

Guidelines to the Function and Work of the German Film Commissions

Preliminary Remarks:

Film commissions are regional points of contact for film industry companies of all kinds involved in the production of film, television and video projects, and who require information, services or contacts.

The working practices and operating principles of film commissions are defined by an international umbrella organization, the Association of Film Commissioners International (AFCI). In conformity with AFCI by-laws, the German film commissions have agreed on the following joint overall guidelines, whose main aim is global transparency. They are also intended as an aid to maintaining standards and competitiveness in both national and international contexts.

Services:

1. Non-profit

Film commissions are non-profit organizations, i.e. they offer information and services free of charge to the national and international film industries.

One emphasis of their work is the strengthening of their respective regions in the area of film, television and video production. Their various distinguishing features, such as municipal or regional branch offices, have no influence on their basic working practices. The German film commissions are financed as a general rule by the federal states, by film-funding institutions or economic development programs.

2. Regional Networking

Film commissions are an active part of a continually improving network of regional and public agencies, and use their local and media industry knowledge to improve production and shooting conditions within their respective regions. They operate as an interface between the film production industry and the authorizing bodies.

3. Information

Film commissions are a central coordination and information point for all matters concerning shooting and production in their respective regions. They are not responsible for the granting and obtaining of shooting permits, but in certain circumstances can act in an intermediary

capacity using their network contacts. Their service covers information on the responsible authorities and application procedures, together with the contact addresses of service providers for location scouting, the procurement of shooting permits, street cordoning, equipment, etc. This information is available online, in print form or on inquiry. Film commissions act as an intermediary between the film industry, public authorities and location providers should problems arise. Their networks here provide for the efficient and disinterested search for a solution acceptable to all parties, taking into account all factual circumstances and the concerns of residents.

4. Location Guides

Film commissions support location scouting by providing free, publicly available location guides in the form of online/offline databanks and/or in print. The guides primarily contain public locations. To improve our service and our collaboration with local location scouts and agencies, third parties may also add locations to the databanks.

5. Individual Location Inquiries

Film commissions in Germany process location inquiries with the help of their existing databanks and of regional location scouts. Specific, project-based location scouting is not usually among their range of services. The German film commissions thus contribute to the strengthening of their regional film industries by avoiding improper competition and ensuring the employment of local service providers.

6. Service

Film commissions have an overview of the production-related infrastructure of their regions. Free, publicly available production guides are available in the form of online/offline databanks and/or in print. Inquiries as to film industry resources and production procedures are dealt with in cooperation with and with reference to the regional industry. Film commissions are enjoined to neutrality in their dealings with partners. The answering of inquiries is intended to be as effective and as practicable for the industry as possible, and to take all factors into account. This means that contact lists can be drawn up with a specific aim in mind and with a reduced number of contacts, should this be required and given the know-how for such a selection.

7. Funding Possibilities

Film commissions are in possession of information about regional and national funding and financing models, and are able to answer general funding questions and those relating, for example, to co-production possibilities. Detailed inquiries are referred to the relevant institutions or funding advisors.

8. Quick, Competent Information

Inquiries to the film commissions are dealt with promptly. An initial reaction or answer should be given immediately. Delays may however occur in the case of more complex inquiries. Answers are based at all times on careful and competent research. Any information passed on must be reliable and verified.

9. Marketing

Film commissions are marketing and PR service providers for the German federal states with regard to their regional film and film production industries and their importance as film industry locations. At national and international trade fairs and festivals, the film commissions represent their regional industries and, in joint appearances, the German film industry as a whole.

Concluding Remarks:

Preserving and guaranteeing the above principles is prerequisite to the further establishment of the German film commissions and ensures fair and healthy competition.