Film and high-end television production in the UK, January - March (Q1) 2019

BFI Research and Statistics Unit

2 May 2019

1. Key points

- Twenty six films started shooting during the 1st quarter of 2019, with a total UK production spend of £274.8 million.
- Eleven of the 26 films were either inward investment or co-production features. They accounted for 78% of the total UK spend.
- UK spend for the 15 domestic films starting to shoot this quarter was £61 million.
- Total production spend in the UK for the 12 months April 2018 to March 2019 was £1,829 million. Inward investment films represented 82% of the total UK spend for the 12 months.
- Total UK spend on high-end television programming commencing production during the first three months of 2019 was £248 million spread across 19 individual titles.
- One hundred and eighteen high-end television productions started principal photography in the 12 months between April 2018 and March 2019. Their UK spend was £1,225 million. This is the largest 12 month total HETV UK spend since records began.
- The number of inward investment and coproduction high-end TV programmes for the 12 month period was 69, representing a +21% growth year-on-year

2. Film production in the UK

The total number of films that began production shooting during the first quarter of 2019 was 26 (Table 1). This is one more than the number of films reported for Q1 2018. The total UK spend for these films is £274.8 million. Inward investment and co-production features accounted for the 78% of the total spend and domestic UK features represented 22%.

Titles that started filming in Q1 2019 include, Marvel superhero film *Morbius,* the third instalment in the Kingsmen series *Kingsmen: The Great Game,* Viggo Mortensen's directorial debut *Falling,* the Biopic of pioneering fossil hunter Mary Anning *Ammonite* and *Chasing Chaplin* a documentary exploring the life of one of cinemas most iconic figures.

Table 1 Number and UK spend of features produced in the UK, Q1 2019

	UK spend £ million	Number of features
Domestic UK features	61.0	15
Inward investment and co-productions	213.8	11
Total	**274.8**	**26**

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.
Totals may not sum due to rounding.

Spend across the full 12 month rolling period (March 2018 to April 2019) was £1,829 million (Table 2). This spend is just marginally below the £1,836 million total production spend reported for the equivalent 12 month period in the previous year, 2017/2018. The latest 12 month total UK spend is the third highest recorded total UK spend figure after the record high of the April 2016 to March 2017 period.

It should be noted that due to the time lag in obtaining complete information on all low and micro-budget activity in the UK, data on the number and UK production spend of these films is likely to be revised upwards over time. The lag factor is demonstrated in updates to the 1st quarter 2018 total spend. The total 1st quarter UK spend was reported as £1,707 million in the statistics report for Q1 2018. As this latest release shows, this has now increased to £1,836 million.

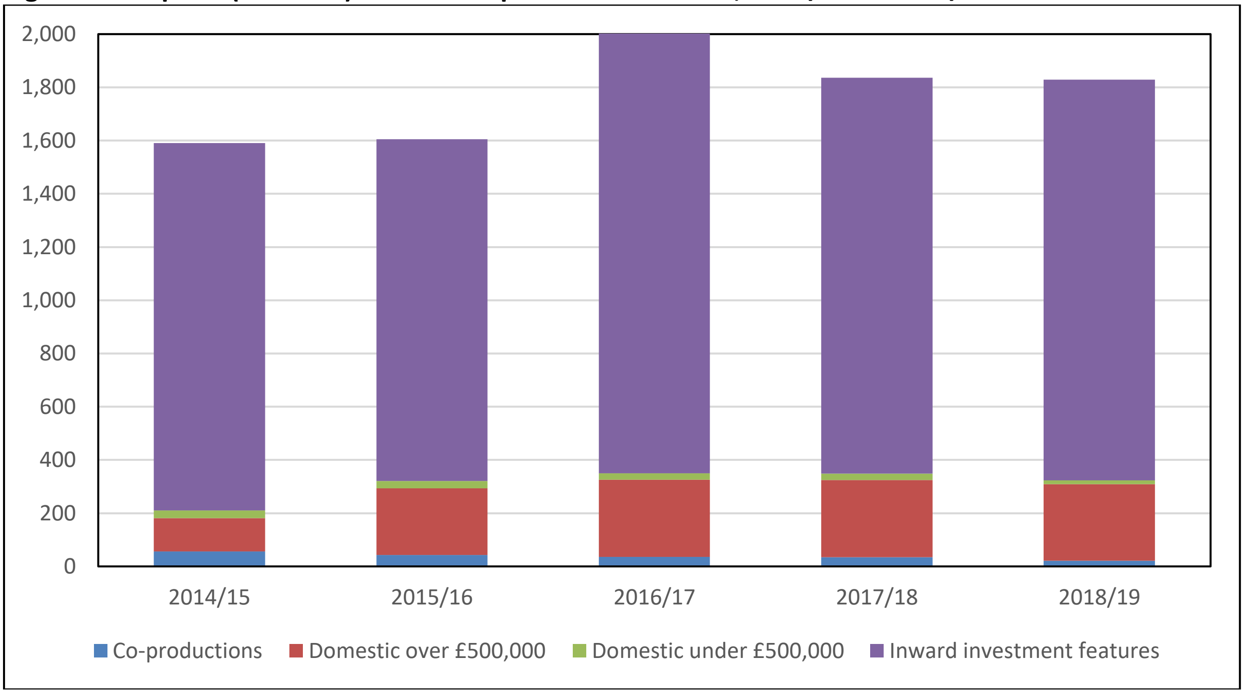
Inward investment films – creatively controlled outside the UK, but which may also include domestic UK financing in addition to UK spend attracted from elsewhere - represented the largest component of total UK film production spend, with 53 films delivering £1,505 million or 82% of the total spend (Table 2 and Figure 1). Across the same period the previous year the inward investment category spend was £1,487 million from 56 films. Domestic UK features contributed £302 million to the total spend, with 95% of the total being films with budgets larger than £500k. The domestic total is down 4% versus the previous period, but note again that the lag factor will mean that domestic spend figures will be expected to increase as more information is gathered in coming months. The co-production spend of £21 million continues the consistent decreasing trend begun in 2014 / 2015.

Table 2 UK spend of features produced in the UK, 2014/15 to 2018/19, £ million

	Rolling years: April – March				
	2014/15	**2015/16**	**2016/17**	**2017/18**	**2018/19**
Co-productions	56.8	43.1	36.2	34.5	21.4
Domestic UK features	153.2	278.5	314	314.5	302.2
Of which budget ≥ £500,000	*125.1*	*250.7*	*289.5*	*290*	*287.5*
Of which budget < £500,000	*28.1*	*27.8*	*24.5*	*24.5*	*14.7*
Inward investment features	1,380.4	1,283.1	1,839.6	1,487.1	1,505.1
Total without films with budgets <£500,000*	1,575.1	1,576.8	2,165.4	1,811.6	1,814.0
Total	**1,603.1**	**1,604.6**	**2,189.8**	**1,836.1**	**1,828.7**

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.
*This refers to all films with a production spend <£500,000 in the UK, not just Domestic UK features.
Totals may not sum due to rounding.
Figures for the most recent Rolling Year (2018/19) are very likely to be amended upwards in future as more data becomes available.

Figure 1 UK spend (£ million) of features produced in the UK, 2014/15 to 2018/19



Source: BFI
Films are allocated to the calendar quarter in which principal photography started.
Figures for the most recent Rolling Year (2018/19) are very likely to be amended upwards in future as more data becomes available.

A total of 197 films started filming between April 2018 and March 2019 (Table 3 and Figure 2), of which 129 were domestic UK features. The average number of domestic UK films starting shooting per 12 months from April 2014 to

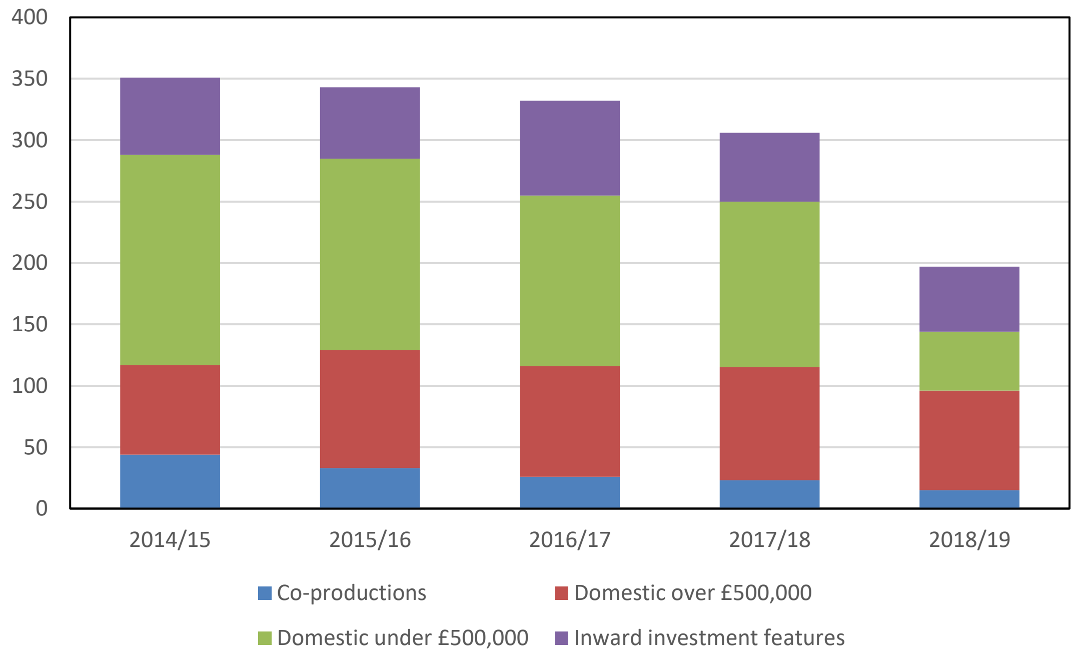
March 2018 was 239.This latest 12 months total can be expected to increase as more data regarding smaller budget films (<£500,000) is obtained.

Table 3 Number of features produced in the UK, 2014/15 to 2018/19

	Rolling years: April – March				
	2014/15	**2015/16**	**2016/17**	**2017/18**	**2018/19**
Co-productions	44	33	26	23	15
Domestic UK features	244	252	229	227	129
Of which budget ≥ £500,000	*73*	*96*	*90*	*92*	*81*
Of which budget < £500,000	*171*	*156*	*139*	*135*	*48*
Inward investment features	63	58	77	56	53
Total without films with budgets <£500,000*	161	169	183	167	148
Total	351	343	332	306	197

Source: BFI
Films are allocated to the calendar quarter in which principal photography started.
*This refers to all films with a production spend <£500,000 in the UK, not just Domestic UK features.
Totals may not sum due to rounding.
Figures for the most recent Rolling Year (2019/18) are very likely to be amended upwards in future as more data becomes available.

Figure 2 Number of features produced in the UK, 2014/15 to 2018/19



Source: BFI
Films are allocated to the calendar quarter in which principal photography started.
* Figures for the most recent Rolling Year (2018/19) are very likely to be amended upwards in future as more data becomes available.

3. High-end television production in the UK

Total UK spend on high-end television programming starting production during the first three months of 2019 was £247.8 million. This is 62% more than the £152.1 million figure reported in the 1st Quarter 2018 statistical release. The driver of growth has been an increase in television production in the UK that also attracts inward investment which has increased from £56.5 million in Q1, 2018 to £191 million. The dominance of inward investment this quarter contrasts with the first quarter last year when domestic film production spend accounted for 64% of the total. These changes reflect structural changes in high end television production in the UK and the often reported observations that television production now attracts multiple rights holders, particularly those in the high end category where budgets are high.

High-end television projects that started filming in Q1 2019 include: Netflix's Arthurian fantasy series *Cursed,* Sky's political thriller *Cobra* and ITV's six-part war drama *The Singapore Grip*.

Table 4 Number and UK spend of high-end television programmes produced in the UK, Q1 2019

	UK spend £ million	Number of programmes
Domestic UK	56.6	6
Inward Investment	191.2	13
Total	**247.8**	**19**

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.
Totals may not sum due to rounding.

The growth in total high-end television programme spend continues (Table 5). The £1,225 million figure for the latest 12 month period is the highest ever recorded for the April to March rolling year. It is a 6% increase year-on-year and is 84% larger than the total HETV spend for the 2014/2015 rolling 12 month period which represented the first full year of reporting since the introduction of HETV tax relief.

Table 5 UK spend of high-end television programmes produced in the UK, Rolling Years: April- March

£ Millions	2014/15	2015/16	2016/17	2017/18	2018/19
Domestic UK	349.8	379.4	378.1	367.7	317.9
Inward investment and co-production	314.3	379.5	685.7	775.0	907.3
Total	**664.1**	**758.9**	**1,063.8**	**1,142.7**	**1,225.2**

Source: BFI
HETV are allocated to the calendar quarter in which principal photography started.
Inward investment and co-production have been combined to avoid disclosing budgets for individual productions.
Totals may not sum due to rounding.
Figures for the most recent Rolling Year (2018/19) are very likely to be amended upwards in future as more data becomes available.

The number of inward investment and coproduction HETV productions increased from 55 across the 12 month period for 2017/2018, to 69 in 2018/2019, representing a +24% growth year-on-year (Table 6). This is the largest number of inward investment and co-production productions recorded across a 12 month April to March period since records begun. Domestic UK productions fell from 57 to 49, but as with film production reporting, this decline will be attributable in part to the lag in sourcing information of productions with smaller budgets.

Table 6 Number of high-end television programmes produced in the UK, Rolling Years: April- March

Number of Productions	2014/15	2015/16	2016/17	2017/18	2018/19
Domestic UK	61	66	71	57	49
Inward investment and co-production	35	25	51	55	69
Total	**96**	**91**	**122**	**112**	**118**

Source: BFI
HETV are allocated to the calendar quarter in which principal photography started.
Inward investment and co-production have been combined to avoid disclosing budgets for individual productions.
Totals may not sum due to rounding.
Figures for the most recent Rolling Year (2018/19) are very likely to be amended upwards in future as more data becomes available.

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, 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.

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.

Within this release the **High-end television** (HETV) programmes referred to are those which have accessed or intend to access the relevant UK creative industry tax relief. To access the relief an HETV programme must qualify as British under the relevant cultural test or as an official co-production, it is a drama (which includes comedy) or documentary production that must be intended for broadcast on television and/or the internet and have an average core expenditure per hour of slot length of not less than £1 million. (The slot length in relation to HETV programmes must be greater than 30 minutes)

These statistics report on high-end television programmes (HETV) from April 2013 onwards only, because HETV production tracking started in line with the completion of the legislation procedures for the HETV tax relief in August 2013 (although the relief was applicable to production spend and backdated to 1 April 2013).

4. Disclosing individual film information

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

6. Pre-release Access

This release has been prepared according to the Code of Practice for Official Statistics published by the UK Statistics Authority (2019). No persons have received pre-release access to this report.

7. Statistical contact details

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