

هيئة الأفلام
Film Commission



2024

SAUDI FILM INDUSTRY YEARBOOK

سَمِيعًا
الْمَلِكِ
الْعَلِيمِ



Foreword by the Chairman of the Board of Directors of the Saudi Film Commission

Saudi Arabia's film industry bridges its deep cultural heritage with a forward-looking vision for a creative, knowledge-based economy aligned with Saudi Vision 2030. Its rapid growth is fostering innovation, generating jobs, and advancing economic diversification.

This inaugural 2024 Saudi Film Industry Yearbook offers a comprehensive statistical overview of the sector's progress. In 2024, a record of 18 Saudi films were released in cinemas. Productions supported by the Saudi Film Commission's incentive programs resulted in estimated expenditures of over SAR 1.08 billion, demonstrating public interest and a strong industry momentum to the Kingdom's appeal in terms of filming locations.

Production infrastructure has expanded rapidly as well, with nearly 100,000 square meters of soundstage space now available across the Kingdom. The upcoming launch of Jax Film Studios - a state-of-the-art, 7,000 square-meter complex in Riyadh - marks a major step forward, with more initiatives ahead. These investments promise to attract international production and boost local filmmaking.

Through film, Saudi Arabia is not only sharing its rich culture and compelling stories with the world but also shaping a vibrant cultural and economic future.

HH Prince Bader bin Abdullah bin Mohammed bin Farhan Al Saud

Minister of Culture
Chairman of the Board of Directors
Saudi Film Commission



Foreword by the CEO of the Saudi Film Commission

It is a privilege to introduce the inaugural Saudi Film Industry Yearbook 2024 - the first annual publication dedicated to capturing the growth and transformation of the Kingdom's film sector.

Published by the Saudi Film Commission, this edition offers data-driven insights into the cultural and economic momentum reshaping the industry. In just a few years, Saudi Arabia has emerged as a serious player in global cinema, supported by robust infrastructure, creative talent, and targeted policy reforms.

From 2020 to 2024, close to 70 film projects received support through national incentive programs, helping attract both local and international productions to shoot across six regions of the Kingdom. This activity continues to fuel job creation, local spend, and global visibility.

In 2024 alone, more than 70,000 professionals from 25 countries gathered at the Saudi Film Confex - now one of the region's leading platforms for industry networking and innovation. New initiatives like the Filmathon, alongside training workshops and speaker sessions, are investing in the skills and solutions that will shape our industry's future. On the documentation and preservation front, over 68,000 archival items were safeguarded at the Temporary Preservation Center under the National Film Archive—strengthening the sector's sustainability foundations. At the same time, policy improvements - including reduced licensing fees and a 28% drop in average cinema ticket prices since 2020 are helping expand audience access and stimulate market growth.

Saudi cinema is gaining international recognition, while domestic audiences are embracing film culture with growing enthusiasm. This Yearbook reflects that progress and provides a forward-looking resource for all who are part of building the Kingdom's future as a global destination for film industry.

Abdullah Naser Al-Qahtani

Chief Executive Officer
Saudi Film Commission

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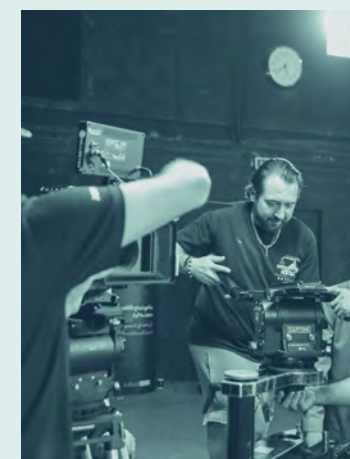
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Wadi Lajab, Jazan Region 



Introduction

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About This Publication

This is the inaugural edition of the *Saudi Film Industry Yearbook*¹ - the first comprehensive, data-driven review of the Kingdom of Saudi Arabia's (KSA's) fast-growing film sector.

Published by the Saudi Film Commission (SFC), this version follows an interim edition of the Yearbook at Saudi Film Confex in October 2024.

With key chapters covering the theatrical market, production infrastructure, public funding, talent development, archival preservation, and festivals and awards,

this publication offers unprecedented insights into the KSA film industry's development. The publication also underlines the continued strong progress that the KSA film industry has made to meet the *Vision 2030* objective of creating an economically and socially vibrant, thriving and ambitious nation.

The Yearbook focuses on industry data and insights from 2024, referencing previous years for context.

¹ Encompassing feature films, television series, short films, animation and documentaries



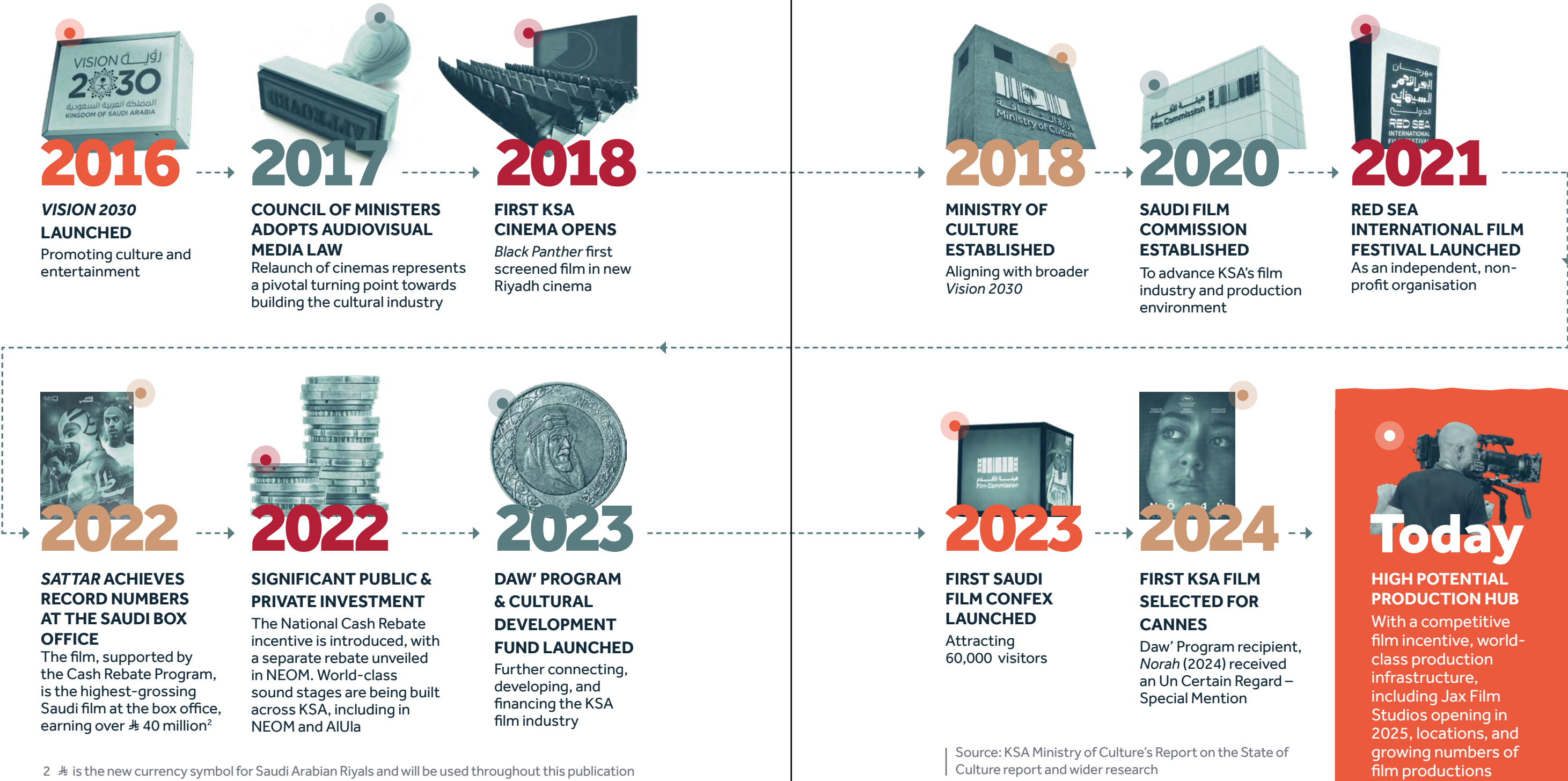
Overview of the KSA Film Industry

Since the release of the first Saudi films in the 1950s and 1960s, the KSA film industry has seen remarkable growth. The momentum has accelerated in recent years with the launch of *Vision 2030* in 2016, promoting culture and entertainment, and the opening of

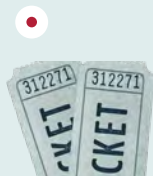
cinemas in 2018, inviting new audiences to Saudi and international films. There is also the growing prominence of Saudi filmmakers, resulting in box office breakthroughs and international acclaim (Figure 1).

Today, KSA has established itself as a key player within the Middle East and internationally, with major regional and global content investors already working in the Kingdom, including Netflix and MBC Studios.

Figure 1 – Latest Developments in the KSA Film Industry



2024 KEY KSA FILM INDUSTRY STATISTICS



17.52 Mn cinema admissions, generating **ﷲ 845.63 Mn** at the KSA Box Office



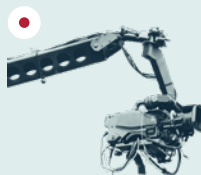
64 cinema sites with a total of **630** cinema screens



17 operational film studios, with **37** stages (of over 1,000 m²)



~100,000 m² total available studio space



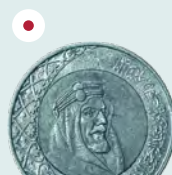
65 active production companies, as well as **7** distribution companies



14 projects supported by the SFC's National Incentive Program (Cash Rebate Program or Daw' Program)



ﷲ 93.68 Mn total estimated production expenditure from projects supported by the SFC's Cash Rebate or Daw' Program



At least **ﷲ 147.16 Mn** in production expenditure from **57** projects supported by funding programmes in KSA



Funding programmes in KSA include the SFC's Cash Rebate and Daw' Program, NEOM's Production Incentives, Film AIUla's Cash Rebate, the Cultural Development Fund, the Red Sea Fund, Saudi Film Festival, and Ithra Film Production Programme



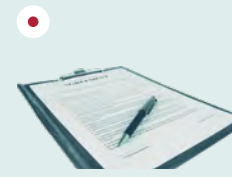
75,600+ admissions to the Red Sea International Film Festival, Saudi Film Festival, and Gulf Cinema Festival, and **225** films, documentaries and short films screened



3,600 attendees at the 2024 Saudi Film Nights' events, with the largest attendance taking place in China with an audience of **1,475** people



~70,000 attendees to Saudi Film Confex in 2024, up from **60,000** in 2023



24 agreements were signed at Saudi Film Confex 2024, amounting to a total agreement value of **ﷲ 226 Mn**



KSA films have won **50 awards** at local and international film festivals and events, 11 of the awards were for KSA films incentivised through KSA's National Incentive Program



The first Saudi film selected for Cannes Film Festival, **Norah** (2024) won the Un Certain Regard – Special Mention award



6,439 new items acquired and **1,029** items catalogued by the National Film Archive

Further industry statistics are included in this publication.





1.3

About the Saudi Film Commission and its Support of the KSA Film Industry

About the Saudi Film Commission (SFC)

The SFC is a KSA government body affiliated with the Ministry of Culture, established in February 2020. The SFC aims to advance the film industry and the production environment in KSA, in addition to stimulating and empowering Saudi filmmakers.

SFC's Vision

Establish KSA as a world-class film centre in the heart of the Middle East.

SFC's Mission

Build and foster the development of a creative KSA film industry and maximise its potential for local and international markets.

SFC's Objectives

- Ensure KSA film industry has access to qualified talent and appropriate facilities and services at competitive cost
- Stimulate domestic productions and attract international productions to KSA
- Promote a suitable environment that fosters the sector's development
- Stimulate substantial demand for KSA-made films in the domestic and in select international markets

The SFC has played a pivotal role in supporting the rapid development of the KSA film industry through a range of initiatives and interventions, including:



Developing film-friendly regulatory frameworks and legislation, including overseeing film licensing



Acquiring and preserving historical artefacts for film productions and research, as well as accessibility to the public via the National Film Archive



Establishing agreements and cooperation across government and private entities to develop production and exhibition infrastructure



Attracting inward production and investment through administrating the national KSA Incentive Program



Developing film talent through career pathways and training opportunities to learn new skills and develop knowledge



Supporting innovation within the KSA film industry



Promoting the KSA film industry at events across KSA, as well as at film markets and festivals worldwide



Creating valuable networking and collaboration opportunities, including at international markets and domestically (e.g. Saudi Film Confex)

These initiatives and interventions have resulted in many key successes since the SFC was established in 2020, including:

Incentivised productions:

Supporting 64 projects through the SFC's Cash Rebate or Daw' Program between 2020-2024, generating an estimated ﷲ 1.08 billion in total production expenditure in KSA – including attracting major international projects, such as *Kandahar* (2023) and *Desert Warrior* (forthcoming)

Diverse production locations:

Attracting productions to shoot across KSA. Shooting on productions incentivised by the SFC's Cash Rebate or Daw' Program have taken place across at least six of KSA's regions, including Riyadh, Makkah and Tabouk

Networking with local and global stakeholders:

Attracting 130,000+ visitors from 25+ countries for the first two editions of Saudi Film Confex to connect and conduct business with the KSA film industry

Training and professional development:

Providing valuable training and insights to more than 4,700 participants, across seven different programmes in 2024, including Saudi Filmmakers and Kader.

Industry innovation:

Supporting 476 participants through two editions of the Filmathon, an intensive training programme consisting of a virtual bootcamp and an in-person Hackathon, with the goal of designing and developing technological tools to address challenges within KSA's filmmaking industry

Global film network:

Successfully growing its organisational and sectoral network, with SFC joining

the Association of Film Commissions International in June 2024 to engage in global discussions on film policy and governance

National partnerships:

Developing KSA's film infrastructure through partnerships, including agreements with the Saudi Broadcasting Authority to align national cinema initiatives, and with MBC Studios to support talent development, employment, and incentives

International cooperation:

International agreements include an executive programme of cooperation with France's National Centre for Cinematography (CNC) to foster Saudi talent, preserve heritage, and encourage co-productions, and an MOU agreement with China's Bona Film Group to increase investment in the industry and distribution of Saudi films in China. The SFC has also signed an executive programme agreement with the Korean Film Council (KOFIC) to enhance knowledge exchange, production collaboration, talent development, and technological innovation in both the Korean and Saudi film industries

Streamlined licenses and prices:

Successfully reducing licensing fees and cinema ticket prices to boost growth and audience engagement. This includes streamlining the licensing process for cinema operations and filmmaking, making obtaining licenses through the Cultural Licenses Platform (Abde'a) easier. This policy has seen the average KSA ticket price in 2024 reduced to ﷲ 48.27, down by 28% compared to 2020

Facilitating industry growth:

Supporting industry development by issuing over 1,500 licenses in 2024, including 33 licenses to operate production studios, 73 for audiovisual production, 12 to operate cinema theatres, 523 for scripts, and 1,047 others

Expediting film processes:

Successfully fast-tracking visa and film permit applications for film productions

Global audience development:

Introducing KSA films to more than 3,690 people across 12 events in Morocco, Australia and China through the Saudi Film Nights programme

Critical film discourse:

Attracting almost 10,000 people to the second edition of the International Film Criticism Conference, held in Hail, Al-Ahsa and Riyadh

Archiving film heritage:

Preserving and cataloguing more than 68,000 historical items for film production and research, as well as the general public





Kadumbul Island, Asir Region





Theatrical Market

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Introduction

With the rapid development of cinemas in KSA, the country's theatrical market has grown quickly in recent years. Box office revenues and cinema admissions have increased steadily since 2020. The KSA box office is chiefly driven by US productions, action films and cinema admissions from the Riyadh, Makkah and Eastern regions.



How the SFC is Supporting

- SFC introduced initiatives to significantly reduce both permanent and temporary cinema licensing fees, encouraging more cinema infrastructure across all parts of the Kingdom
- SFC simplified licensing procedures, making it easier to import or distribute films
- SFC introduced an initiative to encourage cinema operators to offer more promotions and discounts to help boost cinema attendance in the country. As a result, the number of promotions and discounts increased sharply in KSA and the average ticket price declined by 8%
- Major collaborations between SFC and key international entities were formed during 2024, targeting supporting Saudi films to travel abroad and increase the reach to global markets



While KSA's 2024 box office revenue was lower than in the preceding three years, in part due to lowered ticket prices, it had the **highest revenue in the MENA region, generating ₪ 845.63 million.**



The Riyadh region had the largest share of total revenue. Fridays saw the highest weekly revenue, while June was the top-grossing month. The second quarter was the strongest of the year.



A record 18 KSA films were screened in 2024. The top KSA film by KSA box office revenue was *Mandoob El Lil* (2023), at ₪ 28.68 million, while *Shabab El-Bomb* (2024) had the highest number of admissions (632,700 in total).



US films dominated KSA's box office revenue (accounting for 61%), followed by films from Egypt, KSA, India, and Japan. **Action and comedy were the top two genres, both in revenue and number of admissions.**



2024 FACTS IN FOCUS



2024 cinema admissions were slightly below KSA's record 2023 figures, with June 2024 being the month with the highest admissions.



KSA had 64 cinema sites at the end of 2024 (up one from 63 in 2023) and 630 screens (up 17 from 613 in 2023). The Riyadh region had the highest number of screens.



The cinema screen supply has outpaced population growth. In 2020, there was one screen per 100,000 people; by 2024, despite a 12% population increase, there were **1.78 screens per 100,000 people.**



The average cinema ticket price has steadily declined since 2020. In 2024, an average ticket cost ₪ 48.27, down 28% from ₪ 67.14 in 2020. Ticket prices were highest on Fridays.



Global Box Office

Total global box office

The total global box office in 2024 was ١٠٤.٤٠ billion (USD 27.84 billion), down 13% from 2023 (١١٩.٣٤ billion / USD 31.82 billion).^{3,4}

١١٩.٣٤ Bn
(\$ 31.82 Bn)

Top 10 countries by box office size

The US had the highest national box office revenue in 2024, totalling ٣٢.٦٤ billion (USD 8.70 billion) (Table 1). This was followed by China and UK & Ireland, with box office revenues of ٢٢.٠١ billion (USD 5.87 billion) and ٥.٠٥ billion (USD 1.35 billion), respectively. Coming next, France and Japan had box office revenues totalling ٤.٩١ billion (USD 1.31 billion) and ٤.٧٥ billion (USD 1.27 billion), respectively.

Table 1 - Top 10 Countries by Box Office Revenue, 2024

1 USA ٣٢.٦٤ Bn \$ 8.70 Bn 	2 China ٢٢.٠١ Bn \$ 5.87 Bn 	3 UK & Ireland ٥.٠٥ Bn \$ 1.35 Bn 	4 France ٤.٩١ Bn \$ 1.31 Bn 	5 Japan ٤.٧٥ Bn \$ 1.27 Bn 
6 Germany ٣.٢١ Bn \$ 0.86 Bn 	7 South Korea ٣.١٩ Bn \$ 0.85 Bn 	8 Mexico ٣.١٦ Bn \$ 0.84 Bn 	9 Australia ٢.٢٩ Bn \$ 0.61 Bn 	10 Spain ١.٩٧ Bn \$ 0.53 Bn 

| Source: Comscore



Total box office for specific regional countries

Compared to all other MENA countries, KSA had the highest national box office revenue in 2024, totalling ٨٤٥.٦٣ million (USD 225.50 million) (Table 2). This was followed by the UAE, Turkey, and Kuwait, with box office revenues of ٧٩٢.٨٦ million (USD 211.43 million), ٥٤٨.٨٩ million (USD 146.37 million) and ١٨٤.٤٠ million (USD 49.17 million), respectively.

Table 2 – Total Box Office in Specific Regional Countries, 2024

KSA	٨٤٥.٦٣ Mn	\$ 225.50 Mn	
UAE	٧٩٢.٨٦ Mn	\$ 211.43 Mn	
Turkey	٥٤٨.٨٩ Mn	\$ 146.37 Mn	
Kuwait	١٨٤.٤٠ Mn	\$ 49.17 Mn	
Oman	٥٧.٦٢ Mn	\$ 15.37 Mn	

| Source: Comscore

³ The conversion rate used for this publication is SAR to USD, 1 SAR = 0.266667 USD. Some totals may not sum due to rounding.

⁴ The total global box office figure includes data collected between 1st Jan 2024 and 31st Dec 2024, and only includes revenue data for markets available on Comscore and is therefore not the complete worldwide box office revenue, but is a close reference point.

Table 2 – Total Box Office in MENA Countries, 2024 - continued

Iraq	﷼ 44.20 Mn	\$ 11.79 Mn	
Lebanon	﷼ 44.00 Mn	\$ 11.73 Mn	
Jordan	﷼ 29.33 Mn	\$ 7.82 Mn	
Egypt	﷼ 22.18 Mn	\$ 5.91 Mn	

2.3

KSA Box Office

Total KSA box office

KSA's box office revenue declined to ﷼ 845.63 million in 2024, slightly down from previous years. This mirrors a global trend, with worldwide box office down 13%, driven in part by the growing dominance of streaming platforms (Figure 2, Table 3). 2024 releases include international films such as *Bad Boys: Ride or Die*, *Welad Rizk 3*, *Inside Out 2*, and *Deadpool & Wolverine*, along with domestic films, *Mandoob El Lil* and *Shabab El-Bomb*.

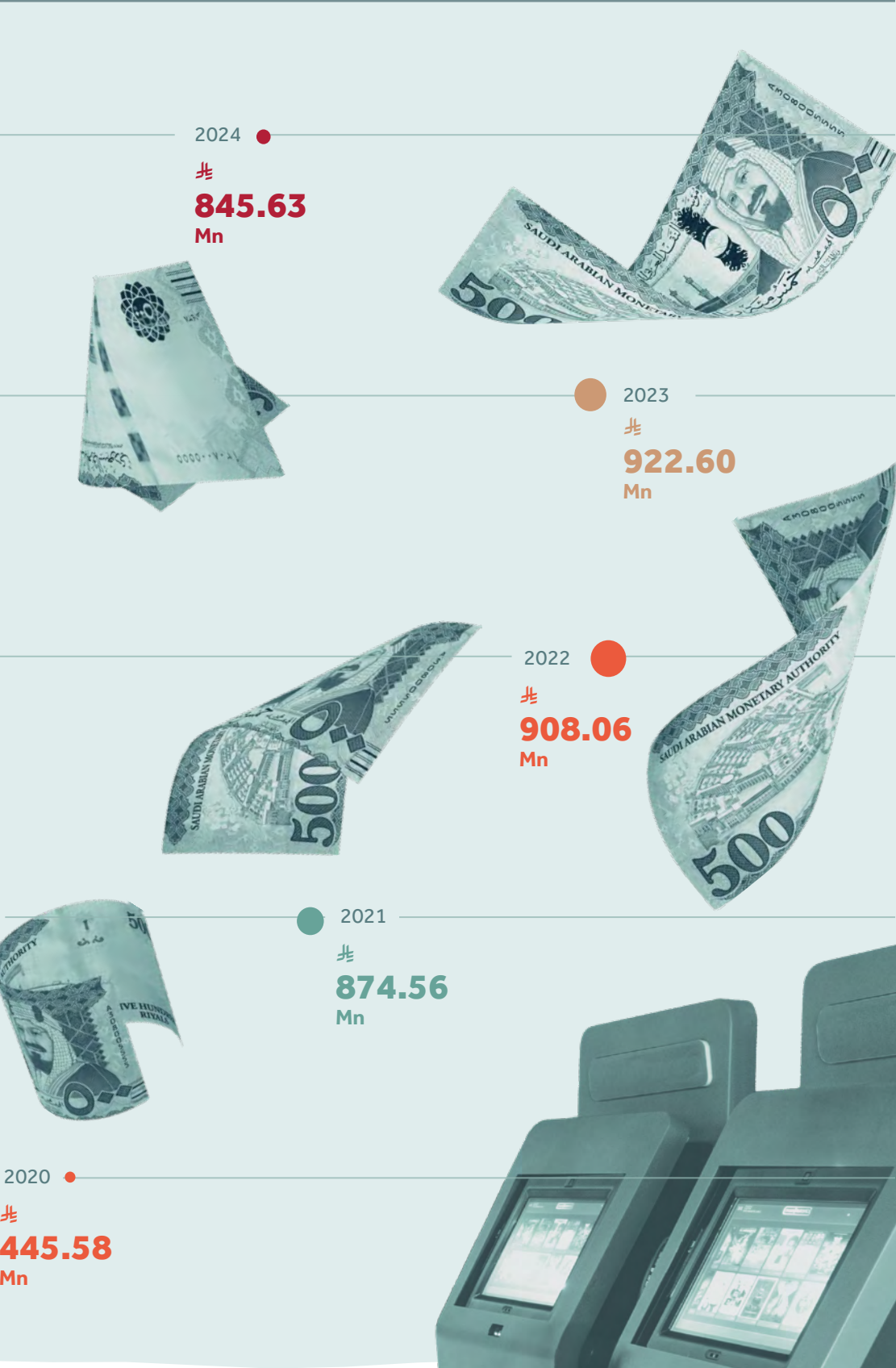
Over the previous three years, 2021-2023, KSA's year-end box office revenue was relatively strong – with revenues of ﷼ 874.56 million (2021), ﷼ 908.06 million (2022) and ﷼ 922.60 million (2023), respectively. Due to the COVID-19 pandemic, lockdown measures closed cinemas from April 2020 to May 2020. As a result, KSA's box office revenue in 2020 was lower than in other years, generating ﷼ 445.58 million that year.

Table 3 – Total KSA Box Office, 2020-2024

Year	Total KSA Box Office (﷼)
2024	845,626,705
2023	922,598,335
2022	908,063,982
2021	874,564,532
2020	445,576,921

I Source: Comscore (2023-2024) and the General Authority of Media Regulation (2020-2022)

Figure 2 – Total KSA Box Office, 2020-2024 (﷼ Million)



Source: Comscore (2023-2024) and the General Authority of Media Regulation (2020-2022)

Total KSA box office by region

The Riyadh region has the largest regional share of the 2024 KSA box office revenue, totalling 391.14 million (Figure 3, Table 4). This is followed by the Makkah and Eastern regions, which totalled 224.46 million and 128.06 million, respectively.

Figure 3 – Total KSA Box Office by Region, 2024

Source: Comscore

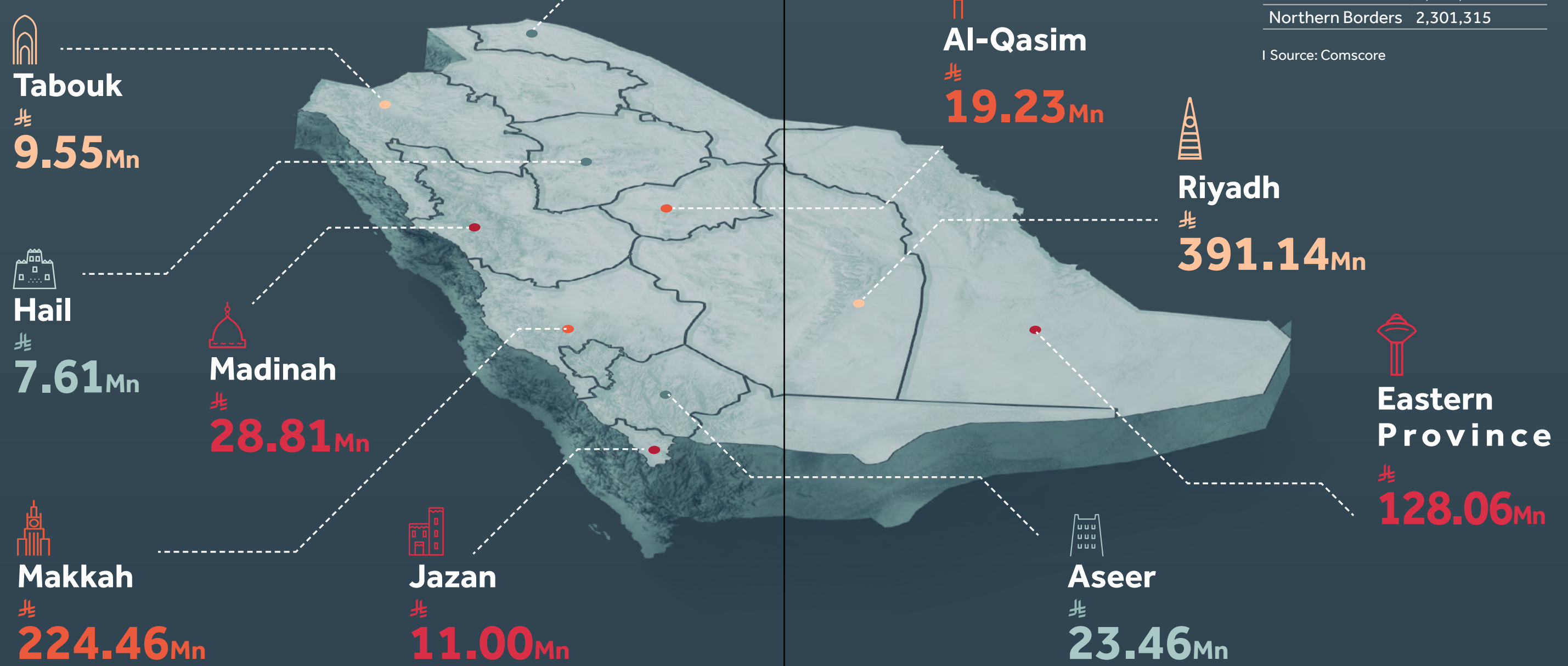


Table 4 – Total KSA Box Office by KSA Region, 2024

Region	Revenue (ﷲ)
Riyadh	391,137,058
Makkah	224,460,150
Eastern	128,058,614
Madinah	28,811,334
Aseer	23,463,625
Al-Qassim	19,229,402
Jazan	11,004,824
Tabouk	9,549,174
Hail	7,610,983
Northern Borders	2,301,315

Source: Comscore

Total KSA box office for 2024 by country of origin

Films originating in the US constituted the majority (61%) of KSA's total box office revenue in 2024, generating 514.17 million. This was followed by Egyptian films, generating 212.67 million (25%), and then domestic KSA films, generating 56.48 million (7%) (Figure 4, Table 5). Indian films made up 3% of KSA's box office with a total revenue of 28.60 million, while Japanese films made up 1% of KSA's box office with a total revenue of 6.89 million.

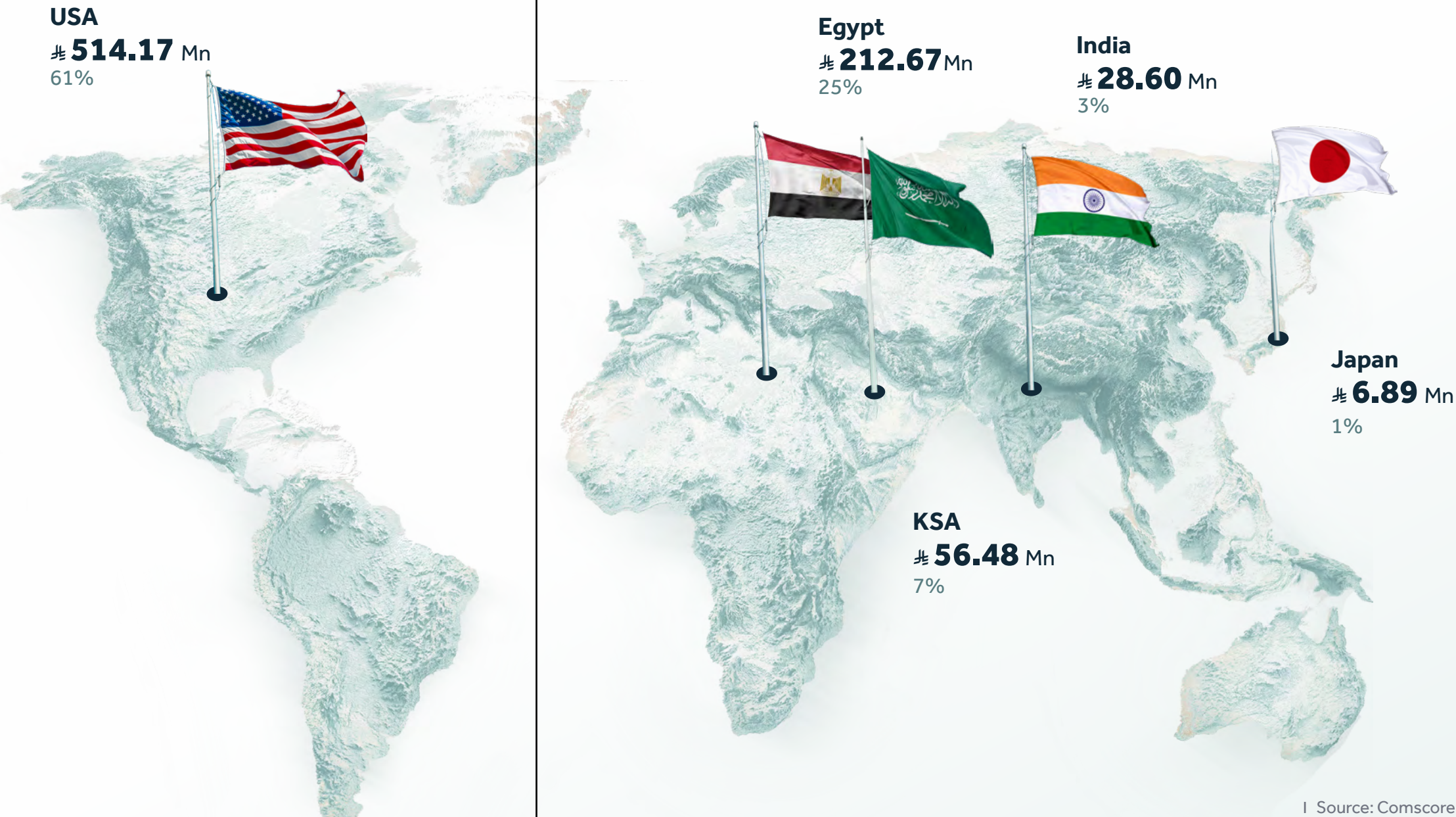


Table 5 – Total KSA Box Office by Country of Origin, Top 10 Performing Countries, 2024

Country	Revenue (Mn)	% Share of Total KSA Box Office
US	514,169,025	61%
Egypt	212,669,198	25%
KSA	56,480,787	7%
India	28,604,026	3%
Japan	6,893,142	1%

Figure 4 – Total KSA Box Office by Country of Origin, Top 5 Performing Countries, 2024

Country	Revenue (Mn)	% Share of Total KSA Box Office
UK	4,919,102	0.6%
France	2,744,637	0.3%
Russia	2,414,226	0.3%
Canada	2,397,803	0.3%
Norway	1,657,475	0.2%

I Source: Comscore

Total KSA box office by day of week

Fridays generated the highest weekly total box office revenue in 2024, with 201.21 million, followed by Thursdays at 163.99 million. The lowest weekly total box office revenue was on Sundays, at 74.04 million (Figure 5, Table 6).

2024's weekly box office revenue pattern aligned with 2023. In 2023, box office revenues were also highest on Fridays (at 221.19 million) and lowest on Sundays (at 87.38 million).

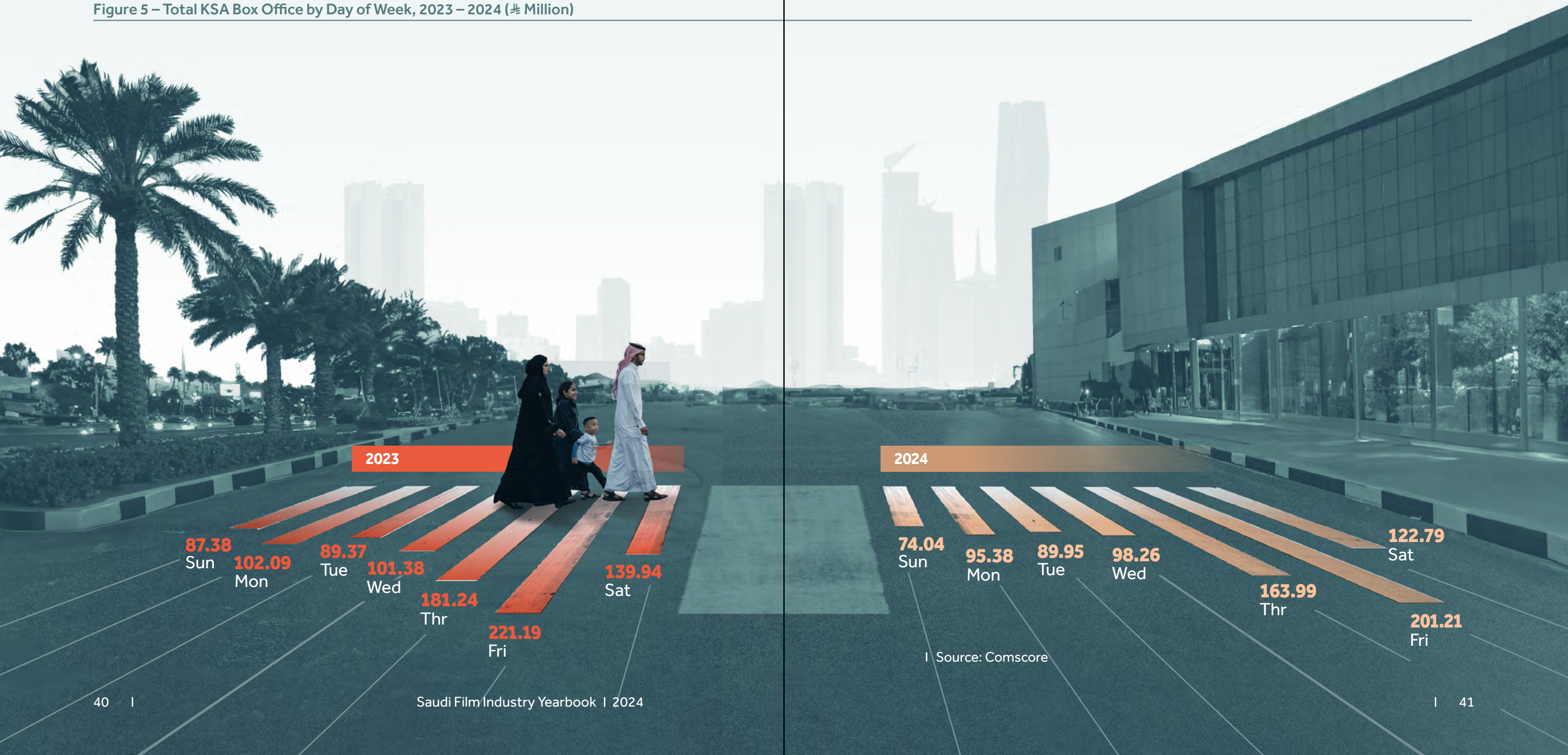
Figure 5 – Total KSA Box Office by Day of Week, 2023 – 2024 (S Million)

Table 6 - Total KSA Box Office by Day of the Week, 2023-2024 (S)

Year	Sun	Mon	Tue	Wed
2024	74,042,486	95,378,273	89,952,103	98,264,676
2023	87,384,987	102,093,311	89,368,368	101,377,695

Year	Thr	Fri	Sat
2024	163,993,427	201,208,127	122,787,388
2023	181,244,349	221,192,277	139,937,349

Source: Comscore



Source: Comscore

Total KSA box office by month

June generated the highest total box office revenue in KSA in 2024, totalling 141.74 million (Figure 6, Table 7). In comparison, July generated the highest KSA box office revenue in 2023, with 131.25 million.

Higher cinema attendance in June and July is generally attributable to

the summer holiday season that falls between June and August each year. The release of popular films also leads to a spike in box office revenues through increased cinema attendance in specific months. For instance, the release of *Shabab El-Bomb* in April 2024 led to an increase in total box office revenues in April and May 2024.

Table 7 - Total KSA Box Office by Month, 2023-2024 (M)

Year	Jan	Feb	Mar	April
2024	70,016,590	52,467,837	17,881,427	61,991,084
2023	77,160,582	64,087,286	50,618,569	50,574,709

Year	May	June	July	Aug
2024	77,714,407	141,739,374	119,229,465	77,905,189
2023	100,133,722	95,622,662	131,254,592	102,298,547

Year	Sept	Oct	Nov	Dec
2024	41,182,396	52,456,132	68,162,927	64,857,148
2023	80,027,669	57,877,416	50,142,278	62,800,304

Source: Comscore

Figure 6 – Total KSA Box Office by Month, 2020-2024 (M Million)



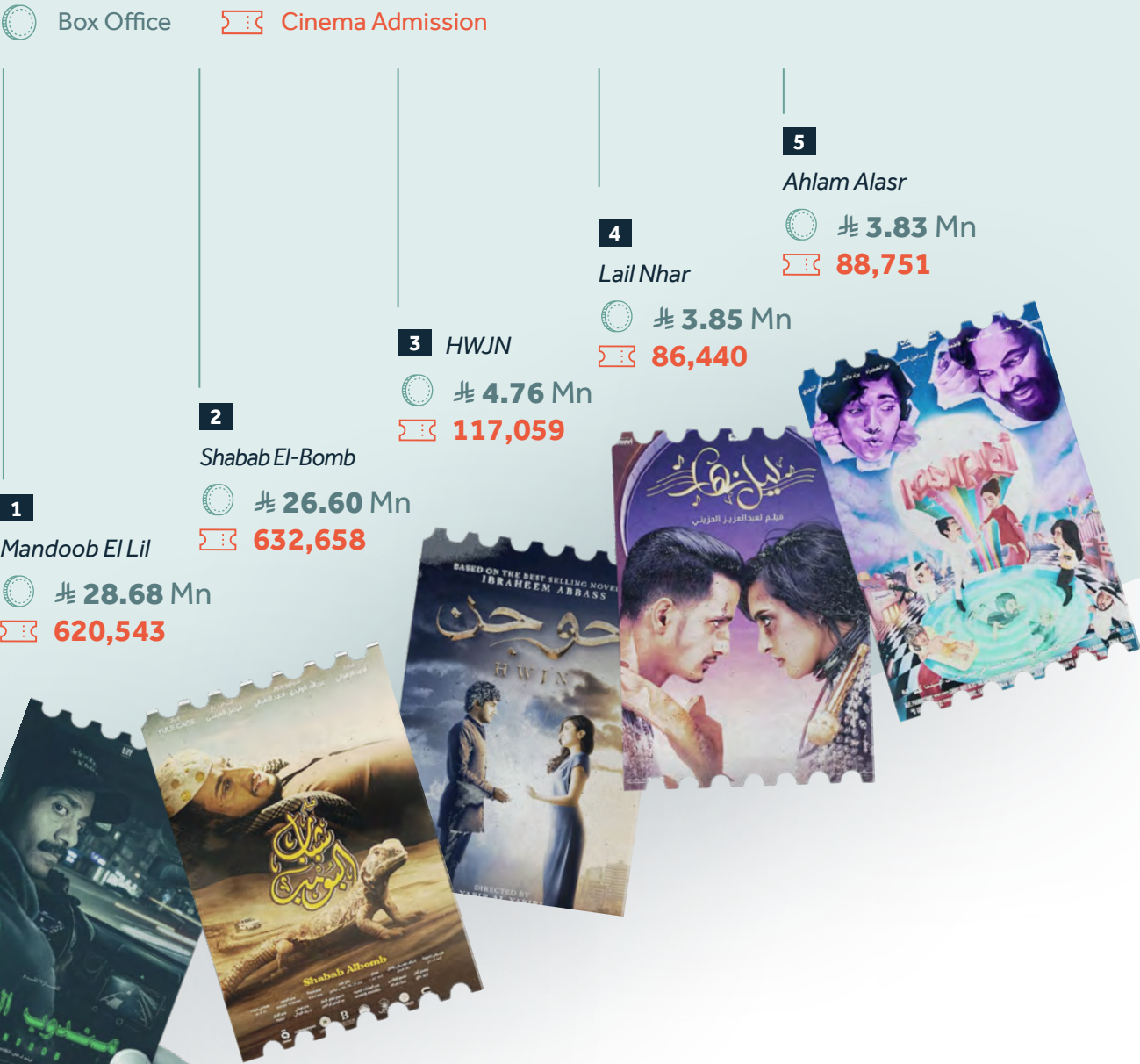
Source: Comscore

Top KSA films by KSA box office

Mandoob El Lil (2023) and Shabab El-Bomb (2024) were the highest-grossing KSA films in 2024, in terms of revenues and admissions (Figure 7, Table 8).⁵ Mandoob El Lil (2023) had the highest box office revenue at ₪ 28.68 million,

attracting approximately 620,500 cinema admissions. This was followed by *Shabab El-Bomb*, generating ₪ 26.60 million at the box office and attracting approximately 632,700 cinema admissions.

Figure 7 – Top KSA Films by KSA Box Office and Cinema Admission, 2024



⁵ *Mandoob El Lil* and *The Cello* were initially released in KSA in 2023, but are included here as they continued their theatrical run into 2024. The box office revenue and admissions included for these two films are cumulative totals that feature revenue and admissions generated in 2023

Source: Comscore

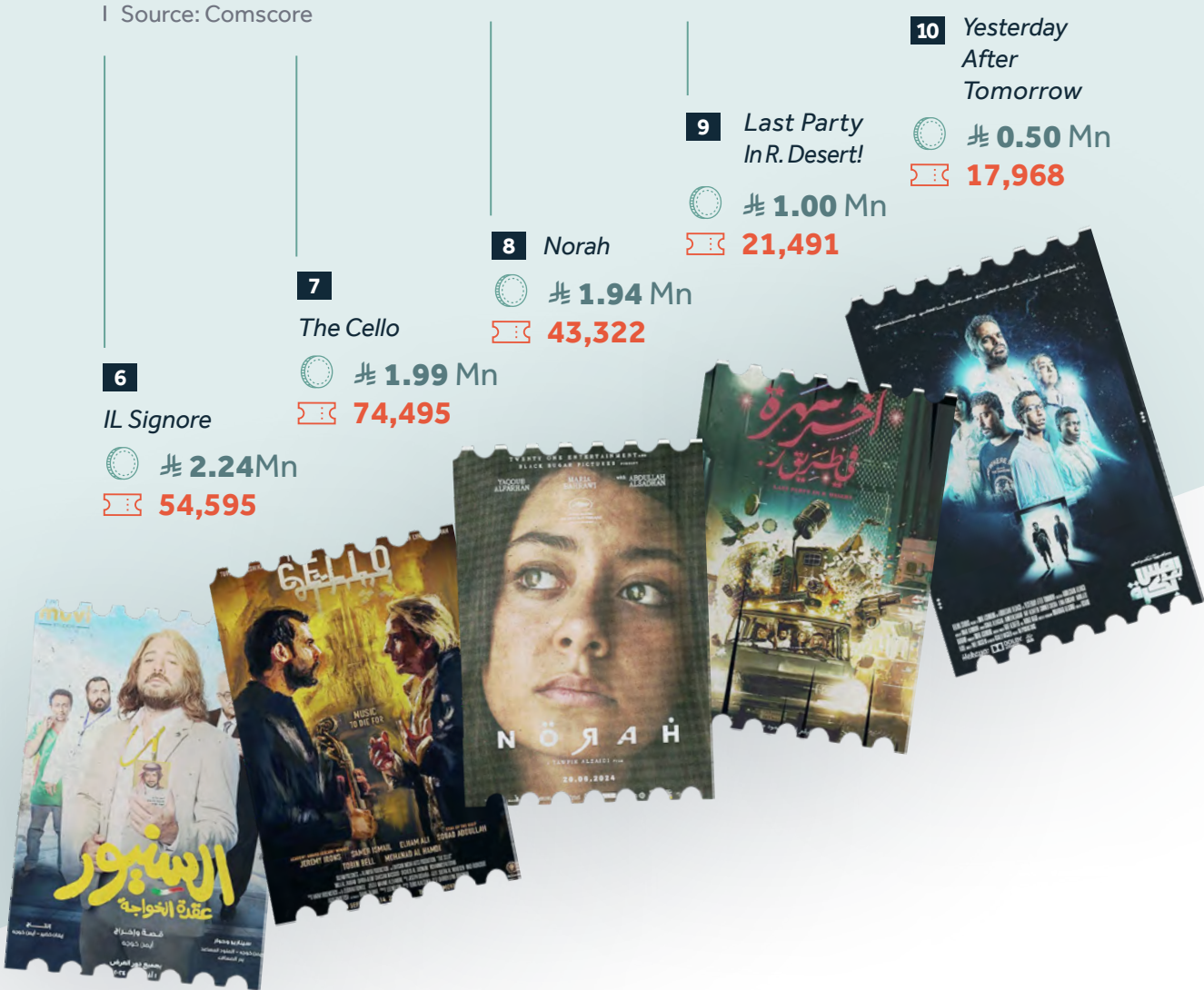


Table 8 – Top 10 KSA Films by KSA Box Office and Cinema Admission, 2024

KSA Film	Box Office (₪)	Cinema Admission
Mandoob El Lil	28,683,307	620,543
Shabab El-Bomb	26,601,811	632,658
HWJN	4,763,232	117,059
Lail Nhar	3,846,816	86,440
Ahlam Alasr	3,834,704	88,751
IL Signore	2,244,901	54,595
The Cello	1,994,255	74,495
Norah	1,935,003	43,322
Last Party In R. Desert!	1,002,974	21,491
Yesterday After Tomorrow	498,450	17,968

Source: Comscore

Top films released in KSA, by country of origin

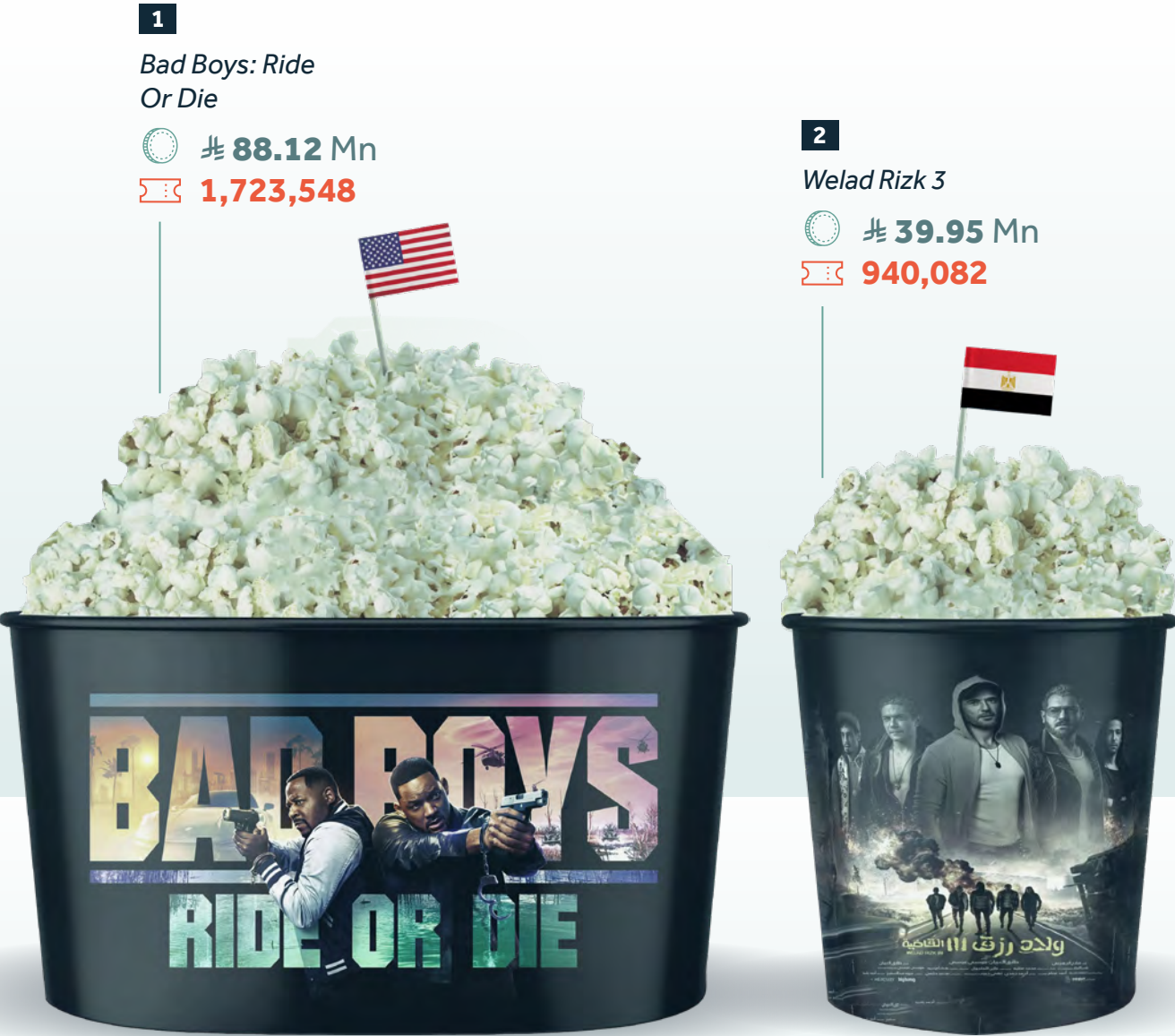
The majority of the top films released in KSA in 2024 were US and Egyptian films, followed by KSA films (Figure 8, Table 9).

Bad Boys: Ride or Die (US) was the top film released in KSA in 2024, generating ₪ 88.12 million at the KSA box office

via approximately 1,723,500 cinema admissions. This was followed by *Welad Rizk 3* (Egypt), which generated ₪ 39.95 million and approximately 940,000 cinema admissions. Third, was *Gawaza Toxic* (Egypt), which generated ₪ 29.89 million and approximately 635,700 admissions.

Figure 8 – Top 5 Films Released in KSA by Country of Origin, 2024

Box Office Cinema Admission



Source: Comscore

Table 9 – Top 10 Films Released in KSA by Country of Origin, 2024

Film	Country of Origin	KSA Box Office (₪)	Cinema Admissions
<i>Bad Boys: Ride Or Die</i>	US	88,117,825	1,723,548
<i>Welad Rizk 3</i>	Egypt	39,953,428	940,082
<i>Gawaza Toxic</i>	Egypt	29,890,465	635,720
<i>Inside Out 2</i>	US	29,213,918	702,016
<i>Mandoob el lil</i>	KSA	28,683,307	620,543
<i>Shabab El-Bomb</i>	KSA	26,601,811	632,658
<i>Deadpool & Wolverine</i>	US	26,395,797	499,136
<i>The Beekeeper</i>	US	23,195,874	396,083
<i>Lahazat Lazeeza</i>	Egypt	22,706,361	459,461
<i>Ex Merati</i>	Egypt	20,485.660	444,718

Source: Comscore



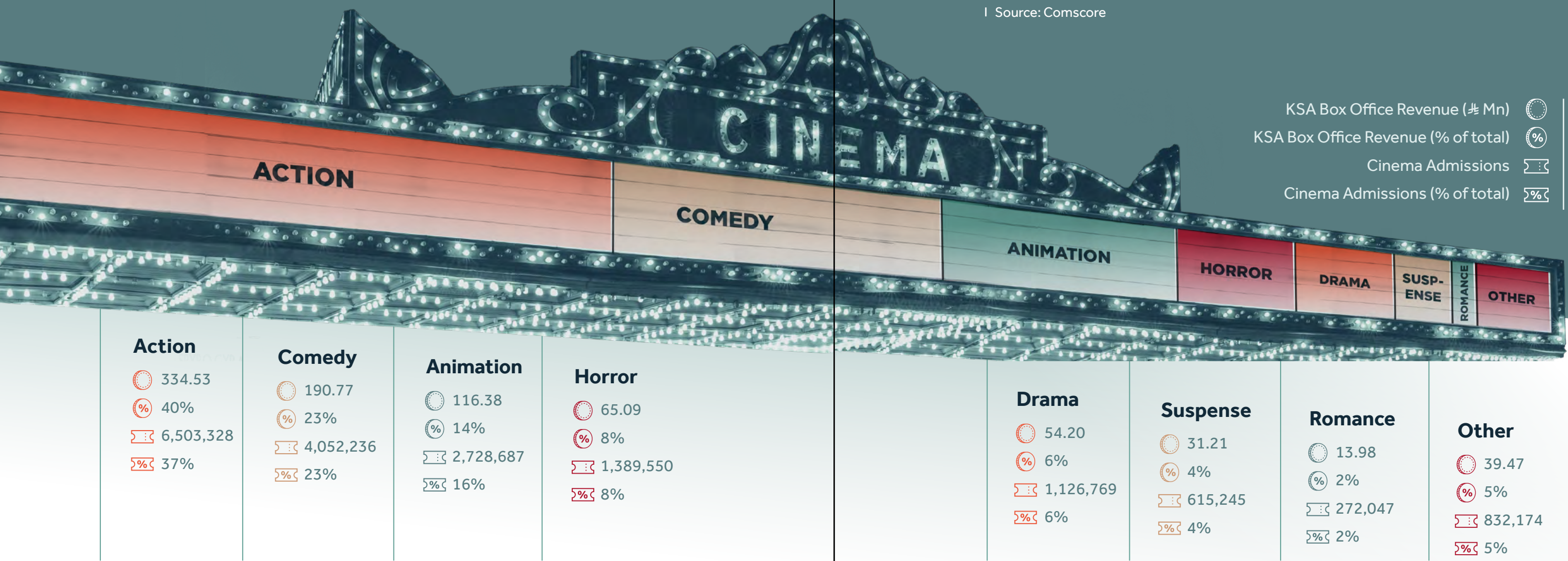
Total KSA box office and cinema admissions by genre

Action and comedy were the top two genres in terms of KSA box office in 2024, in terms of revenue and admissions (Figure 9, Table 10). Action constituted 40% of the KSA box office revenue (ﷲ 334.53 million) and 37% of admissions (6.50 million). Meanwhile, comedy constituted 23% of the revenue (ﷲ 190.77 million) and 23% of admissions (4.05 million). This was followed by animation (14% of KSA box office revenue and 16% of admissions), horror (8% of KSA box

office revenue and admissions), and drama (6% of KSA box office revenue and admissions).

Bad Boys: Ride or Die and *Gawaza Toxic* were the top action and comedy films in 2024, in terms of admissions and box office revenue. Meanwhile, the top films for animation, horror, and drama were *Inside Out 2*, *A Quiet Place: Day One*, and *It Ends with Us*, respectively.

Figure 9 – Total KSA Box Office and Admissions by Genre, 2024



Source: Comscore

Table 10 – Total KSA Box Office and Admissions by Genre, 2024

Genre	KSA Box Office Revenue (ﷲ)	KSA Box Office Revenue (% of total)	Cinema Admissions	Cinema Admissions (% of total)
Action	334,533,998	40%	6,503,328	37%
Comedy	190,773,009	23%	4,052,236	23%
Animation	116,378,089	14%	2,728,687	16%
Horror	65,087,518	8%	1,389,550	8%
Drama	54,200,870	6%	1,126,769	6%
Suspense	31,207,477	4%	615,245	4%
Romance	13,983,736	2%	272,047	2%
Musical	12,096,508	1%	234,906	1%
Adventure	11,468,923	1%	236,206	1%
Other ⁶	5,700,335	1%	133,326	1%
Sci-Fi	5,328,350	1%	108,195	1%
Fantasy	4,867,894	1%	119,541	1%

Source: Comscore

⁶ Encompassing dance, documentary, family, film festival, rock/pop concert, romantic comedy, special events, western.

Cinema Admissions

Total cinema admissions

Overall, cinema admissions in KSA have steadily increased since 2020. KSA cinema admissions nearly doubled between 2020 and 2021, rising from 6.60 million in 2020 to 13.10 million in 2021. This demonstrated a quick return to cinemas following the easing of the COVID-19 pandemic lockdown measures in 2021.

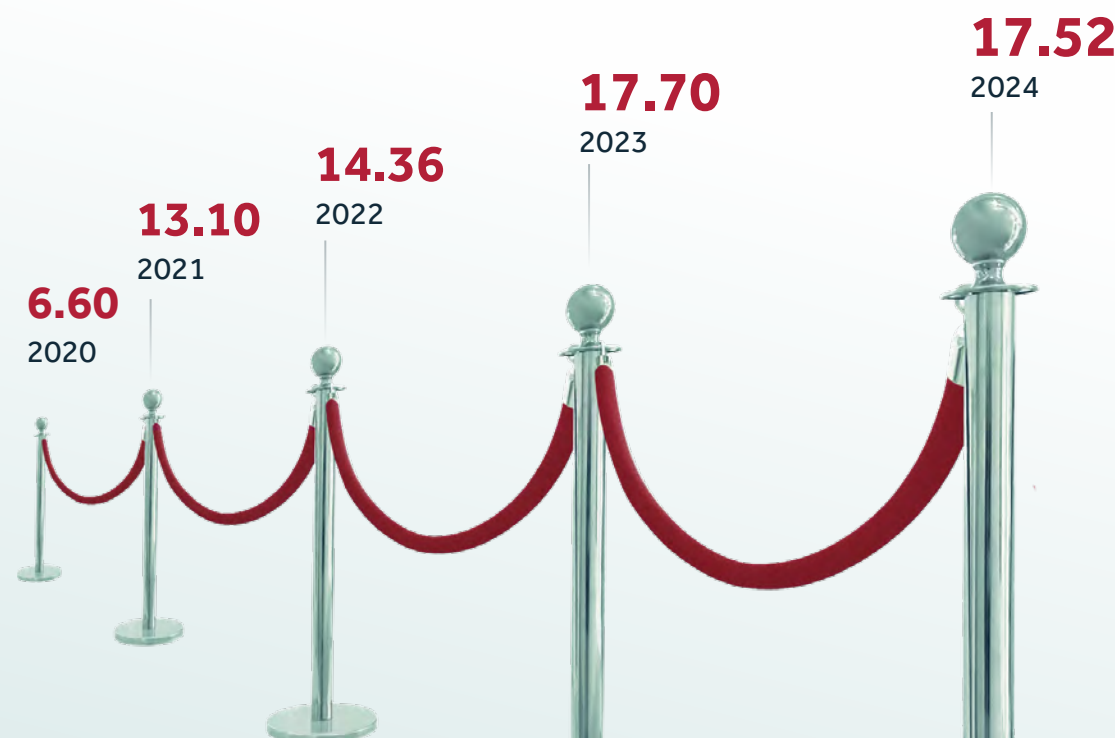
Cinema admissions in 2024 fell just short of KSA's record 2023 cinema admissions figures, with 17.52 million admissions in 2024 compared to 17.70 million in 2023 (Figure 10, Table 11).

Table 11 - Total KSA Cinema Admissions and % Change Between Years, 2020-2024

Year	Cinema Admissions	% Change from Previous Year
2024	17,520,036	-1%
2023	17,700,334	+23%
2022	14,358,062	+10%
2021	13,096,022	+94%
2020	6,596,073	N/A

Source: Comscore (2023-2024) and the General Authority of Media Regulation (2020-2022)

Figure 10 - Total KSA Cinema Admissions by Month, 2020-2024, Mn



Source: Comscore (2023-2024) and the General Authority of Media Regulation (2020-2022)



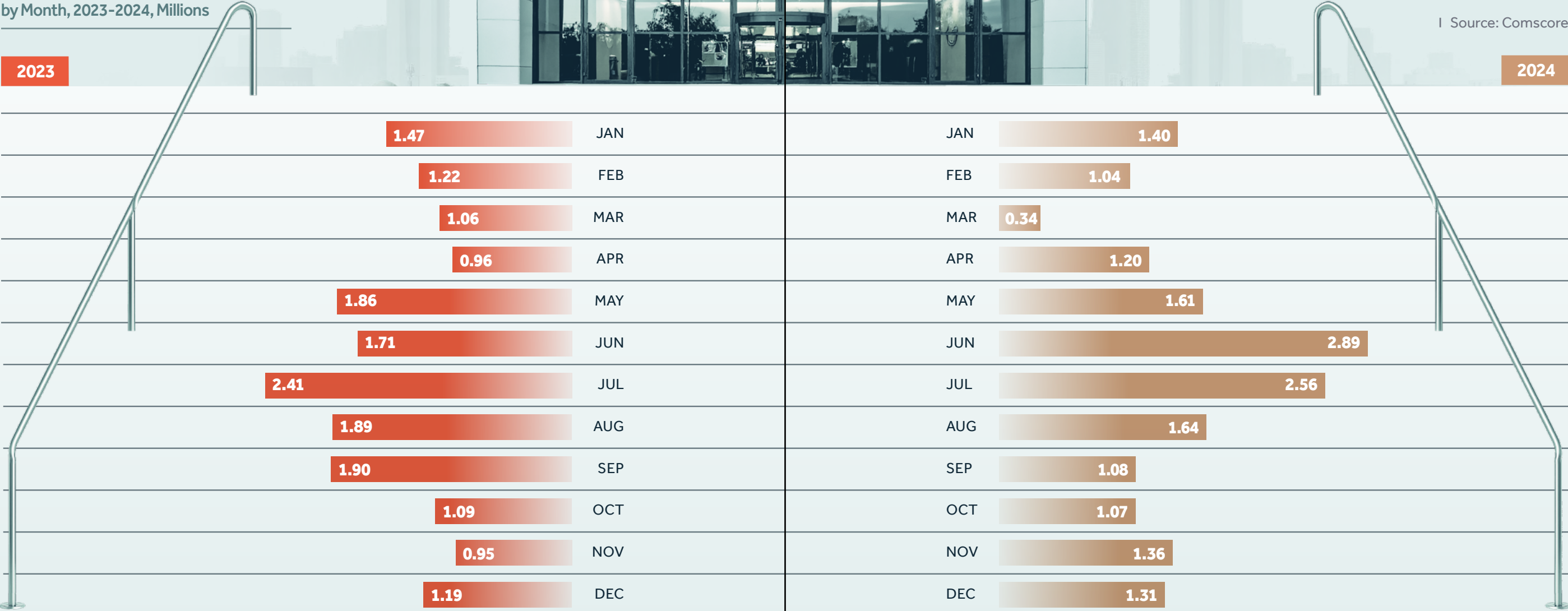
Total cinema admissions by month

June had the highest monthly cinema admissions in 2024, with 2.89 million admissions (Figure 11, Table 12). In comparison, July generated the highest cinema admissions in 2023, with 2.41 million.

Table 12 – Total KSA Cinema Admissions by Month, 2023-2024, Mn

Month	2023	2024
Jan	1,473,291	1,395,306
Feb	1,217,703	1,036,504
Mar	1,060,172	335,900
Apr	961,100	1,202,525
May	1,855,957	1,605,158
Jun	1,712,900	2,893,917
Jul	2,406,889	2,564,403
Aug	1,892,573	1,644,973
Sep	1,895,480	1,084,252
Oct	1,086,868	1,069,343
Nov	947,317	1,360,125
Dec	1,190,084	1,313,787

Figure 11 - Total KSA Cinema Admissions by Month, 2023-2024, Millions



Source: Comscore



2.5

Cinema Infrastructure

Total Cinema sites in KSA

KSA had 64 cinema sites at the end of 2024, a marginal increase from 63 cinema sites in 2023 (Table 13). The highest increase in cinema sites in KSA was between 2020 and 2021. During this time, the number of cinema sites in KSA increased by 19 (up by 61%) from 31 in 2020 to 50 in 2021.

Table 13 – Total Number of Cinema Sites in KSA, 2020-2024

Year	Cinema Sites in KSA	% Change from Previous Year
2024	64	+2%
2023	63	0%
2022	63	+26%
2021	50	+61%
2020	31	N/A

I Source: SFC

Total Cinema screens in KSA

KSA had 630 cinema screens at the end of 2024, up 17 from 613 in 2023 (Table 14). The highest increase in cinema screens in KSA was between 2020 and 2021. During this time, the number of cinema screens in KSA increased from 317 cinema screens in 2020 to 483 cinema screens in 2021, equating to a 52% increase. MUVI was the operator with the greatest number of screens, with 219 in total and 22 cinema sites (Table 15). With only seven screens and two cinema sites in total, Noir was the smallest cinema operator.

Table 14 – Total Cinema Screens in KSA, 2020-2024

Year	Cinema Screens in KSA	% Change from Previous Year
2024	630	+3%
2023	613	+7%
2022	574	+19%
2021	483	+52%
2020	317	N/A

I Source: SFC

Table 15 – Total Cinema Screens and Cinema Sites by Cinema Operator, 2024

Operator	Cinema Screens in KSA	Cinema Sites in KSA
 مووفي	219	22
 فوكس	184	18
	117	10
	57	8
	32	3
	14	1
	7	2

I Source: SFC



Cinema screens by KSA region

The Riyadh region had the highest number of cinema screens in KSA in 2024, with 264 screens in operation (Figure 12, Table 16). This is followed by the Makkah region (156 screens) and the Eastern region (97 screens).

The Makkah and Al-Qassim regions saw an increase in the number of cinema screens between 2023 and 2024. The

Makkah region gained 27 screens, from 129 to 156 screens, and the Al-Qassim region gained four screens, from 14 to 18 screens.

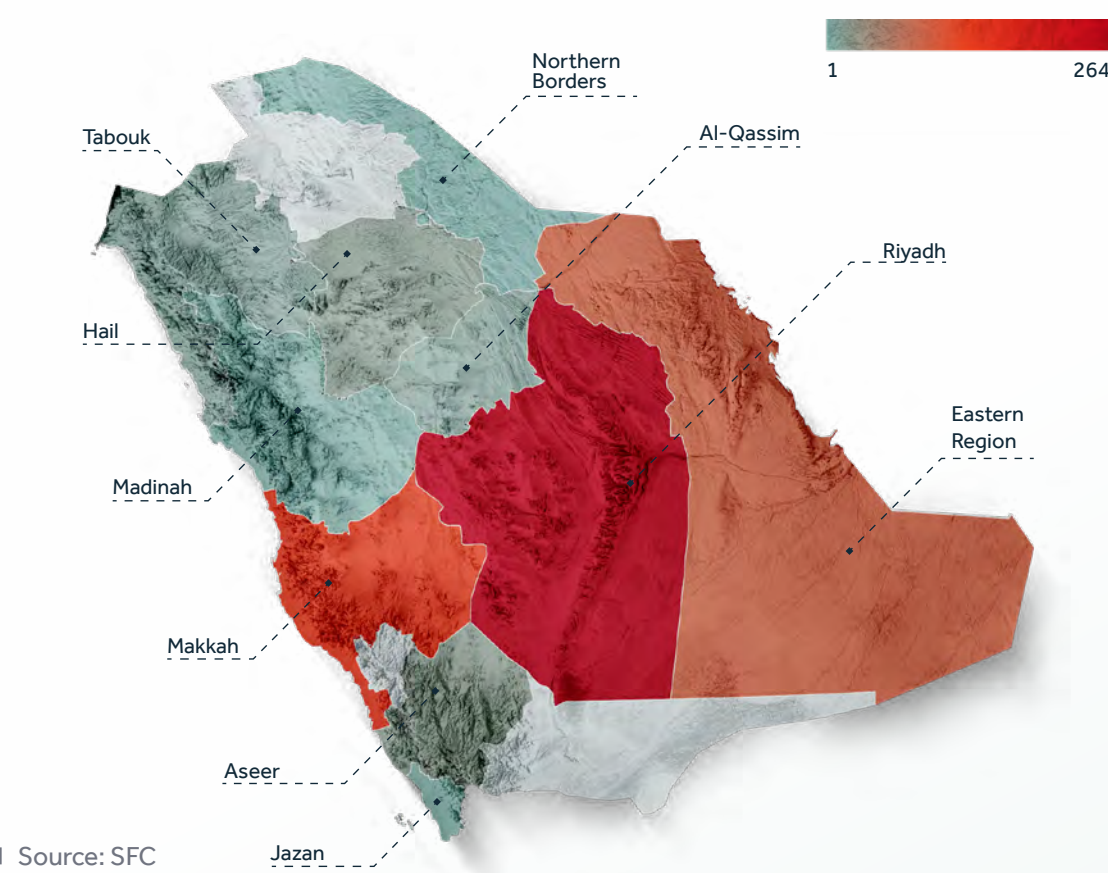
In contrast, both the Riyadh and the Eastern regions saw a decrease in the number of cinema screens, from 276 to 264, and 99 to 97, respectively.

Table 16 – Total Cinema Screens by KSA Region, 2023-2024⁷

KSA Region	No. of Cinema Screens, 2023	No. of Cinema Screens, 2024	% Change from Previous Year
Riyadh	276	264	-4%
Makkah	129	156	+21%
Eastern	99	97	-2%
Aseer	26	26	0%
Hail	24	24	0%
Tabouk	18	18	0%
Al-Qassim	14	18	+29%
Jazan	10	10	0%
Madinah	10	10	0%
Northern Borders	7	7	0%
Total	613	630	+3%

I Source: SFC

Figure 12 - Total Cinema Screens by KSA Region



I Source: SFC

7 The regions of Al-Jowf, Najran, and Al-Baaha do not have any cinema screens and have therefore been excluded from Table 18 and count.

Cinema screen density per 100,000 population

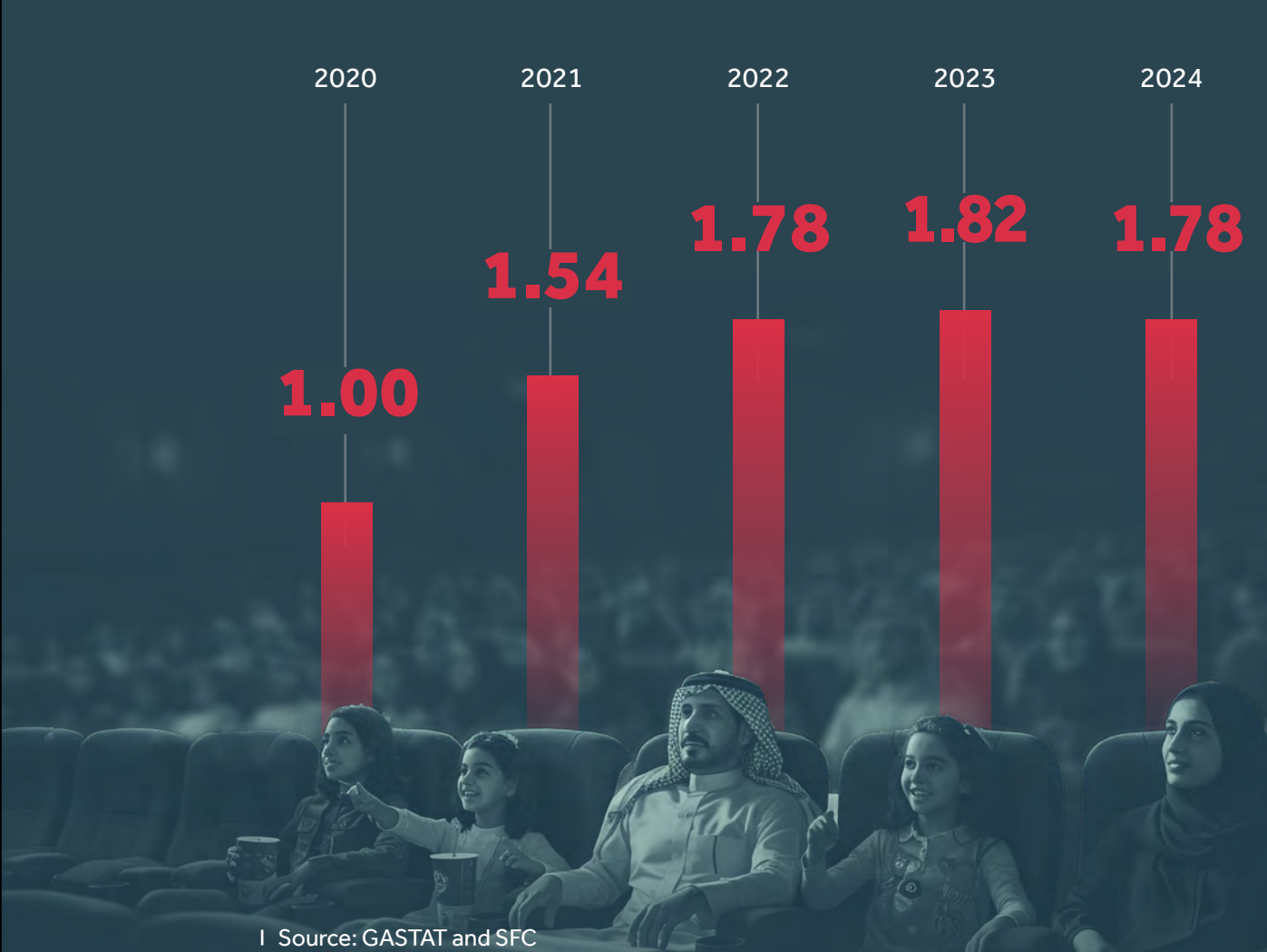
The increase in KSA's cinema screens has notably outpaced the increase in KSA's population. In 2020, there was roughly one cinema screen per 100,000 population. By 2024, despite an estimated 12% KSA population increase, there were 1.78 cinema screens per 100,000 population (Figure 13, Table 17).

Table 17 – KSA Cinema Screen Density per 100,000 Population, 2020-2024

Year	No. of Screens	KSA Population (estimated)	Screen Density (per 100k population)
2024	630	35,300,280	1.78
2023	613	33,702,730	1.82
2022	574	32,175,220	1.78
2021	483	30,784,380	1.57
2020	317	31,552,510	1.00

I Source: GASTAT and SFC

Figure 13 - KSA Cinema Screen Density per 100,000 Population, 2020-2024



I Source: GASTAT and SFC

Ticket Price

Average ticket price

The average cinema ticket price in KSA has been steadily decreasing since 2020. The average cinema ticket price in 2024 was 48.27. This is a reduction of 29% from the average ticket price of 67.55 in 2020 (Figure 14, Table 18).

The average cinema ticket price reduction was in part due to an SFC initiative, announced in April 2024, to reduce cinema licensing fees and cinema ticket prices in KSA. The initiative “aims to stimulate growth, increase audience engagement, and position Saudi Arabia as a regional hub for filmmaking excellence.”⁸ muvi Cinemas announced reduced ticket prices on the 1st May 2024, subsequently reducing their day screenings to 34.00 and their night screenings to 39.00, as well as consistent prices across weekdays and weekends. Vox Cinema announced a similar reduction in ticket prices later in May 2024, with standard tickets permanently reduced to 35.00.

Figure 14– Average KSA Cinema Ticket Price, 2020–2024, and Change Between Years

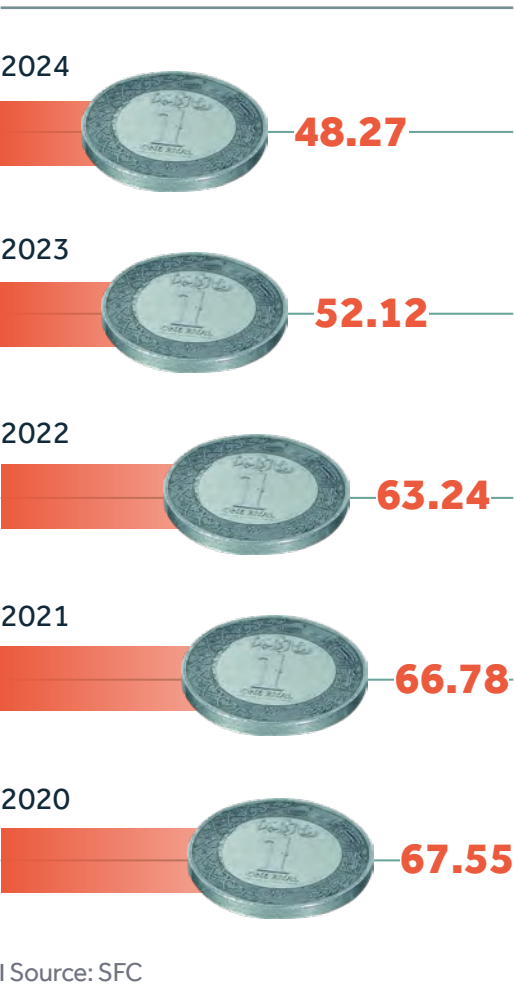


Table 18 – Average KSA Cinema Ticket Price, 2020–2024, and Change Between Years

Year	Average Ticket Price (SAR)	Percentage Change from Previous Year
2024	48.27	-7%
2023	52.12	-18%
2022	63.24	-5%
2021	66.78	+1%
2020	67.55	N/A

I Source: SFC

8 Film Commission Reduces Cinema Licensing Fees and Ticket Prices. Saudi Press Agency, 22nd April 2024.

Average Ticket Price by day of week

In 2024, on average, Saturday had the highest ticket price (48.27) of the week (Table 19). Meanwhile, the lowest average ticket price (41.86) was on Monday.

Compared to 2023, overall, the average cinema ticket price per day in 2024 decreased in price. The most significant change in ticket price between 2023 and 2024 is recorded for Tuesdays, where there has been an 8% decrease in ticket price from 2023.



Table 19 – Average KSA Ticket Price by Day of Week, 2024, and Change Between Years

Day of the Week	Ticket Price (SAR)	% Change from 2023
Sunday	50.75	-7%
Monday	41.86	-7%
Tuesday	46.70	-8%
Wednesday	51.22	-5%
Thursday	50.66	-4%
Friday	52.14	-2%
Saturday	53.07	-1%

I Source: SFC



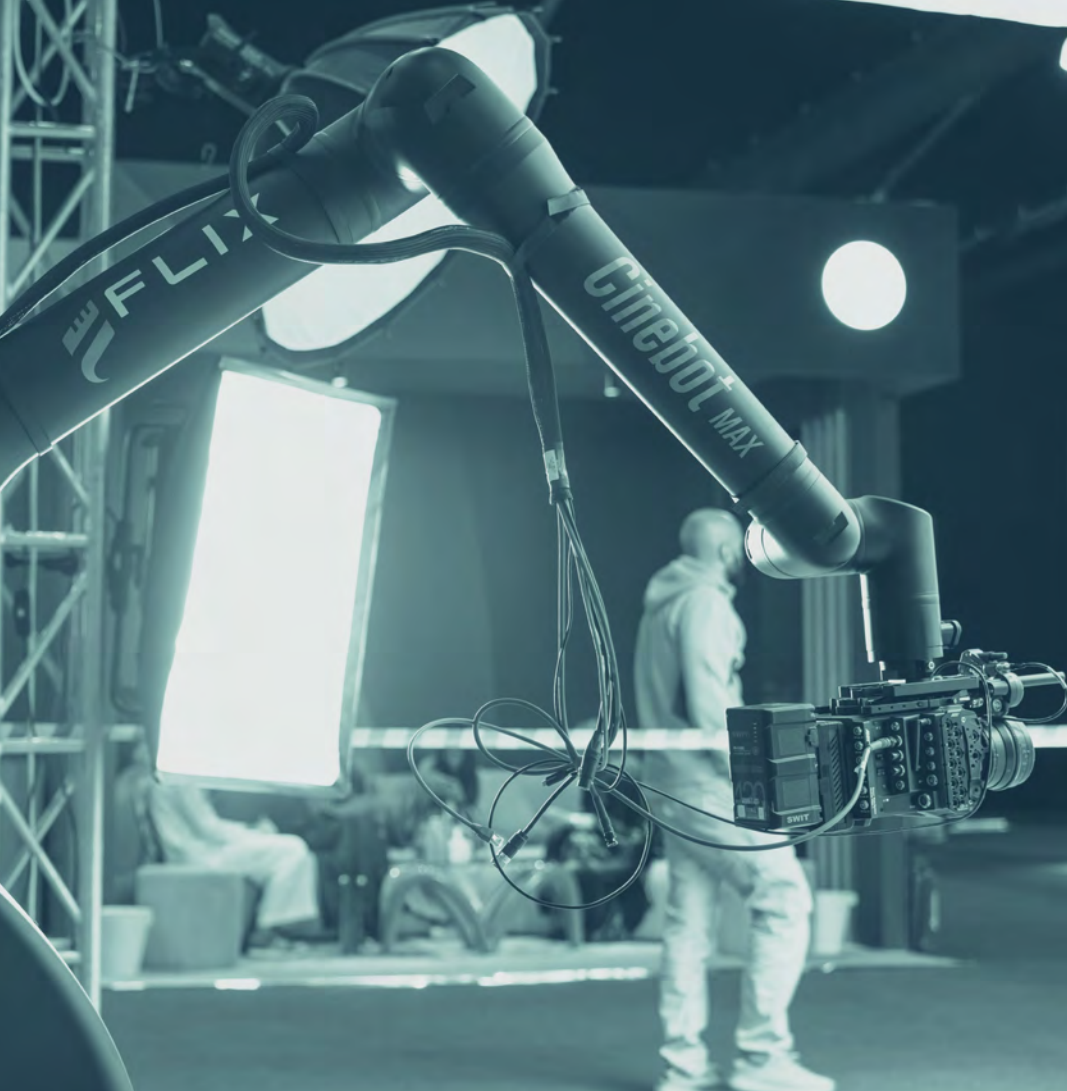
Al Qarah Mountain, Eastern Region





Production Infrastructure & Companies

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How the SFC is Supporting

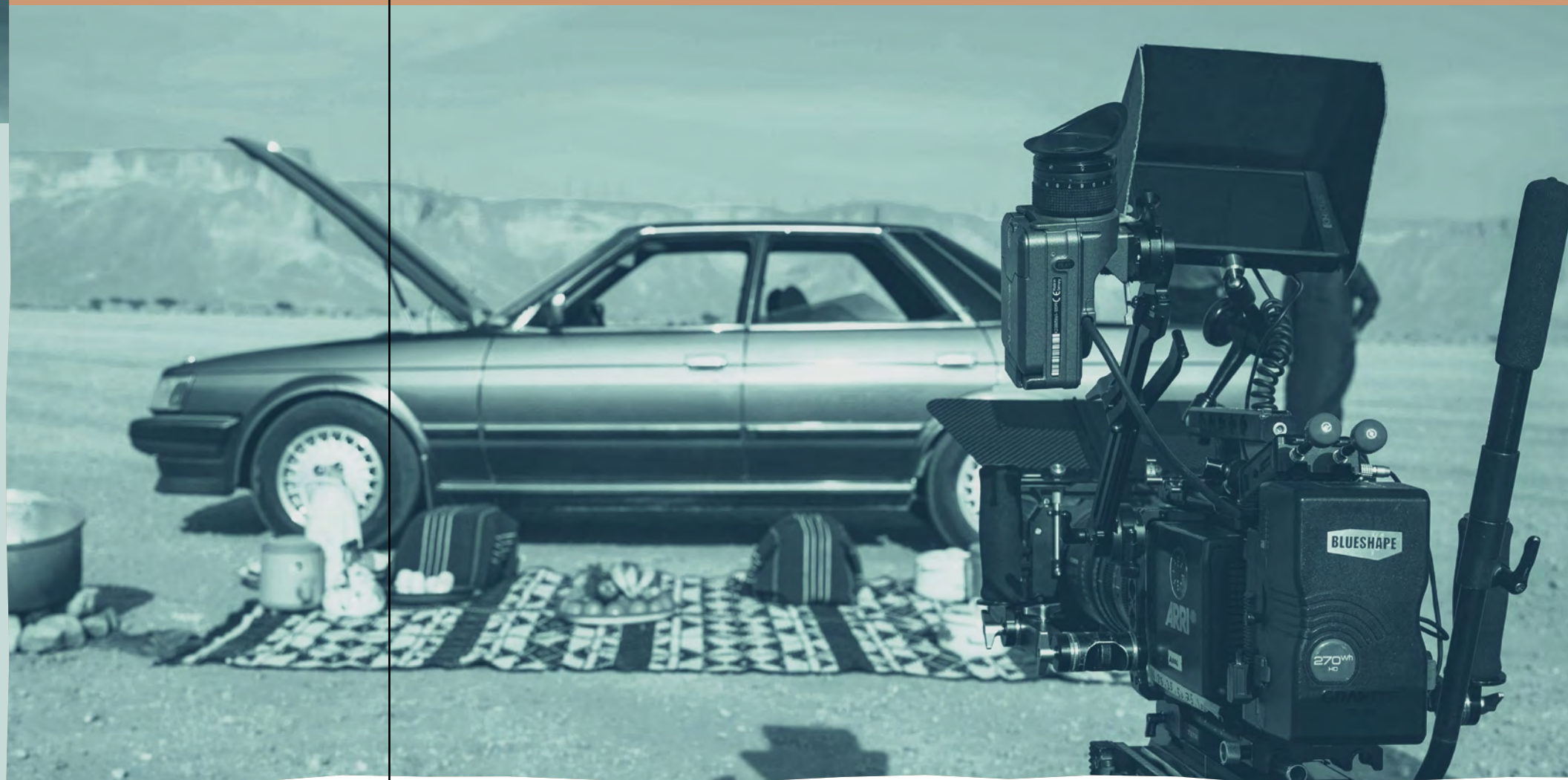
The SFC is prioritising studio investment and development as a key objective. Priority interventions in this area include:

- Working to establish public-private sector co-investment
- Deepening the level of insight and knowledge regarding the current capacity, occupancy and quality of production infrastructure in KSA
- Establishing agreements and cooperation across government entities to develop production infrastructure
- Developing a public SFC Infrastructure Database of KSA-based production resources, including studios, service providers, vendors, and filming locations across KSA
- Investing in KSA's production infrastructure, including the recently announced Jax Film Studios development.

3.1

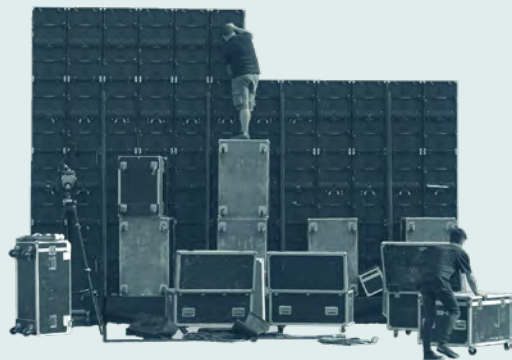
Introduction

KSA's film production infrastructure has expanded significantly in recent years, with several notable studio facilities in operation and more being planned and in construction. Key regions like NEOM and AIUla have developed world-class facilities that meet international standards.





At the end of 2024, there were **17 operational film studio facilities across KSA**, with **37 stages** (of over 1,000 m²) collectively across these studio facilities. This totalled **just short of 100,000 m² in available stage space**, the majority of which is in Riyadh. Further film studios are being planned and in construction, with **33 studio operation licenses issued** by the SFC in 2024



The **technological offer of these studios** includes high-tech soundstages, virtual production technology, special effects facilities, and advanced rigging and mounting systems. **Post-production technology and facilities** are equipped with advanced editing technology, VFX capabilities, and CGI tools



2024 FACTS IN FOCUS



At the end of 2024, there were **65 active production companies** in KSA, creating their own content, as well as servicing international productions. There were also **seven distribution companies**, connecting KSA films to domestic and global audiences



KSA's **diverse filming locations**, from historic landmarks to modern urban settings, continue to attract productions from around the world.

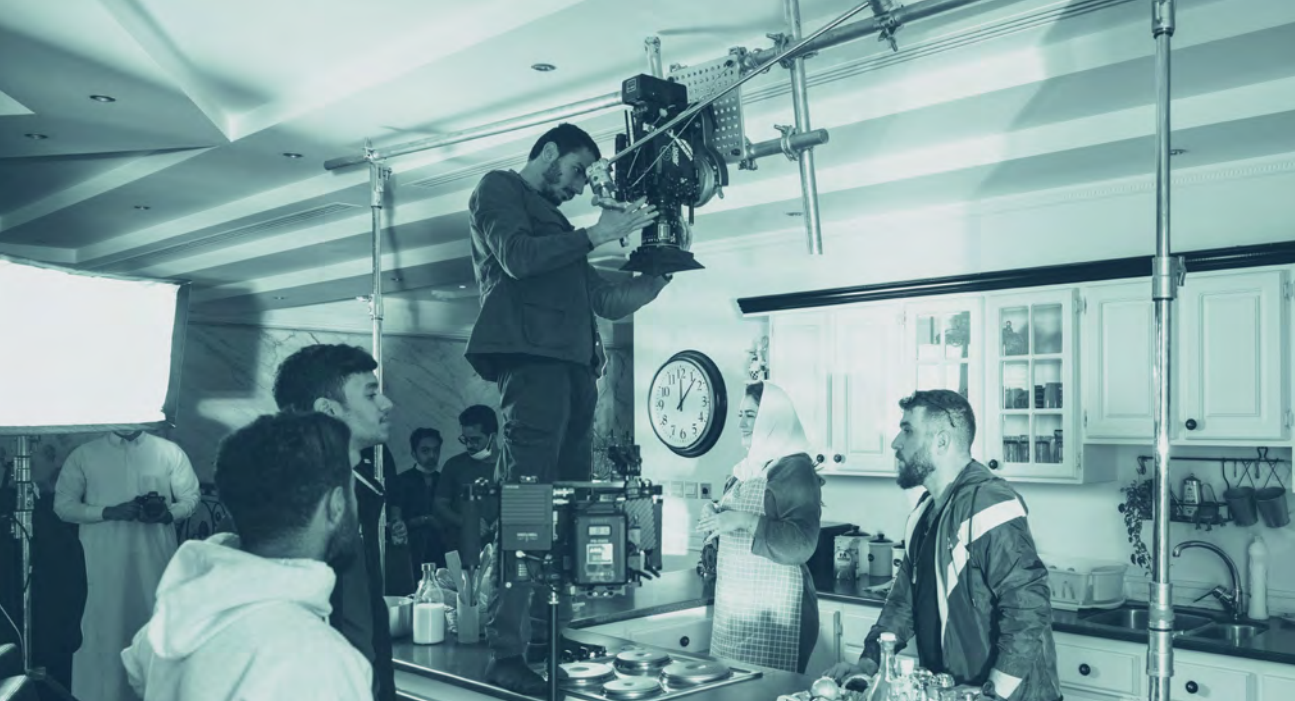
**Saudi Film Commission Announces
World-Class Jax Film Studios
Production Facility in Riyadh**

Jax Film Studios is a new, state-of-the-art production facility set to open in 2025 in the heart of Riyadh. Covering over 7,000 m², the complex will include a 1,500 square-metre soundstage, a cutting-edge virtual production soundstage powered by Sony's latest screen technology, a cutting-edge virtual production volume powered by Sony's latest screen technology, a private screening room, production prep areas, dining zones, meeting spaces, and a VIP lounge - offering a comprehensive environment for modern

film and television production. It will also be the home to the SFC's National Film Archive and Filmmakers Hub.

With its central location, the studio provides immediate access to Riyadh's international airport, luxury hotels, upscale dining, and a growing base of creative and technical professionals. Designed to meet the highest international standards, Jax Film Studios will support both local and international productions, contributing to the development of a thriving film industry in the region.





3.2

Production Facilities

Total number of film studios in KSA

At the end of 2024, there were **17 film studios in operation across KSA⁹**, with **37 total stages measuring a minimum of 1,000 m²** across these facilities (Figure 15, Table 20). These include **industry-standard soundstages**, with dimensions, sound-proofing and other specifications appropriate for large-scale international features and series productions.

Table 20 – Total Number and Area of KSA Studio Facilities per City, 2024

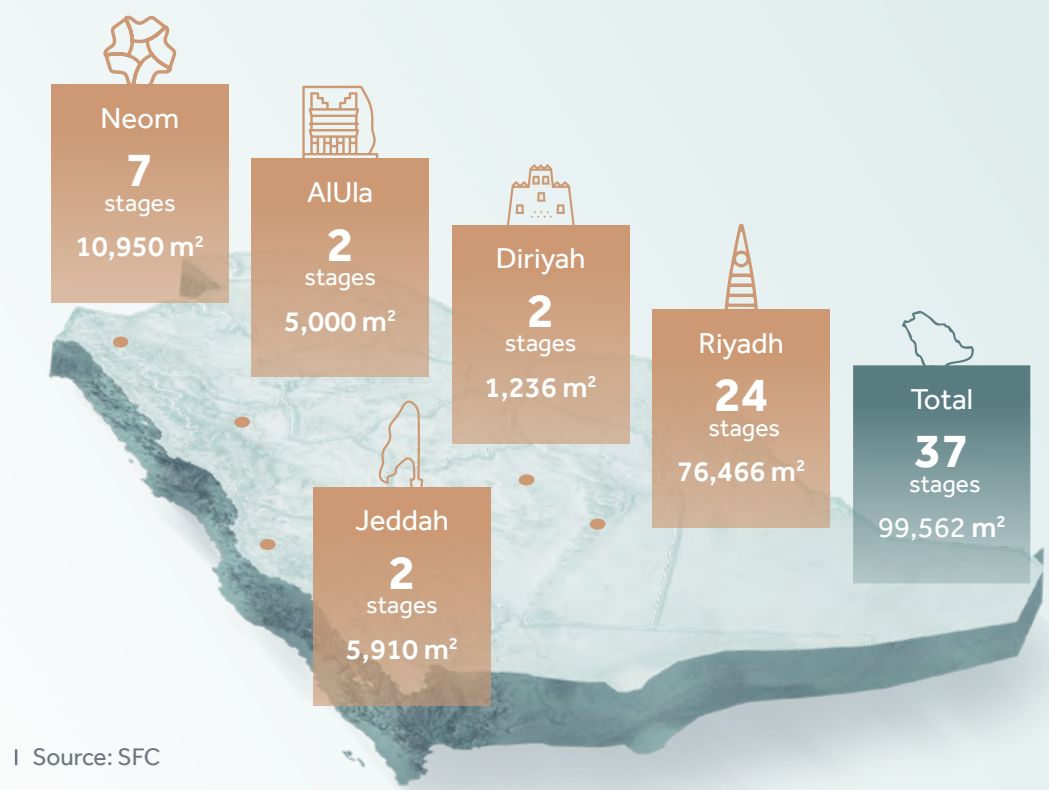
KSA City	Number of Stages	Total Area (m ²)
Riyadh	24	76,466
NEOM	7	10,950
Jeddah	2	5,910
AlUla	2	5,000
Diriyah	2	1,236
Total	37	99,562

I Source: SFC

⁹ Exclusively including operational film studios of over 1,000 m², as international production standards typically require stage space of at least this size. Stages less than this are unlikely to be able to contain sets, cast and crew, equipment, and rigs needed for filming

¹⁰ Count exclusively includes operational film studios of over 1,000 m²

Figure 15 – KSA Studio Space by City, 2024



I Source: SFC

Total available studio space in KSA

At the end of 2024, there was **approximately 99,562 m² of total operational stage space available across KSA** (Figure 15, Table 20).¹⁰

Total available studio space in KSA by city

The **vast majority of KSA film studios were based in the city of Riyadh**, with 12 of the 17 film studios and 24 of the 37 stages in that city, totalling approximately 76,466 m² in stage space (Figure 15, Table 20). AlHisn Big time Studios, located in Riyadh, is the largest film production hub in KSA, with a total area of 31,476 m² and six soundstages. Launched in November 2024, the studio's

amenities include a 150,000 m² backlot, an indoor water tank, an outdoor pool, workshops and post-production facilities. In 2025, the studio hosted its first major production, *The Seven Dogs*, which is set for release later in 2025. With a budget exceeding ₪ 150 million, the action thriller is reportedly the largest Arabic film production to date.

There were also **significant film studio soundstage facilities outside Riyadh. The most notable of these were at AlUla Studios**, which comprises two large, state-of-the-art soundstages, which total of 5,000 m², as well as backlot space, workshops, warehouses, and a recording studio. International thriller *Fourth Wall* is set to be the first feature film shot at the studios. The other main facility is at **NEOM**.

NEOM



Since the launch of its media location and film facilities in 2020, NEOM has emerged as a major production hub, having hosted over 40 film and television projects from Hollywood, Bollywood, the Arab world, and KSA itself. A key draw is its competitive cash rebate of over 40% for qualifying productions, which has helped attract high-profile international work, including the forthcoming Hollywood feature, *Desert Warrior*, filmed entirely at NEOM. The site continues to build strong partnerships, with returning regional series and a healthy pipeline of upcoming projects.

NEOM's production infrastructure is split into two major complexes, Media Village and Bajdah Studios, comprising a total of seven soundstages. The complex includes high-tech SFX facilities, backlot spaces, and accommodation for large numbers of cast and crew.

The surrounding natural landscape also offers filmmakers an impressive range of locations, including 468km of Red Sea coastline, coral reefs, dramatic desert landscapes, and winter snow-capped mountains. This geographical diversity, combined with the site's proximity to production infrastructure, offers both creative flexibility and logistical efficiency.

In line with *Vision 2030*, NEOM has trained over 1,000 Saudis through partnerships with local and international institutions, including the UK's National Film and Television School, placing more than 350 in hands-on production roles. Beyond film and TV, NEOM is also supporting the growth of KSA's gaming sector through initiatives such as the Level Up Accelerator, positioning itself as a wider creative and digital media hub.

40+

Film productions hosted from around the world

40%

Cash rebate for eligible productions

2

Major production complexes

7

Soundstages

1,000+

Saudis trained through NEOM partnerships



Number of Licenses issued for studio operators

In 2024, the SFC issued **33 licenses for studio operations**. These studios are a mixture of being in operation, being constructed, and being at the initial planning stage.

3.3

Production and Distribution Companies

Total number of film and television production companies in KSA

At the end of 2024, there were **65 active film and television production companies** operating in KSA (Figure 16, Table 21). Notable examples include MBC Studios, Telfaz11, Desert Motion Pictures, Celtic Arabia Audio-Visual Production, Seven Productions, and Yellow Camel.

Total number of film distribution companies in KSA

At the end of 2024, there were **seven active distribution companies** operating in KSA (Figure 16, Table 21). Notable examples include Rotana, MBC Studios and Majid Al Futtaim.

Figure 16, Table 21 – KSA Film and Television Production and Distribution Companies, 2024



Company Type	Number of Companies
Production Companies	65
Distribution Companies	7

Source: SFC

3.4

Sign up to KSA's Infrastructure Database

The Saudi Film Commission (SFC) is developing a comprehensive public database of production resources, encompassing studios, service providers, vendors, and filming locations across the Kingdom.

By joining, you will position yourself at the centre of Saudi Arabia's rapidly expanding film ecosystem, enhancing your visibility to local and international productions, and opening new opportunities for collaboration and growth.

Be part of the movement shaping the future of filmmaking in the Kingdom. Contact our Infrastructure team to register: SID@moc.gov.sa





'Uruq Bani Ma'arid, Najran Region 



Public Funding and Production Incentives

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Introduction

The offering in KSA of funding, incentive and grant options has successfully attracted and supported significant international and domestic projects. SFC's Incentive Program – which includes the Cash Rebate and the Daw' Program – has resulted in over ₪ 1 billion in production expenditure through supported projects. Funding through regional funds, film festivals, and other funding programmes have drawn production expenditure to the region. This support aids in the creation of productions that showcase the wealth of KSA stories, facilities, talent, and locations.



How the SFC is Supporting

The KSA Incentive Program has been instrumental in attracting international productions to KSA, as well as helping domestic producers to create and scale their projects. The SFC administers the two main strands of the programme, the KSA Cash Rebate and Daw' Program:



The KSA Cash Rebate was officially launched in 2023, following a three-year pilot. Targeted at both international and domestic productions, it focuses on growing the screen production sector, creating job opportunities for Saudis, and contributing to economic development, aligning with *Vision 2030*'s goals of cultural exchange and economic diversification.



The Daw' Program was launched in 2023, following the Daw' Competition, a pilot programme, in 2022. Targeted at domestic production, it focuses on the cultural and creative growth of KSA's film production sector.

The SFC are able to provide additional on-the-ground support, including logistical support to scout locations, assist international productions to find suitable service providers, and help with acquiring licenses and permits, for example.



Between 2020 and 2024, **64 productions** have been supported by the KSA Incentive Program, 30 through the KSA Cash Rebate and 34 through the Daw' Program¹¹



Between 2020 and 2024, the KSA Incentive Program has generated an estimated **ﷲ 1.08 billion (USD 287.28 million) in total production spend** in KSA¹²

The **Cash Rebate** accounts for **88.4% of the total production spend** generated by the KSA Incentive Program



The KSA Cash Rebate is supporting the development and growth of the domestic industry. Between 2020 and 2024, **domestic productions made up 83.3% of the projects accessing the Cash Rebate**



Funding is also available through a number of other regional and cultural sources, including **NEOM, Film AIUla, the Cultural Development Fund, the Red Sea Fund, the Saudi Film Festival, the Big Time Fund and the Ithra Film Production programme**. While each programme has different funding priorities and objectives, all provide financial support to films produced in KSA



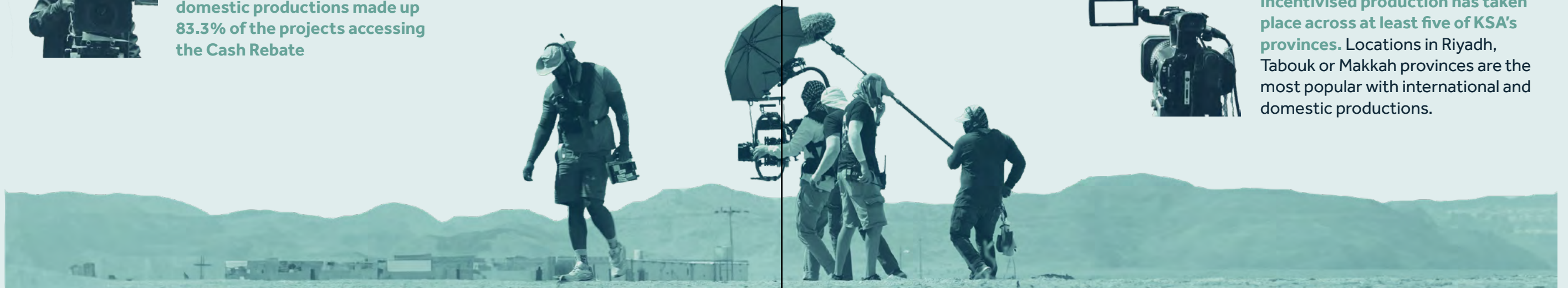
In 2024, at least **ﷲ 116.19 million (USD 30.99 million) in production expenditure** was generated by 10 productions produced with funding support from NEOM, while at least **ﷲ 26.34 million (USD 7.02 million) in production expenditure** was generated by seven productions that received support through Film AIUla



Incentivised production has taken place across at least five of KSA's provinces. Locations in Riyadh, Tabouk or Makkah provinces are the most popular with international and domestic productions.



2024 FACTS IN FOCUS



11 Only Cash Rebate and Daw' Program projects that have been approved and contracted with the SFC are included in the analysis. The data includes both produced and in process projects. Projects are allocated to a year based on the start date of principal photography.

12 The conversion rate used for SAR to USD is SAR 1 = USD 0.266667. Some totals may not sum due to rounding.

The Value of Incentivised Production

4.2.1 The National Incentive Program

Productions incentivised through the National Incentive Program produced in KSA

Between 2020 and 2024, 64 projects have been supported by the KSA Incentive Program – 30 through the Cash Rebate and 34 through the Daw’ Program (Figure 17; Table 22).

The majority of the Cash Rebate projects (17 projects) accessed the incentive in 2023, following a three-year pilot period (which supported 12 projects).

Following the pilot Daw’ Competition in 2022, which supported 18 productions, three domestic projects were supported by the Daw’ Program in its inaugural year in 2023, which increased to 13 projects in 2024.



Figure 17 – Total Number of Productions in KSA Accessing the KSA Incentive Program (Being The Cash Rebate or Daw’ Program), 2020-2024

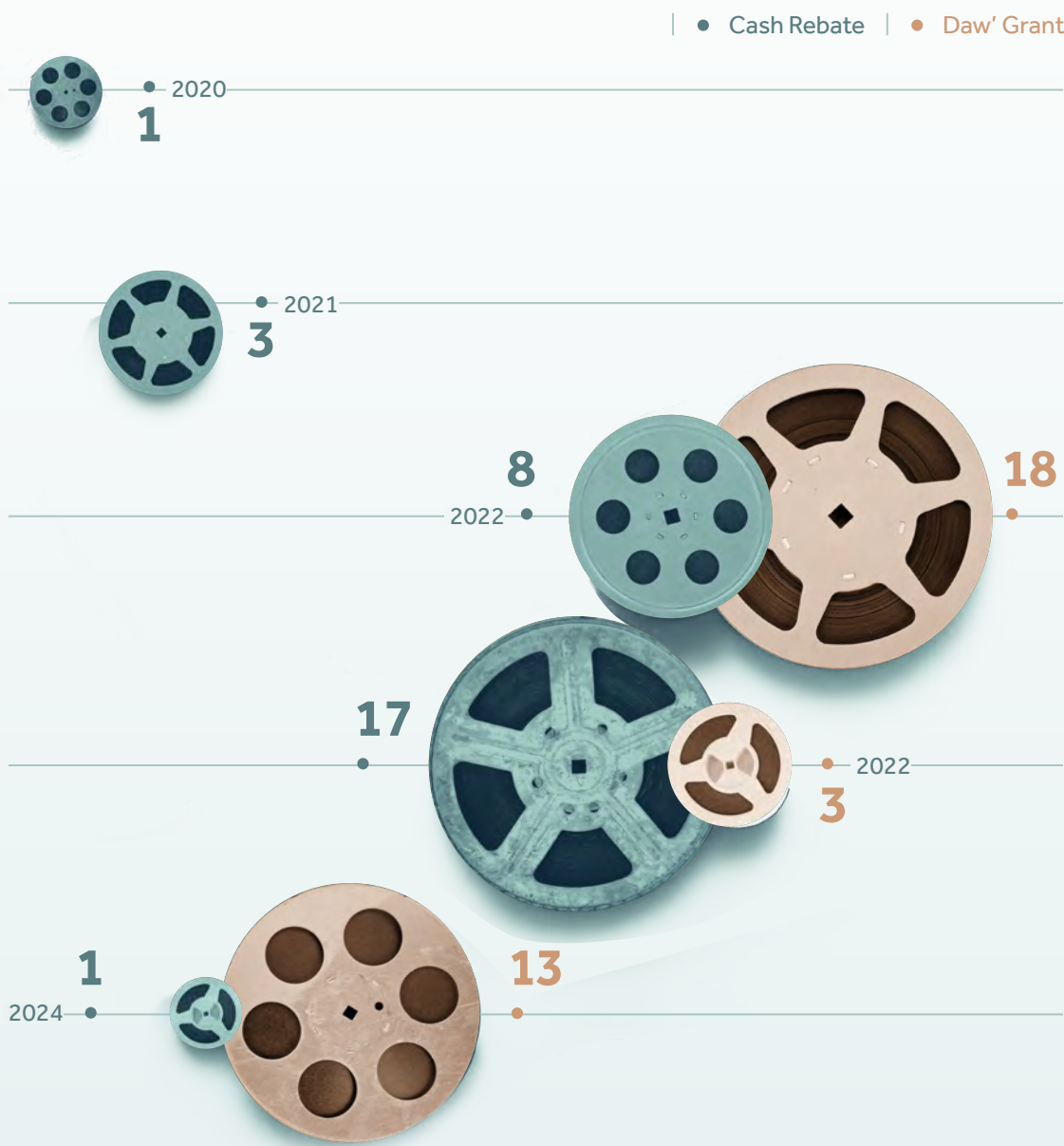


Table 22 – Total Number of Productions in KSA Accessing the Cash Rebate or Daw’ Program, 2020-2024

	Daw’ Program	Cash Rebate
2024	13	1
2023	3	17
2022 (pilot)	18	8
2021 (pilot)	N/A	3
2020 (pilot)	N/A	1

Source: SFC



International and domestic Cash Rebate productions

Between 2020 and 2024, domestic productions made up the large majority of the number of projects accessing the Cash Rebate, accounting for 25 (83.3%) of the 30 projects (Figure 18; Table 23).

The Cash Rebate is attracting productions from a range of jurisdictions. US production *Desert Warrior* (forthcoming) is a historical action drama set against some of the region's dramatic landscape and features Oscar winner, Sir Ben Kingsley.

KSA continues to draw the attention of global names, having hosted Gerald Butler for the filming of *Kandahar* (2023) as well as UK director, Guy Ritchie, for an upcoming project. Interest extends beyond Hollywood, with Indian film *Dunki* (2023) having also utilised the incentive.

The domestic industry is thriving, with notable incentivised KSA productions, including *The Cello* (2023), which was directed by US filmmaker Darren Lynn Bousman and stars Jeremy Irons, and KSA's renowned studio Telefaz11's satirical drama *Saify* (2024).



Figure 18 – Total Number of International and Domestic Productions Accessing the Cash Rebate, 2020-2024

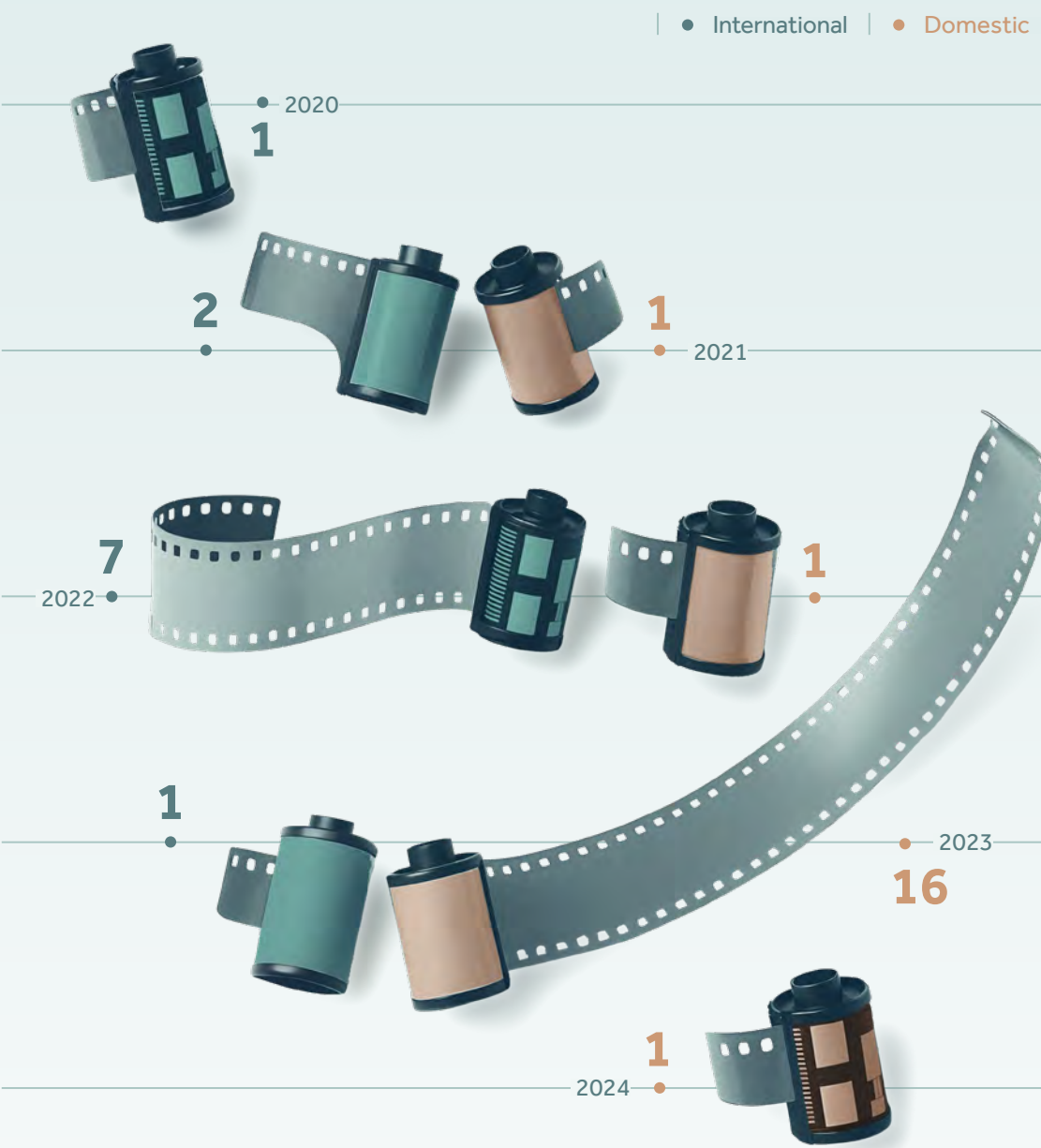


Table 23 – Total Number of International and Domestic Productions Accessing the Cash Rebate, 2020-2024

	International	Domestic
2024	0	1
2023	1	16
2022 (pilot)	1	7
2021 (pilot)	2	1
2020 (pilot)	1	0

Source: SFC

Production spend in KSA through the KSA Incentive Program

Between 2020 and 2024, the KSA Incentive Program is estimated to have generated ₪ 1.08 billion (USD 287.28 million) in total production spend in KSA. The Cash Rebate accounts for the vast majority (88.4%) of this amount, generating an estimated total of ₪ 952.15 million (USD 253.91 million), compared to ₪ 125.15 million (USD 33.37 million) via the Daw' Program.

2021 saw the highest production expenditure attributed to the KSA

Incentive Program via the Cash Rebate, with ₪ 435.22 million (USD 116.06 million) spent in KSA (Figure 19; Table 24). This was chiefly due to a small number of very large productions in that year. This was followed by 2023, with ₪ 333.09 million (USD 89.62 million) in production expenditure.

Production spend in KSA through the Daw' Program

The Daw' Program generated a higher amount of production spend in KSA in 2024 compared with 2023, up to ₪ 88.50 million (USD 23.60 million) from ₪ 8.61 million (USD 2.30 million) in 2023

(Figure 19; Table 24). This was chiefly due to an increase in the number of supported projects, but also in terms of the average

spend per project, demonstrating the success of the programme in stimulating domestic activity.

Table 24 – Total Production Spend in KSA Related to the Cash Rebate and Daw' Program, 2020-2024, ₪

	Cash Rebate	Daw' Program
2024	5,175,000	88,501,717
2023	336,086,081	8,614,000
2022 (pilot)	163,553,197	28,031,113
2021 (pilot)	435,224,488	N/A
2020 (pilot)	12,109,214	N/A

Source: SFC

Figure 19 – Total Production Spend in KSA Related to the Cash Rebate and Daw' Program, 2020-2024, (₪ Mn)¹³

Cash Rebate Daw' Grant Source: SFC



13 Results for 2022 relate to the Daw' Competition pilot programme, whereas the 2023-2024 results relate to the Daw' Program

Shabab
Al Bomb
2024

Shabab Al-Bomb began as a television series that premiered in 2012, directed by Majed Al-Rubaian and written by Abdul Aziz Al-Fraihi. The youth comedy show garnered a significant following, with its 13th season premiering during Ramadan 2025.¹⁴

The feature film, of the same name, was developed to further expand the potential audience reach of the story

and the characters. Amer (Faisal Al-Issa) finds unexpected companionship in a lizard while on a road trip following a confrontation with his group of friends. Amer is suddenly faced with the responsibilities of protecting the lizard and, in the process, discovers it possess supernatural abilities of luck. Most notably, Amer must come up against the efforts of a businessman, Abu Suleiman (Mohammed Hajji), as he attempts to seize control of the lizard and use its gifts. In the process, Amer must also confront his own actions.

The script, written by Abdullah Al-Walidi and Ahmed Al-Zahrani, draws key threads from the television show in its use of satirical comedy to address key societal

issues facing Saudi youth, fronted by the same comedic lead, Faisal Al-Issa. In addition to that, the direction of filmmaker, Yule Caise, and cinematography by Radan Popović sought to bring to the film an international level of expertise and credibility. The feature film received support from the Cash Rebate incentive and provided the grounds for many local crew to gain experience on a film set of international standard.¹⁵

The film was predominantly shown across the Gulf region. During its theatrical run, Shabab Al-Bomb generated ₪ 31.19 million (USD 8.32 million) at the global box office, with 85% of its box office revenue generated in KSA.

Name of Production:	Shabab Al Bomb
Production Type:	Feature Film
Country:	Saudi Arabia
Production Company:	Business Innovation
Director:	Yule Caise
Incentive:	Saudi Film Commission (Cash Rebate)

Key Cast:	Faisal Al-Essa, Mohammed Al-Dosari, Abdulaziz Al Furajiji, Salman Al Muqaytib, Muhannad Al Jumaili, Abdulaziz Barnawi, Faisal Al Musaeed
------------------	--

Plot Summary:	A lizard crosses paths with the film's lead, Amer, during a road trip after separating himself from his friends following an argument. What comes next is a journey of adventure, danger and unexpected twists, including Amer trying to protect the mythical lizard from those who are hunting it, while contemplating the consequences of his actions.
----------------------	--

14 Showtimes of the series "Shabab El-Boom 13" and the broadcasting channels. Sbsiali. 27th February 2025.

15 Shabab Al-Bomb movie... a Saudi youth comedy on Eid Al-Fitr. Sbsiali. 2024.



Fursan Qurieh 2024

Fursan Qurieh is a television drama series that premiered in May 2024. The story follows the struggles of a fallen football club, Fursan Quraih, who have not won any championships in a while. The lead, Abu Othman (Abdulaziz Alshehri) is given the formidable task of returning the sports club to its former glory and restoring the team's reputation in its hometown.

The drama series premiered on Shahid, a streaming platform owned by the MBC group. The 10-episode television series was supported by the incentive programme, was produced entirely in Saudi Arabia and is a Shahid original production.

Fursan Qurieh is a showcase of Saudi Arabian talent. The cast ensemble includes notable talent, including Abdulaziz Alshehri as Abo Othman, Yousef Aldakheel as Shafi and Abdullah Alrehaili as Hamdan. Director of the series, Abdullah Bamajboor, is an established Saudi filmmaker with over eight years of experience across television, feature films and commercials.

Streaming the series on Shahid, which is available across multiple territories in the Gulf region as well as internationally has made the show accessible to a wider, global audience. While the show is still relatively new, there has been positive reception from audiences so far, reflected in part by the current IMDb rating of 7.4 out of 10 based on 302 user ratings.¹⁶

Name of Production:

Fursan Qurieh

Production Type:

Television Series

Country:

Saudi Arabia

Production Company:

Shahid MBC

Director:

Abdullah Bamajboor

Incentive:

Saudi Film Commission
(Cash Rebate)

Key Cast:

Abdulaziz Alshehri, Yousef
Aldakheel, Abdullah Alrehaili

Plot Summary:

The Forsan Graih football team is down on its luck, with very little chance of a championship to turn things around. Abu Othman has been tasked with reviving the sports club and restoring the town's support for their team.



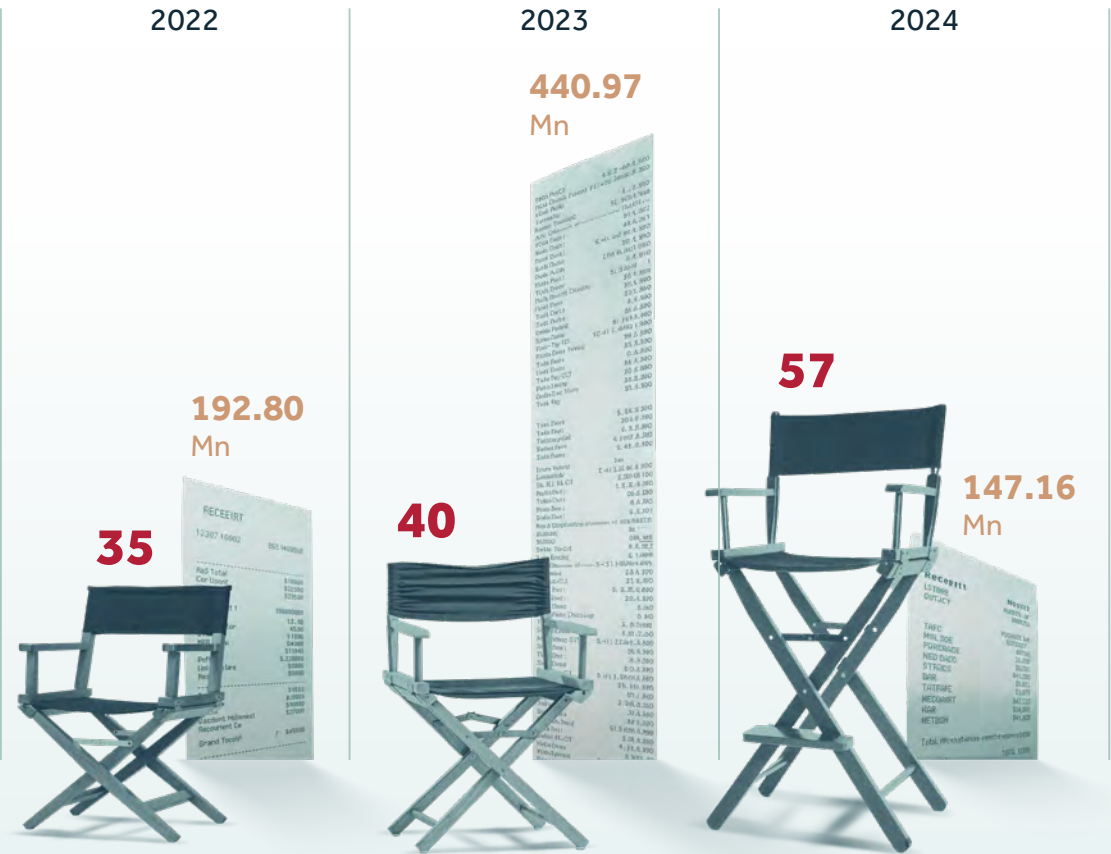
4.2.2 Additional Incentives and Funding Programmes

There are various other incentives and funding programmes working alongside the KSA Incentive Program to support the film industry. In addition to the national KSA Incentive Program, funding is available through AIUla, NEOM, the Big Time Fund, Saudi Film Festival, the Red Sea Fund, Ithra Film Production programme, the Cultural Development Fund and others.

These incentives and funding programmes are a vital tool to attract international productions, such as *Kandahar* (2023) or *Champions* (2021), to KSA.

They are also a critical support mechanism for the production of domestic Saudi feature films, documentaries and television series. Funding through the SFF supported the forthcoming feature film *Layla's Wolf*, directed by the regional talent Nora Aboushousha. Domestic features such as *Within Sand* (2022) and *Hajjan* (2023) received financial support through various funding initiatives in KSA and have since gone on to win the jury prize at Red Sea International Film Festival and premiere at the Toronto International Film Festival respectively.

Figure 20 – Productions in KSA Accessing KSA Incentives and Funding Programmes, and Associated Production Expenditure, 2022-2024, ₪, Mn



Source: Saudi Film Commission, Film AIUla, Red Sea International Film Fund, Cultural Development Fund, Saudi Film Festival, NEOM, Ithra Film Production

Table 25 – Productions in KSA Accessing KSA Incentives and Funding Programmes, and Associated Production Expenditure, 2022-2024, ₪

	Total number of productions	Total expenditure (₪)
2024	57	147,155,470
2023	40	440,968,922
2022	35	192,803,538

Source: Saudi Film Commission, Film AIUla, Red Sea International Film Fund, Cultural Development Fund, Saudi Film Festival, NEOM, Ithra Film Production ¹⁷

Productions in KSA attracted through KSA incentives and funding programmes

In 2024, at least 57 productions received funding support through KSA incentives and funding programmes to be produced in KSA (Figure 20; Table 25).¹⁸ This was an increase on 2022 and 2023, where at least 35 and 40 productions, respectively received funding support.

Value of production spend in KSA attracted through all incentives programmes

A large volume of production expenditure has been generated in KSA through productions receiving support through KSA incentives and funding programmes.

In 2024, at least ₪ 147.16 million (USD 39.24 million) was spent in KSA, related to productions accessing KSA incentives and funding programmes, including the Cash Rebate, Daw' Program, Film AIUla's Cash Rebate, Red Sea Fund, Cultural Development Fund, Saudi Film Festival, NEOM's Production Incentives and Ithra Film Production programme (Figure 20, Table 25).¹⁹ The highest expenditure was in 2023, where ₪ 440.97 million (USD 117.59 million) was spent by projects produced in KSA that accessed KSA incentives and funding programmes, followed by ₪ 192.80 million (USD 51.41 million) in 2022.



17, 18, 19 Productions may receive funding support through multiple sources. The data has been adjusted to remove double-counting and reflects the total number of productions receiving support in a year

Hobal 2024

Hobal tells the story of a nomadic family during the early 1990s who find themselves at a crossroads.²⁰

Hobal marks Saudi filmmaker Abdulaziz Alshlahei's third feature and collaboration with writer, Mufarrij Almajfel, following *Zero Distance* (2019) and *The Tambour of Retribution* (2020), which was the country's Best International Feature Film entry for the 2021 Academy Awards.

The cast are an ensemble of strong local talent, led by established actor Ibrahim

Al-Hassawi, playing Liyam, Mila Alzahrani as his daughter and Mishaal Almutairi as his son. The feature was supported by various industry funding programmes available in the region, including the Daw' Program, the Red Sea Fund and NEOM's Production Incentives, being filmed in the Bajdah Desert, NEOM, as well as across parts of Rammah, which is in close proximity to Riyadh.

The film premiered at the Red Sea Film Festival in December 2024 and received the Film AIUla Best Saudi Film Award. Following that, it has had a significant reception at the Saudi Arabian box office outperforming major international titles, including *Mufasa: The Lion King* (2024) and *Den of Thieves 2: Pantera* (2024).

From its theatrical release at the start of January 2025 to the beginning of February 2025, *Hobal* garnered 613,421 admissions to date, which is an estimated intake of ₪ 26.1 million (USD \$7.0 million). According to the distributor, the Qanwat Group, the film has seen sold-out screenings, most notably in more rural areas of the country. The film's portrayal of family dynamics amidst the struggles between traditions and modernity has notably connected with Saudi audiences as well as audiences outside the region. The film performed well in Gulf Cooperation Council (GCC) territories as well as scoring over 87,000 admissions in Kuwait, the UAE, Oman and Bahrain, in the same timeframe at the start of 2025.²¹

Name of Production:

Hobal

Production Type:

Feature Film

Country:

Saudi Arabia

Production Company:

Shaf Studios

Director:

Abdulaziz Alshlahei

Incentive:

Daw' Program, Red Sea Fund, NEOM's Production Incentives

Key Cast:

Mila Al Zaharani, Amal Sami, Ibrahim Al-Hasawi

Plot Summary:

In the aftermath of the Second Gulf War, a Bedouin family led by 80-year-old grandfather, Liyam, retreat into the desert following what Liyam believes to be recent signs that mark the end of days.

20 *Hobal*. Red Sea International Film Festival. 2024.

21 Anti-Patriarchy Saudi Drama 'Hobal' Beats Hollywood Titles, Becoming Standout Local Hit. Variety, 10th February 2025.



Productions in KSA attracted through KSA incentives and funding programmes

There are a range of other incentives and funding programmes available in KSA that target specific objectives, such as local talent development, regional economic impact as well as cultural uplift and storytelling. These initiatives all seek to support production in KSA, but they are not entirely comparable and often differ in focus and application. As a result, a single production can package more than one incentive or funding programme, stacking those that are most applicable.²²

The following pages highlight some of the key other incentives and funding programmes.



NEOM Production Incentives



NEOM is a production hub, promoting infrastructure, resources and talent in a state-of-the-art build in the Saudi desert. A key offering of the hub is NEOM's cash rebate of 40%, with additional uplifts available to productions that meet the necessary requirements.

In 2024, at least 10 productions in KSA were supported by NEOM's Production Incentives, with a total production expenditure of **¥ 116.19 million in KSA**. This was an increase from the three productions supported in 2023, with a local expenditure of **¥ 29.96 million**, and 2022, with three productions supported,

with a local production expenditure of **¥ 144.97 million** (Table 26).

Productions supported by NEOM's Production Incentives ranged from the short feature film *Does it Hurt Too Bad to Look at Me?* (to be released), an MBC Group television soap opera *You Think You Survived*, to a Hussam Alhulwah's feature film *Al Gaid* (to be released). NEOM has also supported the well-received feature film *Hobal* (2024), included critically acclaimed feature films, *Dunki* (2023), *Hajjan* (2023) and *The Lamb* (2024).

Table 26– Number of KSA Productions and Total Production Spend of Productions Accessing NEOM's Production Incentives, 2022-2024

	Supported Productions	Total Production Spend in KSA (¥)
2024	10	116,187,700
2023	3	29,959,251
2022	3	144,970,780

I Source: NEOM



22 As productions can receive funding through multiple sources, a single title may appear across multiple production funding programmes and/or incentives

Film AIUla



Through its dedicated film office, AIUla hosts a range of international and domestic productions, largely drawn to its iconic natural landscape and historical heritage locations. Funding is provided through sponsorship and other incentive offers, including Film AIUla’s Cash Rebate.

2024 saw at least seven productions in KSA supported by Film AIUla with a total production expenditure of at least **ﷲ 26.34 million**. This was an increase from the three productions supported in 2023,

with a local expenditure of **ﷲ 83.95 million** and the single production supported in 2022, with a local production expenditure of **ﷲ 270,000** (Table 27)

Most recently, Film AIUla supported productions included Shahad Ameen’s feature film *Hijra* (to be released) and Anderson Paak’s directorial debut feature film, *K-POPS!* (2024). Productions supported in previous years included critically acclaimed feature film, *Norah* (2024), and Netflix’s feature film, *The Matchmaker* (2023), directed by Abdulmohsen Aldhabaan.

Table 27 – Number of KSA Productions and Total Production Spend of Productions Accessing Support from Film AIUla, 2022-2024

	Supported Productions	Production Spend in KSA (ﷲ)
2024	7	26,336,589
2023	3	83,949,759
2022	1	270,000

I Source: Film AIUla

Cultural Development Fund



The Cultural Development Fund (CDF) was established with the aim of supporting cultural activities and projects. Linked to the National Development Fund, its objective is to aid in facilitating investment in cultural activities across various sectors, including film.

In 2024, at least two productions in KSA were supported by the CDF with a total production expenditure of **ﷲ 9.85 million in KSA**. This is an increase from the single production supported in 2023, with a local expenditure of **ﷲ 7.06 million** (Table 28).

Table 28 – Number of KSA Productions and Total Production Spend of Productions Accessing Cultural Development Fund, 2022-2024

	Supported Productions	Production Spend in KSA (ﷲ)
2024	2	9,853,000
2023	1	7,056,273
2022	N/A	N/A

I Source: Cultural Development Fund



The Red Sea Fund



The Red Sea Fund is a funding programme that forms part of the Red Sea Film Foundation, an umbrella under which the Red Sea International Film Festival falls. The fund's objective is to support filmmakers across the Arab world, including Saudi Arabia, as well as Africa and, most recently, Asia. The Fund' has supported 287 films throughout its cycles between 2020-2024, and co-produced over 120 films. Films supported by the Red Sea Fund have received more than 165 nominations globally, and won more than 110 awards at international film festivals and events.

In 2024, four KSA productions were supported by the Red Sea Fund with a production expenditure of at least 3.09 million in KSA. Four KSA productions were supported in 2023, with local expenditure of at least 4.00 million. In 2022, three KSA productions were supported, with a local production expenditure of at least 254,229 (Table 29).

Alongside other national funding programmes and incentives, the Red Sea Fund supported the production of feature film's *Hijra* (to be released) and *Hobal* (2024). The programme also supported the production of the critically acclaimed feature films *Norah* (2024) and *Slave* (2023).

Table 29 – Number of KSA Productions and Total Production Spend of Productions Accessing the Red Sea Fund, 2022-2024

	Suported Productions	Production Spend in KSA (ﷲ)
2024	4	3,094,480
2023	4	4,004,400
2022	3	254,229

I Source: Red Sea International Film Fund

Quareer

2021

Quareer is an anthology film, comprising of five short stories that take place in a conservative society in which five female protagonists face adversity, abuse and abandonment as a result of incidents linked to puberty, marriage, separation and assault.

The film originated as a graduation project of the five young filmmakers who studied together at Jeddah's Effat University's Visual and Digital Production department. The film is a landmark creative work, in terms of the cultural

significance of the content as well as having five young female directors at the helm of a film reaching audiences across both national and international platforms.²³

One of the directors, Norah Almowald thanked the Red Sea Fund, saying "the funding for (the) post-production stage and support, gave (them) the chance to get the best outcome of our film."²⁴

Quareer premiered at the 2021 Red Sea Film Festival. Tickets for the premiere sold rapidly and was reportedly one of the first films programmed to sell out.²⁵ Following that, the film received awards for Best Cinematography, Best Script and Best Musical Score. The film then went on to receive five awards at the 2022 Saudi Film Festival, including the Golden Palm Tree for Best Film and the Award for Best Director(s).²⁶

Name of Production:

Quareer

Production Type:

Feature Film

Country:

Saudi Arabia

Production Company:

Effat University

Director:

Ragheed Al Nahdi, Norah Almowald, Ruba Khafagy, Fatma Alhazmi, Noor Alameer

Incentive:

Red Sea Fund

Key Cast:

Salua Ahmed, Manal Ahmed, Khairia Abu Laban, Raghad Balshroom, Fay Foad

Plot Summary:

The film is made up of five stories depicting women taking risks to carve out their own spaces in the changing society in which they find themselves.

23 Quareer. MAFF

24, 25 Saudi film festival hit puts the focus on female filmmakers. Arab News. 2021

26 Anthology Film 'Quareer,' By Five Female Directors, Wins Big at Saudi Film Festival. Variety. 2022

Saudi Film Festival



The Production Markets Competition is part of the Saudi Film Festival (SFF). While the market is an opportunity for international and domestic industry to engage, the competition offers filmmakers partial funding for projects through a pitching process.

In 2024, 38 KSA productions were supported through the Production Markets Competition, hosted by the SFF. While this is a slight decrease from the 39 productions supported through the programme in 2023, there is progressive growth from the 35 productions supported in 2022.

Production expenditure in KSA associated with the SFF-supported productions has steadily increased since 2022. Expenditure reached a high in 2024, with 2.83 million recorded in KSA production spend, having grown from 2.51 million in 2023 and 1.10 million in 2022 (Table 30).

Productions supported by the SFF included *Saqr AlUla* (to be released) and *No One Dies in Iraq* (to be released). Funding through the SFF also supported the forthcoming feature film *Layla's Wolf*, directed by the regional talent Nora Aboushousha.

Table 30 – Number of KSA Productions and Total Production Spend of Productions Accessing Support from the Saudi Film Festival Production Markets Competition, 2022-2024

	Supported Productions	Production Spend in KSA (M)
2024	38	2,829,000
2023	39	2,510,000
2022	35	1,100,000

I Source: Saudi Film Festival



Ithra Film Production Programme



Ithra Film Production Programme is a unit of The King Abdulaziz Centre for World Culture. The objective of the programme is to attract international filmmakers to shoot productions in the Kingdom using local talents and local crews as well as provide financing opportunities for Saudi-based creatives.

In 2024, 15 KSA productions were supported through the Ithra Film Production Programme with a total production expenditure of 3.02 million in KSA. This was a significant increase from the single production supported in 2023, which saw a higher

local expenditure of 18.50 million and the two productions supported in 2022, with a local production expenditure of 250,000 (Table 31).

The Ithra Film Production Programme has supported multiple productions including short films by Lina Mahmood, *My Dear Professor* (to be released), and Mohammed Aljabreen, *Abandoned* (to be released), as well as Shahda Ameen's feature film *Hijra* (to be released), Abubkr Shawky's *Hajjan* (2023) and Abdullah Saharty's *Hadi Aleis* (2023).

Table 31 – Number of KSA Productions and Total Production Spend of Productions Accessing Ithra Film Production Programme, 2022-2024

	Supported Productions	Production Spend in KSA (M)
2024	15	3,018,750
2023	1	18,500,000
2022	2	250,000

I Source: Ithra Film Production Programme



Valley Road 2022

Valley Road is a feature film that follows the emotional and uplifting journey of a young boy and how perceived inadequacies can be one's strengths. Ali is a young boy with selective mutism, who, while accompanied by his father to see a doctor in a nearby village, gets lost and finds himself on his own.

Valley Road is one of the first fantasy films produced in KSA, and the first family film. The film's cinematography and

artistic aesthetic was also highlighted as a successful showcase of the region as a filming location.²⁷ It is the feature film debut of independent filmmaker Khalid Fahad.

The film premiered as the closing film of the Red Sea International Film Festival in 2023. Ahead of its premiere, the film's producer, Majed Z. Samman, stated that the film **"is an innately Saudi story and an inextricably Saudi film, so it's only fitting that it premieres on Saudi ground at this prestigious festival"**.²⁸

The film showcases local talent in front of and behind the camera, including Rashed played by Mohammed El Shehri – previously

in *The Fates Hotel*, *Sekket Safar* and *Exit 7*, Seham played by Aseel Omran – a local television and social media personality, as well as Ali played by Hamad Farhan – in his first acting role. As a prime example of showcasing local creative talent, the film was also screened as part of the Saudi Film Nights edition in China.

Valley Road is one of the projects produced under the Film Production fund at Ithra, which is one of the largest film producers in KSA. *Valley Road* is an example of Ithra's core objectives to support the telling of original stories, foster local talent and contribute to the development of the wider industry across KSA.

Name of Production:

Valley Road

Production Type:

Feature Film

Country:

Saudi Arabia

Production Company:

Ithra Film Production

Director:

Khalid Fahad

Incentive:

Ithra Film Production Programme

Key Cast:

Hamad Farhan, Naif Khalaf, Aseel Omran

Plot Summary:

Ali is perceived by his family and the people of Alwadi, the mountain village where he lives, as having a disability. En route with his father to see a folk doctor who is expected to "cure" him, Ali gets lost. Now alone, an unexpected journey awaits Ali as he embarks through the wonder of the valley.



4.3 Incentivised Production Spread

Shooting locations for Cash Rebate productions by KSA region

Productions supported by the Cash Rebate have used locations across at least 5 KSA regions (Figure 21; Table 32).²⁹ Between 2020 and 2024, the majority of these productions used locations in Riyadh (12 productions), Makkah (six productions) Tabouk (five productions), Madinah (two productions) and Eastern (one production) – likely attracted by the coastal locations in Jeddah, as well as the facilities and locations in NEOM and Film AIUla.

Shooting locations for incentivised productions by KSA region

Between 2022 and 2024, projects supported by KSA incentives (being the Cash Rebate and Daw' Program) and other funding programmes shot in locations across 7 of the 13 KSA regions (Figure 22; Table 33).³⁰ Over the three year time period, the majority of productions shot in Tabouk (26 productions), followed by Riyadh (24 productions), Makkah (21 productions), and Eastern (15 productions). Productions also shot in Madinah (12 productions) and Aseer and Northern Borders (two productions each) during the time period.

²⁹ Based on a sample of 26 Cash Rebate productions, it does not include shooting locations for all Cash Rebate productions during this period. Productions may also shoot in more than one region. Therefore, it is a conservative estimate of where productions have shot

³⁰ Based on a sample of 73 individual projects between 2022-2024 with location shooting information provided through the KSA Cash Rebate, Daw' Program, Film AIUla, NEOM, Ithra Film Production Programme and Red Sea Fund. Data has been reviewed to remove double counting.

Table 32 – Total Shooting Locations for Cash Rebate Production by KSA Region, 2020-2024

	Cash Rebate Projects
Riyadh	12
Makkah	6
Tabouk	5
Madinah	2
Eastern	1

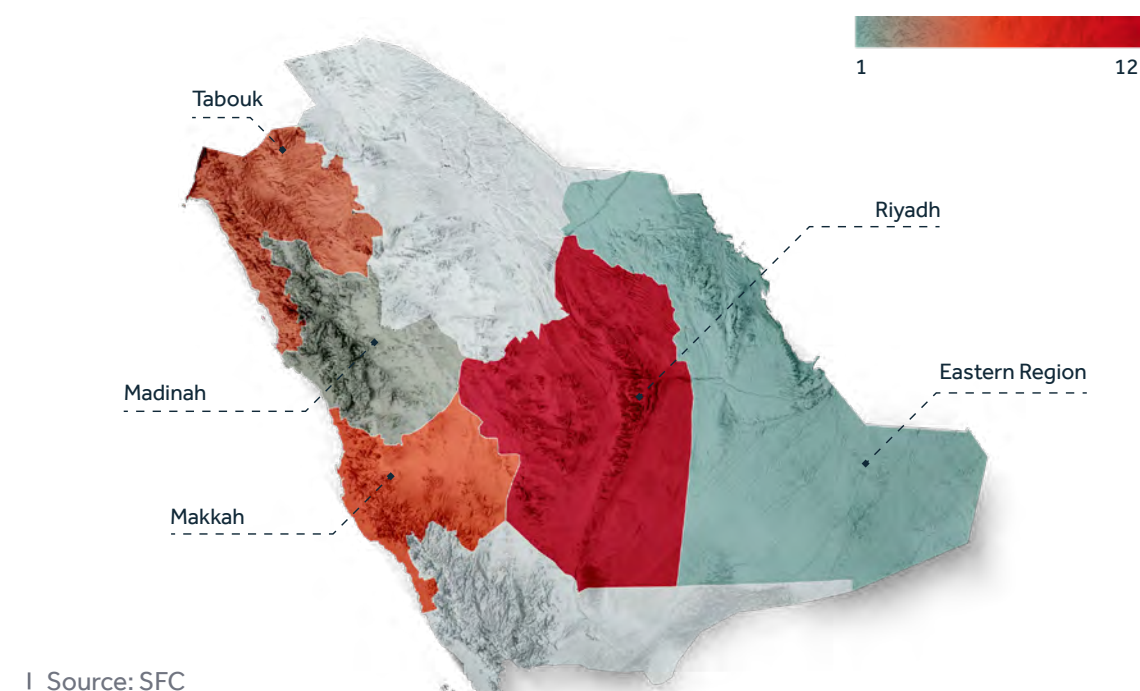
Source: SFC

Table 33 – Shooting Locations for all KSA Incentives and Fundings Programmes by KSA Region, 2022-2024

	Incentivised Productions
Tabouk	26
Riyadh	24
Makkah	21
Eastern	15
Madinah	12
Northern Borders	2
Aseer	2

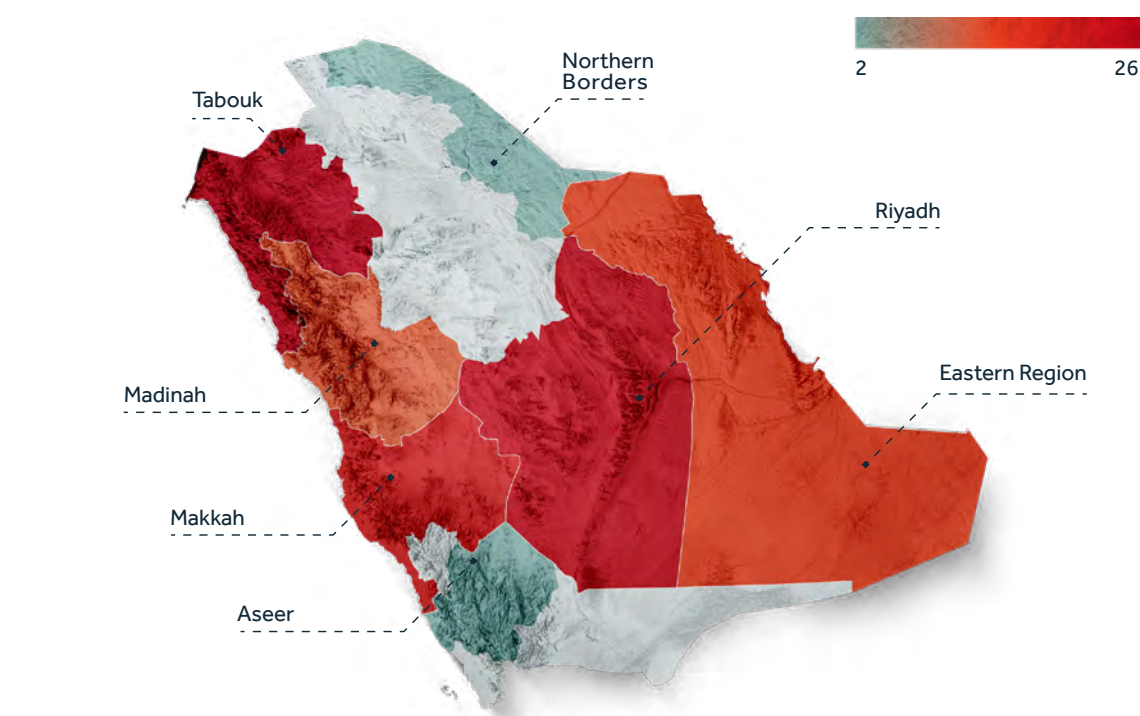
Source: SFC, Red Sea Fund, NEOM, Film AIUla

Figure 21 – Shooting Locations for Cash Rebate Production by KSA Region, 2020-2024



Source: SFC

Figure 22 – Shooting Locations for all KSA Incentives and Fundings Programmes by KSA Region, 2022-2024³¹



Source: SFC, Red Sea Fund, NEOM, Film AIUla

³¹ Includes productions accessing funding through the KSA Cash Rebate, Daw' Program, NEOM, Film AIUla, Ithra Film Production Programme and the Red Sea Fund.



Rijal Almaa, Aseer Region





Talent Development

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Introduction

As KSA's film industry grows, the public and private sectors have established a range of training programmes to ensure the development of essential film-related skills. These university programmes and training programmes have been well attended, highlighting the demand for hands-on learning opportunities.

How the SFC is Supporting

The SFC is invested in creating a growing, skilled and resilient film industry workforce. Priority interventions in this area include:

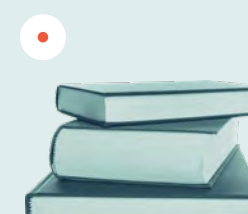
- Providing workforce training programmes, such as the annual Filmmakers programme to learn new skills and develop knowledge
- Creating valuable networking and collaboration opportunities, including at international markets
- Providing career consultations for professionals working in the sector
- Collaborating with higher education institutions to develop film-related programmes
- Monitoring and identifying skills gaps within the sector value chain
- Providing practical, on-set training opportunities for emerging talents in international filming schools.



2024 FACTS IN FOCUS



In 2024, **at least eight universities in KSA had at a minimum 14 film-related programmes**, with **3,810 students enrolled**. This was up from 13 programmes in 2023, with 4,020 students enrolled



There were **at least 25 film training programmes** in KSA in 2024, including 16 public sector programmes and nine private sector programmes



6,500+ participants took part in film training programmes, with the majority supported by SFC's programmes and initiatives, including the Filmmakers Program and at Saudi Film Confex, the Saudi Film Festival and the Red Sea International Film Festival.

University Film-Related Programmes

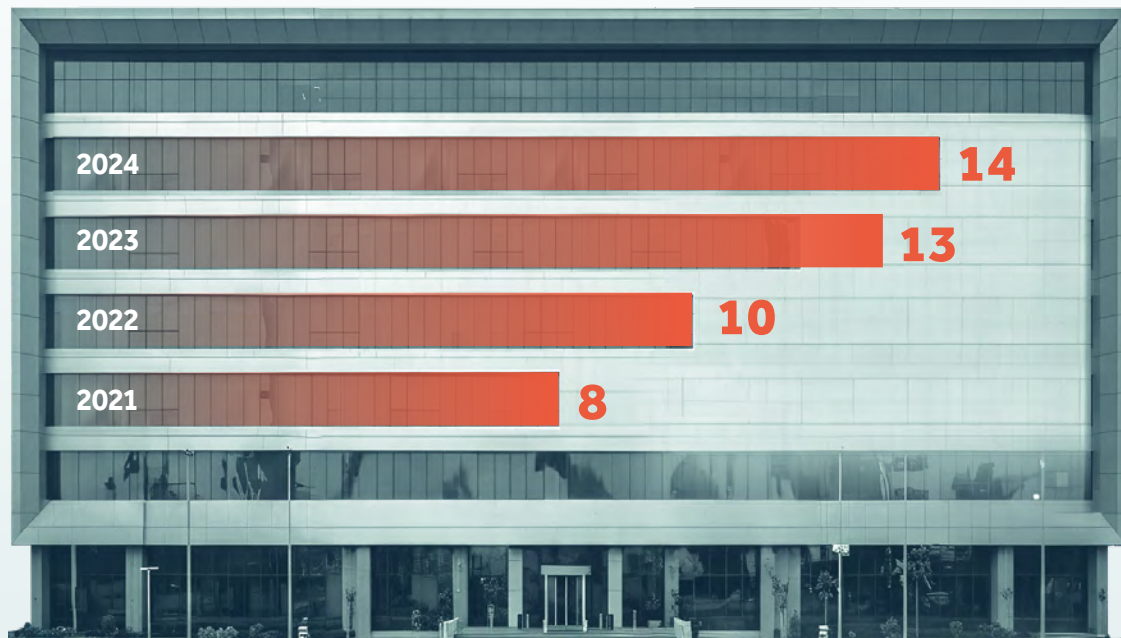
Number of film-related programmes at KSA universities

In 2024, there were more film-related programmes at KSA universities than in 2023. In 2024, there were 14 film-related programmes at KSA universities (Figure 23; Table 34), compared to 13 programmes in 2023. Notable film-related programmes offered in 2024 included a Bachelor programme in TV, Radio and Films from Al-Imam Muhammed Ibn Saud Islamic University, a Bachelor programme in Filmmaking and Animation at Princess Nourah bint Abdulrahman University, and a Bachelor programme in Radio and Television from Umm Al-Qura University.

Number of students enrolled in film-related programmes at KSA universities

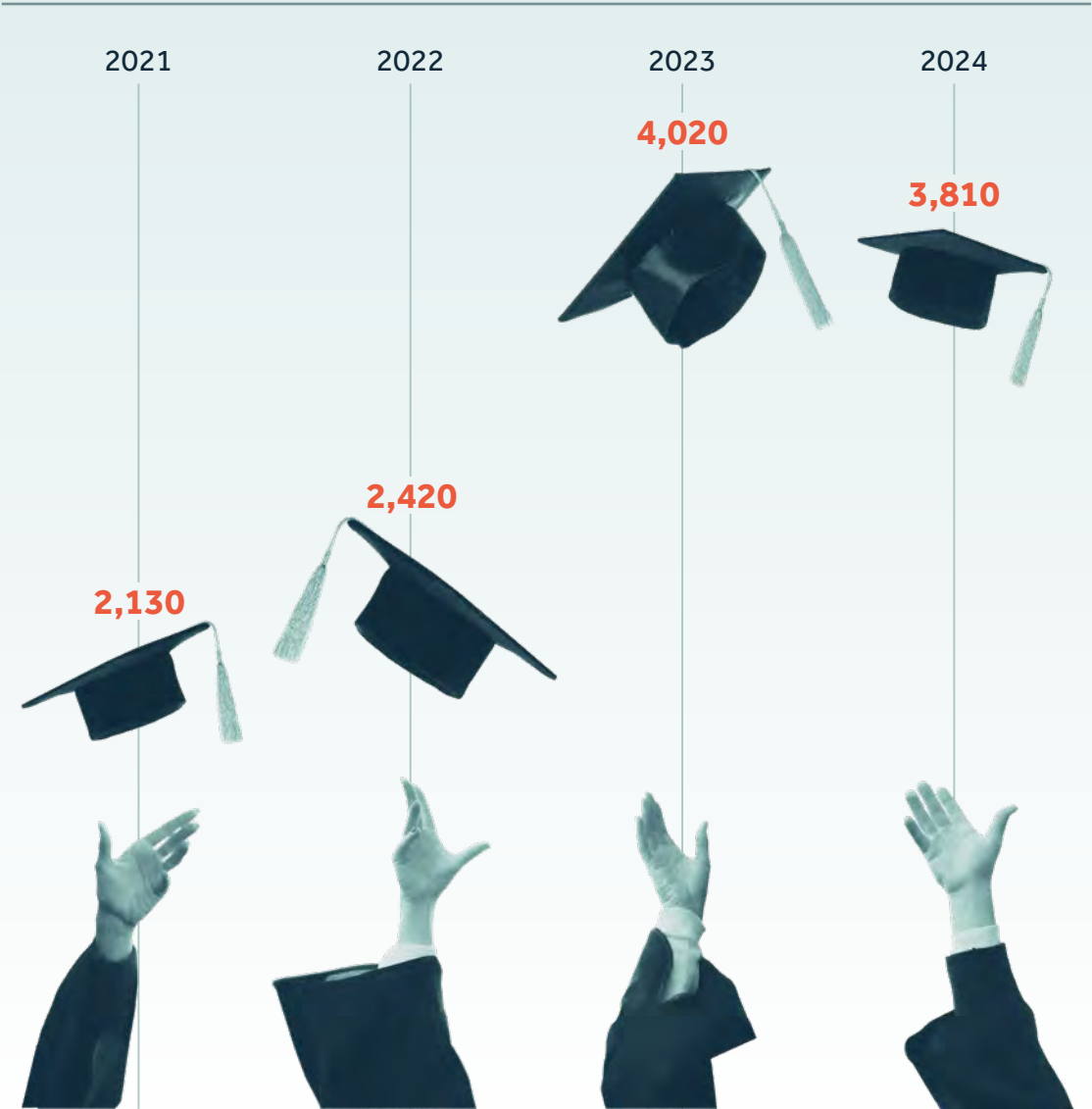
In 2024, there were less students enrolled in film-related programmes at KSA universities than in 2023. In 2024, there were 3,810 students enrolled in total, compared to 4,020 students enrolled in 2023 (Figure 24; Table 34). The Bachelor programme in TV, Radio and Films at Al-Imam Muhammed Ibn Saud Islamic University had the most students enrolled in 2024, at 1,580.

Figure 23 – Number of Film-Related Programmes at KSA Universities, 2021-2024



Source: Ministry of Education

Figure 24 – Number of Students Enrolled³² in Film-Related Programmes at KSA Universities, 2021-2024



Source: Ministry of Education

Table 34 – Number of Film-Related Programmes and Students Enrolled³³ at KSA Universities, 2021-2024

Year	Film-Related Programmes at KSA Universities	Students Enrolled in Film-Related Programmes at KSA Universities
2024	14	3,810
2023	13	4,020
2022	10	2,420
2021	8	2,130

Source: Ministry of Education

32, 33 Enrolled includes students who joined or graduated from the course in the given year

Film Training Programmes

Number of participants in film training programmes in KSA

In 2024, there were at least 25 film training programmes in KSA, with over 6,532 participants (Table 35). The SFC’s training programmes had the highest proportion of participants in 2024, with 4,721 in total, followed by private sector programmes with 997 and other governmental programmes, such as the Cultural Scholarship Programme and Red Sea International Film Festival, with over 814.

The SFC ran seven training programmes in 2024 (Table 35), including the Kader programme, which offered hands-on filmmaking experience with global production companies to 22 participants across 10 different countries, including the US, the UK, China, France and Spain (Table 36). Over 15 productions were completed through the Kader programme, two of which were featured in film festivals. The fourth edition of the SFC’s

Filmmakers Programme was held in 2024, which offered workshops, residencies and masterclasses in partnership with leading global institutions. 79 in-person workshops were held in 12 cities across KSA, with 2,092 participants from 17 different countries taking part (Table 36).

There were at least nine other government entity programmes in 2024 (Table 35). This includes the Cultural Scholarship Programme, which offered 150 students specialising in one of 13 cultural disciplines, including filmmaking, the opportunity to study at an accredited international institution (Table 36). As of August 2024, over 278 institutions across 15 countries were listed as part of the programme. The opportunities are fully funded, and the progress of each student will be monitored and evaluated. Seven programmes were also carried out by the Red Sea International Film Festival, including Inspire!, a series of masterclasses covering an array of topics in film, which were attended by over 500 participants, and Women-Led

Table 35 – Estimated Number of Film Training Programmes and Participants in KSA, 2024

	Saudi Film Commission	Government Entities	Private Sector	Total
 Number of Programmes	7	9	9	25
 Number of Participants	4,721	814+	997	6,532+

I Source: SFC

Stories, a programme aiming to empower 21 female filmmakers and artists by providing resources, mentorship and networking opportunities.

In 2024, there were an estimated nine programmes run by private sector companies, Studio Production Training and MAFLAM (Table 35). Studio Production Training’s programmes included film masterclasses in Jeddah and Riyadh,

attended by 170 participants, who were granted certificates from the University of Southern California. MAFLAM’s programmes include an introduction to documentary filmmaking workshop, as well as a workshop by Saudi filmmakers Sarah and Maram Taibah, at Beit Al Sharbatly Cultural Centre. These workshops were attended by 827 participants in total.

Table 36 – SFC’s Film Training Programmes and Participants in KSA, 2024

Programme	Number of Participants
Amateur Film Club	24
Artistic Cinema 2024	27
Filmmakers 4	2,092
Gulf Cinema Festival	80
Kader	22
Saudi Film Confex	1,671
Saudi Film Festival 10	805

I Source: SFC



SFC Filmmakers Program

Season 4

SFC's Filmmakers Program launched in 2021 with the aim of discovering and nurturing Saudi filmmaking talent. The initiative is run in partnership with a number of international educational institutions who specialise in sector-specific training. Young Saudi men and women are eligible to take part in the free program, which consists of a track for beginners and amateurs, and a second track for experienced practitioners and professionals. The training programmes, workshops and dialogue sessions help to engage young people in the artistic field, strengthen skills and provide greater access into the industry.

The fourth edition of SFC's Filmmakers Program consisted of a year-round series of **139 filmmaking workshops, residencies and masterclasses**. There were **2,092 attendees in total, 1,054 of which were female and 1,038 of which were male**. In-person workshops were held across all **13 administrative KSA regions**, and overseas in Bologna, Italy, while others took place virtually. Many distinguished institutes and universities around the world partnered in the implementation stages of the programme, including Britain's Creative Media Skills Institute, Vancouver Film School in Canada, the Goblin Film School, and Series Mania, and **over 74 participants** were recruited from **20 different nations**.

The programme started with a four-day film production training course in Riyadh, which was attended **by 17 participants**. The participants were taught how to develop, process and convert scripts into films, enabling them to understand the filmmaking process from the first idea to the final production. The course, led by Sudanese director Mohamed Kordofani, was a huge success, with attendees rating the course **4.9 out of five stars**.





Farasan Island, Jazan Region





Festivals, Events and Awards

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How the SFC is Supporting

Through its role in supporting and organising film festivals and events, the SFC plays an integral role in fostering global partnerships and cultural exchange, including:

- Partnering with local or regional organisations, such as the Saudi Film Association and Gulf Cooperation Council, to organise annual film festivals in KSA
- The promotion of KSA filming locations and wider support programmes to attract international productions
- Supporting the development of the KSA film industry by running workshops, seminars and panels at KSA film events and year-round engagements
- Providing opportunities for KSA filmmakers to network and engage with members of the wider global film industry
- Partnering with global production companies, such as Blacksands Pictures in Australia, or Ori Group in China to showcase KSA films to global audiences

6.1

Introduction

Showcasing KSA films through international festivals, including the Saudi Film Nights events, has significantly contributed to building the KSA film industry's global reputation. These events, such as markets, panels and training programmes, provide valuable opportunities for local filmmakers to develop their skills and foster domestic, regional, and global networks.



There were more than **75,600** admissions in 2024 to the Saudi Film Festival, Red Sea International Film Festival and Gulf Cinema Festival, and **225** feature films, documentaries and short films screened



2024 was the **largest year on record** for the Red Sea International Film Festival, with more than **40,700 tickets** sold to the screenings and events held over the festival's 10 days, and 122 films screened from 85 countries

Saudi Film Nights events took place in **seven cities** across three countries in 2024, including screenings at the Sydney Opera House in Australia



There were more than **3,600** attendees at the 2024 Saudi Film Nights events, with the largest attendance taking place in **China** (1,475 attendees)

2024 FACTS IN FOCUS



There were approximately **70,000** attendees to Saudi Film Confex in 2024



Twenty-four agreements were signed at Saudi Film Confex 2024, amounting to a total agreement value of **226 million** (USD \$60.3 million)



KSA films have won **50 awards** at local and international film festivals and events, 11 of the awards were for KSA films were supported through the KSA National Incentive Program, including *Norah*, which received the Un Certain Regard – Special Mention award at the Cannes Film Festival

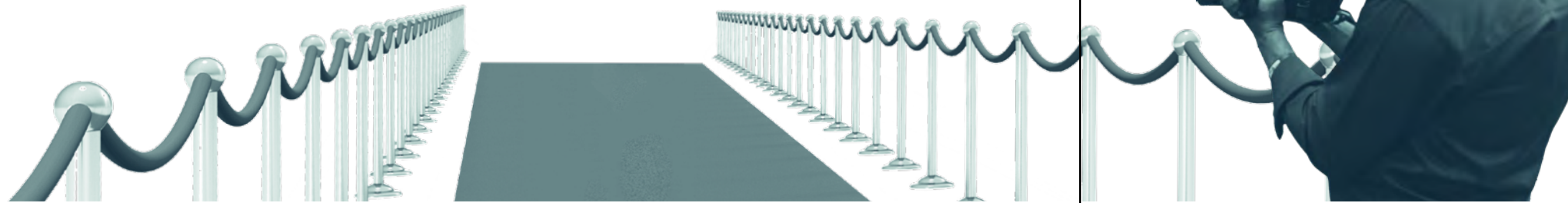
Hajjan received **seven awards** at the Saudi Film Festival and Gulf Cinema Festival, including the Golden Palm for Best Actress – Feature, Golden Palm for Best Actor – Feature, Golden Palm Jury Award – Feature and Best Feature Film Award



Film Festivals

Total number of film festivals in KSA

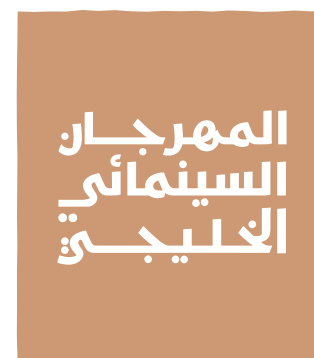
KSA hosted three film festivals in 2024, encompassing the Red Sea International Film Festival, Saudi Film Festival, and Gulf Cinema Festival.



The Red Sea International Film Festival (RSIFF), launched in 2021, is now the region's preeminent international film market and festival. The RSIFF's first edition in December 2021 featured over 138 films from 67 countries.³⁴ The festival takes place in December each year, with the fourth edition held 5th-14th December 2024.

The Saudi Film Festival (SFF), originally titled the Saudi Film Competition, was launched in 2015. The festival is organised in collaboration with the Saudi Film Association and supported by the SFC. Held over five days at the King Abdulaziz Center for World Culture (Ithra), in Dhahran City in KSA's Eastern region, the festival includes a substantial programme of films, industry workshops and training programmes, an industry marketplace, and an awards ceremony for films in competition. The 10th edition of the SFF (in May 2024) featured a selection of films from the Gulf region, as well as international productions.

The Gulf Cinema Festival (GCF) aims to support filmmakers and develop the film industries in the Gulf region, while encouraging greater cooperation and collaboration. The festival, which takes place in a different Gulf country with each edition, gathers dignitaries, cultural and media figures and filmmakers from the six Gulf Cooperation Council (GCC) countries for a series of screenings, panels, training programmes, and awards. Screenings of the films are also open to the general public. The 2024 edition of the festival took place in April in Riyadh.



³⁴ Festival Overview: December 6-15 2021. Red Sea International Film Festival.

Total number of films shown at film festivals in KSA

A total of 225 films were screened at the 2024 editions of the SFF, the RSIFF and GCF (Figure 25; Table 37). This included screenings of feature films, documentaries and short films from KSA, GCC and international filmmakers.

The 2024 edition of the SFF featured 74 films, including nine feature films, 20 documentaries and 45 short films. Saudi films *Within Sand* (2022) and *Hajjan* (2023) were among the feature films screened at the festival.

The 2024 edition of the RSIFF featured 122 films, including 70 feature films, 44 short films, and nine documentaries. Furthermore, the festival showcased 61 international premieres and 53 MENA premieres, including Johnny Depp’s *Modi, Three Days on The Wing of Madness* (2024) which screened at the Final Festival Gala.

The 2024 edition of the GCF featured 29 films, including six feature films, 12 short films and 11 documentaries. This 2024 edition showcased the Gulf region’s national and regional talents, including Muzna Al-Musafer, the Omani director whose film, *Clouds* (2024), was featured in the short films category.

Total number of attendees at film festivals in KSA

More than 75,614 people attended the three film festivals hosted in KSA in 2024 (Figure 25; Table 37). This included 32,826 admissions to the SFF, over 40,700 to the RSIFF, and 1,900 admissions to the GCF. 2024 was the biggest year yet for the RSIFF, with over 6,500 accredited guests and more than 40,700 tickets sold across all screenings and events.³⁵

Table 37 – KSA Film Festival Admissions and Screenings, 2024

2024 Film Festivals	Saudi Film Festival	Red Sea International Film Festival	The Gulf Cinema Festival	Total
Admissions	32,826 ³⁶	40,798	1,990 ³⁷	75,614
Total Films Screened	74	122	29	225
Feature Films	9	70	6	85
Short Films	45	44	12	101
Documentaries	20	8	11	39

I Source: SFC and RSIFF

35 The Red Sea International Film Festival 2024 Closing Night And Awards. Red Sea International Film Festival, 12 December 2024.

36 This figure includes admissions and visitors to the 2024 SFF

37 This figure includes panel discussion attendees and film screening attendees

Figure 25 – KSA Film Festival Admissions and Screenings, 2024



I Source: SFC and RSIFF

Screening Events

Saudi Film Nights (SFN) is a showcase event series for Saudi feature films and short films launched by the SFC. The second edition of SFN was announced in April 2024 with Morocco, Australia, China, India and Mexico identified as the international settings for the travelling event. The SFN events in Morocco, Australia and China took place in April, June and October 2024, respectively. The SFN India events took place towards the end of January 2025, with the Mexico SFN events still to come.

SFN includes screenings of a range of Saudi feature-length and short films, alongside Q&A sessions with directors or cast from the showcased films. The showcase aims to platform Saudi films and filmmakers, helping them to reach a wider global audience. The event reflects the SFC’s dedication to fostering global partnerships and leveraging cultural exchange as a cornerstone of Saudi Arabia’s *Vision 2030* and establishing strong relationships in global cinema for the exchange of expertise and knowledge.

Total Number of Saudi Film Nights

There were 12 SFN events in 2024, across the three countries (Table 38). This included six events in Morocco in Casablanca and Rabat, two events in Australia in Melbourne and Sydney, and four events in China in Beijing, Shanghai and Suzhou.



Tabel 38 – Total Number of Saudi Film Nights, 2024

				
2024 SFN Locations	Morocco	Australia	China	Total
Events Hosted	6	2	4	12
Films Shown	5	4	4	13
Total Attendees	1,331	824	1,475	3,690
General Attendees	945	674	1,158	2,777
Media Attendees	93	30	77	200
VIP Attendees	111	120	159	390
Students	182	N/A	81	263

I Source: SFC

Total Number of Films Shown at Saudi Film Nights

There were 13 screenings of KSA films at SFN events in 2024 (Table 38). The films screened in each international location were carefully curated. The feature film *AlHamour H.A.* (2023) launched at the inaugural event in Morocco and was one of five films shown. SFN in Australia opened at the iconic Sydney Opera House with screenings of two films, the feature film *Hajjan* (2023) and the short film *Me & Aydarous* (2022). The showcase in China marked the first time Saudi films had been screened in the country and included screenings of *Saleeg* (2023), *Valley Road* (2022), *Star Chaser* (2024), and *Il Signore* (2024).

Total Number of Attendees at Saudi Film Nights

There were more than 3,690 attendees across the 12 SFN events in 2024 (Table 38). This included more than 2,700 general attendees, 200 media attendees, 390 VIP attendees and 260 students attending the SFN events in Morocco, Australia and China.

The largest SFN attendance took place at the China SFN events, with almost 1,500 general, media, VIP and student attendees. This was followed by Morocco with 1,331 attendees, and Australia with 824 attendees.





The Saudi Film Nights in China

The China edition of SFN took place from 21st-26th October 2024, with the event launching in Beijing, moving to Suzhou and concluding in Shanghai. This instalment of the SFN was hosted by the SFC, and co-organised by the ORI Group.

A total of four films were screened for the duration of the event across the three Chinese cities. This included feature films *Valley Road* (2022), *Il Signore* (2024) as well as the animated stop-motion short film, *Saleeg* (2023) and the animated sci-fi feature film, *Star Chaser* (2024). The events attracted over 1,475 attendees, which ranged from local film industry, students, representatives of wider cultural organisations and cinema enthusiasts.

The selection of films sought to convey an immersive glimpse of KSA's cinematic landscape and creativity.

In summarising the timely value of the event, Chairman of ORI Group, Feng Qian, stated that, **"Sino-Saudi cultural exchanges are evolving rapidly, with cinema playing a vital role. The Saudi Film Night showcased the allure of Saudi culture and opened doors for further film collaborations."**³⁸



38 "Saudi Film Nights" Concludes in China, Ushering in a New Chapter of Sino-Saudi Film and Cultural Exchange. ORI Group. 31st October 2024.

6.4

Award Nominations and Wins

Awards events and film festivals are not only opportunities to celebrate films but serve to bolster industry growth as well as promote both international filmmakers and talent from those events' respective regions. There are various examples of awards, ranging from internationally regarded legacy events, such as the Academy Awards, the BAFTAs and the Golden Globes, through to the newly established Joy Awards, which look to showcase the Arab world and what its emerging film industry has to offer.

KSA's film industry continues to grow, with significant coverage both internationally and locally. 2024 saw the celebration of Arab talent at the third instalment of the Joy Awards, with the fourth instalment of the awards showcasing even more talent at the start of 2025.



Total number of local and international awards won by KSA filmss

In 2024, KSA films received 50 wins at local and international awards and film festivals (Figure 26; Table 39).³⁹ This included feature films such as *Within Sand* (2022), *Sattar* (2022), *Hajjan* (2023), short films *Me & Aydarous* (2024), *In Between* (2024), and documentaries *Horizon* (2024), *Voices of AlUla* (2024) and *Underground* (2024).



39 Awards and festivals included in the analysis are the Academy Awards, BAFTA, Berlinale, Cannes, Golden Globes, Joy Awards, London Film Festival, Red Sea International Film Festival/Yusr Awards, Sundance, Saudi Film Festival, Toronto International Film Festival, Venice, and the Gulf Cinema Festival

Total number of local and international awards won by incentivised KSA films

Incentivised KSA films won a series of awards at local and international awards and film festivals in 2024, with 11 wins for KSA films supported by the KSA National Incentive Program (Figure 26; Table 39).⁴⁰

Incentivised films, *The Cello*, *Hajjan* and *Sattar* received support through the SFC's Cash Rebate and went on to receive nominations and wins at the Joy Awards, SFF, and GCF. *Hajjan* received seven awards at the SFF and GCF, including the Golden Palm for Best Actress – Feature, Golden Palm for Best Actor – Feature, Golden Palm Jury Award – Feature and Best Feature Film Award.

The feature film *Norah* (2023), which was supported through the Daw' Program, received a special mention under Un Certain Regard at the 2024 Cannes International Film Festival.

Figure 26 – Total Number of Local and International Awards Won by KSA films, 2024



I Source: SFC and RSIFF

Table 39 – Total Number of Local and International Awards Won by KSA films, 2024

2024 Awards and Festivals	Total Awards	Total Awards for KSA Films Supported by the Incentive Programme
Cannes International Film Festival	1	1
RSIFF / Yusr Awards	8	2
SFF	36	4
GCF	4	3
Joy Awards	1	1

I Source: SFC and RSIFF



40 Awards and festivals included in the analysis are the Academy Awards, BAFTA, Berlinale, Cannes, Golden Globes, Joy Awards, London Film Festival, Red Sea International Film Festival/Yusr Awards, Sundance, Saudi Film Festival, Toronto International Film Festival, Venice, and the Gulf Cinema Festival

Hajjan 2023

Hajjan is an adventure story that highlights the deep bond that can develop between a human and an animal. The story follows Matar, played by Omar Alatawi, who is the youngest of his family. Following his brother's death as a result of a fall during a camel race, Matar is faced with the possibility of moving to his family in the city and losing his own camel, Hofira.

Instead, he becomes a jockey, working for Jasser, played by Abdulmohsen Al Nemer, a ruthless racing baron. Matar and Hofira are later forced to go on the run, venturing on a life-threatening journey across the desert in search of a better life for them both.

This is director, Abu Bakr Shawky's second feature film, which had its international premiere at the 2023 Toronto International Film Festival and opened at the Red Sea International Film Festival that same year.

The film performed notably well at the Gulf Film Festival in 2024, winning the Best Feature Film Award, alongside winning awards for Best Photography, and Best Actor. *Hajjan* also won four Golden Palms at the SFF, including for Best Music Composition – Feature, Best Actor – Feature, Best Actress – Feature and the Jury Award – Feature.

Name of Production:
Hajjan

Production Type:
Feature Film

Country:
Saudi Arabia

Production Company:
Ithra Film Production
Film-Clinic
The Imaginarium Films
Yellow Camel Studios

Director:
Abu Baker Shawky

Incentive:
The Saudi Film
Commission (Cash
Rebate), NEOM, Ithra

Key Cast:
Omar Alatawi, Azzam
Alnemari, Abdulmohsen
Alnemr

Plot Summary:
This is the coming-of-age story of Matar, the youngest child in a Saudi family of camel jockeys, who does all he can to protect his camel, Hofira, and goes in search for freedom and better life for them both.



Norah 2023

Norah, Set in 1996, tells the story of an orphaned young woman who lives in a desert village with strict rules and a banning of all artistic expression. Through various means, such as smuggled magazines, *Norah*, played by Maria Bahrawi, is able to admire the distant worlds of fashion,

cinema and popular culture. Her life is changed upon the arrival of Nader, played by Yaqoub Afarhan, a former artist and new schoolteacher in her village.

The film was directed, written and produced by Tawfik Alzaidi, features notable performances from young talent and boasts over 40% of its crew being Saudi nationals, which, alongside the iconic landscapes from across AlUla

featured throughout, highlight the film as a true showcase of all KSA has to offer.⁴¹

Following its premiere, the film won the Best Saudi Film Award at the Red Sea International Film Festival in 2023. In 2024, *Norah* became the first Saudi Arabian film to be selected for the Cannes International Film Festival, receiving a Special Mention – Un Certain Regard.

Name of Production:

Norah

Production Type:

Feature Film

Country:

Saudi Arabia

Production Company:

Black Sugar Pictures
Nebras Films
Mile Studios

Director:

Tawfik Alzaidi

Incentive:

Daw' Program, Film AlUla,
Red Sea Film Fund

Key Cast:

Yagoub Alfarhan, Maria
Bahrawi, Abdullah Al-
Sadhan

Plot Summary:

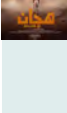
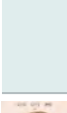
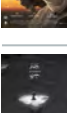
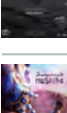
Set in the 90s, when artistic expression was banned, this is a story about the arrival of a new teacher, formerly an artist, into a small remote Saudi Arabian village where he meets a young woman named Norah.



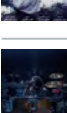
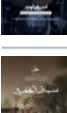
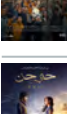
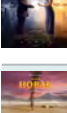
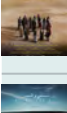
⁴¹ "Norah": A Groundbreaking Saudi Film Makes Its Mark at the Cannes Film Festival. AlUla. 2024.

Table 40 – KSA Film Local and International Awards and Festival Wins, 2024

Production Awards

	<i>Norah</i>	Cannes - Un Certain Regard – Special Mention
	<i>Sattar</i>	Joy Awards - Best Feature
	<i>The Burdened</i>	SFF - Golden Palm Award for Best Gulf Feature Film – Feature SFF - Special Jury Award for Acting in Gulf Films – Feature
	<i>Hajjan</i>	SFF - Golden Palm for Best Music Composition – Feature SFF - Golden Palm for Best Actor – Feature SFF - Golden Palm for Best Actress – Feature SFF - Golden Palm Jury Award – Feature GCF - Best Feature Film Award GCF - Best Photography Award GCF - Best Actor Award
	<i>Within Sand</i>	SFF - Golden Palm for Best Cinematography – Feature SFF - Golden Palm for Best Feature Film – Feature
	<i>It's Always That Feeling</i>	SFF - Golden Palm for Best Editing – Feature
	<i>A Beautiful Excuse for a Deadly Sin</i>	SFF - The Golden Palm for the Gulf Short Narrative Film – Short Film SFF - Golden Palm for Best Short Film – Short Film
	<i>Basira</i>	SFF - Abdullah Al-Muhaisen Award for First Film – Short Film SFF - Golden Palm for Best Actor – Short Film
	<i>In Between</i>	SFF - Golden Palm for Best Second Animated Film – Short Film
	<i>Musnad</i>	SFF - Golden Palm for Best First Animation Film – Short Film
	<i>Bakhroosh</i>	SFF - Golden Palm for Best Cinematography – Short Film
	<i>Me & Aydarous</i>	SFF - Golden Palm for Best Actress - Short Film SFF - Golden Palm Jury Award - Short Film

Production Awards

	<i>Bar Saar</i>	SFF - The Golden Palm for Gulf Documentary Films – Documentary
	<i>Horizon</i>	SFF - Golden Palm for Best Film on the Saudi Environment – Documentary
	<i>Voices of AlUla</i>	SFF - Tuwaiq Mountain Award for Best Film about a Saudi City – Documentary
	<i>Aseer Memory</i>	SFF - The Golden Palm for Unique Documentary Subject – Documentary
	<i>Underground</i>	SFF - Golden Palm Jury Award – Documentary
	<i>Donkey Race</i>	SFF - Golden Palm for Best Documentary Film – Documentary
	<i>HWJN</i>	GCF - Best Original Score Award
	<i>Hobal</i>	RSIFF - Film AlUla Audience Award Saudi Film
	<i>My Driver and I</i>	RSIFF - Chopard Emerging Saudi Talent
	<i>To A Land Unknown</i>	RSIFF - Silver Yusr Feature Film RSIFF - Yusr Best Actor
	<i>Red Path</i>	RSIFF - Yusr Golden Yusr Best Feature Film RSIFF - Yusr Best Director
	<i>Seeking Haven for Mr. Rambo</i>	RSIFF - Yusr Jury Prize
	<i>Songs of Adam</i>	RSIFF - Yusr Best Screenplay

Highlighted films are incentivised through the National Incentive Program (Cash Rebate or Daw' Program)

| Source: SFC and RSIFF

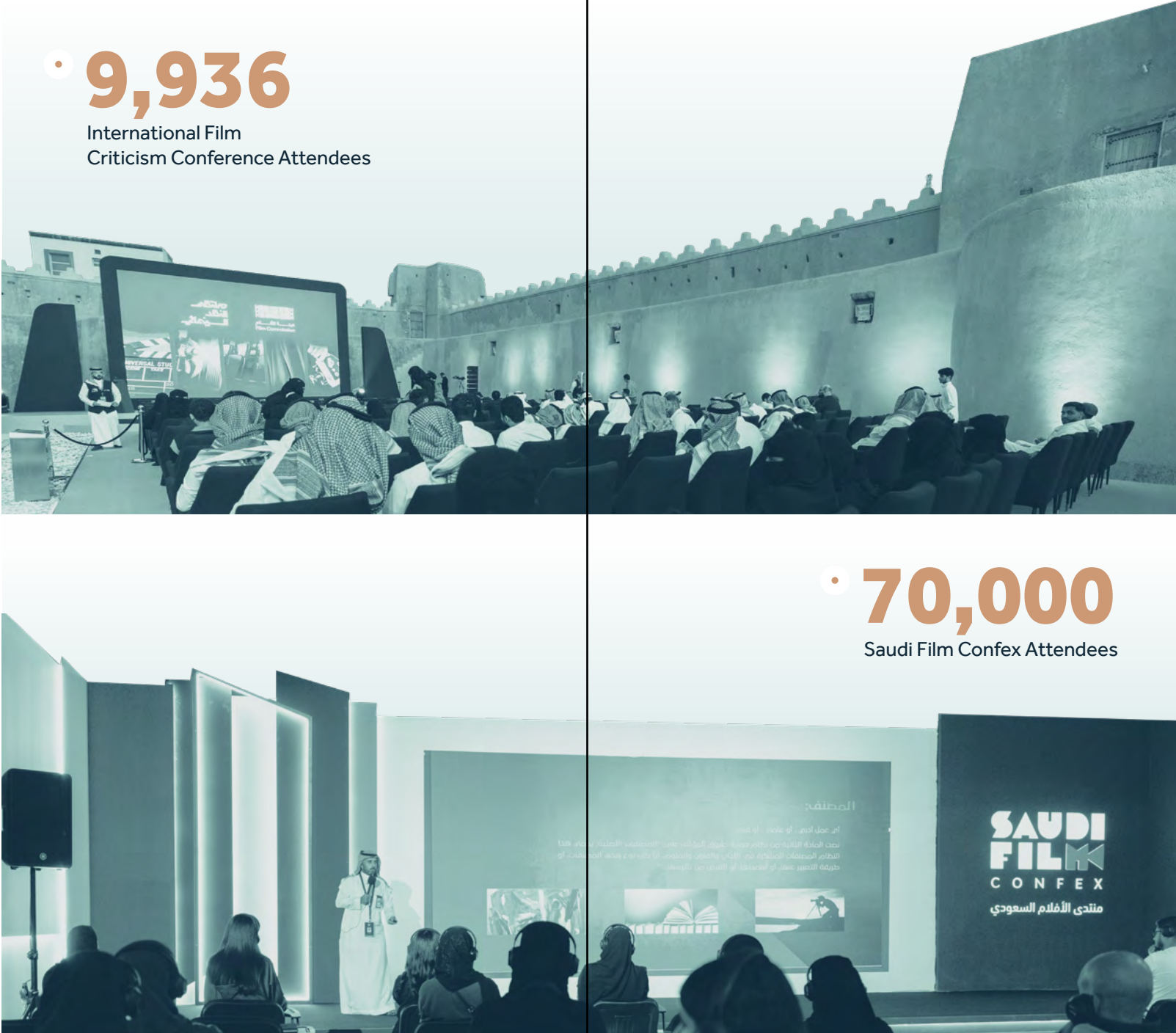
Film Conference Events

Total number of film-related conference events in KSA

There are currently two primary film-related conference events in KSA: Saudi Film Confex and the International Film Criticism Conference.

Saudi Film Confex serves as a meeting point for filmmakers, industry specialists, and a selection of local and international talent and producers to reflect on and look to the development of the KSA film industry. The event consists of an exhibition featuring top local, regional, and international companies involved in the film value chain, showcasing key opportunities and innovations, as well as a specialised conference that explores various aspects of the film industry.

The International Film Criticism Conference (FCC) is one of KSA's most prominent cultural and artistic events. This is an annual series of forums and conferences held in multiple KSA cities. The conference brings together local and international academic film critics and filmmakers to highlight the importance of film criticism in the process and development of filmmaking.



Total number of attendees at film-related conference events in KSA

There were approximately 80,000 admissions across Saudi Film Confex and the International Film Criticism Conference in 2024 (Table 41). This included at least 70,000 admissions to the Saudi Film Confex (up from 60,000 in 2023), and almost 10,000 admissions to the International Film Criticism Conference, with over 7,000 admissions in Riyadh, 1,500 in Al-Ahsa, and 1,200 in Hail.



Table 41 – Saudi Film Conference Event Attendees, 2024

2024 Conference Events	Saudi Film Confex	The International Film Criticism Conference
Admissions	70,000	9,936

I Source: SFC

Saudi Film Confex 2024

The Saudi Film Confex is a global platform connecting key players in the film industry to foster business opportunities, empower companies to build internationally competitive ventures, and inspire creatives to produce world-class films, driving the industry's growth.

Launched in 2023, the Saudi Film Confex has become a strategic platform supporting Saudi Arabia's *Vision 2030* by strengthening KSA's positioning as a global production hub and a centre for creative economic growth.

The second edition of the Saudi Film Confex was held from the 9th to 12th October 2024 in Riyadh. The 2024 programme attracted over 70,000 attendees and exhibitors from across 25 countries and 25 sectors (Figure 27). The event also welcomed key players from global markets such as Asia, Europe, the Americas, and Africa.

The exhibition featured 118 exhibition booths representing production, distribution, post-production, technology,

logistics, finance, education, tourism, marketing, and advertising. Alongside, 23 workshops, 13 dialogue sessions, and eight accompanying events enriched the programme with hands-on learning and creative exchanges. Accompanying events, networking lounges, talent showcases, and edutainment experiences added to the immersive environment, while the event achieved significant local and international media coverage.

Twenty-four agreements were signed, valued at 226 million (USD \$60.30 million), in addition to soft outcomes such as interest from international studios to enter the Saudi market, and enhanced global-local industry dialogue.

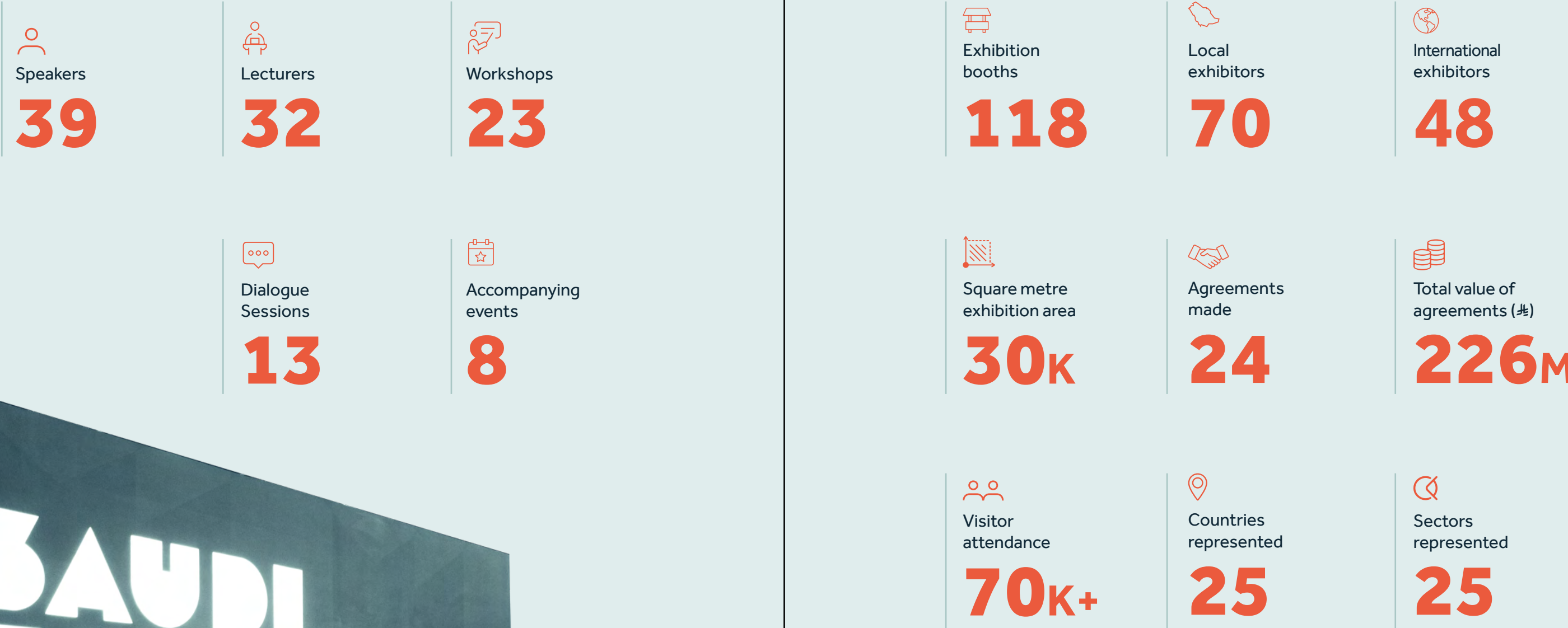
The conference addressed global trends, AI's role in cinema, emerging markets, and Saudi Arabia's growing influence in the global industry. Among other key stakeholders and international figures, KSA's Prince Turki Al Faisal bin Abdulaziz, who is the chairman of the King Faisal Foundation's Centre for Research and Islamic Studies, took part in a session, during which he highlighted the achievements of the KSA government in helping develop "**strong creative visions**".⁴²

42 Saudi Film Confex considers role of film as a tool of cultural diplomacy. ScreenDaily, 2024.



The third edition of Saudi Film Confex will be hosted in Riyadh in October 2025. For more information, visit saudifilmconfex.com

Figure 27 – Saudi Film Confex 2024



**SAUDI
FILM
CONFEX**

منتدى الأفلام السعودي



International Film Criticism Conference 2024

Organised by the SFC, the FCC brings together academic film critics and filmmakers from around the world. The conference is part of the SFC's strategy to promote cinema as a cultural mirror and catalyst and an essential component of societal and economic development, aiming to deepen cinema's role in cultural, social, and economic growth by empowering talent and advancing national experiences.⁴³

At the Riyadh event's opening ceremony, SFC CEO, Mr. Abdullah bin Nasser Al-Qahtani, stated that **"this conference has been created as a platform to bring together critics and cinematic innovators, providing them the opportunity to exchange ideas and experiences, ultimately leading to the formation of a deeper Arabic cinematic awareness that elevates our film sector to international levels, while staying true our authentic culture and identity".**⁴⁴

The second edition of the International Film Criticism Conference took place in 2024, with forums held in Hail and Al-Ahsa on 26th September 2024 and 24th October, respectively, before concluding with the final conference in Riyadh from the 6th to the 10th November 2024. The conference aims to highlight the importance of film criticism in the

development of filmmaking and explore recent trends in film analysis through its scientific forums, discussion sessions and workshops.

The 2024 FCC theme was 'Sound in Cinema'. Throughout the two forums and Riyadh conference, approximately 10,000 people from more than 20 countries attended a range of masterclasses, screenings, discussion panels and workshops. Events in 2024 included discussions with film critic Musab Alamri and director Mohammed Al Salman on who films are made for; and discussions on how films critics engage with documentary film with film critics Qais Qasim and Dr. Mohammed Albashir. There were also workshops on short film scriptwriting, as well as screenings of films such as *Maradona's Legs* (2019) and *Saleeg* (2023).

At the Riyadh opening ceremony, Saudi director Abdullah Al-Mohaisen stated that **"film criticism relies on sentient, honest, and purposeful criticism. It is the dynamic driver of development and creativity for the director. Cinema is and will always be a message before being anything else."**

43 Second Edition of Film Criticism Conference Concludes in Riyadh. Saudi Press Agency, 11th November 2024.

44 The International Film Criticism Conference is Launched in Riyadh. Antara, 9th November 2024.



The third edition of the International Film Criticism Conference series will take place in Abha (Aug 2025), Taif (Sep 2025), with the main conference in Riyadh (Nov 2025). For more information, visit: engage.moc.gov.sa/film_criticism_conference/





Film Archiving

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Introduction

The SFC's National Film Archive (NFA) has been instrumental in preserving KSA's rich cultural and cinematic heritage, as well as ensuring that historical content is accessible to filmmakers, researchers and film enthusiasts. In addition, the NFA aspires to become a Centre of Excellence for the preservation of Saudi and Arab cinematic heritage more widely.

How the SFC is Supporting

The SFC established the National Film Archive (NFA) to preserve, restore, digitise and provide access to the Saudi and Arab film heritage. The NFA's key objectives are:

- To preserve Saudi culture, as well as Arab cinematic heritage, and become a source of truth for the filmmaking community and the public
- To build capabilities and develop professionals in the art of preservation, restoration and archival research
- To provide public access to historical film content
- To enrich Arabic content on film and create broader awareness of the Saudi film industry.
- To gain international recognition as a leader in successful archive operations



2024
FACTS IN
FOCUS



The National Film Archive (NFA) has preserved approximately **68,000** items since 2022, including **6,439** new acquisitions added in 2024.



In 2024, the National Film Archive documented **33,268** and catalogued **1,029** films and related materials.

Conservation and Preservation of KSA Film Content

Total count of items acquired, preserved, documented and catalogued by the National Film Archive

By the end of 2024, a total of 68,009 items had been preserved at the NFA's Temporary Preservation Centre. In 2024, 6,439 new items were acquired, 33,268 were documented and 1,029 items were catalogued (Table 42).

The items preserved cover a wide range of mediums, including film reels, photographs, posters, filming equipment, and scripts (Table 43). These items are classified according to internationally recognised archival standards, recording their descriptive metadata, and cataloguing accordingly.

Table 42 – Total number of items acquired, preserved, documented, and catalogued by the NFA, 2024

Year	Count of Items			
	Acquired	Preserved	Documented	Catalogued
2024	6,439	68,009	33,268	1,029

I Source: SFC

Table 43 – Breakdown of total number of items acquired, preserved, documented, and catalogued by the NFA by category and type, 2024

Film and Audio-visual (FAV)	Film Reel	466	
	Digital File	90	
Objects (OBJ)	Projector	2	
	Script	98	
Paper Documents (DOC)	Poster	3,000	
	Newspaper Clippings	10,200	
	Diary	1	
Photographs (PHT)	Photograph	3,681	
	Album Photographs	471	
	Photo Negatives	50,000	

I Source: SFC

Film Deposit Initiative

The NFA's Film Deposit Initiative seeks to document KSA's rich cinematic history and preserve films, recognising their cultural, historical, and artistic value. It aims to ensure this heritage remains accessible for future generations.

The initiative collects Saudi films and cinema-related material (as detailed in Table 43) from filmmakers, public and private sectors, and production companies, depositing them into the NFA's collection. The preservation facility is equipped to store both analogue and digital formats in optimal conditions.

There are several deposit options: deposit-only, deposit with researcher access, and deposit with public access. These options enable learning programmes and general appreciation of cinematic heritage - ranging from classics to independent or home-made films.

So far, 182 films have been deposited under legal agreements. This includes all Bahraini director Bassam Al-Dhuwadi's films; the journalistic collection of writer and critic Hassan Haddad; and various cinema-related material by producer and director, Muhammad Qazzaz.

Sign up to the initiative [here](#):



Cinamaa Initiative

The Cinamaa Initiative for Enhancing Cinematic Knowledge Content (Cinamaa), led by the NFA, is one of the largest initiatives to enrich and promote cinematic knowledge content in the Arab world. This initiative is dedicated to delivering rich and engaging cinematic content to all those interested in films and related knowledge, through a variety of formats - written, audio, and visual.

Cinamaa offers a variety of resources that enrich the understanding of cinema, including books, articles, translations, interviews, magazines, blogs, podcasts, newsletters, and access to prestigious digital libraries, among others. The initiative supports critical thinking and analysis, expands academic horizons, fosters social interaction and dialogue, and nurtures promising talent in writing, analysis, translation, publishing, and filmmaking.

To date, the initiative has published and produced **1,200 articles, 30 books, 18 video blogs and 6 interviews**. There are ongoing efforts to meet the remaining targets, which include 200 new articles, a modern cinematic glossary, 60 research papers, translation and publication of 20 books, a collection of 1,000 books for the cinematic archive library, two open-access digital libraries for researchers and critics, 60 newsletters, four magazine issues, and 20 podcast episodes.



Natural and Cultural History Documentation Project

The Natural and Cultural History Documentation Project of Saudi Arabia is a collaborative effort with the French producers, 'The Explorers', in partnership with the local production company Qomra. The project documented KSA's diverse heritage and natural sites across 133 locations in 8K resolution, creating over 18,000 minutes of content available to beneficiaries through the NFA's platforms.

The project produced **100 illustrations and sketches, 18,000 raw video minutes** and a photo library containing **4,000 high-resolution images**.



هيئة الأفلام
Film Commission



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