[GB] Government Review of Film Co-production

IRIS 2004-1:1/27

David Goldberg
deeJgee Research/Consultancy

The UK Government has announced a review of international film co-production treaties (see IRIS 1995-2: 8 and IRIS 1998-6: 11). The aim is "to ensure they are bringing real cultural and economic benefits to the UK" e.g., film-industry related jobs and use of film making facilities.

The review will analyse existing treaties and advise whether there should be new ones.

The terms of reference for the review are:

- To review and make recommendations for the redefinition of the current legislative definition of a "British film", geared to the twin issues of cultural expression and industry economics;

- To propose a clear policy framework for the UK's international co-production activity;

- To evaluate fully the cultural and economic benefits of all the UK's existing international co-production treaties, including the European Convention on Cinematic Co-Production, and to make recommendations, based on that analysis and the policy framework defined in objective 2 above, as to the retention or revision of those existing treaties in order to obtain the maximum cultural and economic benefits for the UK;

- To make recommendations for new international treaties aimed at fostering intra-industry co-operation across the value chain, in the light of objective 2 above;

- To review the current operation of the system whereby films are certified as British, examining in particular the efficiency and relevance of current practice, and to make firm recommendations about the future operation and location of and appropriate resources for this function, with reference to objective 2 above.

As a first step, the guidelines clarifying the criteria for international co-productions defined as "films made by two or more countries" have been updated. A successful applicant gains "British Certification", enabling the producer to apply for film tax relief (see IRIS 2002-5: 13 and IRIS 2001-5: 13).

© European Audiovisual Observatory (Council of Europe) 2026

The new guidance is substantially the same as the existing one. However, it aims at increased transparency (explaining on what basis the Department for Culture Media and Sport grants a British Certificate) and prescribes that an application needs to be received not later than four weeks before principal photography commences, as well as tightening the rules requiring auditor's reports.

"Estelle Morris Announces Major Review Of Film Co-Production", Press Release 124/03, Department of Culture Media and Sport, 4 November 2003

http://www.culture.gov.uk/global/press_notices/archive_2003/dcms124_03.htm

© European Audiovisual Observatory (Council of Europe) 2026

© European Audiovisual Observatory (Council of Europe) 2026