

# INTELLECTUAL OUTPUT 4

## Case Study IO4- Tourism

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### Film Tourism and importance of the Film Commission

Miguel Ángel Pérez Castro, PhD. in Economics  
Department of Applied Economy, Universidad of Granada, Spain  
pcastro@ugr.es  
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#### 1. Summary

The specialization of tourism services requires the creation of projects that are capable of innovating in the face of the high competition that exists in the supply of destinations worldwide. A new and growing product is the so-called FILM tourism, or those services for people who dedicate part of their trips to discover the locations of their favourite films or series.

The promotion of a film, whose scenario is a particular city strengthens, from the city's visibility and viewership numbers to the economic performance of the multiplier effect of tourism in the region.

The activities promoted in this context are sponsored by national tourism authorities who recognize them as a way to promote the region. The film commissions are non-profit entities, which can either be public or private, and whose main objective is to promote the development of the cinema, multimedia and audiovisual sectors in the region concerned.

In this case study, we will analyze the grand trajectory of the Film Commission is one of the regions of the 3economy+ consortium, Malta, as opposed to the incipient creation of the Alentejo Film Commission and the still undeveloped project of the Melilla Film Commission.

It will also show the difficulties these bodies have in becoming fully operational and how financial and fiscal aid granted to film projects is essential to enable them to develop their recordings in the territories under analysis.

## 2. Introduction

To begin the analysis of the role that the locations chosen for filming films or television series are playing in the tourist development of a territory, mainly due to the demand generated by tourists looking for the places where they were shot, it is necessary to understand the existing relationship between image and location. The image we have of a place plays an essential role in a tourist promotion since it predisposes us to go and visit it if it produced sensations or feelings that we would like to relive in situ.

The relationship between image and tourism is studied by Kim and Richarson (2003) or Fakeye and Crompton (1991) on the choice of tourist destination through the image, or how the process of forming an image is carried out by Baloglu and McClearly (1999) who state that, "Research over the last two decades has shown that image is a valuable concept for understanding the process of destination selection by tourists."

The cinematic gaze mirrors the intrinsic imageability of places (Lynch, 1960). Therkelsen (2003) argues that the image of a destination can be enhanced in two ways, directly through national bodies with responsibilities for small tour operators, or indirectly, through other sources such as films, television programmes, documentaries, and commercials. Thus, audiovisuals and films cannot be neglected as a powerful tool for marketing tourism and territory. Bolan and Williams (2008) consider that increased visitation is possible as a result of being presented on television, video, or film.

In this context, the term movie-induced tourism is coined, referring to the implication that the locations give an "iconic" meaning to the viewers, causing them to move to the destinations that appear on the big screen (Riley, Baker and Van Doren, 1998)

Azcue (2014) makes an effort for synthesizing them, shaping the following three big groups of types:

- Film tourism in actual scenes: they are places of the actual environment that the tourists decide to visit after having seen them, or to be thinking about having viewed them, on the screen.

- Film tourism is created scene: they are artificial locations, explicitly created to be able to roll a movie or with tourist intentions, as the cinematographic fair-grounds.
- Film tourism like business tourism, which is given when a destination reaches an agreement with a producer to roll a movie, in order that all the workers of the producer (actors, scriptwriters, the directors, barbers, etc.), turn into tourists of the own destination.

At the same time, they are shooting in a territory impacts on its local economy during and after the shoot by marketing packages to get to know most famous locations. Also, the image and reputation of a destination, not always positive, becomes a powerful tourism promotion tool that territories have to collaborate in their differentiation and visibility.

The most evident impact of film tourism is generally the increase in visitor's numbers that can benefit the local economy of the film location, apart from being an enduring tool adaptable to alleviate problems of seasonality (Beeton, 2001; 2005).

The relationship between a film, video, or TV series and a location is evident and its increase in tourist visits. Films and destinations can be related in the following: Lost in Thailand (Thailand), The Da Vinci Code (Roolyn Chapel), Games of Thrones (Dubrovnik, Malta), Walking Dead (Grantville, Georgia), Braveheart (Scotland), The Lord of the Rings (New Zeland), Gorillas in the Mist (Rwanda), Crocodile Dundee (Australia), Notting Hill (Kenwood House, London), Troy (Canakkale, Turkey).

Given the effects that the recording of a film or series produced in a region, the need to help and encourage this activity through the creation of specialized organizations arises. That is why the current Film Commission (FC) appeared together with the Destination Management Organization (DMO).

A first film commission was created in the United States in the late 1940s in response to the need for film producers to have a link to the local government that would coordinate a range of services (police, fire, roads, etc.) and facilitate their filming work.

The FC are non-profit entities, which can either be public or private, and whose main objective is to promote the development of the cinema, multimedia and audiovisual sectors in the region concerned. An FC is a specialized office under the authority of a government entity, or administrative office, to promote the region through the development of film, video, and multimedia production.

In this context, Film commissions can play a decisive role, as they are entities that actively promote the local or regional intending to attract national or international producers who can go there to film (Riley and Van Doren (1992)).

FC can be an incredibly valuable resource for filmmakers. A film commission is a quasi-governmental organization that serves as a liaison between filmmakers and the community. Film commissions can help filmmakers in some different ways, including: finding crew, finding locations, housing, equipment discounts, permits and releases, setting standards of professionalism, site location photography, regional scouting services, location library, and serving as a clearinghouse for production information

An FC is also a fantastic resource for Visual Effects (VFX) work, short films, commercial shoots, and documentary production, and can also be an excellent resource to use after production, as most film commissions have an active role in hosting film festivals and conferences. They have tools (film routes and movie maps) to attract as many tourists as possible before, during, and after a shoot in their territory.

The interest in turning a territory into a setting for the filming of cinematographic audiovisual productions, television series, or any other type of audiovisual product, constitutes the main engine of the start-up of a Film Office or Film Commission in any locality, region, province or region.

The mission of a filming office is to highlight, not only the benefits of landscapes, monuments, the climate of a territory or the ability of its people to host filming equipment (logistics, predisposition of citizens), but also to give visibility to the technical and human audiovisual resources with which a shooting team arrived in a locality could count on in that environment (Sarabia and Sánchez, 2019).

In order to know the role of the FCs, the objectives to be studied, and the method used to find out how these bodies have been materializing in each of the three territories that make up the 3economy+ project will be determined.

### 3. Aims

In this case study, we want to give answers to the following questions related to tourism policies and management strategy of the film tourism Malta, Alentejo y Melilla:

- How developed are their Film Commissions?
- Which films identify the territories creating the need for a tourism management infrastructure related to filmmaking?

## 4. Method

This case study analyzes how the creation of the Film Commission has developed. As far as the methodology is considered, after a brief analysis of current trends in the film tourism sector, the paper is based on the comparative study of different official and unofficial sources (such as governmental reports, institutional website and advertising, newspaper articles) in order to evaluate potentialities and critical aspects of the movie industry, particularly in terms of film tourism. Finally, the case study aims at exemplifying the role of cinema in moulding uses and narratives of landscapes.

The methodology is based on the case study categories identified by Yin (1984) and McDonough (1997); the methodology will be exploratory, descriptive, and interpretative.

A study will be prior fieldwork, and smallscale data collection will be conducted before the research questions are proposed. The descriptive case studies may be in a narrative form, and it aims to interpret the data by developing conceptual categories, supporting or challenging the assumptions made regarding them.

Explanatory case studies aim to answer 'how' or 'why' questions, generally, with little control on behalf of the researcher over the occurrence of events. This type of case study focuses on phenomena within the contexts of real-life situations.

## 5. Results

### A. Malta

Malta has a long history of experience in the business of film production and television and series shooting until it was coined the nickname the mini—Hollywood of the Mediterranean (Rosenthal 2002). The Archipelago has built a strong reputation as a tourism destination thanks to its temperate climate as well as the extreme richness of its cultural and historical heritage, apart from the strong support of institutional players, as it is showed by official policies in the decade's Malta was regarded as a low-cost alternative to more established production sites such as Italy, Spain, France, Beirut, Athens, Israel.

In recent years Local Maltese players have been making several efforts to actively support movie tourism, regarded as a critical sub-sector to enhance local development as well as establishing the country's tourism brand. It was in 1964 when the British special-effects expert Jim Hole created the Malta Film

Facilities Service company (Later On renamed as Mediterranean Film Studios) in order to provide logistic support to the international film industry, considering the Huge potentialities of a local film industry, Graziano (2015).

It was in the early 2000s that the archipelago eventually became a competitor in the film production system on a global scale. In 2000, The Malta Film Commission (MFC) was established to support film productions in shooting in the archipelago formally. Moreover, a film commissioner was appointed by the Ministry Of Economic Services In order to induce economic benefits from inward investments as well as supporting the local film industry. At The beginning, MFC was surely less developed than other film commissions. Later on, the extreme variety of natural and urban landscape, the temperate climate, in addition to worldwide famous sea-facing water tanks, represented a competitive asset for film productions, Graziano (2015).

The Malta Film Commission (MFC) is a government body established by Chapter 478 (Act No. 7 of 2005) of the Laws of Malta, with the role of advising the Minister responsible for the film sector on policies. The MFC is responsible for the promotion, development, and support of the audiovisual industry, including the film servicing industry in Malta. As an office, the MFC aims at attracting business to the Maltese islands through various marketing efforts and by offering economic incentives and also provides free services, from scouting locations to troubleshooting with local officials.

The Malta Film Commission Act was even implemented in order to assure financial incentives to foreign productions, by differentiating the island in a growing network of film locations on the global scale (fiscal incentive, workforce is competitive because of the labour costs, and knowledge of English and infrastructures).

MFC manages the Malta Film Fund whose role is management to production grants awarded are intended to stimulate the realisation of projects (Short Film Production New Talent Grant, maximum grant €2,500 and Short Film Production, maximum grant €20,000). It also manages to Malta Film Studios with experience of more than 50 years of operation is one of the most extensive production facilities in the world. Having serviced over 200 feature films, television movies, documentaries & commercials, the facilities have an outstanding track record as a reliable and efficient production studio.

The Malta Film Commission Act was even implemented in order to assure financial incentives to foreign productions, by differentiating the island in a growing network of film locations on the global scale:

A) Qualifying Productions (excluding Animation/VFX Criteria) 30 % on all eligible expenditure. This limit does not apply in the case of delicate audiovisual works. The Commissioner has the discretion to award an additional 10% based on the Maltese cultural elements as outlined below: a) Malta features as Malta or local usage of facilities 5%; b) Maximisation of local resources, 5%. Maximum Rebate: 40%

B) Animation/VFX Criteria, 25 % on all eligible expenditure. The Commissioner has the discretion to award an additional 15% based on the Maltese cultural elements and the maximisation of local resources. Maximum Rebate: 40%

It also has a Coproduction fund. The primary purpose of this fund is to encourage collaboration between Maltese and foreign companies to produce Feature film, Television film or Television Series or Mini-Series, Animation, Creative documentary, Transmedia, and cross-media productions intended primarily for cinema release/broadcast and suitable for international distribution. The fund aims to grow and further develop the Maltese film Industry. The total budget available under the Malta Co-Production Fund is €1 million per annum.

Since 2013, the implementation of the new strategy has led to an unprecedented growth in the local industry, with over 50 productions filmed in Malta resulting in more than €200 million in foreign direct investment being injected into Malta's economy.

The research carried out by Euroscreen (2013), 3.5% of the tourists who visited Malta In 2012 Reported that one of the factors which influenced their decision was seeing Malta Featured on TV.

The most representative films and series shot in Malta are, among many others: the Devil's Double, World War Z, Munich, A Game of Thrones, Sinbad, Agora, Troy, Gladiator, The Count of Monte Cristo, Kon-Tiki, Murder on the Orient Express, Midnight Express, and The Da Vinci Code.

## **B. Alentejo**

Alentejo is the largest region in Portugal, including 5 NUTS5 III (Central Alentejo, Alto Alentejo, Baixo Alentejo, Litoral Alentejo, and Lezíria do Tejo, in 31.551,2 Km, with the correspondence of 34,3% of the national territory) but also the one with the lowest population density.

In Portugal, between 1993 and 1994, the Association of Film Technicians (ACT) attempted to study the creation of a film commission that would report to the national territory and thus enhance the period of intense film activity,

mainly foreign, that existed in this country. Later, in 2011 the independent project "Portugal Film Commission" - a project declared to be of cultural interest - was born, which it directs, together with the Instituto do Cinema e do Audiovisual (ICA).

Alentejo is still at a very early stage as far as the foundation of Alentejo's Film Commission is concerned. The promotion of regions as the stage of national and international audiovisual productions also fosters tourism in these regions.

It is intended the creation of a non-profit association that will have as its main project the Alentejo Film Commission (Turismo do Alentejo, ERT, Associação de Desenvolvimento Regional do Alentejo (ADRAL), Comunidades Intermunicipales do litoral, central, baixo , alto Alentejo, and Associação Empresarial .

Finally, the project was finalized by the Alentejo and Ribatejo Film Commission. Their objectives are: Information on financial and logistic support; search for a national executive co-producer; video survey of locations; translations of scripts and other documents; support in technical and artistic repositioning; pre-production and production support; with specialized technical labor in the region; file of licenses and fees; meetings with authorities and owners; support with the media and support for free time (excursions and guided tours).

The Alentejo and Ribatejo region has fantastic natural landscapes and is one destination for audiovisual productions from all over the world. With an area of more than 31.000 km<sup>2</sup>, it presents an enormous variety of natural locations, architecture and heritage, ranging from the Atlantic beaches to the golden Alentejo plains, from forests and forests to rivers and natural lakes, from Roman ruins to palaces, mansions and houses, from train stations to theatres and museums, from mountains to castles and practically everything else a film can need.

However, it also has competent professionals in the sector, an excellent gastronomy, and a huge offer of leisure and entertainment for the team's free time. The Alentejo and Ribatejo have over 300 different locations.

The most famous films shot in the Alentejo are: "The House of the Spirits" (Jeremy Irons and Meryl Streep), Évora filmed in the Monte de las Tres Marías, and Raiva under Alentejo.

### **C. Melilla**

There are several Film Commissions in Spain, some 27, distributed throughout Spain, from provincial capitals to villages, which want to be organized through the Spain Film Corporation (SFC). The SFC offers a series of tax incentives that Rebates for investments in film and series audiovisual productions, live performances, and musical shows.

The current general incentives available are:

- 20% tax rebate;
- Foreign production types are feature-length films, television series, animated films, and documentaries
- Maximum rebate limit is 3 million Euros;
- Beneficiaries are Spanish companies which are registered in the Film and Audio-visual Arts Institute's register of audiovisual producers;
- Rebate base is eligible expenses incurred in Spain (creative staff with a registered address in the country or another European Union member state, up to a maximum of €100,000 per person/technical or complimentary service)
- Minimum expense incurred in Spain is 1 million Euros;
- Procedure is the refund must be applied for by the Spanish company, during July of the year after the end of filming.

Spanish investments in film and audiovisual production are often carried out via an EIG (Economic Interest Grouping), which is set up as the film's producer.

Melilla, which has not created a Film commission, politically would like to turn it into a city of cinema, and be a unique set due to its locations and also have some tax benefits that can encourage the creation of audiovisual content in the City. The essential films shot in the City are: *Juego sucio en Casablanca* (1985), *Morirás en Chafarinas*, *ADU* (2019) *Hogar* (Netflix 2019) *Ghentar*, and "A este lado del mundo" being shot in 2019.

## 6. Discussion

It is clear that locations are decisive when making decisions to shoot films in specific locations. However, given the existence of similar locations over large geographical areas common to several nations, it is possible to decide between one location or another depending on many different aspects. Between the essential financial and fiscal benefits that public administrations grant to film projects.

Therefore, in the face of competition in attracting film productions, the Film Commission seeks to be competitive in broad facets that help production companies considerably, such as: Finding crew, finding locations, housing, equipment discounts and permits, and releases.

However, the essential financial and fiscal benefits that public administrations grant to film projects can be among the most decisive, and these entail political decisions that can vary depending on the objectives of the governments at any given time.

## 7. Conclusions and Recommendation

Malta has extensive experience in developing and managing film industry promotion policies by providing locations and financial incentives. The MFC is the body that centralizes all this activity of the Maltese islands. It also helps to promote tourism through the so-called Film tourism since such promotion can motivate tourists to visit the locations where their favourite films or series were shot.

Alentejo has also created a Film Commission, but it seems to be very little operative, and therefore it has not contributed to the objectives set to contribute to the economic and tourist development of the region.

In Melilla, even this organizational figure is still in the studio, and therefore the city does not have an entity that specializes in trying to capture a part of the film production made in Spain, and only the annual hours of recording is testimonial. The tax incentives could help to put it into operation.

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