

TECHNICAL DAY - SUMMARY RECORD

Friday 5 June 2009

LE PHARO – MPM Auditorium in Marseilles

Day organized by **ATOUT FRANCE** and **FILM FRANCE**

Film-making and tourism : What possible synergies ? How can the economic spin-offs be increased ?

Round Table N°1: Organization and economic impact of the tourism and film sectors:

Presentation of the main players and functioning of the two sectors

Focus on “How to work together better?”

- **Philippe MAUD'HUI, Director Engineering and Projects, ATOUT FRANCE**
- **Arie BOHRER, President, European Film Commissions Network (EUFEN)**
- **Philippe LONG, Professor, Centre for Tourism and Cultural Change, Faculty of Arts and Society, Leeds Metropolitan University**
- **Martin EVANS, Director, The Tourism Business**

This first round table 'set the scene' and highlighted the interest the two sectors had in working together.

The first observation is that despite many common interests, until recently, very little work has been undertaken together, even though film-making generates between 50 000 and 100 000 Euros per week in a given location.

For these locations, hosting a foreign film production brings in from 50 to 70 million Euros per year, with, in addition, an indirect impact on the desire to visit France and the promotion of France's image.

Any partnership must be based on a win-win relationship establishing a B-to-B relationship between the two sectors.

This means adopting an economic development strategy designed to produce a return on investment. It is not a matter of 'cultural patronage'.

Tourism is directed at two types of clients:

- Visitors, ie clients from outside the area
- local inhabitants - this is one of the aspects currently being researched in terms of economic impact

It is striking to note the lack of common language between the tourism and film worlds. Producers and tourism stakeholders have very different mentalities and approaches:

- For the producer, making a film is a short term business, focused on success and pleasing the public. A film commission takes a very practical approach.
- A tourism strategy is developed over time; tourism stakeholders take a long-term marketing approach.

As a result, the two sectors should work together in a long-term perspective with a shared common strategic vision.

As Arie Bohrer stressed, in Vienna, for example, more than 60 years later, some films are still attracting thousands of visitors. Of the 2 million annual visitors to the palace, 75% come because of Empress Sissi.

How can the dialogue between these two worlds be facilitated?

Film commissions (the first was set up in 1993 in the Var; now some 40 across France) act as intermediaries between producers and tourism.

The dialogue between film commissions and tourism players is starting to take shape.

The function of these commissions is to host shoots; they must have an overall vision of the area; they need to work with tourism players.

The producer does not have an overall vision of the area. His job is basically to find the finance; his focus is on the technicalities of making a film. His expectation is that everything will be available locally.

A good working relationship between tourism and film-making is in fact a matter of local policy. If the film commission and the tourist board are at the same level this considerably facilitates relations. In the United States, the department of tourism and film hosting organization are located in the same place.

Working together regularly on concrete cases facilitates the synergy between tourism and film.

The European Film Commissions Network (EUFCN) was set up recently, in 2007. It brings together 23 countries and around one hundred film commissions. Its purpose is to facilitate the exchange of information – and encourage co-productions. More and more films have plots unfolding in several countries. The objective is to promote collaboration between European countries. For the EUFCN the difficulty as regards tourism is : how to influence tourism when the various countries are in competition with each other? The tourism-filming synergy could be an excellent means of overcoming this.

Leeds Metropolitan University is currently researching the impact of shoots on the attractiveness of a location, on the emotional dimension generated over and above the immediate impact of the production itself. Two sorts of visitors are to be found in places where films have been shot:

- experts
- fans and non-experts

Very often nothing is done to encourage the natural flow of tourists to film locations as a means of increasing economic spin-offs.

There is some debate regarding the tourism impact of a film showing a destination in a rather negative light.

Films have an enormous impact even if this is not easy to assess. It seems that one tourist out of ten in the United Kingdom visits a destination as the result of a film shoot. In Provence, two-thirds are drawn to a destination because of a film or TV series.

It is important to assess the relative importance of foreign productions: in France, most shooting is for domestic productions. 95% of shoot days are for French productions.

The difference in impact between a TV series and a film is time-sensitivity. The advantage of TV series is that they run over a long period of time. If they are exported, this potential is multiplied out.

Round Table N°2: synergies prior to shooting: location marketing. How to attract film shoots to these localities? International competition. Strategies set up in France and abroad.

- **Karim MEKACHERA, Director, ATOU France, India**
- **Richard BOWER, Movie Project, CCI Marseille-Provence**
- **Vassili MEIMARIS, Regional Film Commission, PACA**
- **Sophie BOUDON-VANHILLE, Paris-Film, Mission Cinéma**
- **Jean-Pierre MARTINETTI, Director, Cité de la Culture et du Tourisme Durable**

This second round table devoted to “location marketing” sought to define how to promote an area, how to facilitate shooting, how to get a location into the story.

Participants observed that there were many new entrants into this market which is becoming increasingly competitive.

Countries are waging real “competition wars”. Some are paying producers above and beyond the level of mere support.

In France, new measures have been introduced to encourage shoots: tax breaks for French producers (since 2004) and for foreign shoots (since 2008).

Paris Film grants the authorisations in Paris, hosts the shoots (840 a year, 15 per day), runs a support fund, helps art-movie cinemas, encourages visual art education, supports film festivals.

Film shoots in Paris are a direct source of employment, they enhance the city's image in France and abroad. This activity has been in existence for a long time but the aim is to improve assistance to production companies, increase shooting periods in terms of number of days, make the Paris heritage accessible and diversify shooting locations.

The Marseilles-Provence Chamber of Commerce CCIMP was a forerunner in this field. It sent a delegation to Los Angeles in 2007 to promote the region as a film location. CCIMP's objective was to generate business for local companies, as culture and films contribute to the economy.

In 2008, the regional tourist board CRT and the film commission invited some Indian film directors to discover the areas of Nice, Marseilles, as well as the Rhône-Alpes region.

Given the importance of films in India (3 billion tickets sold per year) promoting France as a destination through movies is one of the development tracks chosen by the ATOU France office in India.

Film commissions organize famtours (a term borrowed from the world of tourism and adopted by film commissions).

In location marketing, it is not just an area or region that is being sold, but also technical skills, a soul, stories, diversity and human richness. The cultural dimension is very important and must be built into marketing policies in order to enhance the identity of the area.

The strengths and weaknesses of an area must be accurately assessed and continuous attention must be paid to competition. There is no such thing as a guaranteed marketing advantage, even for places like Paris.

**Round Table N°3: Synergies during the shoot: organization and realization of an audiovisual work. Interaction between the various players (logistics, budget).
Some French and foreign examples.**

- **Karim MEKACHERA, Director, ATOUT France, India**
- **Trish SHORTHOUSE, Scottish Highlands Film Commission**
- **Alessandra BERGERO, Italian Riviera Alpi Del Mare – Film Commission**
- **Pierre BORRIS, Head of Film & Performing Arts Market, Accor Hospitality**

The aim is to make the location as welcoming as possible as there are many technical aspects to organize. In what way are tourism/film competencies complementary?

Film commissions are to a certain extent “shooting boards” (to coin a term similar to tourist boards). In short, they act as intermediaries between the producer and the location. They provide free of charge assistance with geographical orientation, information (on regulations, on the best settings, by facilitating contacts with local authorities, interpreters, local administration, business etc.)

The Scottish Film Commission reports that 70% of its activity revolves around TV commercials and programmes, a market worth £5 to 8 million per year. For producers, Scotland's assets are its wild scenery, its luminosity and the possibility of shooting late into the summer.

The Commission does not provide any financial support but has a small budget for familiarising people with the area.

The area does not have much capacity to meet the requirements of film-making in terms of hotel accommodation and technical skills.

The Commission works closely with tourism players. A hosting programme for film crews has been set up jointly with various bodies: Visitscotland, social media and the destination marketing organization.

It is important to make the world of tourism and services understand that there is a real potential for economic spin-offs. However, this means service providers must adapt to producers' demands – for instance, the need to be flexible with timing, as shoots can take place late at night, to anticipate dietary requirements of foreign crews : in India, for example, most people are vegetarian.

When the Italian Riviera Film Commission was set up around ten years ago it was the first of its kind in Italy. This very sunny area is not much visited in winter, providing an opportunity for film shoots, while also bringing business to local hotels which are normally empty off-season. “ Ink Heart” a general public feature film, was shot there in 2006.

The decision to film in the area was taken rapidly by the producer, leaving the commission little time to get organized. Accommodation had to be found for 400 persons in November when many hotels are closed.

No public financing was made available, with the exception of logistical support provided by tourism bodies and attractive negotiated prices. This was what finally convinced the producer to make 70 % of the film in the region.

The name of the actual shooting location does not appear anywhere but at a certain moment in the film the place name is said by one of the actors. The region did not pay for this.

Although the area was not in a position to organize the marketing, the film was screened in 70 countries. Articles in the Italian papers all referred to the area where the film was shot - which was very beneficial for the region.

Local stakeholders are not entitled to use material from the film to promote the area. It is important to negotiate rights outright before the contract is signed in order to permit tourism-related promotion afterwards. Once the film is made it is too late. Sometimes the author does not wish the location to be identified; for instance, J.K. Rowling wanted to preserve the magic of the Harry Potter setting. Only local inhabitants were able to identify the places where the film was shot ; no official communication was allowed.

The French Hotel Group Accor has considerable experience in hosting film crews: 30 000 bednights per year in France and abroad. It is important to bear in mind that a hotel is a profit centre and that it cannot be expected to provide services for nothing. Hosting film-crews must be profitable. An internal charter has been signed to facilitate good relationships. The Performing Arts & Film Market Department looks after coordination within the Group. It also takes care of locating possible sets as hotels can also be film locations. Marketing directors are very careful about questions of image and the possibility of negative publicity. Rates can be brought down if the Group's brand appears on screen.

Production companies in India take a very commercial approach to location search. They are looking to be hosted free of charge. Negotiation starts with arguments on the tourism spin-offs. Malaysia, for instance, paid several thousand dollars for a film shoot. Its impact was later quantified as a 30% increase in tourist visitation was recorded after the film was released.

The question of image was raised once again: does a film generate appeal for the area if it shows negative images, scenes of violence, of crime, etc.?

The PACA region has an artistic works aid fund. The selection method does not take possible tourism benefits and image into consideration. The fund is basically designed to support film-making.

Indeed, tourism should not "exploit" just any film. The question of image is obviously important for tourism. Some films are positive in tourism terms, but not all.

Can the appearance of an area in a film be considered as product or brand placement? The answer is basically "no" as there is an emotional dimension, an identity, a complexity which cannot be compared to the appearance of a mere product.

There are two critical moments:

- Before signing, both the film and the tourism sectors must agree on such aspects as logistics as well as the tourism use to which the film will be put.
- Once the film has been released, operations should be organized so that tourists have an additional reason to come to the area if the opportunity arises.

Where image is concerned, the city of Paris can veto filming if the scenes are technically impossible to shoot under good security conditions or if there is a serious problem of integrity.

Round Table N°4: Perception and impact of films: distribution strategy.

Type of benefits, duration of impact in relation to film content, level of distribution or the characteristics of the area.

- **Stefan ROESCH, International consultant, Film Tourism**
- **Claude MANISCALCO, Director, Saint-Tropez Tourist Office**
- **Jean-Baptiste DAGREOU, former owner of Camping La Dune (location of the film “Camping”)**
- **Geoff WILCOCK, Sales Director, Open Brolly (Screen Agency Software and Services)**

The fourth round table was designed to understand why film locations fascinate people. Why do they spark off the desire to see a place, a setting, an environment?

The film “Brave Heart” generated visitor flows to the area although the film was actually not shot there. It seems, although this is hard to prove, that people want to immerse themselves in the atmosphere of the film, to enter into the story – not to mention the fascination people have for stars. Visiting a film location is like taking possession of the place in some personal way.

There are many motivations: follow in the footsteps of the stars, get closer to them, discover the more technical aspects of the filming, pick up a souvenir (for instance, people took away stones from the site where “Lord of the Rings” was shot).

The impact of a film or TV series is illustrated by films like “Camping” and the series “Sous le soleil”.

After the film “Camping” was released, one call out of three received by the campsite “Les Dunes” where the film was shot was motivated by the film. Everyone wanted to see the restaurant, the place where the various families camped... The owner of the campsite even allowed people not staying at the campsite to come and see for themselves as he did not wish to appear “self-seeking” and make people pay to see. Even though the owner had indeed anticipated that the film would have a tourism impact (he had asked for a small fee in exchange for the right to retain the set).

The series “Sous le soleil” (distributed internationally under the title “Saint-Tropez”) consists of 500 episodes shot between 1995 and 2008 and released in 100 countries; it drew a steady stream of visitors to the beach even though the set was removed during the summer season.

Saint-Tropez is a real “film” destination (over 100 feature films and TV commercials have been shot there). The tourist board is going to create a “movie walk” so that visitors can get to know the town through its movies.

Morocco hosts a considerable amount of film-making but only one-fifth of the films actually showcase the country itself as many of the films recreate the atmosphere of other countries. Morocco would like to alter this situation and ensure that film shoots show off Moroccan destinations.

Round Table N°5: Downstream synergies: getting tourists to film locations

Movie maps, site visits, web tools, other tourist products

- **Eugeni OSACAR, Director of the Barcelona Movie project, Barcelona Tourist Board**
- **Arnaud BARRÉ, Director, Paris Trip**
- **Georgette BLAU, President, On Location Tours Inc.**

The final Round Table dealt with concrete examples of enhancing the tourism value of film locations, once the film had been shot.

On Location Tours Inc. is a private company that has been running tours of location sites in New York for the past ten years as well as in New Jersey and Washington. On Location Tours does not pay any rights for these tours as they do not sell any film-related material, they merely take people to places. Meals can be organized on site, which makes the tour even more interesting. Around 15% to 20% of the tourists purchasing the tours have never seen the series but are with someone who has. They subsequently become viewers.

In Barcelona, where 1700 shoots took place in 2008 (140 films, the rest being TV) the tourist board - in partnership with the University, Catalan producers and the Film Commission - set up "Barcelona Movie Walks" available on Internet. The aim is make Barcelona a movie destination and to create attractive surroundings.

Paris Trip is a private company that organizes "classic" guided tours. Until recently, movies were considered a plus in the tours, but there were no specific location tours.

The first experience was a Da Vinci Code tour, also offered by a number of other companies. Paris Trip is the only company still offering this tour.

Other ways to get tourists interested in visiting film locations need to be explored, specifically using new media. It may be interesting to set up thematic discussion groups on Face Book...

Web sites

Atout France : www.odit-france.fr / www.franceguide.com

Film France: www.filmfrance.net

CCI Marseilles Provence : www.ccimp.com

PACA Region : www.regionpaca.fr

City of Marseilles : www.marseille.fr

Marseille Provence Métropole : www.marseille-provence.com

European Film Commissions Network: www.eufcn.net

Leeds Metropolitan University: www.lmu.ac.uk

Paris-Films, mission cinéma de la Ville de Paris : www.parisfilm.fr

Cité de la Culture et du Tourisme Durable : www.cctd.eu

Scottish Highlands and Islands Film Commission: www.scotfilm.org

Italian Riviera Alpi del Mare Film Commission: www.italianrivierafilmcommission.org

Accor Hospitality: www.accorhotels.com

Film Tourism www.film-tourism.com

Saint-Tropez Tourist Office : www.ot-saint-tropez.com

Camping de la Dune : www.campingdeladune.fr

On Location Tours : www.screen-tours.com

Barcelona Movie: www.barcelonamovie.com

Paris Trip: www.paris-trip.com

Open Brolly: www.openbrolly.com

Publication

Collection Ingénierie touristique - Mini-guide N°28 :

« **Tourisme et tournages de films :**

comment dynamiser son territoire par l'audiovisuel »

(Tourism and Film-Making: using audiovisual products to boost an area's performance)

ODIT France-Film France – 2009

On sale :

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www.ladocumentationfrancaise.fr

In french and english version (PDF) : 18 € TTC on www.odit-france.fr