

# Korea turning point

The value of South Korea's format exports has increased tenfold in recent years, rising from US\$3.4m in 2013 to an impressive US\$39m in 2015, according to South Korean cultural agency Kocca. As a result of the international roll-out of formats such as *Grandpas Over Flowers* and *Hidden Singer*, global production and distribution outfits have been drawn to the country like bees to honey.

Endemol Shine Group, ITV Studios, Banijay Group and NBCUniversal (NBCU) are among the international companies to have set up partnerships in the country, while others are getting in on the act.

These include Keshet Asia, the Hong Kong-based subsidiary of Keshet International (KI), distribution and production arm of Israel's Keshet Media Group. The unit, led by Gary Pudney, is in talks with "a large broadcaster" in South Korea about a co-development deal and is aiming to have something in place by early 2018, according to the former Sparks Echo Group exec.

"While South Korea has been good at exporting scripted content, it has generally been less strong on the non-scripted side, with a couple of exceptions. That's where our conversations are focused: how we can bring our skills and expertise to the non-scripted industry there," says Pudney.

This comes after Keshet Asia expanded its operation into India with the opening of an office in Mumbai and Pudney believes the



*The Talwars: Behind Closed Doors* for HBO Asia and Star India

With South Korea now well grazed by international production groups, where is the next Asian IP-exporting hotspot likely to be? Nico Franks reports.



Amanda Groom of *The Bridge*

country, along with South Korea, China and Japan, shows huge export potential.

"It's also only a matter of time before Indian companies start to break through. There are some very cool, funky, talented creative people there. They just need the opportunity to start marketing their content. With us having an office there, we could be a very good gateway for that to happen," says Pudney.

But other countries in Asia still have some catching up to do, adds the exec. "Besides Korea, Japan, China

and India, I don't think the creative is there yet. There's always potential but one great format does not make a market a powerhouse. We'll certainly take a look [at formats from other countries in Asia], but those four territories are our core focus at the moment."

Pudney expects to see Chinese content breaking into the international distribution market in 2018, "as there's so much co-development and internal development happening there at the moment. But the quality of that is yet to be seen."

Others, meanwhile, are shifting their attention away from South Korea and focusing on less exploited countries to find that next great, undiscovered format. ▶

## News from C21Media.net

### Hooq catches five more scripts

SVoD service Hooq has announced another five shows for script development as part of its talent discovery initiative, Hooq Filmmakers Guild. The Asian streamer selected six entries to be developed into pilots in October, the best of which will be made into a full series for the service.

While the new entries – *Crazy in Love* (Indonesia), *Golden Star* (Philippines), *Merit Score* (Thailand), *ReLie* (Thailand) and *Trips* (Singapore) – are not ready to be converted into pilots, they have shown potential, Hooq said.

The streamer added it would create scripts for the five

projects, which could then be converted into pilot episodes. Originally, the Filmmakers Guild was meant to select five projects for pilot development, but Hooq said the quality of entries led to it picking six: *Bhak* (India), *Suay* (Thailand), *Haunt Me* (Singapore), *How to be a Good Girl* (Singapore), *Aliansi* (Indonesia) and *Heaven & Hell* (Indonesia). Hooq CEO Peter Bithos said the latest projects "really highlighted the immense talent in Asia," adding: "The fact we could pick out five more brilliant ideas on top of the six we already chose for pilot development means this region is a hotbed for creative talent."

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