



FIELD GUIDE / 2026 EDITION

Hiring a CGI Studio in Saudi Arabia

How giga-project scale changes the brief, the stakeholder map behind a large image set, what desert light and planting demand, and where phasing economics are won or lost.



START HERE

Scale changes the brief, not just the quantity

A single tower and a masterplan district are not the same commission with a different number at the end. They are different products, bought differently, and most disappointing outcomes on large Saudi projects come from briefing the second one as though it were the first.

	SINGLE-BUILDING BRIEF	MASTERPLAN-SCALE BRIEF
What gets modelled	One building, some context.	Terrain, infrastructure, landscape, a library of building types, and the hero buildings in detail.
Image count	A set you can name in one line.	Hundreds, arriving over years, in waves that do not look alike unless someone makes them.
Who signs off	One client, sometimes two.	Several parties who each want a different view of the same thing.
How long it lives	Until the scheme is built.	Through phases, hand-overs, rebrands and changes of masterplanner.
What drives cost	Hours on one model.	Whether anything built in phase one is still usable in phase three.
Biggest risk	The images miss the point.	Paying to rebuild the same district five times under five different commissions.

The question that reprices a giga-scale quote

"Which parts of this are built once and reused across every phase, and what do we have to own for that to be true?" Terrain, landscape kit, material library and the building library are the assets. The images are the by-product. A quote that does not separate the two is quoting for pictures, and you will buy the same district again next year.



Maverick Frame production render.

STEP 01

Five audiences, one model, five different views

On a large programme the same asset is asked for by people who want opposite things from it. Map them before commissioning, because the order you serve them in decides what gets built first.

WHO ASKS	WHAT THEY ASK FOR	WHAT IT NEEDS FROM THE MODEL
Board and investors	The whole thing, from above, looking inevitable.	Terrain, full extent, massing. Detail matters least here and is bought first by mistake most often.
Masterplanner and urban design	Street-level sequences, public realm, shade, how the grid feels on foot.	Landscape kit, ground materials, people and vehicles at believable density.
Approvals and authorities	Whatever your own authority specifies — ask them, in writing, and take the answer to the studio.	Accuracy, recorded camera positions, and a method somebody can describe. Not retrofittable.
Sales and leasing	Unit-level interiors, views from actual floors, amenity.	Interiors built properly, with the real view geometry behind the glass.
Operator or brand partner	Their standards applied: rooms, lobby, signage, guest journey.	Brand-accurate materials and signage, often arriving late and changing.

The sequencing rule: build the shared foundation for the audience who needs it earliest, then hang each audience's images off it. Commissioning the board deck, then the sales set, then the street-level sequence as three separate jobs means paying for terrain and landscape three times. Commissioning them as one asset with three output waves is the same work billed once.

Ask this at the shortlist stage

"Show us a programme you worked on across more than one phase, and tell us what you reused from phase one." Studios that have only ever delivered single sets will answer with a portfolio. Studios that have run a programme will answer with a file structure, and that is the answer you want.



STEP 02

Desert light, planting, calendars and language

Light and air are the craft

- High sun flattens everything. The images that work are built around low sun, and around the hour after it.
- Atmospheric haze is not a filter — distance has to fade in layers or a masterplan reads as a model on a table.
- Heat shimmer over paving and asphalt, used sparingly, is the detail that makes a ground-level shot read as real.
- Dust settles on glass, paving and leaves. Perfectly clean surfaces read as a different climate.
- Night is a second set, not an afterthought. A great deal of life there happens after dark, and lighting design deserves its own images.

Ground and planting

- Specify planting that survives on the site, with your landscape architect's schedule — date palm, ghaf, acacia, desert-adapted ground cover. Generic temperate planting is the fastest way to make an image look imported.
- Plant at a density that irrigation can actually sustain, and say which year of growth you are showing.
- Shade is the amenity. Canopies, colonnades, mashrabiya screens and the shadows they throw are the reason a public space reads as usable.
- Sand drift at edges, and hardscape that has weathered, beat a showroom-clean ground plane every time.

Working week, calendar and language — things to establish, not assume

01	The working week	Your studio's week and your project team's week may not match at either end. Agree the two days each week when nobody is available on one side, and fix the review point around them.
02	Holiday calendars	Ask both sides for their shutdown dates at the quoting stage, including Ramadan and Eid working arrangements. Do not assume either calendar. Check them against your milestone dates before signing.
03	Arabic and English deliverables	Signage, boards and titles in both languages, which means right-to-left text set properly, mirrored layouts where they are mirrored, and correct fonts. Have a native speaker check every rendered word.
04	Names and transliteration	Project, district and building names get transliterated inconsistently across a programme. Agree one spelling per name in both scripts, in writing, and put it in the brief.
05	Local review in person	Establish early who is on the ground, who can walk a site, and who photographs anything that needs photographing. An offshore studio is not doing it.



STEP 03

Where reuse pays, and what to put in writing

On a multi-year programme the contract clause that matters most is not price. It is what you hold at the end of each phase.

ASSET	BUILT	WHAT IT IS WORTH LATER
Terrain and survey base	Once	Every phase, every viewpoint, forever. The most expensive thing to rebuild and the least visible.
Masterplan massing	Once, updated	Updating massing is cheap. Rebuilding it because the file was never handed over is not.
Building-type library	Once per type	Whole districts assembled from types already built. This is where volume economics live.
Landscape and planting kit	Once	Reused at every scale from aerial to street. Also the thing a new studio gets wrong first.
Material library	Once	What keeps phase three looking like phase one.
Named camera set	Once	The same viewpoints re-rendered as the design develops. The only honest way to show progress.

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| ☐ Who owns the terrain, library and material assets at the end of each phase | ☐ Where files are stored, backed up, and for how long |
| ☐ Handover format, named — native working files and a neutral exchange format | ☐ Licence covering developer, operator, agent, funder and government partners |
| ☐ A naming convention agreed before the first file is made | ☐ Contract currency, tax treatment and transfer costs — put to your own adviser |
| ☐ Will they take over another studio's files, and at what cost to assess them | ☐ Approval and submission requirements — put in writing to your own authority |
| ☐ Capacity committed across the programme, not just the first wave | ☐ A written definition of what one revision round is |

The clause that is worth more than a discount

A stated right to receive the full asset library, in named formats, at the end of every phase, whether or not you continue with the same studio. It costs almost nothing to agree at the start and it is the difference between a programme that gets cheaper as it grows and one that starts from zero every time the procurement cycle turns.

WORKING WITH A STUDIO

Cost, and how to brief it

Two things people ask us before anything else. Both answers are short.

COMMISSIONED WORK	FREELANCER	STUDIO
Single exterior still	\$100 – 300	\$250 – 600
Single interior still	\$120 – 350	\$300 – 700
Package, 5–8 views	\$600 – 1,500	\$1,500 – 4,000
Animation, per minute	\$1,000 – 3,000	\$3,000 – 8,000

Market ranges we are willing to publish. Turnaround and revision-round figures are deliberately not in this table: ours vary too much by project type to state as a benchmark, and an invented number here would be worse than none.

How to brief it — shorter is better

This is the opposite of what most people assume. Four things:

- What you need — **how many images, and of what**
- The plans and elevations, as they are
- A few reference images for mood and light
- One clear line on what the images are *for*

Inflating a small job into a fifty-page specification backfires: taken literally it comes out ugly, and it misleads the people doing the work. Tell them the intent and let the team that does this daily handle the detail.

The mistake that costs the most

The biggest failure we see is not choosing the wrong vendor. It is **timing**. People start looking only after the first supplier has already failed and the deadline is on fire, then choose in a panic.

Line up and vet rendering partners **before** you need one. One, ideally a few, briefed and ready to take work. It costs an afternoon now and saves a project later.

10+

YEARS RENDERING
VISUAL STORYTELLING

350+

BRANDS & AGENCIES
EMPOWERED GLOBALLY

95%

CLIENT
SATISFACTION RATE

40%+

OF OUR COMMISSIONS NOW
INCLUDE MOTION OR 360

When the image has to hold up, **talk to us**

We are a CGI studio: architectural and product rendering, 3D modelling, animation, 360 tours and VR. Ten years, 350+ brands and agencies, and the kind of work that still looks right when somebody counts the windows.

Send us the plans and a line on what the images are for. You get a scope and a price, and no obligation to use either.

START HERE

maverickframe.com/contacts

SEE THE WORK

maverickframe.com/gallery

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Maverick Frame production render. · Cost ranges are market ranges as of 2026 and are not a quotation.