



ACIC's Submission to the Joint Standing Committee on Treaties – Audiovisual Co-Production Agreement Between Australia and India

Background of ACIC

- The Australian Centre of Indian Cinema (ACIC) is an initiative aimed at informing Australians and the western world about the rich traditions, commercial prospects, and collaboration potential of Indian Cinema.
- Centre recognises the Audiovisual Co-Production Agreement between Australia and India as an opportunity to meld together our two cultures through the effective and attractive medium of cinema and screens.
- The coproduction treaty is very welcome given the increased size of Indian diaspora and heightened collaboration between the two film industries

Submission:

International centre for Indian cinema also trading as Australian Centre for Indian cinema provides the following notes and remarks on the draft of the treaty.

1. ACIC believes that there are certain aspects of the treaty in relation to refusal for public exhibition particularly in India which will result in censorship and undue / unjust political and authoritative interference in a creative project.
2. We believe there should be safeguards in place to limit or remove censorship/interference in the content of screen projects resulting out of this co production treaty.
3. We request that any visa processes specially for the projects approved by coproduction treaty to be exempt from union no-objection as requirement for visa from either side. In our experience there is not enough cultural or professional knowledge on either side to aptly and accurately understand the norms, professional



standards, and practices of each other. Thus providing a No Objection power to unions may lead delays and inconvenience interference from non-related parties.

4. Article 8 states that each co-producer should make a financial and creative contribution of no less than 20%. ACIC would recommend that the Australian producer offset is to be viewed as a contribution as it is an equity.
5. Article 12.3 states that at least 90% of the footage included in an audiovisual co-production shall be specially shot for that audiovisual work. This is limitative for documentary productions and request this be around 70% mark.
6. ACIC strongly believes that in light of inadequate cultural or professional knowledge on either side, Australia, through federal and state filming bodies and agencies like Australia India Film Council, plan and execute a national road trip in Australia to inform Australian film fraternity and Indian diaspora, along with others about the coproduction treaty and its benefits in a simplified way.
7. ACIC also suggests support for delegations of film professionals between the two countries time with important film conference and/or festivals.
8. ACIC also requests dissemination of clear and specific messages about the status of the treaty. Currently screen agencies have no information, press announcements say the treaty is in effect, some say it is in effect some say it is being discussed. It will be good to get an official update widely publicised through the media to avoid confusion and avoid detrimental effects due to this confusion for the current in development screen projects.

We hope our other notes will assist in making this co production treaty a reality after two decades of fruitful discussions.

Sincerely

Anupam Sharma

Director ACIC

15th August 2023