

ERIA Discussion Paper Series

Engendering ASEAN Identity:

The Role of Film*

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November 2015

Abstract: *The role of film, which is used here in generic terms to include audiovisual images as well as animation, in engendering the much-sought after Association of Southeast Asian Nations (ASEAN) identity is a necessary ingredient in the general framework of development leading to the realisation of the ASEAN Community. Film is an economic tool as it brings unquantifiable benefits to sectors participating in the industry. It is an effective information mechanism translating messages in more meaningful ways that appeal to the emotions. Film mirrors the cultural lives of people and reflects their heritage, values, and traditions. With the advancement in technology, film now comes in different platforms and formats, and is not confined to cinema or theatre. It becomes accessible through personal gadgets, the Internet, television (TV), cable TV, and digital versatile discs (DVDs). Thus, the reach and influence of films are vital in the people-oriented and people-centred agenda of an identity search and ensure that stakeholders down to the community level in all ASEAN member states (AMS) benefit from this approach.*

The ASEAN Socio-Cultural Community (ASCC) Blueprint clearly identifies the goals and strategies that AMS should support through the multilevel mechanisms in the Committee on Culture and Information (COCI), the Senior Officials Meeting Responsible for Information (SOMRI), and the ASEAN Ministers Responsible for Information (AMRI). This set of goals and strategies can be facilitated and implemented by collectively engaging government agencies in charge of film development in the AMS under the management of a technical expert group for this area and referred to as FILM ASEAN. While the COCI, SOMRI, and AMRI can provide the official conduit for the government's participation in film development, FILM ASEAN as presented in this paper is worth taking a look at. There may also be a need to re-think the assignment of officers to the Working Group on Content and Production formed by the SOMRI to attend to the business of film development. Representation of the FILM ASEAN in the said Working Group may be an immediate action that can be taken for this purpose. Other initiatives related to global connection for film production and co-production may also be assigned to FILM ASEAN as it is already engaged in this endeavour.

Key Words: ASEAN community, ASEAN identity, ASCC, film

* Final version of the paper presented at the Framing ASCC Post-2015: Technical Workshop Program, 16 January 2015, ERIA, Jakarta, Indonesia.

1. Introduction

One of the key goals of the Association of Southeast Asian Nations (ASEAN) Socio-Cultural Community (ASCC) as embodied in its blueprint (2009–2015) is the forging of a common identity called the ASEAN identity, which would help realise the ASEAN community. It is aimed at fostering solidarity and unity amongst the peoples of the ASEAN Member States (AMS).

In its blueprint, the ASEAN identity is viewed as the basis of Southeast Asia's regional interests. It is the collective personality, norms, values, and beliefs as well as aspirations as one ASEAN community. ASEAN will mainstream and promote greater awareness and common values in the spirit of unity in diversity at all levels of society.

The blueprint identified four major objectives that will bring about the goal of building the ASEAN identity, as follows: promotion of ASEAN awareness and a sense of community; preservation and promotion of ASEAN cultural heritage; promotion of cultural creativity and industry; and engagement with the community.

In the strategies outlined in the blueprint, the clarion call is for the AMS and their instrumentalities to promote a regime of programs and activities that will promote a deeper understanding of the culture, history, religion, and civilisation of the ASEAN members. It seeks out the identification of common values that characterise what an ASEAN person is.

2. Understanding Film

A film, also called a movie or motion picture, is a series of still images which, when shown on a screen, creates the illusion of moving images. Generally, when referring to film, movie or motion picture, we use the word cinema. The contemporary definition of cinema is the art of simulating experiences to communicate ideas, stories, perceptions, feelings, beauty, or atmosphere by the means of recorded or programmed moving images along with other sensory stimulations.

Film is both an art and industry in this sense. The film-maker projects how he perceives these ideas and stories. It is up to the viewer to discern which is reality or make-believe. Film-making involves different stakeholders, from directors, screenwriters, cinematographers, the cast and crew, to the manufacturers and suppliers of film equipment, those providing accommodations, transport and catering, and up to stage and sound designers, providers of post-production services, distributors, and exhibitors.

Films are cultural artefacts created by specific cultures. In effect, they are the mirrors of societies. Films are both entertaining and informative. They are used by governments to educate or indoctrinate their citizenry.

Films have the power to impact the way we see history, influence the food we eat, and inspire revolutions around the world. They can entertain, provide distraction, inspire, and evoke emotions. Most importantly, films can be tools to tell stories that influence the understanding of millions.

3. The Role of Film in Search of the ASEAN Identity

With the power and influence of films, they become very accessible educational tools to inform the AMS communities about the diverse ASEAN religions, cultures, traditions, and values, while building the sense of ‘belongingness’ to come up with a ‘collective identity’ that will make the individual members of the community proud to be an ASEAN person. Films will be attractive tools for all sectors of society, for different age groups, and gender as they can have different faces (e.g., romantic, adventures, comic, action, horror, etc.) that entertain as well as educate and inform. They can be shown commercially in regular cinemas, art houses, open air cinema, television (TV), cable TV, or can be viewed from personal gadgets such as computers, smartphones, etc. They can be stored in digital versatile discs (DVDs) and portable hard drives and be watched repeatedly. They can be accessed via video-on-demand (VOD) or from the internet—free of charge—or shared through a community viewing with governments’ sponsorship.

ASEAN film-makers, therefore, are tasked to be the agents for these platforms. They should search for common threads that bring ASEAN together. Stories can then be developed and shown to a specific audience. This intermeshing can be honed in the long run and the perfect blend of the ASEAN story can then be worked on by film-makers.

ASEAN is covered by major religions of the world, ethnic traditions and values, diverse influences from east and west, and is a melting pot of the old and the new. The search for the ASEAN identity, therefore, becomes a very difficult task.

With continuous exposure to each other's cultures and way of life, however, there is a chance for the ASEAN character to slowly emerge. A deliberate storytelling about the composite ASEAN person will eventually mould an image that will have its own identity.

4. Film Development Status in the ASEAN Member States

A quick study of the film industry of the 10 AMS shows that the level of development is varied with half of the ASEAN countries needing major assistance for systems development, infrastructure upgrade, capability build-up, and international co-production.

Brunei Darussalam

Its film industry is barely getting off the ground with just one international film produced in the past year. Brunei's first big-budgeted commercial film, *Yasmine: The Final Fist*, boasts an international cast from Brunei Darussalam, Hong Kong, Malaysia, and Indonesia. The first movie ever produced by Brunei was in 1968 and titled *Gema Dari Menara (Voices from the Minaret)*. This was followed by *Ada Apa Dengan Rina* (What's So Special About Rina), Brunei's first feature film using the Brunei Malay dialect that came out in 2013. It won the Best Jury Award in the ASEAN International Film Festival and Awards (AIFFA) in Kuching, Sarawak, Malaysia in the same year.

The production of *Yasmine* may be a precursor of how the movie industry will be in the ASEAN region, with its mixed cast and crew from Brunei, Malaysia, Indonesia, and Hong Kong.

There are less than 10 privately owned cinema screens in Brunei. The government agency that oversees film production in Brunei is Radio Television Brunei (RTB), which is under the Office of the Prime Minister.

Cambodia

As early as the 1920s, Cambodia already produced documentary films. Even before King Norodom Sihanouk was chosen King by the French, he was into film-making himself. The 1960s were considered to be the golden years of Cambodian cinema. The film industry became non-existent in the 1970s during the communist regime: cast and crew were either killed or exiled from the country. Films from the Soviet Union, Viet Nam, India, and European Socialist countries though were shown in the country.

The Cambodia film industry did a rebound in the 1990s after a period of hiatus of local films. The Cambodians prided themselves with music and films that were produced in the 1960s under Sotho Kulikar, a renowned award-winning Cambodian director.

Cambodia is slowly rebuilding its film infrastructure. There are 12 cinema houses in the country as of 2011. Young film-makers receive training in the country and scholarships from abroad.

Indonesia

Since 1900, foreign films had been shown to the Indonesian public. It was only in 1911 that the first locally produced documentary was made while 1926 saw the first feature film.

The country was producing profitable local films in the 1930s until it was co-opted by the Japanese during its occupation of Indonesia. Only educational films and newsreels for the Japanese audience in Japan were produced locally.

After the Japanese occupation, foreign films were banned and only Indonesian films were produced and shown in the country until the 1990s. In the 2000s, there

was a rebirth of Indonesian film-making with independent film-makers taking centre stage. Indonesia also hosted various local and international film festivals. There were 763 cinema screens in the country in 2011.

Lao PDR

Since the founding of the Lao PDR, only a handful of films have been produced. However, it prides itself with the holding of a film festival in the World Heritage site of Luang Prabang. The festival brings together the boldest storytellers and the most talked about films in Southeast Asia.

The Lao Cinema Department sees the Luang Prabang Film Festival as the epitome of cultural expression. Although they have an underdeveloped film industry, they see the film festival as an avenue to learn from participating film-makers. The festival as a creative and communication tool has the potential to spark a greater domestic interest in film in Lao PDR. There are only a few cinemas in the country.

Malaysia

Malaysia's small film industry dates back to the 1930s. At present, Malaysia produces about 20 feature films annually and between 300–400 television dramas and serials a year apart from in-house productions by individual television stations. Malaysia also holds its own annual National Film Festival. There are about 639 cinemas and cineplexes in Malaysia as of 2011, showing both local and foreign films. Foreign film producers are welcome to shoot on location in Malaysia, undertake film co-production ventures so that local artists and technicians have the opportunity of gaining exposure and experience.

Malaysia has a national film and television studio facility, the Pinewood Iskandar Malaysia Studios, that offers 100,000 square feet (sq. ft.) of film stages, production office space, workshops, state-of-the-art digital post production facilities and services, green screen capability, and an expansive backlot for filming including 30 acres of natural forest.

Myanmar

The cinema of Myanmar has a long history dating back to the 1910s. The person who created the first silent film was Ohn Maung, the country's first producer and director. He is known today as the father of Myanmarese cinema. Most of the films produced in Myanmar tackled social issues such as corruption and gambling.

The film industry in Myanmar is controlled by the government. From a peak of 244 cinema screen, the number has dwindled to 71 as of 2011.

Philippines

Philippine cinema began with the introduction of the first moving picture to the country on 1 January 1897 at the Salón de Pertierra in Manila. Even with the problems currently facing motion pictures around the world, movies are still considered one of the popular forms of entertainment amongst the Filipino people, directly employing some 260,000 Filipinos and generating around ₱2 billion in annual revenues. The Philippines was the last country to establish a national film archive in October 2011.

During the Japanese occupation in the 1940s, film-making was suddenly put to a halt. As was the case in other countries occupied by Japan, Japanese film companies took over local exhibition venues and Japanese films replaced those from Hollywood and the Asian region. Japanese films had been imported into the Philippines since the late 1930s but without great success. Japanese-sponsored film production in the Philippines continued until 1945 but was limited mostly to newsreels and educational films.

The 1950s was the golden age of Philippine cinema with the emergence of artistic and mature films, and significant improvement in cinematic techniques amongst film-makers.

The 1970s and 1980s were considered turbulent years of the industry, bringing both positive and negative changes. In 1972, the Philippines was placed under Martial Law and films were used as propaganda vehicles. On the whole, films dealt with more serious topics. Action and sex films proliferated.

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The 2000s saw a dramatic decline of the Philippine movie industry and the emergence of independent films, those produced outside the established studios. Hollywood films dominated mainstream cinema even more and fewer than 20 quality local films were being produced and shown yearly. Many producers and production houses later stopped producing films after losing millions of pesos.

Signs of the rebirth of Philippine cinema were visible in the middle of the 2000s with films that carried inspirational messages. In 2006 and 2007, Filipino filmmakers started making movies using digital media. Filipino films produced in the 2010s experienced some kind of commercial renaissance with a number achieving record box office successes.

In 2014, Filipino film-maker Lav Diaz's film *From What is Before (Mula sa Kung Ano Noon)* won the Golden Leopard at the Locarno Film Festival. The win is highly regarded as it is the second Filipino film to receive an award from an A-list film festival in the world 20 years after *The Flor Contemplacion Story* won the Golden Pyramid at the 1995 Cairo International Film Festival.

The Philippines has 693 registered cinema screens as of 2011.

Singapore

Despite having a flourishing Chinese and Malay film industry in the 1950s and 1960s, Singapore's film industry declined after independence in 1965. There were a few films that featured Singaporean actors and were set in Singapore, including *Saint Jack* and *They Call Her Cleopatra Wong*. However, most of these were not released in Singapore and could not be labelled as truly Singaporean productions

The 1990s saw the production of pioneering films in Singapore with phenomenal success such as *Money No Enough* in 1998, which eventually ignited the nation's drive towards moviemaking.

The year 2005 was another boom year for Singaporean cinema with commercially successful fares like Kelvin Tong's horror flick *The Maid* and two Jack-Neo co-directed movies *I Do I Do* and *One More Chance* as well as less mainstream offerings like Eric Khoo's critically acclaimed *Be with Me* that premiered in the Directors' Fortnight during the Cannes Festival and Djinn's *Perth*, a dark take on Scorsese's *Taxi Driver*.

Since 2010, a wave of young film-makers educated in local and overseas film schools have dominated the film scene.

Singapore had 187 cinema screens in 2011.

Thailand

The cinema industry in Thailand possibly started in 1897 after King Chulalongkorn's visit to Bern, Switzerland was recorded by Francois-Henri Lavancy-Clarke and then exhibited in Bangkok. In that same year, Auguste and Louis Lumière brought their film exhibition 'the wonderful Parisian cinematograph' to Bangkok and became the first known film to be screened in Thailand. In 1933, *Pu Som Fao Sap* (*Grandpa Som's Treasure*) directed by Sri Krung was the first Thai film in colour. This period up until 1942 is regarded by scholars as the Golden Age of Thai film. There was an explosion of locally produced films in the late 1970s when the Thai government imposed heavy taxes on imported films. This led to a boycott by Hollywood studios.

In the wake of the Asian financial crisis in 1997, three TV commercial directors—Nonzee Nimibutr, Pen-Ek Ratanaruang, and Wisit Sasanatieng—thought that films needed to be more artistic to attract investors and audiences. These so-called New Wave directors achieved commercial and artistic success, and encouraged a new crop of film-makers to break free of the traditional and often restrictive Thai studio system and create experimental short films and features.

The Thai film industry has spawned genre films from action, animated films, comedy, crime, gay films, historical epics, horror, musicals, romance, to teen movies.

As of 2010, Thailand had 757 cinema screens.

Viet Nam

Vietnamese cinema began in the 1920s when a group of Vietnamese intellectuals formed the Huong Ky Film Company in Hanoi. It produced a silent feature and documentaries on the funeral of Emperor Khải Định and the enthronement of his successor Bảo Đại. The industry continued throughout the wars from 1940s to 1970s.

Well-known Vietnamese language films include *Cyclo*, *The Scent of Green Papaya* and *Vertical Ray of the Sun* by French-trained director Tran Anh Hung, an overseas Vietnamese. Recently, the film industry has modernised and moved from government-backed propaganda films. Contemporary Vietnamese film-makers have gained a wider audience with films such as *Buffalo Boy*, *Bar Girls*, *The White Silk Dress*, and *Muoi*.

At the end of the First Indochina War, two separate film industries operated from Hanoi, North Viet Nam and Saigon, South Viet Nam. The Hanoi industry focused on propaganda films while Saigon produced war-themed or comedy films.

After the reunification of North and South Vietnam, studios in Saigon began producing Socialist Realism films. Vietnamese feature film outputs increased and reached 20 by 1978.

The shift to a market economy in 1986 dealt a blow to Vietnamese film-making, which struggled to compete with video and TV, and sharply reduced the number of films produced the next year.

Viet Nam has 257 cinema screens in 2012.

5. Engagement with International Film Commission Networks

In the pursuit of development, most film industries in the ASEAN region have some form of engagement with an international film commission, a network of established or developing system of collaboration and coordination in the areas of technology transfer, resource-sharing, marketing, and distribution of films. Most regions in the world would have organisations or networks that serve as fora for film-related activities and programs. The Asian Film Commissions Network (AFCNet), the Association of Film Commissioners International (AFCI), the European Union Film Commissions Network (EUFCN), and the Latin American Film Commission Network (LAFCN) are some of the more active networks that reach out to other parts of the world to promote co-production and to scout for film locations. Annex A briefly describes all these networks.

The pace of development of the film industry in the ASEAN region is affected by the stage of engagement with these networks, some are nearing maturity and some in the early stages.

With this as a backdrop and with the ASEAN integration as the overarching goal, it is important for AMS to have a forum as a venue to discuss and probably resolve issues on censorship in the region, incentives to attract foreign co-production in the region, resource-sharing, and development of regional film facilities such as studios, film archives, and other related services.

6. Developing the FILM ASEAN

In the October 2011 Asian Film Policy Forum held in Busan, Korea, a deliberate decision was made by AFCNet, a government and private sector network, to engage the ASEAN in its expanding program of reaching out to countries in the Asian region that are not yet network members. At that time, only six of the 10 AMS were official AFCNet members, namely, Cambodia, Indonesia, Malaysia, Philippines, Singapore, and Thailand. The remaining four countries, namely Brunei, Lao PDR, Myanmar, and Viet Nam, were not members although representations were already being made by these countries in the various AFCNet programs.

The engagement of ASEAN is part of the vigorous efforts launched by AFCNet over the years to bring in more countries and organisations to the network so as to strengthen cooperation, encourage sharing of resources and expertise, and raise the bar of development of the film industry in the entire Asian region. This is also in recognition of the interest of ASEAN to pursue its objective of ‘enhancing regional resilience by promoting greater political, security, economic, and sociocultural cooperation’ amongst its members under its motto of ‘One Vision, One Identity, One Community’ (ASEAN Charter, 2008).

With varying levels of development of film industries in the 10 AMS, it was logical to provide some form of fulcrum that will enable AFCNet to support ASEAN. To coordinate the efforts of AFCNet towards the above goal, an ASEAN Committee was organised and the Film Development Council of the Philippines (FDCP) was chosen as the coordinator.

One of the immediate tasks of the AFCNet ASEAN Committee was to consult ASEAN members of the AFCNet regarding programs of action which could be jointly addressed in the ASEAN region. In addition, there was a deliberate move to contact the other ASEAN countries which were not yet members of AFCNet.

This consultation process revealed the immediate need to unify lead government agencies in charge of film development within ASEAN. The initial information gathered from these agencies showed that majority did not have access to the ASEAN committees assigned to cover film and audiovisual images (e.g. AMRI, SOMRI, COCI). Table 1 lists the lead government agencies for film development in AMS.

Table 1. Lead Government Agencies for Film Development in ASEAN Member States

Lead Agency	Ministry
Brunei Darussalam Radio Television Brunei	Office of the Prime Minister Supported by the Ministry of Culture, Youth, and Sports
Cambodia Cinema and Cultural Diffusion Department	Ministry of Culture and Fine Arts
Indonesia Directorate of Film Industry Development	Ministry of Tourism
Lao PDR Lao Cinema Department	Ministry of Information, Culture, and Tourism
Malaysia The National Film Development Corporation Malaysia (FINAS)	Ministry of Communication and Multimedia
Myanmar Myanmar Motion Picture Development Department	Ministry of Information
Philippines Film Development Council of the Philippines	Office of the President
Singapore Media Development Authority	Ministry of Communications and Information
Thailand Thailand Film Office, Department of Tourism	Ministry of Tourism and Sports (The Ministry of Culture is in charge of the local film industry)
Viet Nam Viet Nam Cinema Department	Ministry of Culture, Sports, and Information

It was during the consultation sessions that majority of the agencies mentioned above discussed the possibility of having a regular forum for dialogue and coordination regarding policies, programs, and joint activities in the ASEAN region. This proposition was in support of the ASEAN integration due to happen in 2015.

The Film Development Council of the Philippines (FDCP), being the lead convenor of the AFCNet ASEAN Committee, brought up the idea of organising the forum with the ASEAN Secretariat. The response of the Secretariat was positive and so FDCP went to the Sub-Committee on Information (SCI) and the Committee on Culture and Information (COCI) with the Concept Note (refer to Annex B) to present the group temporarily called the FILM ASEAN. Unfortunately, AFCNet ASEAN Committee was dissolved at this stage.

Pending the definitive action of the Senior Officials Meeting Responsible for Information (SOMRI) and the ASEAN Ministers Responsible for Information (AMRI) on FILM ASEAN, the FDCP offered to host the organisational meeting of FILM ASEAN in Manila in September 2013. Thereafter, three more general

meetings were held in Thailand (November 2013), Manila (June 2014), and Myanmar (November 2014).

Annex C presents the chronology of events regarding FDCP's representation with the ASEAN Committees and executive bodies.

7. FILM ASEAN and Private Sector Participation

FILM ASEAN will direct the policy and program platforms for film development in the region. As the film industry involves almost all sectors of society and because it performs vital roles in stimulating the economy, uplifting cultural values, integrating societies, and developing the ASEAN identity, the participation of the private sector becomes necessary as it brings in investments and can help in streamlining the production processes and promoting corporate social responsibilities.

FILM ASEAN will set the stage for this participation and will give paramount importance to private sector interests alongside its goal of developing the art and culture of AMS. The private sector will also be very important in the development of a viable incentive program for film production, both for local film-makers and for foreign production companies.

8. Recommendations

Given the body of work already done by ASEAN committees and the provided ASCC blueprint to enrol films as one of the main instruments for the development of the ASEAN identity, one immediate action that ASCC can advocate is to commission FILM ASEAN to conduct the following activities and programs which, to a certain extent, mirror the film agenda of FILM ASEAN:

1. That a study be undertaken to examine and compare the existing laws, policies and taxes on film production, marketing, distribution, exhibition, importation and exportation in the various ASEAN countries with a view to working out common standards and incentives to stimulate the free flow of

ASEAN films throughout the region. This includes holding regular ASEAN film festivals and encouraging the use of dubbing or subtitling in local dialects;

2. That in order to encourage the promotion and dissemination of more ASEAN films, a network of ‘cineclubs’ or film societies be established in AMS and assisted by the ASEAN COCI;
3. That an ASEAN Film Development Fund with seed money from ASEAN countries be created to finance the production of films that promote better understanding amongst ASEAN countries and project ASEAN cultures to the rest of the world. The fund may be managed by the Asian Development Bank (ADB), which can solicit grants from foundations and institutions from affluent countries, especially ASEAN dialogue partners. In addition, premiums will be given to films that present composite cultures and values, and highlight common traditions that are uniquely ASEAN;
4. That ASEAN will be presented in film booths to be put up in international film markets or festivals, and handled by a contingent either from ASEAN or the private sector;
5. That workshop programmes be organised by a composite faculty of ASEAN experts and trainers for film professionals, starting with feature film scriptwriters and directors;
6. That continuous training programmes and effective exchange of information in various aspects of film-making be implemented at the earliest possible time;
7. That the ASEAN COCI through its programmes facilitate the telecast of ASEAN films over ASEAN national TV networks;
8. That a constant exchange of compilations of special film production services, equipment, and facilities available in each ASEAN country as well as their rates and prices be conducted and shared amongst member states;
9. That a continuing program to recognise excellence in film-making through an ASEAN Film Awards be implemented;

10. That a study be conducted on the feasibility of putting up regional film facilities that manufacture raw film and magnetic stocks for ASEAN use as well as for export; a regional film archive centre to service the needs of all AMS and lessen the need to develop national archives; regional studios that provide fee subsidies to ASEAN film-makers; and regional training centres to develop the capability of ASEAN film-makers to develop stories about ASEAN;
11. That a periodic exchange of film catalogues and film clips amongst ASEAN countries be undertaken to promote distribution of ASEAN films within ASEAN; and
12. That the Governments of the ASEAN countries, through law and public policy, stimulate and support the production of more culturally and socially valuable films in the region, and agree to request the COCI to examine the above recommendations for possible implementation.

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ANNEXA

Film Commissions Networks

Asian Film Commissions Network (AFCNet)

AFCNet is a network of professional film commissions established with official sanction from the central and local governments in Asia, and shares information on location, regulations and custom clearance for each nation through established networks between film support agencies centred on Asia. It is Asia's first established film-related nonprofit international organisation with 46 members from 17 countries.

Its mission is to contribute to a balanced growth of film industries in Asia by promoting the improvements and supplementations of the systems.

Association of Film Commissioners International (AFCI)

The AFCI is a nonprofit educational organisation founded in 1975 to serve the growing needs of on-location film and television production.

Originally, the AFCI was formed by a small group of film commissioners who wanted to share information and learn from one another's experiences. Since then, the AFCI has expanded into a worldwide network of more than 300 commissions from 45 countries. All are devoted to the business of facilitating on-location film and television production activity which generates billions of dollars annually.

European Union Film Commissions Network (EUFCN)

EUFCN is a nonprofit association that supports and promotes the European film industry and culture. Its main goals are to create a network of the most active European Film Commissions (EFC); to promote the exchange of information between members; to sustain the development of location searches and shooting opportunities; and to carry out professional and educational activities for members. Furthermore, it is also involved in promoting Film Commission activities with public institutions, the European community, and the film industry; conducting projects funded by the European Union (EU); supporting the film industry; organising seminars and conferences; analysing the needs of producers of films and TV dramas, and meeting these needs.

A group of film commissioners who wanted to share information and learn from one another's experiences met in Malaga in 2004 to establish the foundations for this organisation, that is devoted to the business of facilitating production activity. In 2005, they signed the Berlin Declaration for the constitution of the network.

Latin American Film Commissions Network (LAFCN)

This is a regional network with a mandate to foster new business and build exposure for the continent's film industry.

The network was inspired by the EFC and AFCI, and was born at a meeting at the recent Locations Trade Show in Santa Monica, California.

This is the first time these commissions have come together to act as a regional entity. In recent years, the tendency toward collective action and continental consensus has had a pre-eminent role in the region's economic trade as well as in resolving major political conflicts.

The network's initial goals include offering foreign producers a variety of locations for their productions; creating mechanisms for one single production to be carried out in several Latin American cities; having a wider global exposure (through media, marketing, and promotion); strengthening foreign producers' confidence in the region; and consolidating every film commission's relation with government and nongovernment organisms.

The network allows members to share information on problem resolution, and it plans to establish a 'cineposium'-type of training program. Organisers see this networking as a useful tool as many of the commissions are in their infancy. The Peruvian Film Commission, for example, was only recently launched by Peru's Foreign Office.

Amongst the upcoming initiatives are an annual calendar of events and a weekly newsletter that will cover all activities of the network members. Also, every film commission will provide information on Latin American producers and on productions taking place in the network members' countries. The information can be used to study the economic and social impact of productions and how this buoys other areas, mainly tourism.

ANNEX B

FILM ASEAN: A Concept Note¹

Background

The film industry of the member countries of the Association of Southeast Asian Nations (ASEAN) is in various degrees of development. Although most of these countries have a long history of film activities and programs, this was not matched with the development of infrastructure, systems, and programs that allow the full development of the film industry as a key medium for nation-building, albeit a medium for information and cultural upliftment.

Some countries such as Brunei, Myanmar, and Indonesia are working on the establishment of a government-led film commission to accelerate the development of their film industry. The rest of the ASEAN countries have their film development program already being implemented by an authorised government agency, although there are some needed structural adjustments in some countries to cope with the rapid changes in the film industry brought about by technology-change and cross-border programs for film production, capability-building, and sharing of expertise and resources.

The film industry in the international arena is likewise undergoing a major reconfiguration with film commissions network composed of government and nongovernment sectors being strengthened to allow a more efficient system of resource-sharing and capability-building. The three big film commissions include the Asian Film Commissions Network (AFCNet) which constitutes the biggest organisation of government and private sector film commissions in Asia with 54 members from 19 countries stretched across the Asian region. The Association of Film Commissioners International (AFCI) mainly covers the North and South American region and has 300 members from six continents of the world, while the European Union Film Commission Network (EUFCN) has 82 members from 26 countries.

¹ Prepared by the Film Development Council of the Philippines for the ASEAN Committee of the Asian Film Commissioners Network (AFCNet), Special Senior Officials Meeting Responsible for Information (SOMRI), Kuala Lumpur, Malaysia, 1–4 July 2013.

Focus on Film Development

With the changing film industry landscape worldwide, particularly the engagement of foreign production companies to do location shooting in the ASEAN countries, the scope of film development is no longer confined to promotion of cultural heritage and information aspects. It becomes a powerful tool for economic development while cultural upliftment and its role for information giving and sharing are continued to be enhanced.

ASEAN countries which serve as host for location shooting by foreign production companies benefit a lot in terms of income and revenues, employment of local film talents, tourism enhancement, and acquiring technological know-how with the exposure of local film-makers to modern film-making processes and equipment.

Furthermore, with close to 600 million population, the ASEAN region is one of the biggest markets for film screening and distribution. It is a natural magnet for foreign production companies for shooting their films or for film distribution.

It becomes imperative therefore that the member-countries of ASEAN create a forum for integration of policies, programs, and systems that will benefit the whole region rather than promote individual interests which, in the long run, would be impacting negatively to the concept of an ASEAN Community.

FILM ASEAN: Contributing to the Building of the ASEAN Community by 2015

Film development can be an integrating program for ASEAN countries, with a dedicated program for exchange of expertise, experiences, and systems. In-country programs for developing local film-makers, archive development, developing cinema outlets such as ‘cinematheques’ and mobile cinema, film festivals to showcase cultural identities, joint training programs, regional competition, and a host of other new initiatives can be designed through an ASEAN film development program which would be labelled as FILM ASEAN.

FILM ASEAN will also strengthen the position of the member countries in the international arena as they engage film commission networks by speaking with one voice, promoting the ASEAN region as an integral geographical unit, and standardising to the extent possible policies and systems on immigration, customs and duties, and incentives.

FILM ASEAN will promote the ASEAN identity, film locations of all member countries, and develop programs for regional development, such as a regional training program, film studios in strategic countries, film archives to service the needs of the region, ASEAN film festivals to be held simultaneously in all member countries, film markets to showcase ASEAN films and film services, efficient distribution system for ASEAN films, and staging friendly competition amongst film-makers in the ASEAN festivals.

The Proposed Mechanism

Film development in each of the ASEAN country should be given particular focus by giving the authorised government film commission of each country a regular seat in the ASEAN Committee on Culture and Information (COCI) to serve as the professional representative of the film industry in the committee.

Representation in the ASEAN COCI is also proposed under allowable terms. The designated government film commissioner of the ASEAN country, on rotation basis, will have a regular seat in the COCI. This allows professional perspectives in the discussions about film and film-related programs which the ASEAN COCI will support.

A FILM ASEAN Secretariat is also proposed to be organised. This Secretariat can be based in Jakarta, Indonesia or can be hosted by ASEAN members on rotation basis to ensure that the film development programs of the 10 member countries are continuously coordinated and monitored. The FILM ASEAN Secretariat will provide the necessary information and technical support to the ASEAN Foundation for programs that the Foundation will support related to film development.

Continued engagement in the AFCNet will be pursued by the FILM ASEAN as well as its engagement with the other big networks (i.e., AFCI and EUFCN).

Immediate Gains

The FILM ASEAN will facilitate the engagement of ASEAN countries in the three big film commissions networks, namely, AFCNet, AFCI, and EUFCN.

With an integrated film agenda, the development of the film industry in the ASEAN is expected to gain currency at a much faster pace as the member countries

provide support to each other and share regional facilities and expertise. It will also help develop the ASEAN identity, which is the goal of the ASEAN Community, as ASEAN film audiences are exposed to films produced by ASEAN film-makers.

FILM ASEAN will also facilitate the creation of government film commissions in Brunei, Myanmar, and Indonesia and strengthen the existing government mechanism for film development in the other seven ASEAN countries.

ANNEX C

Organising the FILM ASEAN Chronology of Events³

1. Visit to the the Association of SouthEast Asian nations (ASEAN) Secretariat, 4 April 2013. The FILM ASEAN concept was initially presented to Deputy Secretary General (DSG) Alicia Bala by Film Development Council of the Philippines (FDCP) Chairman Briccio Santos. DSG Bala suggested that a Concept Note be prepared by the FILM ASEAN Committee to be submitted to the ASEAN Committee on Culture and Information (COCI), which covers films and audiovisual images.
2. The Concept Note was submitted to the ASEAN Secretariat in May 2013.
3. The Concept Note was submitted to the Sub-C
4. ommittee on Information (SCI) of the COCI which met on 10-11 June 2013 at Bandar Seri Begawan.
5. The Concept Note was elevated to the Special Senior Officials Meeting Responsible for Information (SOMRI) which met on 22-23 August 2013 at Kuala Lumpur, Malaysia. The following were agreed on:
 - 5.1. Film cooperation or co-production project can be initiated through the respective Sub-Committee on Information (SCI) / Committee on Culture and Information (COCI) channel;
 - 5.2. Film policy is one of the tasks of the newly established Working Group on Content and Production under SOMRI; and
 - 5.3. Any immediate matters related to film (arising from the paper of the FDCP) will be discussed/highlighted at the next SOMRI Meeting (2014, in Myanmar).

³ Prepared by the FILM ASEAN Committee, December 2014.

6. Upon the invitation of the COCI, FDCP Chairman Briccio Santos presented the FILM ASEAN concept at the 48th Meeting of the ASEAN COCI at Bandar Seri Begawan, Brunei on 20 November 2013.
7. FDCP reported the status of FILM ASEAN to the ASEAN Secretariat (DSG Alicia Bala) on 17 January 2014. DSG Bala recommended the inclusion of FILM ASEAN in the discussion agenda of the next SOMRI/AMRI.
8. The next SOMRI/AMRI meeting where FILM ASEAN will be discussed is scheduled on 2–6 June 2014 in Myanmar.
9. No definite action was taken at the SOMRI/AMRI meeting in Myanmar regarding the FILM ASEAN programme.

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