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05 NOV 2005

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Scouting And Location

At the end of August, a call was forwarded to European production houses operating in Asia. The call was to provide a popular European TV channel with several film services for a shooting in the Southeast Asia region. The TV shooting programme would have involved a hundred of people for a one-month period of time on a desert island.

The television needs were high. It looked for a small island without any construction on it. The island had to be in a sunny area with the shooting period starting at the beginning of January. The island would have to be easily connected to a hospital with modern facilities – less than one hour fly. The team to host would have needed also full-board catering service for the one-month period. Translators and medical staff were among the other more simple demands on the list.

Getting such a job is a promise of a lot of work and, eventually a lot to earn for the production house and the region where the shooting would have taken place. Fortunately for people working in the film production, such a call is not rare in the Southeast Asia. There is an increasing number of European film projects being filmed on location there. The “Two Brothers” – a Universal Film by French filmmaker Jean-Jacques Annaud is probably the latest European production which generated a huge list of services and facilities to be provided by the hosting country that was Cambodia.

Line producer Xavier Castano mentioned that around 400 local people were involved in tasks that ranged from the creating statues needed for the backgrounds (many of the statues they made have been donated later to the National Museum in Phnom Penh), to boat and elephant transportation, security, de-mining unit job and, not to mention of course all the work associated with the tigers of the movie. These animals required special team to monitor their movements, to feed them and to check the nets around the compound where they lived during the shooting period.

Beside of the work with the local team, there were many other tasks to set with the local authorities in order to make the shooting possible. Within a few years, Cambodia became a popular destination for tour operators. It was necessary to contact them several months in advance to let them know which of the famous Angkor Wat temple will be closed for shooting and, exactly when.

Later, during the shooting in the capital, it was thanks to private relations that the production could go on. The square chosen for the location housed a bank and the main post office. The building had to be transformed into a jail *“Because Cambodia doesn't have an official film commission, I had to develop a number of close personal relationships with members of the Cambodian government. The help and encouragement they gave us was outstanding”* recalled again Xavier Castano.

For European film production, shooting in the Southeast Asia region is not always such a complicated logistic operation to set from the scratch. The concept of Film Commission is gaining ground there also. Another recent French film *“ALL THE BEAUTY OF THE WORLD”* by Marc Esposito could find a considerable support in scouting, location and other services provided by the Bali Film Commission (Find More in the [Indonesia Resource Directory](#)).

The BFC helped the production for the shooting of sixty locations on governmental and local levels in a period of eight weeks.

In Europe also, the role of the film commission is greatly appreciated. Whether for the closing of the Charles Bridge in Prague or [for the filming of a cemetery in Berlin](#), the role of the European regional film commission is to assist the production in the selection of the best shooting places, arranging all the shooting permissions, connecting together the local film industry with the foreign companies who plan

snooting permissions, connecting together the local film industry with the foreign companies who plan to shoot, and eventually operating also for all the other services in the region where these commissions are active.

Not all the European regions or cities, even not all the major European capitals have a Film Commission. It is thus an open door for dynamic entrepreneurs to create them where needed.

In regard to the benefits that filming in a region can bring for the local development, Governments shall also support these initiatives.

To conduct a study on the relation between the local film industry and its effects on the country's larger economy, the Czech Ministry of Culture has contracted Olsberg|SPI, the London-based strategic advisory firm, to make recommendations on how local conditions can be made more attractive to film-makers.

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