Film, high-end television and animation programmes production in the UK: full-year 2015

BFI Research and Statistics Unit

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Key points

- In 2015, 201 feature films started principal photography in the UK, with a total UK spend of £1,410 million.
- This is a slight decrease (6%) from £1,497 million in 2014, though it is the second highest figure since measurement began in 1994.
- Forty seven of these films were Inward Investment films. These accounted for most (83%) of the UK spend, contributing £1,177 million to the total.
- Spend by domestic UK features was £198 million on 124 productions, down 7% from 2014.
- UK production spend by all independent films was £316 million down from £430 million in 2014.
- Eighty-two high-end television programmes started principal photography in 2015, with a total UK spend of £759 million an increase from £633 million in 2014.
- Eighteen animation programmes started principal photography in 2015, with a total UK spend of £29 million.

1. Total film production expenditure in the UK

The aggregate UK spend of features that commenced principal photography in 2015 was £1,410 million, slightly down (6%) from £1,497 million in 2014. This is the second highest figure since measurement began in 1994. Inward investment films contributed £1,177 million (83% of total), domestic UK films £198 million (14%), and co-productions £35 million (2%). UK spend decreased by £69 million for inward investment films, £15 million for domestic UK films and by £3 million for co-productions (Table 1 and Figure 1).

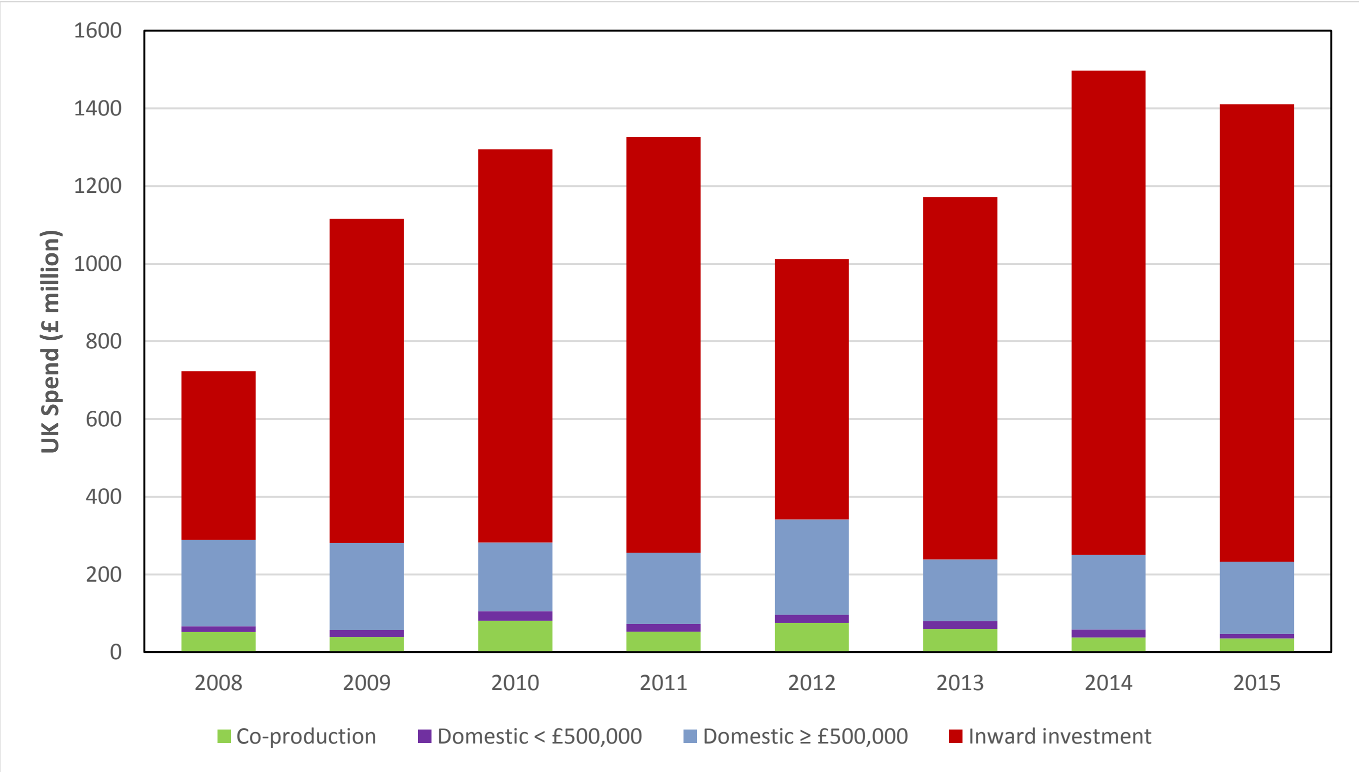
Domestic films with a budget greater than or equal to £500,000 had a UK spend of £186 million in 2015, slightly down (3%) from £192 million in 2014, and accounted for 94% of the spend on domestic films. Domestic films with a budget less than £500,000 had a UK spend of £12 million in 2015, down from £20 million in 2014. However, these numbers should be treated as interim figures which are likely to increase, as there is a time lag in obtaining detailed information on all production activity in the UK.

Table 1 UK spend of features produced in the UK, 2008-2015, £ million

	2008	2009	2010	2011	2012	2013	2014	2015
Co-productions	51.7	38.6	80.4	52.4	75.2	59.5	38.1	35.2
Domestic UK features	237.3	242.2	201.8	203.4	266.6	179.0	211.8	197.9
Of which budget < £500,000	15.2	17.9	25.2	20.3	21.4	20.5	20.3	11.6
Of which budget ≥ £500,000	222.1	224.3	176.6	183.1	245.2	158.5	191.5	186.3
Inward investment	434.4	834.6	1,012.5	1,071.0	670.5	933.4	1,247.4	1,177.0
Total without films with budget <£500,000	707.4	1,096.2	1,267.9	1,304.8	985.9	1,149.4	1,475.7	1,397.3
Total	**723.4**	**1,115.4**	**1,294.7**	**1,326.8**	**1,012.3**	**1,171.9**	**1,497.4**	**1,410.1**

Source: BFI
*this information refers to all features produced in the UK, but just Domestic UK features with budget under £500,000
Data are rounded to the nearest £0.1m so may not sum exactly to the totals shown.
Films are allocated to the calendar year in which principal photography commenced.
Films at all budget levels are included in this analysis. For pre-2008 data restricted to films with budgets of at least £500,000 see the BFI Statistical Yearbook 2015 www.bfi.org.uk/statistical-yearbook.

Figure 1 Value of UK spend of inward, domestic, co-production and total features, 2008-2015



Source: BFI

In 2015, 201 films started principal photography in the UK. Of these, 47 were inward investment films, 123 were domestic UK features, and 30 were co-productions (Table 2 and Figure 2). Both the number of inward investment and co-productions was lower than 2014. However, these numbers should be treated as interim figures which are likely to increase, as there is a time lag in obtaining detailed information on all production activity in the UK.

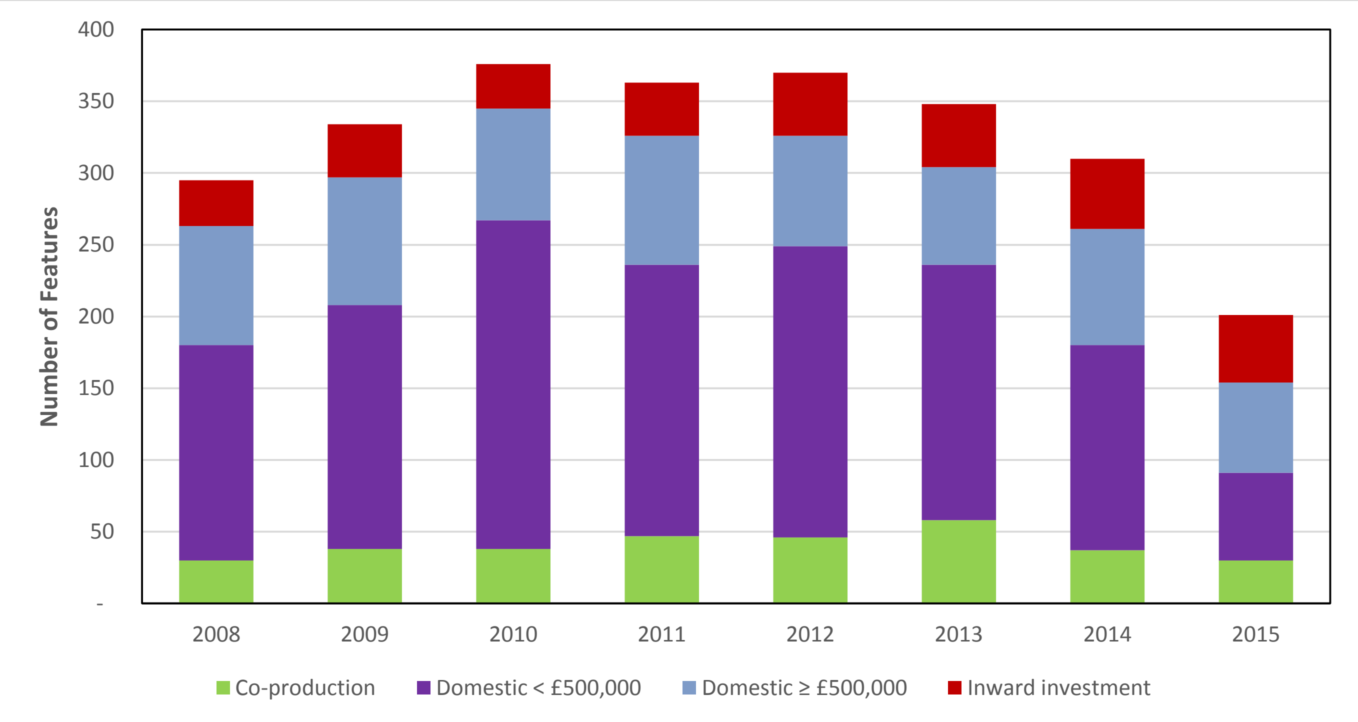
Domestic films produced with budgets greater than or equal to £500,000 decreased from 81 in 2014 to 63 in 2015, and the number of domestic films with a budget less than £500,000 decreased from 143 to 61. Again, these numbers should be treated as an interim result, as there is a time lag in obtaining detailed information on all low and micro-budget activity in the UK.

Table 2 Number of features produced in the UK, 2008-2015

	2008	2009	2010	2011	2012	2013	2014	2015
Co-productions	30	38	38	47	46	58	37	30
Domestic UK features	233	259	307	279	280	246	224	124
Of which budget < £500,000	150	170	229	189	203	178	143	61
Of which budget ≥ £500,000	83	89	78	90	77	68	81	63
Inward investment	32	37	31	37	44	44	49	47
Total without films with budget <£500,000	138	152	131	153	137	142	155	130
Total	**295**	**334**	**376**	**363**	**370**	**348**	**310**	**201**

Source: BFI
See notes to Table 1.

Figure 2 Number of inward, domestic, co-production and total features, 2008-2015



Source: BFI

Films that commenced principal photography in 2015 include: *Rogue One: A Star Wars Story, David Brent: Life on the Road, I, Daniel Blake, Bridget Jones' Baby, The Girl with All the Gifts* and *Fantastic Beasts and Where to Find Them.*

1.1 UK and non-UK Films

In 2015, UK films accounted for £1,197 million out of a total UK spend of £1,410 million, as shown in Table 3. This reflects the fact that most (85%) inward investment films that started principal photography in 2015 were UK-qualifying films. There is a large increase in the Non-UK films spend in 2015, this is due to some large inward investment productions. However these classifications may change in future as more information becomes available and the statistics are updated.

Table 3 UK spend of UK and non-UK features produced in the UK, 2008 - 2015, £ million

	2008	2009	2010	2011	2012	2013	2014	2015
Non-UK films	24.3	47.7	22.0	40.8	18.8	3.7	20.0	213.2
UK films	699.0	1,067.7	1,272.7	1,286.0	993.6	1,168.2	1,477.4	1,197.0
Total	**723.4**	**1,115.4**	**1,294.7**	**1,326.8**	**1,012.3**	**1,171.9**	**1,497.4**	**1,410.1**

Source: BFI
Data are rounded to the nearest £0.1m so may not sum exactly to the totals shown.
UK films are those that are certified as UK or are de facto UK films by virtue of being made in whole or part in the UK by UK production companies.
Non-UK films are films that are produced and financed by overseas companies and are not certified as UK films.

Table 4 shows the production numbers for UK and non-UK films in 2008-2015. Of 201 films tracked in 2015, 193 were UK films and 8 were non-UK films. This was a decrease of 109 films (37%) from 2014. However, this number may be revised upward as more information on low budget films comes to hand.

Table 4 Number of UK and non-UK features produced in the UK, 2008 – 2015

	2008	2009	2010	2011	2012	2013	2014	2015
Non-UK films	16	25	8	19	8	6	6	8
UK films	279	309	368	344	362	342	304	193
Total	**295**	**334**	**376**	**363**	**370**	**348**	**310**	**201**

Source: BFI
See notes to Table 3.

1.2 US studio and independent films

In 2015, the majority of UK spend (78%) was accounted for by films backed by the major US studios, a total of £1,094 million (Table 5). This was an increase from £1,067 million in 2014, where US films accounted for 71% of UK spend. UK spend by independent films was £316 million in 2015 down from £430 million in 2014.

Table 5 UK spend of US studio and independent films produced in the UK, 2008-2015, £ million

	2008	2009	2010	2011	2012	2013	2014	2015
US studio films	428.7	814.4	985.4	1,038.9	647.7	777.7	1,067.0	1,094.2
Independent films	294.7	301.0	309.3	287.9	364.6	394.1	430.3	315.9
Total	**723.4**	**1,115.4**	**1,294.7**	**1,326.8**	**1,012.3**	**1,171.9**	**1,497.4**	**1,410.1**

Source: BFI
Data are rounded to the nearest £0.1m so may not sum exactly to the totals shown.
The notes section at the end of this release provides information on film definitions.

Table 6 shows the breakdown between the number of US studio films and independent films that commenced principal photography in 2015. Throughout the period, the majority of films were independent; in 2015 there were 178 independent films (89%) compared to 23 US studio films. The number of US studio films has been fairly stable since 2008. The number of independent films decreased from 289 in 2014, though this number is likely to be revised upward as more information on low and micro-budget productions becomes available.

Table 6 Number of US studio and independent films produced in the UK, 2008-2015

	2008	2009	2010	2011	2012	2013	2014	2015
US Studio	23	26	18	19	15	17	21	23
Independent films	272	308	358	344	355	331	289	178
Total	**295**	**334**	**376**	**363**	**370**	**348**	**310**	**201**

Source: BFI
The notes section at the end of this release provides information on film definitions.

1.3 Independent UK films by category

This release does not report UK production for Independent UK films by category for 2015, to avoid disclosing data on the small number of non-independent UK Domestic films which had some UK production spend. Data for previous years can be found in previous editions of these statistics.

2. High-end television

Total UK production spend for high-end television programmes (HETV) was £759m in 2015 an increase from £633 million in 2014. As in 2014 Domestic HETV was the largest contributor to this with £380 million, an increase from £331 million in 2014. Co-productions and Inward investment contributed £379 million, an increase from £302 million in 2014 (Table 7).

A total of 82 HETV programmes commenced principal photography in 2015 a decrease from 93 in 2014. Of these, 25 were co-productions and inward investment a decrease from 30 in 2014, 57 were domestic HETV, down from 63 in 2014. These figures are slightly lower (12%) than 2014 and again may increase due time lag in obtaining detailed information on all production activity in the UK.

Table 7 UK spend and number of high-end television programmes produced in the UK, 2014-2015

	2014 UK spend £m	2014 Number	2015 UK spend £m	2015 Number
Co-production & Inward Investment	302.4	30	378.6	25
Domestic UK HETV	330.9	63	380.2	57
Total	**633.2**	**93**	**758.8**	**82**

Source: BFI
Co-production and Inward Investment have been combined to avoid disclosing budget data for individual titles.
HETV are allocated to the period according to the date principal photography commenced.

3. Animation programmes

At the time of reporting the UK spend for domestic television animation programmes for 2015 was £29 million. Domestic UK programmes accounted for £10 million (36%). These figures are a decrease (62%) from 2014 figure of £76 million. However, the figures for 2015 are likely to change due to the time lag in obtaining detailed information on all production activity in the UK. (Table 8).

A total of 18 animation programmes commenced principal photography in 2015. Of these, 8 were domestic. The numbers of animation programmes are substantially down (64%) in comparison to the 50 in 2014. However again the time lag in obtaining detailed information on all production activity in the UK will likely see this change.

Table 8 UK spend and number of television animation programmes produced in the UK, 2015

	UK spend £m	Number
Co-production & Inward Investment	18.7	10
Domestic UK	10.5	8
Total	**29.2**	**18**

Source: BFI
Co-production and Inward Investment have been combined to avoid disclosing budget data for individual titles.
Animation programmes are allocated to the period according to the date principal photography commenced.

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. 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 **UK film** is a film which is certified as such by the UK Secretary of State for Culture, Media and Sport under Schedule 1 of the Films Act 1985, via the Cultural Test, under one of the UK's bilateral co-production agreements or the European Convention on Cinematographic Co-production; a film which has not applied for certification but which is obviously British on the basis of its content, producers, finance and talent; or (in the case of a re-release) a film which met the official definition of a British film prevailing at the time it was made or was generally considered to be British at that time.

A **US studio film** is a film produced with creative and/or financial input from the major US studio companies. These are: Fox Entertainment Group, NBC Universal, Paramount Motion Pictures Group, Sony Pictures Entertainment, Walt Disney Motion Pictures Group and Warner Bros Entertainment.

An **independent film** is a film produced without creative or financial input from the major US studio companies.

3. 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 forthcoming full year release: British Film, High End Television, Animation programmes, Video Games and Children's television certification 2015 (Publication Date: 4th February 2016)

4. Disclosing individual film information

Spend data for individual film titles are not disclosed when the number of productions (co-production, domestic or inward) is three or less.

5. Pre-release Access

This release has been prepared according to the Code of Practice for Official Statistics published by the UK Statistics Authority (2009). Pre-release access has been granted to the following:

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6. 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, please contact us using the named contact details below.

7. Statistical contact details

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