

الهيئة العامة  
لتنظيم الإعلام  
GENERAL AUTHORITY  
OF MEDIA REGULATION



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# The State of Media Sector in the Kingdom of Saudi Arabia and opportunities for investment

EXECUTIVE SUMMARY

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2024



## Mr. Salman bin Yousef Al-Dossary

His Excellency the Minister of Media,  
Kingdom of Saudi Arabia.

Chairman of the Board of Directors,  
General Authority of Media Regulation

## Foreword by the Ministry of Media of the Kingdom of Saudi Arabia

In recent years, Saudi Arabia's media sector has undergone a radical transformation, underpinned by Vision 2030's ambitious goals of economic diversification and promoting innovation. This evolution extends beyond economics, encompassing state-of-the-art infrastructure upgrades and robust regulatory framework development to ensure sustainable growth in the domestic media sector.

As Saudi Arabia progresses towards its Vision 2030 targets, we attract global attention, offering a platform to showcase the boundless potential of our media sector to provide unprecedented opportunities to companies and investors eager to participate in this transformative journey.

2024 marks the Year of Media Transformation in Saudi Arabia, signifying a new era for the Kingdom's media sector, which adapts to emerging transformational factors, most notably the shifting audience preferences, and provides fair and inclusive access to funding. The focus on nurturing young Saudi talents — creative minds capable of global influence — combined with strategic planning and resource allocation, and cutting-edge infrastructure, well positions us to dramatically elevate Saudi media's presence on the global stage. This approach is set to exceed all expectations.

This report is an important step in cementing Saudi Arabia's position as a leader in the future of regional media, under the leadership of the Ministry of Media. It serves as both an inaugural edition of an annual report series and a comprehensive reference documenting the sector's progress. Moreover, it spotlights success stories and opportunities available to investors, media professionals, and consumers, inviting them to join Saudi Arabia's media ecosystem as it gains deserved international recognition.

We are committed to providing an effective regulatory environment that balances innovation with consumer protection. This approach not only increases investment flows but also ensures the creation of distinguished media content that resonates with societal needs and values.

We welcome all those who wish to join us on this unique journey to explore the tremendous opportunities offered by Saudi media sector and contribute to achieving a bright and prosperous future for this vital sector.

# Glossary

## a-b

**AdTech.** Technologies and platforms used to automate, optimize, and analyze the process of delivering advertisements to target audiences across various digital channels, including display, video, mobile, and social media

**Advertising Video on Demand (AVOD).** Streaming service that provides free content to viewers supported by advertisements

**AR.** Augmented Reality

**ARPU.** Average revenue per user

## c-d

**CAGR.** Compound Annual Growth Rate

**Digital audio advertising.** Pre- and in-stream Audio ads that appear in music and podcast streaming services

**Digital classifieds.** Online platforms where individuals or businesses can advertise goods, services or job opportunities. These platforms are typically websites or apps that allow users to create and post ads for a fee or for free

**Digital media.** Digital newspapers & magazines, OTT video, and music streaming

## e-l

**E-books.** Digital versions of printed books that can be read on electronic devices

**Electronic Sell-Through (EST).** Refers to individual purchases of films or series as direct downloads, analogous to the purchase of a DVD or Blu-ray

For the purpose of currency conversion in this report, 1 USD = 3.75 SAR

**E-Sports.** Competitive video gaming at a professional level, often organized into leagues and tournaments with substantial prize pools

**ICT.** Information and Communication Technology

**IP.** Intellectual Property

**Internet of Things (IoT).** Network of interconnected devices embedded with sensors, software, and other technologies to exchange data

## m-r

**Machine Learning (ML).** Subset of artificial intelligence where systems learn from data to improve performance on a specific task

**No Objection Certificate (NOC).** Official document issued by KSA authority to indicate no objection to a request or proposal made by an individual or organization

**Out-of-Home (OOH).** Advertising or marketing efforts targeted at consumers when they are outside of their homes, such as billboards, transit ads, and street furniture advertising

**Over-the-Top (OTT).** Content delivery directly to viewers via the internet, bypassing traditional cable or satellite television platforms

**Role-Playing Game (RPG).** A genre of video game where players assume the roles of characters in a fictional setting, typically with the goal of completing quests, exploring worlds, and developing their characters' abilities and attributes

## S

**Search Engine Optimization (SEO).** Process of improving a website's ranking on search engines to create higher visibility and increase organic traffic

**Software as a Service (SaaS).** Software delivery model where applications are hosted by a third-party provider and accessed by users over the internet, typically on a subscription basis

**Subscription Video on Demand (SVOD).** Streaming service that offers unlimited access to a library of video content for a recurring fee

## t-z

**Third-Party Game (TPG).** Video game developed by a company or individual other than the platform holder

**Traditional media.** Print media, linear TV, and traditional radio

**Transactional Video on Demand (TVOD).** Streaming service that allows users to rent or purchase individual pieces of content on a pay-per-view basis

**Triple-A Games (AAA Games).** High-budget video games developed by major studios with significant resources, typically featuring advanced graphics, expansive worlds, and polished gameplay

**User-Generated Content (UGC).** Content created by users rather than traditional content producers

# CONTENTS

## 01

Introduction 04

## 02

Decoding the six sectoral shifts that are shaping the media landscape in KSA 06

## 03

Video Segment 14

## 04

Audio Segment 16

## 05

Publishing Segment 18

## 06

Gaming Segment 20

## 07

Advertising Segment 22

## 08

Conclusion 24

## 09

Acknowledgement 26

# An impressive story of national transformation

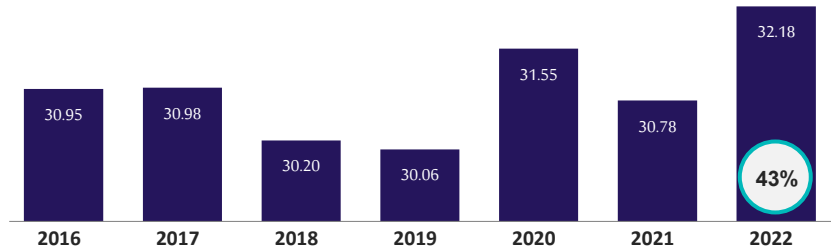
Saudi Arabia is demonstrating foundational traits and impressive achievements<sup>1</sup> that bode well for the targeted multiyear transformation led by Vision 2030

## Young population

The demographic growth of Saudi Arabia has been notable over the past years (32.18M in 2022<sup>1</sup>), with its population characterized by a large young demographic. Currently, **43% of Saudis are under the age of 39**

### Conducive demographic growth, population in Million<sup>1</sup>

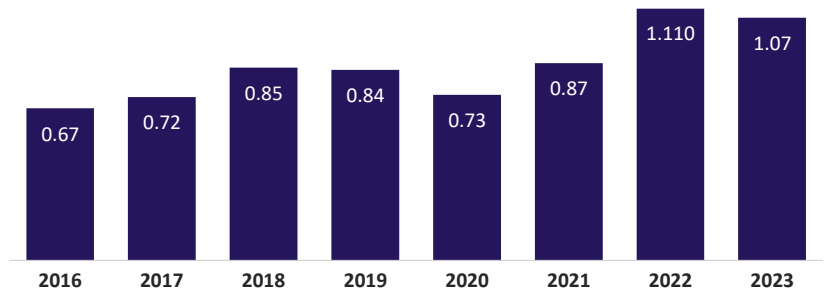
○ Share of total population under 39 years



## \$1 Trillion of added GDP

Saudi Arabia is one of the **fastest-growing economies worldwide**, especially among G20 countries. The Kingdom's economy achieved a notable landmark, **surpassing the \$1 trillion mark** in nominal GDP since the announcement of Vision 2030

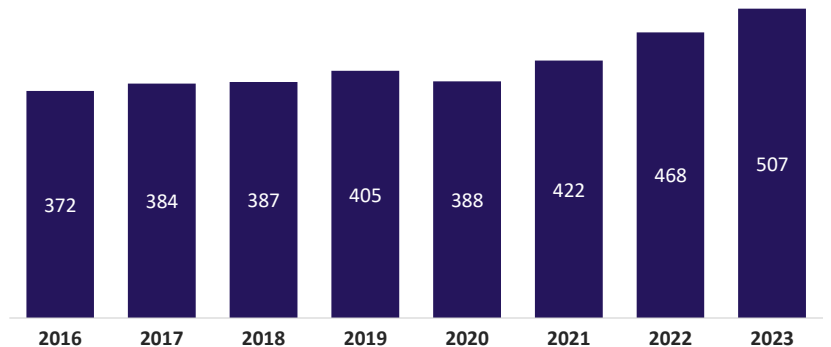
### Strong economic growth, GDP value in USD \$ Trillions<sup>2</sup>



## The economic diversification journey

Saudi Arabia's non-oil sector growth is a testament to the country's successful economic diversification. The share of non-oil-related activities **expanded by 4.7%<sup>3</sup> in 2023**, now accounting for almost 50% of the GDP

### Non-oil GDP contribution, in USD \$ Billions<sup>2</sup>



1. GASTAT  
 2. Saudi Arabia: A Story of Transformation (2016 – 2023) report  
 3. Based on constant 2010 prices

# Media sector as a driver of economic growth

Ensuring the growth of the media sector is a critical enabler of Vision 2030

Following years of business as usual, the Saudi media sector found itself on the brink of transformative change with the introduction of Saudi Vision 2030. With the announcement of the **nation-wide transformation**, the primary objective is to cultivate the media sector to enhance the lives of the Saudi population and establish itself as the region's content hub.

This new vision is centered around a series of strategic objectives that Saudi Arabia is actively pursuing, including:

- Enhancing entertainment options and quality.
- Safeguarding national heritage and values
- Enhancing KSA's image locally and globally
- Boosting economic contribution

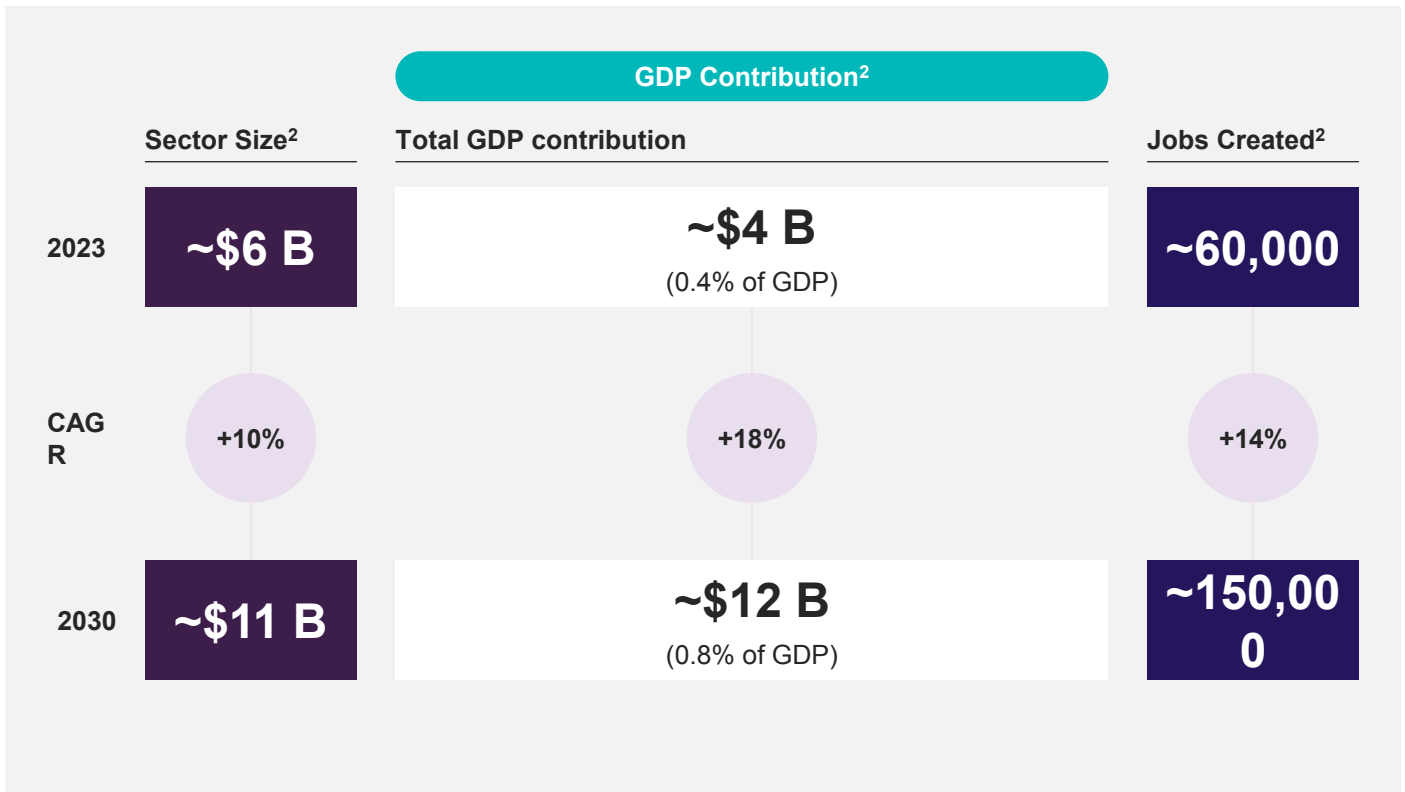
**Vision 2030** is set to revolutionize the national media industry, transforming it into a hub of activity that not only attracts and fairly compensates talent

from around the world but also fosters innovation and plays a vital role in expanding the economic foundation.

Saudi Arabia's media sector is poised for significant growth, driven by its **youthful demographic profile**. With the highest population growth rate among G20 nations and 43% of its population being youth, the Kingdom is at the forefront of an evolving media landscape and digital revolution. This demographic dividend not only stimulates innovation and creativity but also propels the sector's growth.

The media sector in Saudi Arabia holds **immense potential for socio-economic development** and is strategically vital. The General Authority of Media Regulation (Gmedia) estimates that by 2030, the media sector will contribute roughly USD 12 billion (SAR 45 billion) to the national GDP, with significant growth in domestic job creation.

## Media sector economic impact<sup>1</sup>

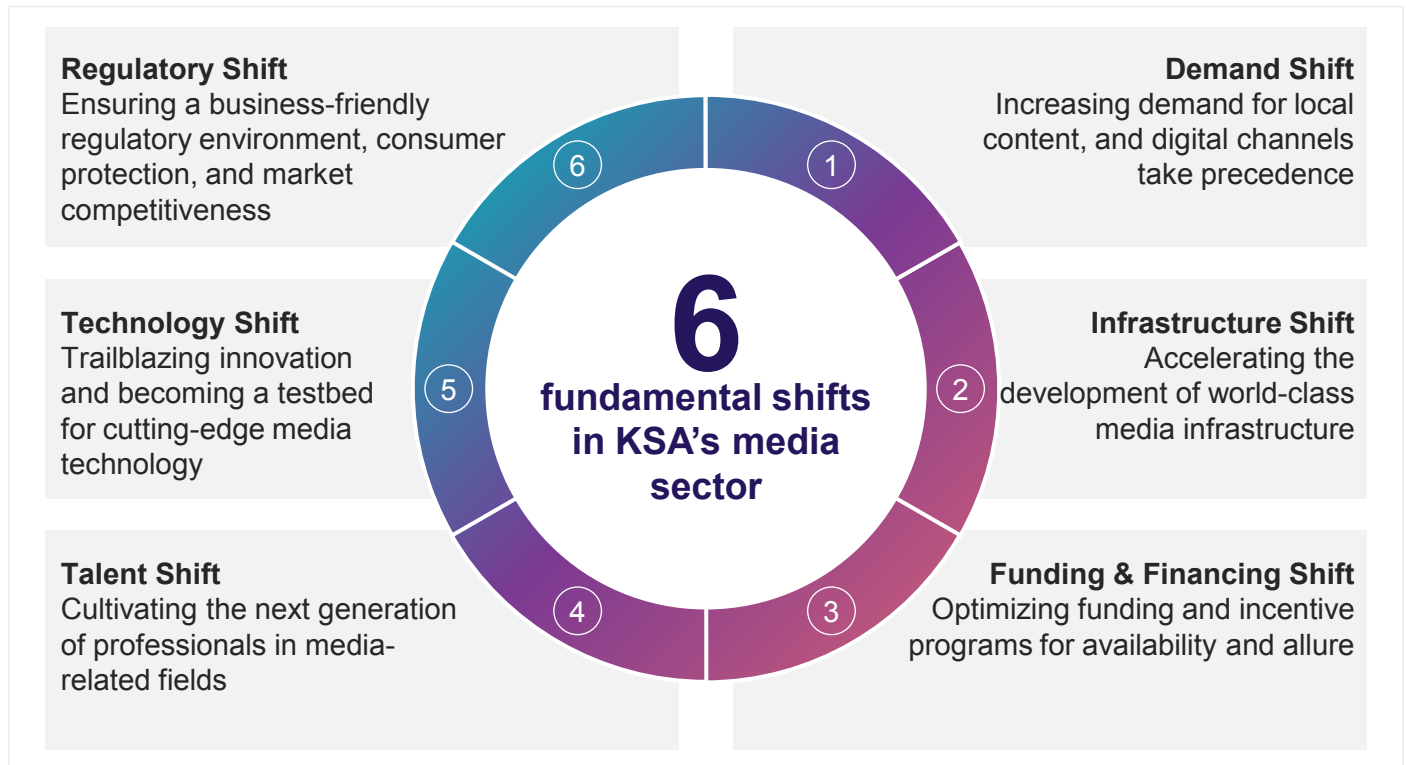


1. Numbers shown are rounded and in USD  
 2. Arthur D. Little estimate

# Decoding the six sectoral shifts that are shaping the media sector in KSA and opportunities for media investors

Within the media landscape of Saudi Arabia, six significant transformations are reshaping the sector, each influenced by the unique starting conditions and cultural attributes of the Kingdom.

These transformations are driving profound changes and unlocking strategic opportunities for both new entrants and international investors.



## Opportunities for regional and international media investors

<p><b>A Drive local content development monetization</b></p>	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> <li>Establish partnerships for content co-development and production, sharing platforms, and content libraries to meet the growing demand for local content, blockbuster films, and Arabic music streaming content.</li> <li>Collaborate with adjacent sector players to leverage media convergence and capabilities, particularly in the gaming segment.</li> </ul>
<p><b>B Support leading-edge media infrastructures</b></p>	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> <li>Forge long-term strategic and operational partnerships with giga-projects to leverage the growing demand for film studios, cinema theaters, opera houses, and gaming venues.</li> <li>Collaborate to co-develop and operate state-of-the-art media infrastructures incorporated with environmentally sustainable solutions and components.</li> </ul>
<p><b>C Drive best-in-class media talents development</b></p>	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> <li>Collaborate with domestic academic institutions and giga-projects to develop media education programs through partnerships.</li> <li>Establish campuses and facilitate academic exchanges in KSA, focusing on video, music, and gaming fields to enhance student opportunities and ensure financial sustainability.</li> </ul>
<p><b>D Financially support national media crown jewels</b></p>	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> <li>Provide Private Equity's customized and flexible private credit lending solutions to facilitate financing media businesses and support content creation and distribution, and adjacent agencies.</li> <li>Support companies with VC's early to mid-stage funding structures to enhance business and operating models.</li> </ul>
<p><b>E Localize next-generation technologies</b></p>	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> <li>Partner with public stakeholders and industry participants to deliver and co-develop highly innovative and scalable technological solutions tailored to the specific needs of media verticals.</li> </ul>

# 01: Demand Shift

Increasing demand for local original content and digital channels takes precedence

In line with global trends, the post-pandemic world in Saudi Arabia has deepened consumer behaviors, accelerated digital disruption and it leading to industry tipping points in the years ahead. Many ongoing shifts — such as the relentless rise of streaming, transition to digital news media, and the growing influence of gaming and user-generated content—have gained momentum. The changes brought by Vision 2030 have significantly shifted audience demand towards content that clearly aligns with the values and narratives of the Kingdom.. Given the growing demand for Saudi-centric media content with an emphasis on local culture and values, the media audience in Saudi Arabia is rapidly creating opportunities at the intersection of local content that can be accessed anytime and anywhere through digital mediums.

Media consumers in Saudi Arabia are clear-minded about what they want to watch, read, listen to, and play, and they are now firmly in control of how they spend their two largely finite resources – time and money. This has led to the growth of specific content formats, such as podcasts, which are supported by the

influencer economy. Saudi Arabia is the leader in podcast content in the Arab world, with over 67% of its adult population listening to at least one hour of podcasts per week.

Thmanyah, a Saudi content producer, has rapidly become the most popular podcast producer in the Arab world within a short timespan of eight years. This massive addressable market represents an opportunity for digital audio platforms, key opinion leaders, and media organizations.



## Case Study – User statistics of Thmanyah



Established in Saudi Arabia in 2016, Thmanyah has swiftly emerged as a top-tier producer of Arabic podcasts and documentaries, garnering acclaim throughout the MENA region. Boasting an unrivaled library of premium Arabic content, its podcasts like "Socrates," "Swalif Business," "Things That Changed Us," and the immensely popular "Fnjan" talk show, boasting over 1.6 million average monthly listeners, have captivated audiences. Thmanyah's commitment to excellence in content creation sets it apart as a leader in the industry.



**2.8+ M**

Followers across online media platforms



**6**

Local & regional content awards



**30+**

New documentary episodes monthly



**180+**

Documentaries produced



**18**

Radio programs



**1+ M**

Weekly downloads



**126+ M**

Total podcast streams



**56+ M**

Total movie views

1. Thmanyah website



## 02: Infrastructure Shift

### Accelerating the development of world-class media infrastructure

With the reopening of the cinema scene in 2018, Saudi Arabia has entered a new era in media infrastructure. This development has not only revitalized content exhibition but also led to exponential growth in media-related production infrastructure. Giga-projects such as NEOM and AIUla are driving this growth, contributing to what is now over 35 film studios across the country. The development of physical media infrastructure remains a top priority for public stakeholders and a crucial enabler for the flourishing private sector. The

acceleration of technical infrastructures, such as studios equipped with capabilities required across the entire production cycle, is fueled by the continuous growth of new media companies localizing their businesses in the Kingdom. Additionally, the number of physical distribution channels, including cinema theaters, music venues, and gaming centers, is increasing to meet the growing demand of media consumers and communities.

### AIUla and NEOM



#### Media facilities at AIUla

AIUla is an area of outstanding natural beauty and cultural significance, covering over 22,500 square kilometers, and serves as the perfect backdrop for a wide range of filming endeavors. The film production complex and audio recording studio at AIUla offer a range of services and facilities for high-quality productions.

This full-service facility comprises two 2,415 sqm soundstages and control rooms, alongside a variety of supporting facilities. Ads for international companies such as Bentley and Porsche were also shot here

**235+**  
TV series, docufilms, and commercial promos till 2023

**5**  
feature films wrapped till 2023

**355**  
permits issued till 2023

Lucrative production incentives program



نيوم NEOM

#### Media facilities in NEOM

Both NEOM's Media Village and Bajdah Studios provide state-of-the-art infrastructure tailored to the diverse needs of filmmakers, offering a total of 12,000 sqm of production space in addition to support and backlot facilities.

With the capacity to collectively accommodate over 350 people, the Media Village and Bajdah Studios combine effectiveness and convenience, making NEOM a premier destination for filmmakers and investors. NEOM houses popular TV shows such as the Top Chef Middle East and Million Dollar Land which are aired on MBC.

**35+**  
major productions

**2**  
world-class production hubs

Lucrative production incentives program









# 03: Funding/Financing Shift

## Optimizing funding and incentive programs for availability and allure

As the Kingdom's media market undergoes rapid evolution, it is establishing itself as one of the most advanced media ecosystems in terms of the availability and attractiveness of funding and incentive programs. The diverse range of funding and financing programs not only supports businesses across the media value chain but also encourages them to consider relocating

their operations to Saudi Arabia. These efforts aim to foster a culture of financial accountability within the private sector and fiscal responsibility at the public sector level, thus ensuring a healthy media ecosystem and maximizing economic contribution, in alignment with Vision 2030.

		Development	Production	Aggregation	Distribution	Monetization
Cash rebates	 <b>KSA Film Commission:</b> Cash rebate covering up to 40% of qualifying expenditure for selected projects; grant schemes supporting emerging talents and facilitating film production in KSA.	✓	✓		✓	
	 <b>NEOM:</b> Highly competitive cash rebate covering at least 40% of qualifying expenditure related to the production films.	✓	✓			
	 <b>Film Alula:</b> Cash rebates covering up to 40% of qualifying expenditure, including location scouting, government liaison, talent & crew recruitment services and logistical assistance.	✓	✓		✓	
Funding	 <b>IGNITE:</b> \$1.1 B program to boost digital content creation in KSA, including: <ul style="list-style-type: none"> <li>Financial support of \$243 M (SAR 908 M) to Culture Development Fund of which \$234 M (SAR 879 M) goes to Film Sector Financing Program</li> <li>Financial support for talent development programs and digital content producers</li> <li>Funding for digital content infrastructure development</li> <li>Funds for intellectual property (IP) protection</li> </ul>	✓	✓		✓	
Govt. Financing	 <b>Cultural Development Fund:</b> <ul style="list-style-type: none"> <li>Launched a \$234 M (SAR 879 M) Film Sector Financing Program, funded via IGNITE, with 30% of financing dedicated to establishing film companies and facilities, and 70% to content development, production, and distribution</li> <li>Launched with MEFIC Capital and Roaa Media Ventures a \$100 M (SAR 375 M) Saudi Film Fund to attract filmmakers and forge partnerships with major international studios, fostering a vibrant cinematic ecosystem within Saudi Arabia</li> </ul>	✓	✓		✓	
Other	 <b>The Royal Commission for Riyadh City and the Ministry of Investment:</b> As part of the <b>Regional Headquarters Program</b> , media players are given incentives to relocate their regional headquarters to KSA, including 30-year exemption for corporate income tax.	✓	✓	✓	✓	✓

With the availability of a wide range of funding and financing mechanisms including Kafalah, Saudi Arabia's media ecosystem presents vast opportunities for private equity and venture capital (PE/VC) investments. For example, funds can support the media industry by providing private credit as bespoke and flexible lending solutions for financing media businesses and supporting content creation and distribution. This lending spectrum extends from

studios producing TV shows and movies to related businesses such as streaming services and talent agencies. Furthermore, PE and VC can find multiple opportunities to back companies with early to mid-stage funding to enhance their business and operating models, expanding into adjacent spaces like live entertainment and sports, especially as production value becomes increasingly sophisticated.

Source: Publication analysis, organizations' websites, Arthur D. Little analysis













# 04: Talent Shift

## Cultivating the next generation of professionals in media-related fields

Saudi Arabia is actively fostering development of its local workforce through initiatives aimed at reforming education, expanding vocational training, and incentivizing Saudization policies. These initiatives encompass comprehensive reforms targeting educational quality enhancement and alignment with dynamic labor market demands. Investments in the expansion of vocational training are further bolstering skill acquisition among Saudi youth across diverse sectors. These efforts not only support the growth and

development of the local workforce but also contribute to creating a more inclusive and diverse business environment in the Kingdom.

In the media sector, stakeholders are actively assisting talent development efforts by offering specialized programs and vocational training to empower aspiring professionals. These initiatives demonstrate a concerted effort to cultivate and support a thriving media ecosystem in the Kingdom.

Cinema	Music	Journalism	Gaming
 <p>Since 2016, Effat University has held partnerships with the New York University Tisch School of the Arts and has offered bachelor's degree programs in cinematic arts to Saudi women.</p>	 <p>In 2022, the Music Commission launched the first world-wide Virtual Music Academy available to domestic and international students, offering music training programs on disciplines, including visual broadcasting, Virtual and augmented reality.</p>	<p>There are several universities that play a significant role in shaping the field of journalism and media studies in KSA, offering a range of undergraduate and graduate programs:</p>	 <p>In 2022, the Saudi Esports Federation launched the Saudi Esports Academy, offering certified professional education and training programs focused on various esports-related disciplines. Recently, the academy celebrated its first batch of graduates from master's degree and diploma programs, preparing them for careers in gaming.</p>
 <p>Dar Al Hekma University offers programs in collaboration with the New York Film Academy.</p>	 <p>The Nahawand Academy of Arts has partnered with the Gnesins Russian Academy of Music to establish an international music academy in Saudi Arabia, the Nahawand Center, offering educational programs, training, and musical research initiatives.</p>	 <p>King Saud University, recognized for its programs in Broadcast Journalism</p>	
 <p>Film AlUla with the Creative Media Skills Institute, launched a 10-day vocational film industry bootcamp to prepare local talents in various ATL/BTL roles.</p>		 <p>King AbdulAziz University, known for its focus on Broadcast Journalism</p>	
 <p>The Film Commission launched the Kader Program, an initiative in collaboration with international production houses to integrate up to 50 trainees into ongoing projects for practical training.</p>		 <p>Umm Al Qura University, offers Bachelor Programs in Journalism</p>	
		 <p>King Faisal University, provides a Master in Media and Communication Sciences</p>	
		 <p>King Khalid University, provides programs related to Journalism and Digital Media</p>	

Despite recent significant developments in media education, there is still a gap between the supply of educational programs and the demand driven by a young population increasingly interested in pursuing a career in the growing media sector. Partnerships for education delivery have emerged as effective approaches for academic institutions in the Middle East

to address capacity constraints and enhance the quality of education offered, providing investment opportunities to foreign academic institutions and operators. These partnerships involve aspects like back-office functions, infrastructure and logistics, and co-development of academic programs and curriculums.

Source: Publication analysis, organizations' websites, Arthur D. Little analysis

# 05: Technology Shift


## Trailblazing innovation and becoming a testbed for cutting-edge media technology

Technological advancements have profoundly impacted Saudi Arabia's media landscape, driving a transformative shift towards embracing next-generation technologies and services. Aspiring to become one of the world's most innovative media hubs, Saudi Arabia recognizes the critical role played by cutting-edge technology in empowering the media sector. These technologies facilitate seamless connectivity and efficient content delivery, fostering innovation and development within


the sector. Saudi Arabia has made significant strides in developing 5G technology, AI use cases, cloud computing, and data centers. Apart from direct investment and business localization in the Kingdom, there are vast opportunities for investors to leverage the growth of all these enabling technologies for co-developing innovative technology solutions dedicated to media businesses with domestic technology and media players.

### 5G


KSA has made significant progresses in developing 5G technology, positioning itself as a regional leader.




**78%**  
Nationwide 5G availability



**322 Mbps**  
Average 5G speed in KSA, 59% faster than global




**\$18B**  
GDP boost from 5G infrastructure CAPEX by 2030




**75**  
Cities with plans to avail 5G coverage<sup>1</sup>

### Cloud Computing


Cloud computing in KSA is experiencing significant growth, with the national Cloud First Policy driving the adoption of cloud-based solutions.




**\$2.5B**  
Expected annual spending on public cloud services by 2026



**13%**  
Estimated CAGR of public cloud services by 2028




**40%**  
Increase in cloud computing permits issued in 2023




Public cloud partners

### Artificial Intelligence


KSA sees the opportunity to balance innovative disruption and enhanced productivity through AI and has actively invested in AI across sectors.



**\$135B**  
AI's potential GDP contribution by 2030




**12%**  
of GDP




The Public Investment Fund (PIF) has reportedly been planning the creation of a \$40 billion fund dedicated solely to investing in artificial intelligence and partnering with several technology companies. In discussions with prominent entities such as Andreessen Horowitz, the PIF is focused on forming strategic partnerships, reaffirming its dedication to advancing AI projects and technologies through collaborative endeavors.

### Data Centers

KSA is attracting substantial investments in data centers through partnerships with leading international players.




**\$2B+**  
Size of KSA domestic data center market by 2028




**12%**  
CAGR of KSA domestic data center market, 2024-28


**Major data center investments**




**\$5.3B**



**\$2.1B**



**\$1.5B**



**\$0.4B**

KSA is investing significantly in next-generation technology to grow its media sector. Source: GSMA Intelligence, Ookla, IDC, Ministry of Commerce, Statista, Arab News, PIF, CIO, Research and Markets

1. stc Group to expand 5G network in over 75 Saudi cities

# 06: Regulatory Shift

Ensuring a business-friendly regulatory environment, consumer protection, and market competitiveness

Regulations serve as the cornerstone for promoting clarity, transparency, and ease of doing business for both domestic and foreign media entities and investors alike. To advance the vision of the media sector in Saudi Arabia and strengthen its narrative of growth, pivotal regulatory initiatives have been set in motion.

These initiatives are designed to provide industry participants with a holistic governance framework, comprehensive regulatory guidelines, and a robust compliance system rooted in public mandates, national legislation, and sector-specific regulations.

Sector Governance	Regulatory Framework
 <p><b>Ministry of Media</b> Facilitates the media sector development of strategic initiatives</p>	 <p><b>Legal framework of KSA</b> KSA Law as foundational system of laws and regulations generally applicable in the Kingdom</p>
 <p><b>Ministry of Culture</b> Orchestrates the development, supported by its commissions on Film, Music, and Literature, Publishing &amp; Translation.</p>	 <p><b>Gmedia</b> Regulates the media content across the 5 media segments and ensures compliance with the policies</p>
 <p><b>Ignite</b> Supports the governance and orchestration of media activities (e.g., overseeing progress)</p>	 <p><b>Ministry of Human Resources and Social Development</b> KSA Labor Law as foundational systems of regulations governing employment in the Kingdom</p>
 <p><b>Ministry of Investment</b> Oversees ease-of-doing business conditions and access to investment incentives</p>	 <p><b>Ministry of Investment</b> Regulates the process and requirements for foreign investors</p>
 <p><b>Ministry of Commerce</b> Facilitate the establishment and practice of enterprises in the media sector</p>	 <p><b>Ministry of Media</b> Aligns on the media sector policy, goals, and direction</p>
 <p><b>Monsha'at</b> Provide support and possible incentives to small and medium enterprises in the media sector</p>	 <p><b>Communications, Space &amp; Technology Commission</b> Facilitates media platform regulation (technology layer)</p>
 <p><b>Public Investment Fund</b> Co-ordinates the identification of white spaces in the media sector related investment opportunities</p>	 <p><b>Film Commission</b> Regulates and supports the film sector, empowering the filmmakers in the Kingdom</p>
 <p><b>Ministry of Human Resources and Social Development</b> Oversees the media jobs classification and skills/competences development</p>	 <p><b>Music Commission</b> Regulates and oversees the development of the music sector, thus empowering the musical talent</p>
 <p><b>Ministries of Sport, Tourism and General Entertainment Authority</b> Supports the monetization of media content in adjacent sectors</p>	 <p><b>Literature Publishing and Translation Commission</b> Regulates and manages the literature, publishing and translation sectors in KSA</p>
 <p><b>Local development authorities</b> Drive the development of regional vision and strategic objectives for their media sector</p>	 <p><b>Saudi Authority for Intellectual Property</b> Develops and enforces regulations and laws that govern the media IP</p>
	 <p><b>Saudi Data &amp; AI Authority</b> Develops regulations and enforces compliance through binding and voluntary measures</p>

Source: Publication analysis, organizations' websites, Gmedia, Arthur D. Little analysis

Gmedia is poised to play a critical role within the media regulatory landscape to establish KSA as the regional Media hub. Through strategic revision of media law, Gmedia aims to enhance local content production, bolster child online safety measures, and promote educational programs.

This proactive approach seeks to cultivate transparency, attract investment, and safeguard consumer interests across all media segments. Furthermore, Gmedia is committed to ensuring equal opportunities in the media industry, fostering diverse representation and accessibility across media platforms.

By promoting accountability and transparency, Gmedia aims to create a conducive environment for both local and international media professionals. To stimulate foreign investment and foster localization, Gmedia is developing regulations for media special economic zones and enhancing press freedom. These initiatives aim to create favorable conditions for global investment in Saudi Arabia's media sector.

Additionally, Gmedia is facilitating the growth of the media workforce through training academies and institutions, preparing the next generation of professionals for diverse careers in the field. In tandem with this effort, Saudi Arabia has launched the National Intellectual Property Strategy to establish a comprehensive, well-balanced IP value chain that promotes innovation competitiveness and economic growth.

The Saudi Authority of Intellectual Property has undergone a strategic overhaul to align with this strategy, prioritizing service excellence and fostering a dynamic IP ecosystem crucial for driving innovation and economic growth in the media sector.



The media law in Saudi Arabia is undergoing a revamp, driving forward crucial updates to foster the evolving media landscape. Source: Gmedia

Gmedia Strategy	National IP Strategy												
<p><b>Vision.</b> To provide clear and fair regulatory environment that enables a vibrant media sector, while promoting KSA's identity</p> <p><b>Mission.</b> To create an investor friendly regulatory environment that fosters a competitive media ecosystem, which is transparent and accountable and that enhances the country's soft power</p>	<p><b>Vision.</b> Robust IP ecosystem fostering innovation-driven economy</p> <p><b>Mission.</b> To establish a comprehensive well-balanced IP value chain that promote innovation competitiveness and economic growth</p>												
<p><b>Strategic Pillars</b></p> <table border="1"> <tr> <td>Support KSA in becoming the regional media hub and provider of talent and infrastructure for the media segment, attracting major regional media houses</td> <td>Update Media Law, develop investor-friendly regulatory framework with liberalized licensing regime, delivered through a one-stop-shop</td> <td>Build and adopt best-in-class monitoring mechanisms and tools to safeguard consumers</td> <td>Become an efficient and effective organization which can attract and retain talent</td> </tr> </table>	Support KSA in becoming the regional media hub and provider of talent and infrastructure for the media segment, attracting major regional media houses	Update Media Law, develop investor-friendly regulatory framework with liberalized licensing regime, delivered through a one-stop-shop	Build and adopt best-in-class monitoring mechanisms and tools to safeguard consumers	Become an efficient and effective organization which can attract and retain talent	<table border="1"> <tr> <td rowspan="2"><b>Objectives</b></td> <td>Develop creative individuals based on imagination and challenge</td> <td>Foster enterprises based on IP</td> <td>Achieve society based on respect for creation effort</td> </tr> <tr> <td><b>Overall economic impact</b></td> <td>Growth of technology-based industries and the expansion of the intellectual property services industry</td> <td>Create new professional jobs with IP expertise</td> <td>Contribute to improve profit-making capabilities of companies</td> </tr> </table>	<b>Objectives</b>	Develop creative individuals based on imagination and challenge	Foster enterprises based on IP	Achieve society based on respect for creation effort	<b>Overall economic impact</b>	Growth of technology-based industries and the expansion of the intellectual property services industry	Create new professional jobs with IP expertise	Contribute to improve profit-making capabilities of companies
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Source: Gmedia, Publication analysis, Arthur D. Little analysis

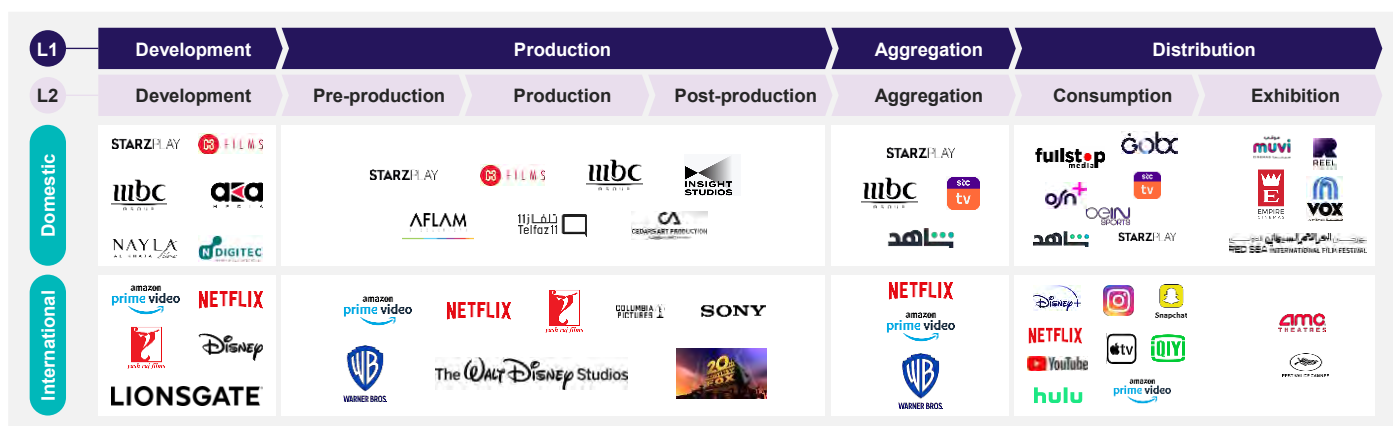
# Video Segment

Saudi Arabia's video segment features a mix of local and international players like Netflix and Shahid from MBC Group, which had a successful IPO in 2024. Reality TV show such as Arabs Got Talent and Comedy series such as Al-Hosn aired on MBC are popular amongst the audience. There is a trend of creating original content for the local audience, seen in platforms like Netflix, Starzplay, and Shahid. Telfaz11, a Riyadh-based studio, gained prominence with its local content, notably with the success of its film "Sattar", surpassing even the viewership of "Avatar: The Way of Water" in Saudi Arabia.

## Key national objectives

- A** Foster infrastructure development for a comprehensive video production ecosystem.
- B** Establish inclusive educational programs to empower individuals and attract diverse talent.
- C** Implement robust financial incentives and funding mechanisms to stimulate growth in the video segment.
- D** Develop a strong video content distribution ecosystem across platforms and strengthen distribution partnerships.

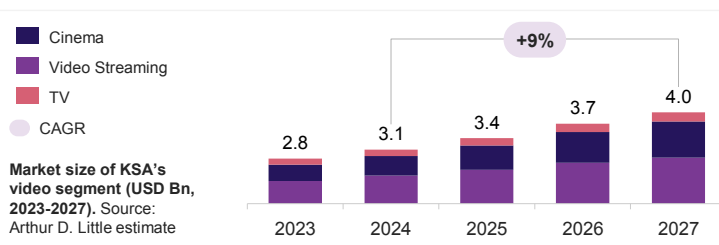
## Business overview



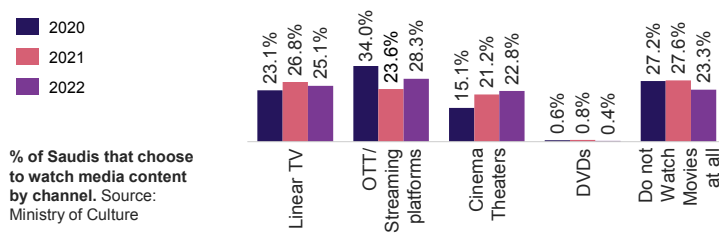
KSA video segment's value chain. Illustrative and non-exhaustive. Source: Arthur D. Little

By 2027, the video segment in KSA is expected to reach a market size of ~USD 4 billion (SAR 15 billion), growing at a CAGR of ~9%. This growth is primarily driven by the rapid expansion of the cinema sector (CAGR of ~19%), and video streaming (CAGR of ~10%), compensating the decline in the TV subscription market (CAGR of ~-6%).

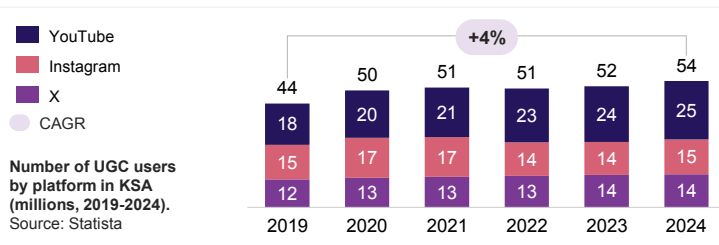
The cinema sector in Saudi Arabia has experienced significant growth in recent years, driven by cinema operators such as muvi Cinemas and AMC Cinemas, among others. Meanwhile, the growth in OTT is fueled by renowned international players like Netflix and Starzplay, alongside Shahid



Consumer behavior in Saudi Arabia has significantly changed, reflecting a preference for digital, immersive, and cinematic experiences. There has been a decline in movie viewership via television channels, while virtual streaming platforms like Shahid and Netflix are becoming increasingly popular. Additionally, cinemas have experienced a consistent rise in popularity during this time.



From 2019 to 2023, the total number of UGC users on major platforms like YouTube, Instagram, and Twitter grew from 44 million to over 50 million, at a CAGR of approximately 4%. This growth is mainly fueled by the rise in YouTube users. YouTube's popularity is evident in the number of hours of video uploaded annually, serving as a reliable indicator of UGC user activity due to its prominence as the primary platform for posting user-generated content.



# Enabling factors overview

## Regulatory framework

Among the opportunities within Saudi Arabia's video segment, investors can find a robust foundation for growth and innovation supported by a comprehensive regulatory framework. Designed to foster accountability, ensure fair competition, and safeguard consumer interests, this regulatory environment serves as a catalyst for investors' confidence and market stability

Prospective investors will find a streamlined process for entry into the Kingdom's video market, with clear guidelines outlining the necessary licenses, permits, registrations, or no-objection certificates required for operation. For instance, the Film Saudi incentive program offers support to obtain licenses and approvals for film production projects

This framework not only provides a roadmap for compliance but also underscores the government's commitment to nurturing a thriving and dynamic video industry.

## Infrastructure



**Media Village:** Established in 2022, Media Village features two expansive 2,400 sqm industry-standard sound stages, along with comprehensive back-of-house facilities

**Bajdah Studios:** Established in 2022, Bajdah studios features two expansive 3,000 sqm stages, equipped with state-of-the-art technology to capture the region's stunning landscapes and facilitate seamless production projects



**Studio facilities:** Two soundstages of 2,415 sqm

**Seasoned international studio management team:** Dedicated location crew possessing vast knowledge of AIUIa's unique landscapes

**Support facilities:** Facilities such as production offices, catering, film clusters, and a backlot (5,713 sqm)

## Funding and financing

Sources of funding and financing mechanisms for the video segment in KSA

### Funding

Non-recoupable funding mechanisms through various entities:

- Government offsets for broadcasters
- Grants for equipment such as camera and lights through the Light for Film Support Program.
- Grants for film projects, workshop, production and post-production activities
- Rebate for production projects and production support
- Warranty guarantee for lenders on filming related loans



### Financing

Recoupable financing mechanisms through the Cultural Development Fund include:

- Loans for SMEs and production projects
- Co-investments into medium-sized film sector companies



## Technology

Investment in next-gen tech is transforming Saudi Arabia's landscape, boosting user experiences and innovation.



Partnerships between platforms like Shahid and telecom companies have resulted in significant subscription growth and enhanced user experiences

OSN+ are integrating AI-driven systems for improved content discovery



AI-driven algorithms are also enhancing user engagement by delivering personalized content recommendations

NEOM designed development plans integrated with VR/AR for enhanced experience.

## Talent development



Dar Al-Hekma University offers programs in collaboration with the New York Film Academy.



Netflix has partnered with KSA-based Studio Production Training to introduce "Below The Line KSA," a program designed to upskill professionals through on-set training and workshops focused on art department and production roles.



12-week intensive program in the field of screenwriting and development, which attracted over 1,800 applicants and development of more than 190 draft scripts



Filmmakers program provides 20 training workshops and 6 master classes to beginners and mature professionals aspiring to work in the film industry



The Ministry of Media launched the Vocational Training Initiative, part of the IGNITE program, to provide on-the-job training and skill development for fresh graduates



Netflix has partnered with Telfaz11, to co-produce fourteen films that would appeal to both Arab and global audiences



MBC and Film Commission agreed to co-produce films and series, expanding Saudi Arabia's creative influence internationally.



Ministry of Culture and MBC collaborated to launch 'Cultural TV' Channel to showcase KSA's rich cultural heritage.



SRMG, owners of Manga Arabia, partnered with Warner Bros to launch Asharq Discovery, a pan-Arabic-language platform featuring exclusive shows previously unavailable for free in Arabic.



Saudi Entertainment Ventures partnered with AMC to enhance institutional capacities and support growth in KSA's cinema industry through knowledge transfer and technical expertise.



Image Nation Abu Dhabi, Majid Al Futtaim and MBC Studios formed an Alliance to launch a production partnership for film and TV projects in the Middle East, with a particular focus on KSA.



# Audio Segment

The audio segment strives to position KSA as a cultural hub, where audio content celebrates national heritage, encourages global dialogue, and shares the unique voices of Saudi Arabia worldwide. This is accomplished by fostering a vibrant and inclusive audio landscape through collaborative efforts, nurturing creative talents, ensuring financial sustainability, and promoting diverse participation to engage global audiences.

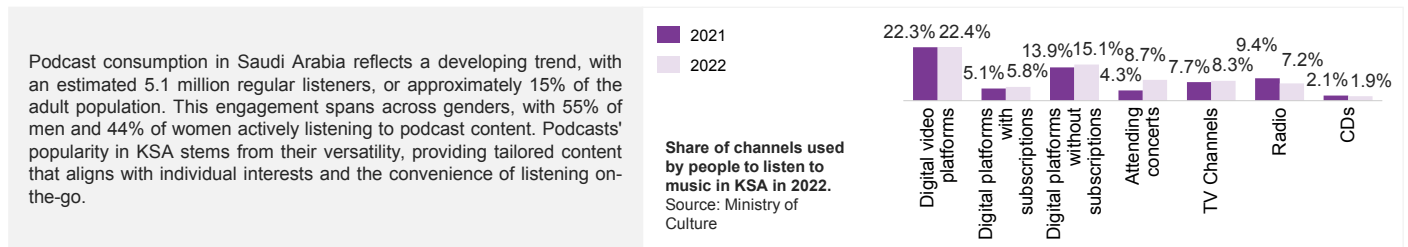
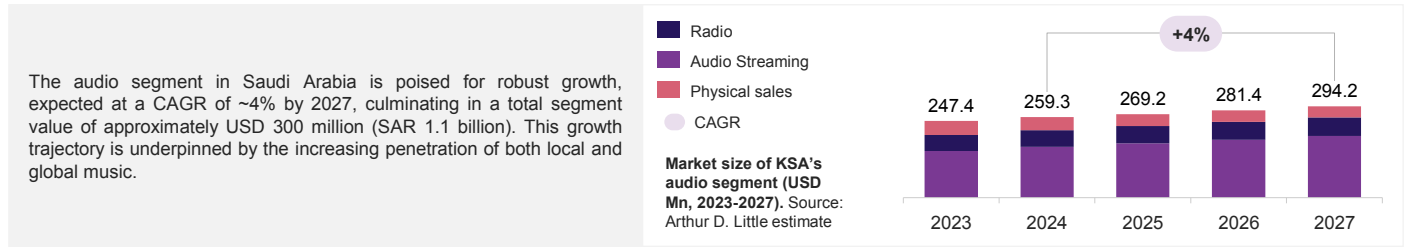
## Key national objectives

- A** Foster creation of a comprehensive audio production ecosystem through strategic partnerships and infrastructure development.
- B** Implement inclusive educational programs and initiatives to empower individuals from diverse backgrounds and attract local and global talent.
- C** Implement robust financial incentives and funding mechanisms to stimulate growth in the audio segment.
- D** Implement stringent IP protection mechanisms to safeguard the creations of audio professionals.

## Business overview



KSA audio segment's value chain. *Illustrative and non-exhaustive.* Source: Arthur D. Little



# Enabling factors overview

## Regulatory framework

In Saudi Arabia's audio segment, investors encounter a regulatory framework tailored to foster fair competition, uphold accountability, and safeguard consumer interests.

Clear guidelines delineate the necessary licenses, permits, or approvals for market entry, providing clarity and certainty to stakeholders navigating the sector.

Reflecting the government's commitment to nurturing a vibrant audio ecosystem, this regulatory environment offers a solid foundation for growth, innovation, and investment within the Kingdom's audio industry.

## Infrastructure

Launched in October 2022 in Riyadh, Merwas stands as the world's largest music production studio, spanning over 4,000 sqm and featuring 22 cutting-edge studios, an academy, and international facilities dedicated to video and audio activities.



Recognized with a Guinness World Record Certificate for its scale and excellence, Merwas has welcomed numerous international artists and produced various shows, series, and podcasts. Its academy has curated multiple training programs and workshops, empowering over 1,000 students and enthusiasts across KSA.

Launching in 2024, Film AIUla will host a state-of-the-art music recording studio catering to film score production, music videos, and orchestral work. It will feature a 190 sqm studio area, a 47 sqm control room, and 2 ISO booths, integrating the latest audio technology.



Diriyah Gate Development Authority and the Royal Commission for Riyadh City announced the ambitious Royal Diriyah Opera House project, set to inaugurate in 2028. It will feature 45,000 sqm with a main 2,000-seat opera theater and 3 additional venues with an approximate capacity of 3,500 seats



As one of the most renowned cultural institutions in Saudi Arabia, the King Fahad Cultural Centre serves as a hub for cultural, literary, and artistic events. It spans an area of 100,000 sqm and offers a variety of facilities and amenities, including a main concert hall, and a main theater for various exhibitions, especially the Zarqa Al Yamama opera.



## Funding and financing

Sources of funding and financing mechanisms for the audio segment in KSA

### Funding

Non-recoupable funding mechanisms include:

- Government offsets for radio broadcasters through Saudi Broadcasting Authority (SBA)
- Grants for audio production projects, workshops, and training programs through MiSK Foundation



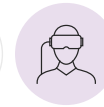
## Technology

Technology is playing a pivotal role in shaping the landscape of the audio segment in KSA, revolutionizing the way content is created, distributed, and consumed.



In KSA, Anghami benefits from low-latency and faster downloads without buffering or lagging. This allows Anghami to serve users who opt for premium services, thus delivering high-quality audio experiences.

Thmanyah leverages AI to enable the development, generation, recommendation, and distribution of curated and customized audio content, while also creating unique musical 'cheers' for sports events.



NEOM designed development plans to integrate for VR/AR for enhanced and immersive in-venue music and entertainment experience.

## Talent development



The Music Commission launched the San'ah program, which offers a comprehensive 6-month virtual training program encompassing various fields such as artist management, DJ skills, sound engineering, and studio management.

The Music Commission launched training to 36,000 kindergarten teachers poised to introduce music education at the academic level for the first time.



The Nahawand Academy of Arts has partnered with the Gnesins Russian Academy of Music to establish KSA's first international music academy and provide educational programs, training, and certifications for musicians.



## Collaboration & partnerships



Cultural Development Fund collaborated with Merwas to establish an investment fund focused on the music sector, contributing to the growth of the audio segment, and create opportunities for the talent in the field.



Deezer entered into a long-term partnership with Rotana to distribute the KSA based company's audio and visual content in MENA and build future market leader positions in different markets within MENA, including KSA.



NEOM announced a partnership with MDLBEAST to ensure end-to-end pre-launch and management of the destination of a new ultra-modern beach club in the island of Sindalah.

# Publishing Segment

KSA's publishing sector has undergone an incremental transformation, evolving from traditional outlets to online platforms, driven by electronic media and increased smartphone usage. This shift enables advertisers to connect more effectively with audiences. The move towards online advertising has opened new avenues for expansion and creativity, leading businesses and marketers to adapt and utilize electronic platforms' capabilities.

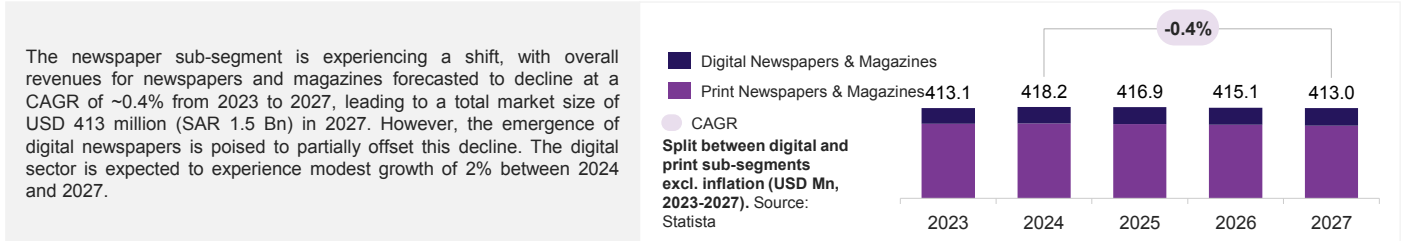
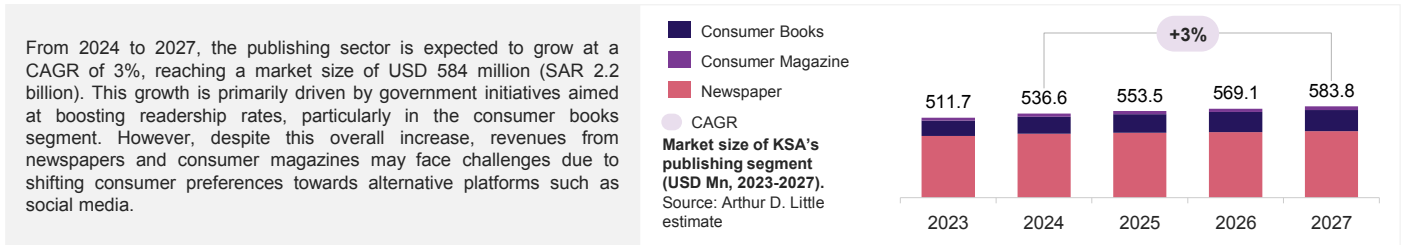
## Key national objectives

- A** Leverage digital infrastructures and technologies to facilitate the seamless production, distribution, and consumption of digital content.
- B** Promote the publication of diverse voices and perspectives, showcasing the Saudi culture.
- C** Empower individuals from all backgrounds with essential skills, fostering a culture of learning.
- D** Establish partnerships and exchange programs with international publishers, literary agents, and cultural organizations to amplify the reach of Saudi literature and promote intellectual exchange on a global scale.

## Business overview



KSA publishing segment's value chain. *Illustrative and non-exhaustive.* Source: Arthur D. Little



# Enabling factors overview

## Regulatory framework

The publishing segment in KSA boasts a robust regulatory framework characterized by its emphasis on accountability, fair competition, and consumer protection. By fostering a level playing field and safeguarding the interests of all stakeholders, this regulatory framework contributes to the integrity and sustainability of the publishing sector in the Kingdom. Regarding licenses, the publishing segment specifically requires permits for activities such as printing, distribution, and copyright permissions.



## Infrastructure



### King Fahd Glorious Qur'an Printing Complex (KFGQPC)

Saudi Arabia stands out as a global leader in the preservation and dissemination of the Qur'an and its Sciences. The King Fahd Glorious Qur'an Printing Complex (KFGQPC) is a key facility using technologies in printing, audio and digital applications to produce the Holy Quranic Text across mediums.



Established in 1985



One of the largest printing facilities dedicated to the Quran globally



### Saudi Publishing House

Saudi Publishing House is a Saudi publishing entity owned by the Literature, Publishing, and Translation Commission; It aims to support and empower the publishing industry in KSA, stimulating local publishing activity, improving output quality in terms of content and final production, and supporting publishers, practitioners, and cultural institutions.



Established in 2021



Invests in modern publishing technologies

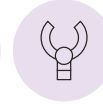
## Funding and financing

As part of its efforts and initiatives dedicated to the promotion of literary work in Saudi Arabia, the Literature, Publishing, and Translation Commission organizes programs such as 'Mu'allaqa 45', a Competition on Arabic poetry, which includes monetary awards ranging from SAR 1 M to SAR 250,000 for competition winners. The 'Third Cover', a program highlighting literature and narrative creativity in the Kingdom will also be sponsored by the Literature, Publishing, and Translation Commission.



## Technology

The news industry is increasingly leveraging AI to transform content generation, streamlining reporting processes and elevating the quality of news coverage. These trends provide a useful reference point as Saudi Arabia's publishers position itself to capitalize on emerging AI initiatives.



In AI news content generation, Reuters deploys AI to automate news article creation, particularly for topics such as financial markets. BBC integrates AI into its production process for generating weather reports and sports updates.

AI-powered fact-checking is gaining momentum. Bloomberg harnesses AI to analyze big data, ensuring the accuracy and credibility of their news articles and reports. CNN utilizes AI-powered tools to authenticate images and videos shared on social media platforms, and swiftly debunk false information.

## Talent development



The Saudi Press Agency has inaugurated its pioneering News Training Academy in February 2024, marking a milestone as the first institution dedicated to news training.



SRMG Academy, a newly launched training program based in Riyadh, dedicated to uncovering fresh media talent and nurturing emerging journalists through world-class vocational training within the Kingdom and beyond.



NEOM has recently launched its graduate development program, designed to develop young Saudis' understanding of all aspects of contemporary media, working with them to explore today's media and communications environment and discover the future of media in Saudi Arabia.



Several prominent Saudi universities play pivotal roles in shaping the field of journalism and media studies in the Kingdom, by providing a diverse array of undergraduate and graduate programs.



## Collaboration & partnerships



SRMG and NEOM have signed a Memorandum of Understanding to collaborate across a range of publishing activities. Key outcomes include increased content production in NEOM, media technology development and integration, and media training programs.



The Literature, Publishing, and Translation Commission supports accelerators to empower Saudi publishing houses in both print and digital publishing fields. These publishers are provided with training programs, advisory sessions, shared services, and networking opportunities with investment partners.

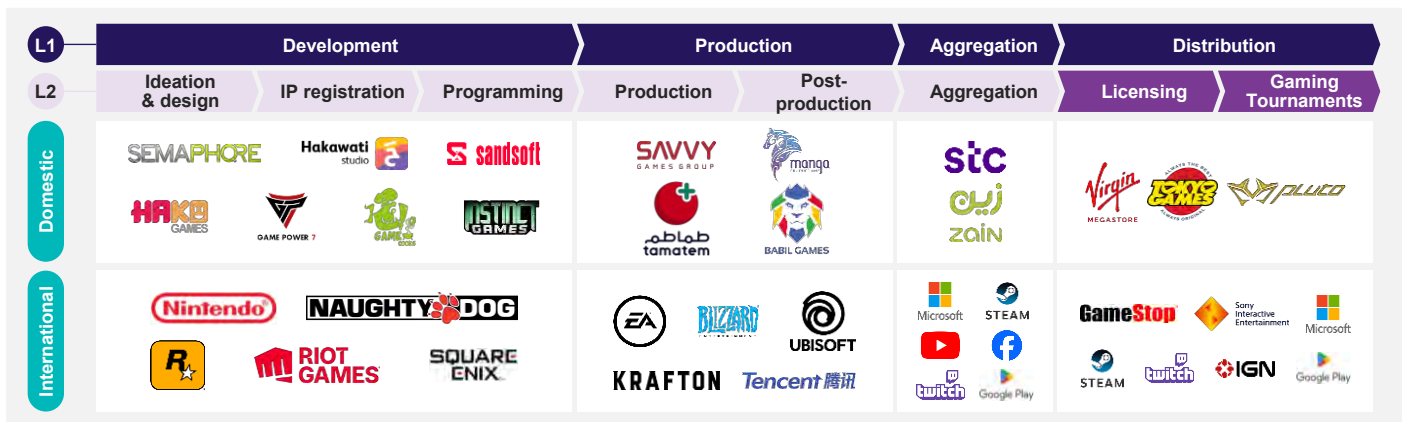
# Gaming Segment

KSA has embarked on an ambitious plan to build a vibrant, globally leading gaming and esports segment. By developing this segment, it aims to drive innovation and redefine interactive entertainment globally. To achieve this goal, KSA has made strategic investments in infrastructure, engaged the gaming/esports community, and empowered gamers, developers, and industry stakeholders to thrive, driving innovation and excellence in interactive entertainment.

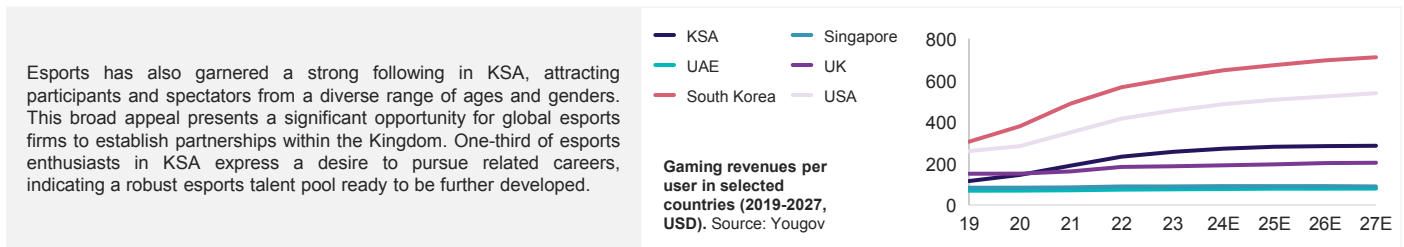
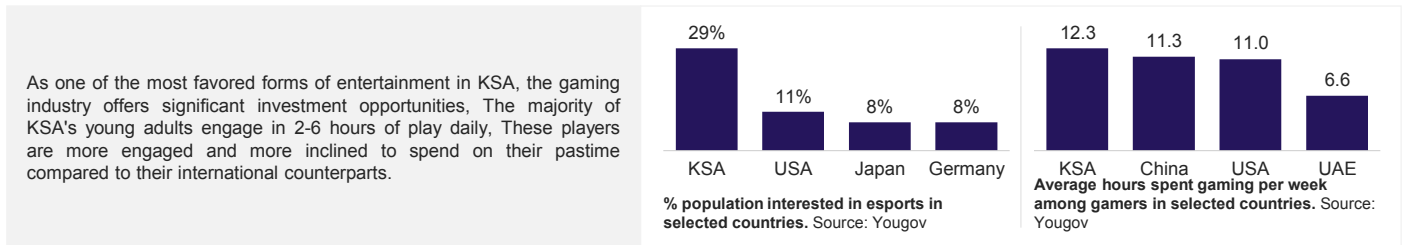
## Key national objectives

- A Develop a regulatory and governance framework to coordinate the roles of public stakeholders.
- B Create best-in-class technical and physical infrastructures to support esports growth.
- C Provide best-in-class funding and financial support to expand the gaming and esports ecosystem.
- D Become the world's testbed for game-tech innovation.
- E Become a world-class center for education in gaming and esports.
- F Foster collaboration and partnerships to scale national gaming and esports initiatives.

## Business overview



KSA gaming segment's value chain. Illustrative and non-exhaustive. Source: Arthur D. Little ■ Global online game distributors and esports organizers also operate in the MENA region and KSA



# Enabling factors overview

## Regulatory framework

In line with other prominent gaming centers, KSA has established a comprehensive regulatory and licensing framework aimed at ensuring sectoral accountability, fostering fair competition, protecting consumers, and supporting the development of the gaming and esports industries within the social and cultural norms of the Kingdom. The regulatory regime primarily addresses classification and clearance, as well as the advertising and broadcasting of esports events. There is a streamlined process in place for the development, production, and distribution of games, which encourages foreign entities to introduce and adapt content specifically for the KSA audience. Conversely, for esports participants and organizations, the requirements for broadcasting activities are comparatively minimal.

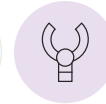


## Technology



Domestic telecommunications companies such as the Saudi Telecom Company (stc), Mobily, and Zain have introduced specialized 5G gaming packages and cloud gaming services, significantly supporting the expanding of gaming users.

STC and NVIDIA have partnered to build AI and deep learning cloud infrastructure in KSA, with STC becoming the first NVIDIA-certified cloud service provider (CSP) in the Kingdom.



At the 2022 Gamers8 tournament in KSA, AI was utilized to enhance esports experiences, with generative AI quickly generating content summaries in both English and Arabic, streamlining content delivery but also seamlessly integrated advertising within the gaming context,

## Infrastructure



The Giga-project Qiddiya unveils plans for a mixed-use gaming and esports district covering 500,000 sqm, consisting of 4 e-sports venues capable of hosting up to 25 e-sports teams at any time.



NEOM is developing an integrated campus for interactive entertainment, featuring development studios and offering various business incentives such as incubators and accelerators, aimed at fostering the growth of the next generation of gaming enterprises.



True Gamers, a UAE-based esports network, announced its plan to invest \$ 45 million to establish 150 gaming centers across KSA by 2030, aiming to notably enhance the gaming experience within the Kingdom.

## Talent development



Ministry of Media launched the Vocational Training Initiative, one of the initiatives under the IGNITE program, in cooperation with the Ministry of Communications and Information Technology; It aims to provide on-the-job training opportunities and develop professional skills of up-to 120 fresh graduates in cooperation with 30 private sector companies



The Saudi Esports Academy, established by the Saudi Esports Federation, offers master's degrees in gaming and esports business to cultivate a new generation of professionals in the sector. This educational institution collaborates with technology entities GGTech and Gen.G Global Academy to deliver comprehensive training and opportunities for students.



Premier universities such as King Abdulaziz University (KAU), King Abdullah University of Science and Technology (KAUST), and King Saud University (KSU) offer specialized education and professional certification in gaming.

## Funding and financing

### Funding

Non-recoupable funding mechanisms include:

- Grants for esports teams through the Saudi Esports Federation
- Prize money and awards for esports tournaments



### Financing

Recoupable financing mechanisms include:

- Co-investments into gaming players via Savvy Games, an investment arm of the Public Investment Fund (PIF)
- Co-investments into VCs, incubators and accelerators



## Collaboration & partnerships



The Sandbox and Sandsoft have partnered on talent development and attraction in the local video games sector by empowering local creative talent through trainings and onboarding them in job opportunities within the ecosystem.



The Saudi Esports Federation (SEF) has partnered with the British Esports Association and the Japan Esports Union (JeSU) to drive talent development and foster growth in the esports industry across their respective countries.



KSA partnered with global design firm Populous to plan the esports and gaming district in the city of Qiddiya. As part of the sector building, Populous also commissioned a report with YouGov titled Esports growth & venue development in KSA in late 2022

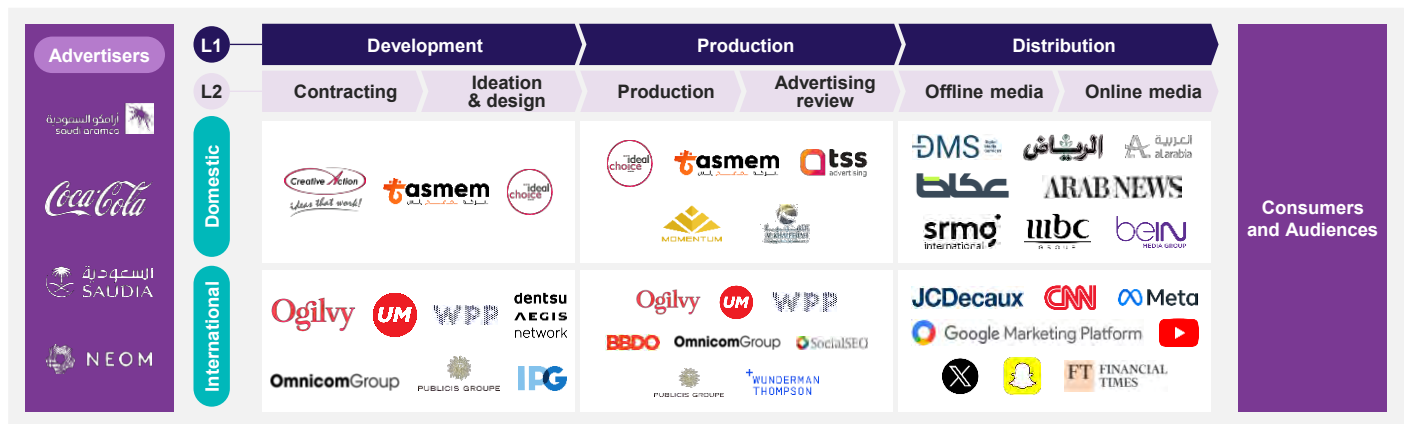
# Advertising Segment

KSA's advertising sector has seen remarkable growth, evolving from traditional outlets to online platforms, driven by electronic media and increased smartphone usage. This shift enables advertisers to connect more effectively with audiences. The move towards online advertising has opened new avenues for expansion and creativity, leading businesses and marketers to adapt and utilize electronic platforms' capabilities and reach.

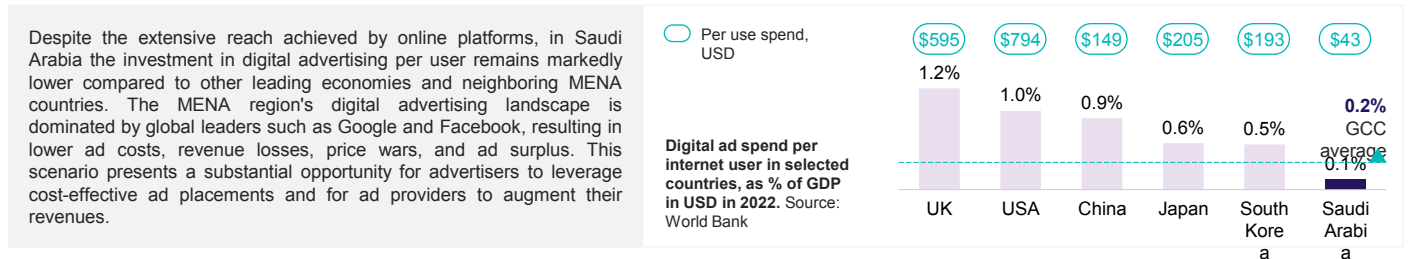
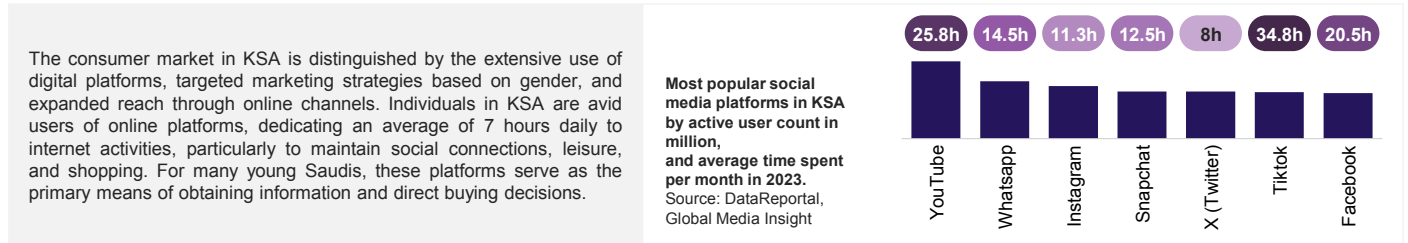
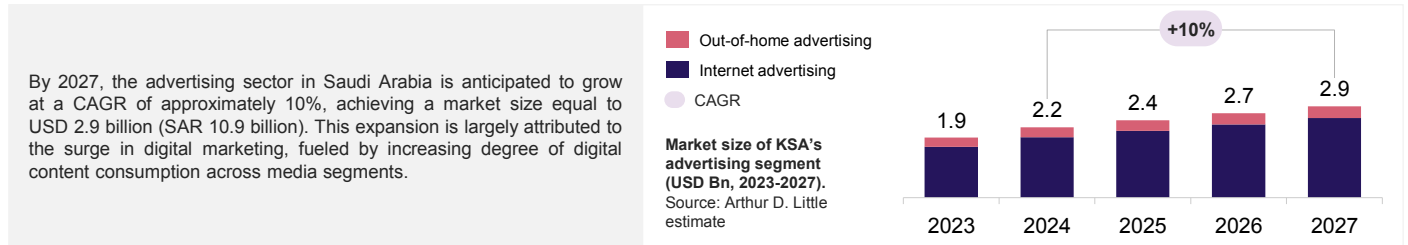
## Key national objectives

- A** Streamlining the regulatory framework and approval processes for entry requirements and to scale the localization of advertising firms.
- B** Facilitating the transition toward digital advertising through digital infrastructure development.
- C** Limiting revenue leakage in the advertising sector.
- D** Empowering individuals with essential digital skills and fluency.
- E** Fostering partnerships between global digital advertising platforms and local content creators.

## Business overview



KSA advertising segment's value chain. *Illustrative and non-exhaustive.* Source: Arthur D. Little



# Enabling factors overview

## Regulatory framework

The regulatory framework for advertising activities in KSA has significantly facilitated sectoral growth and innovation by simplifying approval processes.

Current regulations promote the establishment of international and domestic firms by streamlining entry requirements, particularly focusing on licensing for advertising agencies and marketing offices.

Additionally, regulations authorize promotional content for cinema screenings and grant permissions for advertising material dissemination on individual social media accounts



## Infrastructure



The Media Rating Council (MRC) is the licensed entity for the measurement of television viewership in Saudi Arabia, and it has established a collaboration with the multinational measurement company Nielsen. Nielsen provides the technology and innovative measurement approaches for a multi-channel viewership system that collects data across more than 2,200 domestic households, 150 collective channels, spanning 24 cities in Saudi Arabia. This system provides advertising companies with important analytical insights that improve their ability to reach consumers and increase conversions.



In April 2023, the Royal Commission for Riyadh Development unveiled a city-level advertising masterplan, collaborating with Remat Al-Riyadh Development Company to introduce new out-of-home (OOH) advertising space on building fronts, major roads, and public transportation routes. This initiative aims to complement existing OOH billboards and digital ad boxes.

## Funding and financing

### Funding

One of IGNITE's tenets is to nurture KSA's advertising market. This includes funding to develop a Saudi digital advertising champion, serving as a one-stop advertising aggregation platform and capture ad value within KSA



### Financing

Saudi Venture Capital Company (SVC), a KSA Government-backed VC established in 2018 by Monsha'at (General Authority for Small and Medium Enterprises), has invested roughly \$700 million in early-stage investments in Saudi startups, including in the advertising and marketing sector.



## Technology

AI technology in Saudi Arabia is empowering companies like Taswiq.ai, an AI-driven SaaS platform, to revolutionize the marketing sector.



By deploying generative AI, Taswiq.ai analyzes an online store's inventory to generate customized marketing content that aligns seamlessly with the store's branding and message, effectively reaching audiences across various channels.

Leveraging technology similar to ChatGPT, Taswiq.ai designs marketing strategies, autonomously scheduling content across multiple platforms, optimizing search engines, and managing social media engagements, pairing products with suitable influencers and forecasting the impact of these partnerships.

## Talent development



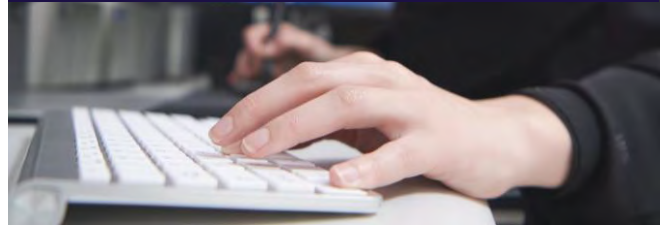
The Communication Academy, established in July 2023 under the Ministry of Media, provides digital advertising courses aimed at nurturing skilled professionals in the sector and enhancing consultancy and research proficiencies.



The Saudi Ad School, founded in September 2023 as the first vocational institute in Saudi Arabia solely dedicated to advertising, offers specialized training in copywriting, production, planning, and marketing. As a sister institution to the Cairo Ad School, it represents a significant milestone in the Kingdom's advertising education landscape.



As part of the IGNITE Initiative, the KSA government is facilitating skill development sessions in digital content production through "Tawasul+," aimed at digitally upskilling professionals, including those in the publishing sector.



## Collaboration & partnerships



The Athar Festival, held for the first time in November 2023, marked a significant milestone for KSA's creative industry, attracting over 1,000 marketing and creative professionals. This four-day festival featured more than 100 speakers, offering 12 workshops tailored for creative professionals. Additionally, it included a program specifically designed to support networking, partnership development, and knowledge exchange among women in the industry.



The Step Startup Festival, renowned for spotlighting tech and startup innovations in KSA, introduces a dedicated session on advertising technology within its digital segment. In 2023, this session brought together over 20 digital and creative industry leaders, sharing insights on digital marketing strategies, online advertising channels, and customer engagement tactics, with a focus on experts and influencers from the MENA region.



# Conclusion

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The media sector in the Kingdom of Saudi Arabia is emerging as a promising field with considerable growth potential for international media firms. The synergy between government stakeholders and the private sector creates an attractive landscape for ambitious international investors eager to explore the dynamic changes underway.

Initially, overseas media entities have adopted a phased approach to entering the Saudi market, forming strategic alliances with local players and government bodies. These collaborations aim to integrate their innovative solutions with a nuanced understanding of the local market and its unique segments, thereby achieving gradual progress. Currently, Saudi Arabia offers an ideal setting for more decisive and bold initiatives by international investors, encouraging them to establish a presence and launch their ventures within the thriving Saudi media landscape.

As delineated in this report, the outlook for Saudi Arabia's media sector is exceptionally promising. Those looking to engage with what is rapidly developing into one of the most dynamic media landscapes globally will find no cause for regret.

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# Acknowledgments

The Ministry of Media, General Authority of Media Regulation, and Arthur D. Little are grateful for the contributions made and input provided by sector participants and public stakeholders to the development of this report.

We would like to extend our sincere appreciation to:

Communications, Space and Technology  
Commission  
Cultural Development Fund  
Film AIUla  
Film Commission  
King Fahd Glorious Qur'an Printing Complex  
MBC Group  
Media Rating Council  
Merwas  
Ministry of Investment  
Ministry of Media  
Music Commission

National Center for Privatization & PPP  
NEOM Media  
PIF  
Savvy Group  
Qiddiya Investment Company  
Rotana Group  
Saudi Broadcasting Authority  
Saudi Entertainment Ventures  
Saudi Research and Media Group  
stc Group  
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