



**The Saudi Fashion Commission and Kering launch the second edition of the “Kering Generation Award X MENA”**

**during the opening reception of the RLC Global Forum,  
hosted at the French Residency in Riyadh**

- *Building on the success of the 2025 edition, the 2026 program will expand its impact across the MENA region.*
- *The program seeks startups driving innovation in sustainable sourcing, circularity and eco-design, promotion of biodiversity and wildlife protection, sustainable new business models for fashion and consumer awareness.*
- *The award offers resources, global exposure, and opportunities to accelerate sustainable innovation in fashion.*

**Riyadh, Saudi Arabia - February 3 2026** – The Saudi Fashion Commission and Kering, the global luxury group, announced today; during the opening reception of the RLC Global Forum, hosted at the French Residency in Riyadh; the call for applications for the second edition of the **“Kering Generation Award X MENA”**, a program dedicated to supporting and celebrating startups driving the transformation towards a sustainable fashion future.

**Building on first edition success**

Following the success of the inaugural edition in 2025, which attracted 500+ applications, 21 finalists, and 3 winners, with participants benefiting from mentorship, workshops, and international exposure, the 2026 program will expand its impact across the MENA region.

**Focus Areas 2026**

This year's themes address critical areas for sustainable fashion, including:

- Regenerative materials & clean production innovation
- Circular design & business models
- Nature & animal welfare
- Consumer awareness & cultural engagement

**Program Opportunities**

Selected startups will gain exclusive access to resources and opportunities, including:

- An immersive trip to Paris, with visits to Kering HQ and Plug and Play Paris
- 3 months of expert mentorship
- 6-month workspace at The Garage incubator in Riyadh
- Specialized workshops and curated ecosystem introductions
- Visibility at major events happening in Saudi Arabia, the region and global platforms
- Access to Plug and Play's international network of brands, retailers, and investors

**Who Can Apply**

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The program is seeking startups from the MENA region that:

- Operate in or positively impact the sustainable fashion sector
- Demonstrate innovation with measurable sustainability outcomes

Startups are invited to apply now and take the first step toward shaping a more sustainable future for the industry: [Kering Generation Award X MENA - Application Form](#)

*"The second edition of the 'Kering Generation Award' builds on the strong foundation we established last year, reaffirming sustainability as a central pillar of Saudi Arabia's fashion future. Together with Kering, we are championing the next wave of innovators who are redefining what circularity and environmental responsibility mean for the global fashion industry. By empowering startups with the tools and visibility they need, we are not only nurturing local and international talent but also accelerating the transformation of fashion into a more sustainable and resilient ecosystem," said Burak Cakmak, CEO of the Saudi Fashion Commission.*

*"The Kering Generation Award was born from our conviction at the Group level that sustainability must be a catalyst for innovation in fashion. Celebrating the success of the first edition earlier this year, we are proud to expand this initiative with the Saudi Fashion Commission to further empower startups in the MENA region. By nurturing these pioneering solutions, we aim to amplify their positive impact across the industry and reinforce our Group's global commitment to shaping a more sustainable future for fashion", stated Marie-Claire Daveu, Chief Sustainability and Institutional Affairs Officer, Kering.*

*"The expansion of the Kering Generation Award across the MENA region underscores our belief in turning ambition into action. This region is rich in ideas, creativity, and entrepreneurial drive, and our role is to help convert that potential into lasting impact. By opening access to mentorship, global networks, and concrete opportunities to scale, we aim to equip emerging talents with the confidence and capability to build businesses that are both responsible and resilient. In doing so, we strengthen not only individual ventures, but the wider creative ecosystem, and affirm the region's growing role in shaping the future of global sustainable luxury", said Miral Youssef, President, Kering Middle East & Africa.*

## **About the Fashion Commission**

Founded in 2020, the Fashion Commission is leading the development of the Kingdom's fashion sector. By driving investment and building robust regulatory frameworks, the commission is supporting the next generation of Saudi fashion talent as they aspire to reach their full potential. The commission is enabling the sector while preserving the Kingdom's vast heritage in fashion and empowering Saudi fashion designers.

Together with the Ministry of Culture, the commission is working to unlock a thriving cultural sector to preserve and elevate the traditions that make the Kingdom unique.

To learn more about the Fashion Commission, please visit:

Twitter: [@FashionMOC](#) (Arabic) | Instagram: [@fashionmoc](#) (Arabic) | website: <https://fashion.moc.gov.sa/en> (English)

## **Press contact**

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## **About Kering**

Kering is a global, family-led luxury group, home to people whose passion and expertise nurture creative Houses across ready-to-wear and couture, leather goods, jewelry, eyewear and beauty: Gucci, Saint Laurent, Bottega Veneta, Balenciaga, McQueen, Brioni, Boucheron, Pomellato, Dodo, Qeelin, Ginori 1735, as well as Kering Eyewear and Kering Beauté. Inspired by their creative heritage, Kering's Houses design and craft exceptional products and experiences that reflect the Group's commitment to excellence, sustainability and culture. This vision is expressed in our signature: *Creativity is our Legacy*. In 2024, Kering employed 47,000 people and generated revenue of €17.2 billion.

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## **About RLC Global Forum**

The RLC Global Forum is a leading platform that brings together the world's most influential brand and retail leaders, innovators, and policymakers to drive positive industry change. It marks the next phase of the Retail Leaders Circle's (RLC) twelve-year mission to connect and empower decision-makers across the retail and consumer-facing sectors. In addition to its Annual Global Meeting in Riyadh, the RLC Global Forum curates a portfolio of high-level gatherings worldwide, including the RLC Fashion Summit in Milan and the CEO Summit in New York.