



## New Nationwide Screenwriting Development Programme 'Hezayah' to Support Local Talents

***Doha Film Institute Announces Gulf Development Unit to Support Regional Filmmaking;  
Fourth Edition of DTFF to run 17-24 November 2012***

**Doha, Qatar, July 3, 2012:** Aspiring filmmakers from Qatar will be the first to write a new chapter in the nation's cinema history, thanks to the pilot edition of Doha Film Institute's (DFI) new nationwide screenwriting development programme 'Hezayah'. This is the first of many initiatives planned by the newly formed Gulf Development Unit of DFI Film Financing, aimed at enhancing skills within the Qatari and regional film industry.

Qatari filmmaker Mahdi Ali Ali joins DFI Film Financing as Manager of the Gulf Development Unit and will work closely with a team of mentors including International film consultant and script analyst Christian Routh and renowned filmmaker Ziad Doueiri, to help build and enhance the new script development programme.

'Hezayah' will offer filmmakers support across all stages of screenwriting through mentorship and interactive development workshops. It will be open for up to 14 local filmmakers who will be part of a holistic script development initiative built around the centerpiece of a six-month mentoring and script doctoring workshop supported by seasoned international and regional cinema professionals. The aim of these workshops is to have industry standard scripts ready for this year's DTFF from 17th to 24th of November.

Open to all local filmmakers, the initial batch of applicants to the programme primarily comprises of filmmakers with scripts in hand or in progress, that previously applied for DFI grants through the fall 2011 and spring 2012 cycle. Submissions are also open to those with a strong story idea or synopsis.

"Although Gulf filmmaking has gradually grown in the past 10 years, Qatar is catching up to its neighbours when it comes to building homegrown talent. I am confident that this development programme will further hone the skills of local talent, whether it's working on the technicalities of scriptwriting or providing an understanding of the way the industry works. The Gulf Development Unit will help cultivate a stronger cinema culture and help build a progressive framework for all to follow", Mahdi Ali Ali said.

A review board from DFI will assist in partnering the applicants to turn their synopses into viable treatments or screenplays once they've been selected. Projects from every genre, style and format for short and feature films are eligible. Additional entry details are available at [www.dohafilminstitute.com](http://www.dohafilminstitute.com)

Paul Miller, Head of Film Financing at DFI said: “This initiative is an exciting opportunity to enthuse budding Qatari and regional filmmakers to help build a viable and vibrant film culture. It will present a focused platform to provide an interactive opportunity to share ideas, develop networks and communities and offer peer reviews. We’re grateful for all those involved in helping to shape this new enterprise as we build on assisting emerging writers to acquire the skills and sensibilities they need to write effectively for the screen.”

Routh brings three decades of film industry experience including more than a decade in script development across the European Union. He has contributed to films including Najwa Najjar’s multiple award winning feature *Pomegranates and Myrrh*. Cinematographer, director and writer Ziad Doueiri is best known for his award winning feature film *West Beirut* and cooperation with Quentin Tarantino as camera assistant for *Pulp Fiction*, *Reservoir Dogs* and *Jackie Brown*. His latest feature, *The Attack*, co-financed by DFI is currently in post-production.

This programme will eventually grow to include filmmakers from across the Gulf region as part of DFI’s commitment to building a sustainable model within the industry.

The Gulf Development Unit is the latest in a series of film education and training initiatives launched by DFI for filmmakers in Qatar and the GCC region. The Unit will introduce further workshops including short film production, acting for film and other development programmes.

-ENDS-

#### About Doha Film Institute:

Doha Film Institute (DFI) is an independent cultural organisation established in 2010 to incorporate Qatar’s film initiatives under one banner; organically supporting the growth of the local film community by enhancing industry knowledge, cultivating film appreciation and contributing to the development of sustainable creative industries in Qatar. DFI’s year-round platforms include funding and production of local, regional and international films, educational programmes, film screenings, and the annual Doha Tribeca Film Festival (DTFF).

With culture, community, education and entertainment at its foundation, DFI serves as an all-encompassing film hub in Doha, as well as a resource for the region and the rest of the world. DFI is committed to supporting Qatar’s 2030 vision for the development of a knowledge based economy.

DFI has established a number of strategic cultural partnerships with leading local and international organisations including Tribeca Enterprises, World Cinema Foundation, Maisha Film Lab, Katara Cultural Village and Giffoni Film Festival.

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