



**national film and video foundation**  
SOUTH AFRICA  
an agency of the Department of Sport, Arts and Culture

# BOX OFFICE REPORT SOUTH AFRICA (January – December 2020)



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## **LIST OF ABBREVIATIONS**

AUS	Australia
BEL	Belgium
BOG	Box Office Gross
CAN	Canada
CHN	China
CBD	Crystal Brook Distribution
EE	Empire Entertainment
FRA	France
GER	Germany
HK	Hong Kong
IFD	Indigenous Films Distribution
ITL	Italy
NFVF	National Film and Video Foundation
NZ	New Zealand
SA	South Africa
SCI-FI	Science Fiction
S.KOR	South Korea
UIP	United International Pictures
UK	United Kingdom
USA	Unites States of America

## DEFINITION OF KEY TERMS

- **Gross Box Office:** is measured in terms of the number of tickets sold at the cinema(s) or the amount of money raised through ticket sales (revenues).
- **Market Share:** is the percentage of an industry or market's total sales that is earned over a specified period. It is calculated by adding domestic gross and dividing by the total gross box office figure.
- **Domestic/SA produced/Locally produced:** refers to films produced by South Africans and shot in South Africa. This further includes films classified as 'national films' by virtue of having received official co-production status from the NFVF.
- **Foreign/International:** refers to films that are produced outside of South Africa.
- **Movie:** a cinematographic and/or theatrical film.
- **Cumulative:** refers to a figure that grows over a period.
- **Compound Annual Growth Rate (CAGR):** is a measure of growth over multiple periods.

Note: To provide a fair comparison between theatrical films released, all rankings are based on ticket sales/box office gross.

## EXECUTIVE SUMMARY

- South Africa's total box office revenues for the year 2020 amounted to R214 million, a decline from R1,2 billion compared to 2019.
- In 2020, South Africa released ninety-six (96) films at the box office, six (06) of which were locally produced films.
- These six (06) films earned a total of R7,6 million in box office revenues.
- The market share of locally produced films in 2020 was 3,5%.
- The highest-grossing films in South Africa were:
  - ***Bad Boys for Life*** (grossing over R51,5 million);
  - ***The Croods: A New Age*** (at R12,5 million); and
  - ***Dolittle*** (at R10,6 million).
- Action/Comedy/Crime was the highest-earning genre, followed by Animation, and then Action/Adventure.

## 1. INTRODUCTION

The annual box office report is a consolidation of South Africa's Top 25 reports, which depicts the performance of films released at the Box Office. The information contained in this report is made available by Filmfinity and sourced from the following South African film distributors:

- Filmfinity;
- Empire Entertainment;
- United International Pictures;
- Indigenous Film Distributors;
- Blacksheep Films;
- Gravel Road Distribution; and
- Nolava International Film Distributors.

This report is compiled bi-annually, with the first publication report published during the January to June period. The second publication reports the Box Office figures during the period of July to December. However, due to the national lockdown announced on 23 March 2020, all cinemas had to close between 26 March to 27 August 2020, and the data is only available from January to March 2020, then August to December 2020. Other sources of data include Box Office Mojo and the IMDB website.

Insights will be provided on: box office gross, type of genres distributed, the number of domestic films released and their market share for South Africa. Indicators will give an overview of what drives audience consumption.

A significant limitation to note in this report is that films cannot be followed through once they are out of circuit. Therefore, all the figures cited in this report are for the period in which the film was competing in South Africa's Top 25 report.

## 2. BOX OFFICE TRENDS

The national lockdown commenced on 26 March 2020 due to an increase in infections of the coronavirus pandemic. Cinema chains like Ster-Kinekor, Nu Metro, Cine Centre as well as other independents cinemas closed. This has had a significant impact on the performance of theatrical films as their lifespan on circuit was cut short. The analysis below includes films released in South Africa between January to March 2020 and August to December 2020.

### 2.1 Monthly Gross Box Office, 2019 - 2020

The year started strongly, with January 2020 recording R86,9 million compared to R32,2 million in 2019. In February and March 2020, figures began to decline as the news about the pandemic were spreading.

For the entirety of April - June 2020, there were no figures recorded as cinemas were closed at that time.

Again, there were zero revenues in July 2020 as all cinemas remained closed. Cinemas started operating towards the end of August, enabling cinemas to re-open if they implemented new health and safety guidelines, including reduced seating capacity in most cinemas to comply with social distancing measures.

Between October – December 2020, cinemas were able to operate. However, that did not result in more revenues as the restrictions only permitted a limited number of people at cinemas.

**Table 1: Monthly Gross Box Office, 2019 vs 2020**

Monthly Gross Box Office, 2019 vs 2020				
Month	Number of films	GBO 2019	Number of films	GBO 2020
January	15	R32 248 628	16	R86 912 383
February	13	R78 614 103	16	R33 162 943
March	20	R110 712 198	9	R10 882 345
April	17	R167 203 068	0	R0
May	21	R113 218 545	0	R0
June	16	R93 187 243	0	R0
July	10	R165 261 360	0	R0
August	18	R78 253 705	6	R6 646 773
September	16	R76 063 897	9	R19 196 063
October	14	R69 189 039	19	R13 413 249
November	19	R62 431 172	12	R11 931 738
December	11	R178 951 990	9	R31 426 888
<b>Total</b>	<b>190</b>	<b>R1 225 334 948</b>	<b>96</b>	<b>R213 572 382</b>

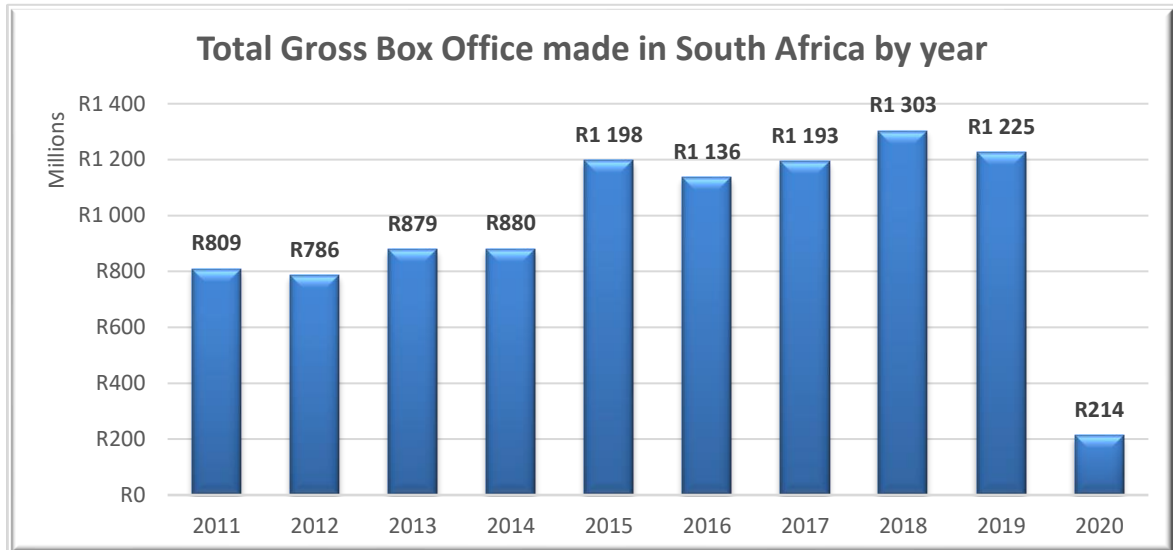
\*Source: Filmfinity, NFVF database



## 2.2 Gross Box Office by year

A total of ninety-six (96) titles were released in South Africa in 2020, a significant drop from one hundred and ninety (190) titles released in 2019. The total gross box office for 2020 amounted to R214 million, a decline from R1 225 million generated in 2019.

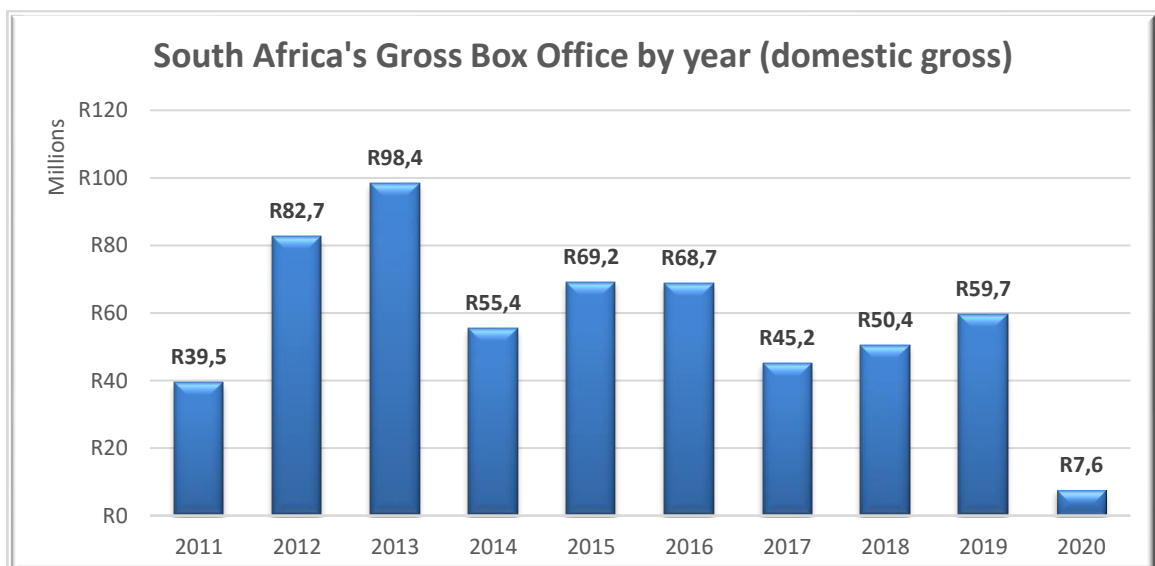
**Figure 1: Total box office gross by year**



\*Source: Filmfinity, NFVF database

Out of the ninety- six (96) films released in 2020, only six (6) of those were produced in South Africa, generating R7,6 million in revenues.

**Figure 2: South Africa's Gross Box Office by year (domestic gross)**



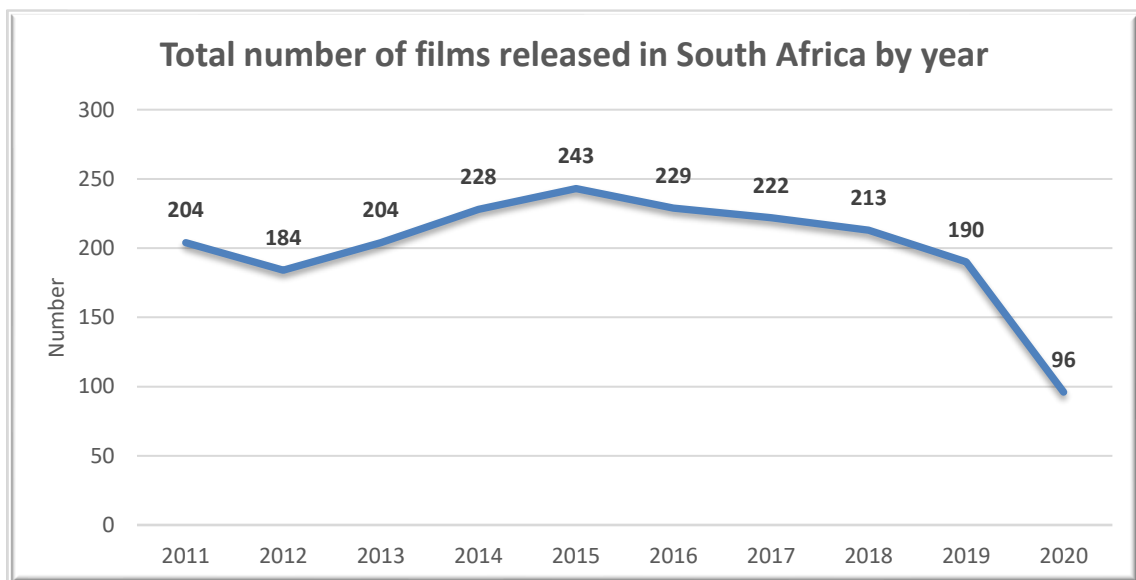
\*Source: Filmfinity, NFVF database

### 2.3 The total number of films released at Box Office.

The total number of films released in South African cinemas dropped from one hundred and ninety (190) to ninety-six (96) films.

**Note** films that were re-released in 2020 are not counted as they would have been counted in the previous year of the initial release. Therefore, instead of having one hundred and twelve (112), ninety-six (96) were recorded as new films released in 2020.

**Figure 3: Total number of films released in South Africa by year**

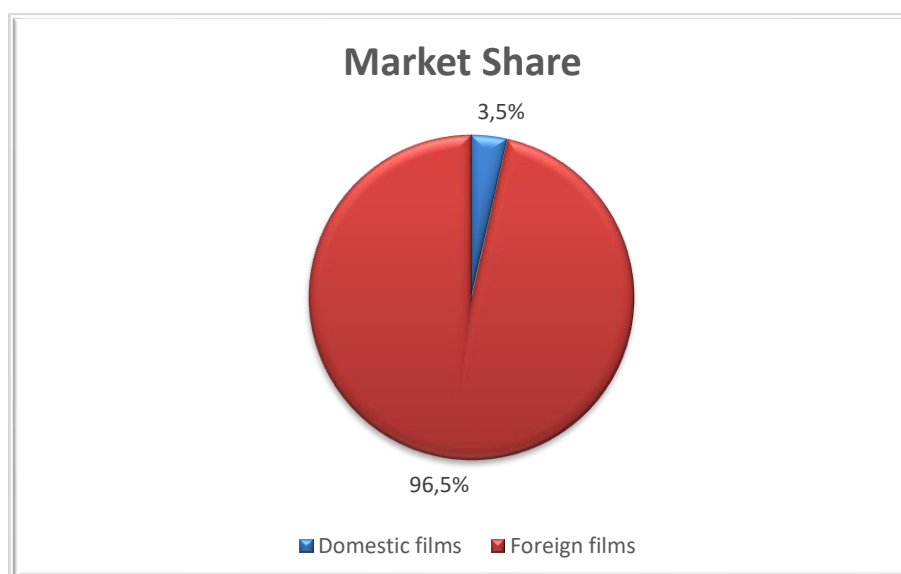


\*Source: Filmfinity, NFVF database

### 2.4 Market Share of domestic films

There were six (6) domestic films released in 2020 with box office earnings of R7,6 million placing South Africa's Market Share at 3,5%.

**Figure 4: Market Share**



\*Source: Filmfinity, NFVF database

### 3. MARKET SHARE BY DISTRIBUTOR

Table 2 provides an analysis of the total number of titles released by local distributors in 2020. Films released through Filmfinity earned the largest share at the box office, with a total gross of R102 million. Empire Entertainment (EE) accounted for R59 million in box office revenues, and United International Pictures R49 million.

**Table 2: Market Share of films by a distributor**

<b>Market Share by Distributor</b>				
<b>No#</b>	<b>Distributor</b>	<b>Count of Movie Title</b>	<b>Gross Box Office</b>	<b>Market Share</b>
1	Filmfinity	29	R102 298 135	47,9%
2	EE	43	R59 013 843	27,6%
3	UIP	15	R49 436 514	23,1%
4	Black Sheep	4	R1 566 741	0,7%
5	Indigenous	3	R723 195	0,3%
6	Gravel Road	2	R533 954	0,3%
<b>Grand Total</b>		<b>96</b>	<b>R213 572 382</b>	

\*Source: Filmfinity, NFVF database

### 4. TOP PERFORMING THEATRICAL FILMS

#### 4.1 South African produced films

Table 3 below shows the performance of films produced in South Africa. 2020 was the worst performing year for South Africa as cinemas had to shut down due to the covid-19 pandemic resulting in revenue losses.

**Table 3: South African produced films**

Performance of SA produced films, 2020						
No#	Movie Title	No# of Weeks	No# of Screens	GBO at Release	Cumulative GBO	Language
1	Vergeet My Nie	6	53	R1 216 986	R3 710 344	Afrikaans/English
2	Toorbos	9	34	R277 202	R1 485 509	Afrikaans
3	Poppie Nongena	4	42	R269 146	R1 171 936	Afrikaans/English
4	Bhai's Café	6	27	R279 053	R617 920	English
5	Knuckle City	4	45	R263 183	R558 936	IsiXhosa
6	Flatland	2	19	R18 934	R26 835	Afrikaans/English
					<b>R2 324 504</b>	<b>R7 571 480</b>

\*Source: Filmfinitiy, NFVF

Gross Box Office = Cumulative gross up to 01 March 2021

#Number of weeks on circuit, #Number of screens at release

#### 4.2 Top 20 – films released in South Africa.

Table 4 depicts films ranked by the amount earned at the box office in 2020.

- The highest-grossing film in 2020 was ***Bad Boys for Life***, an Action/Comedy/Crime film, earnings over R51, 5 million in total. The film did exceptionally well, given the crisis that we are faced with globally.
- The second highest-earning film was ***The Croods: A New Age***, an Animation film earning R12,5 million in box office revenues.
- ***Dolittle*** was the third highest-grossing film earning R11, 1 million.

**Table 4: Top 20 films released in South Africa, 2020**

<b>Top 20 films released in South Africa, 2020</b>					
<b>No#</b>	<b>Movie Title</b>	<b>No# of Weeks</b>	<b>Genre</b>	<b>Gross Box Office</b>	<b>Country of Origin</b>
1	Bad Boys for Life (Incl. D.BOX, IMAX & 4DX)	9	Action/Comedy/Crime	R51 456 849	USA
2	The Croods: A New Age (Incl. 3D)	13	Animation	R12 508 717	USA
3	Dolittle (Incl. 3D, 4DX & IMAX)	11	Adventure/Comedy	R11 060 515	UK/USA
4	Wonder Woman 1984 3D (Incl. 3D, IMAX)	11	Action/Adventure	R10 641 839	UK/USA
5	Sonic the Hedgehog (Incl. 4DX)	5	Action/Adventure/Comedy	R10 558 457	CAN/JPN/USA
6	1917 (Incl. D.BOX & IMAX)	9	Drama/War	R6 843 858	UK/USA
7	Mulan (Incl. 3D & D.BOX)	15	Action/Drama	R6 165 491	CAN/HK/USA
8	Birds of Prey (Incl. D.BOX, IMAX & 4DX)	7	Action/Adventure/Crime	R6 113 624	USA
9	Honest Thief (Incl. IMAX)	16	Action/Thriller	R5 466 202	USA
10	Like a Boss	7	Comedy	R5 017 510	USA
11	Trolls (Inc.3D)	16	Animation	R4 962 283	JPN/USA
12	Greenland	19	Action/Drama/Thriller	R4 814 077	UK/USA
13	Tenet (Incl. IMAX, D.BOX & 4DX)	19	Action/Sci-fi/Thriller	R4 553 826	UK/USA
14	War with Grandpa	18	Comedy/Drama	R4 407 008	CAN/UK/USA
15	After We Collided	24	Drama/Romance	R4 229 980	USA
16	Vergeet My Nie	6	Romance	R3 710 344	SA
17	Onward (Incl. 3D, D.BOX & IMAX)	3	Animation	R3 618 792	USA
18	Bloodshot (Incl. D.BOX, IMAX & 4DX)	2	Action/Drama/Sci-fi	R3 284 139	CHN/USA
19	Can You Keep a Secret	4	Comedy/Romance	R3 138 294	USA
20	Bombshell	10	Biography/Drama	R2 962 091	CAN/USA

\*Source: Filmfinity, NFVF database

## 5. GENRE CLASSIFICATION

Table 5 illustrates the relative popularity of different genres at the box office. Action/Comedy/Crime was the top-earning genre, grossing R53,5 million in revenue, followed by Animation with R28,9 million and Action/Adventure with R13,6 million.

**Table 5: Top 10 Films released in SA - by Genre.**

Top 10 films released in SA - by genre				
No#	Movie Title	Count of Movie Title	Gross Box Office	Top Performing Title
1	Action/Comedy/Crime	2	R53 516 451	Bad Boys for Life
2	Animation	14	R28 924 358	The Croods: A New Age
3	Action/Adventure	2	R13 555 480	Wonder Woman
4	Adventure/Comedy	2	R12 621 477	Dolittle
5	Action/Adventure/Comedy	1	R10 558 457	Sonic the Hedgehog
6	Action/Thriller	4	R8 889 188	Honest Thief
7	Drama/Romance	8	R8 737 015	After we Collided
8	Drama/War	1	R6 843 858	1917
9	Comedy/Drama	6	R6 722 867	War with Grandpa
10	Action/Drama	1	R6 165 491	Mulan

\*Source: Filmfinity, NFVF database

## 6. COUNTRY OF ORIGIN

Most of the films released in South Africa in 2020 originated from the USA (30), accounting for R105,8 million of the total box office earnings. There were seventeen (17) UK/USA collaboration titles earning R45,3 million. The CAN/JPN/USA collaboration made R10,6 million. South Africa released six (06) films which accounted for R7,6 million of the total box office revenue.

**Table 6: Country of Origin**

Country of Origin			
No#	Movie Title	Count of Movie Title	Gross Box Office
1	USA	30	R105 790 457
2	UK/USA	17	R45 337 556
3	CAN/JPN/USA	1	R10 558 457
4	SA	6	R7 571 480
5	CAN/USA	7	R7 263 829
6	CAN/HK/USA	1	R6 165 491
7	CAN/UK/USA	3	R5 775 568
8	JPN/USA	2	R5 035 889
9	CHN/USA	2	R3 677 890
10	CHN/GER/JPN/USA	1	R2 913 641

\*Source: Filmfinity, NFVF database

## **7. CONCLUSION**

2020 has been a challenging year globally. At cinemas, the number of films released, and their box office gross declined significantly. This due to the lockdown that was imposed in March 2020. Cinemas had to close in response to the coronavirus pandemic. Thus, the theatrical window had to be cut, while other films had to postpone their release date. The restrictions were eased towards the end of August, enabling cinemas to re-open as long as they implemented new health and safety guidelines, including reduced seating capacity in most cinemas to comply with social distancing measures. However, that did not result in more revenues as the restrictions only permitted a limited number of people at cinemas. The economy has not recovered, as the lockdown regulations are still in place.

In 2020 we saw many films planned for release being rescheduled for 2021, while others were released on SVOD/VOD platforms. *Moffie*; *Griekwastad*; *Seriously Single*; *Toorbos*; *Riding with Sugar*; *The Tree*; *New Material* are some of the films that were scheduled to be released in 2020.

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