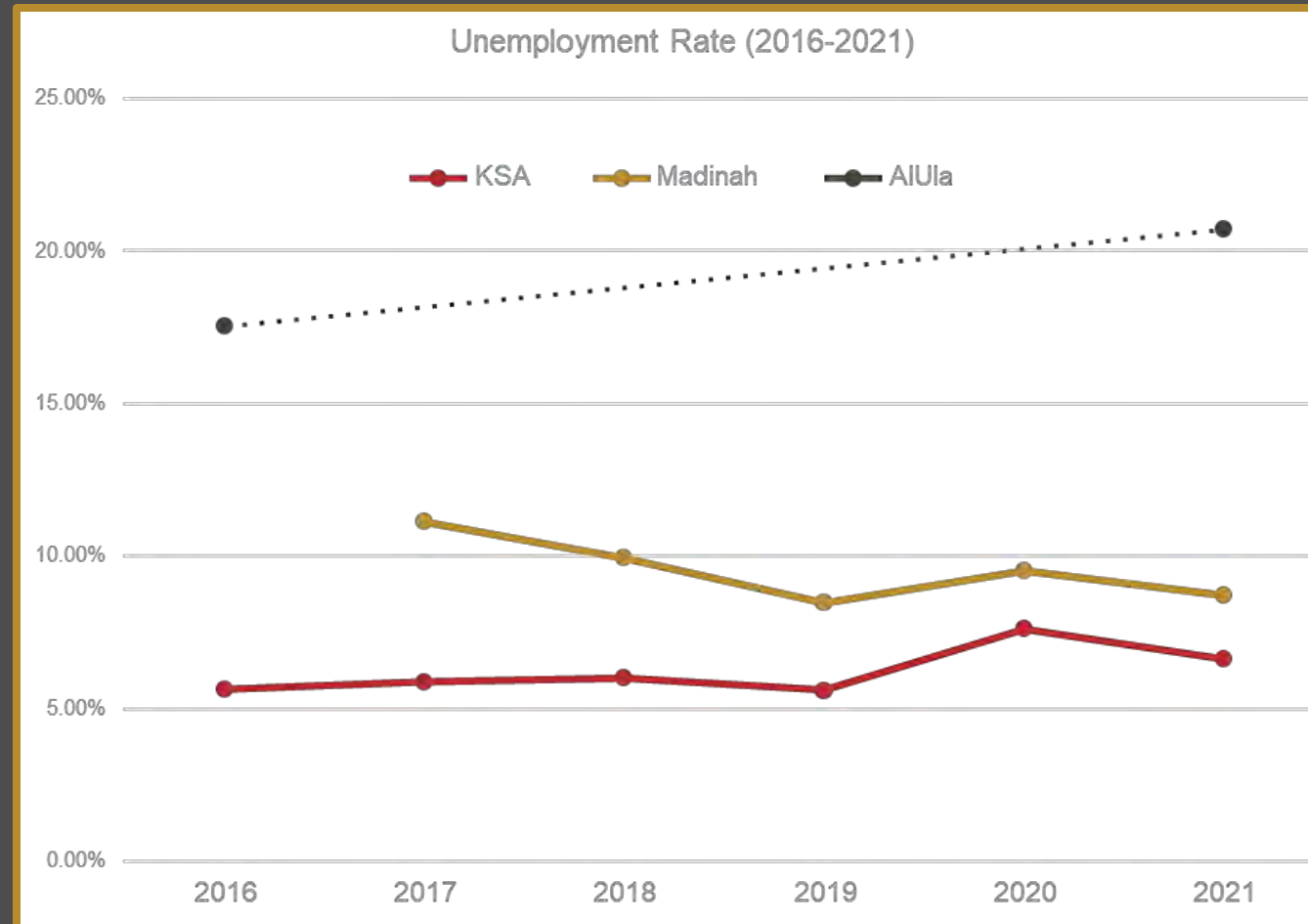
From Neolithic to Late Islamic



AIUla – Socio-economic context

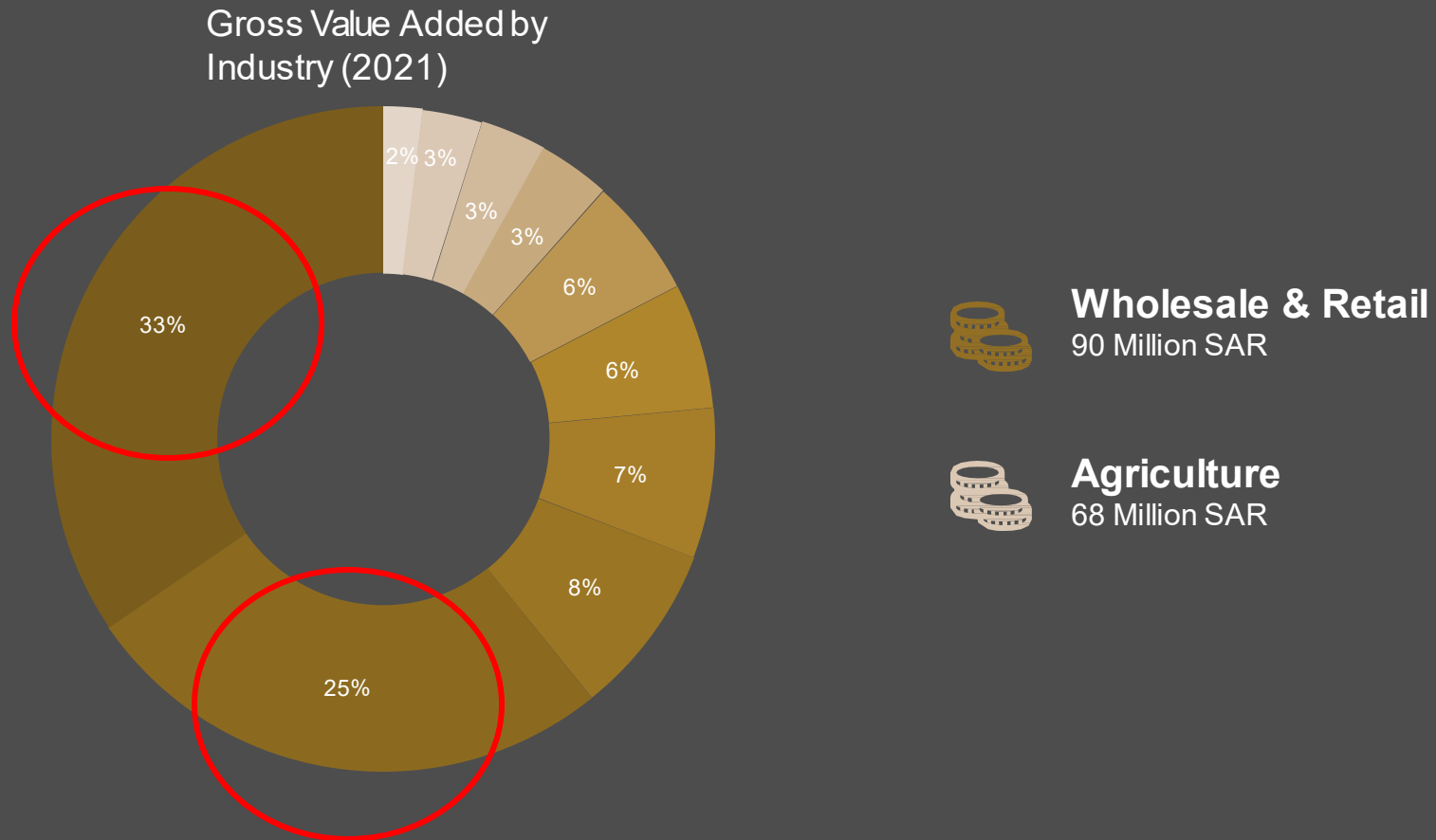


- Unemployment among Saudi nationals in AIUla has risen since 2016, reaching 20.7% in 2021. This is in contrast with the trend of large cities like Madinah, and KSA in general.





- AIUla's local economy is presently dominated by wholesale & retail trade and agriculture





- There is a lack of tailored, higher-level degrees that are relevant to AIUla’s citizens and sectoral growth prospects - *“There are no masters’ degrees here, and in particular a course in archaeology is needed”* (RCU Community Engagement Report)
- There is potential to increase the employment rate among residents, and to address the seasonality of employment - *“People recognize the change and want to be a part of it, but don’t know how”* (RCU Stakeholder Engagement Session)



A significant proportion of the population reports having no formal education. <1% of Saudis in AIUla hold a Masters degree or Doctorate



There is a mismatch between higher education/vocational courses, and the areas of expertise needed for AIUla’s development





RCU Cultural Heritage department

RESILIENCE OF HERITAGE ASSETS AND LANDSCAPES

- *Implementing heritage regulations*
- *HIA and planning consent*

ECONOMIC AND SOCIAL RESILIENCE

- *Fostering establishment of Cultural Heritage companies in KSA*
- *Capacity building*
- *Supporting tourism activation*

RESILIENCE OF MEMORY

- *Enhancing people's links with Cultural Heritage by engaging with local communities*
- *Raising awareness of Cultural Heritage*



Main Gaps in 2014 Antiquities Law

- No provision for HIA/LVIA prior to authorizing development.
- No provision for landscape protection.
- Weak regulation on human remains and fossils
- No procedure for rescue archaeology.
- Fragmented approach to heritage protection.

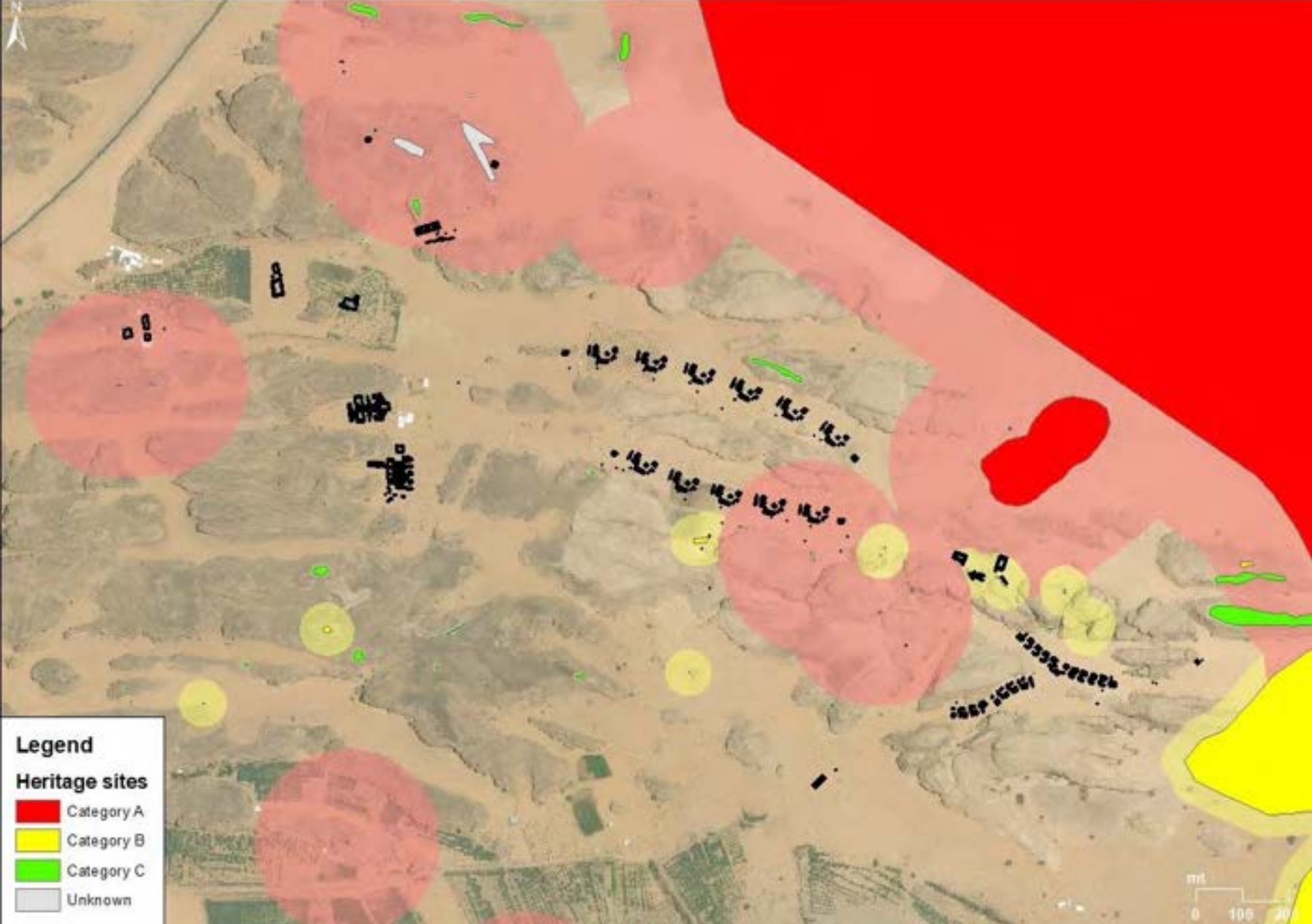
RCU Heritage Implementing Regulations

- Introduced the obligation for HIA/LVIA as condition of development consent.
- Introduced the concept of Landscape Protection Zones.
- Introduced regulation of Human Remains and Fossils.
- Introduced procedure for rescue archaeology.
- Introduced stronger approach on heritage protection, including a revision of heritage protection zones.
- Introduced permitting process with strong controls for both Research and Development-led cultural heritage work.



RESILIENCE OF ASSETS AND LANDSCAPES

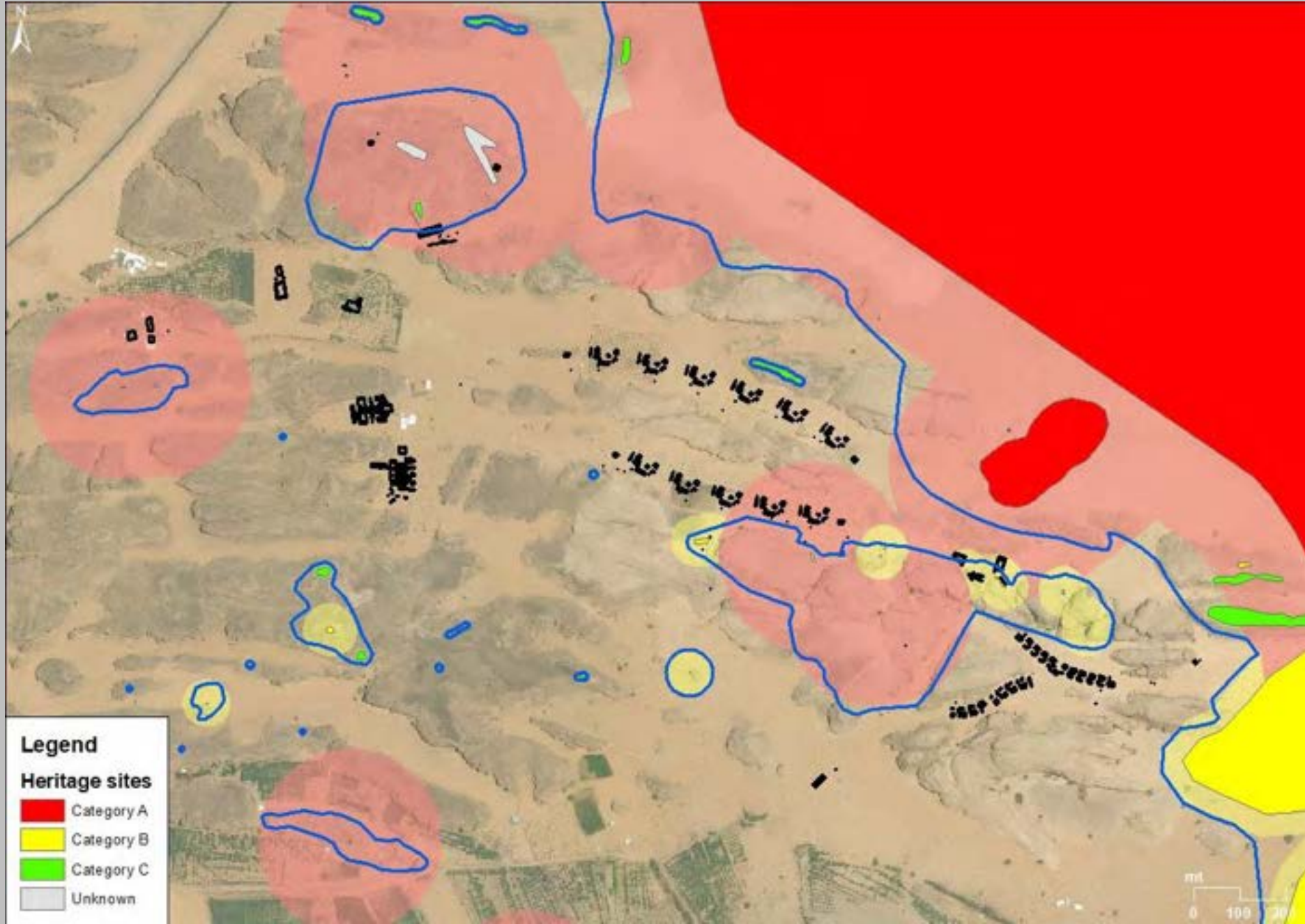
Implementing Heritage Regulations

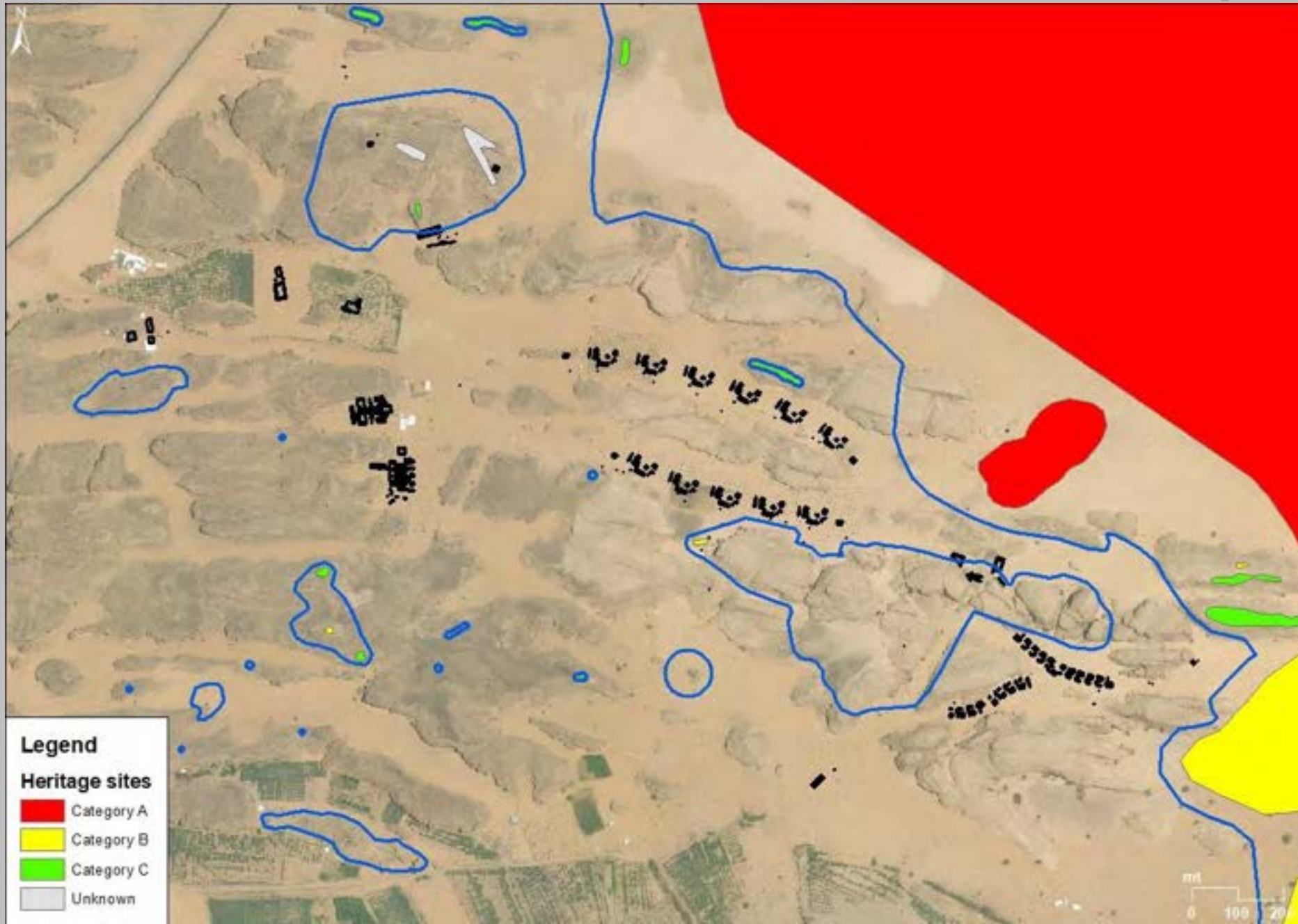




RESILIENCE OF ASSETS AND LANDSCAPES

Implementing Heritage Regulations







-> ENFORCED CHANGE
IN RESORT DESIGN AT
PRE-PLANNING (LAND
USE REQUEST) STAGE

Legend

Heritage sites

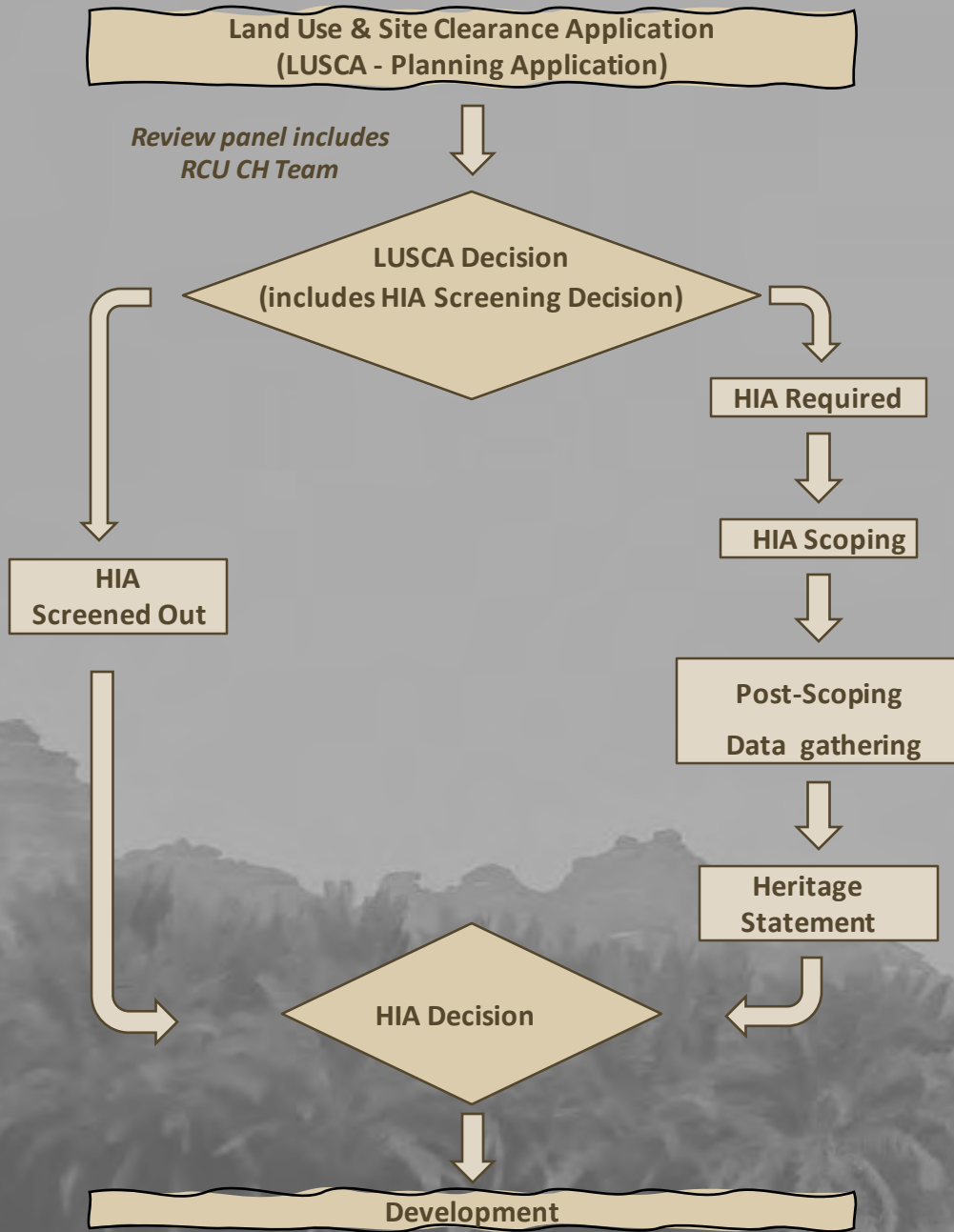
- Category A
- Category B
- Category C
- Unknown

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RESILIENCE OF ASSETS AND LANDSCAPES

HIA and planning processes



Pre-existing situation

- No provision for HIA in law
- Heritage input only as comments in land use request review panel
- No follow-up on compliance

→ Weak heritage controls

RCU Heritage Department Contribution

- Introduced formal HIA process in implementing regulations
- HIA included as mandatory step of planning process
- Controls on compliance and mitigation

ECONOMIC AND SOCIAL RESILIENCE
Establishing heritage companies in KSA



From 2020 → effort to inform stakeholders about the RCU Cultural Heritage Implementing Regulations & HIA provisions, and discuss opportunities of setting up Heritage Companies in KSA



First Saudi-owned CH company launched in 2021



Pre-existing situation

Examples of services not provided in KSA:

- Heritage Consultancy
- Archeological Site Investigation
- Condition assessments

→ Need to source foreign companies



RCU Heritage Department Contribution

- Opening up new economic opportunities in KSA
- Employment of Saudi archaeologists
- Capacity building rather than reliance on foreign expertise



Capacity building of Saudi heritage professionals is an ethical imperative and a formal requirement to obtain a permit for all RCU cultural heritage works



Students and graduates trained in over 30 heritage projects with international teams – several subsequently hired by RCU & private firms



Pre-existing situation

- Cultural heritage not considered as a career opportunity
 - Lack of postgraduate education in cultural heritage and related sciences
 - Absence of opportunities for practical training
- Need to source foreign heritage professionals



RCU Heritage Department Contribution

- Training opportunities through fieldwork placements
- Employment of Saudi Archaeologists
- Capacity building in cooperation with international expertise

Workshops



Fieldwork documentation (structures)



Field survey



Fieldwork documentation (rock art)



© KLDAP/CNRS

Finds analysis



© UCOP/ARCHAIOS



ECONOMIC AND SOCIAL RESILIENCE

Supporting tourism

Tourism is central to the AlUla project, and cultural heritage among the main attractors of visitors. Safeguarding of cultural heritage is a core value of AlUla.



Pre-existing situation

- Heritage sites overall poorly conserved
 - Only 3 heritage sites open to tourists, but mostly unregulated
 - No official tour guides or job opportunities in the sector
- Minimal revenue from tourism



RCU Heritage Department Contribution

- Support Tourism sector through conservation of heritage sites
- Enhance the AlUla heritage narrative
- Guide and support activations of heritage sites
- Identify added value of heritage to development projects
- Enhanced job and revenue opportunities

Restaurant (adaptive reuse of a heritage building)



AlManshiyah Plaza



Mudbrick Workshop



Heritage Trails





RESILIENCE OF MEMORY

Community Engagement & Awareness

Community engagement is a moral obligation and a formal requirement to obtain a permit for all cultural heritage works led by RCU



Pre-existing situation

- Scarce awareness of local heritage
 - Superstition
 - Uncontrolled destruction of heritage assets
- Community “detached” from their cultural heritage



RCU Heritage Department Contribution

- Constant effort to involve community in heritage activities
- Tell the story of lesser known heritage features
- Re-build a shared memory of AlUla



Workshops



Site visits



Site visits with local tour guides

Meet the archaeologists!

Lectures at local schools/universities





Challenge is to embed cultural heritage as a vehicle for resilience in the context of rapid development through:

- Safeguarding and conservation of cultural heritage assets and landscapes. Ensuring protection from development and long-term management through robust regulatory and planning mechanisms, including robust & clear HIA process
- Fostering socio-economic resilience through capacity building, tourism & commercial initiatives. This requires time, Need to balance immediate development-driven needs with longer-term goal of resilience & sustainability
- Repairing linkages between communities and their heritage is crucial to maintaining sense of belonging
- Shaping a heritage ecosystem where there are opportunities to build careers
- Promote cultural heritage as added value to developments

Let's continue the conversation!

Post questions and comments in the IAIA23 app.

Acknowledgments

- The Royal Commission for AlUla - His Highness Prince Badr bin Abdullah bin Mohammad bin Farhan Al Saud (the Governor), Eng Amr AlMadani (CEO)
- The RCU Environment & Sustainability department
- The RCU Regulations department
- The RCU Heritage team (Rakan Alanazi, Laura Morabito, Sarah Ritchie)



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