



# Singapore Film Industry

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Chia Swee Hoon  
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## Market Overview

Cinema attendance in Singapore rose a healthy 16.1% to 24.5 million in 2013 while box office receipts increased 4.5% to US\$160.2 million, according to latest available data from the Singapore Film Commission. Foreign movies accounted for most of the box office receipts in Singapore as Singapore has a fledgling film industry and depends heavily on imported film and TV content. The U.S. remains the largest content supplier to Singapore despite issues on censorship and cross carriage mandates on content.

## Market Demand and Data

The Singapore film industry and the Singapore Film Commission (SFC), which is part of the Media Development Authority (MDA), are trying to nurture, support and promote Singapore talent in filmmaking and the production of films. MDA administers the New Talent Feature Grant, which supports first and second-time filmmakers in developing feature films; as well as the Film Mentorship Initiative, which helps filmmakers attend international film project labs overseas, so they can learn from experts and work on their skills. Details on the funding grants can be found at <http://www.mda.gov.sg/IndustryDevelopment/GrantAndSchemes/Pages/overview.aspx>.

To deepen the appreciation of local films in Singapore, the SGFilm Channel was launched in February 2013 as part of the Watch Local initiative, to allow easy access to Singapore short films and trailers of upcoming local releases. The Singapore government has also signed government-to-government bilateral Co-Production Treaties and Memoranda of Understanding on media cooperation with various countries including Australia, Canada, China, Korea, and New Zealand.

In addition, Singapore has been successful in attracting international film production and service companies such as Double Negative Visual Effects and Lucas Film to establish development studios in Singapore to use the country's creative expertise, hiring local talent to work on international projects. For example, Rango, the computer-animated film which bagged the Oscar for Best Animated Film at Academy Awards 2012, saw over 100 animators from Lucas Film Singapore working on the film together with their colleagues in San Francisco for 15 months.

Hollywood productions remain the most popular and consistently top the box office charts in Singapore. According to the Singapore Film Commission, the top 10 grossing movies in Singapore in 2013 were:

SINGAPORE'S TOP 10 GROSSING MOVIES 2013

No.	Title/Language	S\$ million
1	Marvel's Iron Man 3 (2D, 3D, Imax 3D)	11.93
2	Ah Boys to Men 2 (M) (35mm & Digital) (Local)	7.38
3	Marvel's Thor: The Dark World [D, 3D, IMAX3D]	7.33
4	Despicable Me 2 (Digital, 3D, Imax 3D)	6.71
5	Man of Steel (2D, 3D, Imax 3D)	5.93
6	The Hunger Games: Catching Fire (Digital, IMAX)	5.62
7	Fast And Furious 6 (Digital)	5.54
8	G.I. Joe: Retaliation (Digital, 3D Imax 3D)	4.94
9	The Hobbit: The Desolation Of Smaug	4.93
10	Pacific Rim (Digital, 3D, Imax 3D)	4.58

\*All figures provided are in gross as at 31 Dec 2013, and estimates based on major cinema exhibitors (some films may still be screening)

Source: Singapore Film Commission

<http://www.mda.gov.sg/IndustryDevelopment/IndustrySectors/Film/Documents/3%20-%20Singapore%27s%20Top%2010%20Grossing%20Movies%20by%20Year%20from%202003.pdf>

Singapore has 218 theatre screens in 2013 and seating capacity increased by nearly 4.0% to 38,425 seats. The major Singapore exhibitors were:

Exhibitor	No. of Screens	Seating Capacity
Golden Village	87 [29 are 3D, 87 Digital]	15,667
Cathay	60 [24 are 3D, 60 Digital]	10,778
Shaw	47 [27 are 3D, 47 Digital]	8,475
Filmgarde	14 [3 are 3D, 14 Digital]	2,205
Eng Wah (WE Cinemas)	10 [Digital, some 3D]	1,300

Source: Singapore Film Commission

The pro-business policies, strong intellectual property rights, well developed infrastructure, cutting-edge technology and skilled English-speaking workforce have attracted many international media companies to set up their regional offices in Singapore. They include AXN, BBC World, CNBC Asia, Discovery Asia, HBO Asia, MTV Asia, Nickelodeon, and Walt Disney Television. Many of these organizations regularly source content for the region.

### **Best Prospects**

Best prospects continue to be box office movies. However, free TV provider MediaCorp and sole cable operator Starhub and pay TV telecommunications service provider Singtel and international media brands are constantly seeking a wide variety of content from children to lifestyle. There are also opportunities for co-production and partnerships with Singaporean studios and production companies.

### **Market Entry, Issues & Obstacles**

The Films Act of 1981 governs the importation, production, distribution and exhibition of films in Singapore. Information on relevant legislation and codes of practice can be found at: <http://www.mda.gov.sg/RegulationsAndLicensing/ActsCodesOfPracticeAndGuidelines/Pages/ActsCodesofPracticeandGuidelines.aspx>. There are stringent censorship guidelines for classifying films and TV content in Singapore. American companies should also be aware there are issues regarding online piracy and cross carriage mandates on content and information can be found in the National Trade Estimate Report: <https://ustr.gov/sites/default/files/2014%20NTE%20Report%20on%20FTB%20Singapore.pdf>

Singapore is a free port and there are no import duties and taxes for importing content into Singapore. However, there is withholding tax of 10% and the importer is required to withhold the tax when making payment to content owners. The withholding tax is on the gross payment. There is no tax treaty between Singapore and the United States. There is also a 7% Goods & Services Tax (sales tax).

According to the Doing Business 2014 Report by the World Bank, Singapore is the easiest place in the world to conduct business. In addition, the World Economic Forum Global Competitiveness Report 2013 – 2014, ranked Singapore as having the best IP protection in Asia. Singapore is a crossroad between the East and West, making it an attractive choice for American companies looking to tap into the local and regional market. Firms located in Singapore not only acquire rights for Singapore but also for the region.

### **Trade Events**

Companies interested in selling to the Asian television market should consider exhibiting at Asia TV Forum and Market that will be held in December 1-4, 2015 in Singapore. It is held alongside the Singapore International Film Festival and Screen Singapore. Interested parties can contact the show organizer at [atf@reedexpo.com.sg](mailto:atf@reedexpo.com.sg).

### **Resources and Contacts**

Media Development Authority: [www.mda.gov.sg](http://www.mda.gov.sg)

Motion Picture Association: <http://www.mpaa.org/>

Southeast Asia Pacific Audio Visual Archive Association: <http://www.seapavaa.com/>

#### *For More Information*

The U.S. Commercial Service in Singapore can be contacted via e-mail at: [sweehoon.chia@trade.gov](mailto:sweehoon.chia@trade.gov); Phone: 65/6476-9403; Fax: 65/6476-9080; or visit our website: <http://www.export.gov/singapore>

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**Comments and Suggestions:** We welcome your comments and suggestions regarding this market research. You can e-mail us your comments/suggestions to: [Market\\_Research\\_Feedback@trade.gov](mailto:Market_Research_Feedback@trade.gov). Please include the name of the applicable market research in your e-mail. We greatly appreciate your feedback.

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