Film and other screen sector production in the UK, January - September (Q1-Q3) 2018

BFI Research and Statistics Unit

01 November 2018

1. Key points

- Total UK spend for film in Q1-Q3 2018 was £1.5 billion, the third highest since our records began.
- Inward investment features contributed the highest UK spend with £1.2 billion. UK spend on domestic features came to over £229 million.
- 127 films started principal photography in Q1-Q3. This is the lowest number since analysis began, however this is likely to be revised up as in previous years.
- Total UK spend in last 12 months (Q4 2016-Q3 2017) was £1.7 billion, of which £1.4 billion was inward investment features, £262 million was domestic features and £21 million was co-productions.
- In Q1-Q3 2018, a total of 76 high-end television programmes started principal photography with a UK spend of £755 million. Of these, 35 were domestic programmes, with a UK spend of £253 million and 41 were inward investment with a UK spend of £502 million, the highest since analysis began.
- 12 animation programmes started production in Q1-Q3 2018.

2. Film production in the UK in Q1-Q3 2018

The aggregate UK spend of feature films that started principal photography in Q1-Q3 2018 was £1.5 billion, down from the all-time high of £2 billion in Q1-Q3 2017 but still the third highest since our analysis began in 2002 (Table 1 and Figure 1).

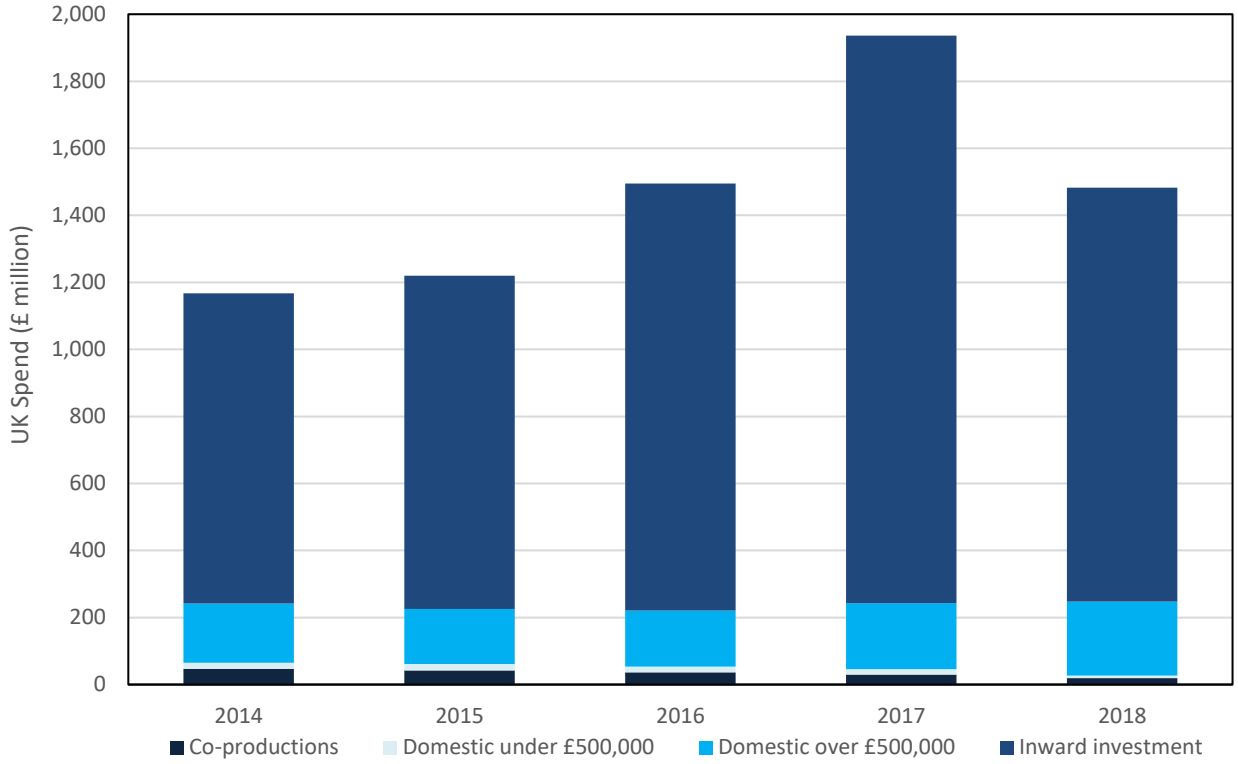
Inward investment features contributed the highest UK spend, with £1.2 billion; this is down from £1.7 billion in Q1-Q3 2017 from 29 productions starting compared to 70 over the same period in 2017. Domestic features contributed £229 million to total UK spend, the highest since our records began. Of this, £221 million was from films with budgets of £500,000 or more, an increase of 12.4% on Q1-Q3 2017. £8 million was from those with budgets of less than £500,000 and although this is the lowest Q1-Q3 UK spend for domestic films with this budget for the period shown, it is mainly due to a time lag in obtaining complete information on all low and micro-budget activity in the UK in Q1-Q3 2018; as such this figure is likely to be revised upwards. Co-production UK spend was the lowest in the time period at £19 million, down from £30 million in Q1-Q3 2017, and continuing the downward trend seen over the last five years.

Table 1 UK spend of features produced in the UK, Q1-Q3 2014 to Q1-Q3 2018, £ million

	Q1-Q3				
	2014	**2015**	**2016**	**2017**	**2018**
Co-productions	46.7	42.6	36.6	29.8	18.9
Domestic UK	195.0	182.7	183.8	213.0	228.9
Of which budget < £500,000	*18.8*	*18.7*	*16.6*	*16.4*	*8.0*
Of which budget ≥ £500,000	*176.2*	*164.0*	*167.2*	*196.5*	*220.9*
Inward investment	925.2	994.4	1,274.6	1,693.4	1,235.0
Total	**1,166.9**	**1,219.7**	**1,494.9**	**1,936.2**	**1,482.8**

Source: BFI
Data are rounded to the nearest £0.1m so may not sum exactly to the totals shown.
Films are allocated to the calendar quarter in which principal photography started.

Figure 1 UK spend of features produced in the UK Q1-Q3 2014 to Q1-Q3 2018, £ million



Source: BFI
Films are allocated to the calendar quarter in which principal photography started.

There were 127 films that started principal photography in the UK in Q1-Q3 2018 (Table 2 and Figure 2). This is the lowest figure in the reporting period, however it is mainly affected by the lag in obtaining complete data for domestic UK features with a budget of less than £500,000 mentioned above. In last year's Q3 2017 release (*Film and other screen sector production in the UK, January – September (Q1-Q3) 2017*) the number of films reported for 2016 was 160 which has subsequently been revised in this release to 251 as more information has become available. It is likely that this year's total of 127 will be revised upwards therefore it is not necessarily direct evidence of a decline in the production of domestic features in the UK. See appendix for a more detailed analysis of this lag.

There were 50 domestic films that started principal photography in the lower and mid-budget range, ie budgeted at £500,000-plus, compared to 64 in the Q3 2017 release.

Overall there were 83 domestic projects that started principal photography in Q1-Q3 2018 and these account for the majority of productions (65%). There were 29 inward investment films that started filming, less than half the number in 2017, though spend has only decreased by just over a quarter. Fifteen co-productions started principal photography continuing the downward trend seen over the last five years.

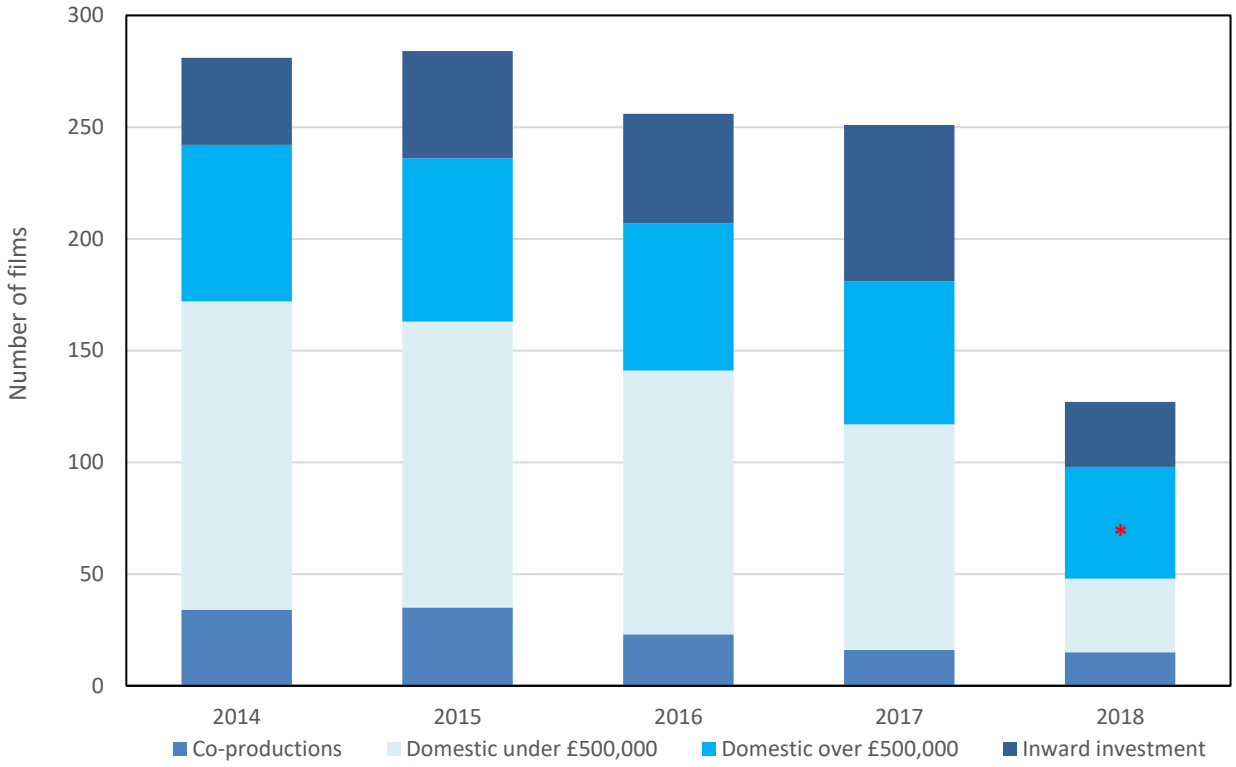
Films which started principal photography in Q3 2018 include: *Star Wars: Episode IX*, *Rocketman, Downton Abbey, How to Build a Girl, Normal People, Horrible Histories the Movie: Rotten Romans, Rare Beats, Girl Untitled, Sorry We Missed You* and *The Nest.*

Table 2 Number of features produced in the UK, Q1-Q3 2014 to Q1-Q3 2018

	Q1-Q3				
	2014	**2015**	**2016**	**2017**	**2018**
Co-productions	34	35	23	16	15
Domestic UK	208	201	184	165	83
Of which budget < £500,000	*138*	*128*	*118*	*101*	*33*
Of which budget ≥ £500,000	*70*	*73*	*66*	*64*	*50*
Inward investment	39	48	49	70	29
Total	**281**	**284**	**256**	**251**	**127**

Source: BFI
Films are allocated to the calendar quarter in which principal photography started.

Figure 2 Number of features produced in the UK in Q1-Q3 2014–2018



Source: BFI
Films are allocated to the calendar quarter in which principal photography started.
* The low numbers for domestic productions with budgets under £500,000 is partially attributable to a time lag in obtaining complete information on all low and micro-budget activity in the UK. See appendix for a further explanation of this issue.

This release also looks at UK spend and the number of films produced in the UK in a rolling year (October - September), highlighting the changes in spend in the last 12 months and the previous 12 month periods back to 2013. This is to give a broader impression of production trends in the UK. In this release the rolling year period covered is Q4 2013-Q3 2014 to Q4 2017-Q3 2018.

In the time period Q4 2013-Q3 2017, aggregate UK spend has consistently increased year on year from just over £1 billion to over £2 billion (Q4 2016-Q3 2017), in the latest rolling year the level is currently £1.65 billion, returning to levels seen before the record high in Q1-Q3 2017, though this is likely to be revised upward as more information becomes available.

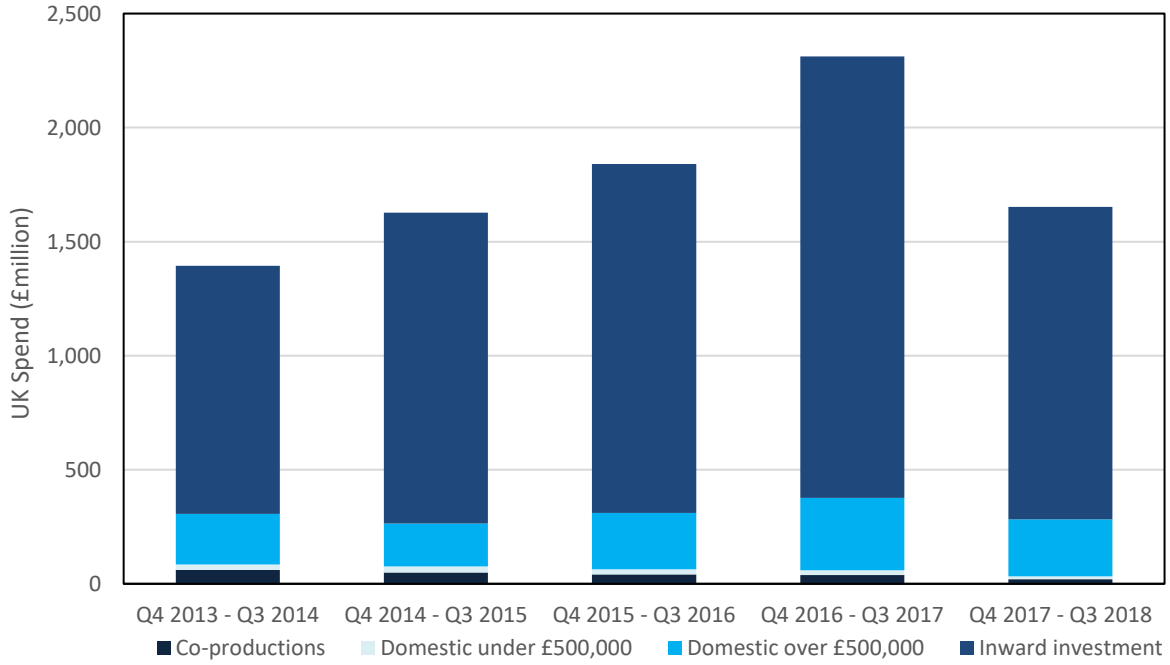
Inward investment features contributed the highest UK spend, with just under £1.4 billion; a drop from the record high of £2 billion in the previous rolling year. Domestic features contributed £262 million, again a drop from the record high of the previous roiling year. Of this £249 million was from films with budgets of £500,000 or more and under £13 million from those with budgets of less than £500,000. This is the lowest UK spend for domestic films with budgets under £500,000 for the period shown, however as there is a lag in the collection of data especially on these smaller budget productions it is expected to be revised upwards in future statistical releases. See appendix for a more detailed analysis of this lag. Co-production UK spend was the lowest in the time period at £21 million. UK spend for this production category was consistently the lowest UK spend of the three main production categories in the time period.

Table 3 UK spend of features produced in the UK, rolling year, Q4 2013 to Q3 2018, £ million

	Q4 2013 - Q3 2014	Q4 2014 - Q3 2015	Q4 2015 - Q3 2016	Q4 2016 - Q3 2017	Q4 2017 - Q3 2018
Co-productions	61.1	49.5	41.1	38.8	20.8
Domestic UK	245.2	215.1	269.4	338.3	261.9
Of which budget ≥ £500,000	23.4	27.2	22.5	20.6	12.5
Of which budget < £500,000	221.7	187.9	246.9	317.7	249.4
Inward investment	1,088.3	1,362.2	1,530.6	1,934.8	1,369.0
Total	**1,394.5**	**1,626.9**	**1,841.0**	**2,311.9**	**1,651.8**

Source: BFI
Data are rounded to the nearest £0.1m so may not sum exactly to the totals shown.
Films are allocated to the calendar quarter in which principal photography started.

Figure 3 UK spend of features produced in the UK, rolling year, Q4 2013 to Q3 2018, £ million



Source: BFI
Films are allocated to the calendar quarter in which principal photography started.

3. High-end television – British productions and co-productions

The aggregate UK spend for high-end television programmes that started principal photography in Q1-Q3 of 2018 was over £755 million up from £701 million in 2017 and the highest since records began. Inward investment contributed the highest UK spend at £502 million up 13% from 2017 and again this is the highest since analysis began (in previous years inward investment is combined with co-productions to avoid disclosure of information that would breach confidentiality on a small number of titles). Domestic programmes contributed £253 million on a par with £255 million in 2017 (Table 4). Again Q1-Q3 2018 is likely to be revised upwards.

Table 4 UK spend of high-end television programmes produced in the UK Q1-Q3 2014 to Q1-Q3 2018, £ million

	Q1-Q3 2014	Q1-Q3 2015	Q1-Q3 2016	Q1-Q3 2017	Q1-Q3 2018
Domestic UK	315.8	353.7	314.0	254.8	253.4
Inward Investment and Co-productions	275.7	372.7	452.6	446.0	501.9*
Total	**591.5**	**726.5**	**766.6**	**700.8**	**755.2**

Source: BFI
Data are rounded to the nearest £0.1m so may not sum exactly to the totals shown.
HETV are allocated to the calendar quarter in which principal photography started.
* All HETV programmes in this category were Inward Investment titles in 2018

A total of 76 HETV programmes started principal photography in Q1-Q3 2018. Inward investment contributed the highest number of programmes at 41, whilst domestic programmes accounted for the remaining 35. Productions that started principal photography in Q3 include *The Crown Series 3, Devs, Killing Eve Series 2, The Dublin Murders, Call the Midwife Series 8* and *Death and Nightingales*.

This is the lowest figure in the reporting period, however it is mainly affected by the lag in obtaining complete data for domestic UK features with a budget of less than £500,000 mentioned above. In last year's Q3 2017 release (*Film and other screen sector production in the UK, January – September (Q1-Q3) 2017*) the number of HETV reported for 2016 was 62 which has subsequently been revised in this release to 86 as more information has become available. It is likely that this year's total of 72 will be revised upwards therefore it is not necessarily direct evidence of a decline in the production of HETV programmes in the UK.

Table 5 Number of high-end television programmes produced in the UK Q1-Q3 2014 to Q1-Q3 2018

	Q1-Q3 2014	Q1-Q3 2015	Q1-Q3 2016	Q1-Q3 2017	Q1-Q3 2018
Domestic UK	51	54	53	43	35
Inward Investment and Co-productions	28	24	31	43	41*
Total	**79**	**78**	**84**	**86**	**76**

Source: BFI
HETV are allocated to the calendar quarter in which principal photography started.
* All HETV programmes in this category were Inward Investment titles in 2018

4. Television animation programmes – British productions and co-productions

A total of 12 animation programmes started principal photography in Q1-Q3 2018 with an aggregate UK spend of just over £26 million (Tables 6 and 7). Data is not shown for domestic and inward investment and co-productions because there are a very low number of inward investment and co-productions and the data could disclose information that would breach confidentiality on a small number of titles. As with the other data there is a lag in information becoming available, especially on domestic animations.

Titles starting principal photography in Q1-Q3 2018 included *Hey Duggee Series 3, Norm of the Forest, Olobob Top Series 2* and *The Rubbish World of Dave Spud*.

Table 6 UK spend of animation programmes produced in the UK Q1-Q3 2014-2018, £ million

	Q1-Q3 2014	Q1-Q3 2015	Q1-Q3 2016	Q1-Q3 2017	Q1-Q3 2018
Domestic UK	42.3	29.7	51.7	37.3	c
Inward Investment and Co-productions	15.0	20.3	27.1	22.1	c
Total	**57.3**	**50.0**	**78.9**	**59.4**	**26.1**

Data are rounded to the nearest £0.1m so may not sum exactly to the totals shown.
Animation programmes are allocated to the period according to the date principal photography started.

Table 7 Number of animation programmes produced in the UK, Q1-Q3 2014-2018

	Q1-Q3 2014	Q1-Q3 2015	Q1-Q3 2016	Q1-Q3 2017	Q1-Q3 2018
Domestic UK	31	25	38	27	c
Inward Investment and Co-productions	11	11	13	8	c
Total	**42**	**36**	**51**	**35**	**12**

Animation programmes are allocated to the period according to the date principal photography started.

Appendix

As explained in the main body of the report, there is always a time-lag with the reporting and collation of all production spend figures, particularly for film production. The analysis in these statistics releases reports previous data which has been updated post initial publication, along with new figures reported for Q1, H1, Q1-3 and full year which are subsequently updated. Therefore apparent trends need to be viewed with the understanding that the latest data being reported will always be updated subsequently.

The impact of having full trend information is demonstrated by Table A and Figure A below.

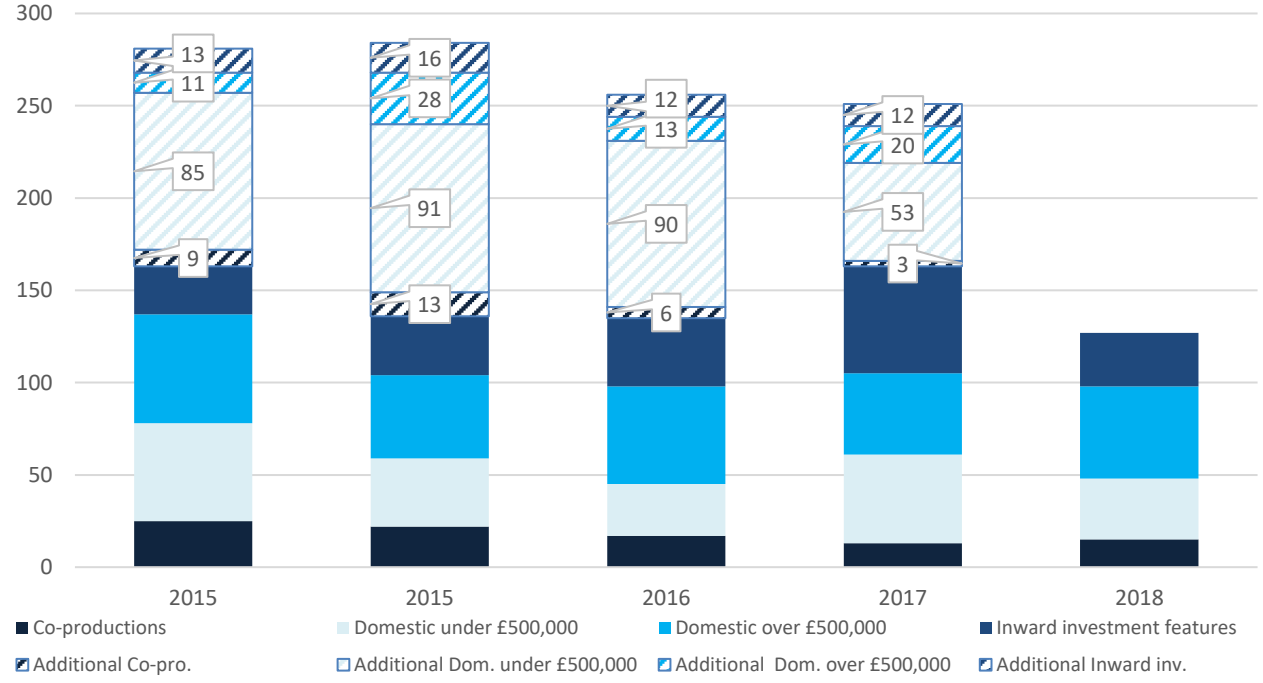
Table A below shows data for Q1-Q3 as published at the time of release, i.e. prior to finalised updates and a real-time direct comparison of the slate of films starting principal photography in each Q1-Q3 period, year on year. The overall trend is a fairly consistent picture of the volume of production starts over the past three years.

Table A Number of features produced in the UK, 2014 to 2018 as published in Q1-Q3 stats of that year.

	Q1-Q3				
	2014	**2015**	**2016**	**2017**	**2018**
Co-productions	25	22	17	13	15
Domestic UK features	112	82	81	92	83
Of which budget < £500,000	*53*	*37*	*28*	*48*	*33*
Of which budget ≥ £500,000	*59*	*45*	*53*	*44*	*50*
Inward investment features	26	32	37	58	29
Total	**163**	**136**	**135**	**160**	**127**

Figure A displays the reported numbers from Table A – the base data – with the addition of production data which has been finalised and reported post the publication of the statistics for a particular period, therefore showing the full slate of films in production as shown in Figure 2. This aims to aid understanding of the time-lag in obtaining complete data, and how the data in this report for Q1-Q3 2018 should be regarded as interim. This is especially relevant when looking at domestic UK features with a budget of less than 500,000.

Figure A Number of features produced in the UK Q1-Q3, 2014 to 2018



Source: BFI

Films are allocated to the calendar quarter in which principal photography started.

Notes

1. BFI Research and Statistics Unit production tracking

The Research and Statistics Unit production tracking system attempts to track all films produced in whole or part in the UK (i.e. it is a census, not a sample).

Sources of information include the British Film Commission, industry tracking forums, Creative Skillset, trade press and internet sources, UK film certification data and direct approaches to film producers.

Only productions with some UK spend on shooting, visual effects or post-production are included.

Spend is allocated to the calendar year, half year and quarter in which principal photography starts.

For high-end television and television animation programmes, only programmes officially certified as British are included.

2. Revisions

Production tracking is a continuous process and numbers are updated each quarter to reflect newly tracked films, updated budget or UK spend information and postponements or cancellations. Adjustments apply to previous periods as well as to the most recent reported period. The tables in this report contain revised data.

Statistics on **Video Games** and **Children's Television** will be reported in the release: British Film and other screen sector certification Q1-Q3 2018 (Publication Date; 1st November 2018).

3. Definitions

A **domestic** (indigenous) UK production is a feature film, HETV programme or television animation programme made by a UK production company that is produced wholly or partly in the UK.

A **UK co-production** is a co-production (other than an inward co-production) feature film, HETV programme or television programme involving the UK and other country partners usually under the terms of a bilateral co-production agreement or the European Convention on Cinematographic Co-production.

An **inward investment production** is a feature film, HETV programme or television animation programme which is substantially financed and controlled from outside the UK, where the production is attracted to the UK because of script requirements, the UK's infrastructure or UK tax incentives. Many (but not all) inward productions are UK films, HETV programmes or animation programmes by virtue of their UK cultural content and the fact that they pass the cultural test administered by the BFI Certification Unit on behalf of the Secretary of State for Culture, Media and Sport.

An **inward feature co-production** is an official co-production that originates from outside the co-production treaty countries (usually from the USA) and which is attracted to the UK because of script requirements, the UK's infrastructure or UK film tax relief.

A **VFX-only film** is a film that has a substantial quantity of digital visual effects made in the UK at one of the UK's main VFX houses but no other UK spend.

A **UK film** is a film that has been certified as British by the DCMS or by the Certification Unit of the BFI (acting on the authority of the Secretary of State for Culture, Media and Sport) or which is a *de facto* UK film by virtue of being made in whole or part in the UK by a UK production company.

A **US studio film** is a film that is produced in whole or part by one of the major US studios or one of the major US studios' specialist subsidiaries.

An **independent film** is a film made by an independent production company or group of independent production companies.

US studio films are generally distributed in most territories by the parent studio. Independent films are usually distributed by different distributors in different territories.

4. Disclosing individual film information

Spend data are not disclosed when the number of productions (co-production, domestic or inward) is three or fewer.

5. Feedback

We welcome feedback from users of our statistics releases to help us improve what we do. If you have any feedback on these statistics or if you wish to make a complaint, in the first instance please contact us using the named contact details listed below

8. Statistical contact details

This release was prepared by Ian Cade, Research and Statistics Unit, BFI,
ian.cade@bfi.org.uk, tel +44 (0)20 7173 3249