Poland: A Go-To Filming Destination

Poland is a country with a rich film tradition and a dynamically developing audiovisual market. The unique talents of Polish filmmakers are appreciated and awarded all over the world. Poland has modern facilities and film infrastructure, and Polish crews are well prepared to cooperate with foreign partners. Poland offers a wide variety of landscapes, from sandy beaches in the north to the rocky mountains in the south, from bustling cities to wild and primeval nature. From 2019, feature, documentary and animated projects made in Poland can receive a 30% cash rebate on qualifying Polish costs.

The audiovisual production support system (incentives) is regulated by the Act on financial support for audiovisual production and offers reimbursement of production costs incurred in Poland in the amount of 30% of Polish eligible expenditures. Funds allocated to support audiovisual production come directly from the state budget and are distributed throughout the year until they are depleted. At least 10% of the annual budget is intended to support animated productions. The system is managed by the Polish Film Institute.

Reimbursement is available for feature films, animations, documentaries and series - fiction, animated and documentary. The return is available for the production of Polish and international co-productions and services provided for foreign productions (line production). The cultural qualification test and minimum spending thresholds apply. Limit per project and applicant apply. To apply support a Polish partner or company registered in Poland is required. There are no deadlines; applications are processed in order of submission until the funds for a given year are depleted. Financial support is paid after the presentation and positive verification of the final report on production or the stage of work covered by the support.

The Polish eligible costs include, among others: location scouting, production design, costumes, equipment rental, travel and accommodation, postproduction, animation, and labour costs. A detailed list of costs that may constitute Polish eligible costs and a detailed list of costs excluded from eligibility is available on the Polish Film Institute website: https://pfif.pl/en/

A cultural qualifying test applies. It contains a set of criteria and a corresponding score. The application must receive at least 51% of all possible points in the cultural test to qualify for the support. The project receives points for:
- using subjects and threads deriving from Polish or European cultural heritage
- using Polish locations
- setting the production in Poland (number of shooting days, image and sound post production)
- participation of Polish or European artists and crew members
- using Polish film infrastructure

There are currently 11 operating funds. In general, the Polish regional film funds seek film projects by announcing competitions. One basic condition for entering a project for a competition is that it is related to a city or town in the region, or to the region itself, either in its theme and/or its setting, or through the participation of local people and companies in its production.

Support is also contingent on the expending of at least 100% of the funding within the region; in some cases, the sum to be expended is 150%. The competition organizers are interested in enhancing the positive image of the city, town or region, which is why projects intending to use distinctive locations and sites receive the most favourable assessments.

The Polish regional film funds differ in terms of the budgets they manage, the form of support they provide and the sums which must be expended in their cities, towns and region during the production of a film. Support most often takes the form of the institution managing the fund participating in the production as a co-producer with its own financial or in-kind contribution. Other forms of support are non-repayable grants or refunds. In other words, a partial reimbursement of the costs incurred, which is paid after the production has been completed. All the Polish film funds provide support of up to 50% of the film’s budget, although in the case of documentaries & animated films, the funding may be higher.

The regional film funds usually announce the competitions once a year, with the assessment of the projects and allocation of funding taking anything from 60 to 120 days. Foreign producers are also welcome to submit projects, though preferably as partners to Polish producers. At the requisite documentation must be completed in Polish.
Krakow: The Unexplored Destination

Krakow Film Commission has been operating in the structures of the Krakow Festival Office since 2008. The main task of KFC is to support film production in the City of Krakow and the Małopolska Voivodeship. It helps in obtaining all required permits as well as access to public locations throughout the region. Krakow Film Commission coordinates contacts with offices, the police, municipal guards, fire brigades and many municipal institutions. Thanks to our vast experience, we are able to quickly and efficiently carry out official formalities and complicated procedures. We work with filmmakers on almost all stages of production.

Thanks to our location database, producers can get acquainted with hundreds of potential film places throughout the entire province. We also run a database of the local companies related to the audiovisual market, providing support i.e. on the set, in the technical segment and post-production.

Krakow Film Commission also operates the Regional Film Fund in Krakow, financed from the budget of the Municipality of Krakow and the budget of the Małopolska Voivodeship. As part of every year's competition, it is possible to obtain co-financing for productions related to Małopolska.

Krakow Film Commission is a member of:
- EUCFNC - European Network of Film Commissions
- Cine Regio - European network of regional film funds
- AFCI - Association of Film Commissioners International
- KIPA - The Polish Audio-visual Producers Chamber of Commerce

Małopolska Film Region

Since 2019 Krakow Film Commission is also a part of new audio-visual project and together with Krakow Film Cluster and Off Camera Foundation will now promote worldwide the companies from film production sector based in the Małopolska region under one label - Małopolska Film Region. The programme includes trips and participation in the most important film markets and festivals as well as a digital campaign. The project, which shall last to 2022, received financial support from the Regional Operational Programme.

As part of the task planned to 2022, the project leader (Krakow Film Cluster) together with project partners (Krakow Festival Office - Krakow Film Commission, Off Camera Foundation) and representatives of the Małopolska region film industry will take part in over forty international film events such as co-production fairs, film festivals, conferences and film location expos. Moreover, a long-term, coherent digital campaign and promotion of companies from the Małopolska Region, which jointly form a film production conglomerate, will be launched.

“Małopolska Film Region allows Krakow Film Commission to intensify its international activities. The Małopolska Region already uses it to increase its visibility at the Focus London film location market and presents itself as part of the AFCI Taste of the World Locations Forum in Los Angeles or at the IFFTC Conclave in Mumbai, India.”