
Filming in South Africa and Some Production Information

A Brief History

South Africa's film industry was originally based primarily in Johannesburg – the economic hub and largest city in South Africa. Television was first introduced to South Africa in 1976 and the SABC then based itself in Johannesburg, which cemented it as the powerhouse of the industry. Since the global acceptance of a new democratic South Africa over twenty years ago, Cape Town has become the growth centre of the industry through servicing the numerous international commercials and films that come to the country to take advantage of its beautiful and varied locations and in turn develop and grow the local skills and capabilities of the logistics, support and infrastructure.

Tourism

South Africa is one of the world's most popular tourist destinations with Cape Town ranking amongst the world's top five favourite cities amongst tourists. The country offers visitors a vast range of attractions ranging from beaches to safaris and an assorted array of activities from adrenaline high adventure through to calming and relaxing spas.

Cost

South Africa remains excellent value for money when compared to other popular international filming destinations. Value Added Tax (VAT) currently lies at 14% and is included in the price of most goods and services. VAT is claimed back, where legally permitted, by Enigma Pictures on behalf of our clients. VAT cannot be claimed back on passenger vehicles, catering and accommodation. The tax-free rebate available from the Department of Trade and Industry (DTI) through The Film and Television Production Incentive makes filming in South Africa for mid-size budgets even more cost effective than other countries.

Casting

There are a number of experienced casting directors available in South Africa who understand the projects and director's needs and who work with the artists agents. The casting directors will firstly focus on the professional actors but are also more than willing to conduct street casting if and when necessary. Experienced actors are generally open to most parts available on any given project and where there are sufficient calls to justify it, picture deals or weekly deals can be negotiated with them. The standard artist's workday is 12 hours per call, including lunch. South Africa does have a diverse population that covers most racial and ethnic groups of the US, Europe and Asia.

Crew

South African crew are on a par with the best in the world. Working in an industry driven by expectations of high levels of service, their skills have been honed to meet the different production and cultural requirements of the numerous international productions that have been undertaken in South Africa. South African crew have a high standard of work ethic, are creative, flexible and keen to expand their knowledge and experience. Most technicians are represented by agents and they are not unionized, which allows for working conditions, within reason, to be negotiated on a project to project basis. For long form (not commercials) the generally accepted industry working hours are a 6 day week with 12 hour days, including lunch. Turnaround per 6 day week is five 10 hour nights with the sixth being a 12 hour turn around which is generally included around the day off to create a 36 hour break. Overtime and turnaround infringement is paid at 1,5 times the hourly rate, with double time being applicable on any 7th day worked. There is no premium for Sundays, most public holidays

and night shoots for crew on weekly deals. Daily staff are, however, entitled to premium pay for the first night of a night shoot only, no premium on Sunday or public holidays.

Equipment

A comprehensive range of specialized motion picture equipment is available here in South Africa. Equipment suppliers such as Panavision, Panalux, Take 2 and Media Film Services all have bases in Cape Town and Johannesburg. Between these suppliers there is hardly a piece of equipment that is not available or cannot be sourced through the local companies' international affiliations. All the rental houses have experience in supplying equipment in other African countries and Media Film Services is already represented in Durban and Mauritius. Enigma Pictures is happy to provide you with details of the wide range of equipment available here or to source any specific piece of equipment required.

Locations, Scouting and Permissions

No other popular international filming destination can offer the enormous variety of locations available in South Africa. They include sand dunes, beaches, mountain ranges, forests, plains, agricultural land, vineyards, city streets, villages, bush, desert and waterfalls, most of which are in close proximity to a major city centre. A number of the locations can easily replicate almost anywhere else in the world. Enigma Pictures will submit reference pictures of possible locations which will give an accurate starting point of what is available and later saves time and money when a specific scout is commissioned. Prior to the start of any specific location scout, a comprehensive detailed brief is requested from the director, if possible, or from the producer and production company. All locations, private, municipal or government, require permissions of some kind which will be arranged and secured by Enigma Pictures wherever possible and when needed.

Studios

Due to the limited size of the available studios in both Johannesburg and Cape Town, warehouses are more commonly used for feature films and TV productions. Cape Town Film Studios are the largest soundproof, air-conditioned studios available in Cape Town at present and is a studio complex comparable to most other international studio-based locations. There are smaller packshot studios like the Cape Island Studios, which are not soundproof, but can be made to work for most productions. While there are more studios available in Johannesburg, most are permanently occupied by daily soap operas.

Post-Production

South Africa boasts various post facilities which specialise in High Definition workflow through to online and delivery. Previously most of the international post-production work had been completed outside the country, however in recent times there has been an increase of productions staying in the country to complete parts, if not all of their post-production work in South Africa.

Looping can also be arranged as there are ISDN Voice recording facilities and Protools audio suites readily available in the country which can link to most countries around the world.

Commissions, Film Offices and Organisations

The Cape Film Commission, Gauteng and Durban Film Offices were established to assist foreign and local film makers with obtaining the correct location permissions and for the issuing of film permits while promoting growth and development of the film community in their respective regions.

Please visit their websites for more information:

- Cape Film Commission / Film Office: <http://www.capefilmcommission.co.za>

- Gauteng Film Commission: <http://www.gfo.co.za>
- Durban Film Office: <http://www.durbanfilmoffice.com>

The Independent Producers' Organisation (IPO) represents, promotes and protects the specific needs and interests of producers of feature films, documentaries and television series.

Please visit their website for more information: <http://www.ipo.org.za>

The National Film & Video Foundation (NFVF) is the statutory body mandated by a progressive act of Parliament to spearhead the equitable growth and development of the South African film and video industry under the auspices of the Department of Arts & Culture. Their mission is to create an environment that develops and promotes the South African film and video industry domestically and internationally. The NFVF is also responsible for allocating both development and production funding to successful film projects.

Please visit their website for more information: <http://www.nfvf.co.za>