



## SHOOTING IN THE DOMINICAN REPUBLIC - FAQ

### Lantica and Pinewood

- 1. What is Lantica Media?** Lantica Media provides world class studio facilities and production services to the media, tv and film industries. The company's operating units currently include Pinewood Dominican Republic Studios ([www.pinewooddr.com](http://www.pinewooddr.com)), Lantica Production Services and Art 3+4.  
Lantica is owned by the Dominican group Inicia ([www.inicia.com](http://www.inicia.com)) and Pinewood Group ([www.pinewoodgoup.com](http://www.pinewoodgoup.com)) in the UK.
- 2. Who owns Pinewood Dominican Republic Studios?** It's 100% owned by Lantica Media.

### Incentive

- 3. What is the incentive?** There are several incentives in our Film Law, but the main incentive for foreign productions is a Transferable Tax Credit of 25% of eligible costs.
- 4. What's eligible for the incentive?** Everything is eligible (ATL and BTL), except for per diems, finance charges, completion bond, unit publicity and marketing costs.
- 5. Are foreign cast and crew eligible for the incentive?** Yes, subject to being paid via the local Production Services company and withheld 1.5% income tax from their gross salary.  
\*1.5% WHT is an exclusive benefit for Lantica to service Feature Films, TV movies, TV Series, TV Mini Series, TV Reality Shows, Documentaries, Telenovelas and Music Videos under the Art.39 Incentive of the DR film law. Note that these projects must be exhibited in the Dominican Republic (it can be as simple as organizing a screening for local crew and the DR Film Commission).
- 6. Can one still use any foreign based payroll company (for example Entertainment Partners/Cast and Crew/Sargent Disc)?** Yes.



- 7. Will foreign cast and crew lose their union rights because they are paid via the DR company?** No. The DR company only works as a paying agent, the employment contract will still be with the foreign producer.
- 8. What type of projects are eligible?** Feature Films, TV movies, TV Series, TV Mini Series, TV Reality Shows, Documentaries, Telenovelas and Music Videos.
- 9. What are the requirements to access the incentive?** Minimum spend of USD \$500K, a signed production services agreement with a local provider, and the use of Dominican crew (minimum amount of Dominican crew required in 2019 is 25% of number of crew members for the whole project).
- 10. What are the costs associated to getting the incentive?** An audit, ranging from USD \$10,000 to USD \$25,000, depending on the size of the project, a Tax Credit Management Fee, ranging from USD \$10,000 to USD \$20,000, and registration of every foreign crew and cast member into Sirecine (a Film Commission database), which costs USD \$20 for each cast and crew member, and USD \$40 for director and producers.
- 11. What type of incentive is it?** It's a transferable credit, which means the government issues the credit and then it needs to be transferred (sold) to a DR taxpayer.
- 12. Who buys tax credits?** Any company or individual who pays income tax in the DR.
- 13. Is there a market of companies buying tax credits?** Yes. In 2018, 100% of credits available in the DR were sold, close to USD8M. Pinewood Dominican Republic (PWDR) is part of a group of over 100 companies with provides access to a big market of companies buying credits.
- 14. What's the typical discount of the transfer?** Pinewood DR typically transfers credits at around 90 cents to the dollar.
- 15. How long does it take to sell the tax credits?** The timeline from the end of the production audit to the selling of the tax credits ranges between 10 and 14 months.
- 16. Are there caps to the incentive?** The incentive only has 2 eligibility caps:3% for development costs and 6% for producer fees. There are no caps for budget size nor talent fees.
- 17. Who cashflows the incentive?** Lantica Media (Pinewood's partner in the DR) can sometimes cashflow the incentive at 80 cents to the dollar on projects with considerable studio use.



## Other Financial

- 18. Is there VAT in the DR?** Yes, it's called ITBIS.
- 19. What is it applicable to?** It's applicable to all local labor and expenses, except providers registered as exclusive film providers (Studio Services and Film Equipment Rental Houses).
- 20. Is ITBIS refundable?** No, it should be considered as part of the costs. But it is an eligible cost for the Tax Credit.
- 21. Are there any exemptions?** The DR Film Law contemplates that eligible registered suppliers can invoice without ITBIS. Currently there are very few suppliers who can do this: camera and electric supplier, studio services and production services.
- 22. What's the local currency and exchange rate to the USD?** Dominican Peso, currently at 50 per US Dollar.
- 23. Do PWDR or Lantica Media fund projects?** No.

## Production

- 24. How many projects are made in the DR every year?** There are around 25 local films made every year (average budget USD1.2M), plus around 10 foreign projects (from reality TV, to features, and TV series). There are hundreds of commercials and music videos also shot in the DR every year.
- 25. What foreign companies have shot in the DR?** In the last 5 years, Netflix (twice), NBC Universal, Heyday Films, Annapurna, Turner, See-Saw Films, Revolution Studios, Paramount, MJZ and many others.
- 26. What are the necessary permits and requirements?** The key permit is the Shooting Permit (Permiso Único de Rodaje or PUR), which is necessary to make costs eligible for the incentive, and it's also necessary to get location permits from government agencies, customs' free temporary importation of goods, and to access any other government support for the production.
- 27. How easy is it to get location permits?** Public location permits are normally obtained in a week's time.



- 28. What equipment is available in the island?** Practically all the necessary film equipment can be sourced locally. There are several vendors that service more than 30 films and over 300 commercials, each year. The biggest film supplier is PJ Gaffers, based at PWDR. You can find locally: Alexa Cameras, Ultra Prime Lenses, Anamorphics, Arrimax HMIs, Techno Cranes, etc.
- 29. What equipment needs to be imported?** You do not need to import film equipment, except for specialty gear, such as Motion Control or Pursuit Arms and Helicopter Mounts. Gimbals and SFX Gear might also need to be imported, depending on the needs.
- 30. What's the shipping and customs process like?** When shooting in the DR, the production is allowed to bring cargo without paying the regular import taxes. This requires that the client provides detailed information of cargo at least 10 days before arrival, so the Customs Broker can do all pertinent paperwork and have permits on time for the entry. With the correct paperwork beforehand, the cargo can be released in a matter of days (3 working days).
- 31. What are the available film equipment suppliers?** PJ Gaffers, De Jesus Crane, Miravista, Guerra Films, KCettes.
- 32. Do you offer marine coordination?** Yes. The water tank is ran by Diving Services DR, a team of marine coordination trained at Pinewood UK.
- 33. Do you have green screen capabilities?** Yes.
- 34. Do you have Post production facilities?** At PWDR: offline editing, DIT and screening room. In Santo Domingo, all audio and picture post available, including VFX.
- 35. Do you have construction teams for set construction?** Yes.

### **Local Cast & Crew**

- 36. How many crews do you have?** In the past there have been up to 10 projects shooting simultaneously. Our estimation is that there are 3 to 4 very good crews.
- 37. What are the crew working hours?** 6 day weeks, 11+1 hours per day..
- 38. What are crew costs compared to the US?** Crew costs can be as much as 50% lower than the US.
- 39. Are there any unions in the DR?** No.



**40. Where is the crew based?** Santo Domingo, the capital city.

**41. What is the travel time to PWDR?** 1 hour.

**42. Is the crew bilingual?** All heads of department are bilingual.

**43. What ethnic diversity does exist in cast?** Mulattoes, mestizos, white and black, and in a lower percentage, arabs, asians and others.

**44. And in Extras?** The majority of the population consists of mulattoes and mestizos (50%) another 20% white and about 20% black, and minorities of arabs, asians (for example 40,000 Chinese population), and others. The DR is the biggest tourist destination in the caribbean, so there are thousands of foreigners, mainly from Canada, USA and Europe that migrate for months each year, who are an additional pool.

**45. Accounting in the DR.** The DR fiscal system is complex. It's a cross referencing system, where clients and suppliers both declare each invoice every month, inputting more than 20 different criteria (information in columns) per invoice. The system crossmatches each transaction and if the reporting is consistent, the system accepts each transaction. This means that using a system such as Vista is difficult. DR Accounting firms have developed a software that emulates vista and generates the necessary reports, so what we do is input costs in this system and then export to Vista for the foreign accountants to be able to generate their reports.

In essence, the load of work is considerably larger than what a typical accounting team in the UK, USA or Canada have to handle. You always require a local team added to the foreign production accountant hired by the Producer. It is very important to go through how production accounting works in the DR with the client before we start each project.

**46. Are there any rules or restrictions for minor cast or extras we hire from the DR?**

Actors under 16 years old cannot work more than 6 consecutive hours a day. Actors under 16 years old cannot be employed for the night work, meaning they cannot start work after 08:00 P.M. Any child under the age of 18 years old is considered a minor in the DR.

For more information, below are some articles of importance of the Dominican Labor Law regarding WORK OF THE CHILDREN:

Art. 245.- The work of minors of fourteen years old is prohibited. However, for the benefit of art, science or teaching, the Minister of State for Labor, by individual permits, will be



able to authorize minors to be employed in public shows, radio, television or motion pictures as actors or extras.

Art. 246.- The minors of sixteen years old cannot be employed for the night work, during a period of twelve consecutive hours, which will be considered by the Minister of State for Labor and that, necessarily, will not be able to begin after eight o'clock at night, or finish before six o'clock in the morning.

Art. 247.- The working day of the minors of sixteen years old cannot exceed, under any circumstance, of six hours a day.

Art. 251.- The employment of minors of sixteen years old in dangerous or unhealthy jobs is prohibited. The Secretary of State for Labor will determine what these works are.

Art. 254.- The employer who employs an underage is obliged to grant them adequate facilities compatible with the needs of the worker so that he/she can fulfill his/her school programs and attend to professional training schools.

## **FOREIGN HIRE**

- 47. Which positions do you recommend bringing?** For projects up to USD \$15M budget it is recommended that you only bring your HODs. For projects of a bigger scale and complex SFX or Stunts, we recommend you bring in 1st and 2nd tier and source the rest locally.
- 48. Are there any fringes for crew?** No fringes, only the 18% ITBIS/VAT.
- 49. What's the withholding tax rate for foreign cast and crew?** Via a tax ruling issued to Lantica in 2018, it is 1.5%.
- 50. Do you need a visa to work in the DR?** Depending on where you are coming from. If coming from the USA, UK, Europe, Canada, Mexico, all you need is a visitor's visa which your airline' fare will include, and you'll be allowed to stay for 30 days. Any additional time will be acquired by buying the extended visa on exiting the country. For example, an extra 60 days costs USD \$50.
- 51. What is Sirecine?** It's a database created by the DR Film Commission. Every cast and crew member needs to be registered, at USD \$20 for each cast and crew member, and USD \$40 for director and producers. The local production services company will handle the registration.



## Infrastructure

- 52. How many sound stages does PWDR have?** 3 Sound Stages (a 21,000 Sq Feet and two 16,000 Sq Feet).
- 53. What's the sound stage power capability?** Each stage has a 750 KVA power transformer, the supply voltage source is 120/208/220/480VAC @ 60HZ.
- 54. Water Tank:** The 8 acre water facility includes a 60,500 sq ft horizon water tank with 4,300 sq ft inner tank and blue screen capabilities. It's in front of the ocean so you have an 'infinity' effect.
- 55. How long does it take for the water tank to fill up completely?** Approx. 12 Hours.
- 56. PWDR Support facilities.** Support facilities include offices, meeting rooms, dressing rooms, makeup & hair, workshops, utility spaces and warehouses, including woodmill.
- 57. What are the airports closest to PWDR?** Las Américas (Santo Domingo airport, coded SDQ) is 25 mins away. Punta Cana airport (coded PUJ) is 1.5 hours away.
- 58. What airlines fly to the DR?** The main ones are American Airlines, Delta Airlines, JetBlue, Spirit, Copa Airlines, Iberia, Alitalia, AeroMexico, British Airways, Air Canada, West Jet, Air France.
- 59. Are there any direct flights from Los Angeles?** Not currently. You have to fly via Miami, NYC, Atlanta, Mexico City or Panama City.
- 60. Where are the direct flights from?** The main cities are Miami, NYC, Atlanta, London, Madrid, Milan, Paris, Frankfurt and Mexico City.
- 61. Are there enough hotels near PWDR to house the crew?** Within a 10 min drive from the studio, there are 4 hotels, 2 golf country clubs, with hundreds of villas and thousands of apartments, many of them seafront.
- 62. Country infrastructure?** The Dominican Republic is the most popular tourist destination in the Caribbean, receiving over 6M visitors each year. Therefore the hotel industry is very developed, with more than 75,000 hotel rooms around the island. There are over 30 five star hotels, highways between the main cities, 7 international airports, shopping malls, and food from all over the world.
- 63. Public transport and self-drives?** Driving in the DR is fast and it is recommended not to use self-drives. Public transport is limited.



## More about shooting in the DR

- 64. Are there any diseases the crew & cast have to be vaccinated against?** No vaccinations required.
- 65. What's the climate in the DR?** June is the hottest month with an average temperature of 28°C (82°F). January is the coldest month with an average temperature of 25°C (77°F).
- 66. When is hurricane season?** Officially from June to November.
- 67. How often are there hurricanes?** The last one was 20 years ago.
- 68. When is the best time to shoot in the DR?** Films are made all year around. The most beautiful weather is from November to March.
- 69. Do you need hurricane insurance to shoot in the DR?** No.
- 70. Are there any safety concerns in the DR?** As everywhere in the world, there are areas where it's not recommended to visit. But in general, it's a safe country with one of the lowest crime rates in the Caribbean. For example there are more gun deaths per capita in Baltimore, Detroit and New Orleans than in the DR.
- 71. Is there a film commission in the DR?** Yes, the Dirección General de Cine (DGCINE): <http://www.dgcine.gob.do/>