

Filmart: Malaysia's Animasia Teams with China's Zero One on 'Chuck Chicken' (Exclusive)

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Malaysia's Animasia Studio has inked a deal with China's Zero One Animation to produce the CGI-animated feature film Chuck Chicken — The Movie.

The \$8 million movie is being adapted from the successful television series Chuck Chicken a.k.a. Kungfu Chicken. Production will take place in China, but animators from both countries will work on the project. The film will premiere first in China, as the original TV series was particularly popular there, having gained 300 million views within six months of its launch on the country's VOD platform iQIYI.

Malaysia's Film Kingdom Group is also collaborating with Hong Kong's Pegasus Motion Pictures and Eunice and Tonia Entertainment for Miss Sunshine, a romantic comedy directed by veteran helmer Ko Chi-Sum that will be shot entirely in Malaysia, specifically in Penang. The story chronicles a group of single women in their late thirties in search of love.

The deals marks the latest efforts of Malaysia's National Film Development Corporation (FINAS), which recently set up a \$5 million co-production grant to promote international co-productions. Next on the agenda is to promote collaborations between Asian film companies to produce live-action feature films, said FINAS senior director Azmir Mutalib.

The Malaysian film industry has seen a boom in recent years, with 2015's Polis Evo and 2014's The Journey grossing \$4.2 million and \$4.1 million, respectively. "There were 81 films produced through FINAS in 2015," said Mutalib, "and there were some more co-productions that didn't go through the FINAS system."

He attributes the successes of those films to the scripts. "The Malaysian production houses are starting to make the stories relevant commercially. The script and story is key," said Mutalib.

But the Malaysian films don't have a presence in other markets. "The co-production grant is part of a strategy for the Malaysian cinema to increase market share overseas," he said.