

THE VOICE OF A NATION

A DEEPER LOOK AT A DECADE OF SAUDI NATIONAL DAY COMMUNICATION

Strategic Gears
Management Consultancy

SAUDI 96TH NATIONAL DAY EXCLUSIVE

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THE KEY TAKEAWAYS

Over the past eleven editions, Saudi National Day has evolved from an occasion celebrated by citizens and organizations into a communication season that is consciously planned for throughout the year. Between 2015 and 2025, a fixed panel of 1,198 organizations published 18,544 National Day creatives, of which 3,178 were production films. This report traces the growth and composition of those creatives, the intensity of participation across organizations, and the distribution of audience attention that made them the most memorable. Below are the key takeaways.

01

A national day occasion has built a creative communication season

The number of organizations publishing National Day videos rose from 94 in 2016 to 1,001 in 2025, while their creative output grew from 164 to 3,394 works. This expansion has made the occasion a shared platform for expressing national pride and institutional identity, as organizations seek to inspire audiences and compete for creative recognition. The season spans a ten-day window around National Day: one-half of the films produced are released on 22 or 23 September, while nearly two-thirds of other creative works are published after the occasion.

02

Film productions are the least prevalent communications format, but the most creative one

Event coverage has led the creative mix since 2022, reaching 61% of creatives in 2025, while greetings fell to 17%. Produced films, which entail more resources, have held a near stable share at around 15% to 22% as the total creative output grew each year. The creative formats serve different purposes: greetings are mainly template-based and used to acknowledge the occasion, event coverages document organizational activities, while films offers the largest scope for creative expression via scripting, casting, and production.

03

Participation has broadened over the past decade, while consistent production rests on a core set of organizations

Film output per active organization declined from a peak of roughly three films for every four organizations in 2020 to one for every two in 2025. Yet the 208 organizations participating in every edition since 2019 have maintained an average of nearly one film per organization per year. The number of organizations publishing two or more films per edition has remained at around seventy since 2020, suggesting that growth has come mainly from a wider pool of new or occasional film contributors, alongside a stable core of regular producers.

04

Audience attention concentrates in a handful of films

In every edition since 2018, the top 10% of produced films have attracted between 73% and 86% of that edition's engagement. And across the decade, just 100 films account for 61% of all recorded engagement. This concentration leaves a wide gap between typical and exceptional performance, as broad organizational participation has expanded creative output, but audience attention remains concentrated among a small number of standout works.

05

A consistent creative direction helps organizations establish a lasting resonance with the audience

Military institutions have developed an approach around real acts of service and sacrifice, while Aramco connects national history with cinematic storytelling and original music. Their consistency allows each edition to build on previous work while renewing and improving artistic execution within the established creative direction. Sports clubs attract substantial attention through their supporters and stars, but their history, communities, and wider sporting achievements may hold untapped creative potential.

06

The most engaging films are characterized by timely dissemination, production quality, and emotionally-compelling creative choices

Films released before 23 September drew 1.95 times their edition median, against 0.35 times for films released after it, and films of one to four minutes exceeded the median in every edition. Among each edition's strongest-performing films, production quality is a prerequisite for competing, but is insufficient on its own to stand out: original musical compositions, nostalgia, and references to a shared cultural touchstone characterize the higher-performing group, while the national anthem and adaptations of existing patriotic songs do not emerge as distinguishing features.

INTRODUCTION

Context

National commemorations derive their meaning and become rooted in collective memory through individual and institutional participation in public ceremonies and celebrations, the sharing of national values, and communication across society. These practices sustain the occasion over time and create a legacy passed down through generations. Government bodies, public institutions, and businesses contribute in different ways, translating shared national sentiments and values into films, greetings, event coverage, and other content that reflects their institutional identities and, in the case of businesses, their brands.

Saudi National Day illustrates a significant shift from formal commemoration to broad national participation involving both the public and private sectors. Observed annually on 23 September, it marks the proclamation of the Kingdom's unification in 1932. It was first officially celebrated in 1965 and became a nationwide public holiday by royal decree in 2005. Today, the occasion is widely celebrated by citizens, with organizations playing a growing role through patriotic advertising, songs, and promotional campaigns.[1] A unified communications framework emerged in 2018, when the Ministry of Media launched an official National Day identity via the Center for Government Communication. And since 2019, the General Entertainment Authority has been issuing the occasion's theme and visual identity, providing participating organizations with a shared creative reference that is retained across two consecutive years, such as همة حتى القمة in 2019–20, هي لنا دار in 2021–22, نحلم ونحقق in 2023–24 and عزنا بطبعنا in 2025–26.[2] This expansion has coincided with Saudi Vision 2030, whose "Vibrant Society" pillar connects national development with deep-rooted identity, national pride, culture, and heritage. The parallel growth of the cultural and entertainment sectors has also broadened the institutional landscape and channels through which national identity is publicly expressed over the past decade.

The occasion also carries measurable commercial and private sector weight. There is documented evidence that appeals to national identity generate more favorable responses to advertising and stronger purchase intentions, with effects that scale with how strongly consumers identify with their nation.[3] Digital platforms have broadened participation by enabling more organizations to contribute to the occasion's public communications. They have also intensified competition for limited audience attention, making content volume, format, timing, and reach central dimensions of communications around national commemorations.

And finally, the National Day has created one of the most crowded creative communications momentums. As the cultural and entertainment sectors expanded over the past decade, the space in which national identity is expressed widened with them, and the September 23 anniversary became a fixture of the creative industry's calendar, particularly with the Ministry of media launching the "Media Excellence" award in 2019 for the annual National Day event, and the moment becoming a visible contest for creative recognition.[4]

Despite this scale, the creative work produced for National Day has not been examined systematically across organizations or over time. Existing analysis consists largely of practitioner guidance issued ahead of individual editions and single-year platform summaries, while commercial studies focus on search and spending behavior rather than the content produced around the occasion. This report addresses that gap through a longitudinal analysis of video-based National Day communication published on X and YouTube between 2015 and 2025. It draws on a fixed panel of 1,198 Saudi organizations to enable like-for-like comparison across the period. The analysis traces the growth of participation, compares the roles of public and private organizations, and examines content formats, publication timing and the distribution of audience attention.

Aim and Scope

This report provides a structured assessment of how Saudi organizations deploy creative audiovisual communications to commemorate the National Day. It is based on a novel dataset of creative productions published on Youtube and X across eleven editions of the national event, from 2015 to 2025, and spanning more than 1,000 organizations.

The study addresses four thematics. First, it sizes participation, tracing the growth and frequency of activity among organizations, creatives, and produced films. Second, it profiles participating organizations, comprising public, non-profit, and private sector entities, and assesses their communication frequency, consistency, and audience engagement. And third, it examines when organizations publish relative to the National Event (September 23) and how audience attention is distributed across films, tracing how a single day has extended into a communication season. Finally, the report makes a case for shortlisting the determinants for high-performing, successful communication productions that helped influence a decade of creative work.

ANALYTICAL OUTPUTS



CREATIVE ACTIVITY

Creatives, publishers and produced films per edition, and the mix of creative types



PARTICIPATION INTENSITY

Produced films per active organization and by publishing frequency



PUBLISHER PROFILE

Institutional groups and a league table of 16 entity categories by volume and intensity



PUBLICATION TIMING

The release sequence of films and other creatives around the National Day



AUDIENCE ATTENTION

The concentration of engagement and the response relative to audience size

METHODOLOGY

The empirical analysis in this report draws on two platform data sources, the X API and the YouTube Data API, applied to a fixed panel of Saudi organizations across eleven editions of National Day. A combination of rule-based scoring and editorial peer-review isolates the video communication relevant to the questions the report addresses. The data preparation was refined through the following dimensions:

01 A fixed panel of 1,198 Saudi organizations.

We held a single list of organizations constant across all eleven editions to standardize comparison over time. The panel was built from the organizations that published National Day content in 2025, including government bodies, Tadawul-listed companies, and major private companies. The analysis covers organizational publishers only; individual accounts were excluded.

02 Video content was collected through two complementary passes.

Content was retrieved programmatically through the X API and the YouTube Data API. For each edition, collection covered a three-week window spanning the week before, the week of, and the week after September 23. Stories and other ephemeral formats were excluded.

- **Keyword match:** Every video post in the three-week window matching terms for National Day, that edition's official theme, or the year itself.
- **Peak-window sweep:** Every video posted by each panel organization between 21 and 24 September, regardless of caption. Many National Day films carry no searchable text, so all collected content was filtered for relevance in the data cleaning stage.

03 Relevance was screened on whether National Day is the subject of the creative.

Results from both passes were merged into a single record per creative and screened against six rules:

- **One record per film and organization:** Posts by the same organization were merged when published within five days of each other, at the same length to within one second, and with the same thumbnail, caption, or X media file, including where one film ran on both X and YouTube. A film posted by several organizations counts once for each.
- **Acknowledging the National Day:** Creatives with captions that refer to the National Day in Arabic or English, through the phrase itself, its hashtags, the edition number, or that year's official theme, qualified to the sample.
- **Offers are excluded:** Creatives that explicitly promote commercial offers of products and services using the National Day as a hook were excluded from the dataset.
- **Other national events in proximity to the Saudi National Day were removed:** Replies to other posts and videos marking other countries' public events or national days, such as China's on 1 October and Iraq's on 3 October, were dropped.

04 Creatives were classified into four types, with produced films as the core unit.

This report adopts a typology that clusters creatives into four types:

- **Produced film:** Made for the event and built as a film, scripted and edited, with narrative, voice-over, motion graphics, cinematic footage, or an anthem.
- **Event coverage:** Organizational footage of an event that took place, such as a ceremony, parade, school assembly, illuminated building, match or broadcast segment.
- **Greeting or message:** A person or card delivering a congratulation on behalf of an organization.
- **Other:** Contests, data recaps and announcements.

Of the 18,544 relevant creatives, 8,517 are event coverage (46%), 5,764 greetings or messages (31%), 3,178 produced films (17%) and 1,085 other (6%). Produced films form the unit of analysis for the sector, category, timing and audience-attention findings. All relevant creatives are retained for counts of active, new and returning publishers.

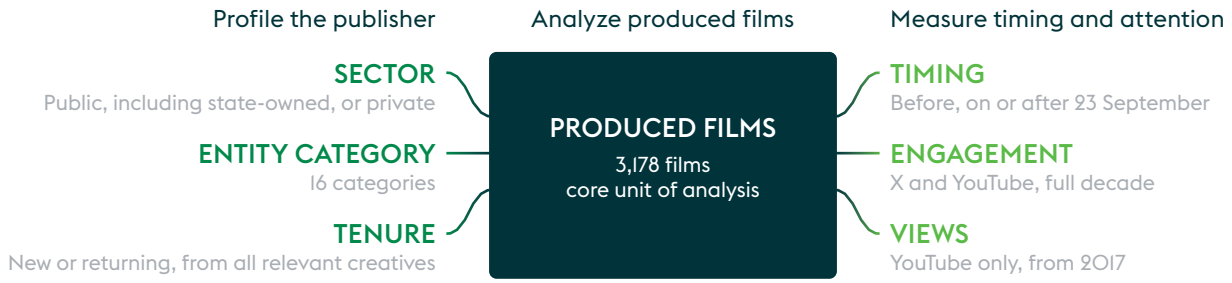
05 Audience attention was measured through engagement.

Engagement combines likes, reposts, and replies on X with likes and comments on YouTube, and is the only attention measure available across the full decade. Views are drawn from YouTube alone, as X has reported views and impressions only since December 2022. Moreover, all attention metrics are lifetime totals recorded to 15 September 2026, and publication timing is recorded relative to September 23 as before, on, or after the day of the event.

HOW THE 18,544 RELEVANT CREATIVES SPLIT



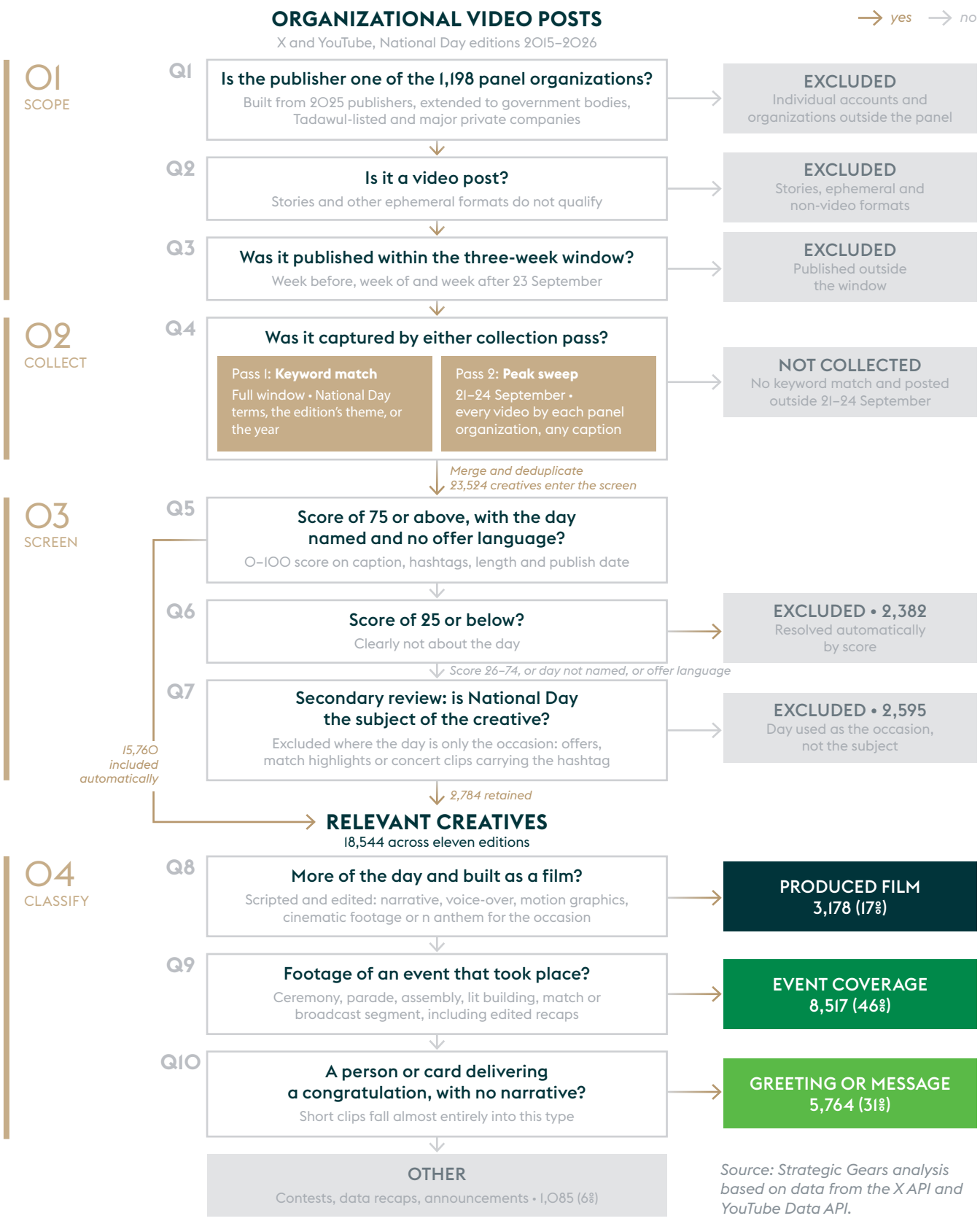
Produced films carry the sector, category, timing and attention analysis; all relevant creatives feed publisher counts (active, new and returning)



Source: Strategic Gears analysis based on data from the X API and YouTube Data API.

ANALYTICAL FRAMEWORK • *From organizational video posts to the unit of analysis*

The framework traces National Day communication through a decision tree across four stages, scope, collection, screening and classification, from the universe of organizational video posts to the investigated sample of creative films.



Source: Strategic Gears analysis based on data from the X API and YouTube Data API.

Limitations and mitigation

The report is subject to three limitations that shape the boundaries of this exercise.

01 A panel anchored on 2025 understates earlier editions.

Building the panel from 2025 publishers biases the sample toward organizations active today. Organizations that published in earlier editions but have since ceased activity, rebranded or dissolved are not captured, so early-year volumes should be read as a floor. The same anchoring makes the returning-publisher share a minimum bound as well, as an organization missed in an earlier edition reads as new in a later one.

02 Attention metrics accumulate over unequal periods.

Engagement and views are lifetime totals to September 15, 2026, so a 2025 film has had one year to accumulate attention and a 2020 film has had six. Comparisons of attention across editions should therefore be read with the exposure window in mind, while comparisons within an edition, such as public against private films, share the same window.

03 View data is constrained by platform reporting.

X introduced public view counts only in December 2022, so the views series relies on YouTube, which carries 520 films across 2017–2025. Engagement, available on both platforms across the full decade, therefore serves as the primary attention measure, with views used as a supporting series.

THE NATIONAL DAY

A decade in view

This section provides a compiled summary of the most memorable films created by Saudi organizations on the occasion of the Saudi National Day. It covers the past eleven editions and is based on a review of over 3,000 film productions published across Youtube and X between September 15, 2015 and September 15, 2026.

FIGURE 1: **THE HUNDRED MOST ENGAGED FILMS**
The 100 produced films with the highest engagement, 2015–2025



Source: Strategic Gears analysis based on data from the X API and YouTube Data API.

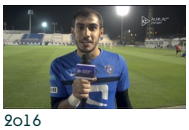
THE FILMS THAT LED EACH EDITION

The hundred strongest films hold 61% of the engagement recorded across the decade. Most come from the 2023, 2024 and 2025 editions, with national government bodies accounting for 35, sports organizations for 25, and telecom operators for 11.

The most engaged film of the decade belongs to the 90th edition in 2020, when Almosafer released a National Day song that drew 218,546 engagements and 42.9 million views on YouTube, in the year the celebration moved almost entirely onto screens.

FIGURE 2: **THE LEADING FILM OF EACH EDITION**

Highest-engagement produced film by edition, 2015–2025



2016

The Leader's Stars Congratulate the Nation

Al Hilal Club

First-team players record short congratulations to camera, cut together with the club's crest and colors.



2017

Law Ma Baqa (If It Had Not Remained)

Makkah Region Emirate

A new poem written by Prince Khalid Al-Faisal for the 87th National Day, set to film.

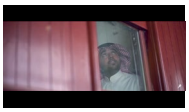


2018

We Set Off for the Future

Saudia

A film that boards a Saudia flight in the year 2030 and lets passengers narrate the Kingdom they arrived into, moving through the Vision's pillars.



2019

Made by Saudis

stc

A National Day anthem that describes the country as built by its own citizens inheriting the values from earlier generations.



2020

Ashiqeenak (We Adore You)

Almosafer • Sung by Rashed Al-Majed

A National Day song for the 90th, it became the most engaged film of the decade.



2021

Sahm Mu'zi

Ministry of National Guard • Starring Faisal Al-Dokhi

The film follows the partnership of 2 soldiers at their post on the southern border, ending with the commendation from their brigade commander.



2022

Ten to One

Ministry of National Guard

A production of six soldiers holding a southern border position through the night against a Houthi assault while fasting, dedicated to the one who did not survive it.



2023

A Homeland For Its People and for the World

Al Nassr Club • Starring Cristiano Ronaldo, Sadio Mané, Marcelo Brozović

The squad in Saudi dress performing the Ardah inside the club, led by Ronaldo with a sword.



2024

How Did We Do It?

Zain • Sung by Ayed

A National Day song asking how the Kingdom achieved what it has, answered through archive and documentary footage.



2025

A Homeland Without Limits — Confrontation Zero

Ministry of Interior • Directed by Ahmed Maged El Masry, starring Naif Al-Dhafeeri and Fawaz Al-Zahrani

A docudrama built on real Border Guard operations against smuggling and infiltration along the Kingdom's frontiers.

Source: Strategic Gears analysis based on data from the X API and YouTube Data API.

THE ORGANIZATIONS BEHIND THEM

The ten organizations that reached the annual top five most often are split between the public and private sectors. The Ministry of National Guard reaches a year's top five six times, more than any other organization. Al Hilal, Al Ittihad, Al Ahli and Al Nassr together hold 22 of the hundred strongest films of the decade, and 17 of those have come over the past three editions.

FIGURE 3: **ORGANIZATIONS WITH THE MOST TOP-FIVE FILMS**
Films reaching a year's top five, by organization, 2015–2025

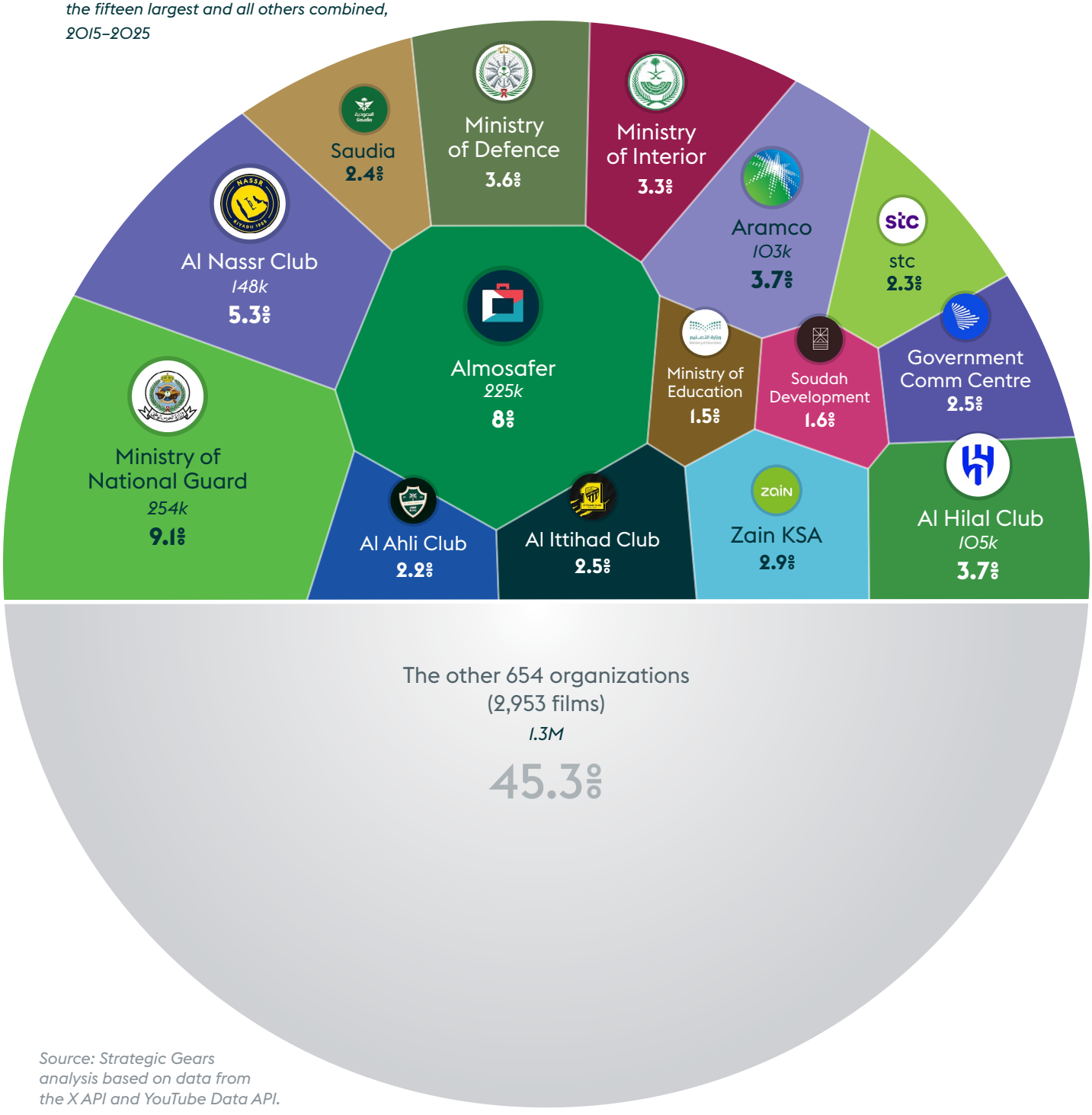


Source: Strategic Gears analysis based on data from the X API and YouTube Data API.

HOW ENGAGEMENTS ARE DISTRIBUTED

Engagement is concentrated in a small number of organizations. The fifteen largest hold 54.7% of the decade's total and the remaining 654 hold 45.3%. The Ministry of National Guard leads on 254,157 from twelve films, while the Government Communication Centre reaches tenth place with fifty-three film, **hinting at a decreasing marginal engagement return to each unit of film created after a certain point.**

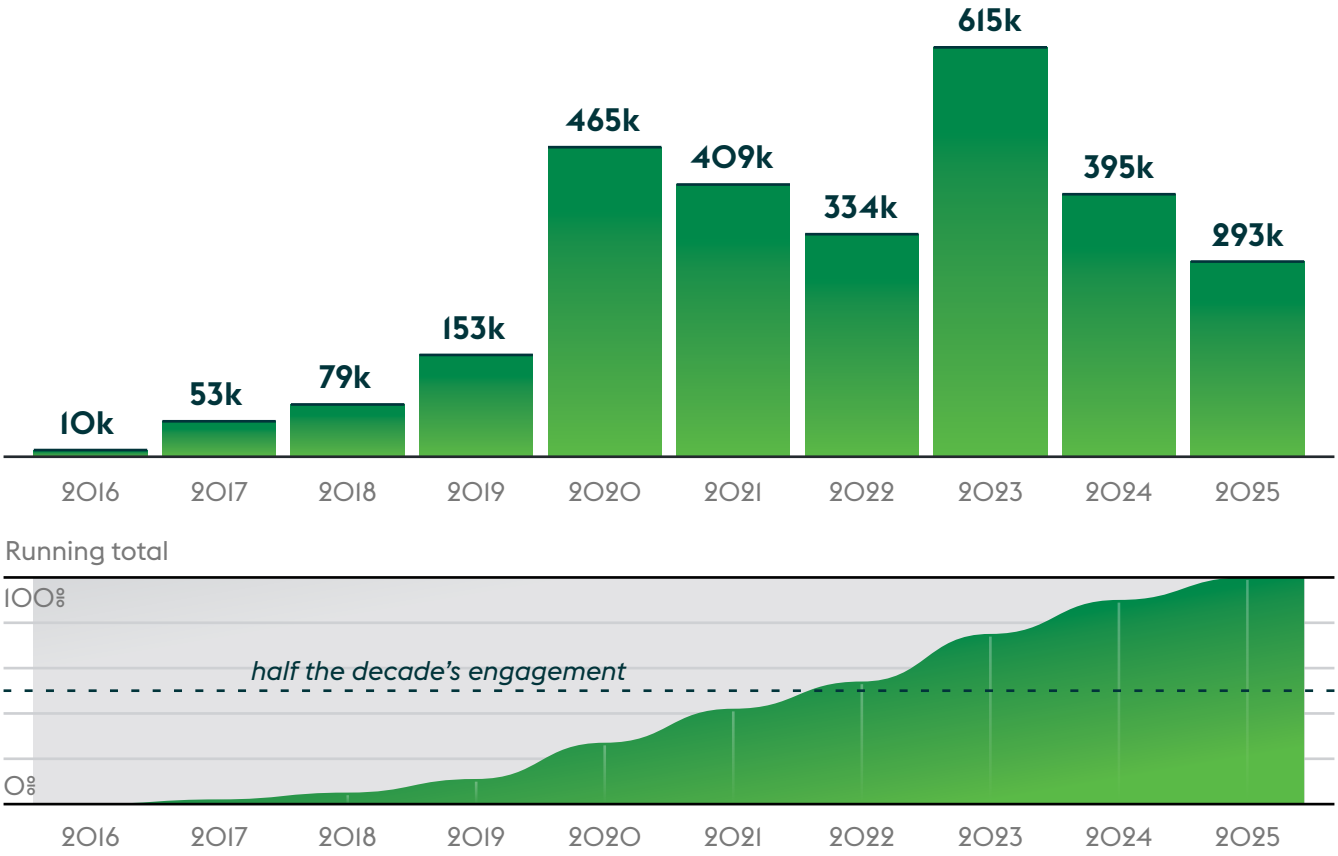
FIGURE 4: **ENGAGEMENT BY ORGANIZATION**
Engagement on produced films by organization, the fifteen largest and all others combined, 2015–2025



Source: Strategic Gears analysis based on data from the X API and YouTube Data API.

FIGURE 5: **ENGAGEMENT ACROSS THE DECADE**

Engagement on produced films by edition and as a running total, 2015–2025



Source: Strategic Gears analysis based on data from the X API and YouTube Data API.

The past three editions alone account for almost 47% of the 2.8 million cumulative National Day engagements, led by 2023 has the largest aggregate engagement of any year at over 615,000. Interestingly, the second largest edition was held under pandemic restrictions in 2020 and saw the biggest year-on-year incline. As for 2024 and 2205, engagement metrics saw back-to-back declines that place them 7% below the level of engagement as 2021 and 2022, and 8% below the average engagement per produced film.

HOW MUCH EACH EDITION RESTS ON ITS STRONGEST FILMS

The fifteen largest institutional publishers echo the national narrative of the National Day. They include five national government bodies, the four football clubs, two telecom operators, the national airline carrier, Aramco, Almosafer, and Soudah Development. Aside from 2016 when the number of films created was still below 100, 2018 saw the largest concentration in engagement among the top 10 publishers. Since then, participating organizations have increased and the top 10 occupied less share of engagement.



Ashiqeenak (We Adore You)

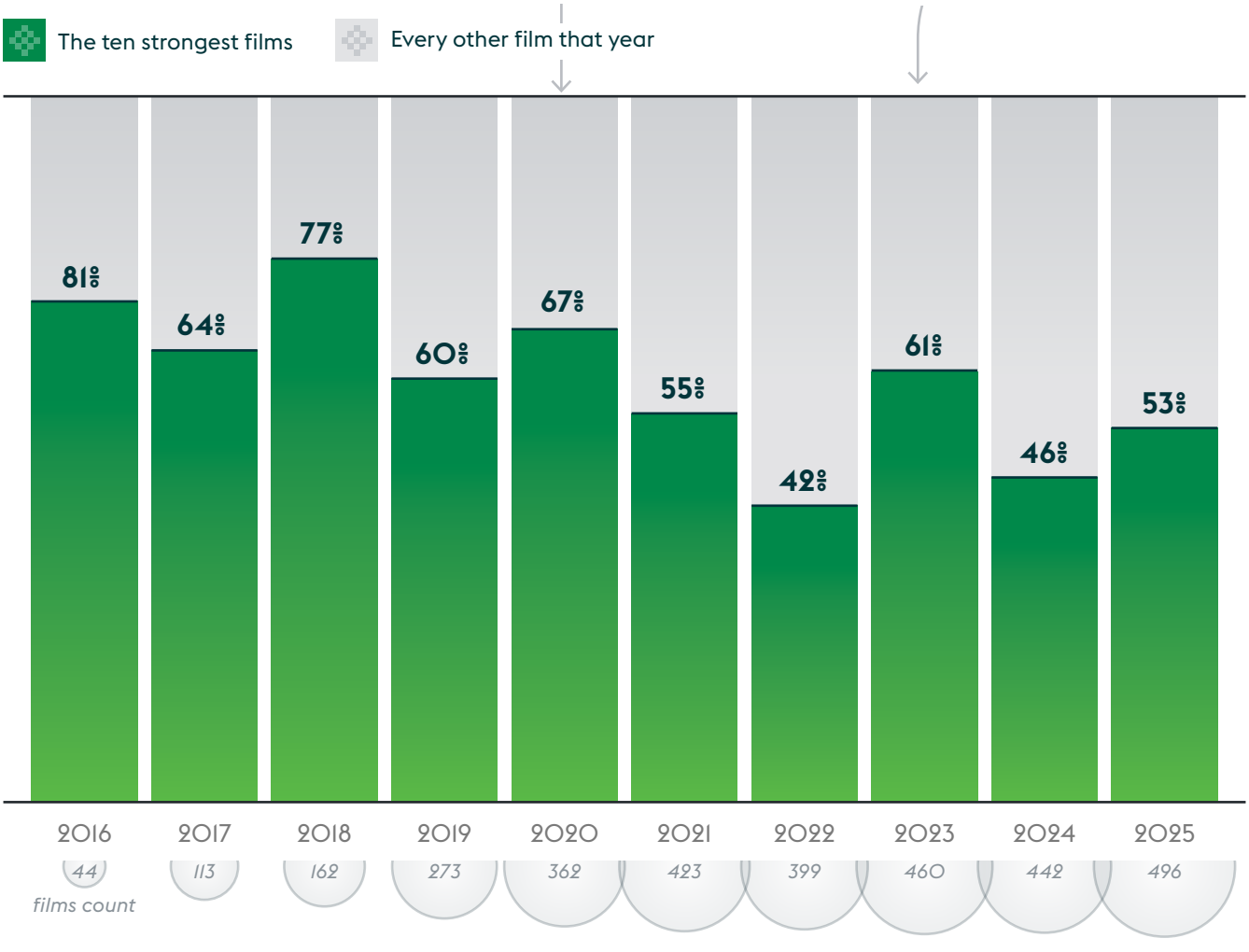


A Homeland For Its People and for the World

The highest engagement in the year

FIGURE 6: **THE TEN STRONGEST FILMS OF EACH EDITION**

Share of each edition's engagement held by its ten highest-engagement produced films, 2016–2025



Source: Strategic Gears analysis based on data from the X API and YouTube Data API.

Communications landscape

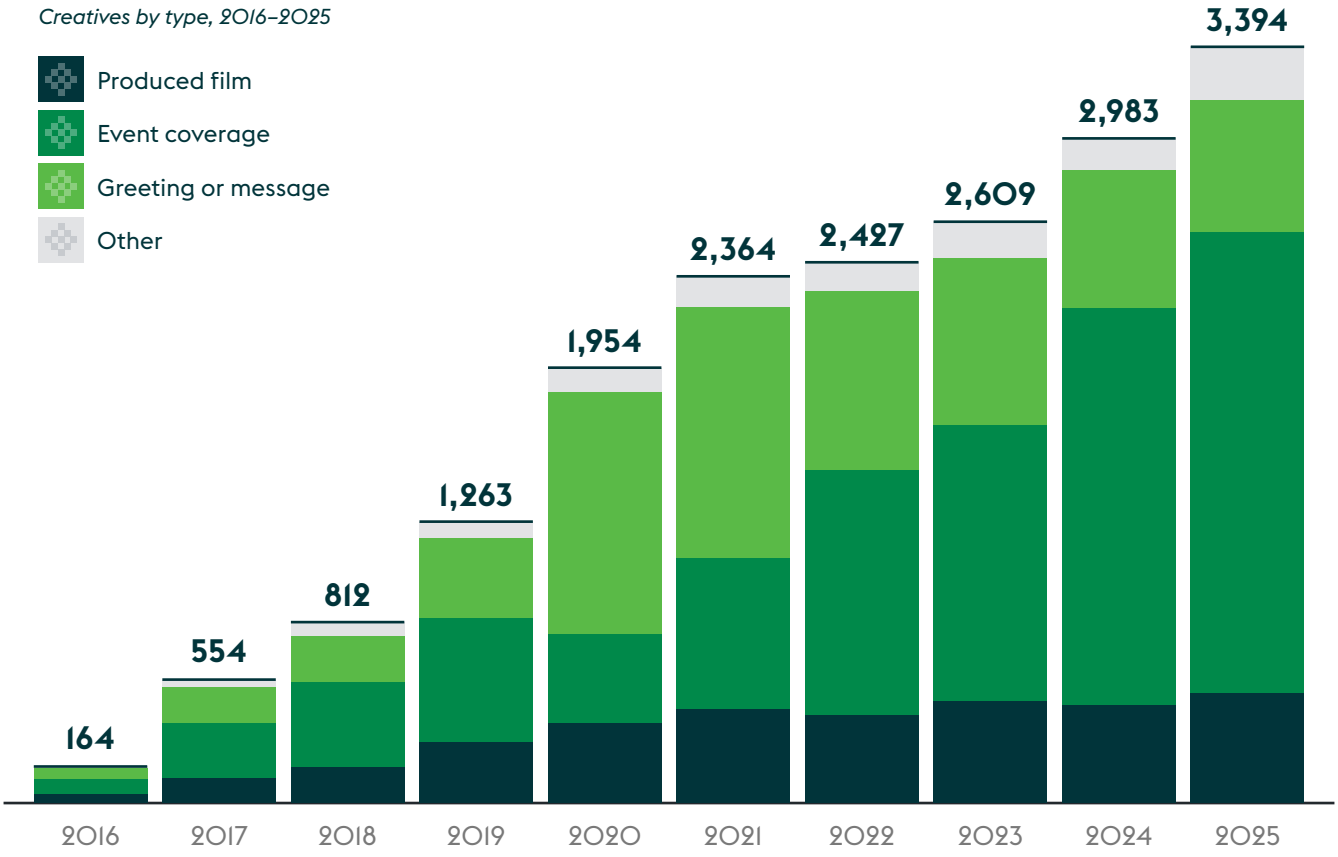
This section assesses National Day communication across three dimensions. First, it sizes the composition of creative outputs. Second, it zooms on film productions and measures the frequency and intensity of participation across time and the sampled organizations. And third, the section structures films by dissemination strategy relative to the National Day (September 23) and the volume of audience attention they yield.

CREATIVE MIX AND FORMAT

Creative communications related to the Saudi National Day rose from 164 in 2016 to 3,394 in 2025, published by 94 and 1,001 organizations respectively. Growth was steepest in first five years of the launch of public commemoration efforts, with creatives reaching 1,954 in 2020. Since then, creative publications rose by an average of 12% a year reaching an all-time high of 3,394 in 2025.

Event coverages, which are documentary videos of organizations' participation in the National Day, tops the creative mix since 2022. Before that, organizations engaged in less creative friction and tended to produce courtesy and template-based greeting videos, representing the most prevalent creative work at 56% of the creative mix in 2020. As for film productions, the most resource-demanding creative work, publications saw the largest incline within a three-year window, growing from 162 in 2018 to 423 in 2021, and today represent around 15% of the coverage mix.

FIGURE 7: **THE COVERAGE MIX OF SAUDI NATIONAL DAY**
Creatives by type, 2016–2025



Source: Strategic Gears analysis based on data from the X API and YouTube Data API.

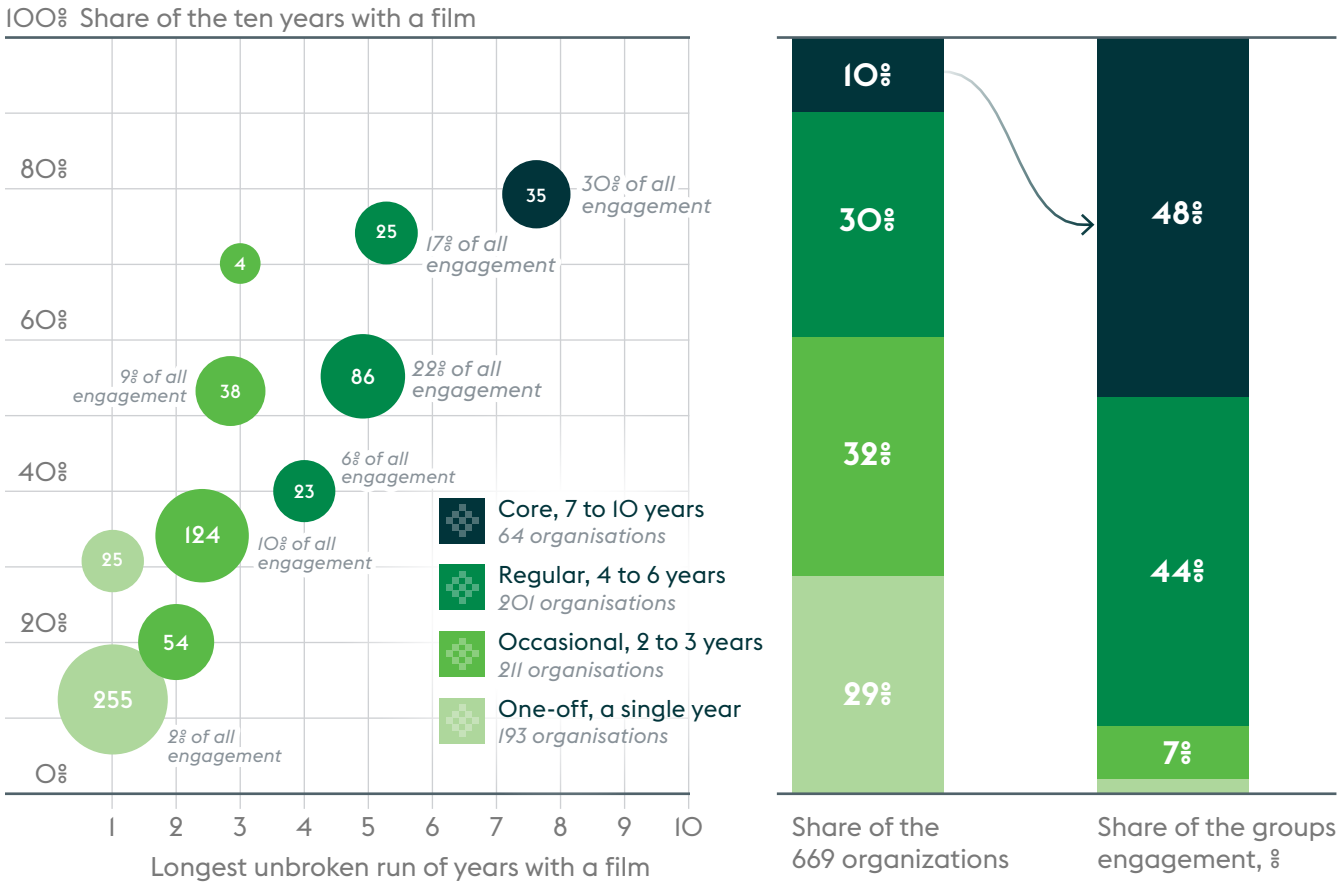
INTENSITY OF PARTICIPATION

Across all sampled organizations, film production rose from around 1 in 2 organizations in 2017 to a peak of 3 in 4 in 2020 and 2021. The ratio declined again in the past two editions, with 50% of organizations producing a video out of a sample of 700 and 1,000 organizations respectively.

A subset of core accounts has published National Day creatives in every edition since 2019, and as a group it averages close to one film per organization per edition. Among them, 32 entities never skipped the publication of a production film since 2020—including the King Abdulaziz Foundation, NEOM, Madinah Education Directorate, University of Ha'il Qassim Emirate, Ma'aden, Saudia, and Al-Ittihad. The core group's film participation intensity has been established at nearly 2x the average organization, characterizing a resilient National Day output over the past six editions.

FIGURE 8: **CLOSE TO ONE FILM PER ORGANIZATION**

Produced films per active organization, by publisher group, 2016–2025

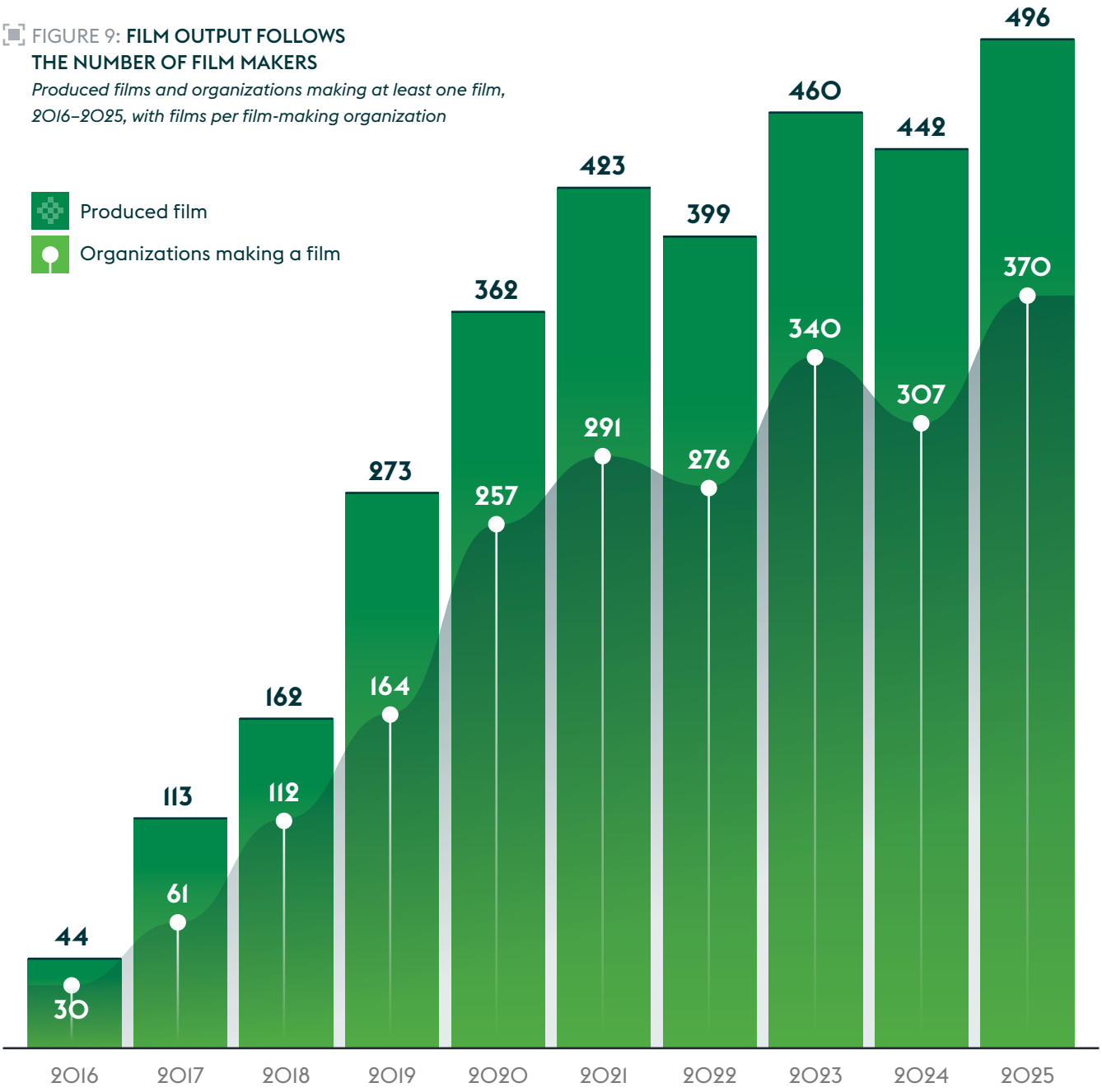


Source: Strategic Gears analysis based on data from the X API and YouTube Data API. Core accounts are organizations whose video feeds were collected in full. Constant cohort covers the 208 organizations active in every edition, 2019–2025.

Produced films rose from 44 in 2016 to 496 in 2025, with output since 2021 increasing with new entrants rather than with more frequent productions. Organizations publishing two or more films have stagnated at around 70 since 2020, while the bulk of film increases are observed with yearly entrants, 191 to 301 between 2020 and 2025. The capacity to carry a multi-film campaign, namely a teaser and a launch film, or separate cuts or even separate distinct films, remains concentrated in a small and largely unchanged group of publishers.

FIGURE 9: **FILM OUTPUT FOLLOWS THE NUMBER OF FILM MAKERS**

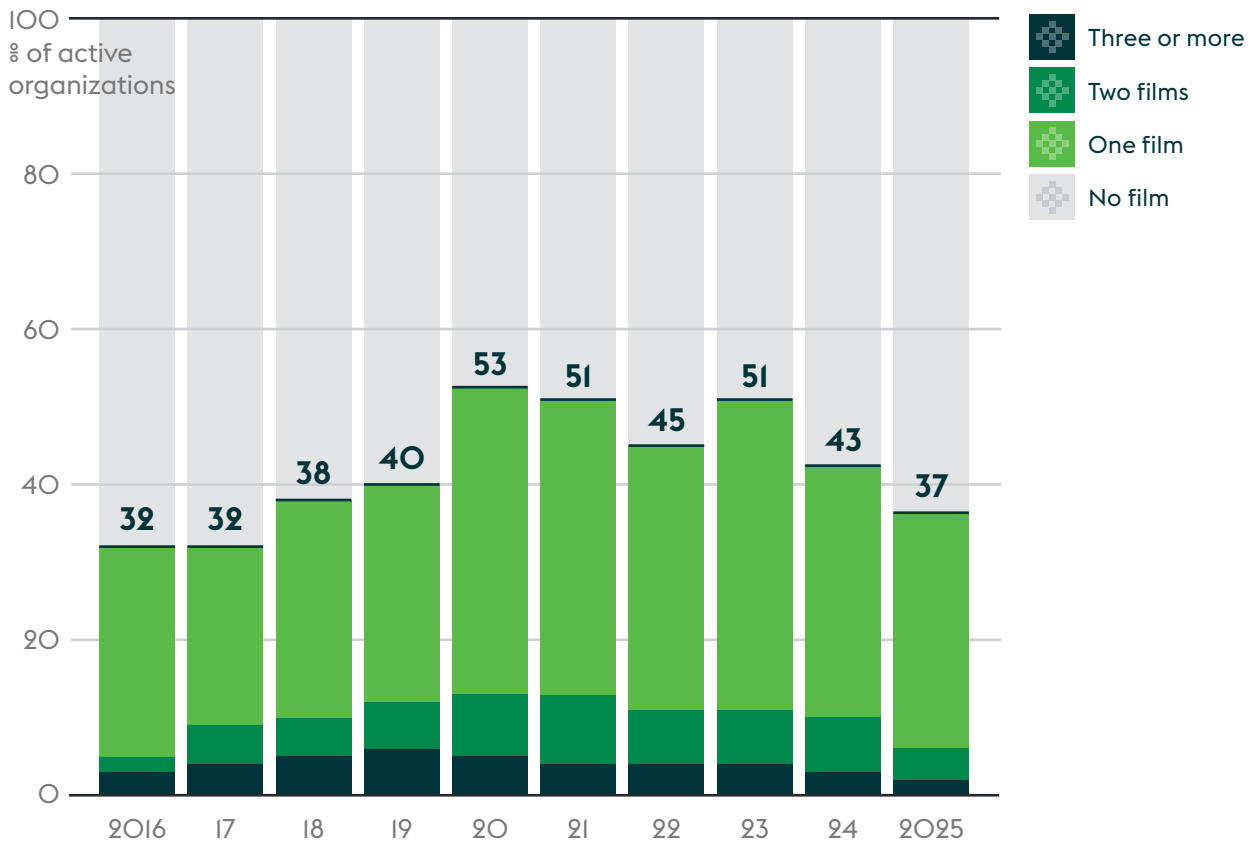
Produced films and organizations making at least one film, 2016–2025, with films per film-making organization



Source: Strategic Gears analysis based on data from the X API and YouTube Data API.

FIGURE 10: **ONE ORGANIZATION, ONE FILM**

Active organizations by number of produced films published, % of active organizations, 2016–2025



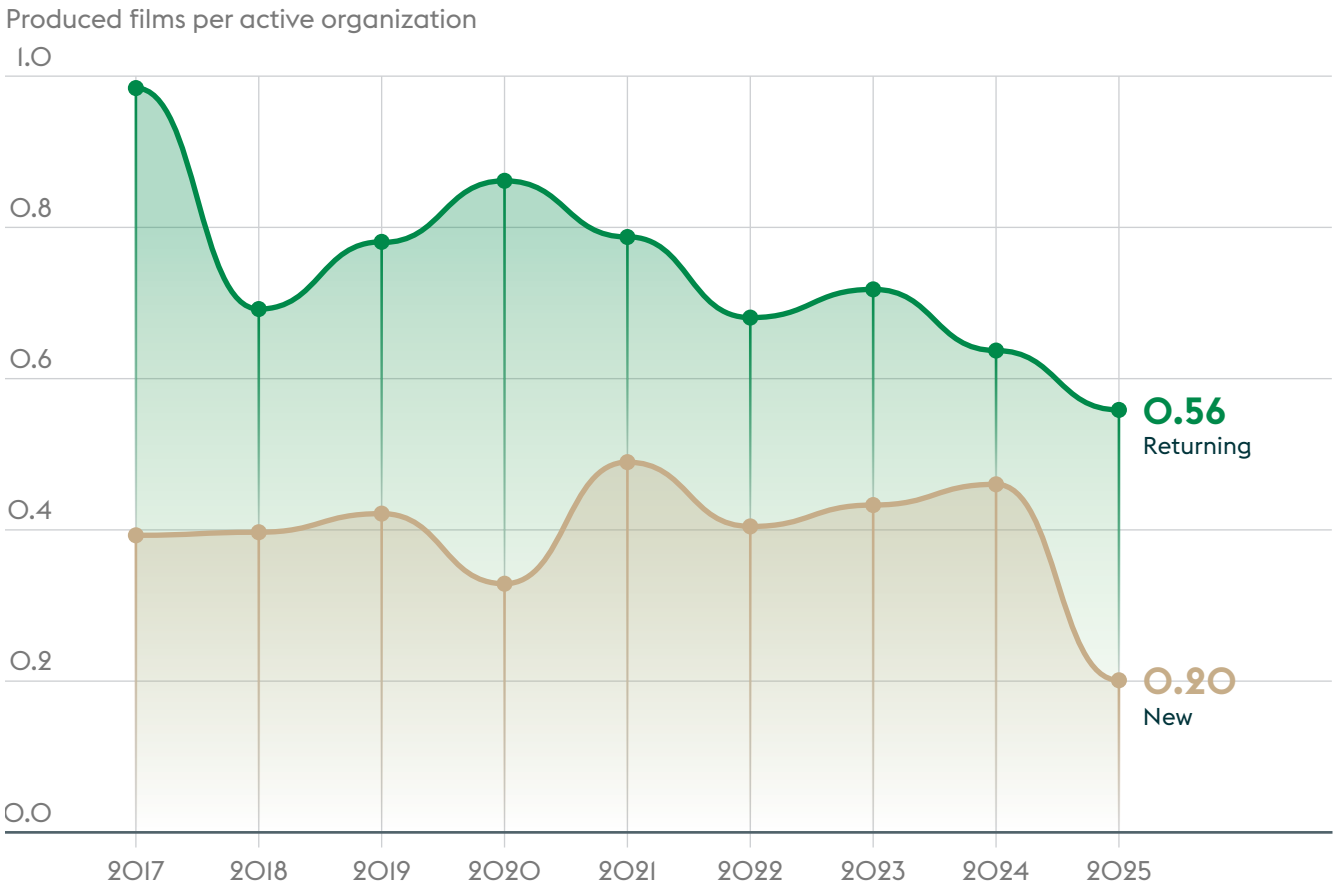
Source: Strategic Gears analysis based on data from the X API and YouTube Data API. Labels show the share of active organizations publishing at least one produced film.

NEWCOMERS AND REPEAT PUBLISHERS

Participating in National Day communications seem equally an opportunity for organization visibility and commitment toward national sentiment, as 82% of organizations have repeatedly participated and they account for 93% of films in 2025. Over the past decade, returning organizations have a higher propensity for film productions, despite it being on a decreasing trend of the past three editions, than new entrants. Moreover, the ratio of new entrants creating a film has largely held constant, outside a big drop in 2025, at around 1 in 2.

FIGURE II: **REPEAT PUBLISHERS CARRY FILM OUTPUT**

Produced films per active organization, new and returning publishers, 2017–2025

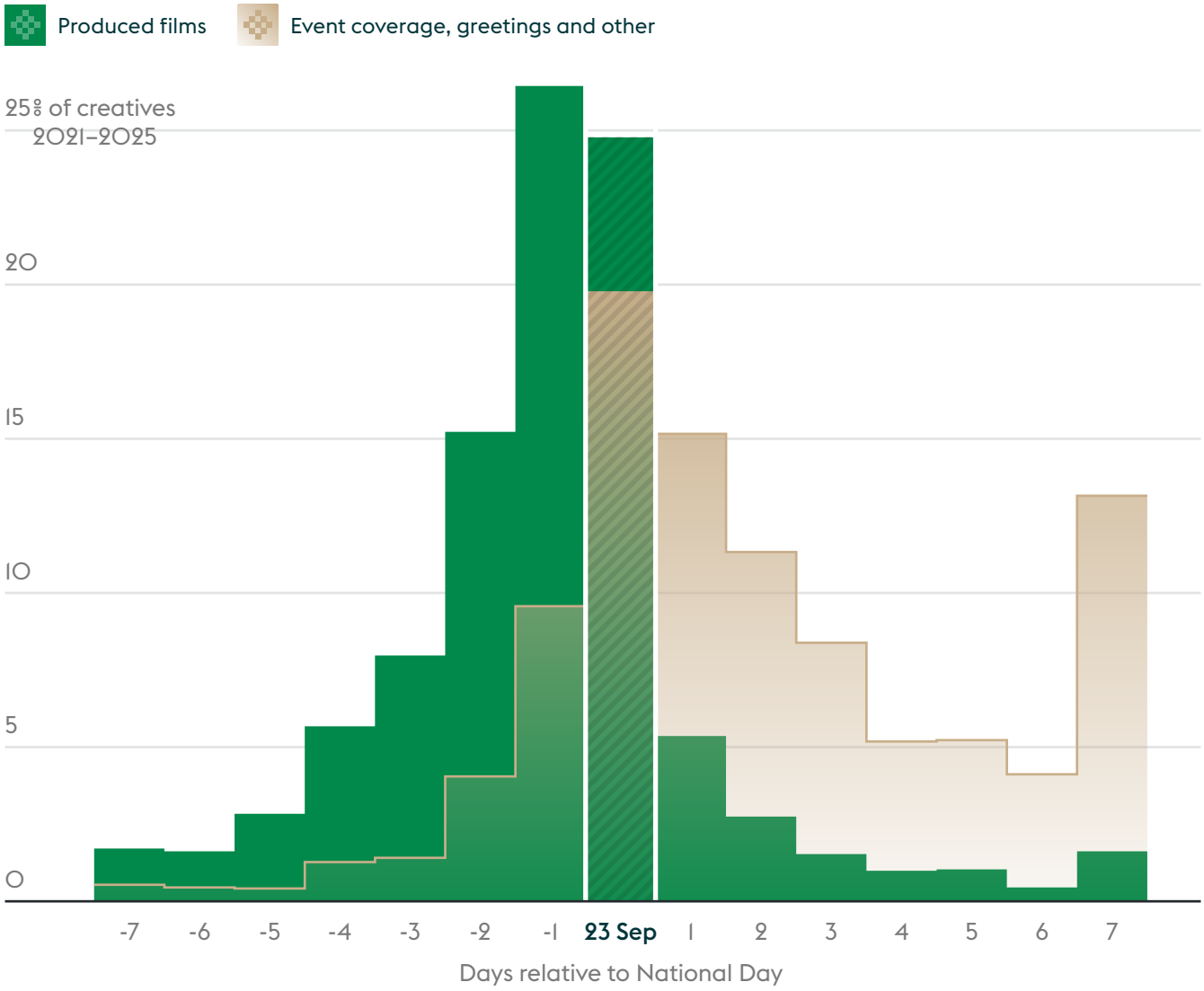


Source: Strategic Gears analysis based on data from the X API and YouTube Data API.

A NATIONAL DAY SEASON

One-half of produced films is released on the day or one day before the National Day. Across the 2021–2025 editions, 26% of films were published on 22 September and 25% on the day itself, while 20% appeared three or more days in advance. The share of films published after the day fell from 34% in 2019 to 14% in 2020 and has remained around that since. The general trend has communications kicking-off the National Day with a film, and covering events about it into the following week.

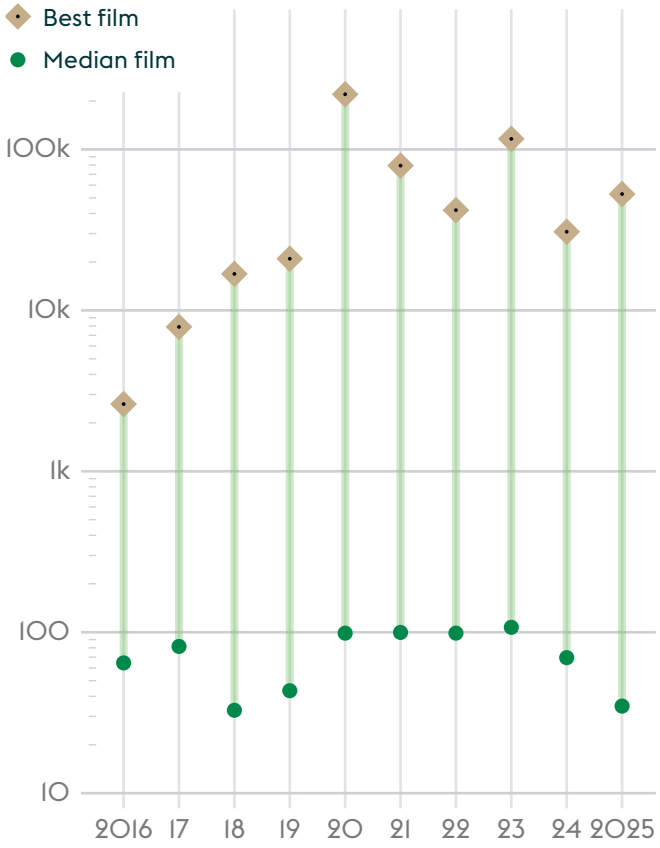
FIGURE 12: **FILMS LEAD, COVERAGE FOLLOWS**
Share of creatives by day of publication relative to the event



Source: Strategic Gears analysis based on data from the X API and YouTube Data API. The final bar includes creatives published up to the close of the collection window.

FIGURE 13: **A FEW FILMS TAKE MOST OF THE ATTENTION**
Median and best-performing film engagement (log scale), and share of total film engagement by film rank, 2016–2025

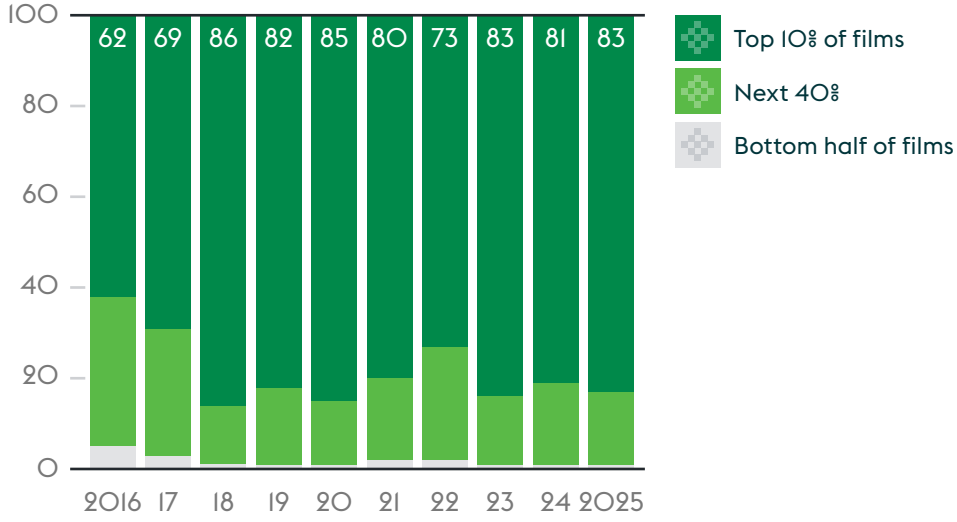
Engagement per film, log scale



CONCENTRATION OF ATTENTION

Attention concentrates on a small number of films. In every edition since 2018, the top 10% of produced films captured between 73% and 86% of total film engagement, and in 2020, a single film featuring a song by Rashed Al-Majed released by the travel platform Almosafer drew 47% of that edition's total.

Share of total film engagement, %



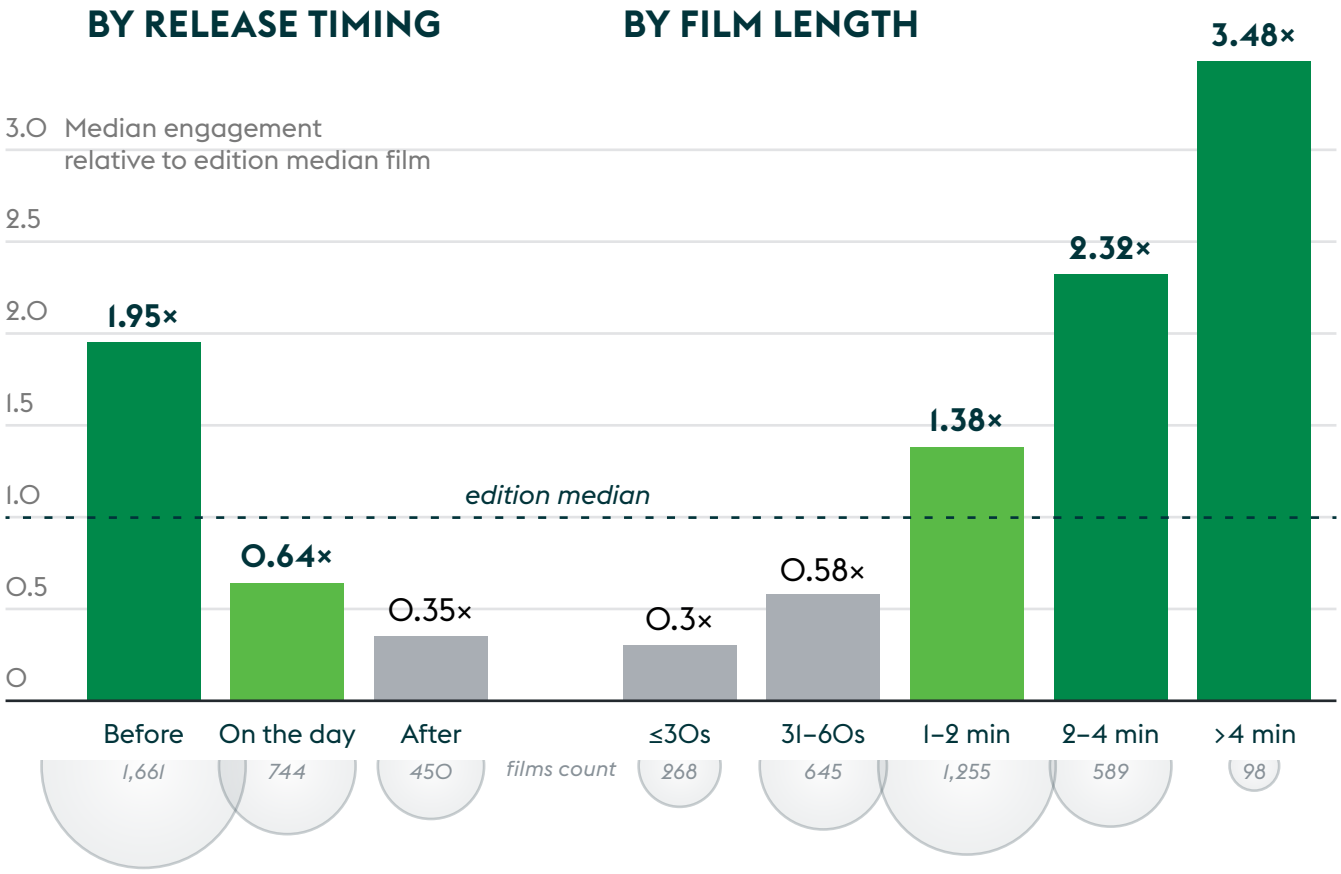
Source: Strategic Gears analysis based on data from the X API and YouTube Data API. Engagement is lifetime likes, reposts and replies on X plus likes and comments on YouTube, to 15 September 2026.

Films released ahead of the day, and films longer than one minute, draw the most attention. Measured against the median film of the same edition, films published ahead of the National Day drew 1.95 times the edition median across 2019–2025. Films published on the day of got 0.64 times the median, while films published after it had a relatively low engagement at 0.35 times.

Engagement also rises with running time. Films that exhibited larger storytelling production seem to grasp more attention among viewers, with films of one to two minutes drawing 1.38 times the edition median, and films of two to four minutes 2.32 times. Films of one to four minutes exceeded the median in every edition since 2019.

FIGURE 14: **A FEW FILMS TAKE MOST OF THE ATTENTION**

Median film engagement relative to the median film of the same edition, by release timing and running time, 2019–2025 pooled



Source: Strategic Gears analysis based on data from the X API and YouTube Data API. Engagement is lifetime likes, reposts and replies on X plus likes and comments on YouTube, to 15 September 2026.

CREATIVE LANDSCAPE: A CLOSER LOOK AT THE DECADE'S MOST ENGAGING FILMS

This section examines the creative landscape of National Day advertising through a content review of the ten films with the highest engagement in each edition from 2015 to 2025. It traces changes in creative approaches and techniques and identifies the main patterns emerging over the period.

A review of each edition

2015–17

The years 2015–2017 marked an early stage in the development of National Day advertising. Simple, direct formats gradually gave way to more professional production and more clearly defined messages. In 2015, straightforward treatments predominated, including characters representing different professions and national and religious imagery, with limited storytelling or integrated creative development. Signs of change appeared in 2016. Alongside works that remained simple in execution, more deliberate attempts emerged to tell stories and draw on history and social values. Shawarmer was among the first to combine more considered production with a clear message about coexistence and confronting discrimination. Other works approached national memory and the Kingdom's unification through more developed narratives. In 2017, production quality and advertising concepts advanced more visibly. Mobily and Shawarmer produced high-quality work, while Zain delivered one of the period's most accomplished productions, combining a message about diversity with a song commissioned for the campaign. Toyota contrasted past and present to capture social changes, including the growing prominence of National Day celebrations themselves. Together, these years show a gradual shift from greetings and direct symbolism toward clearer concepts, messages, and creative identities.

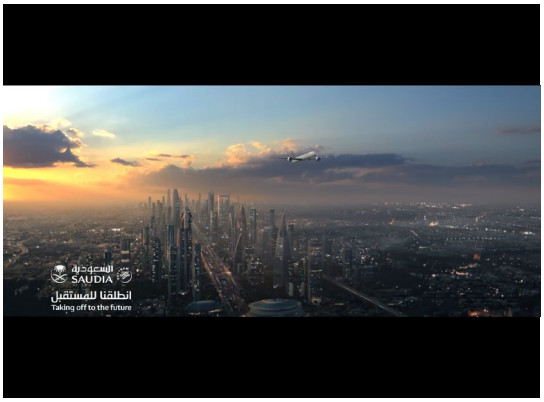


The Leader's Stars Congratulate the Nation

Al Hilal Club • 2016

2018

The films of 2018 continued to celebrate the nation and its achievements directly, relying heavily on songs, poetry, and symbolic imagery, with limited storytelling in most works. Saudia stood out with two productions focused on progress and the future: one combined voice-over and motion graphics with live-action footage; the other featured a song performed by *Naif Al Badr*, *Reem Abdullah*, and a choir. Zain also produced an original patriotic song. Al-Hilal used the music of "**Watani Al Habib**" over footage of its facilities and pitches, while the Center for Government Communication paired a patriotic poem with varied footage and graphics. Al-Nassr took a different approach with a short narrative about King Salman. The Saudi Standards, Metrology and Quality Organization used a simple format in which employees formed the Saudi flag and portraits of the leadership. Shawarmer was the strongest exception in production and scriptwriting, delivering a high-quality short film about making the seemingly impossible a reality. Its narrative approach stood apart in a field largely built around songs, symbols, and direct national imagery.

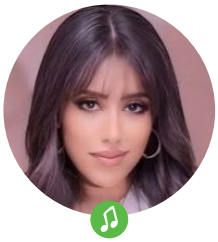


We Set Off for the Future

Saudia • 2018



Naif Al-Bader



Reem Abdullah



"WATANI AL HABIB": TALAL MADDAH'S VOICE IN NATIONAL DAY ADVERTISING

"**Watani Al Habib**," performed by the late *Talal Maddah*, is among Saudi Arabia's best-known patriotic songs and is deeply rooted in collective memory. For successive generations, it has become part of the ritual of celebrating National Day.

It appeared in Al-Hilal's and Shawarmer's advertisements in 2016, accompanying players' greetings in the former and a message about coexistence and confronting discrimination in the latter. Al-Hilal returned to its melody in 2018 over footage of its facilities and pitches. In 2021, it accompanied a voice-over about security and peace in the Ministry of Interior's "Peace to the Home of the Safe." In 2025, Al-Ittihad used it in "Our Union Is One," which recalled the historic city and was the only film in that year's top ten to use an existing patriotic song.

Maddah's presence extended beyond "Watani Al Habib." Al-Batin in 2016 and the Ministry of Municipalities and Housing in 2017 used "Biladi Manar Al Huda." Shawarmer produced a high-quality new rendition of "Ya Biladi Ya Aghla Balad" in 2017.

This repeated use draws on the songs' accumulated emotional associations and their ability to evoke nostalgia immediately.

2019

As in the previous year, the most engaging advertisements in 2019 were generally simple in production and narrative structure. Songs and direct messages remained prominent, while dramatic plots and fully developed cinematic productions were almost absent. Within this landscape, stc distinguished itself through more professional cinematography and execution. Shawarmer took a bolder visual direction by combining animation and song. Mobily connected the occasion to a social issue through a performance of the national anthem by people with disabilities. Monsha'at placed entrepreneurs at the center of its film, presenting real businesses and their founders in a song celebrating their contribution to the nation.

Military and security institutions communicated more directly. The National Guard presented a motivational address by an injured soldier and a separate work featuring poetry recited by soldiers. The Presidency of State Security focused on national unity, while Kudu addressed soldiers through a simple studio production. The Center for Government Communication paired quotations from the Crown Prince with scenes from across the Kingdom. Overall, the edition relied on songs, direct messages, and single concepts, with comparatively limited production and storytelling.



Made by Saudis

stc • 2019

2020

The ten most engaging advertisements in 2020 reflected a creative landscape still in transition, with songs and voice-overs more prevalent than fully developed cinematic narratives. Almosafer led the ranking with "**Ashigeenik**," performed by *Rashed Al Majed* over a simple montage of Saudi landmarks. The song subsequently became a widely circulated contemporary patriotic song, whose advertising origins surprise many listeners. Zain and Riyad Bank followed a similar approach. Zain used a rendition of "**Fawq Ham Al Suhub**" by *Shimi*, a singer who became known through social media. Riyad Bank commissioned an original song accompanied by a mix of specially filmed material and familiar footage of Saudi landmarks.

History and national memory featured strongly through recognizable voices and figures. Saudia built its advertisement around rare footage of speeches by Saudi kings. Retal paired a well-known speech by the late minister Ghazi Al Gosaibi with cinematic scenes, marking a notable advance in integrating a narrative, although not an original script, into a complete cinematic production. The Diriyah Gate Development Authority combined an emphatic performance of Nabati poetry with high-quality visuals. Narrative experiments remained relatively limited. The National Guard depicted soldiers on the southern border performing an older patriotic song, an early attempt at a narrative advertising film. CATRION, formerly Saudi Airlines Catering, told the story of someone stranded abroad by COVID-19 quarantine restrictions, the only work to address the year's defining event. Al-Nassr featured foreign members of the club discussing their experiences in the Kingdom.



Ashiqeenak (We Adore You)

Almosafer • Sung by Rashed Al-Majed • 2020

2021

The ten most engaging advertisements in 2021 marked a clear shift toward high-quality short films, with dramatic narratives becoming more prominent than song-led works. The Ministry of National Guard topped the ranking with a fully developed short film based on the true story of soldiers on the southern border who lose a colleague. Featuring well-known professional actors, it represented a substantial advance on the ministry's modest attempt the previous year. The Ministry of Defense brought a historic speech by King Abdulaziz to life through acted scenes and voice-over. Aramco portrayed Saudi heroes across historical periods, from the Kingdom's founding to the present. Both revisited established themes through more advanced production. Retal reenacted four widely known, real-life rescue stories to honor the citizens involved. The Ministry of Interior chose a more everyday perspective, showing security personnel carrying out rescues and assisting people in familiar situations. Absher documented the history of the security services through a complete production accompanied by an original patriotic song.

New visual approaches also emerged. Manga Productions presented an anime film featuring Saudi characters from different walks of life, a rare example of anime directed at a Saudi audience. The Ministry of Culture imagined the construction of historic Diriyah in a visual journey accompanied by the traditional builders' chant "**Labnat Tina**." Club productions remained simpler that year. Al-Hilal's foreign players performed Saudi customs, such as pouring coffee and wearing local dress, foreshadowing the growing use of star players in later campaigns. Al-Ahli paired an original patriotic song with a montage of landmarks and the leadership.



Sahm Mu'zi

Ministry of National Guard • Starring Faisal Al-Dokhi • 2021

2022

Following the advance in 2021, the ten most engaging advertisements in 2022 were generally simpler in production and narrative structure, with songs again central to several works. These included the Ministry of Culture's medley of well-known patriotic songs, alongside musical productions by Saudia, the Ministry of Education, and Maestro Pizza. stc adopted a direct treatment of empowerment. Theeb presented simple scenes illustrating local values and customs, while Al-Hilal featured a player speaking about the nation and ambition.

Despite the simplicity of much of the field, the Ministries of National Guard and Defense continued to use drama, acting, and true stories of soldiers and their sacrifices, honoring military figures by name. The Local Content and Government Procurement Authority used a modest production to explain the economic circulation generated by local content in an accessible, light-hearted way. Maestro Pizza stood out for its more professional execution, using a song to revisit difficult moments in the Kingdom's modern history and its ability to overcome them, celebrating national resilience.



Ten to One

Ministry of National Guard • 2022

2023

Football clubs dominated the ten most engaging advertisements in 2023, reflecting the momentum in Saudi football following the recruitment of some of the world's leading players. The clubs' use of their stars, which had begun in earlier editions, reached its peak. Players appeared in a local national setting: Cristiano Ronaldo and his Al-Nassr teammates wore Saudi dress and participated in the ardah, while Al-Hilal, Al-Ahli, and Al-Ittihad featured their players performing local dances and offering greetings. Production quality varied considerably across these works.

Military institutions stood out for more narrative and dramatic treatments. The National Guard contrasted citizens' safe everyday lives with the sacrifices of soldiers and firefighters. The Ministry of Defense produced a film based on a true story, emphasizing soldiers' heroism and the human dimension of their mission. History and culture also featured in musical works. Aramco used a choral song to trace the Kingdom's development since King Abdulaziz's reign, while Soudah Development highlighted the nature and culture of the southern region through a high-quality music film.



A Homeland For Its People and for the World

Al Nassr Club • Starring Cristiano Ronaldo, Sadio Mané, Marcelo Brozović • 2023

2024

The ten most engaging advertisements in 2024 showed greater variety between cinematic storytelling and musical works, with history and national memory prominent. The National Guard delivered one of the year's most dramatic productions, moving from familiar scenes of earlier Saudi life to true stories of sacrifice by soldiers and doctors. Parents' prayers in the local dialect provided an emotional thread connecting past and present and accompanying the unfolding events. Aramco also revisited King Abdulaziz's life and the history and cultures of the Kingdom's regions in a film accompanied by an original choral song. The Ministry of Interior focused on the relationship between society and military and security institutions, using a voice-over to describe its cultural roots. Sports Boulevard adopted a simpler format, with a direct voice-over about the nation and no clear dramatic plot.

Several works made music the central element. Zain paired a song by *Ayed* with previously filmed footage. The Ministry of Environment, Water and Agriculture used a simple choral performance, while the National Center for Vegetation Cover Development and Combating Desertification delivered its awareness message through a song performed by a well-known actor. Sports clubs continued to feature their players and stars. Al-Ahli connected its heritage with the national anthem and Saudi dress, while Al-Hilal's stars appeared in Saudi clothing. Al-Nassr's "**We Dream and Dream**" drew on its supporters and history before presenting Ronaldo, Mané, and the other players. Al-Hilal used "**Allah Al Badi**," performed by *Talal Maddah* and *Mohammed Abdu*, illustrating the continuing use of familiar patriotic songs alongside newly commissioned music.



How Did We Do It?

Zain • Sung by Ayed • 2024



Talal Maddah

Ayed

2025

The ten most engaging advertisements in 2025 showed a strong presence of high-quality cinematic production and a wider range of approaches to the occasion. The Ministry of Interior topped the ranking with a war film based on a true story, honoring soldiers who had lost their lives. The National Guard emphasized military strength and readiness through a distinctive, largely wordless cinematic military display. Both continued the sector's use of heroism and national sacrifice. Aramco contributed a musical film that drew on history and national memory.

Sports clubs continued to make their players and stars central to their content. The year also brought newer approaches beyond the narrative patterns of earlier editions, including the Tourism Development Fund's use of comedy to challenge stereotypes.

Al-Ittihad was the only organization in the year's top ten to use an existing patriotic song, *Talal Maddah*'s "**Watani Al Habib**." The Royal Commission for Riyadh City's "Riyadh Al Ezz" brought together *Mohammed Abdu*, *Rashed Al Majed*, and *Majid Al Mohandis* in an original patriotic song, placing greater emphasis on music than on visual production or dramatic plot. Theeb's "**Asdaq Haqawina**" used a specially commissioned choral song in a treatment recalling prominent national figures and symbols.



A Homeland Without Limits — Confrontation Zero

Ministry of Interior • Directed by Ahmed Maged El Masry, starring Naif Al-Dhafeeri and Fawaz Al-Zahrani • 2025



Mohammed Abdu

Rashed Al-Majed

Majid Al-Mohandis

Stages of creative development: From experimentation to maturity

The decade's most engaging National Day advertisements reveal a clear trajectory, from campaigns with uncertain creative direction toward a mature industry in which fully developed cinematic production has become a basic requirement for competition. This development was neither linear nor uniform across organizations. Some advanced steadily, while others fluctuated, and creative approaches changed alongside domestic capabilities and the wider context.

01

BEFORE 2020: A GAP BETWEEN PRODUCTION AND CREATIVITY

Campaigns before 2020 generally lacked a coherent creative direction. The gap between production resources and creative capabilities was evident: some organizations had good production tools but lacked a strong concept; others had compelling ideas without the capacity to execute them to the required standard. Direct treatments predominated, including characters representing different professions, national and religious imagery, and references to history and unification. Nevertheless, some works connected the occasion with social and humanitarian issues or sought greater creative and production ambition.

02

2020 AND 2021: FROM TRANSITION TO A STEP CHANGE

This period marked a transition. Songs, voice-overs, and speeches by Saudi kings remained prominent, but their integration into narrative production became more sophisticated. A clear shift toward high-quality short films followed, with dramatic storytelling becoming more prominent than song-led works.

03

AFTER 2021: AN UNEVEN TRAJECTORY

Progress did not continue at a uniform pace. Production and storytelling were simpler in 2022, when songs again became a principal device, although a baseline of production quality was emerging. Sports clubs dominated the 2023 ranking. In 2024, cinematic narratives and musical works became more varied, followed in 2025 by a strong presence of high-quality cinema and a wider range of creative approaches.

The progression of creative techniques

Across organizations and the wider landscape, creative approaches evolve with production capabilities, creative skills, and the willingness to invest in more costly and less conventional work. They can be grouped into three broad stages.



IMAGERY AND VOICE-OVER

This approach combines stock or general footage of landmarks and the leadership with a voice-over, poem, or familiar patriotic song. It is the least costly format and often attracts limited attention, except where publishers have very large follower bases. Examples include Al-Hilal's use of "Watani Al Habib" over footage of its facilities and pitches, and the Center for Government Communication's poem accompanied by varied footage and graphics in 2018.

MORE COMPLEX FORMATS

These include original patriotic songs commissioned for campaigns, as in Zain's 2017 and 2018 works, and animation, as in Shawarmer's 2019 film and Manga Productions' 2021 work. These formats are relatively moderate in cost and experimental in character, with varying reach and audience reception.





FULLY DEVELOPED CINEMATIC PRODUCTION

This approach became clearly established from 2021, as leading works took the form of short films based on true stories, with professional actors and high-quality production. It is the most costly and professionally demanding format. Security and military institutions have led this approach with notable consistency.

The organizations that shaped the landscape

Military institutions, sports clubs, and Aramco have led the landscape in recent years, while the prominence of other organizations has fluctuated.



SHAWARMER: AN EARLY CREATIVE LEADER

Shawarmer was among the most prominent creative pioneers. In 2016, it delivered a clear message about coexistence and confronting discrimination when most works still relied on straightforward greetings. A high-quality production followed in 2017. Its 2018 short film, about turning the seemingly impossible into reality, was a notable narrative exception that year. In 2019, it moved into animation with a distinct visual treatment. Shawarmer thus preceded many organizations in combining a clear concept with accomplished execution. Its presence among the most engaging works subsequently faded.



MILITARY INSTITUTIONS: THE MOST DISTINCTIVE CASE

Military institutions, particularly the Ministry of National Guard, present the most compelling case in this landscape. Their near-continuous presence among the most engaging works is accompanied by a marked development in production that can be traced year by year.

Ministry of National Guard

2019. **"Men Stand for You, Steadfast as Tuwaiq."** A work based on poetry recited by soldiers.

2019. **"We Are Her Sons."** A motivational address delivered by an injured soldier.

2020. **"We Wish You Well, Our Homeland, with Firm Resolve and Sound Judgment."** A fictional scene of soldiers on the southern border performing an older patriotic song.

2021. **"Sahm Muazzi."** A fully developed film featuring well-known professional actors, based on the true story of soldiers who lose a colleague. It topped the year's ranking.

2022. **"Ten One."** A dramatic treatment of true stories about soldiers and their sacrifices, honoring military figures by name.

2023. **"My Children for Her."** A film contrasting citizens' safe everyday lives with the sacrifices of soldiers and firefighters.

2024. **"We All Belong to Her and Serve Her."** One of the year's most dramatic works, moving from memories of earlier Saudi life to true stories of sacrifice by soldiers and doctors. Parents' prayers in the local dialect connect past and present.

2025. **"The Safeguard."** Largely wordless cinematic scenes of a distinctive military display convey the dignity and strength of Saudi forces through a bold artistic performance.

The Ministry of Defense followed a similar direction with films based on true stories, from "**Our Path Is Steadfast**" in 2021 to "**Because People Come First**" in 2023. The Ministry of Interior then led the 2025 ranking with "**Zero Confrontation**," a war film honoring soldiers who lost their lives, after exploring the culturally rooted relationship between society and security personnel in "**Saudi Arabia Is Within Every Saudi**" in 2024.

The sector continues to lead at a particularly relevant moment for communication with society, given regional conditions. Its institutions have pursued a clear and consistent direction: short films based on true battlefield stories and acts of heroism deserving recognition. National Day has become an occasion to honor fallen and injured service members and other heroes. This approach lends authenticity and emotional proximity to the work and strengthens ties between these institutions and society. The advance in production and creative capabilities is evident in the progression from poetry-based work in 2019 to the high-quality short films that followed.



ARAMCO: FROM PAST TO PRESENT

Aramco has consistently traced the Kingdom's journey from past to present, highlighting defining moments in its history. Its 2021 film "**Haddana Matn Al Sama**" portrayed Saudi heroes across historical periods, from the founding to the present, accompanied by an original song by Rashed Al Majed. The 2023 choral work "**Shawahid Al Ezz**" traced the Kingdom's development since King Abdulaziz's reign. "**Min Tharaha**" in 2024 revisited his life and the history and cultures of the Kingdom's regions. In 2025, "**Great Are You, My Homeland**" recalled national history through milestones including the first railway, an oil pipeline, pearl trading, and an aviation school. This consistency has given Aramco a clear and distinctive National Day identity and a creative space in which to challenge itself. Each year brings a new treatment of its established elements: historical achievements, cinematic storytelling, and an accompanying patriotic song, usually choral. The music has become a distinguishing feature of Aramco's work, with "**Shawahid Al Ezz**" achieving wide circulation in 2023.



SPORTS CLUBS: THE STRENGTH OF FAN BASES AND THE LIMITS OF CREATIVITY

The clubs' presence developed in stages. In 2018, Al-Hilal's "**May Your Glory Endure, Our Homeland**" used "Watani Al Habib" over footage of club facilities, while Al-Nassr's "**You Remain Our Pride, Year After Year**" presented a short work about King Salman. In 2020, foreign staff at Al-Nassr discussed their experiences in the Kingdom in "**From Different Homelands, They Came Together in a Land of Goodness.**" In 2021, Al-Ittihad presented "**Bilad Al Khair**," an original song by Ibrahim Al Hakami accompanied by scenes from across the Kingdom. Al-Hilal's foreign players performed Saudi customs, including pouring coffee and wearing local dress, in "**It Is Their Home**."

Clubs became particularly prominent in 2023, alongside the development of the Roshn League and the recruitment of leading international stars. Cristiano Ronaldo and his Al-Nassr teammates appeared in Saudi dress and ardah scenes in "**A Homeland for Its People and the World**." Al-Hilal's "**The Day of Our Dearest Homeland**," Al-Ahli's "**The Emblem of Pride Keeps Shining**," and Al-Ittihad's "**The Finest Emblem in Celebrating Our Dearest Homeland**" featured players performing local dances and offering greetings, with clear differences in production quality. This approach continued in 2024 and 2025. Some clubs used familiar patriotic songs, including "Allah Al Badi" in Al-Hilal's "A Leader for Every Goal" in 2024 and "Watani Al Habib" in Al-Ittihad's "Our Union Is One" in 2025.

Club engagement depends primarily on large fan bases and the use of star players. Creative treatments have generally remained similar and limited, leaving opportunities to draw more fully on clubs' tangible and intangible assets: history, heritage, supporters, and facilities. Al-Ahli's "**Great and Proud, My Homeland**" and Al-Nassr's "**We Dream and Dream, and in the Homeland of the Possible, Dreams Come True**" in 2024 illustrate this potential. Both began with club heritage, history, and supporters before introducing their stars. Al-Ahli developed this approach further in "**Al-Ahli, the Nation's Ambassador**" in 2025, a high-quality production highlighting achievements in sports other than football without foregrounding its familiar stars. Such examples remain limited, however, and the clubs' creative potential is still underused.



TELECOMMUNICATIONS COMPANIES

Engagement with telecommunications companies is modest relative to their scale and their influence on comparable occasions in neighboring countries and the wider region. They were among the most visible and advanced participants in the early period. Zain's "**Our Diversity Complements Us**" was one of 2017's most developed works, combining an original song with a message about diversity. Mobily's "**May You Be Well, Our Homeland**," also in 2017, delivered high production quality for the time and honored soldiers on the southern border. In 2019, Mobily linked the occasion to a social issue through "**A Kingdom for Everyone**," in which people with disabilities performed the national anthem. stc stood out for its execution in "**Homeland of Glory and Resolve**" that year. More recently, these companies have mostly adopted direct or song-led approaches, such as stc's focus on empowerment in "**With Empowerment, the Impossible Becomes Possible**" in 2022 and Zain's "**How We Made It**" in 2024, which paired a song by Ayed with previously filmed footage. They have yet to establish a sustained presence commensurate with their position.



OTHER ORGANIZATIONS

The prominence of other organizations has fluctuated. Saudia appeared in several editions with musical or historical treatments. Retal produced two notable works in 2020 and 2021, while the Ministry of Culture stood out with "**Labnat Tina**" in 2021 and its medley in 2022. Other distinctive appearances included Maestro Pizza's "**You Will Endure as Long as the Light**" in 2022; Soudah Development's "**This Is Where the Homeland Belongs**" in 2023; and, in 2025, the Royal Commission for Riyadh City's "**Riyadh Al Ezz**," the Tourism Development Fund's advertisement, and Salla's "**A Nation of Doers**." Most of these organizations, however, have not established a sustained presence or a cumulative creative identity around the occasion.

Creative formats and their effects

STORYTELLING AND DRAMATIC PLOTS

Military institutions clearly lead this format, which is among the most compelling, attention-grabbing, and shareable. Its relevance extends beyond the season: the films remain watchable and shareable years later, while strengthening institutional image and ties with society. The format is not confined to the military. Retal used real rescue stories in 2021, and CATRION, formerly Saudi Airlines Catering, told a quarantine story in 2020.

PATRIOTIC SONGS

These works are highly shareable, lend themselves to repeated listening, and can remain relevant beyond a particular season. Almosafer's 2020 advertisement is a clear example: "**Ashigeenik**" became a widely circulated patriotic song whose advertising origins surprise many listeners. The format also includes collaborations among major artists, such as "**Riyadh Al Ezz**," performed by Mohammed Abdu, Rashed Al Majed, and Majid Al Mohandis in 2025. Yet a song can become detached from the organization that commissioned it, circulating without necessarily strengthening its brand image.

GREETINGS AND CONGRATULATIONS

Formats such as players' greetings have lost their initial novelty and no longer generate the same response after repeated use over the years.

ANIMATION

This has appeared in a limited number of experiments, most notably Shawarmer's 2019 production. The available examples are insufficient to assess its effects systematically.

COMEDY

Comedy has been well received, as illustrated by the Tourism Development Fund's 2025 advertisement challenging stereotypes. Its presence remains limited, however, and its effects have not been measured systematically.

CULTURAL PERSPECTIVES

This is an established approach to National Day advertising. Audiences have long responded positively to works that emphasize shared values and strengthen national cohesion when executed with quality and insight. Two approaches can be distinguished.

A

Close cultural observation

These works capture moments, behaviors, or values within the social fabric and illuminate them from different angles. Examples include Salla's "**A Nation of Doers**" in 2025, which explored cultural values through a distinctive message; Theeb's "**This Is Our Way, These Are Our Values**" in 2022, which depicted everyday situations embodying local values; and the Ministry of Interior's "**Saudi Arabia Is Within Every Saudi**" in 2024, which explored the deeply rooted relationship between citizens and security personnel.

B

Nostalgia

These works evoke the past through older architectural styles, clothing, historical events such as wars and crises, and familiar music and songs.

B1

Architecture

The Ministry of Culture's "**Labnat Tina**" in 2021 imagined the construction of historic Diriyah to traditional builders' chants. The Diriyah Gate Development Authority's "**Pride and Grandeur**" in 2020 moved through Diriyah's lanes and farms. Al-Ittihad's "**Our Union Is One**" in 2025 recalled the historic city.

B2

Clothing

Al-Ahli's "**Great, My Homeland**" in 2024 featured players in thobes, ghutras, and gold-trimmed agals. Al-Hilal's "**A Leader for Every Goal**" that year featured players in thobes and shemaghs.

B3

Social settings

The National Guard's "**We All Belong to Her and Serve Her**" in 2024 recreated Saudi homes of the 1980s and 1990s through parents' prayers.

B4

Historical and political events

Aramco's "**Great Are You, My Homeland**" in 2025 revisited the first railway, an oil pipeline, pearl trading, an aviation school, and other milestones. The Ministry of Defense's "**We Protect You, Our Homeland**" in 2022 recalled soldiers who served in major wars and events. Maestro Pizza's "**You Will Endure as Long as the Light**" in 2022 revisited crises the nation had overcome.

B5

Music

Shawarmer's "**Guardians of Tomorrow**" in 2019 drew on a melody from older cartoons. The Ministry of Culture combined familiar patriotic songs in 2022. Zain's "**Fawq Ham Al Suhub**" in 2020 presented a new rendition of Mohammed Abdu's song.

GENERAL IMAGERY AND VOICE-OVER

This format no longer has the influence it held in the early years, as audience expectations and production standards have advanced. In 2018, Saudia's "**Setting Out Toward the Future**" led the ranking with a voice-over and animation about the Kingdom's development, followed by the Center for Government Communication's "The Grand Ardah," which paired recited poetry with national imagery. The center's "**A Date with Ambition**" and the Presidency of State Security's "**One Rank**" appeared in 2019. In recent years, such works have generally ranked below narrative productions, with exceptions such as Sports Boulevard's "**My Path Is My Homeland**" in 2024.

MUSICAL FILMS

These are among the most engaging and widely circulated works, combining narrative and drama with a song that supports reach and memorability. Examples include Maestro Pizza's 2022 song revisiting difficult moments in modern Saudi history, Soudah Development's 2023 work, Aramco's choral productions, and Theeb's "Asdaq Haqawina" in 2025. Their longevity, however, is often more limited than that of narrative films.

RASHED AL MAJED: THE VOICE OF ORIGINAL SONGS IN NATIONAL DAY ADVERTISING

While Talal Maddah is the most prominent reference when organizations revisit familiar patriotic songs, *Rashed Al Majed* appears most frequently in original songs commissioned for the occasion. His voice is associated with several of the decade's most widely circulated works, across formats ranging from a song that carries an advertisement on its own to music accompanying a complete cinematic production and collaborations among leading artists.

"**Ashigeenik**" in 2020 remains the clearest example. Almosafer's advertisement led that year's ranking despite a simple visual montage of Saudi landmarks. It accounted for nearly half of total engagement with films in the edition and recorded the highest engagement of any film in the decade, with more than 218,000 interactions. Al Majed also performed in Riyad Bank's "**Kulluna Bi Ezzak Waqafna**," which ranked third in 2020 and combined an original song with specially filmed and stock footage. In 2021, his voice accompanied a cinematic sequence of milestones in modern Saudi history in Aramco's "**Haddana Matn Al Sama**." In 2025, he joined Mohammed Abdu and Majid Al Mohandis in the Royal Commission for Riyadh City's "**Riyadh Al Ezz**," a work focused more on the song than on visual production or dramatic narrative.

These works show how an original song performed by a popular artist can carry an advertisement and extend its life beyond the season.



Key conclusions

FULLY DEVELOPED CINEMATIC PRODUCTION HAS BECOME A BASELINE REQUIREMENT.
Today's leading works combine high production quality, strong scripts, and professional acting. Simple productions struggle to compete unless supported by an exceptional idea or a large fan base.

DOMESTIC PRODUCTION CAPABILITIES HAVE ADVANCED CONSIDERABLY.
The progression is visible from the early years, moving from simple edits of stock footage to fully developed war films and dramas.

TRUE STORIES ARE THE STRONGEST SOURCE OF IMPACT.
Many of the most prominent recent works have drawn on real people and events, within and beyond military institutions.

NATIONAL DAY HAS SUPPORTED THE LOCALIZATION OF PRODUCTION.
The occasion generates an annual need for substantial locally produced content expressing Saudi identity. It has become a platform for Saudi talent in directing, acting, writing, and performance, creating a recurring arena in which experience accumulates and standards rise.

SUSTAINED IMPACT IS ASSOCIATED WITH CONSISTENCY.
Organizations that have maintained a clear and cumulative creative direction, including military institutions and Aramco, have the strongest presence. Those that change approaches each year tend to fluctuate in the rankings and remain further from establishing a recognizable identity around the occasion.

COMMUNICATIONS IDENTITIES NEED FLEXIBILITY.
Some organizations have participated in most editions without appearing among the most engaging works. Their content has remained rigid and centered on products or services, in a season that has become a creative celebration requiring substantial investment to meet audience expectations and compete with the volume of output.

The analysis is limited to the ten works with the highest engagement in each year. Other films may have greater artistic or creative merit but fall outside this ranking and therefore outside the review. The findings consequently reflect the works that resonated with audiences.

LOOKING AHEAD:
Standing out in a crowded creative landscape

In a decade, National Day has evolved from protocol-driven greetings and ready-made templates into a communications season that organizations prepare for as they would their most important campaigns. As participation broadens, questions become more pressing: What can we contribute? What should we say? How can our participation have a lasting effect? What does it mean for our organization and its image? The past decade points to a next phase in which competition will change on several fronts.

01

FROM PARTICIPATION TO STRATEGIC CHOICE

The occasion is becoming more crowded as new organizations enter each year, while attention remains concentrated in a small number of films and most output receives limited visibility. Participation will increasingly become a strategic decision. Organizations with a strong idea, a story, and a willingness to invest can establish a place; those participating solely to maintain a presence risk disappearing into the volume of content. Distinction will favor organizations that create a work worth anticipating, rather than those that simply publish more.

02

BEYOND THE PRODUCTION RACE

Domestic capabilities have matured to make accomplished cinematic production accessible to many organizations. As execution converges, competition will increasingly center on what a film says and why it matters to its audience. The advantage will lie in investment before production: finding the story, developing the concept, and composing original music. Larger budgets alone will not suffice.

03

EXPLORING LESS-USED CREATIVE TERRITORY

Several devices have been used extensively over the decade: landmark montages, familiar patriotic songs, players' greetings, and recurring national milestones. Other areas remain relatively unexplored, including comedy, as used by the Tourism Development Fund in 2025; closely observed documentaries about everyday life; regional social and local histories; and visual forms such as anime and animation. Organizations willing to explore these approaches will be better placed to attract attention in a season marked by considerable similarity.

04

ESTABLISHING A DISTINCTIVE CREATIVE SPACE

The most consistent organizations have developed approaches rooted in their own identity. Military institutions tell stories of heroism to which they have unique access, while Aramco tells the story of a national journey in which it has played a role. Other organizations can ask: What story can only we tell? Sports clubs have their history and supporters; telecommunications companies are present in everyday life. Both hold assets that remain underused in this respect. The same opportunity extends to banking and the institutions of commerce, labor, finance, the environment, tourism, and other sectors.

05

FROM A DAY TO A SEASON

National Day now spans the days before and after the occasion. Yet only a few organizations build an integrated campaign encompassing anticipation, launch, multiple versions, and activity beyond the day itself. This creates an opportunity for organizations that plan the season as a sustained relationship with their audience, extending beyond a single publication.

06

A FLEXIBLE COMMUNICATIONS IDENTITY

Organizations need to retain their core identity while adapting their tone and voice to the spirit of celebration. Some have participated in most editions without reaching the highest-engagement rankings because they carried their usual institutional tone into the occasion unchanged, producing rigid content centered on services and products. Others stood out by temporarily moving beyond commercial advertising or formal institutional language, speaking more directly to people and making the nation the protagonist. Such flexibility translates the organization's identity: its values remain present, while tone and style respond to a creative celebration in which everyone competes for audience attention.

07

MEASURING BEYOND ENGAGEMENT

The decade shows that circulation does not necessarily translate into lasting impact. Some songs have outlived their advertisements and become detached from the organizations that produced them, while audiences often fail to recall who commissioned a work. Organizations therefore need broader measures of success, including brand recall, association between the work and its publisher, and longevity beyond the season, alongside engagement metrics.

APPENDIX: MUSIC USED IN THE MOST ENGAGING WORKS

1. Original songs commissioned for the occasion

Year	Organization	Song / work	Performer
2017	Zain	Our Diversity Complements Us	Talal Al Saydalani
2018	Zain	I Am a Son of Salman	Unknown
2018	Saudia	Setting Out Toward Our Future	Naif Al Badr and Reem Abdullah
2018	Saudi Energy	We Lit the Sky with the Light of the Earth	Choir
2020	Almosafer	Ashigeenik	Rashed Al Majed
2020	Riyad Bank	Kulluna Bi Ezzak Waqafna	Rashed Al Majed
2021	Aramco	Haddana Matn Al Sama	Rashed Al Majed
2021	Al-Ittihad	Bilad Al Khair	Ibrahim Al Hakami
2021	Absher	A Portrait of My Homeland	Choir
2022	Saudia	Our Life Is a Journey Toward the Future	Ensemble and choir
2022	Ministry of Education	Saudis in Word and Deed	Unknown
2022	Maestro Pizza	You Will Endure as Long as the Light	Adwaa Shannan
2023	Soudah Development	This Is Where the Homeland Belongs	Ayed
2023	Aramco	Shawahid Al Ezz	Choir
2024	Zain	How We Made It	Ayed
2024	Ministry of Environment, Water and Agriculture	Our Flag Flutters	Choir
2024	National Center for Vegetation Cover Development	May It Always Be Green	Actor Abdulaziz Al Shehri
2024	Aramco	Min Tharaha	Choir
2025	Aramco	Great Are You, My Homeland	Choir
2025	Royal Commission for Riyadh City	Riyadh Al Ezz	Mohammed Abdu, Rashed Al Majed, and Majid Al Mohandis
2025	Theeb	Asdaq Haqawina	Choir

2. Existing patriotic songs reused

Year	Organization	Song	Artist
2016	Al-Hilal	Watani Al Habib	Talal Maddah
2016	Shawarmer	Watani Al Habib	Talal Maddah
2016	Al-Batin	Biladi Manar Al Huda	Talal Maddah
2017	Ministry of Municipalities and Housing	Biladi Manar Al Huda	Talal Maddah
2018	Al-Hilal	Watani Al Habib	Talal Maddah
2021	Ministry of Interior	Watani Al Habib	Talal Maddah
2022	Ministry of Culture	Medley of well-known patriotic songs	Various
2024	Al-Hilal	Allah Al Badi	Talal Maddah and Mohammed Abdu
2025	Al-Ittihad	Watani Al Habib	Talal Maddah

3. New renditions of existing songs

Year	Organization	Song	Note
2017	Shawarmer	Ya Biladi Ya Aghla Balad (Talal Maddah)	New production
2019	stc	Homeland of Glory and Resolve	Combines the folk song “Nahmad Allah Jat Ala Ma Natamanna” with an original passage
2019	Shawarmer	Guardians of Tomorrow	Familiar melody from older cartoons
2020	Zain	Fawq Ham Al Suhub (Mohammed Abdu)	Performed by Shimi over a still image
2020	National Guard	An older patriotic song	Performed by actors portraying soldiers on the southern border

4. The national anthem

Year	Organization	Work
2016	Almosafer	May You Remain Proud, Our Homeland — performed by Hussain Al Jassmi
2016	Ministry of Health	Health of a Nation
2016	Saleh Cars Group	The anthem accompanied by still images
2017	Saudi Vision 2030	Your Day Is Honor and Pride, Our Homeland
2019	Mobily	A Kingdom for Everyone
2024	Al-Ahli	Great, My Homeland

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ABOUT STRATEGIC GEARS

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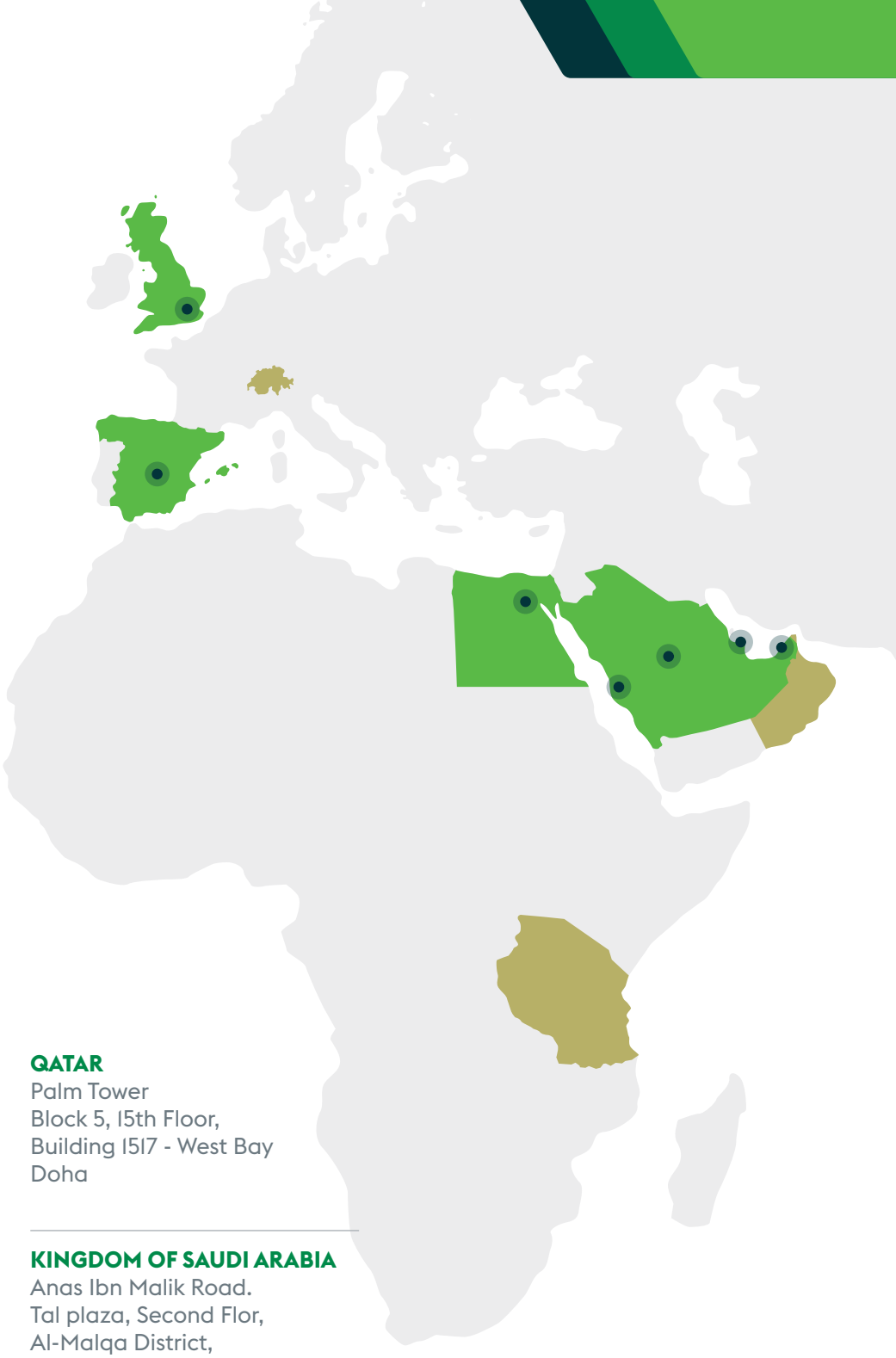
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