



# France – Colombie CO-PRODUCTION Guide

Produced by the students of  
the Master 2 Film & Audiovisual Production  
2022-2023

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The present guide is intended to be a resource to understand the Colombian cinematographic and audiovisual landscape. It is aimed at French and international professionals in the sector and outlines the various factors, challenges and opportunities involved in producing cinema in the country.

**French-Colombian Co-production** is at the heart of this guide and its primary intention is to facilitate and foster cooperation between the two countries. Different themes are addressed including: the historical and cinematographic context of Colombia, its financing systems, the functioning of television, distribution and exhibition structures, and Franco-Colombian co-production in Colombia.

This guide was compiled **in 2023** by the Masters students in Film and Audiovisual Production at the University of Paul Valéry, Montpellier, in preparation for a roundtable discussion held at the Cinélatino festival in Toulouse, where six French and Colombian professionals were invited to discuss the current challenges of French-Colombian co-production.

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# **COLOMBIA'S AUDIOVISUAL AND CINEMATOGRAPHIC LANDSCAPE**

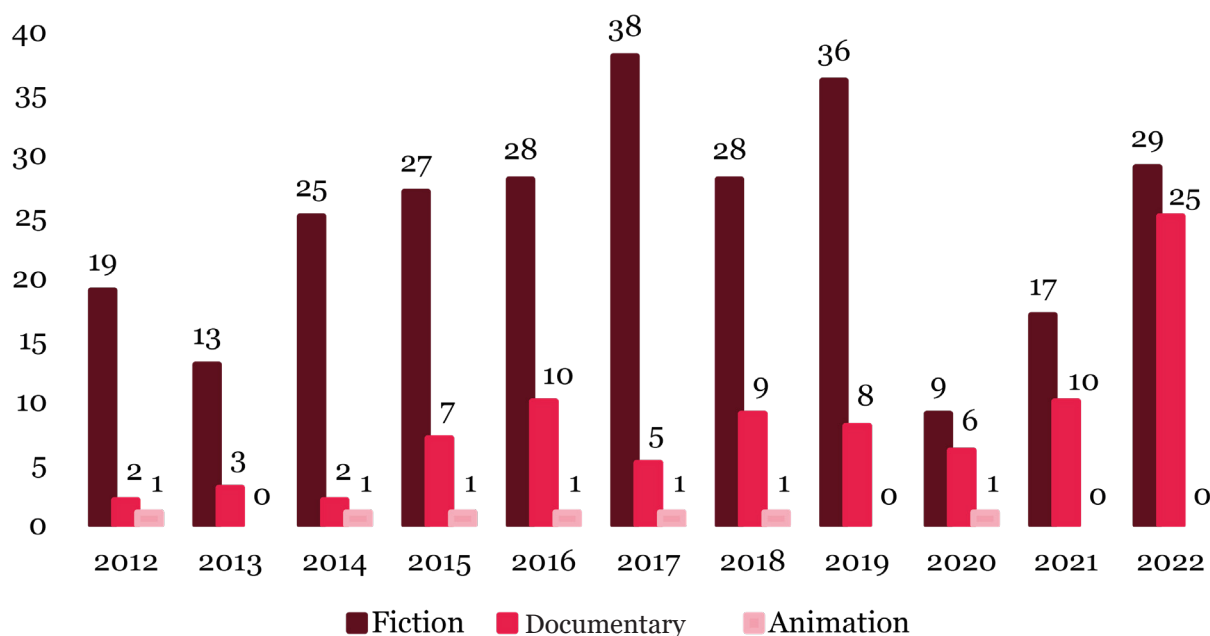


With a well-established track record of documentary production, arthouse auteurs who have gained international recognition, and new platforms attracted by tax credit mechanisms and unique filming locations, Colombia is becoming one of the most developed countries in the Latin American film and audiovisual sector. Despite competition from its dominant and powerful neighbors, Argentina, Brazil and Mexico, Colombia is now managing to establish itself as an emerging force and **the fourth largest producer** in the region due to its promising cultural landscape and market.

While the first cinema was set up by the Cine Colombia group in Bogotá in 1927 who also created the first multiplex in Cali in 1971, today, the country has a number of cinema groups and **1,261 screens** spread throughout the country in 94 municipalities. Most of them are found in well-equipped and digitized multiplexes in the major cities. The number of admissions in Bogotá accounts for half of all cinema tickets bought in the country,

and **on average, Colombians go to the cinema once a month**. The market is essentially dominated by films from the United States, but Colombia is in second place (followed by the UK, then France). In fact, in 2022 a total of 57 Colombian films were released between January and November 2022: 25 documentaries, 6 comedies, 20 dramas, 2 fantasy films, 1 horror film and 3 animated films. An all-time record for the country. **The number of films produced has increased considerably over the last 25 years**, benefiting from **a particularly favorable film policy since 1997**. Before then, there were 2 to 3 Colombian films produced per year, rising to 10 in 2010, 28 in 2014 and 54 in 2022. Following the Covid-19 pandemic, cinemas lost 40% of their attendance compared to 2019. However, today, audiences are gradually returning to the cinema – primarily to watch mainstream films.

Colombian feature films released per year in Colombia



## Geographical and Political Context

Situated in the north of South America, Colombia shares its borders with **five neighboring countries**: Venezuela, Brazil, Peru, Ecuador and Panama. **The Colombian territory is divided** by the Andes Mountains which makes it challenging to manage certain regions effectively which has led to **densely populated sierras** and **marginalized regions somewhat neglected by the state**. On top of the geographical divides, the country has fissures from a turbulent history. The 50 million Colombians are predominantly Catholic but make up a **melting pot** of ethnicities and identities descended from Spanish conquerors, African slaves, and indigenous peoples. In the twentieth century, Colombia, was a **society fractured** between the working class, and conservative elites.

In 1948, the assassination of Jorge Eliécer Gaitán, a popular and charismatic leftist leader, triggered *La Violencia*, a **civil war** that lasted a decade and intensified from the 1990s onwards with the drug cartels. On the one hand, the FARC (Revolutionary Armed Forces of Colombia), allied with the ELN (National Liberation Army), were fighting to establish a Communist regime based on the redistribution of land to small farmers, while on the other hand the United Self-Defense Forces of Colombia, the country's main paramilitary group, protected the interests of the big landowners. Between 2002 and 2010, the right-wing president Alvaro Uribe strengthened the army's resources against the FARC. In 2016, his successor, Juan Manuel Santos, broke with this political line and signed a historic peace agreement with the FARC which is slowly being implemented.



FARC (yellow), ENL (red), and United Self-Defense (green) spread over the Colombian territory

Colombia remains **one of the most unequal countries in the world in terms of income**. Several regions live in extreme poverty despite the country's energy and mineral wealth - much of which is exported - and its **unique biodiversity** which favors ecotourism. Drug traffickers have near-complete control over the cocaine trade and indigenous peoples are fighting with their lives for their ancestral lands and forests. In the spring of 2021, the country was once again on the move to protest against the government and its tax reform, demanding a more social policy. After six decades of civil war and despite a peace agreement with FARC, the Colombian people are far from having found peace. According to Víctor Guerrero Apráez, a professor of political science and international relations, Colombia has always had difficulty naming its conflicts: internal or civil war, armed conflict, etc. which inevitably affected the country's representation on the screen. Although, from the 1960s onwards, Colombian cinema tried to represent the war in different ways, there was still a taboo that led some films to be made in neighboring countries, such as those of Fernando Vallejo, which were shot in Mexico.

However, in the 1980s, we move to a hyper visibility of the phenomenon of drug trafficking and to a glorification of criminals. These themes are spread in successful popular series. The lack of representation of the guerrillas, on the other hand, creates a great imaginary void which leads to a mystification of political events within the country itself.

## History of Cinema and Television

Cinema arrived in Colombia in 1897 with the invention of the Vitascope by Thomas Edison. That same year, Ernesto Vieco presented a series of moving images to the city's inhabitants for the first time at the Bogotá Municipal Theater. After the advent of the cinematograph in Colombia, the country was confronted with a **civil war between 1899 and 1902 that suspended film production**. From 1905 onwards, the President of the Republic hired a French cameraman to keep a record and capture the different events of this period. In addition, the public began to get used to cinema due to the opening of several movie theaters which allowed for the screening of films from other countries, notably North America. A few years later, the Italian brothers Francesco and Vincenzo Di Domenico – importers of French and Italian films to Colombia – created the successful movie theater Salon Olympia in Bogotá and, in 1913, the SICLA (Latin American Industrial Cinema Company). They tried to establish a national Colombian cinema industry while taking advantage of the political events in the country and the assassination of General Rafael Uribe on October 15, 1914, to release the first documentary in the history of Colombian cinema in 1915, *El drama del 15 de octubre*. Seven years later, in 1922, the Spaniards Alfredo del Diestro and Máximo Calvo Olmedo **made the first Colombian feature film, *María***. On July 18, 1924, the first fully Colombian feature film, *La tragedia del silencio*, was released in Bogotá. The film was produced by the first Colombian production company, Acevedo e Hijos, created by Arturo Acevedo Vallarino, producer of numerous documentary images that constitute an important archive of the country's history. Animation arrived a little later than the other cinema genres, although the feature film *Garras de Oro*, released in 1926, included an animated sequence of a few seconds. **In 1927, the arrival of sound caused a major crisis in cinema that lasted more than ten years.**

The first Colombian films dealt mainly with themes such as nature, tradition, folklore and nationalism, and were often literary adaptations.

Later, **television came along on June 13, 1954** with the creation of Televisora Nacional de Colombia and the first television station attached to *Radiodiffusion Nationale Colombienne* (the National Colombian Broadcaster). It was inaugurated in Bogotá under the control of the government, which saw in this medium a means of educating the masses. Colombian television had its **golden age in the 1980s** with the arrival of color and a decline in the level of film production. It became a communication tool that allowed for the projection of a certain image of the country, with works financed that promoted awareness of national heritage, such as the documentary series *Yuruparí* (1983-1987) directed by Gloria Triana. In addition, many television writers and directors sought to portray everyday life and raise the audience's awareness of the history of the country. As a result of the creation of the **National Television Commission**, services offered by satellite or by subscription were able to be regulated and facilitated **the birth of national private channels**, as well as that of several operators. Today, the television market occupies a central part of the audiovisual industry and also allows producers to utilize the country's high quality television studios.



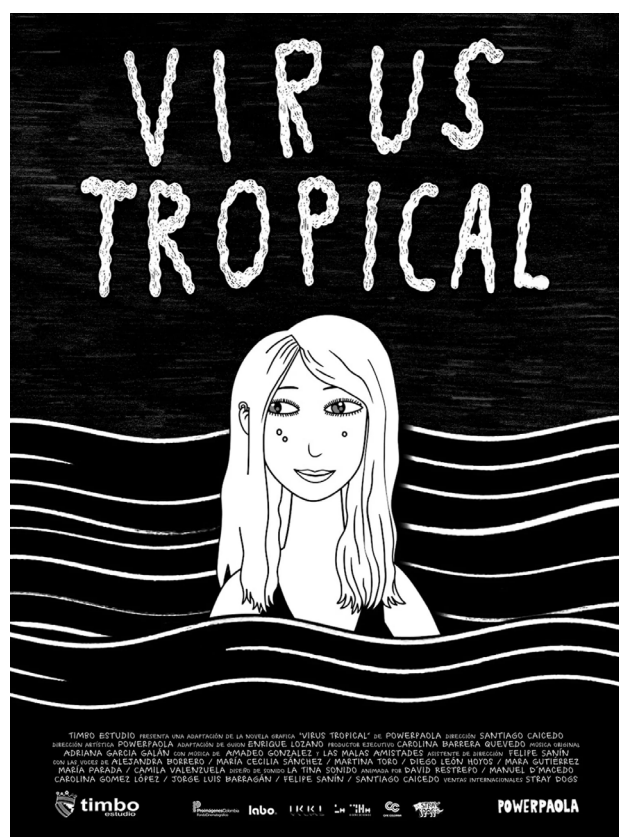


## Fiction

In Colombia, fiction on film emerged around 1920. In 2003, the «cinema law» **encouraged the production of numerous short and feature films** that are screened in festivals around the world. **Colombian production is in full expansion** and new productions putting political and territorial questions at the center of their stories are emerging. The issues that animate Colombian fictional cinema often revolve around **the dreams and aspirations of young people without hope or resources**. Inspired by the Caliwood movement initiated by the Cali group, some filmmakers also use hybrid forms, such as mock-documentary, docu-drama, or fiction borrowing from documentary to represent a certain image of the country's reality. Among the films that stand out, several deal with the war: Francisco Norden's *A Man of Principle* (*Cóndores no entierran todos los días*), presented at *Un certain regard* in Cannes in 1984, deals with an extremely dark period in Colombia, the *Violencia*, in the style of a film noir. Similarly, *Oscuro Animal* by Felipe Guerrero, released in 2016, aims to address the question of the consequences of war. In addition, since the 2010s, there have been international successes with fiction films such as *La Barra* by Oscar Ruíz Navia, which won the FIPRESCI Prize at the Berlin International Film Festival Forum in 2010, *La Tierra y la Sombra* by César Augusto Acevedo, which won the *Caméra d'Or* at the 2015 Cannes Film Festival, or *Ciro Guerra's The Embrace of the Serpent* (*El abrazo de la serpiente*), the first Colombian film nominated for the Oscar for Best International Film in 2016. In recent years, new directors have come to the forefront such as Simon Mesa Soto, director of the short film *Leidi* (Palme d'or for short films at Cannes in 2014), the short *Madre* (Cannes 2016) and the feature film *Amparo* (Semaine de la Critique 2021), or Andrés Ramírez Pulido, author of the short films *El Edén* (Berlinale, 2016) and *Damiana* (Cannes, 2017) and director of the feature film *La Jauría* (Grand Prize at *La Semaine de la Critique*, Cannes 2022).



## Animation



It was at the beginning of the twentieth century that animation techniques began to interest Colombian directors, such as film engraving and stop-motion. These **first appear in documentary films**. *Colombia Victoriosa*, made in 1933 by the two brothers Gonzalo and Alvaro Acevedo, uses animation to show military ships. Animated films, both independent and commercial, date back to the 1960s and boomed in the late 1970s due to strong commercial and advertising demand. Colombian director Nelson Ramirez created 1,200 commercials, including the credits for the Colombian soap opera *Escalona*. However, Colombia's presence on the international scene remained muted. **Only 38 animated films are listed in the national archives**, including 10 feature films and 28 short films. One of the most awarded films in Latin America, *Cristobal Colon*, was directed in 1983 by Fernando Laverde. He is one of the few directors to have used animation during the twentieth century in order to address politically-engaged subjects aimed at a young audience. Contemporary animation cinema was then democratized thanks to Carlos Santa. Animation is one of the film genres that attracts the biggest Colombian audiences with its surrealist approach as in *El pasajero de la noche* one of its most famous works, made with Mauricio García Matamoros in 1989.

In the 90s, the emergence of 2D and 3D animation software changed the approach to animated filmmaking. The Colombian company Conexión Creativa emerged in 1997 and created the first animated television series in Latin America which ran for 113 episodes, *El siguiente programa*.

Nowadays, **Colombian animation cinema is exported internationally**. In 2018, it participated in the official competition of the Annecy festival with *Virus Tropical* released a year earlier. The Colombian company 7G-Lab, working in co-production with Netflix and Disney, is currently preparing the launch of the first Latin American superhero on the big screen, *Zambo Dende*, which is due to be released with an entire transmedia universe. Furthermore, an event exists to highlight animation in Colombia at the Bogotá Film Festival, which is one of the few Colombian film festivals that includes animation.

## Telenovelas



Telenovelas have created habits, changed behaviour and marked family routines. They have elevated their actors to the category of idols and have made increased the profile of Colombian Television abroad. They have also **allowed Colombia to considerably increase its television industry**, mainly driven by **private television channels**. Today, its uninterrupted success is attracting new global players such as Netflix, which has become one of the main co-producers of telenovelas.

It all started with *El niño del pantano*, a theatre play by Bernardo Romero Lozano starring Bernardo Romero Pereiro, which was broadcast on the first day of national television in 1954. Telenovelas are the direct descendant of melodrama and portray fundamental emotions: love, hate, friendship, revenge, but above all, telenovelas are characterised by continuity. In the 1960s, two series were competing: *En nombre del amor* produced by Punch Producciones, the first Colombian television company and *Infame mentira* produced by RTI, the second Colombian television company. The former was broadcast on Mondays, Wednesdays and Fridays while the latter was broadcast on the other days of the week – Tuesdays, Thursdays and Saturdays. As the country was being modernised, homes were being equipped with television sets, and telenovelas reflected these changes and consolidated viewers' tastes. In 1982, Caracol produced *La Mala Hierba*, a series about getting rich from the marijuana trade. Echoing the national

situation of the country at the time and using humour to mitigate conflict, the programme was enthusiastically received. Some telenovelas are adaptations of literary works such as *Aunt Julia* and *the Scribbler* by Mario Vargas Llosa. The telenovela seeks an identity, a national theme, and a way of addressing conflicts and issues that are specific to Colombians.

The telenovelas of the 1990s were notable for an exploration of **greater narrative** and **aesthetic possibilities**, and posed questions about what it means to live in a world where there is nothing to hold on to. This resulted in work with more contemporary thinking and political irony, such as *Café* (1993) created by Fernando Gaitán and produced by RCN, which conquered international markets. At the end of the decade, the emergence of private channels brought about three universal hits: RCN's *Yo soy Betty la fea* (2001) by Fernando Gaitán, *Pedro el escamoso* (2002) which was written and produced by Dago García and Felipe Salamanca and appeared on Caracol, and *Pasión de gavilanes* (2003), written by Julio Jiménez which was produced by RTI for Telemundo and Caracol. The latter show expressed the new trend of conceiving and producing stories from a global perspective. Today we find Colombian telenovelas on Netflix that are successful worldwide, such as *Pablo Escobar*, *The Boss of Evil*, which has been broadcast on Caracol TV since 2012 in Colombia and Telemundo in the USA.

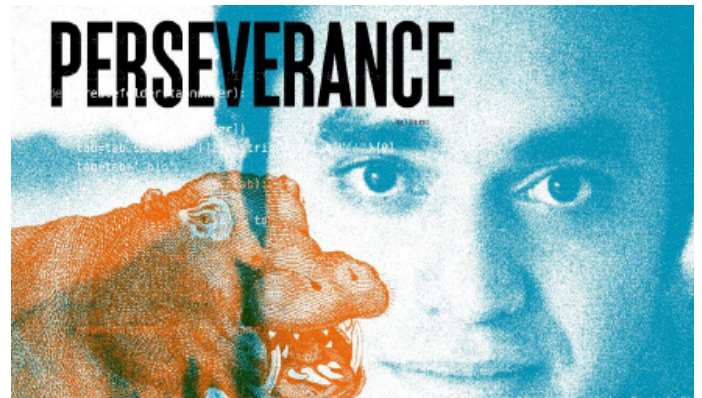
## New medias



**Video games** : Since the 1980s, the field of video games **has seen considerable growth** in Colombia. However, the country did not develop this industry much until the 21st century. Between 2000 and 2018, many video game licences based the universe of the game completely or partially in Colombia. For the first time in 2000, *Hitman* was released on PC and placed one of its plots around the character of Pablo Ochoa, the head of a drug trafficking operation in Colombia. The second opus of the reboot, *Hitman 2*, released in 2018 on different platforms such as PC, PS4 and Xbox One and published by Warner Bros, also saw one of its missions take place in Colombia. During these years, other licences had their characters evolve in Colombia, such as *Battlefield: Bad Company 2*, *Uncharted 3: Drake's Illusion*, *Counter-Strike: Condition Zero*, *Conflict: Global Storm*, *Metal Gear Solid: Peace Walker*, *Soldier of Fortune II: Double Helix* or the various opuses of Tom Clancy's game. The video game industry is constantly growing in Bogotá. **In 2020, the sector grew by 8% and currently generates over 230 direct jobs in the city.** Some events such as the SOFA showcase highlight video games developed by Colombian companies. In previous editions, the public has seen the rise of the company Teravision Games with its game *Captain Toonhead vs. The Punks from Outer Space*. To date, they have made more than 80 video games in numerous collaborations with multinational companies such as Namco, Atari, Disney and Nickelodeon. Other companies are setting up in Bogotá, such as Jam City, founded in the United States in 2010, or Efecto Studios founded in Colombia in 2011, which is developing *Decoherence* and has also participated in the development of games such as *Ark: Extinction*.

**Interactive and immersive films**: At the moment, some filmmakers are interested in the creative industries that allow interactive and immersive films to enter the market. Colombian documentary filmmaker and producer Jorge Caballero, currently based in Barcelona, works in particular on **immersive creation and artificial**

**intelligence**, modern content that attracts a lot of attention. He develops **interactive and transmedia projects** such as the webdoc *Las Fronteras* (2014) which won the Caixa Art prize for social improvement, or *Speech Success* (2014) which won the Haiku competition of NFB Canada and Arte France television.



In 2023, the virtual reality project *El Beat* by documentary filmmakers Irene Lema and Carolina del Mar Fernández, and digital artist Sergio Bromberg was released. The public was able to try out at the PACCPA festival (Panorama du Cinéma Colombien de Paris). This event brought together many other projects around Colombia such as *The Line* which won an Emmy Award in 2020 and the prize for best VR experience at the 76th Venice Film Festival. Other projects will take viewers into the history of Colombian cinema, such as *Entre Luces Y Sombras (Capítulo III)*, which features Félix Rodríguez, a pioneer of Colombian cinema in 1924. Señal Colombia, the Colombian public channel, is also exploring other formats with, for example, the transmedia series *Guillermina y Candelario*, which won a prize at the Comkids-Festival Prix Jeunesse Iberoamericano. We can thus observe a meteoric rise of new media in Colombia.

# History of the Industry

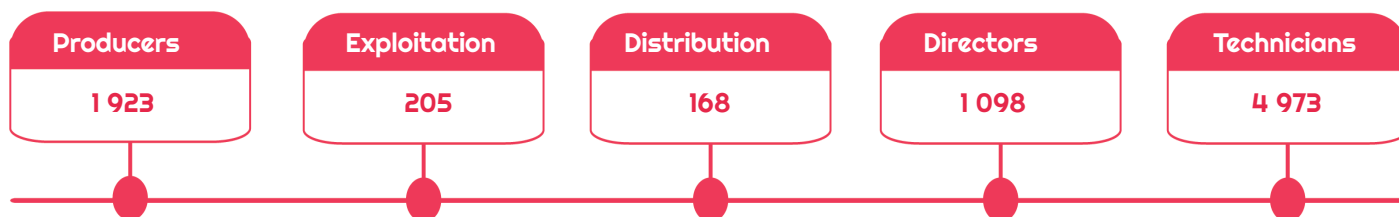
## History

As previously mentioned, Colombia is today the **4th largest film and audiovisual producer in Latin America** behind Mexico, Brazil and Argentina. However, its development is relatively recent. Until the 1970s, the sector did not benefit from any economic support.

### Key stages in the development of the sector :

- **1971** : Decree n°1309 completed by the «Law of Surplus» gave rise to a legal system designed to finance the production of Colombian films, especially 12-minute shorts that were to be shown in movie theaters before feature films.
- **1978** : FOCINE (Compañía de Fomento Cinematográfico), a company linked to the State was created. This was the first serious attempt launched by the government to promote national cinema. **Its mission included:** to encourage the training of filmmakers, to support festivals and film libraries, and to encourage film creation. Through subsidies, it allowed the production of 29 feature films, including Francisco Norden's *The Condors Don't Die Every Day*, which won awards in many international festivals, as well as short films and documentaries during its period of activity. Unfortunately, these films did not find their place in the Colombian cinematographic landscape due to the lack of theatres, distribution structures, means of communication or sufficient promotion of films. The company filed for bankruptcy in 1993.
- **1988** : As a result of an agreement between FOCINE and the National University of Colombia (Bogotá) a film school was created which gave rise to professional training for the film, television and video sectors. Several graduates of this university course have excelled nationally and internationally (Ciro Guerra, Rubén Mendoza, Diana Bustamante, Cristina Gallego to name but a few).
- **1993** : The fund reserved for the financing of cinema was transferred to the Instituto Colombiano De Cultura (Colcultura), the forerunner of the current Ministry of Culture. Unfortunately, the budget for film was insignificant and resulted in the production of few Colombian films. It was this particular stage that slowed down the development of cinema in Colombia, but above all led professionals in the sector to turn to international co-production.
- **1997** : Law 397, or the «General Law of Culture», was passed and gave birth to the Ministry of Culture, which in turn led to the creation of the DACMI, the CNACC and Proimágenes, three essential organisations for the development of the sector. This was the starting point for a boom in Colombian film and audiovisual production and in the film sector in general.
- **2003** : Approval of the «**Cinema Law**» which initiated a new system of support measures for the sector. This law allowed the creation of the FDC (Fondo de Desarrollo Cinematográfico), the major support fund for Colombian cinema.
- **2012** : Law 1556 of 2012, also known as the «New Cinema Law», was implemented in order to position Colombia as an important place to shoot and produce films by attracting foreign producers who hire the services of Colombian film companies at the artistic and technical level. Thus, for films that meet the criteria of this law, 40% of pre-production, shooting and post-production costs are covered by the Fondo Fílmico Colombia (FFC). The government covers 20% of hotel, food and transport expenses.
- **No international films were shot in Colombia until the «New Cinema Law» of 2012:** Films supposedly set in Colombia such as Robert Zemeckis' *Romancing the Stone* (1984) were shot in Mexico and the US, Ted Demme's *Blow* (2001) with Penelope Cruz and Johnny Depp about the life of George Jung, a drug trafficker and major player in the importation of Colombian cocaine into the US in the 1970s and 1980s was also shot in Mexico and the US, and Andrea Di Stefano's *Escobar: Paradise Lost* with Benicio del Toro (2014) was shot in Panama. However, in August, 2015, Doug Liman's *Barry Seal: American Traffic* (2017) was filmed in Colombia, in Medellín and Santa Marta. In addition to shooting scenes set in Colombia, the country can also be used as a set for scenes supposedly set in Panama, Nicaragua and Costa Rica due to their similar landscapes.
- **2019** : Creation of a tax incentive mechanism for foreign productions called the CINA.
- **2022** : During the summer months, **the election of Gustavo Petro** as president and the establishment of a new left-wing government led to the desire for a moderate change in the film industry. Several measures were envisaged to favour the cinema sector such as the taxation of platforms. Nevertheless, the future is uncertain. Following a new tax reform taking effect on January 1st 2023, an abolition of the tax credit, as well as certain funds and incentives for audiovisual production were all envisaged. However, Proimágenes fought to preserve a system that has been in place for 20 years and which, it argues, is beginning to bear fruit by proving its economic, social and cultural value. In the end, the tax incentives and subsidies were not abolished. However, this is an example of the fragility of a system which has not yet been given a fixed long-term mandate but is instead subject to the decisions of the government of the day.

## Professionnelles du secteur



**Note :** These statistics provided by the SIREC (Sistema de Información y Registro Cinematográfico) **include all production companies and individuals registered in the national register, whether they are active or not**, and do not distinguish between delegated, executive or independent producers. Therefore these figures may not give a completely accurate representation of the sector.

**Production:** Most audiovisual and cinematographic production is concentrated in the large cities, particularly Cali, Medellín and Bogotá due to their established infrastructure of filmmaking professionals. The presence of large equipment rental companies in Bogotá encourages the centralisation of production as well as the concentration of the country's technicians. This centralisation of production in urbanised areas favours the large cities to the detriment of the poorly supported regions.

**Film crew and technicians:** Colombia offers several services in terms of logistics and equipment and has quite **a strong capacity to host film productions**. Since the abovementioned cinema law in 2012, these advantages have allowed American and French productions to take place in the country. For this reason, Colombia has a **fairly large pool of well-trained technicians**. They are not affiliated to a specific audiovisual sector which allows them to work in both film and television. Some jobs have also been created as a direct result of the arrival of international platforms. However, Colombia still has little capacity for post-production, although some studios do deal with the visual side of post-production. They very often have to use foreign technicians, particularly for sound-mixing. Postproduction in most cases is carried out in Europe (especially in Germany) where the studios are better equipped. Nevertheless, in recent years, technicians and sound post-production infrastructures have improved considerably.

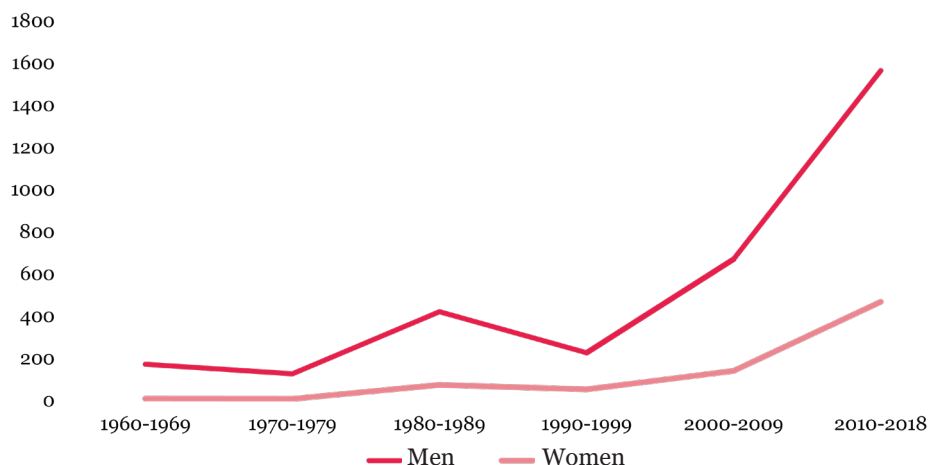
**Associations:** In Colombia there are associations that are committed to improving film and audiovisual production activities, such as the Association of Independent Film and Audiovisual Producers (ASOCINDE). ASOCINDE works to accompany producers in the process of creating a project in cooperation with the government, unions and other institutions to support the development of policies, programs and structures that contribute to strengthen the audiovisual industry in Colombia.

**Inequality of genders in employment:** The sector is not spared from gender inequalities. The 500 films made and recorded in Colombia between 1960 and 2018 involved the participation of 3,280 professionals, **with a proportion of male participation (72%) three times higher than that of women (28%).**

Men largely dominate all sectors of the industry; we can notice in particular that:

- Men are highly-represented in the creative roles of writing, and directing.
- Women are under-represented in the technical positions of sound and photography.
- Women are most strongly represented in artistic direction, producing and editing.
- The majority of female directors work on feature-length documentaries (56%), followed by fiction (43%) and a small proportion in animation (1%).

Evolution of total gender participation by decade



**Since 2010, women's participation in film creation has almost tripled.** However, this phenomenon is also noticeable among men where the increase is even greater. Although women are gradually joining the sector, there are still proportionately far fewer women than their male counterparts who also tend to hold the most prestigious creative and technical positions in the industry.

## Training

In Colombia, Proimágenes's website currently lists **44 film and audiovisual training courses**. Among these, some stand out for the quality of the programs on offer and the number of professionals who graduate from them:

- **The School of Communication of the University of Valle** is a public training department founded by Luis Ospina within the University of Cali. It has played a major role in training and fostering the talent of several Colombian directors and producers such as Oscar Ruiz Navia, Carlos Moreno, Jorge Navas, César Acevedo, William Vega, Santiago Lozano Álvarez, Angela Osorio, and Paola Perez Nieto.
- **The National University of Colombia**, in Bogotá, where the producer Diana Bustamante studied, is one of the main universities in Colombia. It offers several programs including film and audiovisual courses.

- **University of Magdalena** is a public departmental university with headquarters in Santa Marta. It offers multidiscipline audiovisual training in cinema and television, including directing, cinematography, script techniques and production.

There are private schools that also offer 100% film training, and others that train students for mixed careers such as film and communication. Among the best known, the ENACC has a directing/production program, and the Congo Films School has technical and directing programs. The latter was created by the French production company Congo Films.

Today, there is a real boom in university courses and audiovisual training programs. However, the options are particularly centralized to the big cities and there is a lack of communication between the various training courses, which are often not specialized enough and are therefore not sufficiently linked to the needs of the industry.

**Training Abroad :** There are several training opportunities for Colombian directors and producers abroad, notably with EICTV, the school of San Antonio de Los Baños (Cuba), and some North American training programs. In France, there are two grants for 2 to 3 months training for international students at the FEMIS and the ENS Louis-Lumière.

**Programs to Support the Development of Film Education:** Since 1988, the program «Imaginando Nuestra Imagen» launched by the Ministry of Culture has been developing in several regions and aims at training directors and producers. In addition, part of the CDF (Cinema Development Fund) is dedicated to training professionals in the sector.

- In March 2022, the Ministry of Culture announced a new program called «Sandbox» in collaboration with Netflix and the Inter-American Development Bank (IDB). Its goal is to help train nearly 1,500 young Colombians in underrepresented groups or in vulnerable situations (including women, the financially precarious, Afro-descendants & indigenous populations, and the LGBTI+ community) and provide them with opportunities in the audiovisual sector. It seeks to train young people from regions of the country where this type of project is not common in the regions of Chocó, San Andrés, Sucre, Caquetá, Cauca, and in Bogotá.
- In October 2022, the Colombian Academy of Cinematographic Arts and Sciences (ACACC), in alliance with Amazon, launched a project that aims to train young students from all over Colombia and prime them for integration in the working world. The program does not aim to teach technical skills but rather touches on specific areas such as digital content, design and audiovisual communication. It aims to be an initiative that will allow the next generation to prepare for the new creative industries.



*La Tierra y la Sombra* (2015) de César Augusto Acevedo

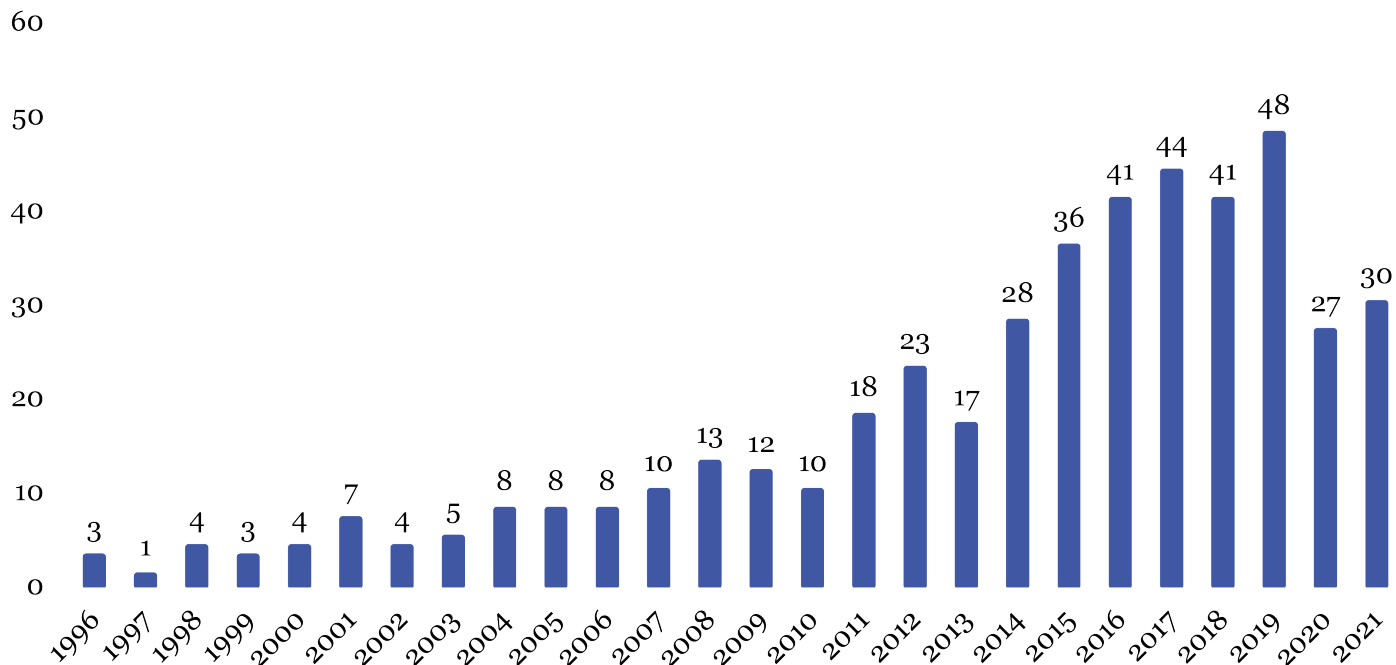


# FUNDING SYSTEM

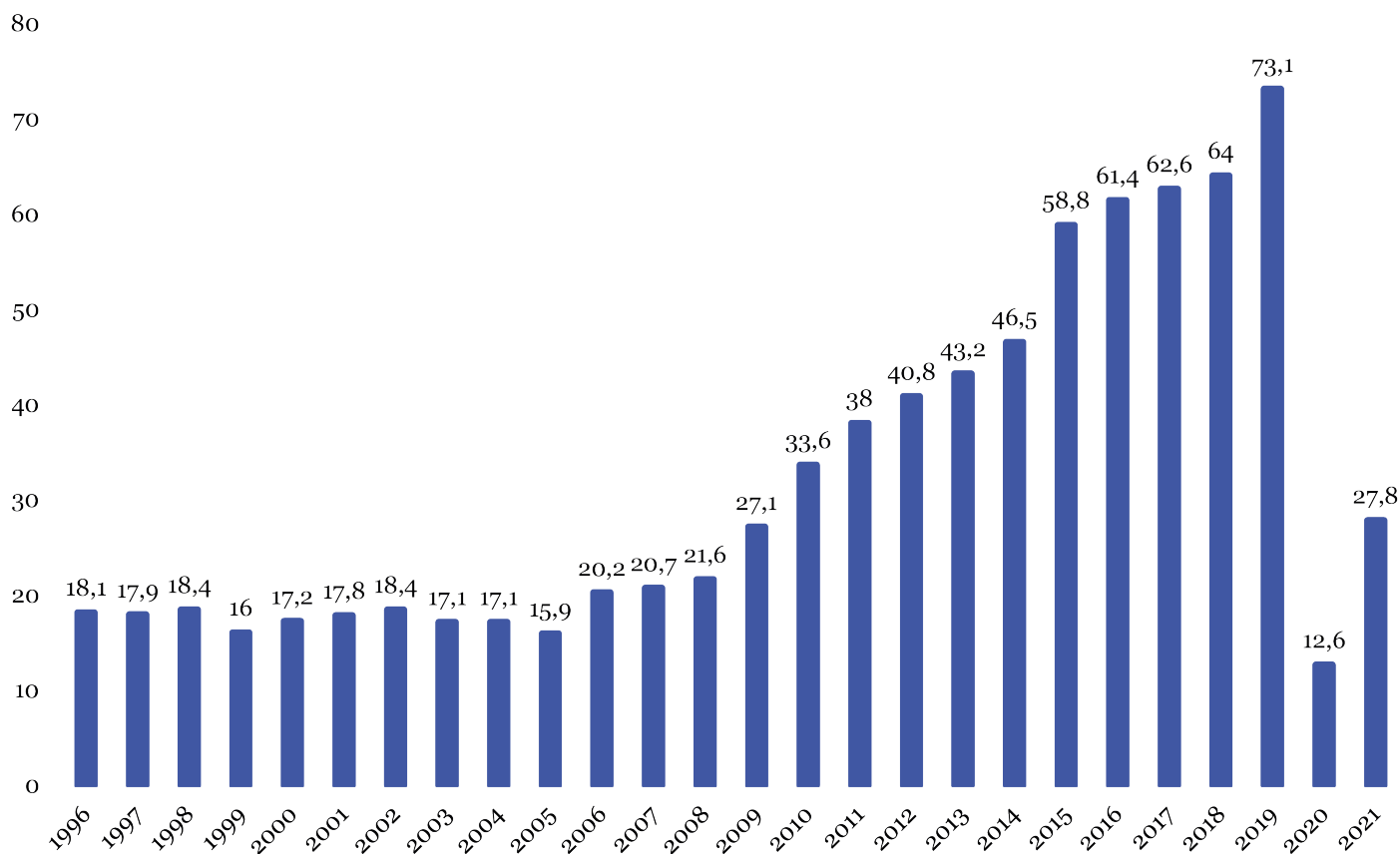


As previously mentioned, it was in **1997** that there was a restructuring of the cinema and audiovisual sector. The creation of a cinema department within the Ministry of Culture (DACMI) demonstrated a desire to give an important place to cinema in the new landscape. However, film production was still difficult and it was not until the **2003 «cinema law»** that the industry started to really take off in many areas (production, exhibition, training, etc.) as a result of the implementation of important funding mechanisms.

Evolution of total gender participation by decade








Entrance to theaters in Colombia



# Structure of the Colombian Cinematographic and Audiovisual Industry

In order to understand how the Colombian funding system works, it is essential to first understand the structures that make up the audiovisual landscape. The structure of these organizations is rather vertical but each one remains relatively independent. This allows them to react as well as possible to the challenges of the sector without being disconnected from the State or from professional realities.

 <b>MINCULTURA</b>	<b>CNACC</b>	
<p>Within the Ministry of Culture, the <b>DACMI</b> (Directorate of Audiovisual, Cinema and Interactive Media) is the department dedicated to cinema, audiovisual and interactive media in Colombia. It is committed to the creation of public policies. It generates resources, social, institutional, infrastructural and regulatory conditions to strengthen the actors, practices and relationships of the film, audiovisual and interactive media ecosystem, with the aim of promoting sustainability, inclusion, diversity, participation and the exercise of cultural rights for all Colombians.</p> <p>It also supports education, research and conservation of Colombian audiovisual heritage.</p>	<p>To help it in its public policy decisions, the Ministry of Culture set up the <b>CNACC</b>, a council that brings together professionals from the sector several times a year to discuss and propose action plans for Colombian cinema. The CNACC is also in charge of <b>distributing the budget of the FDC</b>, the main subsidy fund for cinematographic works.</p>	<p><b>Proimágenes</b> is a non-profit civil company with a public interest mission. It supports and regulates the film industry at all possible levels, including, more recently, series and video games. It is the main interlocutor of the professionals of the sector at the national and international levels. It also <b>manages the FDC</b> (the main film support fund) under the directives of the CNACC. It also administers the <b>FFC</b> (or Cash Rebate) and the <b>CINA</b> (or Transferable Tax Rebate), tax incentive mechanisms.</p> <p>Proimágenes seeks to consolidate and solidify the Colombian film industry, to promote cinema at the national and international level, and to influence public policies.</p>
<p><b>Proimágenes and DACMI</b> work together a lot. For example, works submitted to Proimágenes for support must be submitted to the DACMI for approval before being processed by the commission.</p>		

 <b>MINISTERIO DE TECNOLOGÍAS DE LA INFORMACIÓN Y LAS COMUNICACIONES</b>	<b>RTVC</b>  Sistema de Medios Públicos	
<p>Created in 2009 to replace the Ministry of Communications, <b>MinTIC</b> includes both the Communications Regulatory Commission (CRC) and the brief for public television. The Minister appoints the management of RTVC.</p>	<p>Created on October 28th, 2004, <b>RTVC</b> (Radio Televisión Nacional de Colombia) is the public radio and television entity in Colombia. Comprising a set of three major channels (Señal Colombia, Canal Institucional and Canal Uno), as well as seven regional channels, it depends on the MinTIC and has the function of producing, programming and operating the State's radio and television services.</p>	<p>Responsible for identifying, evaluating, assessing and controlling the risks of corruption and mismanagement in Colombian communications entities, (mainly television) <b>the Communications Regulatory Commission (CRC)</b> monitors all communication channels from an ethical, environmental and social perspective. It is directly dependent on MinTIC.</p>

## Organization of the CNACC and Proimágenes

The CNACC is a council composed of 10 people. It meets several times a year to discuss public policies concerning cinema and to structure and distribute the CDF budget. It is chaired by the DACMI, the cinema authority in Colombia.

### Ex-officio Members: :

- Minister of Culture
- Director of the DACMI
- Director of Proimágenes
- Representative for the Departmental Film Councils

### Members elected every two years :

- Representative for Directors
- Representative for Exhibitors
- Representative for Distributors
- Representative for Producers
- Representative for the Artistic and Creative sector
- Representative for the Technical Trades Sector

Candidates are not required to be in the trade they represent in order to run for office (i.e., one does not need to be a producer to be elected to represent producers). Instead, they are elected solely by the professionals of a given sector to defend the interests of that profession through their vote.

### Proimágenes

Proimágenes is a non-profit company. It is a private organization with a public interest mission. It was created through the cooperation of various public and private entities who now sit on its Board of Directors.

### Founders and Members of the Board of Directors: :

#### Public Entities:

- Ministry of Culture
- Ministry of Education
- National University
- Directorate of National Taxes and Customs

#### Private Entities:

- Cine Colombia (largest cinema operator in Colombia)
- Colombian Association of Film Distributors
- Colombian Film Heritage Foundation

### Professional Representatives on the Board :

- One Professional Film Producer
- One Professional Film Director

**Financing:** Proimágenes is financed by the abovementioned entities represented on the Board of Directors, by the FDC up to 10% of the fund, by the Ministry of Culture and by the sales of goods and services related to cinema (including their catalogue of films from FOCINE).

## Comisión filmica colombiana - CFC

The Comisión filmica colombiana (or Colombia Film Commission) is a project of Proimágenes initiated in 2011, led by both the Ministry of Culture and the Ministry of Trade and Tourism. Supported by the national government, its goal is to promote the country as a destination for film and audiovisual production. The CFC also manages the FFC and CINA tax incentives. **The website presents an extensive directory of useful sites** to obtain information on how to produce in Colombia, as well as on companies and professionals in the audiovisual sector through a directory.

This website is organized by shooting location categories (bars, airports, theaters, lakes, religious buildings, etc.) and by departments or cities in Colombia.

Information is also available on the benefits offered to the film industry, on Law 1556 (2012) which encourages international co-productions, and on the permits required to shoot in Colombia (visas, obtaining certification for foreign work, permits to shoot in Bogotá, Medellín, and in national and archaeological parks).

### The commission's missions:

- To guide, support, and inform producers and other professionals of the sector on the process of applying for tax incentives, including the FFC and CINA (see: [Financing - FFC and CINA p.27](#))
- To provide information to audiovisual professionals on Colombian legislation and on the procedures to follow with government entities
- To be a point of contact for the different companies, producers, and institutions as well as national and regional authorities

Colombia has become one of the most important destinations for audiovisual production in Latin America. The country has hosted more than **38 international productions** which have benefited from the advantages of Law 1556 (2012), and have generated employment for more than 26,700 people.

### Examples of films which have benefited from law 1556::

Title	Director	Genre	Year	Country
<i>Memoria</i>	Apichatpong Weerasethakul	Feature film Fiction	2021	Germany, Colombia, China, France, Mexico, Qatar, United Kingdom, Swiss, Thailand
<i>Juanpis González</i>	Rodrigo Triana and Carlos Mario Urrea	Series Fiction Produced by Netflix	2021	Colombia
<i>Diomedes, el ídolo, el misterio y la tragedia (Broken Idol: The Undoing of Diomedes Diaz)</i>	Jorge Durán and Jaime Barbosa	Feature film Documentary Produced by Netflix	2021	Colombia
<i>Mille 22 (22 Miles)</i>	Peter Berg	Feature film Fiction	2018	United States
<i>Tiempo muerto (Time Sweep)</i>	Victor Postiglioni	Feature film Fiction	2016	Argentina
<i>The 33</i>	Patricia Riggen	Feature film Fiction	2015	United States, Chili

### Sustainable Audiovisual Industry and Socio-environmental Impact:

The CFC also emphasizes **ecological issues** and raises awareness about the environmental footprint of filming, especially in natural locations and settings. Colombia has the third richest biodiversity in the world and has the largest number of bird species, with more than 1,700 recorded. The Colombian government protects this exceptional biodiversity in more than 30 national parks and 12 nature reserves, in a total of 9 million hectares. The national parks represent more than 10% of Colombia's surface area. Together with Proimágenes, the CFC has developed a charter of recommendations to be applied in order to ensure an environmentally-friendly film shoot and production. It also recommends that the environmental impacts of the production are identified as early as the location scouting phase.

# Public Funding for Cinema

## Proimágenes: Overview of Grants

Proimágenes **manages the main funding and financial incentives** for the film and audiovisual industry. It works on two parallel fronts to advance the Colombian film and audiovisual industry:

- It promotes the creative potential of Colombian filmmakers. This is done mainly through support for films, especially those of auteur or independent filmmakers. The FDC, which is a fund for selectively-chosen projects, is the main financing mechanism from this point of view and facilitates the promotion of Colombian culture.
- It develops the Colombian film and audiovisual industry by allowing each film to obtain funding through automatic financial support (FFC) but also through various tax incentives. These subsidies do not include any quality criteria and are incentives for creation which are open to any project which meets the specified requirements.

## FDC

Film Development Fund - Fondo de Desarrollo Cinematográfico is the financing fund in Colombia which is reserved exclusively for cinema. It was created by Law 814 in 2003 and its administration has been entrusted to Proimágenes, which acts as a link with producers, receives applications, organizes commissions, and performs other duties. However, it is the CNACC that takes the structural decisions concerning the FDC and the distribution of its budget.

**How it works:** A commission takes place once a year in March. A national and international jury selects the projects. It is convened by Proimágenes and is composed of directors, producers and distributors. All films can apply to the FDC, but the main criterion for selection is artistic quality. In addition, the jury favors independent or auteur films, and dramas. Once selected, the projects are then submitted to a Proimágenes committee who will choose the recipients of the grants.

When the FDC grant is obtained, a contract is signed, which defines, among other things, the timeline of implementation for the project according to its category:

- **Feature film: 3 years**
- **Short film: 1 year**

As soon as the contract is signed, the producers receive the first instalment of the money within a month. The other payments are then distributed in instalments according to the progress of the project. These grants are not refundable.

- In this way, Proimágenes has two complementary ways of thinking about their cinema and audiovisual sector: it wishes both to promote artistic creation by Colombians and promote the industry in general.

As a major organization in the sector, it has been entrusted with the management of the main public funds in the country: the FDC, the FFC and the CINA.

**Policy:** Proimágenes considers that it is important to give priority to artistic or authorial projects. They believe it more difficult to find funding for such projects compared to more commercial projects and thus consider that without their support, these projects would have difficulty in financing themselves and coming to fruition.

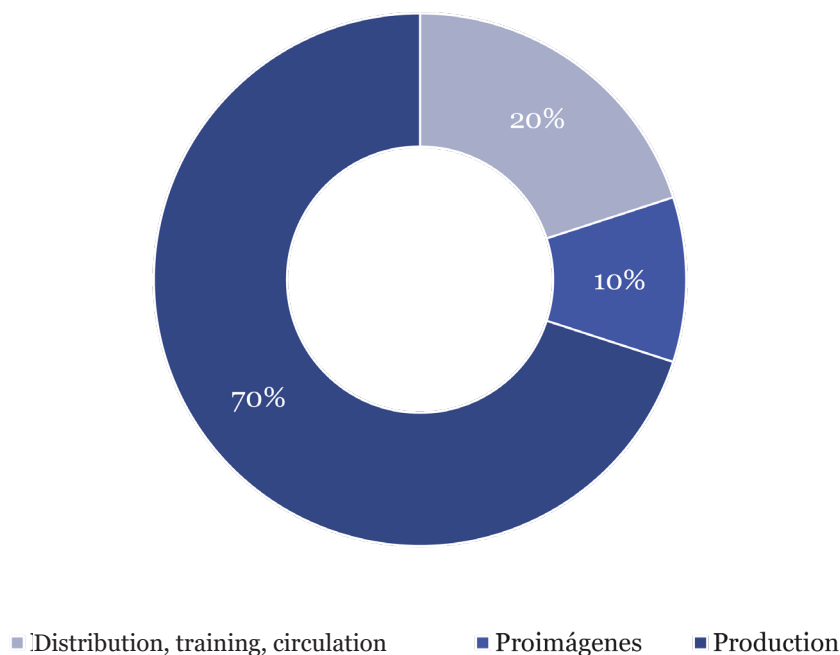
Lately, the jury has been trying to favor projects that take into account environmental issues, gender equality and gender issues, although the criteria of artistic quality remain a priority.

**Funding :** The CDF has been financed exclusively by box office receipts since its inception in 2003 through the «Film Development Quota» (Act 814). Cinema exhibitors are responsible for withholding a monthly percentage of their earnings, but this is deducted from both the exhibitors' income and that of the Colombian distributors and producers:

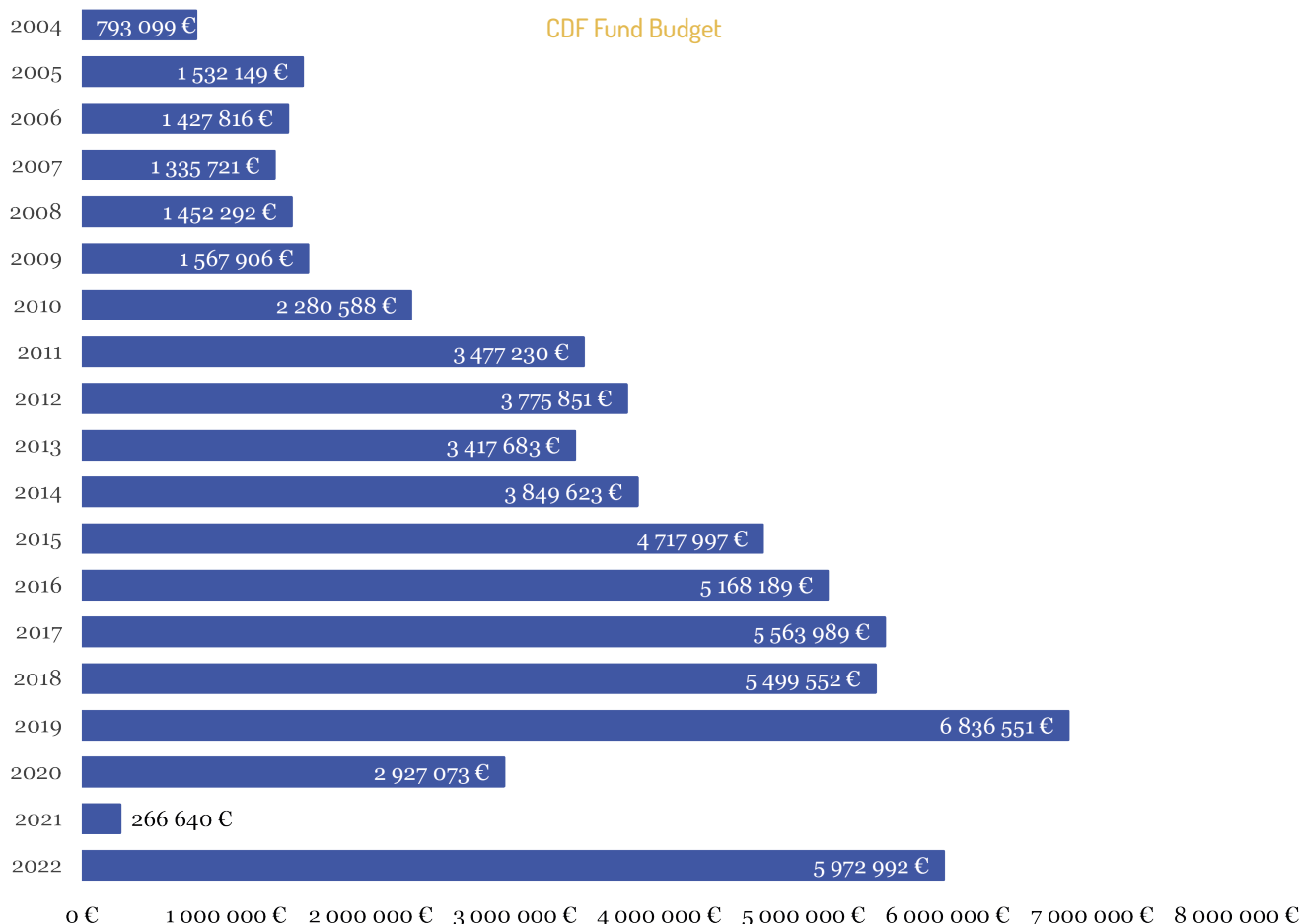
- **Exhibitors:** 8.5% of the total income from the sale of cinema tickets
- **Distributors:** 8.5% of the total income from the distribution of foreign films
- **Producers:** 5% of their total income

The resources generated by domestic and international cinema are thus returned to the sector to stimulate growth in the industry.

Distribution of the CDF fund



**Post-Covid issues:** The Covid-19 pandemic revealed the **fragility of a system based solely on movie theater admissions**. Indeed, when movie theaters remained closed for almost a year and a half in Colombia it led to a dramatic drop in FDC revenues. Today, the fund has returned to a budget equivalent to the pre-Covid amount, but the sector remains concerned and is observing a lower rate of theatre admissions compared to the pre-Covid period due to a change in the viewing habits of spectators, who are turning more to OTT services and platforms. Moreover, if spectators are cautiously returning to movie theaters, it is more to see American blockbusters than Colombian cinema. The sector is all the more worried that these changes in habits may influence government policies, which are already mixed in terms of support for the sector.



**FDC Selectively-chosen Grants :**

The budget amounts listed below are for the entire budget of each fund.

Two to three projects are generally accepted per category with the budget distributed more or less evenly. In terms of development, more projects are being supported (12 in 2022).

[\$ = Colombian Pesos (€1 = \$5,100.56)]

**Animation**

Production of Short Animated Films (between 7 and 14 minutes): €54,611.37 (\$280,000,000)

Production of Animated Feature Films (having completed the development stage): €585,509.69 (\$3,000,000,000)

Development of Animated Feature Films: €66,465.34 (\$340,000,000)

**Fiction**

Screenwriting: €46,930.75 (\$240,000,000)

Production of Short Fiction Films (from 7 to 69 minutes): €46,930.75 (\$240,000,000)

Category 1 Feature Film Production (First film): €312,858.37 (\$1,600,000,000)

Category 2 Feature Film Production (Second feature film or more): €312,858.37 (\$1,600,000,000)

Production of Feature Film (minimum length of 70 minutes): €117,339.93 (\$600,000,000)

Development of Feature Films: €61,603.46 (\$315,000,000)

**Film Festival Applications**

Circulation through film screenings in festivals (Colombian works in the national territory): €176,259.75 (\$901,000,000)

**Training for the Audiovisual Sector**

Film training programs: €78,298.88 (\$400,000,000)

**Other Funds Available for Filmmaking:**

Short Films for Children: €46,977.81 (\$240,000,000)

Minority co-production of Colombian feature films: €195,794.31 (\$1,000,000,000) (3 feature films supported on average per year. Documentary: approx. €40,000; Fiction: approx. €59,000)

Regional Feature Film Production: €352,429.75 (\$1,800,000,000)

Production of Short Films on Ethnic Groups: €35,232.36 (\$180,000,000)

Production of Feature Films for Racial Equality: €156,592.71 (\$800,000,000)

Short Film Production: Regional Stories: €234,865.68 (\$1,200,000,000)

### **FDC Automatic Qualification Grants::**

In Colombia, there are several automatic qualification grants awarded by the FDC. There is no evaluation committee for these grants. All Colombian feature films that have a premiere in the country have access to these grants.

However, some distributors feel that this funding is relatively anecdotal and that their work is poorly supported by the State.

### **Distribution of Colombian films**

This fund is reserved for distributors. It is a fund that can be requested after the distribution of the film depending on the number of tickets sold.

#### **Fiction film:**

up to \$15,000,000 (approx. €3,000) if the film reaches 2,000 admissions

up to \$25,000,000 (approx. €5,000) if the film reaches 3,000 admissions

#### **Documentary Films :**

up to \$15,000,000 (approx. €3,000) if the film reaches 1,000 admissions

up to \$25,000,000 (approx. €5,000) if the film reaches 1,600 admissions

Amount of the fund: \$500,000,000 (€97,807.73)

### **Participation in events**

This is a fund to support the participation of Colombian films or projects in festivals, co-production meetings and markets, workshops and national and international film awards. The 450 events approved for support are listed on the Proimágenes website.

#### **Film Market (for projects or finished films):**

€39,110.32 (\$200,000,000)

#### **Films in Festivals (if the film is selected in a festival):**

€58,693.50 (\$300,000,000)

#### **Film Awards (if the film is nominated for an award)**

€58,693.50 (\$300,000,000)

#### **Project Meeting (Projects in Development):**

€39,110.32 (\$200,000,000)

#### **Training Workshops and Project Consulting (for individuals):**

€58,693.50 (\$300,000,000)

### **Feature Film Promotion and Box Office Performance**

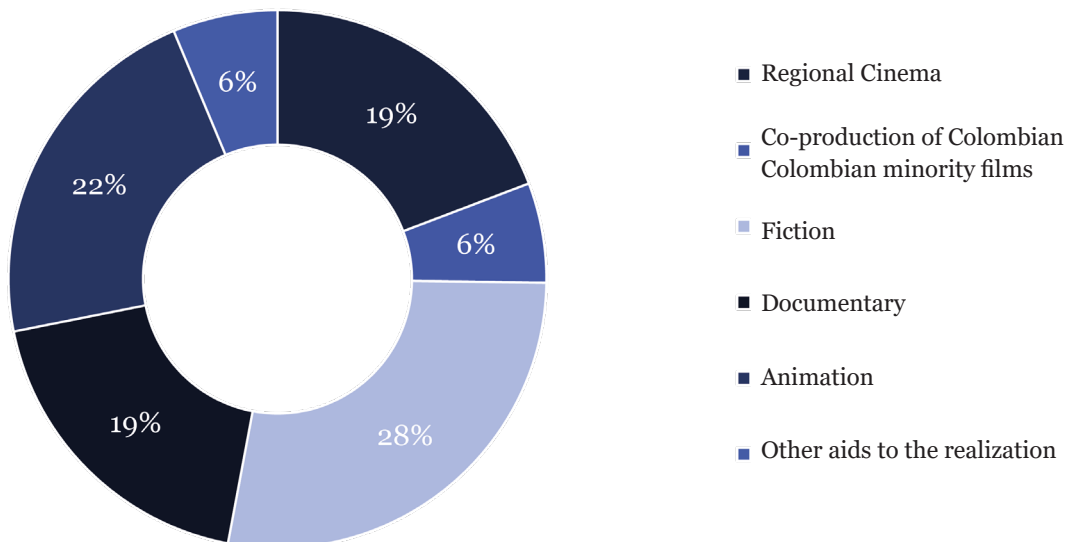
Financial support for the marketing and promotional stage of feature films prior to their theatrical release. Films must have a distributor and be screened in Colombia. The producer can apply for this support.

Fund amount: €332,748.84 (\$1,700,000,000)

### Unequal Distribution according to some Industry Professionals:

**The distribution of the FDC does not seem to be unanimously accepted** by all professionals in the sector. Documentary filmmakers feel that fiction films are given too much preference and have been calling for more support for several years.

Distribution of CDF Production Grants



### Co-production::

- the FDC is only open to Colombian individuals or legal entities. In the case of a co-production, it is the Colombian company that will have to make the request.
- there is specific funding for minority co-productions of Colombian feature films. This fund is quite high, amounting to 195,794.31€ (\$1,000,000,000) and demonstrates the importance given by the CNACC to International co-productions.

## FFC and CINA

The FFC and the CINA are two tax incentive mechanisms managed by the CFC (Comisión Fílmica Colombia) of Proimágenes. The FFC is **reserved for Colombian and international productions and co-productions, but the vast majority of them are national productions.** The CINA is reserved for **international productions.** Both grants are financed directly by the national budget of the State. In order to benefit from these mechanisms, which are paid once the film is finished, the producers must demonstrate that they already have sufficient funds in a bank account to cover the costs of the production.

The CINA and the FFC **have two very different budgets.** The FFC is a fund that comes directly from the State budget. The CINA, on the other hand, is financed by tax credits and therefore private money that is not paid back to the State. This explains the considerable difference between the two budgets.

## FFC – Cash Rebate

2022: **3 projects** approved  
 Limit per project: **\$2.5 billion** (about €500,000)  
 Fund size in 2022: **\$11 billion** (about €2 million)  
 Slightly more than half of the fund was used in 2022  
 Fund size used in 2022: **\$4.5 billion** (about €900,000)

The FFC, also known as the Cash Rebate, is a reimbursement mechanism for films, series and music videos. It allows productions to benefit from a rebate on expenses incurred in Colombia. It can go up to 40% of the expenses in audiovisual services (services and talents) and up to 20% of the expenses in logistics.

The funding is capped, which makes **it more suitable for low-budget productions**. It is mainly used by Colombian productions, which are less expensive, while international productions tend to avail of the CINA, an incentive which was created as a result of the «new Cinema Law» in 2012. It is managed by the CFC (Comisión Filmica Colombiana).

**How it works:** Producers must submit a budget estimate which includes their projected expenses in Colombia, they must also prove that they have the equivalent of the requested money already available in their account, and also, to obtain approval from the DACMI. A CFC committee will then inspect the application, and if approved, the producers sign a contract committing to spending the money. When the film is completed, a verification of the amounts and nature of the expenses is carried out. Then a refund is made within 2 to 3 months to the company's account.

The FFC cannot be combined with the 165% tax incentive (see [Financing, 165% tax incentive, p32](#)).

## CINA - Transferable Tax Credit

Since 2020: **42 projects**  
 2022: **36 projects** approved  
 Fund size in 2022: **\$280 billion** (about €55 million)  
 Fund size used in 2022: **\$251 billion** (about €50 million)

Today and since 2020, Proimágenes has been **expanding its activity** beyond the film sector to focus more on audiovisual and new media. If the selective and automatic aid fund (FDC) remains the prerogative of cinematographic works, the national and international tax incentives now allow for the financing of series, video clips, animation, video games and advertising. This change allows Colombia to expand its production power and maintain its position as a prime location for foreign filming

The **CINA** is a tax credit reserved exclusively for **international filming and projects**. Since it is not capped and has a substantial budget, it is particularly well suited to large productions and North-American platforms. This financial mechanism dates back to 2020 (Decree 474). As a result of this funding, Colombia has positioned itself as a real hub for Latin American production. By attracting international productions, it allows the country to create jobs, train more local crews and strengthen the national industry.

The CINA is reserved for **cinematographic works, series, music videos, video games, commercials and audiovisual productions, animation and post-production**. Through this incentive, Colombia has hosted several Netflix shoots, among others.

Foreign productions receive a negotiable credit of 35% on expenses for services, talent and logistics made on Colombian soil. However, to qualify for this assistance, productions must spend a minimum amount on Colombian soil:

- **Film production, series, short content for the web, music videos, video games and advertising:** \$1,800,000,000 (€355,295.52)
- **Post-production:** \$360,000,000 (€71,059.10)

**How it works:**

- Like the FFC, producers submit an estimate of the expenses incurred in Colombia and sign a commitment contract.
- Once the film is completed, the value of the tax credit is calculated by the DACMI, which issues an electronic tax certificate through the DECEVAL system (stock exchange subsidiary) within approximately one and a half months.
- Producers have two options for selling their CINA: they can sell it directly to a company or private individual who pays taxes in Colombia or they can sell it on the stock market. In this case, they must go through an intermediary (broker) who will take a percentage of the sale, which may or may not be significant depending on the negotiations. In both cases, the certificate is resold with a slight discount (usually 5%) to remain attractive to Colombian buyers who wish to reduce their taxes.
- The Colombian buyer can choose to pay taxes with this certificate, to have a direct tax deduction or to resell the certificate to another person or company paying taxes in Colombia. The certificate can also be divided in different fractions.

**Fragility of the financing system under the new government:** Since August 2022, this system has changed due to the election of the new president Gustavo Petro (the first leftist president). The system of tax incentives and financing of the film industry has been modified by the new government. As part of a comprehensive tax reform, there has been talk of removing subsidies and incentives for audiovisual production. Proimágenes defended its system by proving its economic, social and outreach interest for Colombia. Their argument was listened to and in December 2022, the proposed law was withdrawn. However, this example shows a certain fragility of the financing mechanisms of the sector and a direct dependence on Colombian political decisions at the federal level.

None of the aid from Proimágenes and the State are cumulative (FDC, FFC, CINA and 165% tax deduction).

The timeframe for receiving financial aid is quite short in Colombia (1 to 3 months). This allows producers to be financially independent as soon as they receive the grant notifications and not to have to take out bank loans. Cinema-specific bank loans are not available in Colombia.

## DACMI: Grants

The DACMI, **the film department of the Ministry of Culture**, participates directly in the financing of the film and audiovisual industries by awarding grants for the creation of works, with a broadly inclusive scope. All grants are selective, non-cumulative and must first be studied by a DACMI commission.

### Audiovisual Content Grants (issued in 2022):

- Creating Digital Content for Inclusion.
- «Converging Stories» for Afro-Colombian filmmakers
- Audiovisual creation with mobile devices
- «Female Creators»
- Young creators with a differential approach (these are offered to young people from LGBTQI+, Afro-descendant, indigenous or people with disabilities communities who speak about topics that are specific to them).
- Audiovisual series for children
- Audiovisual series by Afro-Colombian creators aimed at teenagers
- Audiovisual production for hearing impaired children
- Production of regional short films. Categories: any theme and LGBTQI+-themed.
- Production of documentaries made from audiovisual archives

## 165% tax exemption

**Colombian legal entities and private individuals** can invest in Colombian film and audiovisual production. Law 814 of 2003, or «Cinema Law», allows them to benefit from a tax deduction of 165% of the value of their investment. Any individual or legal entity that declares its income in Colombia can invest in a film and benefit from this tax advantage, provided they are not a producer or co-producer of the film.

For this mechanism to be implemented, the project must be approved by the DACMI, which issues «**national project recognition**» (see [Financing, National Project Recognition](#), p.39).

### Eligibility requirements:

- The producer who is applying must be Colombian whether for an entirely national film or for a co-production. In the case of a co-production, the investment is part of the Colombian share of the film's financing.
- The application for national recognition can be made at any stage of the film's production (development, production, post-production).
- The project must be financially viable and have a minimum number of Colombian nationals on the project (Decree 1080 of 2015).
- Investor contributions cannot exceed 20% of the film's budget.
- Projects have national project recognition for 3 years. In case of exceeding this time period, an exemption may be granted by the DACMI provided that the filming is completed.

## Other public funding



INSTITUTO  
DISTRITAL DE LAS ARTES  
IDARTES



The District Institute of Arts (IDARTES) is one of the funds of the city of Bogotá. It is an entity attached to the Secretariat of Culture, Recreation and Sports of the City Council (Alcaldia) of Bogotá created with the purpose of executing public policies, projects, plans and public programs. It is responsible for several calls for projects **in both the film and audiovisual sectors**. Within the framework of the district revival program it offers various grants ranging from documentary, to fiction, to animation, to new media (VR).

### Examples of Calls for Projects for 2023 :

- Creation of short documentaries
- Creation of short fiction films
- Audiovisual creation of a virtual or augmented reality project
- Development of animated short films



Bogotá Film Commission within IDARTES is intended to promote the audiovisual industry in the capital and to strengthen the **local audiovisual industry**.

Bogotá Film Commission has two incentives that are part of the Bogotá City Council's District Recovery Program: a grant for the creation of sound and/or original music for a feature film and a grant for the creation of the pilot episode of a series. Both grants offer thematic freedom.

In 2023, some new features were announced, such as the residency for the development of animated short films at the Zapopan Authors' House in Mexico and the writing grant for a non-fiction project.



FilMedellín is the film commission of the Medellín City Council which aims to **promote activity in the region as well as providing economic**

**support for local productions**, especially through the provision of a large catalogue of professionals in Medellín.

In 2020, the Medellín Audiovisual Development Grant (Incentivo al Fortalecimiento Audiovisual de Medellín) was created, which is given by the City Council through the Film Commission. This fund supports Colombian audiovisual companies by providing a reimbursement of up to 10% of the money spent in Medellín.

### This funding was applicable under three categories in 2022:

#### 1. Expenses while in Medellín

Intended to reimburse some of the costs of Colombian production or post-production companies spent during the production of a feature film, series or short film project in Medellín.

#### 2. Services for International Productions

Intended for Colombian companies that provide services to an international production that has been filmed or post-produced in Medellín. The productions receive 10% of their expenses in Medellín.

#### 3. International participation

This fund is intended for production companies in Medellín and aimed at helping the worldwide circulation of films in development, and finished films, as well as supporting production companies in festivals, events or film markets.

- **Circulation of local feature films at international festivals**  
the minimum amount awarded is \$5,000,000 (or €975.50) and the maximum is \$20,000,000 (or €3,902) depending on the type of festival they are participating in.
- **Nomination of audiovisual works in international awards**  
the minimum amount awarded may be from \$5,000,000 (or €975.50) to a maximum of \$10,000,000 (approximately €2,000) depending on the type of event in which they participate
- **Participation of feature films and series in industry training events**  
The amount allocated here is set at \$5,000,000 (or €975.50) for all beneficiaries
- **Participation of audiovisual companies in international markets**  
The amount is set at \$5,000,000 (i.e. €975.50) for all recipients.

## Television channels and platforms

TV channels (private or public) and platforms **have no obligation to invest in film and audiovisual production**. The budgets, as well as the genres produced or co-produced, are therefore not fixed and depend on the editorial line of each channel or platform.

With regard to private television channels, directed by a small group of wealthy Colombians, their investments in film productions are often destined for **commercial productions** to the detriment of more niche projects

which are compelled to turn to the rather weak public financing or international co-productions. As for the public channels, which have a low co-production budget, their choices are cautious and often focus on projects that are largely financed upstream.

You can find more information on the various channels and platforms in the «Broadcasters» section of this guide (See: [Broadcasters](#), p.41)

# International Funding

## Latin America



Ibermedia is a program designed to **support the co-production** of fiction and documentary films made within nineteen countries: Argentina, Bolivia, Brazil, Colombia, Costa Rica, Cuba, Chile, Dominican Republic, Ecuador, Guatemala, Mexico, Panama, Paraguay, Peru, Portugal, Puerto Rico, Spain, Uruguay, and Venezuela,

Its mission is to work towards the creation of an Ibero-American audiovisual community by stimulating collaboration and the use of new technologies through financial support, workshops, scholarships, seminars and calls for projects open to all independent film producers in the member countries of Latin America, Spain and Portugal.

In 2023, on the occasion of the 25th anniversary of the program, the presidency of Ibermedia, which had hitherto been held by Spain, **was taken over by Colombia** (through the DACMI) and Argentina (through the INCAA - National Institute of Cinema and Audiovisual Arts).

31 calls for projects released  
118 million dollars invested  
1049 co-productions supported  
298 screenings  
2950 training grants

## France



L'Aide aux Cinémas du Monde or A.C.M. (World Cinema Funding) is managed by the CNC (French Film Board) and the French Institute and offers financial support to **a number of selectively-chosen projects**. To be applicable for the funding the project needs to be a feature-length fiction, animation or creative documentary project which has not yet had a cinema release and whose running time is over 60 minutes. It can be given either in advance of filming (production grant) or after filming (this is available to projects not selected for the production grant). The ACM provides a unique opportunity for filmmakers **from all over the world**.

This grant is available to all countries and aims to encourage collaborations between filmmakers from around the world and French professionals. It also aims to promote cultural diversity.

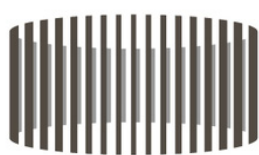
The film must be co-produced by a production company based outside France and a production company based in France. Its director must be a non-French foreign national (or, under exceptional circumstances, they may be French if the on-set language during the production is not French) and the majority of the film must be shot outside France. The language of filming may be the official language or language in use in the foreign country of which the director is a national citizen or on whose territory the filming takes place.

Films whose final cost exceeds €2,500,000 must meet conditions and requirements of CNC approval (for films co-produced with Colombia, approval is only granted if the work complies with the official co-production agreement [[For more information see: Coproducing with Colombia p.60](#)]).

A film that receives ACM funding can apply for distribution approval (even if it does not meet the criteria for investment approval).

524 projects supported since its creation in 2012  
including 12 Colombian projects (fiction only)  
Budget of 6.4 million euros in 2021  
4 sessions per year and 50 projects supported per session

## Europe



FILM FUND  
LUXEMBOURG



## Recognition of Colombian films

The financing of the film and audiovisual sector is one of the DACMI's biggest commitments. This organization recognizes projects and allows them to be eligible for the various existing funding possibilities. There are two types of project recognition: the National Product Certificate (NPC) and national project recognition.

### The National Product Certificate (NPC)

The National Product Certificate is a DACMI document that gives **official recognition of Colombian nationality** to a cinematographic work, allowing it to avail of a number of benefits established by current Colombian legislation:

- The film can benefit from tax rebates (FDC) or selective and automatic grants from the FDC.
- Producers can obtain funding to accompany the film to festivals.
- The aforementioned parafiscal tax for the FDC, paid by exhibitors, is reduced from a rate of 8.5% of ticket admissions for non-Colombian films to 5% for Colombian films.

#### Eligibility requirements:

- Colombian economic participation must be greater than 51% of the budget for Colombian productions and greater than 20% for international co-productions
- Minimum Colombian artistic and technical participation (Decree 1080 of 2015 and Decree 525 of 2021).
- Before applying for the national product certificate, producers must ensure that they have the resources – in terms of finance and film crew quotas – to produce the film.

### National project recognition

The aim of the national project recognition is to **encourage** anyone, whether an individual or a company, to invest in a film and audiovisual project. This is a document, issued by the DACMI, which recognises that the project meets the minimum conditions necessary for an investor to become involved in it. Investors can then benefit from a tax rebate of 165% (law 814, 2003). The recognition is an essential tool for Colombian producers to finance their films.

**It is valid for three years**, during which time a producer can seek the necessary investors to finance the different stages of the film. An extension of two years can be requested from the DACMI, provided that the filming is completed.

## Authorship and copyright

In Colombia, the copyright and related rights regulations are defined in Law 23 (1982) and Andean Decision 151 (1993).

Article 3 of Decisión 351 (1993) of the Andean Community of Nations (Comunidad Andina de Naciones) defines an audiovisual work as “any creation expressed through a series of associated images, with or without incorporated sound, which is intended primarily for dissemination through projection devices or any other means of communication of images and sound, irrespective of the characteristics of the physical medium containing it”.

**In the creative chain of production of an audiovisual work, many artistic and technical contributions from different individuals converge, such as:**

- Authors: Director /screenwriter of screenplay or story bible /music composer /illustrator (if an animated film)
- Actors, Creative Interpreters and Performers
- Producers: Natural or legal person who has the initiative, coordination and responsibility for the production of the audiovisual work.

**The copyright recognises the protection of the authors of intellectual works in the artistic field including cinematographic projects. There are two specific rules:**

- The economic (pecuniary) rights of the author on the cinematographic project are recognised in favour of the producer.
- The moral (non-pecuniary) rights of authorship in the cinematographic project are recognized in favour of the director, without prejudice to those belonging to the various authors, artists, performers or actors who have participated in the work, on their own contributions.

**Two significant laws have been passed in the last ten years to amend the 1982 law :**

- The Fanny Mikey Law (or Law 1403), which came into effect on 19 July 2010, represents a first development in Colombian audiovisual copyright legislation. It modified the copyright and related rights system, recognising the inalienable right of audiovisual performers (actors and voice-overs, among others) to receive equitable remuneration for the public communication of works and audiovisual recordings containing their performances.
- In 2017, the Pepe Sanchez Law was approved by the Colombian Senate. It provides for the first time the right to remuneration for screenwriters and directors for the public broadcasting of their works and allows authors to receive an equitable remuneration for the success of their work.

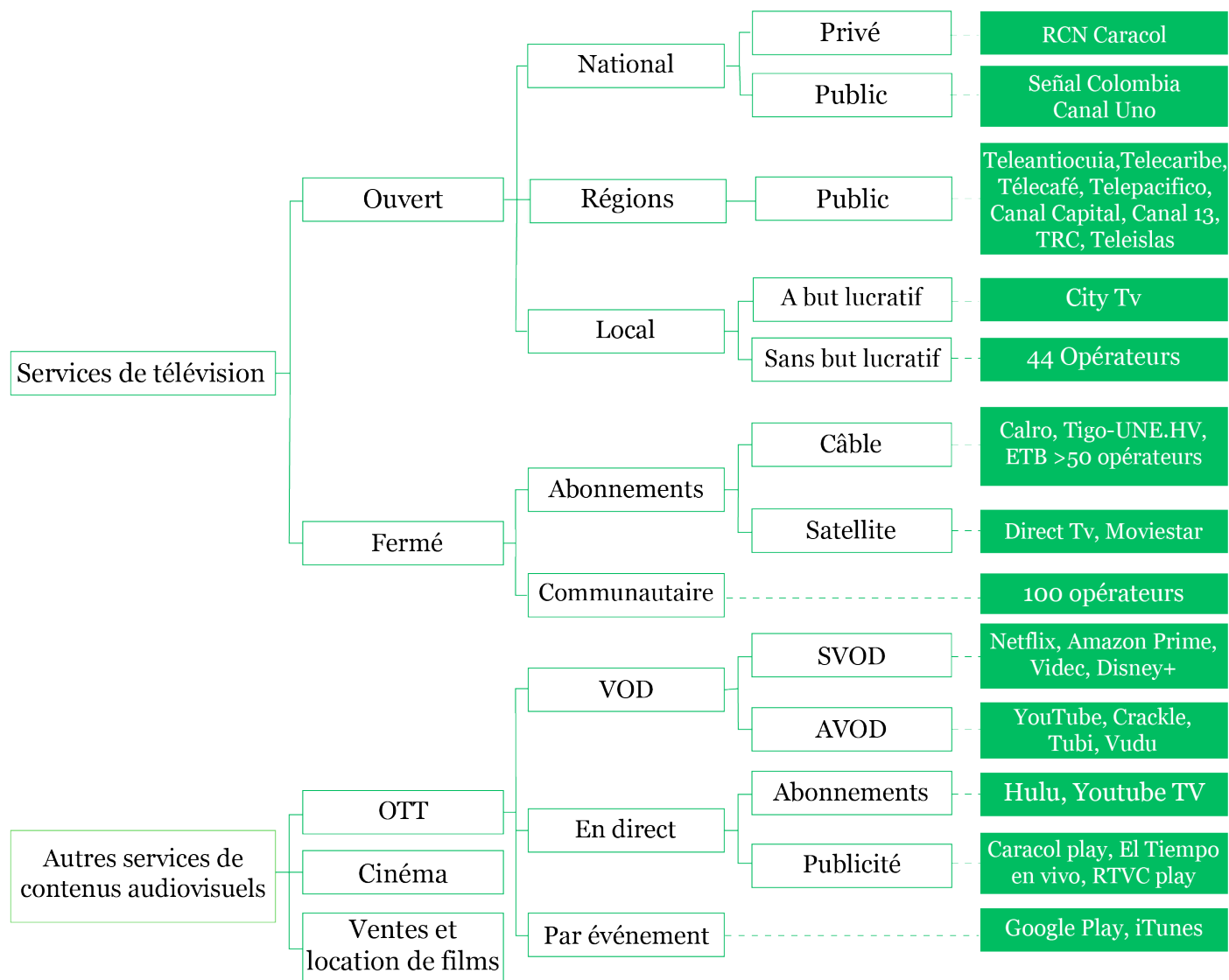




# BROADCASTERS (TV/ PLATFORMS)



## Classification of audiovisual services :



Source : Audiovisual Content Industry Study, April 2021

## TV channels:

**At a national level:** Founded on June 13th 1954 under the government of General Gustavo Rojas Pinilla, television is today the **primary medium** of communication, information and entertainment in Colombia. Among the channels available, there are two dominant private channels with 80% of the national audience: Caracol and RCN. The two main public channels, Señal Colombia and Canal Institucional, provide coverage for 93% of the country. There are 8 regional public channels which broadcast across the country, and 33 channels broadcast by cable or satellite in Colombia.

Among the viewers, 27.8% are between 12 and 25 years old, 28.10% are between 26 and 40 years old, 32.70% are between 41 and 64 years old and 11.4% are over 65 years old. In 2019, 64.6% of all households have access to cable, satellite or IPTV; 75.6% in the capital and 29.2% in rural areas. In Colombia, television audience figures are increasing, especially for foreign channels and for pay TV via cable or satellite. Colombia is becoming better equipped technologically, which allows households to have more and more access to television.

240 minutes per day spent per household watching television.  
91% of families own at least one television set

# Public television

## Panorama of the public television channels in Colombia

Public television in the country is governed by a main entity, RTVC (National Radio Television of Colombia), which depends on the Ministry of Information Technology and Communications (MinTIC) to appoint its director.

This company is responsible for programming, producing and operating the entire state radio and television network, including the main public television channel Señal Colombia, the thematic channels Canal Institucional and Canal Uno, as well as Radio Nacional de Colombia and Radionica.

		
		
<p>Canal 1, the first historical television channel in Colombia, created in 1954, occupies the first channel when you turn on your TV. It is a hybrid model of a private and public channel and has belonged to the RTVC group since the latter was created in 2004. Unlike its sister channels Señal Colombia and Canal Institucional, its programming has not been entrusted to a government agency but to the private company, Plural Comunicaciones since 2016 (previously, several companies had shared the programming). Only 25% of the programming belongs to the public channel, with the remaining 75% of the capital belonging to the new company. This makes it the only commercial public channel. It is a historical competitor of Caracol and RCN, and its programming includes content to these major private channels: telenovelas, news and various entertainment programs.</p>	<p>Señal Colombia was launched on February 9, 1970 and is the first national public channel. It offers 430 hours of programming each month. Its editorial line puts forward the principles of transparency and access to information, education and culture for all Colombians. It is the RTVC group's primary channel for delivering mainstream programming and offers an array of cultural, informative, opinion, youth, entertainment, and sports programs. Its programming, which is mainly aimed at young audiences, underlines how the use of television in Colombian homes is mainly aimed at children.</p>	<p>Created by the government in 1966, this channel (formerly Channel A) declares itself the institutional channel: it is a meeting place between the government institutions and the Colombian people, and deals with topics of national interest. It broadcasts programs from public institutions as well as the assemblies and meetings of the National Council, but also documentaries, reports and newspapers from Señal Memoria, the national archives public organization of the national archives.</p>

### The group's resources come from three different mechanisms:

#### • The Fondo Único (MinTIC)

A portion of the Fondo Único of the MinTIC is allocated to the «Development of Television and Content»: the FonTV, according to Law 1507 of 2012.

In 2019, the budget delivered by the Fondo Único allowed public television to produce a total of 25 series, programs and films, broadcast on national and regional channels.

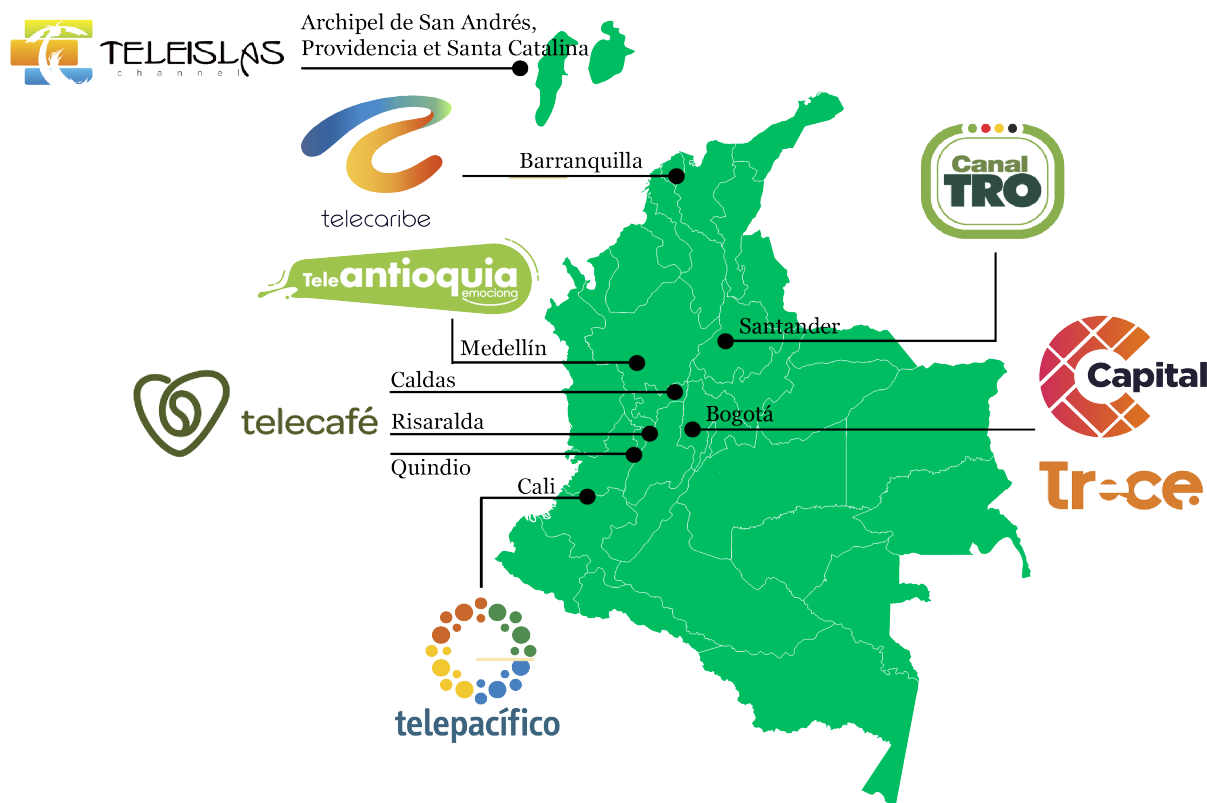
#### • Advertisement

The annual budget from advertising revenues is distributed among the various national and regional channels.

#### • Co-productions

Part of the budget comes from resources managed directly by Señal Colombia / RTVC, collected through their co-productions and/or agreements with national and international, private and public partners. These resources are used to produce new content for the channels.

**At the regional level:** In addition to its national channels, RTVC manages a network of 8 state-owned channels with regional coverage:



Since 2017, the budget allocated to regional public channels by RTVC has increased under the approval of ANTV (former CRC - Communications Regulatory Commission). In 2019, among the 25 series, programs and films produced by the RTVC group, there are about 2 programs per regional channel; the national channels share with Canal Trece the bulk of the productions.

Among the regional productions, there are some international successes such as Turbia (2022), a series directed by the new generation of filmmakers from Cali, produced by the channel Telepacífico present at the 2022 edition of the festival Séries Mania (Lille).

## Co-production Market - Señal Colombia

Presence of Public Television in the Colombian Cinematographic and Audiovisual Landscape.

Annually, Señal Colombia has a budget of 18.5 million euro for its rights purchases and co-productions. This allows the channel to present a limited diversity of content, where large private channels have a much larger annual budget.

Created in 2011, the objective of this mechanism is to open a space for dialogue and exchange between Señal Colombia and film professionals in Colombia and around the world. Each year, the market receives applications in the form of pitches.

- 150 projects per year (between 2019 and 2021) were studied by representatives of the channel and the Ministries of Culture, National Education and Information Technology and Communications.

- Señal Colombia co-produces each year about 12% of the projects submitted with a maximum participation of

60% of the film or series budget. The projects must have previously raised at least 40% of the total budget.

- The funded projects are then shown on the channel and the RTVC Play platform.

- Between 2011 and 2017, RTVC - Señal Colombia co-produced content worth 41.5 million euros, with an investment by the channel totalling 11.5 million euros. This includes the co-production of 97 television series (animated, documentary or other), 40 documentaries and 2 interactive documentaries with Colombian and international producers of 34 different nationalities. In the documentary series and animated films categories for this period, the maximum financial contribution of the channel corresponds to approximately €79,000, the contribution for documentary films not exceeding €20,000 per project.



# Private television

## Overview of private television channels in Colombia

The arrival of private channels modified the audiovisual landscape by competing with the public channels which, until then, had a monopoly on audiences. The two channels (RCN and Caracol) won a tender that allowed them to be registered in the unique register of private operators of the public television service for national coverage. These concessions are extendable for 10 years, with the following economic conditions:

- **Payment of the value of the concession of 95 million dollars**
- **Payment for the use of frequencies set by the National Television Commission television -CNTV-**
- **Contributions to the development of public television in the amount of 1.5% of gross annual revenues payable quarterly**

The strength of Colombia's television industry is partly due to the success of telenovelas produced by these major private channels, such as *Café con aroma de mujer* (1994-1995), which was broadcast on RCN and later adapted and broadcast in 2021 on Telemundo in the United States and on Netflix, or *Yo soy Betty, la fea* (1999-2001), which has been broadcast in more than 100 countries in its original version, dubbed in 15 languages and adapted into 22 foreign language versions. The channel is broadcast nationally but can also be found internationally in 23 countries.

Télévision privée gratuite	
	
<p><b>RCN Televisión</b> (Radio Cadena Nacional TV) is a free private television channel founded in 1967. It began as a television content production company which initially produced no more than 1 hour of programming per day. Since July 10, 1998, it broadcasts and produces its programs as an independent channel. The channel broadcasts mainly telenovelas, but also reality shows (<i>MasterChef</i>, <i>Masked Singer</i>...) or youth programs (<i>Miraculous</i>, <i>Chica Vampiro</i>...). RCN mainly acquires mainstream films (action films, children's films, Christmas films, Easter films, etc.) as well as game and entertainment formats.</p> <p>RCN is part of one of the largest Colombian conglomerates founded by businessman Carlos Ardila Lülle who initiated the channel and produced <i>Yo soy Betty, la fea</i>. It is a powerful player in the Colombian audiovisual landscape with a diversification of its activities (e.g., household appliances) and of its channels: RCN Nuestra Tele Internacional (formerly TV Colombia) available in 25 countries, NTN24, RCN Telenovelas, Win Sports (soccer channel), RCN HD2.</p>	<p><b>Caracol televisión</b> was founded in 1956 as a production company. It was born as part of the Colombian radio network Caracol Radio and was a company owned by the Santo Domingo family (one of the richest and most powerful families in the Americas).</p> <p>In 1969, TVC, a public channel, became Caracol TV, which at first produce content and sold it to public channels as well as acting as programmer. In 1997, Caracol TV obtained the right to establish itself as a private television channel. It began broadcasting on July 10, 1998.</p> <p>The channel provides mainstream programming and has its own news program (Noticias Caracol) which is broadcast four times a day. Caracol TV produces numerous talk shows, telenovelas, reality shows, sports programs, comedies and magazines. The channel is broadcast nationally but can also be found internationally in 23 countries.</p>

## RCN Television

**Programming schedule:** RCN currently operates on a schedule of 22 hours of programming per day divided as follows: entertainment (32%) including talk shows 2.5 hours/day and movies, telenovelas (45%, about 10 hours/day), news (15%, about 4 hours/day), sports (5%), and journalism (3%). The various programs are produced in-house via the production company RCN International or are purchased internationally, mainly from the United States, Europe and Brazil.

## Caracol Televisión

**Programming schedule:** With 50 years of experience in the television industry, Caracol currently produces 5,200 hours of audiovisual content per year, including more than 1,000 hours of original programming (series, films, web series, entertainment programs, telenovelas) through its company Caracol Internacional. Its programs are broadcast in nearly 80 countries and local adaptations of its scripts have become worldwide hits. Caracol TV has produced 31 films, mainly in the genre of comedy and romance.

**Co-production and executive production:** Caracol provides production services in Colombia, including 11 studios (equipped with HD and ranging from 260m2 to 800m2, for a total capacity of almost 20,000m2) dedicated to the execution of productions and co-productions on demand. This has enabled the development of commercial projects with international partners including renowned companies such as Telemundo-RTI, TV Azteca and Sony Pictures Television.

**Co-production with France:** RCN has co-produced some programs with France. This is the case, for example, of *El silencio de los fusiles* (2017), a documentary by Natalia Orozco that traces the negotiations between the Colombian government and the FARC-EP, co-produced with Alegria Production (Fr) and Arte France.

**Film Department:** It was created in 2008 by Diana Bustamante with the aim of giving a new impulse to auteur cinema by expanding Caracol's co-productions beyond the telenovela sector. In recent years, this department, which invests mainly through purchases and not pre-purchases, has financed few films in favor of documentaries that attract a wider audience.

**Co-production with France:** *Les oiseaux de passage* (Pájaros de verano) (2018) by Ciro Guerra and Cristina Gallego, co-produced with Ciudad Lunar Producciones and Blond Indian Films (Co), Film Boutique Production (Fr), Pimienta Films (Mexico) and SnowGlobe Film (Denmark).

**Replay Service:** In 2008, Caracol Play was launched and allows viewers to watch content at a later date.

**Selling programs to Platforms:** Caracol continues to increase its presence on SVOD platforms around the world.

**Presence and rapid evolution of Caracol's programs (TV shows and series) on OTT platforms around the world:**

**2019 : 125 programs**

Plateforme	Prod. Caracol
Tubi	21
Megacable	20
Netflix	19
Claro	18
Telefonica	13
Starz	12
Hulu	8
Prime video	2
Iflix	2

**2021 : 262 programs**

Plateforme	Prod. Caracol	Plateforme	Prod. Caracol
Prende TV	59	Samsung	6
Netflix	32	Telefonica	6
Pluto TV	23	Ivi	5
Huawei	20	Starz	5
Canela TV	19	Ten Time Middle East	5
Tubi TV	19	Alchimie	5
Prime video	11	One Hub	4
Vemox	10	Okko	3
SuperTV	9	MX Player	3
Megacable	7	Zee5	3

Source et suite du tableau :  
Caracol (caracoltvcorporativo.com)

## CityTV, a Private Regional Channel

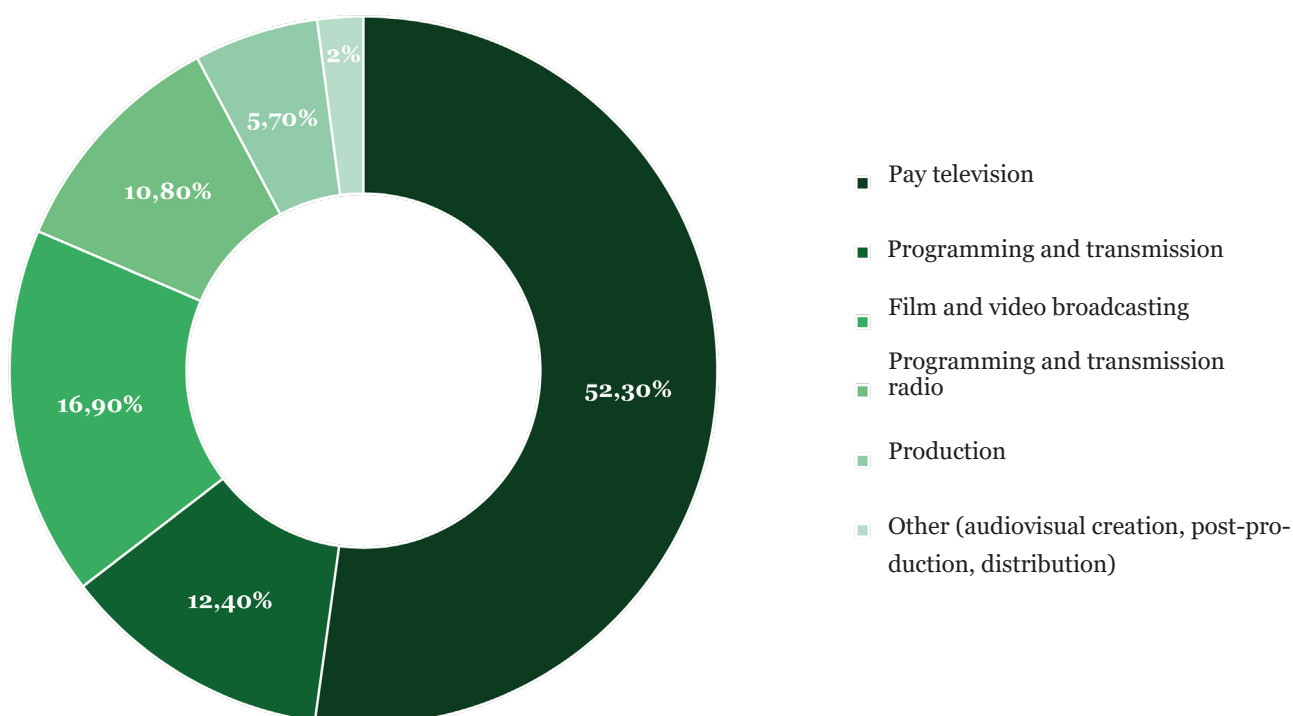
In 1998, CityTV won the tender for Bogotá and became the first and only private local channel in the country, broadcasting since the 19th of March 1999. It broadcasts mainly news programs related to the district of Cundinamarca.

## Financing of Private Channels

Like any television channel **whose revenues are essentially based on advertising**, audiences are essential to maintain a certain level of financing. At present, the proportion of advertising invested in television remains stable despite the increase of advertising investment in Internet content, particularly platforms. In this context, free private television tends to diversify its revenues through different means: co-production, the sale of its successful productions and scripts for adaptations, the diversification of its services (studio rental, commercial site, etc.).

Colombian and international subscription packages, such as Claro TV, Fox or Discovery Channel, attract the highest number of subscriptions. Their foreign programs which are in high demand lead to increased subscriptions and as domestic and international programs are bundled together, these subscriptions generate the greatest added value in the audiovisual industry. Since 2010, there has been a constant increase in the number of subscribers (i.e., a 68% increase in 10 years). While there were just over 3.5 million subscribers in 2010, there were 5.9 million subscribers in 2019.

Average participation by activity in the value added of the audiovisual industry (2014-2019)



Source : DANE

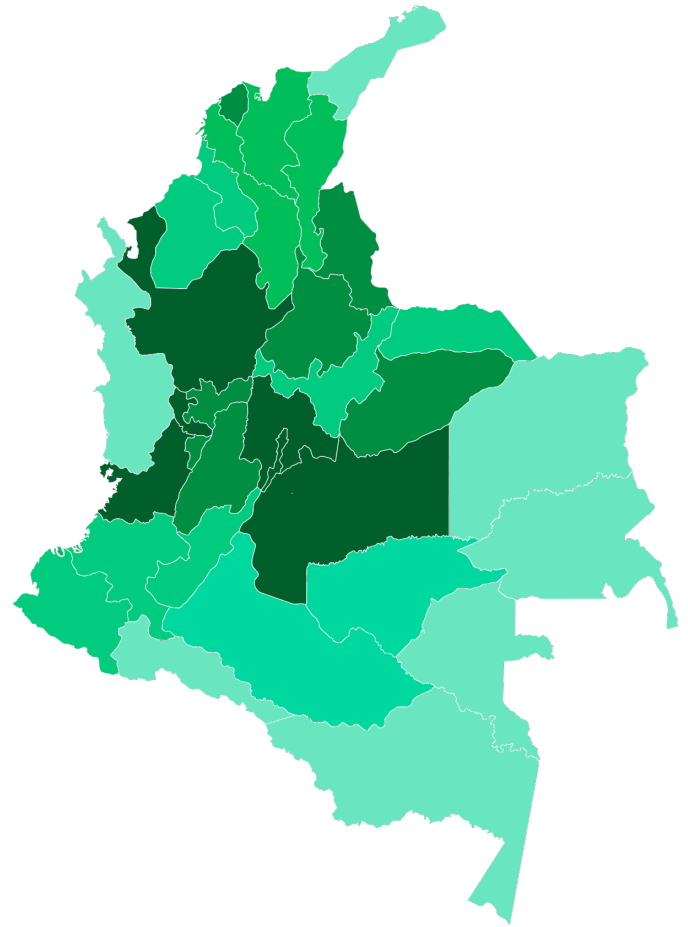
## Platforms

Colombia is the **4th largest digital technology** market in Latin America as well as the country with the third highest number of smartphone users. As the platforms are SVODs, it is necessary for them to have good network coverage and a solid internet infrastructure.

Colombia is one of the worst equipped countries in South America especially in terms of bandwidth. Indeed, according to the ISP Speed report of Netflix, the country has an average speed of only 2.65 Mbps per second, which is far behind other South American countries like Brazil (3.44 Mbps/s), Argentina (3.28 Mbps/s) or Chile (3.12 Mbps/s). Streaming in Colombia is therefore of a lower quality than in other countries in terms of speed and image quality.

Proportion of people aged 5 and over who use the internet anywhere and on any device.

Moins ou égal à 41,9%  
 Entre 42% et 50,8%  
 Entre 50,9% et 59,3%  
 Entre 59,4% et 67,8%  
 Supérieur à 67,8%



## Publics platforms

Public platform: RTVCPlay, symbol of the «*Nueva Realidad*»

# RTVCPlay

Nearly **80 feature-length** documentaries, mostly from Señal Colombia  
 About **40 feature-length fiction films** acquired through rights purchases

In 2016, the RTVCPlay platform was created. It is managed by RTVC and meets two main objectives of the national channels: to adapt the audiovisual sector to the new technological and media landscape worldwide, and to democratize access to culture in Colombia, thanks to a completely free platform and accessibility from anywhere in the world.

On the platform, a variety of content is offered through podcasts, audio documentary series, films and television series of fiction and documentary, and reports, all from the national public channels.

## Original co-productions RTVCPlay

In 2019, the Covid health crisis accelerated the **digitalization process** which had been started by the public group, RTVC. A «new reality» was to be built, which led to several RTVC initiatives :

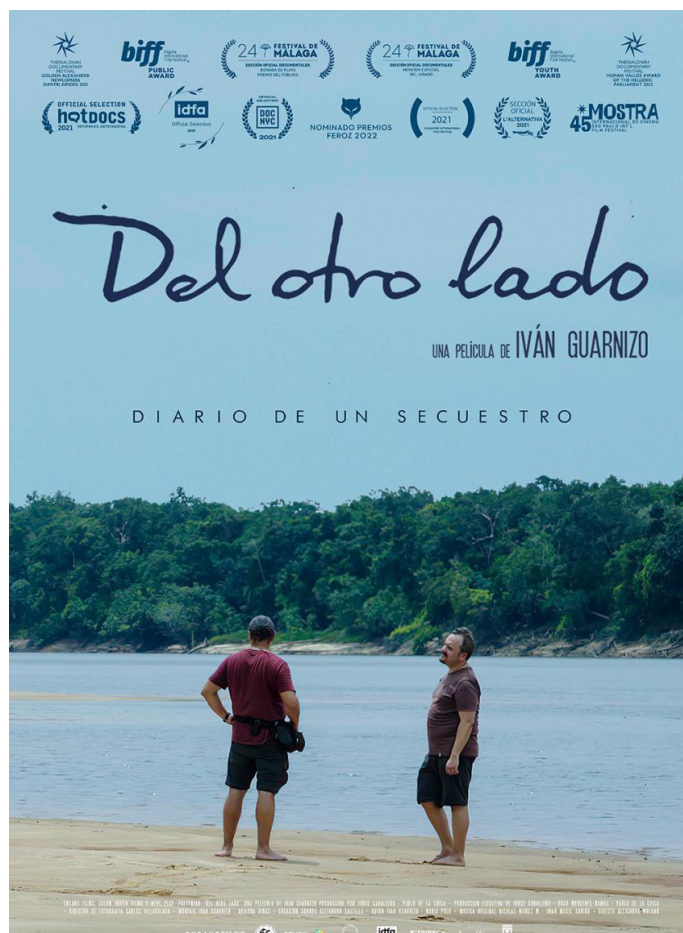
- An agreement with Proimágenes was signed in order to maintain the broadcasting of cinematographic productions during the closure of theaters. The agreement stipulated that RTVC would co-produce feature films that had benefited from the CDF, and in particular, would provide the funds for post-production. These feature films would then appear on the free RTVCPlay platform, which had also co-produced films such as *El árbol rojo* and *La Roya*. This agreement continued the platform's ambitions to provide film content with an international scope. As a result, RTVC has now co-produced 10 films: 7 films in 2020 and 3 in 2021.

- A new strategy "3, 2, 1 edu-acción" was launched by a partnership between the Ministry of Education, the MinTIC and Aprender Digital. The program aimed to deploy resources, both regionally and nationally, to maintain accessibility to education for everyone during the health crisis. 80,000 free digital educational courses were made available to students, parents of students and teachers across the country.

- A regional news channel was created under the initiative of Canal Institucional, Alianza Regional, which continued the policy of decentralization of information that had been initiated in 2014. RTVC had set up a project to consolidate the three production, broadcasting and content transmission studios of Señal Radio Colombia in the cities of Medellín, Manizales and Bucaramanga, in order to retransmit regional news on a national scale.

- The program "Con la lavadora al fondo" was launched, this was a laboratory of sound and audiovisual creations made at home by Colombian artists. These creations, which were mostly family-oriented and aimed at a young audience, lasted a maximum of 2 minutes and were then put online on the RTVCPlay platform.

This set of initiatives reflects a broad policy of cultural development at a regional and national level. RTVC, through its multiple types of content, is mainly aimed at children, young people and students.



*Del Otro Lado* (documentary, 2021, Ivan Guarnizo)



*El Árbol Rojo* (fiction, 2022, Joan Gómez)

## Retina Latina: A Colombian Platform

Retina Latina is a free, public and cooperative international online platform for Latin American cinema. Most of the content is accessible to citizens of Latin America and the Caribbean. It is pioneering in terms of circulating Latin American films and series and it stands out from other platforms due to these objectives:

- **To offer Latin American filmmakers a space to promote their work, expand their audience, and increase their income and visibility in the professional world.**
- **To strengthen regional cooperation**
- **To increase the presence of Latin American films in regional and international markets.**

**An international initiative::** When it was created in 2016, Retina Latina received support from the Inter-American Development Bank (IDB), an international organization that finances economic, social and institutional projects in Latin America and the Caribbean. Since 2017, it has also received support from UNESCO's International Fund for Cultural Diversity (IFCD). The project is coordinated by the Ministry of Culture of Colombia, the member entities are the Ministry of Culture and the Cinematographic Institutes of Colombia, Bolivia, Uruguay, Peru, Mexico and Ecuador.



## Private platforms

### Netflix

The SVOD platform Netflix **has been present in Colombia since 2014 and has just over 1 million subscribers.** It is the most popular platform in the country with 17% market share, ahead of Prime Video (7%), Disney+ (6%) and HBO Max (4%).

Forms	Prices (in Colombian pesos)	Price (in euros)	Price in France
Basic	16 900	3,29	8,99
Standard	26 900	5,23	13,49
Premium	38 900	7,57	17,99

Netflix has decided to adapt its pricing to the economic reality of the country to establish itself in Colombia even though its core market remains North America and Western Europe.

**Production:** The vast majority of Netflix's investment in Colombia is the purchasing of broadcasting rights for Colombian programs. Until the creation of CINA, the few works they produced were mostly in genres which were already popular in Colombia and easily exportable abroad, such as telenovelas or comedies.

Today, there is a clear increase in Netflix productions in Colombia, which takes advantage of the tax credit mechanism, and is quite favorable for their big budget productions.

## Amazon Prime

When Amazon Prime invests in Colombian projects, the platform can finance them up to 100% in exchange for the full broadcasting rights. It gives a certain artistic freedom to the authors and the production company remains in charge of the realization of the project. The films produced by Amazon can nevertheless be shown in theaters for a period of one month before being released online.

Launched on February 17, 2023, the Latino western *The Head of Joaquín Murrieta* is considered to be a key moment in Prime Video's expansion plans. The series, created by Colombian Mauricio Leiva Cock, is one of the biggest gambles Amazon Studios has taken in Latin America. It is co-produced with Amazon Prime and the Colombian production company Dynamo. Murrieta's high production values herald a new scale of projects rarely seen in the Latin American landscape.

## MUBI

MUBI is a British streaming platform dedicated to independent and auteur cinema. It is available in 190 countries, including France and Colombia, and has a unique subscription formula. The price of the subscription varies from country to country. In Colombia, it is about 62,530 (€12.12). It also has a discount for students.

MUBI gathers together independent arthouse films from countries all over the world, including Colombia. The platform has many local films that it highlights in collections specially dedicated to Colombian culture. Its films range from the 1970s to the present day.

In the SVOD landscape in Colombia, MUBI has a much lower penetration rate (less than 5%) than the powerful players in the market such as Netflix and Prime Video. Nevertheless, due to its international catalogue focused on arthouse film aficionados, MUBI has been able to gather a core of subscribers as well as attract the attention of independent filmmakers from the Colombian film industry.

A real partnership is starting to be established with Colombian filmmakers through new co-productions. MUBI is a real alternative for arthouse filmmakers who want to get away from the artistic control imposed by many of the larger platforms. In addition, MUBI does not contractually impose a single release on its service and allows co-produced films to be released in theaters.

## In addition

**Dynamo producciones** : A production company that works with Netflix and Amazon Prime-Latin America

Dynamo Producciones is a Colombian production company that has established itself as one of the leading companies in Latin America since 2006, with a physical and operational presence in Bogotá, Mexico City, Madrid and New York. Its activity consists of developing and producing premium content for the main players in the sector, such as Netflix and Amazon Prime. To date, it has produced a total of 41 feature films, 22 series, and 9 projects in other formats.

They also offer services to foreign producers who wish to film in Colombia, taking advantage of tax benefits such as the FFC and CINA. The series *Narcos* (Netflix, 2015) is a significant example of these collaborations.





Projection au festival FICCI au théâtre Adolfo Mejía (image de Wikimedia)

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# IV

## DISTRIBUTION AND EXHIBITION

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## Access to Cinemas

Even though there are several well equipped and digitised movie theatres they are not evenly distributed throughout the country. It is estimated that about 59% of the population has access to cinemas with **1261 screens** spread around the whole country. Of the total 1123 Colombian municipalities, only 94 have cinemas. However, before the pandemic and the closure of certain cinemas there had been an increase in the number of cinema complexes in the country: there had been only 698 in 2012, i.e. there was an increase of 55% in the subsequent 10 years. This highlights a current dynamism but also the lack of access that had previously existed. The improvements in access were made possible by tax incentives for the creation of new cinemas in the country: exhibitors that reinvested their profits were able to avail of a tax exemption of 50%. This practice allowed the cinema infrastructure to almost double without causing major inflation to the price of cinema tickets.

The greatest concentration of cinemas is still in Bogotá, followed by Cali and then Medellín. This concentration can be explained by a more general political and geographical situation. In fact, the Colombian geographical network is constructed as such that the country's wealth is concentrated in a few large cities, leaving the rest of the country, made up of small and medium-sized municipalities, relatively isolated and in a state of widespread poverty. An effort has been made to decentralize from the big cities, with the notable success story of the city of Bucaramanga having increased its attendance by 60% – benefiting from the development of the region of Santander. However, Bogotá still has the highest number of spectators (10,477,009) and is the city where most Colombian films are shown (307 in total).

The city of Bogotá has the highest number of tickets sold and accounts for half of the overall admissions in Colombia.

**Ticket cost :** Cinema tickets tend to be expensive – except for at the cinematheques, which are more accessible and more dynamic (remember that the average salary in Colombia is about 270€ per month):

- **Bogotá Cinematheque: 1.20€**
- **Art house cinema: from 3 to 6€**
- **Multiplexes: from 4 to 8€**

There is also the possibility of seeing a film outdoors or in a cinema club, which costs less.

**Multiplexes dominance:** Most cinemas are multiplexes and there are only about ten independent cinemas in the country. Cine Colombia, the country's oldest exhibitor which was created in 1927 and which is also a distributor and producer, initiated this trend in 1971 by opening the first multiplex in Colombia. Situating cinemas in shopping malls on the outskirts of cities is often part of a commercial strategy. These remote locations, only accessible by car, are in line with the urban development of Colombian cities where shops are not located in the city centre but in large outlying shopping malls.

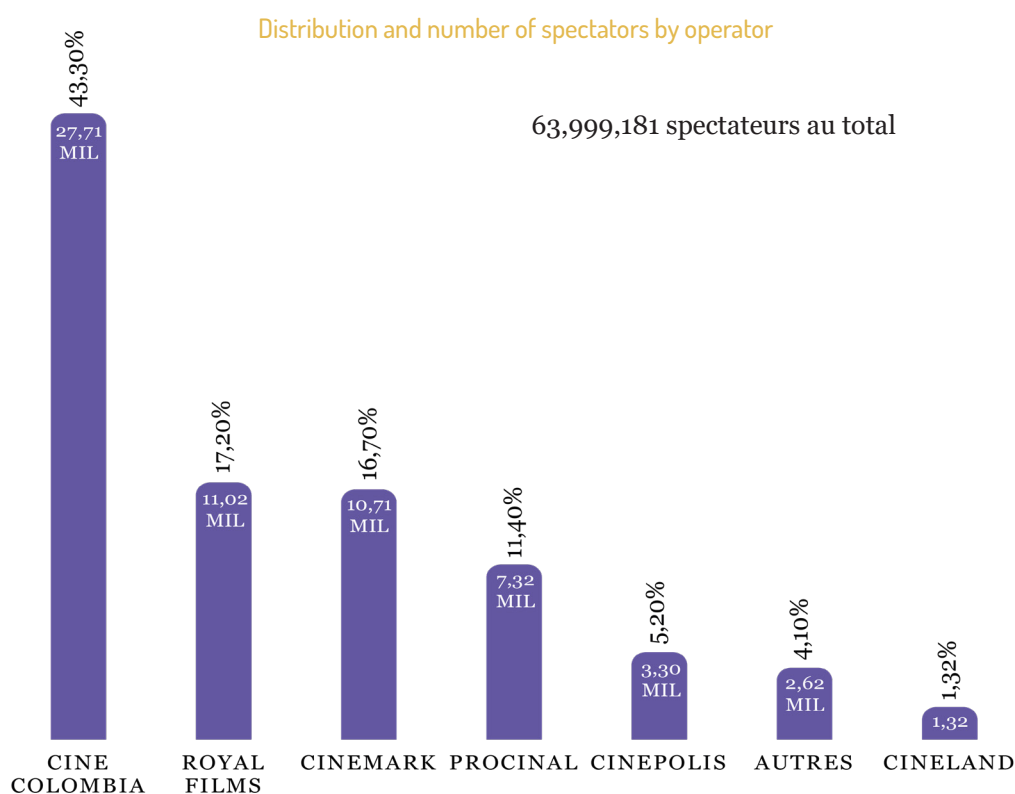
## Monopoly of Exhibition

As in the rest of Latin America, the market is **highly concentrated**: there are five main exhibitors followed by a few small companies that have little weight against this quasi-monopolistic hold. Among the main exhibitors are Royal Films, Cinemark, Procinal, Cinépolis and Cine Colombia, the leading exhibitor in the country.

Cine Colombia has 814 screens which is 64.5% of the total screens, spread over 80 cities, (i.e., 85% of the cities with a cinema), which makes it the company with the largest number of cinemas in the country. It has many multiplexes (an average of 7 screens per cinema) but has also opened a few art house cinemas, notably in Bogotá. In 2018, Cine Colombia was already the leader in the Colombian exhibition market both in terms of cinema attendance and revenue, with 45.6% of the national box office.

In terms of percentage of tickets sold, Cine Colombia is followed by the Colombian exhibition company Royal Films (17.9% of the box office) and the American company Cinemark which also has a base in Colombia (14.2% of the box office).

In terms of the number of screens spread across the country, the company Cinecolor is in second place with 515 screens which is 40.8% of the total screens, spread over 68 cities, (i.e., 72% of the cities with a cinema), and in third place Diamond Films: 139 screens which is 11% of the total screens, spread over 44 cities, (i.e., 46.8%).



Source : Resumen Industria Cinematografica Colombia, Cine Colombia distribucion, 2018, p.14

Thus, 20 multiplexes in the country alone account for 36.5% of the box-office. Before the Covid-19 pandemic and as a relatively marginal phenomenon, alternative cinemas or arthouse cinemas had opened in reaction to these so-called «commercial» or mainstream cinemas.

These cinemas are found in museums, educational institutions, film libraries, associations and cultural centres. In 2017, there were ten alternative cinemas in the country with 1,854 seats.

Summary table of alternative rooms in Colombia

Alternative cinemas	City	Spectators	Average ticket price	Capacity of the cinema
Association Ciné-club Tonalà la Merced (closed during the pandemic)	Bogotá	51 306	1,12€	100
Alliance Franco-Colombienne	Bogotá	205	-	139
Colombian-American Centre of Medellin	Medellín	42 834	1,12€	306
Museum of Modern Art of Medellin	Medellín	19 326	1,27€	256
La Tertulia Film Library	Cali	9 626	1,18€	300
Caribbean Film Library Foundation	Barranquilla	12 972	1,63€	176
Foundation Art Museum of Pereira	Pereira	1 189	1€	300
Cinematheque Distrital	Bogotá	44 105	0,43€	170
Association for the Promotion of the Arts – PROARTES	Cali	-	-	72
Auditorio Cámara Diego Maria Producciones	Manizales	-	-	35

Source : Anuario Estadístico del Cine Colombiano, Dirección de cinematografía Ministerio de Cultura, 2017, p.31

**Health crisis and cinema exhibition:** During the year 2020, cinemas were closed in Colombia for almost a year and a half. The reopening of the cinemas was gradual and was accompanied by numerous restrictions limiting the capacity of the cinemas. Several schemes were introduced to try to create alternatives to the restrictions on cinemas, such as drive-in theaters (however, this alternative suffered a drop in attendance and had to reduce its activity in 2021). Cinema attendance is on the rise again after the Covid years, although it is barely half its pre-pandemic performance. More and more Colombian films are being distributed but attract few spectators compared to foreign films.

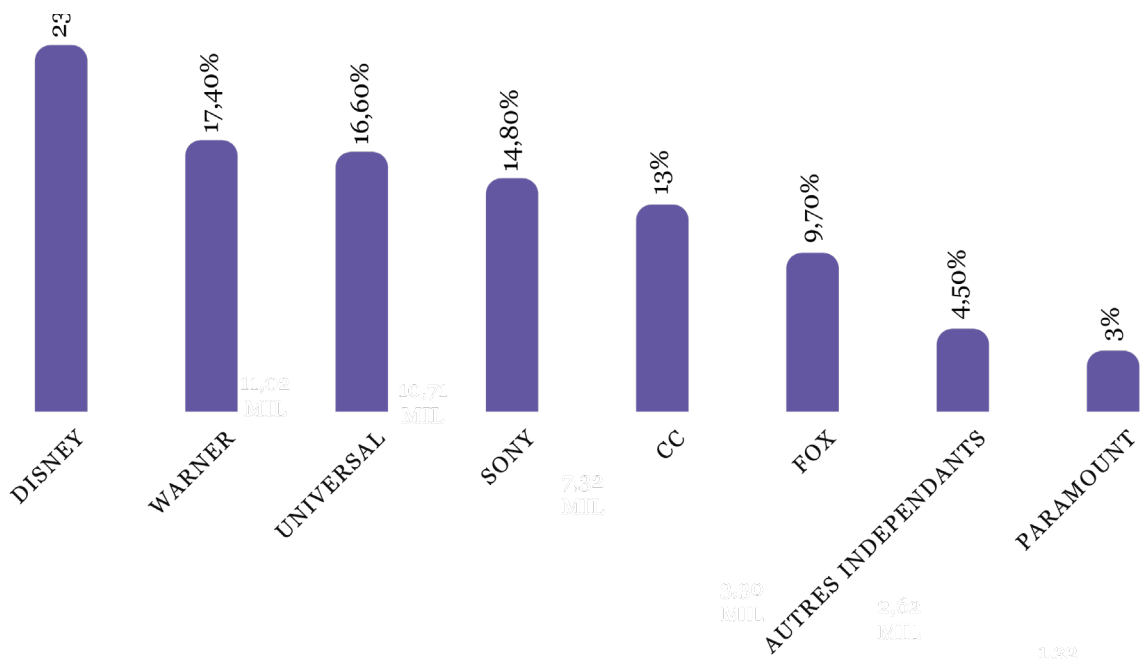
## Cinema attendance

Based on the data for 2018, the attendance rate (spectators/inhabitants) was 0.73%. The population taken into account was 51,609,474 inhabitants. This means that on average, **3 out of 4 Colombians** went to the cinema at least once in 2018. Once again, in 2018, as in the previous ten years, North American films represented the vast majority of films released in cinemas and generated the most revenue (91.93%, of the box office), followed by Colombian films (3.26% of the box office), English films (1.23% of the box office) and French films (0.63% of the box office).

As far as French cinema is concerned, Arnaud Miquel, audiovisual attaché for the Andean countries, reported that there were 40 commercial releases of French films in Colombia in 2022, including Franco-Colombian co-productions.

Although Cine Colombia is also the leader in the distribution of Colombian films, it remains a minor player in the country in this area. As a distribution company, it accounts for only 12.4% of the box office. In Colombia, it is the big American majors that attract the most spectators (82.4%) and generate the most revenue (83.3%). Among them, Disney (24.5% of the box office) is in the lead, followed by Warner (17.8% of the box office) and Sony (14.6% of the box office).

Distribution of viewers by distributor

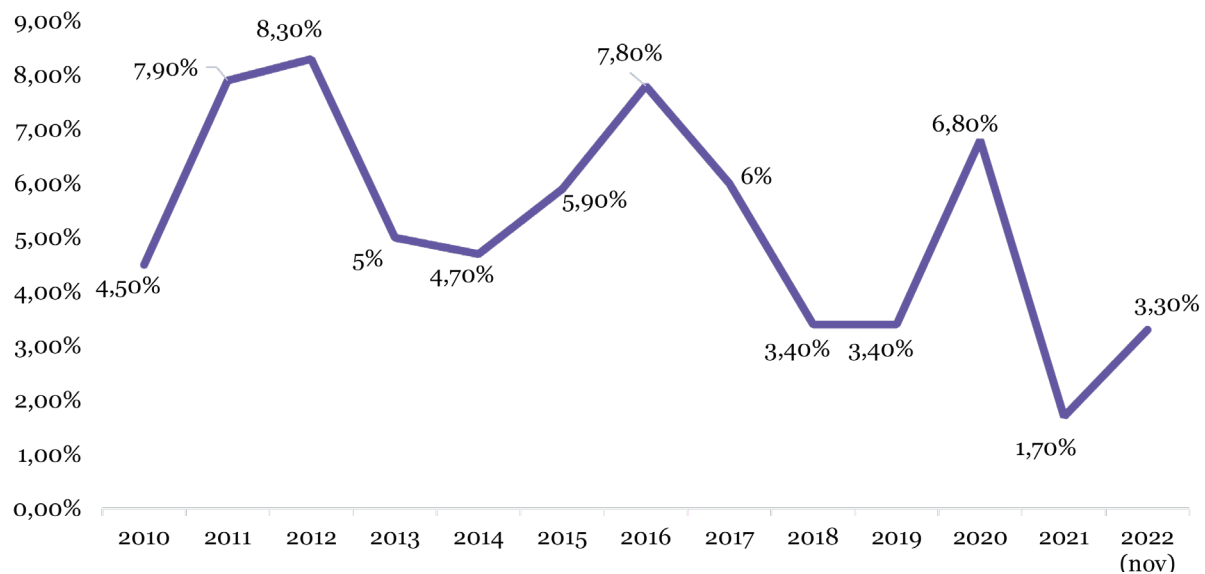


The Colombian films that generate the most revenue are comedies since 73% of the 27,050,845 tickets sold for Colombian films over the last ten years were for comedy films. Of the 323 films due to be released in 2023, 90 (28%) are comedies – the genre with the greatest economic potential. 28% of the films released therefore concentrate 73% of the admissions, thus monopolising the market share.

However, of the overall films on offer, those that generate the most revenue are action films (38%), followed by animation (21%) and horror films (12%). Overall, the most revenue is therefore made by so-called «mainstream» films, especially from American distribution networks, which, like their hegemony and popularity in the rest of the world, work very well in Colombia.

# Colombian Market Share

Evolution of the percentage of admissions of Colombian films in relation to the total number of admissions over 12 years



Source : Cine en Cifras Ed.23, Proimágenes Colombia, 2022, p. 7

Colombian films generate less than 3% of the box-office in Colombia, which represents €82,302,508.

Among these percentages, we observe **great disparities**. In fact, big hits, especially comedies distributed by Cine Colombia, account for the majority of theater admissions. The five biggest successes in Colombian history in terms of theater admissions are the only films to have gathered more than one million spectators: they are *El Paseo 4* - 2016 (1,693,873 viewers), *Uno al año no hace daño* - 2014 (1,634,763 viewers), *El Paseo 2* - 2012 (1,431,818 viewers), *Uno al año no hace daño 2* - 2015 (1,274,314 viewers) and *El Coco* - 2016 (1,154,386 viewers).

While the large American distribution companies achieve the highest number of theater admissions and generate the most revenue, they are not necessarily the ones that release the most projects per year. In 2017 it was Cine Colombia that distributed the most international and Colombian films: 90 in total, which is 73% of the films distributed in Colombia this year. While Cine Colombia is the most prolific and highest-grossing film distribution company of any nationality in Colombia, it is not the one that distributes the most Colombian films.

In fact, the Colombian films released in 2022 were distributed by 16 different companies, of which DOC:CO was the majority company with a distribution of 9 films (17% of the total). It was followed by Danta Cine and Cine Colombia with 8 films each (14.81% of the total). Thus, in the field of national film distribution, the market is quickly saturated since, apart from Cine Colombia, the other independent companies have a small market share. In 2022, with all distributors combined, 54 Colombian films were released, 10 more than in 2019, making it the best year for Colombian film releases. They account for 1.25 million admissions divided between documentaries (46%), dramas (37%), and comedies (11%) followed by mystery and horror films.

However, independent distributors (including Cine Colombia) account for only 16.7% of the box office receipts. Of these independent distributors, Cine Colombia amassed 74.2% of the theater admissions of 2018 with the films they released, particularly mainstream international films.

We can see that there are some comedies released by Cine Colombia which are commercial successes, however it appears that although the supply of Colombian films being distributed is increasing, the audience figures for these films in theaters is decreasing compared to the pre-pandemic period. Indeed, in 2019, the market share of Colombian films was 6.8% of the 75.11 million admissions, while it dropped to 3.3% of the 37.76 million admissions in 2022. If the increase of Colombian films in the market shows a growing dynamism, it tends to make the market increasingly competitive, even saturated in view of the lack of promotional resources, with a decline in attendance.

## Viewing Habits and the Lack of Film Education: The Case of Art House Films

While the supply of Colombian films continues to increase, theatrical attendances are decreasing because distributors are forced to distribute more speculative and uncertain foreign films. Since cinemas were the primary pathway for the distribution sector in Colombia, this phenomenon leads to poor results in theaters for Colombian films. When the films do not find a sufficient national audience, they are forced to look elsewhere for their audience, particularly in Europe, where they aspire to a wider distribution.

In the case of arthouse films, which had gradually developed into a kind of market niche, we see that this drop in attendance is due to several factors, including the pandemic, which has dissuaded some of the older viewers who are fans of this kind of film from going to theaters. For these films with low economic potential, the only way out is often a selection for or a nomination at a major international festival such as Cannes, Berlin or San Sebastian, with the risk of achieving less than 4,000 tickets sold in Colombia. However, even for award-winning films, as was the case for Laura Mora's *Los Reyes del Mundo*, which won a prize in San Sebastian in 2022, the box office remains modest, with around 50,000 theater admissions in the country. This characterizes the film as a «relative national success», despite its strong international recognition.

We can hypothesize some reasons for the growing separation between a larger distribution of Colombian films and a Colombian population who seems uninterested in attending this kind of cinema. Perhaps it comes from the new competition generated by online platforms which siphon away a portion of the potential spectators and tend to homogenize cultural practices all over the world. The predominance of codes and audiovisual grammar linked to or inspired by telenovelas is also a possible explanation: Colombian viewers prefer to watch mainstream works or comedies that borrow the cinematic language and the familiar rhythm of the telenovelas.

We can also point out the small budget allocated to the promotion of these films, the lack of communication tools to reach viewers and the fact that advertising is sometimes left to the producers themselves. Therefore, the work of programming and promoting films is often neglected due to a lack of resources. There is also disproportionate competition from foreign films with a large promotional budget and can include advertising on television – which is permitted in Colombia. Their respective windows of visibility are therefore limited. These factors are all part of a broader cultural context: Colombia does not have a specific system of education in the visual arts or a cinephilia that is instituted and relayed by a specialized press that has a strong prescriptive power. Although the country provides funding to support film production, the same cannot be said for distribution and exhibition.

## Lack of Pathway Structure for the Independent Distribution Sector

With the exception of the Colombian distributors' association, which mainly brings together the major exhibition leaders and excludes small independent distributors who have little influence in discussions and negotiations, the independent distribution sector is not well structured at the association or union level. This contributes to the lack of salary representation in the sector. However, the CNACC includes distributors and operators on its board and the organization Proimágenes has set up financial support to accompany the modernization of theaters, which are now almost all equipped with digital equipment.



It also provides distributors with an automatic funding mechanism that allows them to access a certain amount of the CDF (see [Financing, CDF, p. 23](#)).

In addition to this automatic funding to companies, there is a system of selectively-chosen funding that also gives access to the CDF. There are four types of aid for distribution:

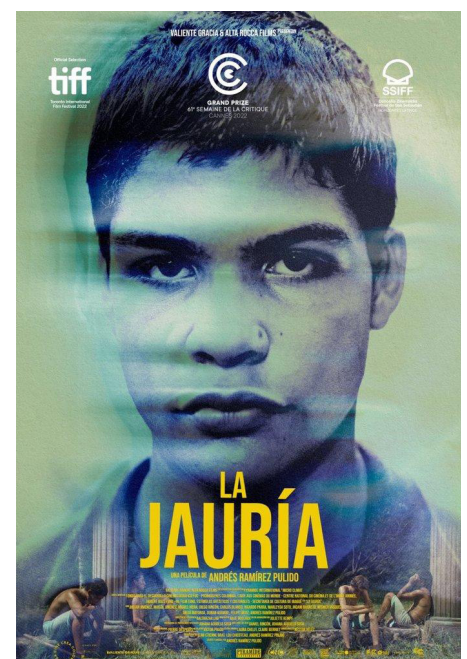
- Support for the circulation of works during special screenings and festivals (€178 000 total budget)
- Support for the distribution of Colombian films (€158,000)
- Support for participation in international markets, workshops, festivals and international awards (€277,000)
- Support for the promotion of feature films to improve box office results through appropriate advertising and communication (€471,000)

However, we can see that the budget to be distributed among the selected projects is relatively low. We can also note the absence of funding mechanisms during the Covid-19 pandemic and the disappearance of financial support from the Europa Cinéma supporting programming through Media Mundus. This fund, created to promote and disseminate European cinema internationally, contributed to the development of the alternative cinema circuit.

## International distribution

Although Colombian cinema is finding an audience within the country itself, whether in its network of cinemas or in its regional and national festivals, its international representation is nevertheless relatively limited. The presence of Colombian films in French festivals, especially in Cannes, has intensified since the 1990s, culminating in the presence in competition of the film *The Little Rose Merchant*, directed by Victor Gaviria in 1998. Since the early 2000s, French-Colombian co-productions have been selected in the various selections of the Cannes festival, such as *The Land and the Shadow*, directed by César Augusto Acevedo in 2015, presented at the Critics' Week and awarded the Camera d'Or. Also, *La Jauría*, a film directed by Andrés Ramírez Pulido, was a co-production between the Colombian company Valiente Garcia and the two French companies Alta Rocca and Micro Climat,

and won the Critics' Week Award and SACD at the last Cannes Film Festival. It has a planned release date of March 22nd, 2023 in France. If France is the main export market for Colombian films, the relationship is reciprocal, as French cinema has met with a certain success among Colombian viewers. In recent years, the box-office for French films in Colombia has continued to improve. In 2019, before the pandemic, French films had more than 785,000 spectators. After the pandemic, only 151,413 Colombian spectators went to see French films. The exhibition and broadcasting of French arthouse films is also solid, mainly due to the Cine Francés en Colombia festival.



Colombia is also a member of CAACI (Conferencia de Autoridades Audiovisuales y Cinematográficas de Iberoamérica), an international organization created in 1989 by the Ibero-American Cinematographic Integration Agreement. This organization is composed of 21 member states, including Argentina, Brazil, Chile and Colombia. It is specialized in the development of the cinema and audiovisual sector in Latin American countries and in

the integration of the different countries into a similar framework of production and regional and international distribution.

Colombia has, in addition to its recent proximity to France, bilateral agreements with three Latin American countries: Argentina, Brazil and Mexico.

## How does Cinema Exhibition in Colombia compare to its Latin American neighbors?

According to Unifrance's annual reports and the data from Box-Office magazine, Colombian's distribution and exhibition sector is among the largest in Latin America. In 2019, Colombia was the 3rd largest film market in the region, generating 177 million euros from the 352 films released that year. This result, lower than those seen in Mexican and Brazilian cinemas (865.7 million and 432 million for 454 and 444 films released respectively), is higher than those in Argentina and Peru (161.9 million and 160.8 million for 494 and 304 films released respectively).

It is important to note that in 2020, this ranking remained unchanged despite the Covid crisis which caused an 80% decrease in cinema attendance, and an 81.3% drop in revenues for the South American continent - including Mexico:

Country	Box-Office 2020 (million \$)
Mexico	190,79
Brazil	150,05
Colombia	35,21
Argentina	31,89
Peru	29,41
Chili	18,71
Ecuador	18,44
Bolivia	9,17
Costa Rica	6,88
Panama	5,83

Source : <https://www.boxofficepro.fr/amerique-latine-etat-des-lieux-2020/>

Indeed, in spite of Colombia's third place ranking, it remains far behind the top two. This difference can be explained by a much smaller population in Colombia and a much larger number of cinemas and screens in Mexico (7493 screens in 955 cinemas) and in Brazil (3500 screens in 842 cinémas in 2019) than in Colombia (1227 screens in 2019).

Even though there is a large disparity between the countries in these results, they all share some similar viewing practices. Unifrance's annual reports show that the top 10 of the 2019 Box-Office in each of these countries was dominated by North-American blockbusters, although there was a national production in the top ten of Brazil (*Nada a perder 2*) and Argentina (*La odisea de los giles*). The latter is a good example of how the national productions in Latin America which can rival North-American blockbusters tend to be comedies - this is also the trend in Colombia.

Another interesting element in Latin American cinema exhibition is the **number of French films** released in the top five markets of the region, and their share of the national box-office. While Brazil is the country that released the most French films in 2019 (70 for 444 films released), Colombia is the country where French cinema held the greatest market share that year (1.1%).

#### Parts de marché des distributeurs

Cinecolor Films Colombia (Disney)	48,6%
Warner Bros	17,3%
UIP (Paramount, Universal)	13%
Cine Colombia	10,1%
Sony	6,7%
Diamond Films	2%
Cineplex	1,2%
Babilla Cine	0,2%

## Festivals and Alternative Exhibition Spaces

### First Film Festival in Colombia: FICCI

The first festival to be held in Colombia was the FICCI (the International Film Festival of Cartagena de Indias). Founded in 1960, it remains one of the most important festivals in the country. Its 62nd edition took place between March 23 and 27, 2023.



FESTIVAL  
INTERNACIONAL  
DE CINE  
DE CARTAGENA DE INDIAS



Traditionally, FICCI focuses its programming on Colombian and Latin American cinema, with a particular focus on promoting local filmmakers and authors. Diana Bustamante was the artistic director from 2014 to 2018, and explains that at the time the festival was 70% financed by various public funds (City Hall, regional, Ministry of Culture) and could welcome 40,000 spectators in a week. In the last few years, the program has broadened to focus more on international films. However, the festival still has a “100% Colombian” section with a selection of recent films that include Afro and Indigenous voices in the public debate on cinema.

The official sponsor for FICCI is the distributor Cine Colombia due to the international reach of the event and its role in promoting tourism in the city and the country. It also has several institutional partners like the Colombian and Bolivian governments or the Spanish Embassy in Colombia and is supported by several national and international media outlets.

## Festivals, film markets and professional networking

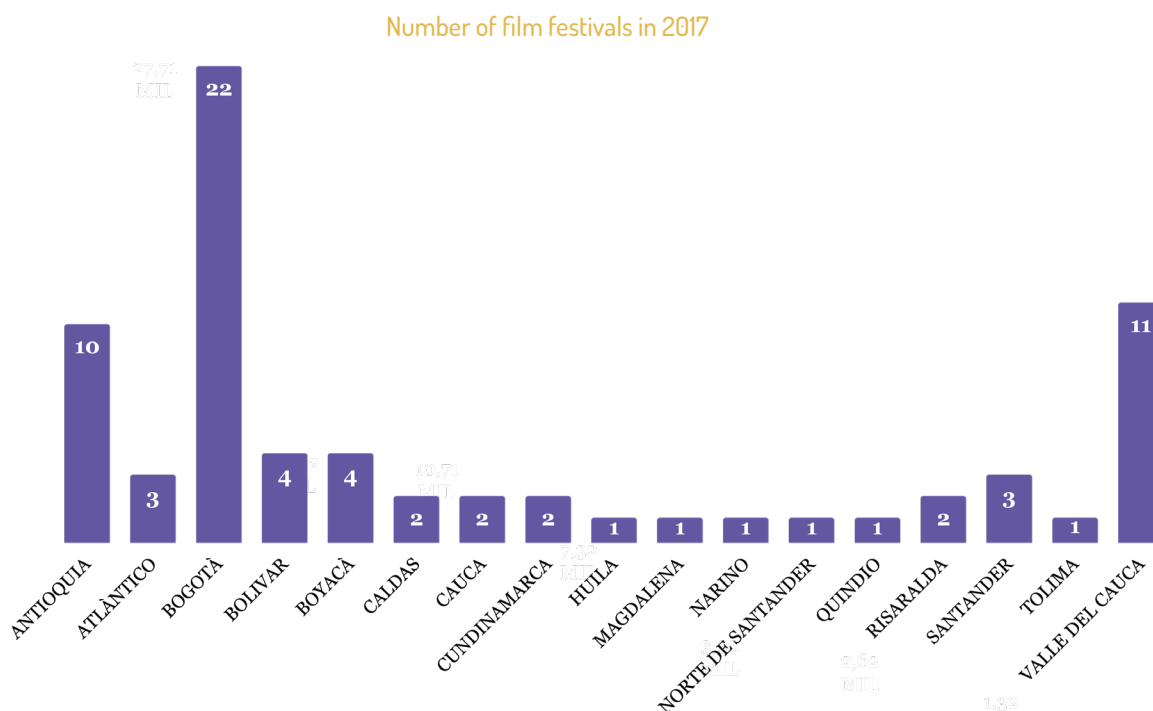
There has been a **significant increase in the number of festivals** over the past 20 years. In 2022, there were around 100 screenings of films and film events in Colombia, but they were still mainly concentrated in major cities. Of the 71 festivals that existed in 2017, 22 are located in Bogotá. Most have a competition and offer awards in several categories. They are largely funded by private investors and are created through the collaboration of distributors, exhibitors, film markets and other strategic business allies, including TV stations, hotels and airlines. One of the most important is the BIFF (Bogotá International Film Festival). It was originally conceived in order to recognise Colombian talent, but quickly extended its programs to international projects.

The festival has become much more diverse and now includes youth programmes, environmental documentaries, short films, screenings for the blind and visually impaired and screenings in prisons across the country. It targets all audiences, especially young people and students. This is also the case of Cinexcusa - the Neiva Film Festival (capital of the department of Huila).

Another important festival is the FICCALI (Cali International Film Festival) which was run by Luis Ospina between 2007 and 2019 (until his death). The festival is also associated with SAPCINE (Cali Film Producers and Projects Fair), a must-see event in the audiovisual landscape. It's a meeting place for academic and amateur filmmakers. Its longest-running category is devoted to short films submitted by film schools and amateur filmmakers.

Most festivals in Colombia have expanded their programming internationally. These events are mainly opportunities to meet, interact or network for the different actors of the audiovisual ecosystem and the public. They are spaces for promoting the visibility of projects excluded from the mainstream market. However, having a Colombian film selected at a festival does not guarantee its success in the country's cinemas. As we have seen, only a selection from top European festivals can influence a movie's release in Colombia.

There are also several festivals dedicated to Western European cinema such as Eurocine, the Festival de Cine Francés or the Ciclo de Cine Italiano.



The association ANAFE (Asociación Nacional De Festivales, Muestras y Eventos Cinematográficos y Audiovisuales de Colombia) is currently organizing meetings and encounters with authors and different actors of the sector to address new perspectives, renew Colombian productions and propose new forms of narration and direction. of the sector to discuss new perspectives, renew Colombian productions and propose new forms of narration and direction. It promotes numerous film events and also distributes awards in festivals such as FICCI. It is chaired by Juan Esteban Rengifo, also the director of the Corto Short Film Festival.

## Going digital

Many festivals are turning **more and more towards digital and new media** in their programming and broadcast methods, for example, #NarrarElFuturo (Creative Commons & New Media Bogotá Film Festival) which has existed since 2013. Its president is Alejandro Ángel, director, producer and university professor at Jorge Tadeo Lozano in Digital and Immersive media. The festival is characterized by including different aspects of the digital ecosystem and the latest audiovisual narrative trends in its

programming including video games, experimental works, docuwebs, transmedia exhibitions, virtual reality (VR) or augmented reality, and productions made with mobile phones.

Moreover, since the Covid-19 pandemic and in a policy of decentralisation, in order to reach a wider audience, some festivals also offer online editions. For example: MIDBO, The International Documentary Showcase in Bogotá,

a very important documentary festival which was created in 1999, launched in digital form in 2020. This mode of distribution allows cinema to be decentralized throughout the country but also gives the works a much greater visibility at the international level.

## Alternative exhibition spaces

Then there are several festivals in Colombia that seek to value local culture and democratize audiovisual education in the most isolated places of the country. This is the case, for example, of the International Festival of Alternative and Community Film and Video, the Fescivi C13 La Otra Historia and the FESDA (Festival Nacional de Cine y Video Comunitario del Distrito de Aguablanca). Some of them are fully focused on the cinema of indigenous cultures, such as the Pasto Film Festival, the Ituango Film Festival, the Muestra de Cine y Video Indígena de Daupará.



«Their greatest strength lies in their integration with the social, cultural or geographical context from which they originate or to which they belong. These are initiatives where the focus of the festival is focused on strengthening the social fabric of the territory. Film festivals and shows are the only way to bring the only way to bring films to the territories. There is no other possibility, because the theaters are in the big cities.»

Mario Viana, director of the Ituango Film Festival.

## Les circuits de diffusion alternative

Alternative Cinemas are defined by the Colombian Ministry of Culture as «**fulfilling cultural, artistic or educational objectives**» rather than having a commercial objective. There are about ten of them in the country with about 1,800 seats and some of them are supported by the Ministry of Culture or the National Program for Cultural Coordination. They are installed in museums, cinemateques or associations. The concept of «alternative cinema» is based on the type of cinema space, the type of films shown, the way the films are programmed, and the fact that the space hosting the screenings is also used for another activity. Although the objective of these cinemas essentially is to show films in the municipalities, they too remain highly centralised. The venues with the largest attendances are located in Bogotá, for example the Cinemateca Distrital (170 seats for 44,105 spectators in 2017) or in Medellín such as the Centro Colombo Americano (306 seats for 42,834 spectators in 2017).

One of the main alternative exhibition mechanisms throughout the country is the Colombian Film Week, dating back to 2004, created and directed by the DACMI. The aim of this event is three-fold. The first aim is to increase the number of spectators for Colombian films. The second aim is to promote the films made in Colombia or made with Colombian talent. The third aim is to strengthen the circulation and distribution of films in the many isolated municipalities that are not equipped with movie theaters

with the ambition of allowing the population to have more equitable access to national cinema. To achieve this ambition, the majority of the films are also broadcast on the Retina Latina platform.

The project is supported by the CNACC and Proimágenes to bring national cinema to the municipalities of the 32 departments of the country. The event is constantly expanding, with the 2016 edition reaching 197 municipalities - 17.5% of the country's municipalities - through 1,800 screenings with a total of 147,761 participants.

EL CINE  
QUE  
SOMOS



*La Jauría* (2022) de Andrés Ramírez Pulido



# CO-PRODUCING WITH COLOMBIA

Although in recent years **more and more co-productions with other Latin American countries** have been set up in Colombia, supported in particular by the Ibermedia program, co-productions remain rare between the other Andean countries (Ecuador, Peru, Bolivia) which have a weaker film and audiovisual industry, little dedicated public funding and a limited capacity to raise private funding.

The majority of production in Colombia remains executive production with companies based mainly in Bogotá (such as Dynamo Producciones) specialised in hosting shoots and providing manpower, as well as technical and logistical resources to large foreign production companies, particularly the major North-American platforms such as Netflix and Amazon Prime.

In this context, international co-production, particularly with Europe, remains one of the most sought-after opportunities for independent producers.

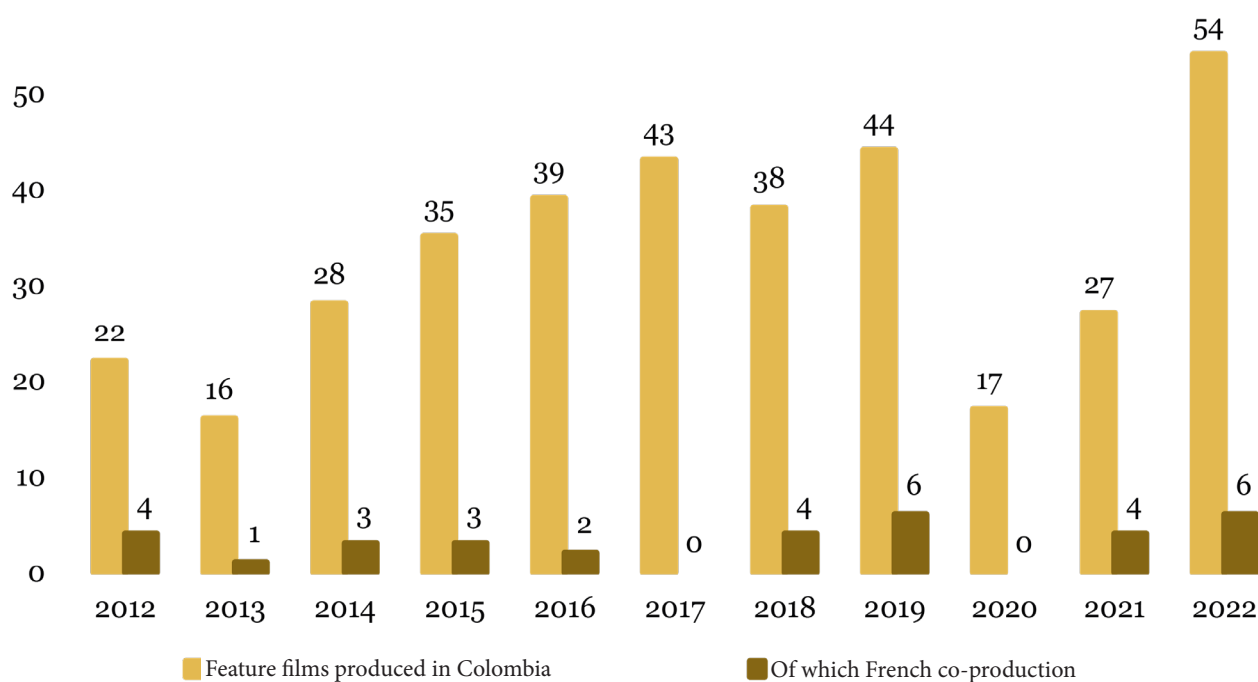
## France-Colombia co-production

Along with Argentina, Brazil, Mexico, Spain and Germany, France is one of the main co-producers of Colombian films. As we have seen previously, in a country that has few independent cinemas and where the majority of the programming of the major exhibitors comes from the North-American major studios, Colombian independent and national cinema is struggling to find its place. Collaboration with France is therefore sought after by Colombian producers for its opportunities to produce independent art cinema due to its network of art house cinemas (the largest in the world), its capacity to provide funds and resources for projects, its many festivals, residencies and spaces to promote films, its qualified technicians and experienced producers, but also for its international image and reputation.

This collaboration led to the signing of a co-production agreement between the French and Colombian governments on 24 May 2013, which has already enabled 28 feature films co-produced between France and Colombia (including 24 dramas and 4 documentaries) to be released.

Of these, 9 films received support from the CNC for “Cinéma du Monde” (World Cinema Grant) (30%) and 20 films received FDC support for development, production or post-production (70%).

Films released in Colombia



Données issues de l'inventaire des films de long-métrage de Proimágenes

*Litigante* by Franco Lolli (2019) - Aide aux cinéma du monde before filming 2019

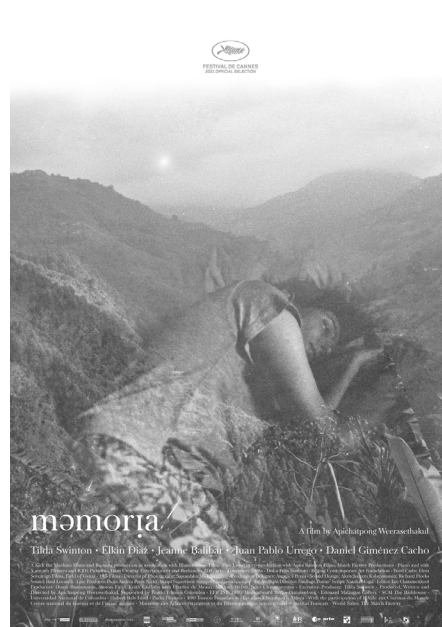


Several France-Colombia co-productions have been awarded in international festivals:



**Grand Prix of the International Festival of San Sebastián:**

*Los reyes del mundo* (2022), 2nd feature film by Laura Mora, produced by Colombian producer Cristina Gallego (Ciudad Lunar Produccionnes), co-produced by Edgar Tenenbaum (Tu Vas Voir, FR)



**Jury Prize in official selection at Cannes**

*Memoria* (2021) by Thai director Apichatpong Weerasethakul, produced by Colombian producer Diana Bustamante (French co-production Anna Sanders Films)



**Golden Camera at the Cannes Film Festival**

*La Tierra y la Sombra* (2015), first film by Cesar Acevedo, produced by Diana Bustamante of Burning Blue Productions (CO) and Thierry Lenouvel of Ciné Sud Promotion (FR)



**GWFF Best First Feature at the Berlinale**

*Los conductos* (2020) by Camilo Restrepo produced by Felipe Guerrero of mutokino (CO) and Helen Olive & Martin Bertier of 5 à 7 Films (FR).



**Best Documentary Award at Torino Film Festival**

*Homo Botanicus* (2019) by Guillermo Quintero, produced by Nicolas van Hemelryck Rodriguez and Clare Weiskopf (Casatarantula, CO), co-produced by Pierre-Emmanuel Urcun (Stank, FR)



**Grand Prix of the Semaine de la Critique in Cannes**

*La Jauría* (2022), premier long-métrage Andrés Ramírez Pulido (French co-production Alta Rocca Films)



**Special Jury Prize, Filmmakers of the Present at the Locarno Film Festival :**

*Los Hongos* (2014), 2nd feature film by Oscar Ruíz Navia, produced by Oscar Ruíz Navia, Gerylee Polanco (Contravia Films) and Diana Bustamante (Burning Blue), co-produced by Guillaume de Seille (Arizona Productions, FR).



**FIPRESCI International Critics Award at the Berlinale Forum**

*Crab Trap (La Barra)* (2010), first film by Oscar Ruíz Navia, produced by Oscar Ruíz Navia, Gerylee Polanco (Contravia Films) and Diana Bustamante (Burning Blue), co-produced by Guillaume de Seille (Arizona Productions, FR)

*La Jauría* by Andrés Ramírez Pulido (2022) – Grand Prix and SACD Prize of the Critics' Week – 75th Cannes Film Festival, 2022



## France-Colombia co-production agreement (since 2013)

Signed in Cannes on May 24, 2013 between the Government of the French Republic and the Government of the Republic of Colombia, this agreement is based on:

- The common will to renew and strengthen cinematographic relations between France and Colombia
- The desire to enhance their common cinematographic heritage

It concerns cinematographic works only (intended for a first screening in cinemas).

### France-Colombia Co-production Agreement - Official text Decree n°2013-928 of October 17, 2013

#### Conditions for eligibility for cinematographic co-productions which can benefit from this agreement:

- The cinematographic co-production project must have already received, once the work is completed, the final approval of the competent authorities of both countries (DACMI for Colombia, CNC for France)
- Artistic and technical collaborators must be either French or Colombian nationals, or nationals of a member state of the European Union or of a state party to the European Economic Area Agreement.
- The cinematographic project must be produced by production companies with a suitable level of technical and financial competency and professional experience recognized by the appropriate authority of the country where they are located. In order to be eligible for this agreement, production companies must also meet the conditions imposed by French or Colombian regulations, depending on the country in which they operate.
- The filming must be done in studios established in the territory of one of the two countries. Shooting in natural settings in a territory that is neither France nor Colombia may be authorized upon agreement of the competent authorities of both countries if the scenario or the action of the film requires it.

**I-Proportion of financial contributions:**

The proportion of the respective contributions of the co-producer(s) of each country in a co-produced cinematographic work may vary from 20% to 80% of the final cost of the cinematographic work.

The technical and artistic participation of the co-producer(s) of each party will, in principle, be in the same proportion as their financial contributions.

Every two years the competent authorities of both countries will examine whether a balance is ensured between the respective contributions to the co-produced works.

**II-Distribution of revenues:**

The distribution of revenues is freely determined by the co-producers. It is specified in the contract between them.

**III-Ownership of the co-produced cinematographic works:**

Each co-producer is a joint owner of the tangible and intangible elements of the cinematographic work. The material is deposited, in the joint names of the co-producers, in a laboratory chosen by mutual agreement.

**IV-Co-operation and circulation :**

All facilities will be granted for the movement and residence of the artistic or technical personnel collaborating in these films, as well as for the import or export to each State of the material necessary for the making and exhibiting of the co-produced films (film, technical equipment, costumes, set elements, publicity materials).

**V-Promotion :**

Credits, promotional trailers and publicity material must mention the co-production between France and Colombia. It must also be mentioned in if the film is presented in festivals.

**VI-Coproduction avec d'autres États :**

The competent authorities of both countries accept that the cinematographic works admitted to the benefit of this agreement may be co-produced with one or more producers from States with which either country is bound by cinematographic co-production agreements.

**VII-Benefits:**

The cinematographic works made in co-production and admitted to the benefit of this agreement are considered as national cinematographic works in both France and Colombia. The work therefore has an exhibition visa and is commercially exhibited in each of the two countries.

The cinematographic works of co-production admitted to the benefit of this agreement can avail of, by right, on the French territory, as well as on the Colombian territory, the advantages which result from the provisions in force relating to the cinematographic industry of each country. These advantages are acquired only by the producer of the country that grants them.

The other points of the agreement concern training in the film industry (facilitating the initial and continuing training of professionals, encouraging the conclusion of agreements or conventions between schools) and cinematographic cooperation: distribution and promotion of cinematographic works (the need to promote cultural diversity through film education programs and participation in film festivals), exchanges of know-how between professionals (artists, technicians, etc.), cooperation between film libraries and film archive conservation organizations.

**VIII-Joint Commission :**

In order to follow and facilitate the application of this agreement and to suggest, if necessary, modifications, a Joint Commission is established, composed of representatives of the competent authorities and professionals from both countries. This Commission meets in principle every two years, alternately in France and in Colombia (it may also be convened at the request of one of the competent authorities).

**IX- Application procedures:**

In order to be eligible for the agreement, producers from both countries must submit a file to the competent authority with their application for admission, prior to the commencement of filming, including:

- A document concerning the acquisition of the author's rights for the exploitation of the cinematographic work
- A synopsis giving precise information on the nature of the subject of the film
- The list of technical and artistic elements
- The work schedule completed with an indication of the number of weeks of shooting (studios and exteriors) and the shooting locations
- A detailed budget and financing plan
- The co-production contract.

The competent authority of the Party with a minority shareholding shall give its approval only after receiving the opinion of the competent authority of the Party with a majority shareholding.

## Implications of this Agreement

- **Benefit from the advantages resulting from the provisions in force relating to the film industry in each country:**

- The French producer will be able to obtain the CNC's approval which will allow him or her to receive money into his or her automatic funding account when the film is released in France and will facilitate the distribution of the film by also allowing the French distributor to use its automatic support account to distribute the film in France
- The Colombian producer will be able to apply for selective and automatic funding from the CDF (including funding for minority co-productions and support to accompany the film in festivals) and benefit from tax incentives (CDF or 165% tax deduction for Colombian investors). The Colombian exhibitor will pay only 5% (instead of 8.5% for non-Colombian films) of parafiscal tax for the FDC on the film's box office

- Films produced under this agreement are considered to be national cinematic works in France and Colombia. As such, they benefit in France from theatrical distribution and access to the AFCAE network of arthouse cinemas, easy access to French and European festivals, promotion by Unifrance, and their presence in French media libraries and archives. In Colombia, they acquire the National Product Certificate (CPN) which allows them to benefit from the advantages established by the relevant legislation (see: previous section).

This last aspect **can pose a real problem** in the case where the French producer would negotiate 100% of the rights for his or her territory, France, leaving 100% of the rights to the Colombian producer for Colombia, as it is usually done in co-productions. The size of the French market surpasses that of the Colombian market and the distribution and broadcasting of the films is mainly done in France. The size of the French market exceeds that of the Colombian market, and the distribution and diffusion of films is done mainly in France, a country with an important network for the promotion of films (art house cinemas, festivals, television). This distribution would cause an unbalanced relationship that could be similar to a form of neo-colonialism. This is the reason why, in recent years, discussions and negotiations have taken place to consider a more equitable sharing of film rights (and therefore revenues), with a preferred solution a sharing of territories in proportion to the contributions of each co-producer.

**It should be kept in mind that meeting the criteria of this agreement is not always feasible, that it is only met once every two years and that the request must be made before shooting begins, so many co-productions are made therefore many co-productions are made in an «unofficial» way.**

## The role of audiovisual attachés

In this collaboration, the audiovisual attachés of the Andean countries have an important role to play. Thanks to their precise knowledge of the economic and political system, they can be the interface that allows Colombian and foreign professionals to meet. When a Colombian producer seeks to co-produce with France, it is the audiovisual attachés who inform him of the financial aid that exists in France, of the editorial line of French production companies, and provide the contacts. The attachés invite professionals from other countries for training, workshops, or residencies in order to encourage collaborations between countries. The strategy also works in the opposite direction: Colombian professionals are supported and accompanied in their projects to allow them to access French festivals such as CinéLatino, and to participate in co-production meetings.

## Co-production markets



### Bogotá Audiovisual Market

The BAM is Colombia's most important audiovisual market and the result of one of the essential missions of Proimágenes and Bogotá's Chamber of Commerce: to offer meeting opportunities to the various agents of the audiovisual sector in order to encourage exchanges between professionals, develop new companies and promote new talent.

The BAM is a film market that centralizes the supply of national audiovisual content and seeks to gather the best possible demand for the creation of a sustainable and internationally competitive industry. For the past 13 years, the BAM has been identifying, strengthening and giving visibility to the country's audiovisual creators with its various themes and formats, facilitating both the circulation of its content at the national and international level, and the creation of alliances for their financing. Every year the BAM welcomes French professionals (sales agents, producers, and distributors) to consolidate cooperation and co-production opportunities between the two countries.



**Festival Biarritz  
Amérique Latine  
Laboratoire**

### Co-production Meetings at the Biarritz Festival of Latin American Cinema:

For the past 7 years, The Biarritz Festival of Latin America has been organizing meetings centered around the topic of co-production, with the support of the Nouvelle Aquitaine Region, the ALCA agency, and the CNC. These meetings aim to facilitate cooperation between French and Latin American professionals and artists. Within this framework, the directors and/or producers attending the festival to present a film in the official selection will be able to present their next projects to producers and sales agents interested in coproduction with Latin America.

At the end of the meetings, three prizes are awarded to selected projects: the CNC Development Fund and the Bal-Lab Fiction and Documentary Prizes, consisting of the translation of the winning scripts into French. Since 2022, 3 new prizes have been added to the list, thanks to the support of the industries of the Nouvelle-Aquitaine region: the Cristal Publishing Prize, a grant for the creation of an original score; as well as two additional grants the Post-Production Prize for Color Grading and the Post-Production Prize for mixing.

## Foro | Europe-Latin America | 20 Co-Production Forum | 22

### The Europe-Latin America Co-production Forum in San Sebastian:

Launched in 2012, this forum is open to Latin American and European projects which are still in the development phase. European projects are required to have a direct link with Latin America which can take many forms: the involvement of a Latin American producer, the filming takes place on location in the region, the casting of Latin-American actors in the main roles, or the storyline itself. Film Projects of fiction, non-fiction, animation, and other transmedia projects, are eligible provided they are of a minimum duration of 60 minutes and have already secured at least 20% of the project's financing. Within the framework of the forum, there are some considerable prizes awarded, such as the prize for the best project – the DALE! prize (Latin American-European Development) – and the international ArteKino prize.



### Cinélatino's "*Cinéma en construction*" and "*Cinéma en développement*":

In 2002, the San Sebastian Film Festival and the Rencontres Cinémas d'Amérique Latine de Toulouse joined forces to organize a «Cinema in Construction» section reserved for Latin American independent feature films which are stuck in the post-production phase due to a lack of funds.

"*Cinema in Construction*" aims to stimulate interaction and cooperation between the producers of the selected 'works-in-progress' and potential European partners, so that their films can be released in theaters and find their audience. With more than 300 professionals participating in these sessions, Cinema in Construction is the strategic meeting point with Latin American cinema, and professionals connected to Latin America.

Another device established within the framework of Cinelatino is "*Cinéma en Développement*", which welcomes about twenty directors or producers each year. These filmmakers bring a film project of fiction, documentary, animation, augmented reality or experimental cinema which is at the writing, development, financing, or post-production phase. The objective is to put them in touch with potential European partners, producers, salespeople, distributors, and TV channels.

### Panorama of colombian cinema at Paris (PACCPA)

For the past 10 years, the Panorama du cinéma colombien, supported by the association "Le chien qui aboie", has offered spaces for encounters with Colombian and Latin American cinema. These spaces are varied and include screenings, round tables, debates, and exhibitions. They offer the chance to explore and discover not only a booming cinema sector, but a country and culture, in continual transformation.

## Why Co-produce with Colombia?

There are other reasons beyond the advantages of the co-production agreement and the various tax incentives which attract film shoots and productions to Colombia. Institutions like Proimágenes have the desire to create challenging cinema, which is aware of the country's historical and social realities. They favor a pool of directors with great talent whose ability to carry powerful universal messages is confirmed by their presence and critical recognition in many international festivals (including Cannes, Venice, Berlin, and San Sebastián).

The films are supported by committed producers such as Diana Bustamante, Cristina Gallego, Alexander Arbelaez, and Oscar Ruíz Navia, who regularly co-produce with France and other countries internationally and are sought after for their expertise. Diana Bustamante, for instance, was an executive producer for the Thai director Apichatpong Weerasethakul (Palme d'Or in Cannes in 2010 with *Uncle Boonmee*) even though the Colombian funding contribution represented only 15% of the film's budget (the main contribution being Mexican).



*Uncle Boonmee* de Apichatpong Weerasethakul



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# VI

## FILMING IN COLOMBIA

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## Filming in Colombia

Thanks to the richness and diversity of its climate and territory, Colombia **has a strong diversity and variety of filming locations**: from glaciers to tropical rainforests, high plateaus, large valleys, two oceans, deserts, rivers, lakes, lagoons, and thousands of animal and plant species. It is considered to be one of top five most biodiverse countries in the world due to its natural beauty. Furthermore, the stability of its different climates throughout the year guarantees flexibility in filming. The country's main cities, are as eclectic as they are cultural, and offer a range of possibilities for different activities, colors and stories.



### Visas

The Ministry of External Relations issues (Type-V) Courtesy Visas to artistic, technical and production personnel who enter the country for the purpose of carrying out international audiovisual projects. However, French nationals are not among the restricted nationalities for entry into Colombia, and thus do not require a visa if their stay is short (less than 90 days) and this facilitates travel for French co-productions.

### Certification of Foreign Audiovisual Projects

The certification is issued by the Ministry of Culture (authorization for filming in the national territory) or by Proimágenes (certification of the foreign audiovisual work), depending on whether the project is a cinematographic work (feature film or short film) or another audiovisual format (series, music videos, video games). Only the application for certification for a cinematographic work is free.

### Permits to film

Authorization for filming is required in Colombia, not only in the cities but also in national parks, archaeological areas, or if you want to film with drones:

Production companies wishing to use the capital, Bogotá, as a filming location should contact The Bogotá Film Commission, which is responsible for granting and issuing permits. To film in Medellín, the Commission FilMedellín accompanies the overseeing of the necessary permits for the use of public space or public property for audiovisual purposes, whether commercial, cultural, artistic, or academic. This application is issued by the City Council of Medellín. To film, record or take photos in national protected areas, the request must be made to the General Directorate of the Special Administrative Unit of the Natural Parks System.

## Future Perspectives for the Cinema and Audiovisual

The last decade has seen the development of **major mechanisms** to strengthen the cinema and audiovisual industry in Colombia, especially through the policies of Proimágenes. In order to accompany this growth, film professionals and technicians from new training programs have gradually come through to meet the demands of the sector. The tax incentives initiated by this development policy have given rise to a network of executive production companies specialized in hosting film shoots, but also to the arrival of North-American platforms such as Netflix or Amazon, who are progressively establishing their presence in the country and their interest in Colombian productions. Despite the country's growing appeal for international productions, a concern remains among the country's professionals who see their independent cinema sector as inadequately supported by public institutions and private entities, in addition to a strong dependence – heightened by the Covid crisis – on the cinema box office quota which funds the CDF, in spite of a post-Covid recovery.

The main issue therefore seems to lie in the exhibition infrastructure, which reinforces the predominance of North American culture in the country. The cinemas that have reopened after the Covid period mainly attract audiences for Hollywood films; at the same time, the lack of independent cinemas pushes independent productions to target European countries, particularly France, which has a much more attractive network of art house cinemas.

A second aspect desired by directors and producers is the decentralization of the funding system. They favor a structure which would increase regional funding mechanisms that support home-grown debut and second feature films which are connected to the region and thus allow new talent to emerge. Medellín has opted this policy over the past decade by funding short films and offering grants to audiovisual companies. As a result, it has quickly positioned itself as the second city of cinema in Colombia, dethroning Cali, the historical birthplace of Colombian cinema. At present, Cali does not have any established mechanism for the funding of the cinema and audiovisual sector; any local grants depend not on the national government but on the political will of the mayor of the day who is appointed every 4 years.



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- Proimágenes, Base de données des long-métrages colombiens, [www.proimagenescolombia.com/secciones/cine\\_colombiano/peliculas\\_colombianas/resultados\\_peliculas.php?nt=1ecisión](http://www.proimagenescolombia.com/secciones/cine_colombiano/peliculas_colombianas/resultados_peliculas.php?nt=1ecisión)

# MASTERS COURSE OVERVIEW

The Master's degree in Cinema and Audiovisual Production aims to train cultural entrepreneurs in the field of the moving image (cinema, audiovisual, interactive productions), who are capable of putting into practice the technical, artistic, legal and financial means involved in the film production process. Emphasis is placed on the international dimension, through the various interventions of professionals and the organization of a seminar on European co-production, in partnership with the Cinemed festival in Montpellier and Cinélatino in Toulouse. The program combines theoretical training (September-March), with classes and workshops given by many experienced working professionals who are experts in their field, and an internship of 4 to 6 months in the second half of the year (April-September). This Master's Degree in Cinema and Audiovisual Production is directed by Vincent Deville (Senior Lecturer in Cinema) and Serge Lalou (Producer at Films d'Ici - Paris and Films d'Ici Méditerranée - Montpellier, an experienced industry professional associated with the University Paul-Valéry).

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**Oscar Ruíz Navia**, Director and Producer (Contravía Films)  
**Hector Ulloque Franco**, Director and Producer (Chakalaka Films)  
**Alexander Arbelaez Osorio**, Producer (Monociclo Cine)  
**Paola Pérez Nieto**, Producer (Inercia Películas)  
**Andrés Ramírez Pulido**, Director and Producer (Valiente Garcia)  
**Thierry Lenouvel**, Producer (Ciné-Sud Promotion)  
**David Hurst**, Producer (Dublin Films)  
**Louise Bellicaud**, Producer (In Vivo Films)  
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