



INVESTT DIASPORA WEBINAR

November 8, 2018

SUMMARY FILMTT

The Trinidad and Tobago Film Company Limited (FilmTT) is the state agency established in 2006 to facilitate the growth and development of the film and audio-visual sector in Trinidad & Tobago.

As a subsidiary of the Trinidad and Tobago Creative Industries Company Limited, FilmTT works on all aspects of film sector development, promotes Trinidad & Tobago as a film production location, and provides Film Commission services to local and incoming productions.

FilmTT's mission is to maximise the economic and creative potential of Trinidad & Tobago's screen industries for the benefit of the country and its people.

As the country's Film Commission, FilmTT promotes Trinidad & Tobago as a location to attract all types of productions, and provides services to local and international producers.

FilmTT offers the following Film Commission services:

- Manage production incentives, primarily the Production Expenditure Rebate Programme, which offers up to 35% cash back on qualifying services, and 20% cash back for hiring local labour.
- Host an online Production Directory where you can find cast and crew, and a searchable Locations Database.
- Arrange entry of equipment, cast and crew into the country for all productions.
- Arrange work permits for cast and crew.
- Connect international producers to local production companies and fixers to manage production logistics on the ground on their behalf.
- Production support services for T&T producers.



Great Courland Bay, Plymouth, Tobago

INDUSTRY SUMMARY

The first local feature film was shot in Trinidad & Tobago in 1970, since then, with limited infrastructure, Trinidad and Tobago producers and directors have been able to produce more than 73 feature-length narrative and documentary films in 48 years. A boom of local television content production in the 1980s and early 1990s also created a lot of skilled production personnel, many of whom became trainers and teachers of the current generation of content creators.

The foundation of the current sector was laid in 2006 with the founding of the Trinidad & Tobago Film Company, to focus on sector development through skills training and production grant funding, and to promote Trinidad and Tobago as a location on the basis of our ability to double for other diverse locations at a lower cost. In that year, the Trinidad and Tobago Film Festival was also established, providing the primary platform for the annual screening of local feature length and short films, and the BA in Film programme at the University of the West Indies at St. Augustine was established, creating the first formal film school for Caribbean filmmakers.

Today, while the quality of content is getting better, there still remain key gaps in the film industry value chain. The three most critical are:

1. Financing

Films are primarily made through government grants, sponsorship, and small amounts of private investment, and personal funds. There needs to be more infrastructure for financing content, introducing sound mechanisms for return on investment, and more private sector companies willing to take the risk on investing in film, and playing the long game to recoup investments.

2. Distribution

T&T and Caribbean films are not on the radar for most notable sales and distribution companies, therefore our content has limited chances to compete. Few films reach the diaspora, which is an untapped audience for consuming T&T film content.

3. Studio infrastructure

While some small studios exist, T&T needs a multi-functional studio that can meet the needs of small-medium, local and international productions. This would increase our competitiveness in the region. InvestTT is currently looking for investors for a film studio, based on a recent feasibility study.



View of San Fernando Hill from Gulf View, La Romaine

What investment/trade/business opportunities are there available now to the diaspora and how can they access them?

1. Invest in Trinidad and Tobago films

In the last 5 years, our content has screened at festivals and cinemas all over the world, a handful have attracted the attention of sales agents who are seeking international distribution for the content, and local audiences are flocking to cinemas as their taste for local films increases. As FilmTT works its strategic plan to develop the industry, a key gap to be filled is the development of investment instruments to introduce more reasonable financing options for producers.

2. Invest in training for Trinidad and Tobago's producers

Hand in hand with encouraging investment is raising the ability of content producers to develop films that have sound strategies to turn profits for its investors through sales and distribution. This skill is not adequately taught at the local film schools to create a measurable impact in the number of projects with dedicated and experienced producers. Increasing the capacity of existing and new producers to treat film as a business, and not just a creative pursuit, would also create more confidence in new investors. Connecting local producers to diaspora producers with credits and experience in navigating the business would be ideal.

3. Be ambassadors to promote Trinidad and Tobago as a location – for commercials, feature length content, television series and episodes.

There are many benefits to shooting in Trinidad and Tobago, and we would like to work with diaspora who are appropriately placed at ad agencies, production companies etc, to extend our marketing reach, so that T&T can be in the running for relevant future projects. Some benefits:

- Generous rebate incentive – FilmTT manages the Production Expenditure Rebate Programme, which offers up to 35% cash back on qualifying services, and 20% cash back for hiring local labour, up to a maximum of US\$8 million per project.
- Skilled labour force, available equipment and production facilities
- Diverse locations in close proximity, on both islands
- An ethnically and culturally diverse, English-speaking population
- Accessible through more than 10 major airlines from most hubs, on both islands
- Lowest business costs in Central America and the Caribbean
- First in the Caribbean for overall infrastructure



View of Woodbrook & Gulf of Paria, Trinidad



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