



# Films *made in Africa* on the rise

## Strengthening the Film Industry in Selected Countries in Africa

In a quiet backyard in Nairobi, two women are locked in a conversation that feels life altering. The camera captures this powerful scene of a supported short film, but also behind the scenes there is an impactful story of a rising industry. Director, sound technician, camerawoman, make-up artist, costume designer, producer — around 100 people are employed to create the short film, each one contributing their talent to bring a local story to life and to the screens. Stories like these don't just entertain, they shape perception and perception drives policy, creates jobs, and empowers African voices.

From writing and directing to post-production and distribution, Africa's film value chain already engages an estimated 5 million people. Add in transport, catering, equipment rentals, and other supporting services and the ripple effect becomes clear. According to UNESCO, the African film industry could employ up to 20 million people in the coming years and generate 20 billion US dollars annually. While Nollywood already is amongst the biggest film industries globally and a cultural and economic powerhouse, the full potential of the film sector in Africa is still to be unlocked.

### The Digital Transformation of the Film Industry

Today, much of Africa's film industry unfolds in front of a screen not just for audiences, but for the creators as well. Green screens put actors into AI-generated worlds, and motion capture transforms them into fantasy creatures.

On the audience side, the digital transformation has led to a shift in consumption patterns. With over 600 million internet users across Africa, demand for digital content is skyrocketing. This shift is reshaping not only how stories are told, but also who they reach, and the market they are made for.

### Demand for films *made in Africa* on the rise

When African filmmakers tell their stories they preserve culture, challenge norms, advocate for social change and contribute to post-colonial discourses. Films let you reimagine narratives in a shifting society and connect with a growing diverse audience. With mobile-first access and streaming on the rise, filmmakers can now reach millions directly, bypassing traditional gatekeepers and building new cultural reference points. In this landscape, audience engagement is no longer passive, it's participatory. Viewers are shaping demand and creating new business models for African cinema.

Project name	Strengthening the Film Industry in Selected Countries in Africa
Commissioned by	Bundesministerium für wirtschaftliche Zusammenarbeit und Entwicklung (BMZ)
Project region	Africa, with a focus on Kenya and Rwanda
Lead executing agency	Deutsche Gesellschaft für Internationale Zusammenarbeit (GIZ) GmbH
Duration	01.11.2023 – 30.04.2026

### Unfolding the Potential

The long-rolling credits of a film give an idea of the complexity of the film value chain. It follows commercial interest and cultural expectations too. In countries like Kenya and Rwanda, filmmakers often lack access to funding, services, and international business linkages. Without effective public support programmes and practiced industry standards, they face systemic barriers that limit growth, competitiveness, and fair working conditions.



## Development State Funded Film Support Programmes

To expand the public services for filmmakers, Deutsche Gesellschaft für Internationale Zusammenarbeit (GIZ) GmbH on behalf of the German Federal Ministry for Economic Cooperation and Development (BMZ) is working together with the *Kenya Film Commission* and the *Rwanda Film Office* to establish sustainable, inclusive, and fair film support programmes for independent filmmaking. With piloting initiatives aiming to establish national film funds, financial support was provided to a total of 48 film projects in Kenya and Rwanda – gaining valuable experiences for the establishment of state funded film support programmes.

The two state-mandated film agencies are further supported by the project in developing and establishing standards and guidelines for the sector. These include, for example, the certification of professional groups, the development of environmentally friendly production standards, the protection of copyright or the promotion of gender-sensitive working conditions.

## Our Impact in Figures



**48**  
Film projects supported



**400**  
Filmmakers trained (45% women)



**60%**  
With an income increase of at least 20%

## International Competitiveness through On-The-Job and AI Trainings

World-class films need world-class crews. To compete globally and increase employment through high-quality productions, filmmakers need access to industry-based training and latest AI trends. The project therefore partners with the non-profit agencies *Some Fine Day Pix* in Kenya and *Media Education Babelsberg* in Rwanda to implement on-the-job masterclasses for professionals in the industry. 60% of participants reported income increases of 20% or more within six months of completing the training.

Beyond the borders of Kenya and Rwanda, young African filmmakers are provided with high quality training opportunities through the development of the *Digital Film School Africa*. This digital learning platform currently offers film students training opportunities in three film disciplines: production, scriptwriting, and documentary film, with more to be developed. The *Digital Film School Africa* was launched by the Ghanaian training institutes *Africa University College of Communication* and *YMCA Ghana*, in collaboration with the German non-profit association *Weltfilme*.

## International Cooperation and Business Networks

Sustainable growth in Africa's film industry depends strongly on national and international cooperation. The project champions cross-sector collaboration, connecting actors from education, politics, finance, digital innovation, and civil society to strengthen networks and foster meaningful exchange. A key pillar of this approach is the development of bilateral co-production agreements, which lay the groundwork for joint productions, investments and wider audience reach.

For all of this, access to reliable data is of huge importance – and a constant challenge. To bridge the data gap and support informed investment decisions, the project facilitated a partnership between the *Kenya Film Commission* and the *Kenya National Bureau of Statistics*. The two government bodies worked together to create a *Film Industry Satellite Account (FISA)*, which quantifies the contribution of the Kenyan film industry to the country's GDP. This data equips both policymakers and industry actors with the tools to attract investment and make evidence-based decisions for long-term growth.

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### As at

April 2025

### Photo credits

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GIZ is responsible for the content of this publication.

### On behalf of

Federal Ministry for Economic  
Cooperation and Development (BMZ)

