

Big boost coming for Jamaica's film industry with soon to be launched screen fund

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James Bond actor, Daniel Craig, is flanked by (from left) Léa Seydoux, Ana de Armas, Naomie Harris, and Lashana Lynch at the film's 25th instalment launch at Golden Eye in St Mary, in April last year. (Photos: Norman Thomas)

Jamaica is set to launch its Screen Fund Initiative in which film makers and producers can get financing of up to 45 per cent of a project and eligible budget for both local and international film productions.

This is a huge boost for Jamaica, which doesn't have a tax credit, but has hosted some major projects in recent years, including the new Bond film, No Time to Die, part of which was filmed in Port Antonio and Kingston. The fund, which has been actively under development for the past five years by Jampro, is now in the final approval stages by the Government.

Jampro has engaged the international screen industry consultants, Nordicity, to deliver the Screen Fund's operational guidelines. The aim of the public-private fund is to stimulate Jamaican film productions.

However, it will also be available to co-productions and even international productions, as long as these productions demonstrate a significant level of contribution or economic impact to the country. For example, a percentage of the crew must be locally sourced as well as a number of shoot days in Jamaica.

Once officially launched, there will be an open call for screen projects, which can apply at the development and pre-production stage, in production, or at the marketing and festival attendance stage. Eligible film projects will need to meet eligibility criteria through a points-based system.



Applications will be overseen by an external third-party assessment body made up of industry professionals both local and international. While applicants will be eligible for a maximum of up to 45 per cent of their eligible budget from the fund, they will need to demonstrate that the remaining budget percentage has been secured from other financial sources before money from the fund can be released.

To help applicants achieve this, Film Commissioner and Head of the Film, Animation and Music Unit of Jampro, Renee Robinson, reports that her organisation is now pursuing a roster of partner companies, both locally and internationally, consisting of debt, equity, angel and distribution partners. She explains that these entities would see that the producers have qualified for the Government grant, and can then consider financing the rest of the budget from an equity, debt, or gap position. ■