

SUSTAINABILITY OF FILM COMMISSIONS

Analysis of environmental, social, and economic measures for sustainable audio-visual production

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ABSTRACT

Film commissions integrate sustainability guidelines into film and television production. As organisations that manage locations and link the audiovisual industry with tourism and cultural heritage, film commissions provide the audiovisual industry with various tools and services to produce works that meet audiovisual sustainability in its triple dimension: environmental, social and economic. This study analyses the objectives, indicators, initiatives and resources of the Spanish film commissions regarding sustainability. These actions include guidelines and recommendations, catalogues of good practises, carbon footprint calculators, training actions, communication and dissemination work and training for different professionals in the audiovisual sector. The main findings and conclusions confirm that despite the progressive integration of sustainability measures in film and television production, further progress is needed in terms of legislation, standardisation of sustainability criteria, financial support for sustainable productions and, above all, the transfer of knowledge and skills for the professionals of the future.

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1. Introduction

The locations of films or television series have an essential purpose: they serve as a stage for the recording of images and sounds that will be part of an audiovisual production. However, they are not only the physical space where filming takes place, but also fulfil other, equally fundamental economic, social and environmental functions (Evans et al., 2020; Osácar, 2022).

Firstly, film locations create significant economic value for the place where the production takes place (Roger-Monzó, 2022). The shooting of a film or television production has a very large direct impact on the area in which it takes place, either for the private sector (accommodation, travel, etc.) or for the public institutions and administrations involved (taxes, fees, etc.). The hiring of local companies as providers of audiovisual services —technical equipment for camera and sound, set construction, costume design, etc. — or the training of future audiovisual industry professionals locally —courses, schools, etc.— (Victory, 2015) enrich an industry that is already mobilising many economic resources.

Secondly, these natural environments that serve as backdrops or film sets become tourist destinations (Martínez Puche & Martínez Puche, 2010). Streets, parks, beaches, buildings or even entire urban or rural enclaves (Márquez-Ballesteros et al., 2021) become iconic reference places for tourists, as if they were open-air museums or historical monuments. This increases the special interest of the film or television location as a holiday offer that includes cultural visits or leisure activities related to the film or series (Huerta-Viso et al., 2024). Audiovisual content and tourist trips, in this sense, share a common narrative stem: the search for fun, escape and knowledge (Beeton, 2001; Beeton, 2005).

Thirdly, from a socio-cultural perspective, a particular place can help to preserve and disseminate the historical heritage of a geographical enclave: Events, personalities, works of art, languages, customs and other notable components of a particular community's idiosyncrasies are disseminated worldwide thanks to the film footage that places this previously unknown place on the international map (Heitmann, 2010).

Audiovisual content creates social identity, fosters community bonds and constructs powerful symbolic realities that influence perceptions of a particular country or territory —as in the case of Indian, Korean or Turkish content (Croy, 2010). For example, early Hollywood flourished in the second decade of the 20th century as the epicentre of major ventures in the American film industry due to the favourable climate or the number of hours of natural daylight available throughout the day, producing a type of cinema and socio-cultural representations that is the most important cultural reference in audiovisual history.

In this sense, the audiovisual industry as a whole is considered a strategic sector with high added value, as it employs an intensive and specialised workforce and promotes the development of other sectors such as technology or tourism (Álvarez-Monzoncillo, 2024). Film or television recordings become important hubs for the scientific, technical or commercial development of a variety of related industries (European Audiovisual Observatory, 2024). The construction of audiovisual centres such as Ciudad de la Luz in Alicante or Madrid Content City in Tres Cantos will become focal points for investment, innovation and training in the geographical area in which they are located.

Therefore, it is necessary to analyse the sustainability of film and television production sites as intensive employment centres, tourist destinations, sources of wealth or relevant socio-cultural spaces for the community (Lopera-Mármol & Jiménez-Morales, 2021), taking into account the three basic dimensions of sustainability —environmental, social and economic— to create a shared vision of the impact of audiovisual activities on the local environment in which they take place. Although the focus is usually on the environmental dimension, due to emerging climate change, all three are not only interlinked but also equally important (Bhattacharyya et al., 2021; Paz Gil et al., 2024).

In a very short period of time —sometimes just a single day— a shooting has a significant impact in each of the three dimensions: At the environmental level, it changes the space by

adapting the location to the needs of the shoot; it consumes abundant resources —for example, energy sources for transport and lighting— and it generates a very large amount of waste. On a social level, the population is actively mobilised, the location gains presence or notoriety in the media, or it changes the immediate environment of a particular community by occupying public space or stopping traffic, among other things. On the economic level, a film shoot invests considerable material and human resources in the location and brings direct and indirect benefits for local service providers and suppliers.

Actually, according to the Sustainable Production Alliance's Carbon Emissions of Film and Television Production (2021) report, the carbon footprint of the audiovisual sector in the United States is not insignificant: emissions associated with the film and television industry range from 391 tonnes of CO₂ for a low-budget production to 3370 tonnes for blockbusters. In the European context, the BAFTA Annual Report Albert (2023) states that the production of one hour of television content generates a carbon footprint of 16.6 tonnes of CO₂ and, more importantly, has increased by more than 30% in just one year. The report *A Screen New Deal. A Route Map to Sustainable Film Production* (Albert et al., 2020) provides very clear data and examples: A single day of film or television production generates more carbon footprint than a person does for a whole year or, to put it another way, a single hour of filming is equivalent to the environmental impact of a flight from London to New York.

The so-called 2030 Agenda, which was adopted by the United Nations General Assembly (25 September 2015), is the global action plan on which industries that want to be sustainable are based (Lubowiecki-Vikuk et al., 2021). Any possible business model based on the circular economy (Camacho-Otero, 2018; Corvellec et al., 2022), as the audiovisual industry can become, must take into account the 17 Sustainable Development Goals (European Commission, 2022; United Nations, 2025), especially, but not only, the SDGs specifically related to responsible production and consumption (Akehurst et al., 2012).

In this sense, the cultural industry cannot stand outside the sustainability of the system itself (KEA-European Commission, 2019) and the creation of audiovisual content has a clear political-social aspect as it depends on public institutions and facilities in this particular area of sustainable production (Dickinson & Harvey, 2005).

Among the various actors involved in the sustainability of the audiovisual industry — production companies, institutions, eco-management companies, suppliers, streaming platforms, cinemas, festivals, etc.— film commissions occupy a prominent position due to their fundamental role in the management of film locations and their direct link to the urban or rural environment.

A film commission or film office is a public or private organisation whose main objective is to promote the attractiveness of audiovisual productions for a specific territory —country, region, city, etc.—. In Spain, the different film commissions are linked to one of the three levels of public administration: the state, autonomous or local level, with which they either work closely or to which they belong directly. At national level, for example, the Spain Film Commission or Asociación Española de Comisionados de Filmaciones, Cine y Televisión, founded in 2001, is a non-profit organisation that works together with the Spanish government and other regional or local institutions. The national film commissions are themselves part of other interconnected supranational networks, such as the Association of Film Commission International (AFCI) or the European Film Commission Network (EFCN).

The film commissions carry out the following specific measures (Table 1): Creation of catalogues and inventories of locations in a given area or region —protected natural spaces, urban centres, infrastructures, etc.—; coordination and management of locations in a given geographical area; offer of specialised services, nearby suppliers, professional technicians and, in short, of all the logistical and material facilities required for filming; promote their locations in international competition; open up new markets and business opportunities for a country, city or region; provide information on the legislation applicable to the production of an audiovisual work in a given location; to have a direct dialogue with the central, regional and local administration in order to promote the audiovisual industry in the different territories; to act as an intermediary to

manage visas or permits and streamline bureaucratic procedures; to advise the different governments on the creation of an efficient system of fiscal incentives; promote the attraction of audiovisual tourism and complementary leisure activities related to film and series locations; collaborate with festivals and local organisations to carry out marketing activities; and compile reports and statistics on the use of locations in national and international productions.

Table 1. Sustainability actions of film commissions

Areas	Measures
Filming locations	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> • Creation of catalogues and lists of filming locations (protected natural spaces, urban centres, infrastructures, etc.) • Coordination and management of film locations
Services and suppliers	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> • Specialised services, local suppliers and professional technicians • Mediation in the management of visas or authorisations and other bureaucratic procedures
Logistics	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> • Provision of the logistical and material facilities required for filming
Communication	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> • International promotion of locations as a filming locations • Direct dialogue with local, territorial and municipal administrations • Collaboration with festivals and local organisations • Reporting and statistics
Market and tourism	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> • Development of new markets and business opportunities for a country, city or region • Strengthening the audiovisual industry in the various territories • Advising the government on the creation of efficient tax incentive systems • Promoting audiovisual tourism and complementary leisure activities
Legislation	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> • Information on current legislation

Source: own elaboration (2025)

Each of these heterogeneous coordination, promotion and stimulus functions implies the adoption of different environmental, social and economic measures. In this sense, a detailed analysis of film commissions will allow progress towards a more efficient, innovative and, above all, sustainable audiovisual industry.

2. Methods

The basic research questions of this study are: Do film commissions apply sustainable policies to the productions they manage? What concrete measures are taken during filming? Do they provide tools or services for sustainable production? What relationships do they maintain with the audiovisual actors directly involved in a filming (production companies, suppliers, etc.)? Do they provide valuable information and training on the subject? What current problems are they facing and what development and optimisation opportunities are there for them?

The aim of this research is therefore to know and evaluate the main actions carried out by film commissions in the three dimensions of sustainability in order to achieve more environmentally friendly film work that creates social well-being for citizens as a whole and is economically viable.

To this end, the sustainability actions of all the film commissions operating in Spain, which are grouped together in the Spain Film Commission association (<https://www.shootinginspain.info/en/>), were analysed. The network consists of 47 film commissions and film offices belonging to local councils, autonomous communities and other public and private organisations (Table 2).

Table 2. Universe of the film commissions of the SFC (2025)

Autonomous/Region	Provincial/municipal
Andalucía Film Commission	Carmona Film Office Malaga Film Commission Malaga Film Office

	Seville Film Office
Aragón Film Commission	Monegros Film Zaragoza Film Office
Asturias Natural Paradise Film Commission	
Canary Islands Film	
Cantabria Film Commission	
Castilla-La Mancha Film Commission	
Castilla y León Film Commission	Ávila Film Office Burgos Film Commission Salamanca Film Commission Segovia Film Commission Segovia Film Office Soria Film Commission Valladolid Film Commission
Catalunya Film Commission	Barcelona Film Commission Sitges Film Office Terrassa Film Office
Extremadura Film Commission	
Illes Balears Film Commission	Ibiza Film Commission Mallorca Film Commission Menorca Film Commission
La Rioja Film Commission	
Navarra Film Commission	
Region of Murcia Film Commission	
	Melilla Film Commission
	Bilbao Biskaia Film Commission San Sebastián-Guipúzcoa Film Commission Vitoria-Gasteiz Film Office
	Alicante Film Office Benidorm Film Office Film Valencia Peñíscola Film Commission Valencia Film Office
	Film Madrid Madrid Film Office
	Ourense Film Commission Pontevedra Province Film Commission Santiago de Compostela Film Commission Vigo Film Office

Source: own elaboration (2025)

The materials analysed were the public documents provided by the 47 film commissions and offices: websites, reports and activity catalogues. The analysis was conducted between October 2024 and February 2025 and included all content provided by each film commission in relation to the sustainability actions and measures described below.

The proposed analysis model includes the following elements to be considered: Finding out whether a particular film commission or film office has an explicit sustainability policy; determining whether they have a catalogue of best practises, official guidelines, recommendations, a list of suppliers or carbon footprint calculators for sustainable filming; and assessing the training, communication and consultancy work they carry out with production companies, festival organisers, trade fairs and audiovisual markets.

The specific objectives in investigating these partnerships are to provide a complete map of sustainable measures currently being implemented to describe innovative and efficient practises, to identify problems and gaps in a particular area, and to suggest options for growth and improvement in specific areas of sustainable audiovisual production.

The case study (Yin, 1994) is the appropriate methodological procedure to apply the proposed model for analysing the sustainability of film commissions. The analysis sample —the 47 associations currently operating in Spain— allows us, as Yin states (Wimmer and Dominick, 1996), to study a current phenomenon in its real context, where the boundaries between the phenomenon and its context are not clearly drawn, as is the case with these active public-private organisations that belong to a broader industrial and commercial fabric. For example, local film commissions and film offices are linked to regional ones, which in turn are linked to national and international associations.

Similarly, McDonald and Walker (Albert Gómez, 2006) understand this technique as a way of studying a case in action, i.e. as a process, as a methodological activity that is constantly updated, since film commissions —like all actors in the audiovisual industry— are organisations that are constantly evolving, creating new structures and forms of organisation, changing their allocation within public administrations —councils, advisory boards, etc. — change, expand the functions entrusted to them or take on new roles in the audiovisual production, distribution and screening value chain. The case study, due to its value in the search for relationships between systems, components, characteristics, factors and processes, as well as its ability to visualise and compare the emerging trends, is the methodological procedure that allows us to formulate an interpretative perspective that is ideal for empirical-inductive research of a qualitative nature such as the present one. In other words, it favours the observation and evaluation of a field that is in constant evolution and change, such as the contribution of film commissions to the sustainability of film recordings.

In order to facilitate the organisation and systematisation of an analysis of very heterogeneous and open variables, the results are presented in the following section in such a way as to classify the different proposals in the environmental, social and economic fields and then address the issues and lines of work that should be implemented for audiovisual production in terms of organisational sustainability.

3. Results

3.1. Designing sustainability policies

Of the 47 organisations analysed, 20 have a dedicated section or division with sustainability strategies, actions or measures (42.55%), meaning that the majority —27 film commissions or film offices (57.45%)— do not currently explicitly refer to sustainability among the services they offer (Table 3).

Table 3. Film commissions with sustainability policies

Film commissions	Number	Percentage
With sustainable measures	20	42.55%
No sustainable measures	27	57.45%

Source: own elaboration (2025)

There are certain differences between the film commissions that implement some kind of sustainable measure (Table 4). Those that have a decalogue of sustainable measures total 12 (25.53%): Andalucía Film Commission, Aragón Film Commission, Asturias Paraíso Natural Film Commission, Barcelona Film Commission, Benidorm Film Office, Catalunya Film Commission, Extremadura Film Commission, Málaga Film Office, San Sebastián-Gipuzkoa Film Commission, Valencia Film Office, Vigo Film Office and Vitoria-Gasteiz Film Office.

Similarly, only 8 organisations (17.02%) include a sustainability best practise guide: Barcelona Film Commission, Cantabria Film Commission, Catalunya Film Commission, Film Madrid, Málaga Film Office, Región de Murcia Film Commission, Valencia Film Office and Vitoria-Gasteiz Film Office.

Regarding the availability of a carbon footprint calculator, 4 film commissions or film offices (8.51%) use this environmental measurement tool: Andalucía Film Commission, Málaga Film Commission, Málaga Film Office and Vitoria-Gasteiz Film Office incorporate the calculator designed by Promálaga (<https://www.promalaga.es/proyectos-europeos/green-screen/>).

Regarding the offer of a specific advisory service for production companies, only 2 film commissions, the Malaga Film Office and the San Sebastián-Gipuzkoa Film Commission, explicitly offer this service (4.24%). Similarly, the Malaga Film Office is the only one (2.12%) that has a database of sustainable or environmentally friendly suppliers and its own certification seal.

Finally, in the section on the organisation of training and dissemination activities in the field of sustainability, 5 film commissions carry out activities of this type (10.63%): Barcelona Film Commission, Catalunya Film Commission, Film Madrid, Madrid Film Office and San Sebastián-Gipuzkoa Film Commission.

Table 4. Summary of film commissions' sustainability

Film commission	Sustainability Section	Decalogue	Best practice	Carbon calculator	Advisory service	Dissemination activities	EcoFriendly Suppliers	Seal
Andalucía Film Commission	Yes	Yes	No	Yes	No	No	No	No
Aragón Film Commission	Yes	Yes	No	No	No	No	No	No
Asturias Natural Paradise Film Commission	Yes	Yes	No	No	No	No	No	No
Barcelona Film Commission	Yes	Yes	Yes	No	No	Yes	No	No
Benidorm Film Office	Yes	Yes	No	No	No	No	No	No
Cantabria Film Commission	Yes	No	Yes	No	No	No	No	No
Catalunya Film Commission	Yes	Yes	Yes	No	No	Yes	No	No
Extremadura Film Commission	Yes	Yes	No	No	No	No	No	No
Film Madrid	Yes	No	Yes	No	No	Yes	No	No
Illes Balears Film Commission	Yes	No	No	No	No	No	No	No
Madrid Film Office	Yes	No	No	No	No	Yes	No	No
Málaga Film Commission	Yes	No	No	Yes	No	No	No	No
Málaga Film Office	Yes	Yes	Yes	Yes	Yes	No	Yes	Yes
Region of Murcia Film Commission	Yes	No	Yes	No	No	No	No	No
San Sebastián-Gipuzkoa Film Commission	Yes	Yes	No	No	Yes	Yes	No	No
Seville Film Office	Yes	No	No	No	No	No	No	No
Soria Film Commission	Yes	No	No	No	No	No	No	No
Valencia Film Office	Yes	Yes	Yes	No	No	No	No	No
Vigo Film Office	Yes	Yes	No	No	No	No	No	No
Vitoria-Gasteiz Film Office	Yes	Yes	Yes	Yes	No	No	No	No
Total	20	12	8	4	2	1	1	5
Percentage out of 20	100%	60%	40%	20%	10%	5%	5%	25%
	42.55	25.53	17.02	8.51	4.24	2.12	2.12	10.30
Percentage out of 47	%	%	%	%	%	%	%	%

Source: own elaboration (2025)

Despite the importance of sustainable policies promoted by the Instituto de la Cinematografía y de las Artes Audiovisuales (ICAA), which reports to the Secretary of State for Culture, or by the Academia de las Artes y las Ciencias Cinematográficas de España —the promoter of the Green Label— environmental, economic and social sustainability is still not fully and structurally integrated into the range of film commissions operating in our country. Projects such as Green Screen Interreg Europe (2020), carried out within the framework of the European Union, also point to this fact and advocate the inclusion of the institutional, economic and social fabric to achieve the common goal of more sustainable audiovisual production.

However, this analysis is only a snapshot of the current situation. In a sector as dynamic as the audiovisual industry, which is in a constant state of flux, it is necessary to follow the evolution of both the film commissions pursuing sustainable policies and the specific measures taken in an innovative way. In the US, UK and France, for example, one of the main tasks of film commissions is to provide film and TV production companies with a database of sustainable suppliers — technical equipment, catering, mobility, etc.—. This is a valuable service for film and television production companies, whereas in Spain there is currently only one film commission offering this valuable service.

3.2. Sustainability measures: guidelines, recommendations and tools

The best practices, recommendations and tools that lead to a significant improvement in the field of audiovisual sustainability of the film commissions analysed can be grouped into the following 13 categories: location, mobility, energy, accommodation, suppliers, employment, consumption, catering, reduction, reuse and recycling, compensation, evaluation, communication and training.

Noteworthy is the large number of measures included in each section, as well as their open and dynamic nature: the measures aimed at minimising the impact of filming, reducing the carbon footprint or obtaining a certificate or seal of approval are extended with the development of awareness of the environmental, economic or social problems associated with any film or television production.

3.2.1. Location

The general goal that should guide work in natural spaces or built sets is to try to leave the location as it was before filming (Table 5). When researching and selecting locations, first gather as much information as possible about the nature, characteristics —narrative, aesthetic, technical criteria, etc.— and the environmental regulations of the locations. In order to film with confidence, it is essential that you are fully aware of the applicable territorial laws, e.g. for protected areas. Similarly, the management of filming permits must be linked to a sustainability plan drawn up beforehand.

Secondly, there are two factors to consider when planning the selection of indoor or outdoor locations: as few locations as necessary and locations that are as close to each other as possible.

Thirdly, it is necessary to assess the harmful effects that may result from the impact on the location in question before, rather than during, filming. Anticipating environmental, social or economic problems is the best starting point for devising preventative measures to minimise from the outset many of the undesirable consequences that can result from landing a production in a rural or urban environment.

At the same time, specific measures need to be taken for the duration of the filming: Identification of possible sensitive elements —flora, fauna, cultural heritage, etc.— the areas affected by the filming must be signposted and demarcated so as not to disturb or affect them; the generation of noise and excessive light pollution must be avoided. Control and reduce acoustic pollution, measure decibels and look for less loud alternatives; communication channels must be established with public institutions and services —municipal administration, police—, citizens, neighbours or users of the area in order to interfere as little as possible with their daily lives; in protected natural ecosystems such as forests, deserts or marine habitats, constant contact should

be maintained with associations or managers specialised in each environment to know and follow the exact indications; building resilient infrastructures and working with reusable sets that can be used for other audiovisual productions in the future; and the use of certified wood (SFC) for the construction of the sets.

This topic is linked to the sustainable development goals number 11 (sustainable cities and communities), 12 (responsible consumption and production), 13 (climate action), 14 (life below water), and 15 (life on land).

Table 5. Sustainable localisation measures

Scouting	Knowledge of current territorial legislation, environmental regulations and the management of filming authorisations
Location planning	Minimising the number of locations and their proximity to each other
Preliminary assessment	Pre-assessment of possible negative impacts of filming on the environmental, social and economic dimension and design of preventive measures
Specific actions	Conservations of flora and fauna, minimisation of nuisance caused by filming, communication with local stakeholders, reuse of sets
Noise and light reduction	Controlling the acoustic and light contamination

Source: own elaboration (2025)

3.2.2. Mobility

The organisation of transport logistics is one of the decisive aspects of sustainable filming (Table 6). Optimising journeys to make them as efficient as possible is essential for sustainable production. The most widespread best practises include: carefully organising a crew mobility plan to avoid redundant, irregular or uncoordinated journeys in general; sharing vehicles, choosing larger capacity vehicles and organising that passengers take a full load on each journey; prioritising means of transport according to their polluting emissions or their impact on the carbon footprint—for example, the train is preferable to the plane—; choosing hybrid or electric vehicles or providing information about public transport or bike and scooter rental services.

This topic is linked to the sustainable development goals number 7 (affordable and clean energy), 11 (sustainable cities and communities), 12 (responsible consumption and production), and 13 (climate action).

Table 6. Sustainable mobility measures

Travel	Non-redundant mobility plan, passenger organisation
Means of transport	Ranking by pollutant emissions/carbon footprint, public transport

Source: own elaboration (2025)

3.2.3. Energy

Energy consumption is another fundamental aspect of any filming (Table 7). There are many measures that can be taken in each area or department of an audiovisual production: favouring renewable energy sources or certified systems; hiring companies that market clean electricity; careful consideration of light points and fields for efficient filming depending on the location; switching off equipment such as cameras, microphones or especially light sources when they are not in use, as well as avoiding leaving electrical equipment on standby and disconnecting chargers from the grid; using efficient generators, low-consumption LED lights and rechargeable batteries; using solar chargers when possible, such as walkie-talkies; using solar panels when possible; and using solar panels when possible. Use solar chargers where possible, such as walkie-talkies; reduce the use of air conditioning or heating as much as possible; designate a person responsible for monitoring compliance with these energy habits; or carry out awareness-raising activities on energy efficiency habits with training and communication measures.

This topic is linked to the sustainable development goals number 7 (affordable and clean energy), 9 (industry, innovation and infrastructure), 11 (sustainable cities and communities), 12 (responsible consumption and production), and 13 (climate action).

Table 7. Sustainable energy measures

Energy sources or suppliers	Prioritise renewable, certified or clean sources
Lighting planning	Energy-efficient shooting according to light fields
Use of devices	Switch off devices when not in use, unplug chargers, use efficient consumables or solar chargers
Conditioning	Reduce the use of air conditioning and heating
Monitoring	Appoint a measure supervisor, carry out training measures on energy efficiency

Source: own elaboration (2025)

3.2.4. Accommodation

In this section, you should opt for sustainable measures (Table 8): Choose hotels or accommodation close to the main locations, sets, etc.; opt for hotels that meet the required environmental standards, have official certifications and have a sustainability policy that includes calculating the carbon footprint, among other specific measures.

This topic is linked to the sustainable development goals number 9 (industry, innovation and infrastructure), 11 (sustainable cities and communities), and 12 (responsible consumption and production).

Table 8. Sustainable housing measures

Accommodation location	Prefer to be close to film locations of film sets
Choice of accommodation	Compliance with environmental, social and economic criteria

Source: own elaboration (2025)

3.2.5. Suppliers

It is also important to take into account the numerous companies and professionals involved in an audiovisual production (Table 9). In this sense, it is better to opt for local suppliers, require the contracted companies or professionals that the equipment or services offered have an established environmental certification or policy, and evaluate the performance of suppliers after the filming is completed in terms of purchasing, waste management and treatment, compensation, etc.

This topic is linked to the sustainable development goals number 8 (decent work and economic growth), 9 (industry, innovation and infrastructure), 10 (reduce inequalities), 11 (sustainable cities and communities), and 12 (responsible consumption and production).

Table 9. Sustainable supplier measures

Supplier selection	Favour local players, choose suppliers with sustainability certificates
Supplier evaluation	Purchasing, management, waste treatment, clearance, etc.

Source: own elaboration (2025)

3.2.6. Employment

Considering the social and economic impact of an audiovisual production is a priority (Table 10). For a production to be sustainable, its fundamental objectives must include ensuring a decent livelihood for technicians and artists, promoting equal opportunities in recruitment, rights and salaries, the inclusion of disadvantaged groups and the promotion of jobs for audiovisual professionals; In particular, it is very important to achieve full gender equality and encourage more women to work in technical departments, which are traditionally more male-dominated; to comply with laws, agreements and collective agreements and endeavour to improve the specific

conditions of workers, combating precariousness and discontinuity; in the area of health, full compliance with all health measures and occupational risk regulations is mandatory.

This topic is linked to the sustainable development goals number 3 (good health and well-being), 5 (gender equality), 8 (decent work and economic growth), 9 (industry, innovation and infrastructure), 10 (reduced inequalities), and 16 (peace, justice and strong institutions).

Table 10. Sustainable employment measures

Equal opportunities	Inclusion of people from disadvantaged groups in technical and artistic teams
Legislation	Compliance with conventions and agreements, improvement of working conditions
Health	Monitoring of regulations on occupational risks, preventive measures, etc.

Source: own elaboration (2025)

3.2.7. Consumption

One of the most striking elements of any filming is the consumption of very heterogeneous equipment and consumables (Table 11). In this area, criteria should be established for the acquisition of sustainably produced equipment, including certificates of environmental responsibility that have little or no impact on the environment; avoiding the purchase of equipment or materials that are difficult to amortise and that can be rented; promoting digitisation and reducing the use of printed media and office supplies in general, which can be replaced by electronic systems and platforms for the creation of scripts, work plans, shooting orders, etc. If paper has to be used, it should be recycled or ecological, as well as opting for vegetable-based printing inks; reducing plastic packaging; in short, for each technical-artistic department, more sustainable alternatives should be proposed —biodegradable detergents for wardrobe, ecological products for make-up and hairdressing, etc.— that avoid the unbridled use of plastic packaging. —which avoid the unbridled use of disposable materials.

This topic is linked to the sustainable development goals number 8 (decent work and economic growth), 9 (industry, innovation and infrastructure), 12 (responsible consumption and production), and 13 (climate action).

Table 11. Sustainable consumption measures

Equipment	Favour the purchase or rental of sustainably manufactured certified and depreciable equipment.
Processes	Reduce the use of print media and office supplies, digitalise processes
Materials	Selection of biodegradable and reusable items

Source: own elaboration (2025)

3.2.8. Catering

A considerable number of relevant actions can be carried out in this area (Table 12): choose catering establishments that are as local as possible with a sustainable focus —local and seasonal products, waste reduction, use of biodegradable or reusable packaging or crockery—; moderate meat consumption and favour local cuisine; limit the use of capsule coffee machines and rather rent electric or automatic coffee machines and thermos flasks to keep drinks hot or cold; with regard to the efficient management of water consumption, a particularly costly and scarce natural resource, the water footprint deserves a separate mention: carefully planning the supply and availability of drinking water by connecting to the public water network or sourcing from local suppliers who certify the origin and hygienic quality of the water; providing the technical and artistic crew with eco-friendly bottles or canteens of tap water that can be used throughout the duration of the shoot, avoiding water bottles for individual use and placing water dispensers

throughout the set; not pouring waste into the toilet; favouring the use of ecological or biodegradable cleaning products that reduce the contamination of water with pollutants; or installing pressure reducers on taps and reducing the flow rate in cisterns and sinks.

This topic is linked to the sustainable development goals number 2 (zero hunger), 3 (good health and well-being), 6 (clean water and sanitation), 12 (responsible consumption and production), and 13 (climate action).

Table 12. Sustainable provisioning measures

Food	Selection of zero-kilometre or sustainable companies
Nutrition	Reduction of meat consumption, use of local products, environmental conscious cooking
Water	Reduction of water footprint, planning of drinking water supply and availability, use of pressure and flow reducers
Kitchen utensils	Use of reusable items, bottles, containers, etc.
Cleaning	Use of biodegradable or environmentally friendly products

Source: own elaboration (2025)

3.2.9. Reduction, reuse and recycling

The development of an integrated waste management plan is one of the key tasks of an audiovisual sustainability strategy (Table 13): Organise and monitor waste separation by setting up strategic, selective recycling points with accessible and differentiated bins in accordance with current regulations; hire a waste management company when filming generates particularly harmful or hazardous waste; rent, lend or reuse used materials for sets, decorations, costumes, etc. Share, sell or donate leftover resources to associations or individuals for future audiovisual productions; limit the purchase of disposable products or compost organic waste.

This topic is linked to the sustainable development goals number 6 (clean water and sanitation), 7 (affordable and clean energy), 9 (industry, innovation and infrastructure), 12 (responsible consumption and production), and 13 (climate action).

Table 13. Sustainable waste management measures

Waste	Placement of strategic selective recycling points, commissioning of companies specialising in the treatment of hazardous waste, generation of compost
Artistic direction	Renting or lending materials, donating surplus resources, limiting throw-away products, etc.

Source: own elaboration (2025)

3.2.10. Compensation

One of the most effective measures that can be taken is to offset the CO₂ emissions or environmental impact generated during filming through associations, institutions, foundations, NGOs or specialised companies. The carbon footprint can be offset through reforestation projects in the main filming location or by contacting public or private actors to find out about specific solutions that can be applied in a particular area or zone —forest, marine environment, etc.— can be applied to preserve the ecosystem of fauna or flora, to finance training or communication actions, to donate material resources or food surpluses or to restore a cultural heritage, to name but a few examples (Table 14).

This topic is linked to the sustainable development goals number 4 (quality education), 10 (reduce inequalities), 11 (sustainable cities and communities), 12 (responsible consumption and production), 13 (climate action), and 17 (partnerships for the goals).

Table 14. Sustainable compensation measures

Environmental	Concrete actions to maintain or restore the forest and marine environment, etc.
Social	Training and communication activities, restoration of cultural heritage
Economic	Donation of material resources or surplus food

Source: own elaboration (2025)

3.2.11. Evaluation

In a dynamic process as complex as the application of a sustainability plan in the audiovisual production sector, it is necessary to evaluate the results obtained, not only to correctly assess the extent of the measures taken, but also to use them as a reference for the validation and implementation of improvements in future productions (Table 15). Among the main measures in this area, the following should be emphasised: Involving an eco-manager, eco-consultant or green runner to continuously monitor the sustainability plan; evaluating the carbon footprint before and after the production process using a calculator, template or spreadsheet; creating a checklist of indicators as comprehensive and detailed as possible to analyse all areas and departments of a production; hiring a consultancy or external audit if necessary; acquiring different sustainability certificates and seals; and allocating resources to think about improvements, incentives and innovative methods in audiovisual sustainability models.

This topic is linked to the sustainable development goals number 1 (no poverty), 2 (zero hunger), 3 (good health and well-being), 5 (gender equality), 6 (clean water and sanitation), 7 (affordable and clean energy), 8 (decent work and economic growth), 9 (industry, innovation and infrastructure), 10 (reduce inequalities), 11 (sustainable cities and communities), 12 (responsible consumption and production), 13 (climate action), and 17 (partnerships for the goals).

Table 15. Sustainability assessment measures

Initial	Carbon footprint, checklist, selection of indicators, allocation of resources
Final	Carbon footprint, scope of implemented measures, sustainability certificates or labels
Continuous	Ongoing monitoring (ecomanager, ecoadvisor, green runner, or external audit), sustainability plan, checklist

Source: own elaboration (2025)

3.2.12. Communication

On the basis of a general sustainability plan —objectives, strategies and specific measures— it is important to develop a communication policy with tools that facilitate the implementation of measures during filming and serve as a model for subsequent productions (Table 16): Firstly, in the area of internal communication aimed at the technical-artistic team of the shoot itself, posters or infographics can be designed to raise awareness and provide training, and informative documents can be distributed —memoranda, graphics, checklists, sustainable habits, etc.— this will ensure that the members of the various departments are involved in the sustainable tasks of the individual departments. On the other hand, as part of external communication, best practises can be publicised in the media and innovative ideas and initiatives can be disseminated to other players in the audiovisual sector —producers, platforms, suppliers, festivals, etc.— can be disseminated. Publicising the experience gained and sharing the results achieved are much more effective marketing actions than other types of less functional and applied campaigns. These actions can include the organisation of conferences, seminars or workshops, the production of complementary audiovisual content —reports, interviews, commercials— or participation in festivals and other film and television events. Some of the most commonly used communication actions are: the preparation of press kits listing the environmental measures taken; commenting

on sustainable practises during premiere presentations or press conferences; the production of specific audiovisual content (making of, trailer, teaser); or sharing the result of the sustainable activity on social networks as well as the daily process during filming, post-production, etc.

This topic is linked to the sustainable development goals number 4 (quality education), 9 (industry, innovation and infrastructure), 10 (reduce inequalities), 12 (responsible consumption and production), 16 (peace, justice and strong institutions), and 17 (partnerships for the goals).

Table 16. Sustainable communication measures

Internal communication	Information, training and sensitisation
External communication	Dissemination in the media, cooperation with other players in the audiovisual sector, creation of press kits
Marketing actions	Organisation of conferences and similar events, participation in festivals and other events, production of specific additional content (making of, trailers, teasers...)

Source: own elaboration (2025)

3.2.13. Training

Finally, it is important to have a training model for sustainability, both for the technical-artistic team of a given production and, in the long term, for the implementation of academic plans and learning paths for future media professionals (Table 17). This didactic process is fundamental in a field that is constantly evolving and requires specialised, qualified training to acquire the professional skills needed to meet the new sustainability challenges of the future. From the script —message development, dissemination of values— to post-production —energy costs, workflows, equipment amortisation— across all technical and creative processes and areas, all audiovisual production players must acquire the knowledge, skills and abilities to produce increasingly sustainable films and series in a highly disruptive technological environment —artificial intelligence, renewable energies, etc.— increasingly sustainable films and series.

This topic is linked to the sustainable development goals number 4 (quality education), 5 (gender equality), 8 (decent work and economic growth), 9 (industry, innovation and infrastructure), 10 (reduce inequalities), 12 (responsible consumption and production), 16 (peace, justice and strong institutions), and 17 (partnerships for the goals).

Table 17. Sustainability training measures

Script	Development of messages, dissemination of values, etc.
Post-production	Energy costs, workflows, equipment amortisation, etc.
All technical and creative areas	Acquisition of knowledge, skills and abilities that incorporate sustainability into all processes

Source: own elaboration (2025)

4. Practical implications and public policy

As film locations create significant economic value for the place where production takes place (Roger-Monzó, 2022), specific practical implications for public policy and the private sector can be highlighted.

Firstly, the public sector can benefit from certain taxes or fees resulting from filming and, in addition, develop a national label for sustainable productions that applies to all films shot in Spain. As a result, this could strengthen the Marca España brand and position the country as an international reference for audiovisual sustainability, attracting not only international investment but also film tourism.

Secondly, the Spanish film commissions are well positioned in terms of sustainability advice (they are the European country with the most good practises included in the European Film

Commissions Network, 2025), but still have room for improvement. Although some initiatives appear in the Green Screen European Union's Project (<https://projects2014-2020.interregeurope.eu/greenscreen/good-practices/>), it advocates the inclusion of institutional, economic and social dimensions in sustainable audiovisual production. In this sense, there are various market opportunities: from offering specific advisory services for production companies to the creation and provision of databases of sustainable providers, following the example of the USA or the UK, or the creation of a standardised Spanish label to identify sustainable productions.

Thirdly, private sector companies can profile themselves as providers of sustainable services or goods in order to fulfil the requirements of the green shooting measures mentioned in section 3.2 and be considered as suppliers for these productions. On the other hand, this can also have an impact on the general offer of such places for daily life or tourist services.

Finally, within the framework of public-private cooperation, we can also include proposals for education and communication, such as training local audiovisual professionals, working with schools, creating specialisation courses (Victory, 2015) or designing and developing different activities related to sustainable productions and their role in the preservation and enhancement of cultural heritage and natural resources.

5. Discussion and conclusions

Film commissions are taking on an increasingly central role in the chain of diverse processes that are necessary for the realisation of an audiovisual production. In addition to managing locations and facilitating resources and administrative, logistical and technical processes for film and television shoots, they are increasingly taking on roles in tourism, heritage preservation and cultural dissemination.

Consequently, the film commissions play an essential role in the implementation of measures for environmental, social and economic sustainability in the audiovisual industry.

A detailed analysis of the work of the 47 film commissions and film offices currently active in the field of sustainability at local, provincial and regional level is necessary not only to assess the present, but also to face the future of sustainable productions.

In this initial approach to the actions being undertaken by film commissions in the area of film and television sustainability, it is clear that these organisations are still at a very embryonic stage in this area. Initiatives, both at the level of general objectives or strategies and at the level of specific measures or actions —good practise guides, advice, etc. — are still very immature and scattered.

The film commissions, for example, still have a long way to go in terms of coordinating their activities with each other and with other institutions, associations or companies in the field of sustainability. The willingness to integrate sustainable practises into audiovisual production is evident, but this transformative intention is not yet explicitly manifested in much of the portfolio of green filming or services that film commissions could offer.

On the one hand, there are major differences in the type, size and scope of film commissions. In terms of sustainability, Málaga, San Sebastian, Vitoria, Madrid and Barcelona have launched the most initiatives and in this sense serve as a reference for other territories with a similar or lower volume of production.

On the other hand, urban film commissions carry out more sustainable actions to a much greater extent than those in rural areas, even in particularly protected areas, and in a more explicit and organised way. The amount of funding allocated to film commissions varies widely across our country and is a key factor in understanding why some have many sustainable tools —comprehensive plans, guides, best practise catalogues, carbon footprint calculators, individual advice or training rooms— and others are limited to implementing specific measures.

However, the realisation that sustainability is an essential element of any audiovisual production is widespread among film commissions. For this reason, they are implementing programmes, tools and measures to mitigate the environmental impact and socio-economic

problems that filming can cause. Furthermore, sustainable production can turn these environmental, labour or civic challenges into an opportunity to improve in each of the three dimensions of sustainability. Raising awareness or sensitisation of the different groups involved is the first step to move forward in this direction and extend sustainability to all film commissions, whether at national, regional or local level.

In this sense, the difficulties faced by the actors involved in an audiovisual production, including the film commissions as the main actors responsible for the film environment, are multiple and urgent.

Firstly, the different economic resources and corporate structures of production companies - from large international groups to small companies or local economic interest groups (EIGs) focused on a specific work.

The implementation of sustainability measures is associated with considerable financial costs, and the sustainability requirements must be adapted both for large-budget works and for smaller proposals with a much smaller financial and economic scope.

The diversity of individual productions —budget, format, genre, technical/artistic requirements— is also a handicap. Each film or series is a unique prototype, so it is very difficult to use the resources or knowledge of one project for another (reuse of materials, experience with sustainability, etc.).

Also, the high mobility and lack of professional stability of the technical-artistic teams prevent the continuous generation of a wealth of knowledge and lasting experiences that improve the sustainable habits of the different departments of production, scenography, lighting, etc. Many of the actions related to consumption or recycling have been carried out for years on film shoots, but in a non-systematic and non-scalable way.

In this respect, certain actors in the value chain adapt better than others. Film commissions are at the forefront, and their potential direct influence on other actors —production companies, festival organisers— is proving crucial in innovating and optimising processes, for example when it comes to building databases of sustainable suppliers working in a specific geographical area.

The lack of standardisation of methods, systems, procedures, tools, seals or certificates is another of the most obvious difficulties. The lack of common parameters that allow a comparative assessment of the sustainability of each production in relation to standardised criteria is inefficient.

Currently, there are indices, certifications and systems for measuring sustainability such as Albert (United Kingdom), Peach (United States), Green Film (Italy) or the Green Seal (Spain), among others. The European Union's Green Screen project is an attempt to standardise different methods and tools —such as carbon footprint calculators— so that the same requirements apply to each production and therefore more effective and sustainable measures can be implemented over time.

In addition, the lack of specific global legislation is also detrimental to the sustainability of increasingly international and cross-border audiovisual productions, which must adapt to each situation or geographical environment. In terms of legislation, the film commissions play an important role in advising production companies on the different rules and regulations that apply in each territory and, in the case of Spain, in collaboration with the public administrations, they seek to harmonise protocols and establish common guidelines for sustainability.

However, the different actors in the audiovisual ecosystem are well aware that the future of audiovisual production will be sustainable and, in this sense, there are good prospects for the implementation and consolidation of innovative measures.

Sustainability is also a factor of motivation and cohesion for the many different professional profiles that are part of the audiovisual sector. The active commitment of the work team, from the very beginning of production, is one of the most valuable elements that guarantee the success of sustainable production.

Public administrations are also making significant progress with tax incentives, subsidies or grants to implement sustainability measures. Similarly, streaming platforms or TV channels are

increasing the sustainability requirements for a production to be broadcast or aired by them. If they do not fulfil their standards, they are rejected.

Another important aspect is the urgent need for specialised and qualified training. All departments involved in audiovisual production need to acquire advanced knowledge and skills in the field of environmental, social and economic sustainability.

This learning must be approached from a multidisciplinary point of view and include subjects from the environmental or technical sciences as well as from the social, economic and human sciences, in addition to the specific content for each production department —lighting, wardrobe, etc.— for example, post-production professionals —a phase in the creation process of a film or series that is becoming increasingly more important than the actual shooting— must be trained in sustainable options in the choice of computer equipment, work processes, energy consumption, etc.

The deeper we dive into the enormous number of actions that are carried out on a film set to become more sustainable, the more compelling becomes the need to formulate multidisciplinary educational programmes —run jointly by universities and companies— to impart this specialised and dynamic knowledge.

Although the inclusion of sustainability as a management model in the audiovisual sector is still in its infancy and therefore subject to multiple and rapid changes, this article provides a fundamental starting point for exploring the further development of audiovisual sustainability through its key facilitators such as the film commissions. Further research will undoubtedly shed new light on a vibrant, dynamic and topical sector.

Finally, it also emphasises the importance of communicating and publicising the sustainability actions carried out by each audiovisual production. There is no better awareness-raising campaign than highlighting the number of sustainable measures that can be implemented in any film production, regardless of its budget or scope.

Film commissions are aware of the communicative role they can play in ensuring that future productions tackle the climate emergency, reduce pollution and waste or combat the greenhouse effect, advocate for better working conditions that enable long career paths, achieve equality of opportunity or a positive impact on citizenship, tourism or peoples' culture, or create the right economic conditions to create wealth and support sustainable growth of the audiovisual industry.

In fact, most film commissions are linked to the tourism and development sectors of the municipalities or cities in which they are located. Considering that their functions and areas of work sometimes overlap, the question arises as to whether it would not be more efficient to pool some of their competences (e.g. in the field of legislation), thus freeing up economic and human resources that could be used to develop, implement and monitor sustainable audiovisual policies in order to strengthen the sector's competitiveness and provide it with the necessary infrastructure and consolidation to make it a spearhead at international level in terms of the sustainability of audiovisual organisation.

The protection of the planet, the material well-being or health of workers and the preservation of cultural heritage are an invaluable added value for the audiovisual industry as a whole. The three pillars of sustainability —planet, people, profit— can be part of any audiovisual project, from the script to the screening in theatres or on platforms, via filming, distribution or marketing campaigns.

Entire countries have become film sets. Cities and natural environments compete for the best film locations. Sustainability can be the key element for the valorisation of audiovisual productions in a certain area. Either film commissions and environmental, social and economic development go hand in hand, or there are much more sustainable places to shoot your film or TV series.

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