
CresCine Internal Research Seminar Tallinn, 25 April WP5

25 April 2024



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WP5 – Talents, Production and Funding Ecosystems

TASK 5.5 Analysing the impact of COVID-19 on film production and identifying factors of Sustainable Growth

FIRST STEP: SURVEY

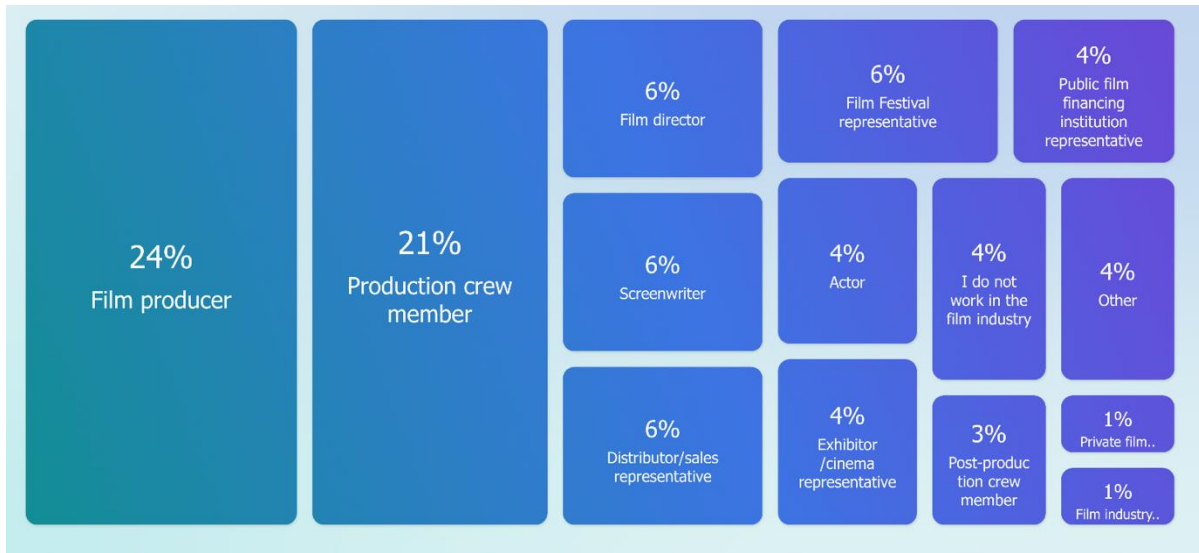
With this survey we were looking for people who work in the film industry of small European nations (particularly LITHUANIA, ESTONIA, BELGIUM (FLANDERS), CROATIA, PORTUGAL, DENMARK, IRELAND) and would like to tell us more about their experience of managing the uncertainties of COVID 19 pandemic in their work.

By gathering insights from individuals' experiences and identifying successful strategies, our goal is to generate recommendations on areas of focus when preparing for crisis.

The survey is still ongoing.



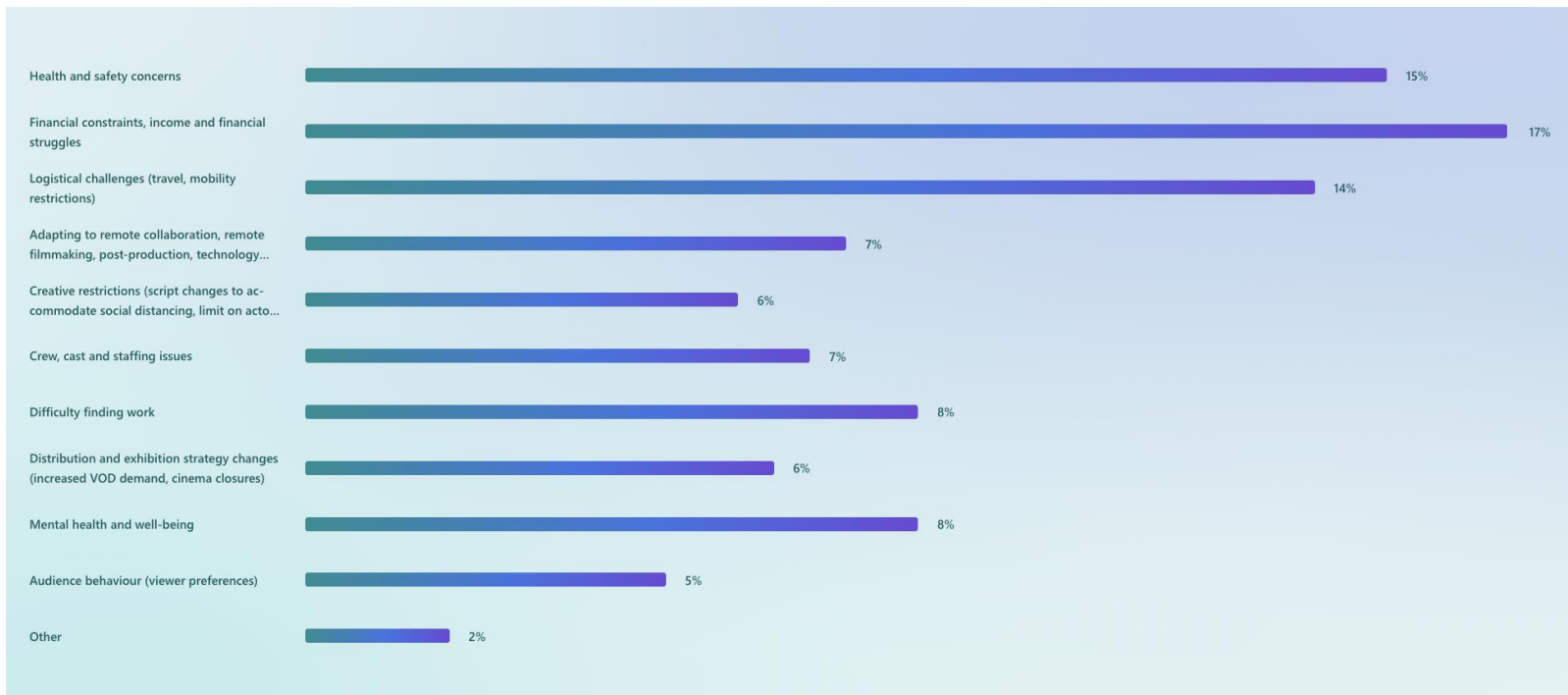
We're focused on the "big picture," encompassing all industry roles, although the bulk of responses still center around film production crew and producers.



We have good response rate from Ireland, Portugal and Lithuania but need more responses in other markets, particularly Denmark, Croatia, Estonia and Flanders.



We are gathering insights on such questions as which were most significant and least significant challenges.



Looking for unexpected positives or opportunities that arose for different positions

More VOD options for short films

The Irish government under Minister Catherine Martin gave much additional financial support.

Yes, due to funding reinforcement in the Public Financing Body (ICA), we managed to obtain unexpected funding in a couple of projects.

A more open mind towards flexible working practices emerged.

Looking for unexpected positives or opportunities that arose for different positions

Yes, **more work because writing and idea development was the only thing many production companies could do** because production itself was restricted or not allowed.

Crew and Cast **happier to engage more online (Zoom etc).**
Less travel

It was definitely an **opportunity** to establish a new way of working with methodologies that are focused on a remote setting

The ability to allow remote work for non-set-based crew. A **period to reflect on the business and what was essential for the future.**

I was **offered a couple of jobs outside of Ireland** on productions that had the budget to shoot in a bubble, therefore negating the usual reluctance to hire overseas crew in favour of local crew

It **gave us a chance to create and implement an online platform of our own**, which was a steep and valuable learning curve.

And for best practices we gathered from literature review that were most and least adopted.



Asking opinions of what is most important in contributing to sustainable growth of the industry

In your opinion, please rank the following factors according to their contribution to sustainable growth in the film production industry, starting from the most important to the least important.

Government support

Strong financial management

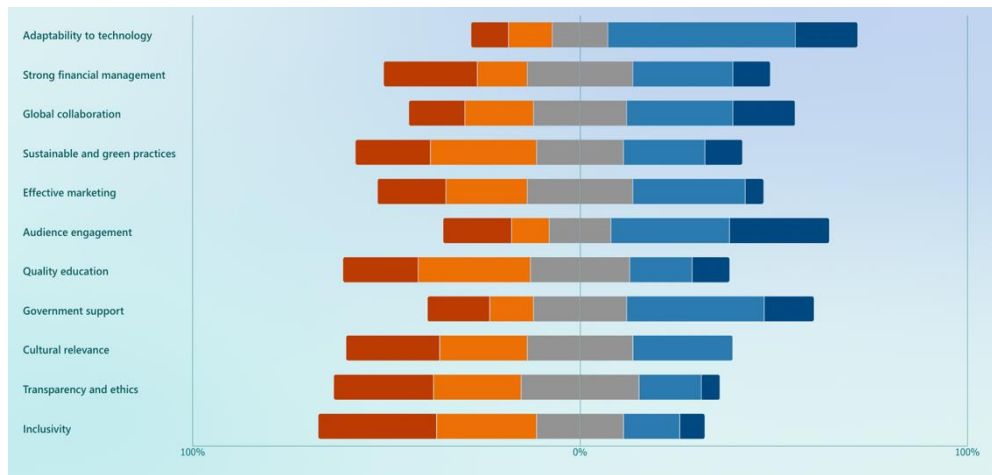
Adaptability to technology

Cultural relevance

Global collaboration

Audience engagement

Sustainable and green practices

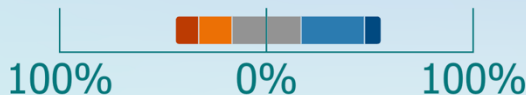


Our foremost priority is delving into the advantages inherent in the status of a small nation and discerning how to strategically harness these advantages. We are keen to explore and document the experiences of small nation film industries amidst the challenges posed by the COVID-19 pandemic, thereby enriching our understanding and informing future strategies.

How do you agree with the statement

Strongly disagree Disagree Neutral Agree Strongly agree

Being a small nation provides an advantage in adapting to unforeseen...



Why do you believe this to be the case?

smaller masses challenges or covid bigger nations Quicker to make decisions
 industry is smaller **small nation Easier** smaller means
 nation and an island adapt faster advantage size of a nation
 Easier to adapt larger nations Smaller country governments
 crews are smaller easily adapt smaller community nation is very large

Being a small nation means that you are frequently overlooked by the big market players. Ireland lost business to some of the other countries that opened up more quickly post/during the pandemic.

I believe that it should be an advantage, but I think the opportunity was squandered.

Funding is lacking already, so an extra cost and logistic challenge like COVID is not easy to accommodate. The only advantage is that our crews are smaller, but that only means that all departments are closer and distance is almost impossible.

lack of preparation

Easier to manage circumstances.
Being a small nation and an island allowed us to manage well.

Ireland as a country has always been
early adapters example the smoking ban

We do not have as much readily available funding to adapt to the challenges or covid as larger countries who were able to return more readily as they had more financial backing for covid testing, contingency plans and adaptability such as housing crew during productions etc

Much more practical and logistics awareness

In the case of the recent strikes also Ireland has a long history of smaller independent productions that can adapt and adjust to such constraints, primarily due to the quality homegrown talent of cast and crew and beyond, in a way that larger productions struggle



Because it helps people **gathering together** with only one common goal.

No big distances involved in developing the solutions for the challenges

Generally as a smaller community there perhaps is a deeper connection and a 'everyone-knows-everyone' mentality so we watch each other's back and more willing to do what's right for each other in adapting to the challenges of COVID.

I suppose nothing is more than a few hours away, maybe that is a plus in times like that.

Less resources to face the problem

Smaller nations have a **better bond** as a community. Groups within larger nations seek to polarise issues

Less options and scale

Quicker to adapt, adjust.

fewer people in the industry make it
a tighter community
- easier to reach out to peers for advice

made us as a sector **come together** rather than compete

Because resources and management might be easier than if the nation is very large. Distribution of resources might be easier.

A small nation is adapted to diverse struggles all the time. It **has to be creative** to solve problems when there are financial issues.

The resources at disposal are so small that there is no room for an adaptation period. There is no advantage, very little government support and almost no understanding from the general public.

Once we gather more responses, we'll present the insights in two ways: first, an overview of the general trends of experiences, and second, a breakdown by country and specific role. These findings will be complemented with qualitative insights gathered from follow-up interviews.

SECOND STEP: In-depth interview

The follow-up study includes an online interview where we go deeper in the practices that were taken, the aspects that helped so we can formulate the recommendations on how to prepare for crisis.



Respondents: film industry (broad sense, not only production).

Online, recorded, transcribed

Time: 45-60 minutes

Goal: storytelling on way to face the crisis situation and how to approach the crisis in the future.

Looking for clues in open and closed answers of the survey whilst forming a script for a follow up interview

Working in the camera department which is a high contact department with regards to sharing equipment with one another and being in very close proximity to cast **meant we had to alter our methodology** in how we worked quite significantly initially

"I was selected to participate in Script Lab Story Editing within TorinoFilmLab, but the entire workshop was conducted **online** due to COVID-19. I believe that **nobody truly benefited** from the workshop as much as they would have if the entire workshop had been held in person."

We had productions shut down three times due to increased COVID risk during 2020/2021 so that was significant. Additional costs incurred with having to reschedule and put new contingencies in place. During the height of COVID it was also **quite a mental drain on people**. Film production is very much about the people and team spirit and it was difficult for people to remain isolated.

Interview script

1. **How has the pandemic personally affected your career or work in the industry? How did your own projects or work evolve during the pandemic, and what were the outcomes?**
2. **Film Project: How did the pandemic affect the initial plan and concept of your project?**
 - Did you have to make any changes to the script or production to adapt to COVID-19 restrictions?*
 - What technologies or remote working methods were introduced in your project in response to the pandemic?*
 - What changes did you have to make in the planning and logistics of the project?*
 - How did the pandemic affect collaboration with your team and actors?*
 - Did the pandemic affect the post-production process of your film? If so, how? Please, describe.*
 - What new distribution strategies were applied to your project because of the pandemic?*
 - What are the main takeaways from making a film during the pandemic that influence your currently produce film projects?*
 - How did the pandemic affect the creative aspects of this project (e.g., script, casting, set design, narration)?*
 - Were you able to secure additional funding during the pandemic? If so, how? Could you describe it more?*

Interview script

Can you share any personal success stories or adaptations you or your organization made during this period?

What were the biggest challenges you faced in your role during the pandemic?

What adaptive or innovative strategies did you implement to address these challenges?

Have you witnessed any successful case studies of other industry players implementing effective strategies during the pandemic?

How have the distribution and exhibition strategies of your film projects changed during and after the pandemic?

How has adapting to increased demand for VOD affected your projects?

Could you share examples of film titles or TV series that were developed or shot during the COVID-19 pandemic? How did these productions adapt to the unique challenges of the situation?

How has the simultaneous use of theatrical and digital distribution changed the structure of distribution of the film projects?

Interview script

Were there any new tools or technologies that emerged and played a significant role in the industry's response to the pandemic? Can you provide examples?

How has your daily work changed as a result of the COVID-19 pandemic?

What new methods or tools have you started using since the pandemic began?

Have you observed any unique advantages or opportunities that your country has gained due to the pandemic's impact on the industry?

In your opinion, which factors contribute most to sustainable growth in the film industry? (To what extent has the pandemic influenced these factors?)

How has the local industry landscape evolved, and what opportunities have emerged?

Do you think being part of a small nation or small film market offers unique/special advantages in adapting to unforeseen challenges like the pandemic?

TIMELINE

- **Survey is running from the beginning of March and will close on May 10th. (aim – minimum 25 answers from each market).**
- **Interviews and analysis are ongoing at the moment (aim – minimum 3 from each market).**

To be ready to present in Cannes.