

Co-producing with South Africa: an analysis of policies that enable or hamper film co- productions

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Introduction

Definitions

Official co-production - a co-production arrangement for the production of films under a bilateral film treaty/agreement concluded between two countries.

Competent authority - institutions nominated by signatory countries to administer and certify applications for official co-production status.

Policy context in South Africa

- Constitutional rights - free speech, right to languages
- White Paper on Arts, Culture & Heritage provisions for:
 - ✓ Autonomous publicly funded arts institutions
 - ✓ Arms length approach
 - ✓ National Film & Video Foundation Act 73 of 1997 enacted for institution to develop and grow film and video industry in a later process

Policy context in South Africa

- White Paper provides for exchange and interaction between local, regional, continental and international cultures.
- Cultural seasons & bilateral film co-productions for cultural exchange.
- Official co-productions are treated as local content in terms of ICASA South African Television Content Regulations.

Policy context in South Africa

- Cultural & creatives industries policies that enable co-productions include:
- Distribution of films (DVD, cinema, TV) subject to classification by Films & Publications Board.
- Film & Television Production Incentive Programme introduced in 2004 later post production incentive.
- Government Soft funds for development, production, marketing and skills development in place.
- Tax allowance for film investors.
- Clear films policies – film permits, use of animals in productions, labour practices related to minors working on shoots – SA FILM FRIENDLY?

Why film co-productions?

- Enhance collaboration, pooling of resources, competition in international market for countries with smaller production markets (Baltruschat,2002).
- Economic and cultural benefits but culture not defined (South African treaties)

Why co-produce?

Advantages

- Access to markets
- Financial incentives & tax credits
- National film status
- Import facilitation for filming equipment
- No import restrictions (SA/UK treaty)

Disadvantages

- Proven track record requirement
- Paperwork substantial for approval process
- Loss of creative control

Treaties signed by South Africa

- Canada (1997)
- Italy (2003)
- Germany (2004)
- United Kingdom (2006)
- Australia (2010)
- France (2010)
- New Zealand (2011)
- Ireland (2012)
- Netherlands (2015)

Treaty Analysis

Treaty	Objective	Culture*	Participants
Canada	Cultural & economic exchange	Producers, writers, directors, technicians, performers, production personnel, English/French original soundtrack	SA Canadian
Italy	Bilateral cultural relations	Producers, scriptwriters, directors & professionals, English & Italian language versions	SA, AU,SADC Italy/EU
Germany	Economic & cultural co-operation	Artistic & technical balance, cast Soundtrack in official languages	SA, SADC,AU German, EEA, EU
UK	<i>Enhancement of film cultures, films that reflect, enhance & convey diversity of culture & heritage</i>	<i>Balance in cultural benefits (statistical data analysis) Films must deliver cultural benefits English, regional or minority language in UK, official language in SA</i>	SA, SADC UK, EEA

Treaty Analysis

Treaty	Objective	Culture*	Participants
<i>France</i>	<p><i>Cultural & economic exchange</i></p> <p><i>UNESCO Convention on the Protection & Promotion of the Diversity of Cultural Expression , 2005</i></p>	<p><i>Soundtrack, French/English languages</i></p>	<p><i>SA</i></p> <p><i>French/EU nationals</i></p>
<i>Australia</i>	<p><i>Cultural, creative, economic exchange</i></p>	<p><i>Balance in Performing, technical, craft, official languages</i></p> <p><i>Writer, director & lead cast</i></p>	<p><i>SA, Australia</i></p>
<i>New Zealand</i>	<p><i>Cultural & economic exchange</i></p>	<p><i>Performing, technical, craft & creative participation, soundtrack in 1 of NZ official language & any combination of permitted languages</i></p>	<p><i>SA/ New Zealand</i></p>

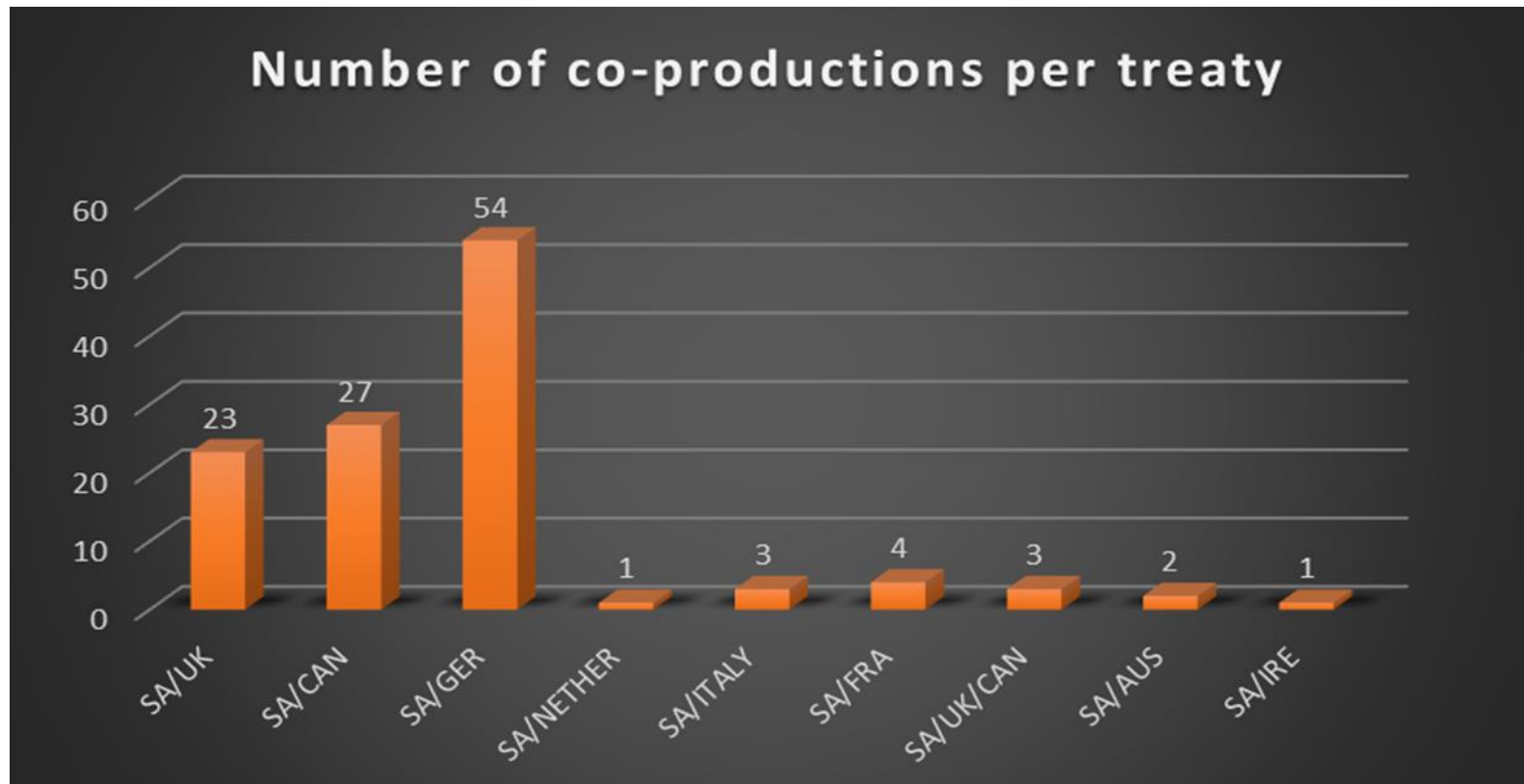
Treaty Analysis

Treaty	Objective	Culture*	Participants
Ireland	Cultural & economic exchange	Soundtrack in official languages, Major creative, craft & technical contributions Writer, director, lead cast Soundtrack in official languages	SA Irish/EU nationals
Netherlands	Cultural & economic exchange	Artistic & technical positions	SA, AU Dutch/permanent residents of Netherlands & EU

General Trends

- Poor performance at the local box office.
- Gross receipts tend to be higher in the co-producing country(Lucas Rosant,2015).
- Post production incentive has not taken off (DTI, 2016).
- Participation of local talent a major contestation (*see pictures*).
- Projects are produced outside treaty framework.
- Competent authorities networking platforms are not effective in promoting collaborations.
- Big 5 production companies in South Africa dominate the co-production space (NFVF, 2017).

Co-production volumes as at March 2017



Local vs. international talent or (co-producing partner talent)

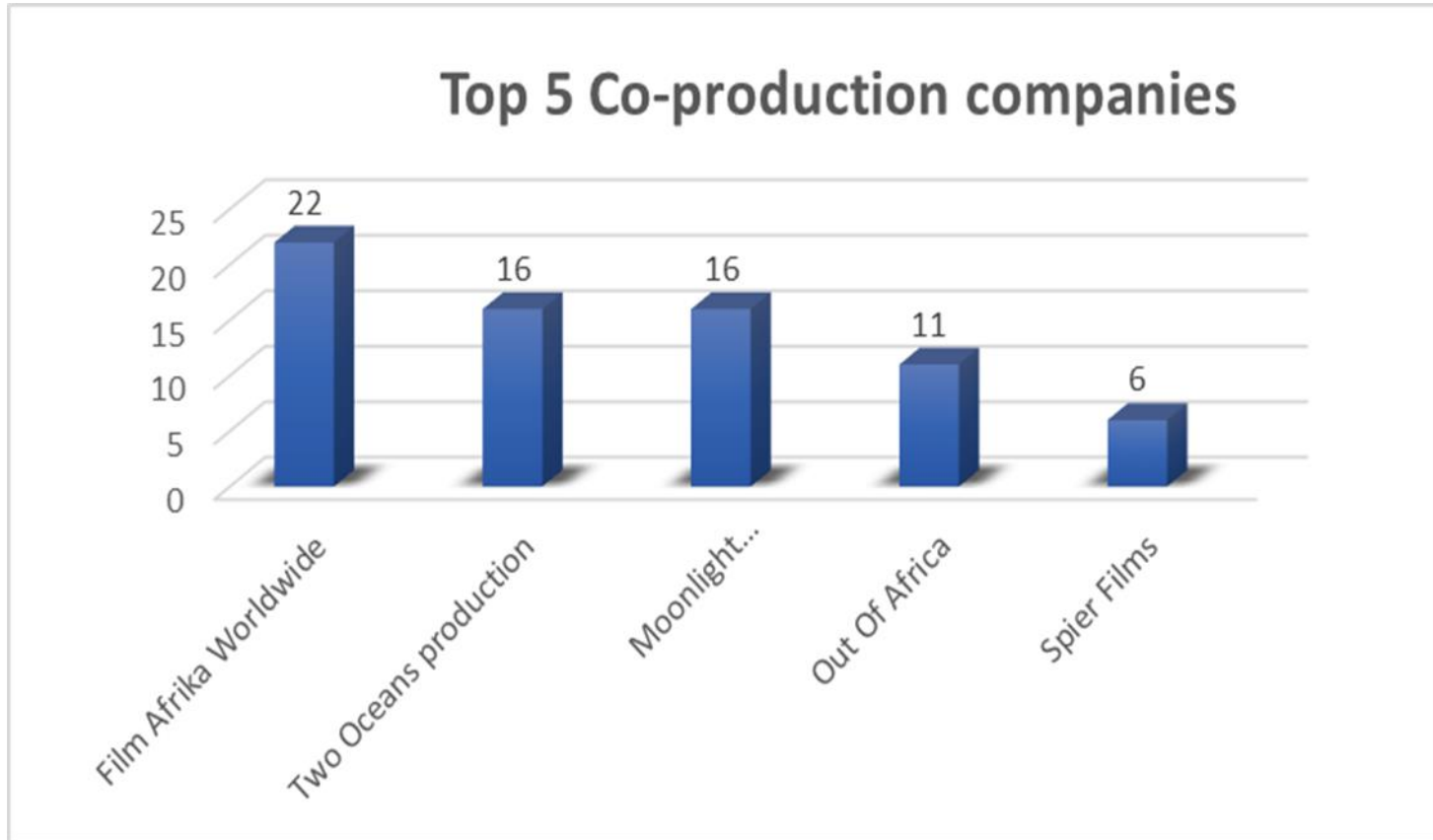
SA/Italy (2004)



SA/UK (2009)



Emergence of Dominant players



Concluding remarks

- Consistency from SA regarding treaty contents important (e.g. language, participants).
- Participation from SADC & AU must be encourage from SA side.
- Treaty with an African country overdue (Kenya, Nigeria).
- The establishment of the Africa Audio-visual and Cinema Commission an opportunity for film collaborations.

Concluding remarks

- Relook requirement for experience vs big 5 that should mentor companies with potential to ensure transformation & diversity.
- Treaties should be reviewed as per 3 years Joint Commission meetings in line with data collected.
- Mechanism to measure cultural input in films is required in South Africa.

With Thanks



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