



# IMPACT THINK TANK 2024 REPORT

# INCLUSIVE CO-PRODUCTIONS



MAY 2024

# EXECUTIVE SUMMARY

EAVE programmes profoundly impact the European independent industry as a whole by empowering graduates to become 'agents of change' and shape their local, regional and national communities. We achieve this through professionalizing stakeholders across the value chain and their continued dialogue within a strong and supportive network. The aim is to build bridges within Europe while linking the European industry to global markets.

Among EAVE's core values are inclusion, diversity, gender equality, and mental health, and we are working to achieve a conscious, engaged, and sustainable industry. advocating for innovation, best practices, green policies and value-based systems, thus setting the benchmark for audio-visual training worldwide.

The EAVE IMPACT THINK TANK series hosted at WEMW in Trieste since 2019 is part of our work to positively impact the European film industry and prepare for a more sustainable future.

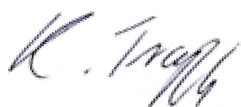
The 2024 EAVE Impact Think Tank at WEMW in Trieste, Italy, on January 20-21, 2024, focused on equitable approaches to co-production structures in the European and global screen sector.

The topic emerged as crucial for further discussion at the 2023 Think Tank, which focused on anti-racism, creating safe spaces in professional training and creating positive inclusion standards, and where many participants had flagged issues related to inequities between producers when co-producing film and TV content.

At the 2024 Think Tank, an assembly of producers and sectoral experts reviewed case studies on best practices and challenges before focusing on policy changes and ways of working recommendations to ensure that future co-productions are inclusive and ethical for all parties.

Attendees highlighted trends and practical approaches in their respective regions to address inequities that they face when co-producing. Notable successes encompassed adopting ethical co-production agreement language, implementing revenue-sharing models, utilizing in-kind valuation strategies, and establishing agreements concerning project costing and IP sharing, which better consider differences in currency valuation and costs between markets.

Based on the discussions, recommendations were formulated to enhance the equality between parties and the accessibility of treaty structures for all participants. The insights and recommendations generated from this think tank provide valuable guidance for industry stakeholders, policymakers, and practitioners aiming to foster more inclusive and effective international co-production collaborations.



**KRISTINA TRAPP**

CEO

# BARRIERS TO INCLUSIVE CO-PRODUCTION:

Producers from around the world discussed challenges and barriers to co-producing in their respective regions, countries, or communities. These challenges included concerns about ownership, financial and power imbalances, and considerations related to storytelling and positionality. The limitations in treaty co-productions were also examined, particularly for producers from countries with limited state financing tools or emerging film/TV markets in the global south. Additionally, it was recognized that most treaties involve former colonial powers and often overlook the sovereignty of Indigenous, Palestinian, or stateless producers.

Key barriers include:

- The inability of the originating producer\* to have creative control and input into critical business decisions.
- In-kind labour contributions of the originating producer are not valued in financial planning.
- Lack of equitable sharing of intellectual property, revenue or crediting among producers.
- Issues of positionality\* in the producing or creative team which hamper or misrepresent the story.
- Systemic racism\* or other forms of discrimination and prejudice.
- Lack of faith in the ability of producers or their creative teams from low-capacity countries to deliver the project.
- Lack of shared vision on the final content and misalignment of strategic goals.
- Outdated co-production treaties and policies which require evaluation and modernization.
- Funding or treaty regulations which are inflexible to the best interest of the content/producers.
- Lack of access to producer training and legal expertise in low-capacity\* countries.
- Producers must understand market realities and production infrastructure in different countries more deeply.
- Co-producers in high-capacity\* countries have easier access to funding/markets. They are often unfairly advantaged or empowered in the financial/legal structures of the co-production even if they did not originate the project or the work depicts a narrative drawn from the originating producer's culture/country.

## Definitions

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1. *Originating Producer*: The producer who formulated the idea for the project or initially optioned the IP.
2. *Positionality*: The creative team's connections to or distance from the community the content is about.
3. *Systemic Racism*: Entrenched societal or organizational policies and practices that perpetuate unfair advantages for certain racial groups while subjecting others to discrimination and harm.
4. *Low Capacity*: Countries with limited or no public/private resources and infrastructure, security or state governance irregularities and limited access to international markets.
5. *High Capacity*: Countries with developed screen sector ecosystems, markets, stable economies and public/private financing tools

# BEST PRACTICES: PRODUCERS

As the driving force behind each project, producers can champion best practices, influence industry norms, challenge inequitable structures, and pave the way for a future where international co-productions are characterized by fairness, respect, and shared success.

## **Place Value in Contributions of all Co-Producers:**

- Foster a partnership-focused mindset, considering all stakeholders equal contributors to the project's success.
- Recognize and appreciate each producer's unique strengths, access, or contributions to the collaboration, ensuring fair credit.
- Embrace a collaborative ethos by sharing intellectual property and revenue with all producers involved in the project and ensuring the originating producer has an equitable share.
- Collaboratively plan for fair distribution and valuation of all contributors' roles, tasks, and financial compensation.
- Ensure that the roles of Black, Indigenous, or People of Color and other equity-seeking producers are not undervalued when creating stories about their communities.
- Acknowledge the value of non-monetary elements that producers contribute to the content.
- Avoid using template contracts, and craft an agreement with your collaborators that encapsulates the inclusive, supportive, and fair working relationship and decision-making process you want to achieve.

## **Work Regionally:**

- Prioritize the establishment of financial, distribution, and creative partnerships within your community or region to maintain creative control and ownership of intellectual property (IP) and foster growth in the local sector.
- Engage with producers from similar communities to streamline collaboration, minimize language barriers, and deepen cultural understanding.

## **Jointly Define the Creation & Release Process:**

- Establish a shared understanding and agreement on the filmmaking process and criteria for success collaboratively.
- Cultivate an atmosphere of mutual respect among collaborators, acknowledging diverse perspectives and expertise.
- Establish an explicit agreement on the themes and story lens explored in the content and the necessary positionality of the key creative team.
- Provide the necessary cultural competency training for crew working abroad to ensure smooth and respectful operations on set.
- Provide the local and foreign crew with the same service and amenities during production.
- Establish a mandate of respect among the crew and address issues of discrimination or prejudice to ensure all crew feel safe and supported in production.
- Foster open and transparent communication to ensure clarity, understanding, and effective collaboration throughout production.
- Producers must undertake due diligence and research into the people, companies, and companies they want to collaborate with.

## **Education & Capacitating Growth**

- Support producers from Black, Indigenous or people of colour communities or low-capacity countries by sharing knowledge, access, and relationships to foster sustainability.
- Collaborate with allies who prioritize the project's collective success over individual gain, fostering a selfless and fearless collaborative environment.
- Producers should familiarize themselves with the importance of Indigenous community guardianship over stories when collaborating and refer to documents such as the [On Screen Protocols and Pathways](#).
- Gain a more profound connection by visiting the country of production to understand the production and market realities.

# BEST PRACTICES: DECISION MAKERS

Decision-makers play a pivotal role as architects of industry transformation in catalyzing the envisioned change for more inclusive and ethical co-productions. They can facilitate this inclusivity by actively leveraging their influence in shaping funding policies, programmatic frameworks, training opportunities, and industry standards. Decision-makers possess the agency to break down systemic barriers and promote a more just and collaborative global screen sector.

## **Treaty Co-Productions**

- Ensure that older treaties are modernized to respond to the screen industry's current trends, needs, and realities.
- Create a policy that ensures that new or renewed treaties are evaluated or sunset after a set period, allowing modernization to be baked into the process.
- Reduce the focus on new nation-to-nation treaties and encourage more regional or continental treaty systems, with frameworks allowing for global collaborations.
- Lower the minimum threshold requirements to ease or enable the participation of producers from low-capacity in co-productions.
- Allow flexibility to raise the participation share (often capped at 10%) of producers in countries without treaties to ensure that the participation of the originating producer is recognized.

## **Non-Treaty Co-Productions**

- Empower Indigenous communities to formulate their co-production structures outside the treaty system and ensure these projects are still eligible for state funding in the countries where the Indigenous producer resides.
- Create pathways for producers to co-produce and finance content with collaborators in their ethnocultural communities, irrespective of whether treaties are in place as a pathway to artistic excellence and authentic storytelling.

## **Co-Production Financing Structures:**

- Allow producers to value the in-kind contribution of co-producers and/or cost savings due to lower market costs in low-capacity countries in their financing plans.
- Ensure that the ownership and control of the originating producer or any other producer is not devalued in the contracts and financial planning.
- When the story is drawn from the originating producer's culture or community, they should maintain control over the creative and narrative elements in the co-production, even if they do not provide the majority of financing.

## **Incentive Regional & Community-Centered Co-Productions**

- In scoring or grading projects, add additional points for projects with meaningful regional or community collaboration (e.g. a co-production across Caribbean nations or between Indigenous producers in the US, Canada and Norway/Sweden/ Finland).
- Employ critical thinking to allow for exceptions in cultural content scoring or funding eligibility terms to enable regional or community collaborations to occur and produce more authentic content.
- Consider working in blocks (as funders or broadcasters) regionally to seed joint funding and lower overhead by administering financing collectively.

## **Funding**

- Provide more development funding that is accessible globally, which enables initiating producers to advance their projects before taking them to market.
- Target funding schemes that support regional or multi-country co-productions between Black, Indigenous or people of colour producers.
- Invest in priority communities or regions through targeted funding focuses over several years.
- To ensure transparency, all co-producers should be signatories to financing agreements, and funding drawdowns should be visible to all parties and require their signatures to initiate.
- Offer flexibility on spending for co-productions that may need to hire crew or spend locally rather than in the funder region or territory due to the project's positionality.

## **Knowledge Sharing**

- Institutions from high-capacity countries can share best practices and learnings with low-capacity to be adapted to meet local realities.
- Support programs that train producers on co-producing, legal aspects of producing, distribution, and financing, and those that support low-capacity regions.
- By sharing failures and successes, long-standing pan-continental funds can offer insights and support to developing continental funds in other regions.

# CONCLUSION

The 2024 EAVE Impact Think Tank insights and proposed changes aim to foster more inclusive and effective international co-production collaborations.

In pursuing a more inclusive and ethical future for co-productions, these insights and recommendations serve as a valuable resource for decision-makers, producers, and other stakeholders. By adopting a partnership-focused mindset, embracing diverse perspectives, and redefining the value of contributions, the industry has the potential to overcome barriers and build a more collaborative and equitable future.

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## ABOUT EAVE

European Audiovisual Entrepreneurs, EAVE, is a professional training, project development and networking organization for audiovisual producers. Working with a worldwide network of partners we are involved in programmes for producers around the globe.

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