

CFCC Orders Tencent to Take “Amazing China” Offline

The Beijing film marketing subsidiary of China Film Co-Production Corporation (CFCC), as the authorizing party of “Amazing China”, sent a notice to Tencent on 19 April in an order of “sudden removal” of the film. The news sparked media attention in the film industry and the Internet.

The notice dated 19 April 2018 wrote:

Tencent Technology (Shenzhen) Co., Ltd,

We are grateful to your company’s support for our copyright business. In order to nourish a harmonious online environment, we are issuing an announcement about the distribution of “Amazing China”

We received notice from the leader of the propaganda department instructing all commercial online video platforms to take down [the film] until further notice. Please follow the instruction seriously and please accept our apology for the inconvenience caused.

“Amazing China” is based on a series of feature reports produced by the China Central Television. Initiated by China’s Financial Channel (CCTV2), the documentary would comprise video clips—submitted by viewers—that present the nation’s achievements over the last 40 years since the Chinese economic reform. There were initially five episodes, each 30 minutes long scheduled to air in September 2017. CFCC and the China Central Television later edited the five episode into a 90-minute documentary feature and released it on 2 March 2018 in the “People’s Cinema Line”. As of its closing on 19 April, the propaganda film grossed some RMB460 million to become the first documentary film to surpass RMB400 million in Mainland China.

Sources had revealed that Tencent was the sole online distributor of “Amazing China”. In other words, the film’s closing date in theatres should be the same as that on online platforms.

There is no official explanation for the state Publicity Department’s sudden take-down of this film from the online environment. Could it be a response to the US -China trade war? Or, has China realized it is inappropriate to ostentatiously promote itself as “the world's second-largest economy”?