

## **PREFACE**

Welcome to the *Guide to Filming in Jamaica*. This publication has been created for filmmakers and other visual storytellers who want to shoot in Jamaica. It is designed with producers as well as 'fixers' in mind, whether you're based locally or internationally. Our hope is that the information provided will make your experience creating screen-based projects in Jamaica as enjoyable, efficient, and productive as possible.

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## A FOREWORD FROM THE FILM COMMISSIONER



It is a well-known fact that anywhere in the world that you go and say “Jamaica,” it brings joy, excitement, and a story about a visit or favourite artiste. Our very identity conjures colourful images of a lifestyle of music, entertainment, and design. Our screen-based industries are no different, and we have a long and storied past in film, from as early as 1916!

Now over a hundred years later, you will see from the Guide that there is a lot happening on the ground by creative business practitioners and public partners to continue to build a business ecosystem in which the creative industries can thrive. One of the most important ideologies for us here at JAMPRO is that although the creative sectors appear to be full of fun and glamour, it is in fact the business of these sectors that are transformative and developmental.

The Guide is yours to use if you are an international producer who is considering Jamaica as a destination to do film business but also, most certainly, if you are a local producer who is under development with local content. We are very proud of our growing local industry, and I hope this will help you enjoy greater efficiencies and knowledge sharing, and an overall ease of doing business. The Guide was developed to streamline the communication of policies, processes, legislation and regulations that exist in all aspects of the filming-on-location process — and boy, do we have lots of those!

It was former Film Commissioner Carole Beckford, who recognized the web of connectivity and initiated the process of bringing all the information into one central location. I am very pleased to be able to complete the project during my tenure, and applaud the vision that she recognized was needed. I also wish to thank the research teams, initially led by Dr. Shelley-Ann Morgan and then by Joan “Nanook” Webley, our advisory review committee, and the staff at the Film Commission, who have altogether put in almost three years of work to get here. Well done!

On an annual basis, Jamaica welcomes an average of 150 international productions, employing over 2500 Jamaicans, and contributing over \$1 billion (JMD) to the local economy. We couldn’t do this without you. So, finally, thank you for having this publication in your hand (or on your screen) and I look forward to your production being shot right here in Jamaica, our beautiful land of wood and water.

A handwritten signature in black ink, appearing to read 'Renee Robinson'.

Renee Robinson  
Film Commissioner

**DISCLAIMER:** The *Guide to Filming in Jamaica* is a compilation of film-related information which has been provided by various government agencies and film practitioners in Jamaica. It includes existing policies and procedures relevant to the Jamaican film industry.

This guide is to be used for general information and educational purposes only. It is not intended to be used as a legal advisory document. As policies and practices in Jamaica's film industry may change from time to time, users of this guide are encouraged to contact the relevant government agencies to confirm the continued applicability of those policies and practices. The links provided in the *Guide to Filming in Jamaica* are provided for information and convenience only and JAMPRO does not accept any responsibility for the information found on the third party's site.

Every effort has been made to ensure that the information provided in the *Guide to Filming in Jamaica* is accurate. Users are advised to seek professional advice prior to making a decision or engaging in the production of a film in Jamaica to ensure that the activities contemplated are in keeping with all applicable national laws.

For the avoidance of doubt the Jamaica Promotions Corporation (JAMPRO) does not accept liability for any error or omission in the *Guide to Filming in Jamaica* and does not accept liability for any resulting loss or damage howsoever occurred by any person relying on the information presented in the *Guide to Filming in Jamaica* or by any third party.



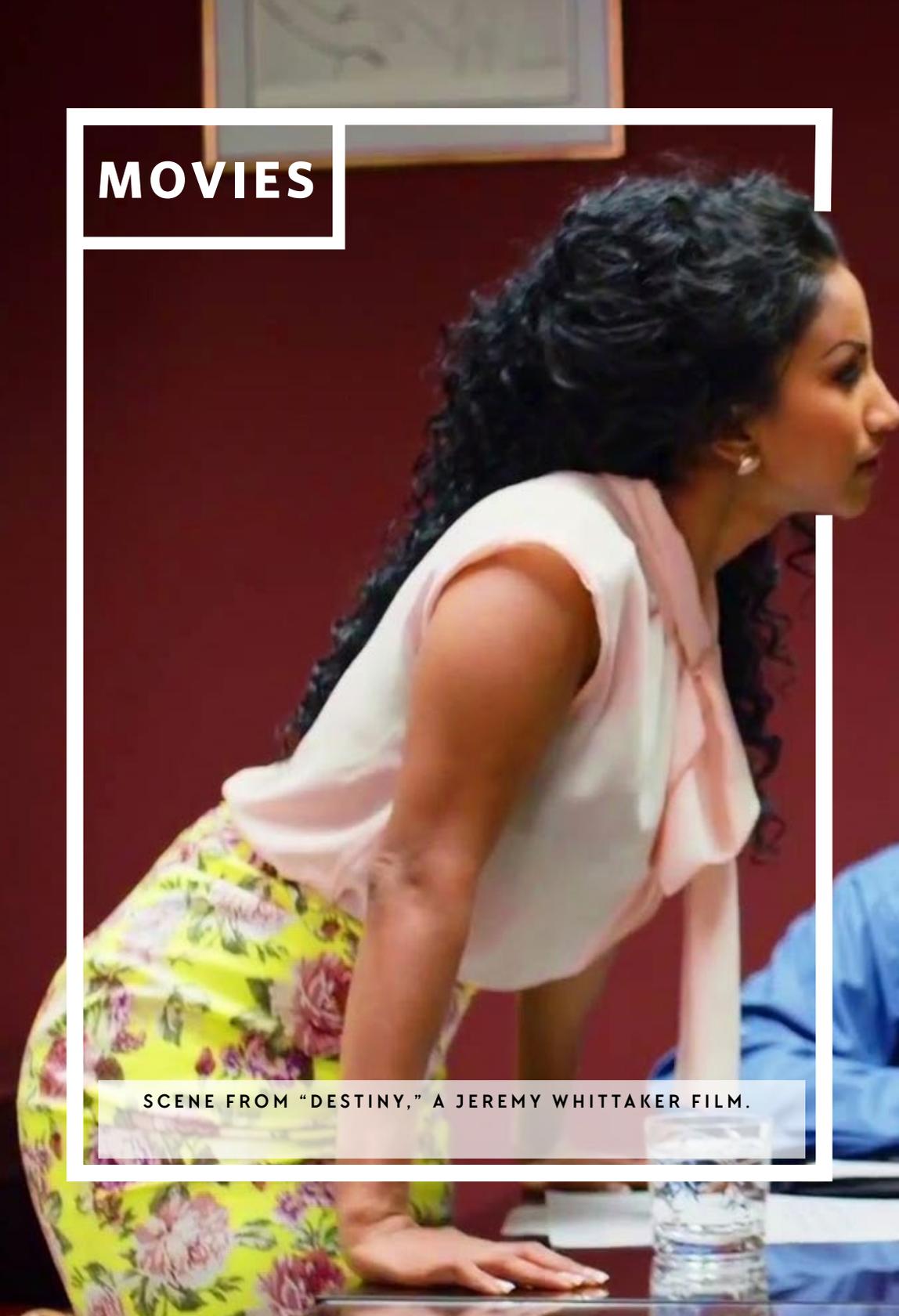
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# KEY ACRONYMS & ABBREVIATIONS

CHASE Fund	Culture, Health, Arts, Sports and Education Fund
CIT	Corporate Income Tax
COJ	Companies Office of Jamaica
CPTC	Creative Production and Training Centre
ECC	Excelsior Community College
EMCVPA	Edna Manley College of the Visual and Performing Arts
ETC	Employment Tax Credit
GCT	General Consumption Tax
iCreate	iCreate Institute
JAFTA	Jamaica Film and Television Association
JAMPRO	Jamaica Promotions Corporation
JANN	Jamaica Animation Nation Network
JCF	Jamaica Constabulary Force
JUTC	Jamaica Urban Transit Company
KSAMC	Kingston and St. Andrew Municipal Corporation
MTI	Media Technology Institute
PAYE	Pay As You Earn
PICA	Passport, Immigration and Citizenship Agency
PIR	Productive Input Relief
PIT	Personal Income Tax
SMA	Spectrum Management Authority
TAJ	Tax Administration Jamaica
UTech	University of Technology
UWI	The University of the West Indies, Mona

# MOVIES

A woman with long, dark, curly hair is shown in profile, leaning forward over a table. She is wearing a white, sleeveless top with a large, light pink bow at the back and a bright yellow skirt with a large floral pattern in purple and pink. Her right hand is resting on the table. In the background, a man in a blue shirt is partially visible. The setting appears to be an indoor meeting or conference room with a dark red wall.

SCENE FROM "DESTINY," A JEREMY WHITTAKER FILM.



## THE / JAMAICA / FILM COMMISSION

**E**stablished in 1984 as part of the Jamaica Promotions Corporation (JAMPRO)<sup>1</sup>, the Jamaica Film Commission's mandate is to promote Jamaica's screen-based industries. This work specifically entails furthering the industries' growth and development through investments, employment, trade and exports.

An essential component of the Film Commission's purpose is to build global relationships that give rise to excellent business opportunities, by efficiently facilitating collaboration and trade

among filmmakers, performing artists, distributors, festivals and financiers. The Commission continuously seeks to represent the growing repertoire of content produced by Jamaicans in Jamaica, as well as the roster of export-bound productions made in Jamaica by international filmmakers.

Our ambit covers the full value chain involved in producing creative output for screens.

<sup>1</sup> JAMPRO is an investment and trade agency of the Government of Jamaica

## **WHAT WE DO**

- Facilitate and Advise on Film Production
- Promote Jamaica as a Filming Location
- Facilitate Export and Investment Opportunities
- Deliver Sector Development Initiatives
- Advocate for Creative Industries

### **FACILITATE AND ADVISE ON FILM PRODUCTION**

- Process film registration applications.
- Submit bond waiver applications on behalf of local and international companies importing equipment temporarily and Productive Input Relief (PIR) requests for local companies importing equipment permanently.
- Support applications for work permits and work permit exemptions, as well as applications for licenses, permits and exemptions for regulated/restricted/banned items (such as firearms, explosives, animals, aerosols, motor vehicles, drones, fresh foods and meats).
- Accelerate applications for special permits for the use of public roads, underwater photography and other distinct arrangements by liaising between government entities and production project leaders.
- Assist local and international productions that require unique forms of facilitation with government entities.
- Collect and provide contact information for local production companies, managers, coordinators, and other audio-visual production professionals, as well as equipment rental houses, customs brokers, transportation providers, caterers, hotels, security services and other vendors.

### **PROMOTE JAMAICA AS A FILMING LOCATION**

- Maintain a locations gallery.
- Assist with scouting missions for designated film projects, which are eligible for that form of support based on the significance of projected impact on primary dimensions of the Film Commission's mandate - that is, investment (capital expenditure inlay), employment, trade and/or exports.
- Represent Jamaica at international festivals, trade shows and content

markets to promote Jamaica as a premier location for filming and to position business linkages for Jamaican industry participants.

- Attend and promote film events in Jamaica and arrange consultation and development meetings that enable eligible local practitioners to advance their businesses. Again, eligibility is determined based on significance of potential impact on the primary dimensions of the Film Commission's mandate.

### **FACILITATE EXPORT AND INVESTMENT OPPORTUNITIES**

- Coordinate with government ministries to pursue, establish and implement bilateral trade agreements (i.e. co-production treaties) across the global film industry, so as to provide increased opportunities for funding to the local industry.
- Circulate regional and international export and investment opportunities to local industry stakeholders.
- Arrange meetings with select international and local stakeholders where viable trade, partnerships, or business opportunities are identified.
- Pursue investor progression for eligible international projects that will result in employment of Jamaicans in the film industry.
- Maintain a database of local stakeholders in the film, animation, music, publishing, fashion and event industries.
- Lobby for incentives and policies to strengthen the business environment and increase viable investment opportunities in the film industry.

### **DELIVER SECTOR DEVELOPMENT INITIATIVES**

- Deliver capacity-building opportunities (e.g. JAFTA Propella! and the Film Lab), coordinate business matchmaking and facilitate access to marketing and distribution avenues for film and animation.
- Engage directly with film and animation industry associations to support their development and sustainability.
- Encourage the development and sustainability of local industry

associations for music, dance, theatre, publishing, fashion and events, in light of Jamaica's well-established reputation for world-class creative output in these areas and their potential relevance to the screen-based sector.

- So as to effect wider cross-fertilisation, support sector development initiatives across all creative industries.

### **ADVOCATE FOR THE CREATIVE INDUSTRIES**

- Lobby for funding, incentives and policies to support the development of local creative industries.
- Participate in national and regional creative industry policy-development consultations and research.

## **WHAT WE DON'T DO**

### **WHAT THE JAMAICA FILM COMMISSION DOES NOT DO**

In the interest of clarity, the Jamaica Film Commission is also obliged to underscore that:

- We do not provide script consultation services, script notes, or script feedback.
- We do not match individual writers or talent to producers or investors.
- We do not provide creative, technical or business training for practitioners. (Please see the “Training and Degree Programmes” chapter.)
- We do not conduct general sector-based research. Our data is JAMPRO specific.
- We do not provide interview responses to individual students conducting research. However, we do give presentations to a full class upon the instructor’s request.
- We do not host, plan or fund film screenings.
- We do not fund clients’ attendance at film festivals or industry markets.
- We do not fund films, sponsor events, or purchase tickets.
- We do not substitute for, or replace, any local private service provider you may need to hire in order to conduct your business.



**/JAMAICA'S /  
FILM INDUSTRY**

**SCENE FROM "MANGO WARS," A KYLE CHIN FILM.**

For generations, Jamaica's aesthetic and social appeal has consistently amassed global recognition, enticing international filmmakers to shoot in the island since the early 1900s. **A Daughter of the Gods** (1916), the silent drama directed by Herbert Brenon, is commonly regarded as the first major motion picture filmed here. It was a decidedly bold production, costing an estimated one million US dollars and employing 20,000 people during its eight months of production.

The discrete number and genres of films made in Jamaica grew over the course of the last century — the most notable addition being **Dr. No** (Terence Young, 1962), the first installation in the timeless James Bond film franchise, adapted from the eponymous novel (sixth in the book series) also written in Jamaica by Ian Fleming. However, a targeted plan to attract 'Hollywood' to the island was not implemented until the 1980s. Immediately preceding that strategic push, homegrown films like **The Harder They Come** (Perry Henzell, 1972) and **Rockers** (Ted Bafaloukos, 1978) had been garnering critical acclaim, market success on screens abroad and global attention to Jamaica as a destination. *The Harder They Come*, in particular, was described as a cult phenomenon and is even credited, by some, with introducing reggae to the world. There is broader consensus that it, at minimum, contributed to reggae's early momentum.

Efforts to attract dominant international filmmakers began to pay dividends in the 1990s with several major projects, like the classic tale, **Treasure Island** (Fraser Heston, 1990), the horror story, **Popcorn** (Mark Herrier, 1991), and the mega-hit comedies, **Cool Runnings** (Jon Turteltaub, 1993) and **How Stella Got her Groove Back** (Kevin Rodney Sullivan, 1998). During that period, independent projects continued to make their mark occasionally, with highly visible releases such as **Dancehall Queen** (Rick Elgood & Don Letts, 1997) and **Third World Cop** (Chris Browne, 1999).

The frequency of film productions in Jamaica is surging once again but, this time, an extended local infrastructure of seasoned writers, producers, directors, actors and technical crew has emerged — a paradigm shift that is fit to keep our domestic production space vibrant and ready for 'action'.

Some of the more recent feature films shot on location in Jamaica (out of the approximately 150 international productions registered annually) are:

**Yardie (2018)**

Director: Idris Elba

Stars: Aml Ameen, Shantol Jackson, Stephen Graham, Sheldon Shepherd, Naomi Ackie

Warp Films

**Sprinter (2018)**

Director: Storm Saulter

Stars: Dale Elliott, Shantol Jackson, David Alan Grier, Lorraine Toussaint, Bryshere Y. Gray, Kadeem Wilson

Mental Telepathy Productions

**King of the Dancehall (2016)**

Director: Nick Cannon

Stars: Nick Cannon, Collie Buddz, Whoopi Goldberg

Ncredible Entertainment

**Destiny (2014)**

Director: Jeremy Whittaker

Stars: Chris Martin, Karian Sang

Grasshopper Productions, JA

**Kingston Paradise (2013)**

Director: Mary Wells

Stars: Christopher Daley, Camille Small,

Greggory Nelson

Caribbean Tales Flix Productions

**Ghett'a Life (2011)**

Director: Chris Browne

Stars: Winston Bell, Kevoy Burton

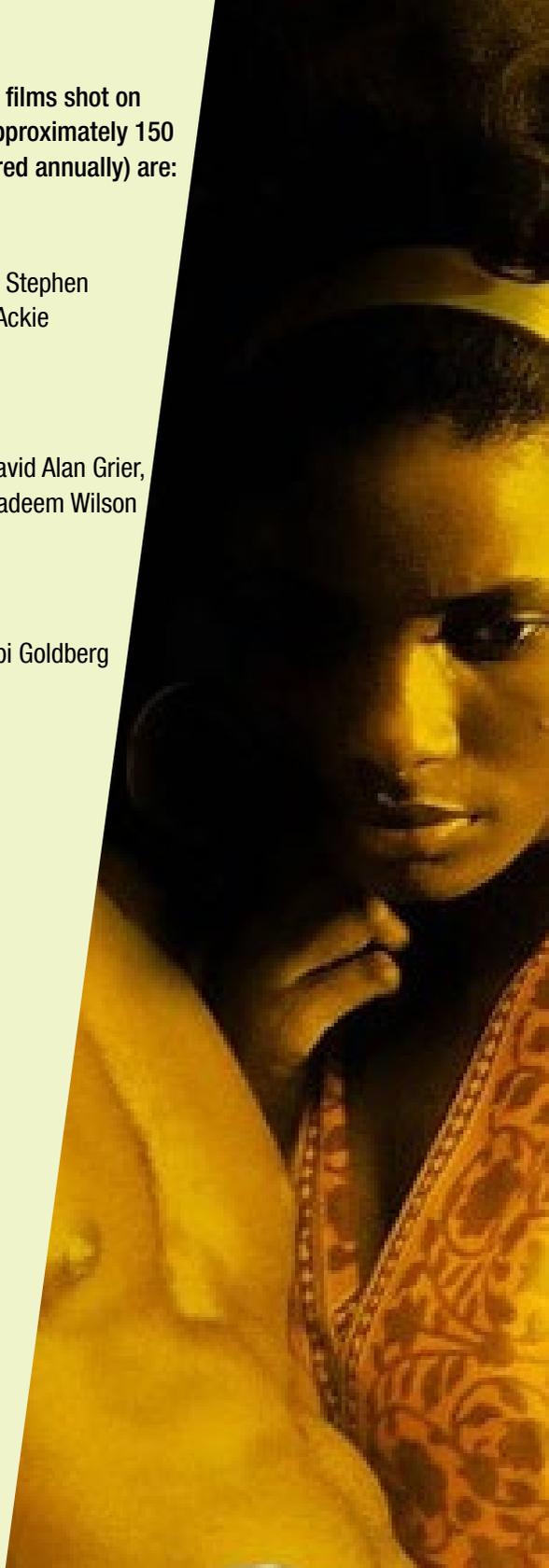
Jamrock Films, JA

**Better Mus Come (2010)**

Director: Storm Saulter

Stars: Sheldon Shepherd, Sky Nicole Grey

Firefly Films, JA



**Glory to Glorianna (2006)**

Director: Lennie Little-White

Stars: Carol Campbell, Rodney Campbell, Gracie-Ann Watson  
Mediamix Productions

**It's All About Dancing: A Jamaican Dance-U-mentary (2006)**

Director: Jason "Jay Will" Williams

Stars: Ding Dong, Elephant Man, John Hype  
Fine Gold Productions

Other popular feature films, shot entirely or partly in Jamaica over the years, and their directors, include:

**License to Wed (2007)**

Ken Kwapis

**Shottas (2002)**

Cess Silvera

**Belly (1998)**

Hype Williams

**White Squall (1996)**

Ridley Scott

**Lord of the Flies (1990)**

Harry Hook

**Smile Orange (1976)**

Trevor Rhone

**Lord of the Flies (1963)**

Peter Brook

**20,000 Leagues Under the Sea (1954)**

Richard Fleischer

**Treasure Island (1950)**

Byron Haskin





**/ JAMAICA'S /  
SCREEN-BASED INDUSTRIES**

SCENE FROM "OFF GUARD," A KYLE CHIN FILM.



As a whole, screen-based industries in Jamaica are experiencing a renaissance. Historically, the bulk of activity in the sector surrounded large international film projects, which came only to shoot in Jamaica, and local television commercial productions. Today, however, we're witnessing the emergence of a consistent flow of homegrown stories, as well as significant diversification — from captivating full-length films, to vivid shorts, animated content and music videos, to compelling documentary features. All of this has resulted in a vast, diverse pool of ideative, technical and on-screen talent.

Spearheaded by private sector efforts, economic growth across all of the industries within our screen-based sector is being encouraged at the highest levels of government and through its ministries and agencies. This, in turn, is having a systemic impact on the educational, training and professional resources available in Jamaica. Well-trained actors and performing artists have always been abundant here. But now, producers have the pleasure of easily locating and collaborating with top-notch managers, directors and technical practitioners, who've worked on a variety of local and international projects, across all fields of audio-visual production.

Intuitively, the vibrancy we see in Jamaica's screen-based industries today comes as no surprise in the context of modern technology. If anything, it's been a long time coming, considering the powerfully expressive nature of our culture. On any given day, while walking our streets, it's easy to be enchanted by the characters and stories you encounter. No matter where you go or what the context is, that dramatic way of being is just the way we process and navigate the world. Simply put, when it comes to storytelling — we're *naturals*.

## / TESTIMONIALS /

“We filmed Caribbean’s Next Top Model, cycle 19, on location in Trelawny and Kingston, Jamaica. The landscape of Jamaica is as much a character, as her people, her culture and her pulse... Yes, Jamaica has her own rhythm that allows the essence of your story to come alive; each frame a postcard, each moment a memory... Once you go you know, and you will return to discover the rest of her beautiful mystery.”

*Dionyse Fitzwilliam*  
*President/Executive Producer*  
*Caribbean’s Next Top Model*

“We came to Jamaica to recreate Kingston in the 1970s. We shot in original recording studios and a vinyl pressing factory, in Trench Town, by day and at night. We shot in the Blue Mountains and on Bob Marley Beach. Everywhere we went we were well looked after and greeted with smiles. Jamaica is spectacular and unique. It was a wonderful experience. I look forward to filming there again.”

*Alice Dawson*  
*Line Producer*  
*Yardie*

“Jamaica is a breathtakingly beautiful island and has countless amazing stories for films to share with the world. We have some of the best crews in the region who are highly skilled and very experienced. There are some important changes happening here, and Jamaican filmmakers are poised for flight.”

*Mary Wells*  
*Independent Director, Writer & Producer*

# / JAMAICA /: THE DESTINATION

Jamaica is an island of multiple majesties whose population's impact on global culture, relative to its size, is unparalleled. Designated a UNESCO Creative City of Music in 2015,<sup>2</sup> our capital city, Kingston, has continued for more than half a century to be an epicentre of musical innovation that inspires the world. Increasingly, Jamaicans are also recognised as being amongst the most prolific and versatile dancers to be found on the international stage. Latest emerging trends suggest the same will ultimately hold true for our film and animation professionals.

Ranking fifth in the world by diversity of terrain, our land covers just over 4,000 sq. miles (11,424 sq. km). A location scout can take you from the bewitching Blue Mountains inland (lush with tropical forest and world-famous coffee farms) to Negril's dramatic caves and cliffs and, of course, those picture-perfect beaches that continue to emerge rhythmically along our west coast, as you descend to Montego Bay. Just under half of our island is mountainous, the highest point being the Blue Mountain Peak, which rises 7,402 ft. (2,256 m) above sea level.

In 2015, UNESCO declared the most dominant inland mountain ranges — referred to collectively as Jamaica's Blue and John Crow Mountains — as a World Heritage Site. In line with its significance to Jamaica's human history and natural environment, the area met both cultural and natural qualifications for designation as a place of “outstanding universal value,” as it became UNESCO's only new mixed (i.e. cultural and natural) World Heritage Site for 2015.<sup>3</sup>

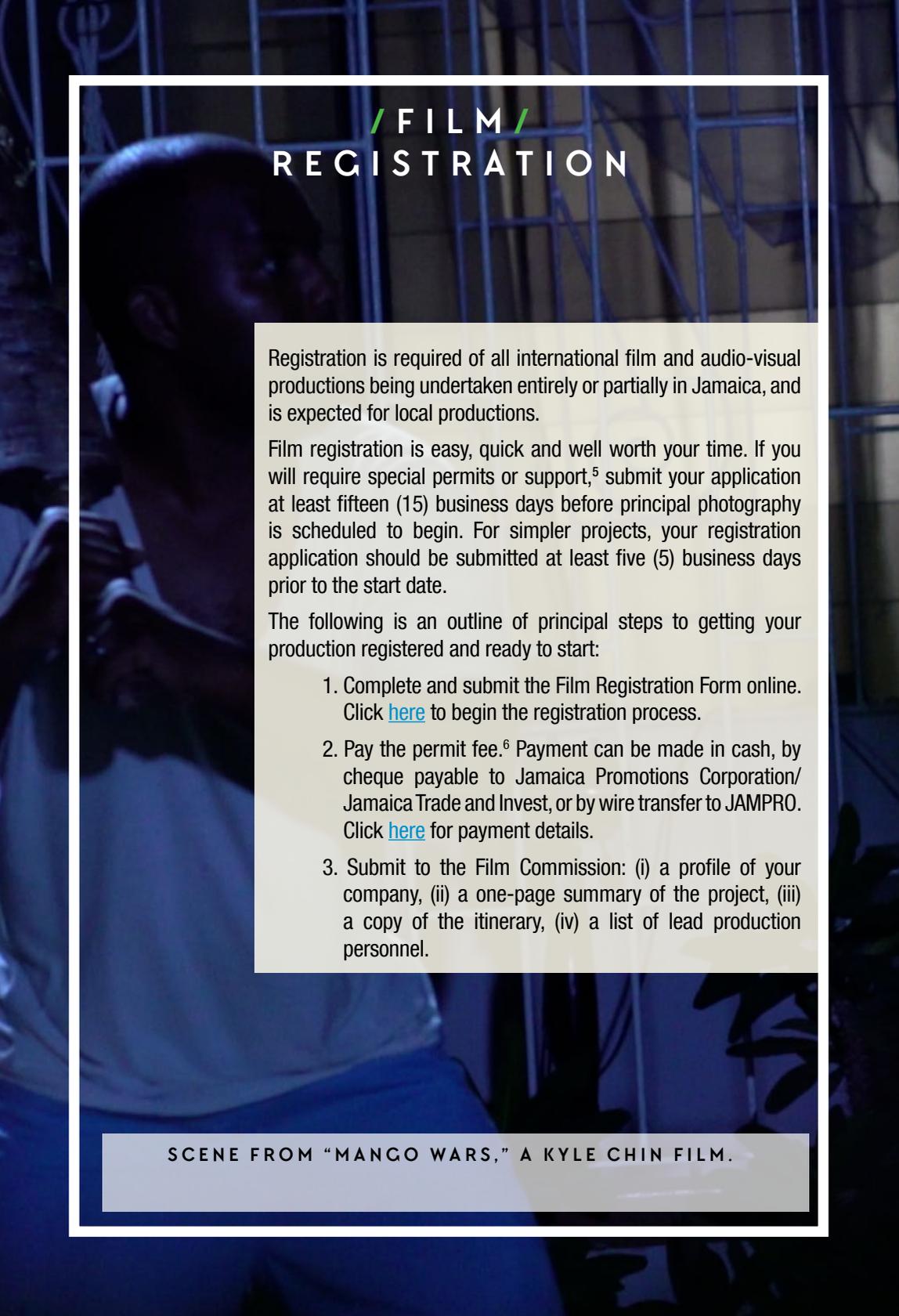
Jamaica has also made numerous political and social contributions to the global community that are honoured and revered in hearts and minds worldwide. Some of her indelible marks on world history have been: the iconic heroism of Queen Nanny in the resistance to

<sup>2</sup> The UNESCO Creative Cities Network (UCCN) promotes cooperation among urban centres that have identified creativity as a strategic factor for sustainable development. Kingston became the 70th city in the network, joining cities like Montreal in Canada, Brazzaville in Congo and Nagoya in Japan. <sup>3</sup> See the [Blue and John Crow Mountains listing](#) on the World Heritage Convention website for further details.

slavery;<sup>4</sup> the leadership of Dutty Boukman in the Haitian revolution; the catalytic role of the Baptist War, led by Samuel Sharpe, in the dismantlement of institutionalised slavery across the British colonial empire; the leadership and legacy of Marcus Garvey in ensuring the elevated consciousness and embrace of African identity amongst descendants of previously enslaved Africans, as well as their economic and political proactivity; the cultural heritage that shaped record-breaking contributions by Harry Belafonte to United States' popular culture, and gave rise to the unique platform that he leveraged for trailblazing advocacy during their Civil Rights Movement; Jamaica's act of being the first nation state in the Western Hemisphere to reject the claim to legitimacy of the Apartheid regime in South Africa by way of economic sanctions; and the role of reggae music (especially, Bob Marley's) in the unmaking of oppressive regimes across the globe, for all peoples.

Jamaica's monumental contributions also include: Cicely Williams' discovery and research into kwashiorkor (a disease that affects persons in areas of famine or poor food supply) and her resultant campaign against artificial milk substitutes for human breast milk; the development impact of the Windrush generation and other Jamaican emigrants on modern UK infrastructure and health practices; and the inspirational feats of our athletes — like Merlene Ottey's incredible longevity as a medalling sprinter, our tropically based bobsled team qualifying for Winter Olympics, Shelly-ann Fraser-Price's golden Summer Olympics hat-trick, Alia Atkinson becoming the first black woman to win a world swimming title, and Usain Bolt's captivating ascension to legendary status as the greatest track and field athlete of all time. Believe it or not, the list could go on.

All together, Jamaica's colourful culture, dynamic natural landscape and rich history provide ideal settings for the production of screen content across a myriad of genres.



## / FILM / REGISTRATION

Registration is required of all international film and audio-visual productions being undertaken entirely or partially in Jamaica, and is expected for local productions.

Film registration is easy, quick and well worth your time. If you will require special permits or support,<sup>5</sup> submit your application at least fifteen (15) business days before principal photography is scheduled to begin. For simpler projects, your registration application should be submitted at least five (5) business days prior to the start date.

The following is an outline of principal steps to getting your production registered and ready to start:

1. Complete and submit the Film Registration Form online. Click [here](#) to begin the registration process.
2. Pay the permit fee.<sup>6</sup> Payment can be made in cash, by cheque payable to Jamaica Promotions Corporation/ Jamaica Trade and Invest, or by wire transfer to JAMPRO. Click [here](#) for payment details.
3. Submit to the Film Commission: (i) a profile of your company, (ii) a one-page summary of the project, (iii) a copy of the itinerary, (iv) a list of lead production personnel.

SCENE FROM "MANGO WARS," A KYLE CHIN FILM.

4. In order for the Film Commission to apply for a bond waiver on your behalf, submit a detailed list of all equipment you will be importing.<sup>7</sup> This list should include a description of the items, with the quantities, serial numbers, monetary value and relevant currency for each. Download the equipment template [here](#). In the case of bond waivers, all equipment on the list should be used exclusively for the purposes of the registered production and must leave the country once the production is completed.
5. Employ the services of a Customs Broker. The broker will assist you with clearing equipment using the documentation provided by the Film Commission. A list of customs brokers is available [here](#). **Failure to retain the services of a customs broker will result in your equipment being detained.**
6. Employ the services of a local Production Manager, Fixer, or Coordinator. This is a mandatory engagement. A list of potential candidates is available [here](#).
7. Prior to confirming your itinerary, verify and resolve with your nearest Jamaican Consulate all immigration requirements for foreign crew and cast members who will be travelling to Jamaica. (The specific requirements for entry into Jamaica vary across nationalities. In some cases, visas are required.)

<sup>5</sup> See pages 28 to 33 for info on special permits that may be applicable to your project. <sup>6</sup> Values stated in the *Guide to Filming in Jamaica* are current at its date of publication but are subject to change. <sup>7</sup> If your equipment list includes Unmanned Aerial Vehicles, such as drones, you will need to get a UAV Flight Permit from Jamaica Civil Aviation Authority for the waiver to be approved. See the “Special Permits and Licenses” section of the “Government Policies and Frameworks” chapter for details on that application process.

# / E S S E N T I A L / T R A V E L L I N G I N F O

## **AIRPORTS**

Jamaica has two major international airports. Located 20 minutes from Kingston's business centre is the Norman Manley International Airport (KIN), our primary airport for business travel and movement of air cargo. The Donald Sangster International Airport (MBJ), in Montego Bay, is the island's main tourism gateway.

## **CLIMATE**

Jamaica has an ideal tropical marine climate. On average, the rainiest times are May to June and September to November, with heaviest rainfall from mid-September to late October. Due to the country's privileged location within the Caribbean Sea, direct impact from hurricanes is a rare event which satellite forecasts give adequate warning for.

Year-round temperatures for most of Jamaica's populated areas range from an average of 70° F (21° C) to 86° F (30° C). Temperatures fall steadily with increasing altitude, dropping about four degrees centigrade for every 1,000 ft. climbed. At the Blue Mountain Peak, the average annual temperature is 53° F (12° C).

## **CURRENCY**

Jamaican official currency is the Jamaican Dollar (JMD). The United States Dollar (USD), Pound Sterling (GBP), Euro (EUR) and Caymanian Dollar (KYD) are also widely accepted for transactions, but usually with a surcharge. Foreign exchange can be converted to Jamaican Dollars at banks and cambios, numerous located islandwide.

## **LANGUAGE**

Official language: English

Dialects: Jamaican Patois

## **TIME ZONE**

Eastern Standard Time (GMT -5)

## **TELEPHONE CODES**

+1 876 and +1 658

## **VACCINATIONS**

Depending on the country you are arriving from, our immigration officials may require you to present certificates of vaccination against certain diseases (based on the specific history of infected zones). Be sure to verify all of your entry requirements with the Passport, Immigration and Citizenship Agency (PICA) before setting your itinerary. Vaccinations are usually not preemptive for travel to Jamaica. However, some foreign agencies make recommendations based on where you're going (urban/rural), how long you're staying and what you'll be doing.

SCENE FROM "CITY OF MINE," A DANIELLE RUSSELL FILM.

# FILMING IN / JAMAICA / : THE BASIC ELEMENTS

All commercial film, television and other screen-based productions being undertaken entirely or partially in Jamaica are to be registered with the Jamaica Film Commission. Refer to the “Film Registration” chapter for a step-by-step outline of that process. Other potentially actionable information pertaining to the execution of the production phases of your project is addressed below.

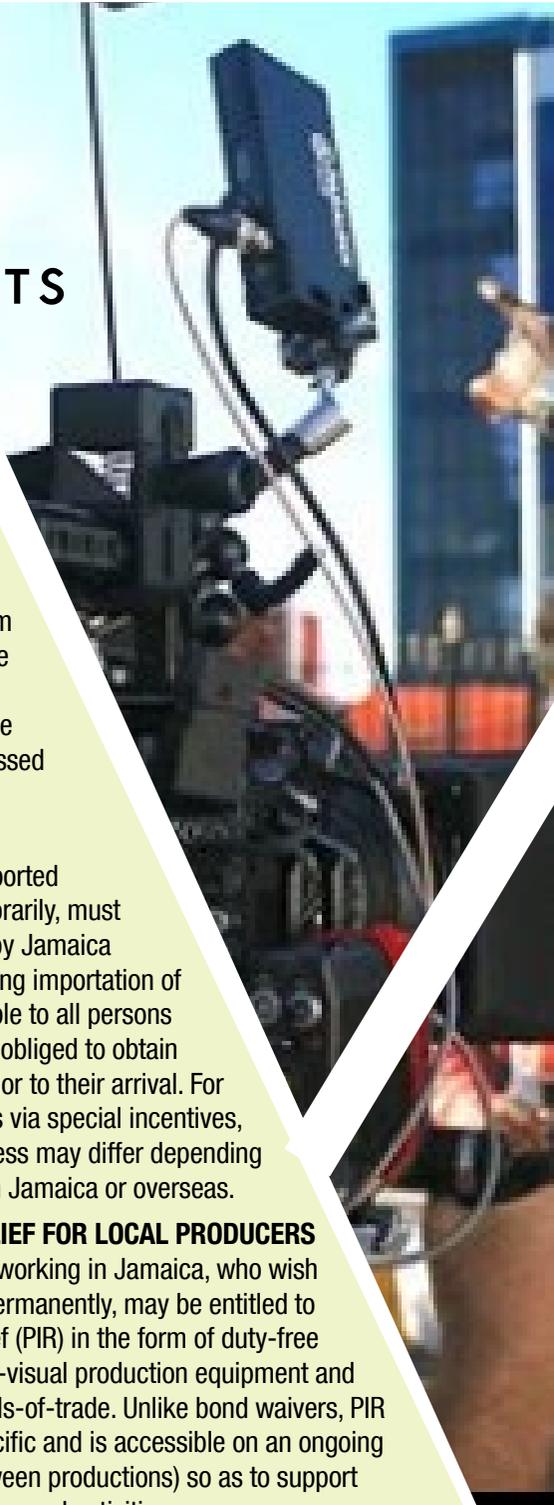
## **CUSTOMS**

All shipments and packages being imported into the island, permanently or temporarily, must be inspected and cleared for entry by Jamaica Customs Agency. The laws governing importation of controlled items are also applicable to all persons in/entering Jamaica, and all are obliged to obtain the relevant import licences prior to their arrival. For duty-free importation of items via special incentives, the customs clearance process may differ depending on whether you’re based in Jamaica or overseas.

## **PRODUCTIVE INPUT RELIEF FOR LOCAL PRODUCERS**

Producers residing and working in Jamaica, who wish to import equipment permanently, may be entitled to Productive Input Relief (PIR) in the form of duty-free importation of audio-visual production equipment and other approved tools-of-trade. Unlike bond waivers, PIR is not project specific and is accessible on an ongoing basis (even between productions) so as to support development-focused activities.

In addition to being locally based, the requirements for film





SCENE FROM "THIS CITY OF MINE," THE NEW BENCHMARK IN JAMAICAN FILMMAKING.

producers to be able to access PIR are as follows:

1. Registration on Jamaica's Entertainment Registry (E-Registry)
2. Completion of the Incentive form. The form can be downloaded from the website of the Ministry of Culture, Gender, Entertainment and Sport.
3. Valid Tax Compliance Certificate (for companies).
4. Valid Taxpayer Registration Number (for individuals).
5. Complete list of equipment to be imported.

The Film Commission facilitates PIR applications of producers listed in the Entertainment Registry. [Click here](#) for details about the Entertainment Registry, including eligibility requirements and the registration process. You may also contact the Ministry with responsibility for Entertainment for guidance on the application process.

### **BOND WAIVERS FOR FOREIGN AND LOCAL PRODUCERS**

Foreign producers who register their productions with the Film Commission can access bond waivers on all approved equipment being imported temporarily. Local producers working with foreign producers on productions in Jamaica are also allowed access to these waivers.

As previously outlined in the “Film Registration” chapter, once your film is registered and you have submitted all documentation required for the importation of equipment, the Film Commission will apply for a bond waiver on your behalf. You must engage the services of a licensed customs broker to facilitate the importation of the equipment. Note that, items acquired with the aid of waivers should be used exclusively for the purposes of your registered production and must leave the country once the production is completed.

For further information about the customs clearance process for film production purposes, you may contact the Jamaica Film Commission directly or speak with your local Production Manager

## **EQUIPMENT RENTAL**

State-of-the-art, audio-visual production and post-production equipment are available for rent, at competitive rates, from local companies. This includes camera packages, as well as grip, lighting and sound equipment. Production vehicles such as trucks, buses, artist trailers and drones are also available. In some cases, hiring a specially qualified operator is compulsory.

As discussed in the preceding sections of this chapter, equipment that is not available in Jamaica can be brought into the island with the assistance of industry-specific incentives, either permanently (in the case of local filmmakers ) or temporarily.

Explore the best options to meet your equipment needs with your local Production Manager. A list of equipment rental services is available on the Film Commission’s website.

## **HIRING A LOCAL TEAM**

Jamaica is home to a large community of well-trained, highly experienced on and off-screen film professionals. Their working format ranges from large commercial outfits to boutique studios, agencies and individual contractors. (Support services such as catering, transportation, private security, lawyers and accountants are also in reliable supply.)

For a list of production companies, independent production managers, fixers and other essential crew, visit [filmjamaica.com](http://filmjamaica.com).

## **WORK PERMITS**

Crew and cast members who are required to be in Jamaica for more than six (6) months, and are not Jamaican nationals, must apply for a work permit. Those who

will be working in Jamaica for less than six (6) months are eligible for exemptions. The Film Commission can facilitate work permit or work permit exemption applications on your behalf. For more details, refer to the section titled “Work Permits” in the “Government Regulations and Framework” chapter.

## LOCATIONS

Jamaica is large enough to provide just about any setting you have in mind, but small enough to drive from one end of the island to the other in under four (4) hours. From mountainous rainforests, caves and cliffs, to hot springs, waterfalls and sprawling white sand beaches to Victorian-era architecture, amusement parks and modern social hotspots — you name it, Jamaica’s got it! The island’s geography is as expressive and diverse as its people and culture.

A photo gallery featuring examples of locations and a list of scouts and managers is available on the Film Commission’s website. Below is a brief introduction to a few of our film-friendly cities and major towns.

### CITIES AND TOWNS

**Kingston** has been Jamaica’s capital city since 1872. Having been built adjacent to the 7th largest natural harbour in the world, it is the centre of commerce and industry on the island, boasting a vast spread of handsome modern buildings inhabited by offices, factories, studios, shops and recreation facilities. Kingston’s geography is further defined by a legacy of tropically adapted Georgian architecture, iconic sites such as the Trench Town Culture Yard, pockets of urban agriculture and exhilarating nightlife. It is the only UNESCO City of Music in the Caribbean and one of only 118 designated cities, globally, in the UNESCO Creative Cities Network.

**Port Royal** is one of the most significant historical and archaeological sites in Jamaica. Established in 1518 by the Spanish, it once held the status of largest city in the Caribbean, functioning as the region’s hub of shipping and commerce during the latter half of the 17th century. Port Royal was known then as “the richest and wickedest city in the world.” Buccaneers and pirates, who preyed on ships around the Spanish Main, stored their treasure there. On June 7, 1692, an earthquake swallowed most of the city. Two-thirds of the town sank into the sea and thousands died, either in the earthquake or in the plagues that followed. Today, Port Royal is a quaint fishing village, with Fort Charles and a few other structures remaining as relics of its notorious past.

**Spanish Town** is Jamaica’s oldest continuously inhabited town. Built on the west bank of the Rio Cobre, it was Jamaica’s first capital during the colonial era and maintained that status for over 300 years. The town’s multi-centurial history, as capital, spanned the periods of Spanish colonisation from 1534–1655 and English colonisation from 1655–1872. The original town square is a historic monument,

being home to numerous memorials, the national archives and one of the oldest Anglican churches outside of the British Isles.

**Mandeville**, our largest hill town, is regarded as Jamaica's mountain resort, experiencing annual temperatures typically in the low sixties (fahrenheit). The town was originally laid out in 1816 and named for Lord Mandeville, the eldest son of the Duke of Manchester (the Governor after whom the parish in which Mandeville is located was named). In the latter half of the 19th century, Mandeville became the home of the Caribbean's first golf course and one of its oldest hotels. Today, it remains a prosperous metropolis and is the island's fifth largest urban centre, which is attributed, in part, to it being the site of Jamaica's first major bauxite mining facility.

**Montego Bay (Mo-bay)** is Jamaica's second largest city and has been a tourist mecca since the turn of the century. Distinguished by its variety of year-round recreation and entertainment options, the city also has an international airport, a modern cruise ship pier and a growing industrial free zone area. Historical places of interest include Sam Sharpe Square, named for the revered freedom fighter and deacon who was hanged there on account of his leadership in the Baptist War of 1831-1832. The monumental event, which mobilised 60,000 enslaved workers, set off a chain reaction that resulted in the dismantlement of institutionalised slavery across the entire British Empire.

**Negril** is a seaside resort town located at the western tip of the island, whose borders extend from the Half Moon Bay in Hanover to the Negril Lighthouse in Westmoreland. There, no building can be higher than the tallest palm tree — by law. Boasting seven continuous miles of white sand beach, the town has a hedonistic ambiance and offers diverse accommodations to suit various tastes. Negril's beach is regularly rated as one of the top ten beaches in the world by travel magazines. The location is also prized for its diving sites, such as The Throne Room underwater cave.

**Ocho Rios** is another tourism hot spot located on the island's north coast, in the parish of St. Ann. Travel about 28 miles (45 km) inland and you'll find Nine Mile — the birthplace of internationally acclaimed reggae superstar, Robert Nesta Marley. Like Mo-bay and Negril, Ocho Rios boasts breathtaking beaches, thrilling excursions and an eclectic range of accommodations. It is specially known for its rivers, waterfalls, plantation tours and majestic tropical gardens.

**Port Antonio** is located in the perennially lush parish of Portland, which is also home to the Charles Town and Moore Town Maroons and the world famous Blue Lagoon. The town owed much of its early prosperity to the banana trade with the U.S.A. and England, which officially began in 1870 (making Jamaica the first country to trade bananas internationally). Among the foremost historic structures

located in Port Antonio are the DeMontevin Lodge (a guest house resembling a Victorian-style New England mansion) and the Titchfield High School (founded in 1785 in the barracks of Fort George, the remains of which can still be seen today).

## **SPECIAL PERMITS AND LICENSE**

### **ANIMAL HANDLING**

A high standard of care is prescribed for all animals in Jamaica. This standard applies to all animals being used in film productions, including animals being used off camera.

If animals will be used in your project, you must notify the Veterinary Services Division Quarantine Unit at the Ministry of Industry, Commerce, Agriculture and Fisheries at least six (6) weeks prior to the animal's arrival.

All animals imported into Jamaica are required, by law, to be quarantined for a minimum of fourteen (14) days. Paperwork and processing of the animals to be imported must be scheduled for and completed in advance of the production date. Animals that are imported without the required paperwork will be detained by the Quarantine Unit. Animal carcasses will be destroyed.

For further information contact the [Veterinary Services Division](#) of the Ministry of Industry, Commerce, Agriculture and Fisheries.

### **PROTECTED NATURAL AREAS**

The National Environment and Planning Agency (NEPA) administers oversight of all activities that have potential or existing implications on Jamaica's natural environment. You may need to apply for special permits from NEPA, if your production involves:

- Filming in protected areas.
- Filming underwater.
- Importation of flora, fauna, biological organisms or genetically modified organisms.

Speak with your local Production Manager or the Film Commission to determine if your production requires you to have special permits from NEPA. Information regarding environment-related policies, guidelines and fees are available on [NEPA's website](#).

# **DRONE OPERATIONS AND AERIAL PHOTOGRAPHY**

Professional operators of unmanned aerial vehicles (UAVs) must apply to the Jamaica Civil Aviation Authority (JCAA) for permits and comply with all conditions included in permits granted, in order to exercise authority to operate UAVs. Depending on the radio frequency a UAV carries, a class license for operation in that frequency (issued by the Spectrum Management Authority) may also be necessary.

## **Jamaica Civil Aviation Authority**

For a UAV Flight Permit to be prepared and issued by the JCAA, once you have settled on the date(s) to conduct your drone operations, you will need to submit a written request that includes the following information:

- Name and mailing address of the accountable person to be named in the permit
- Type of UAV
- Max UAV altitude being requesting (not above 400 feet)
- Location of the UAV operation
- Date and duration of the UAV operation
- Purpose of the UAV operation

The application should be addressed to:

**Director General  
Jamaica Civil Aviation Authority  
4 Winchester Road  
Kingston 10**

The application process is normally completed within four (4) working days. You will be given special operating instructions, if the location is in or near special use airspace (“restricted”/”prohibited”).

For further enquiries, please contact the **JCAA** at:

Tel: 876-960-3948 or 876-960-3965

Email: [info@jcaa.gov.jm](mailto:info@jcaa.gov.jm)

You may also visit [JCAA's website](#) for alternative contact details.

## **The Spectrum Management Authority (SMA)**

The Spectrum Management Authority (SMA) is the national regulator for the radio frequency spectrum. As an agency of the Ministry of Science, Energy and Technology and an advisory body to the Minister with principal responsibility for Telecommunications (who has responsibility for the regulation of the spectrum

under the Telecommunications Act, 2000), the SMA facilitates the efficient management of the spectrum and the issuance of licenses.

Currently, drones are only allowed to operate without a spectrum license in the 2.4GHz and the 5725-5850 MHz frequency bands. Drones operating outside of those bands require a spectrum license. The SMA will need to see the UAV Flight Permit, from the JCAA, to process a spectrum license.

For further details, please contact the licensing representative or the administrative manager of the SMA at the phone numbers or email address provided below:

Licensing Representative

Tel: 876-922-8884 or 876-967-7948

Manager, Administration

Tel: 876-922-8884 or 876-967-7948

Email: [info@sma.gov.jm](mailto:info@sma.gov.jm)

You may also visit [SMA's website](#) for alternative contact details.

## **FIREARMS, WEAPONS, EXPLOSIVES AND PYROTECHNICS**

Firearms and related supplies, other lethal weapons, explosives and pyrotechnics are not permitted in Jamaica, under any circumstances, without the officially documented authorisation of the [Ministry of National Security](#). In the case of genuine arms and ammunition, a license or exemption is necessary for their use to be legal. A permit is required for other restricted items. You may be required to hire the services of an armourer in specific cases where genuine arms and ammunition are utilized on set. Your local Production Manager and the Film Commission can provide references for qualified armourers on the island. Restricted items include, but are not limited to the following:

- Ammunition
- Bullet-proof vests
- Camouflage
- Guns and accessories (real or imitation)
- Firecrackers and flares
- Mace/Pepper spray
- Stun guns/Tasers

If your production requires the importation of genuine/modified/imitation arms and/or ammunition, you must:

- Notify the Jamaica Film Commission of your intention to apply for an approval for importation of a restricted item.
- Complete a [Restricted Items Importation/Clearance Form](#).

The Film Commission can prepare a letter of endorsement, in relation to your production, making reference to the date, time frame of use and specific items to be imported. The letter and the form can then be submitted by your Production Manager to the Ministry of National Security along with supporting documentation which you will be asked to provide. The application processing time is at least ten (10) business days.

### **PROTECTED CULTURAL SITES**

If your production requires filming at a historic, heritage or otherwise protected cultural site, you may need permission from the Jamaica National Heritage Trust and/or the Ministry with responsibility for Culture and Cultural Heritage. There are some heritage sites where filming is strictly prohibited. Consult with your local Production Manager or the Film Commission to verify your obligations. For additional specific information about historic and heritage sites, visit the [Jamaica National Heritage Trust website](#).

### **ROAD CLOSURE, TRAFFIC DIVERSION AND GENERAL POLICE PARTICIPATION**

Your primary points of contact for requesting and accessing permits and assistance for temporary road closures, diversion of automobile traffic and/or diversion of pedestrian traffic, will be the relevant parish council and the local precinct of the Jamaica Constabulary Force (JCF). To engage the police for private security purposes, you will need to contact the local precinct of the JCF only. For other forms of police participation, direct approval would need to be granted by the Commissioner of Police.

#### **Parish Council Approval**

Your Production Manager should contact the relevant parish council no less than ten (10) business days prior to the scheduled shoot date, to ensure timely processing. Requests must be submitted <sup>8</sup> in writing and should include:

- Your letter of endorsement from the Film Commission.
- The shoot schedule, complete with dates, times and locations for filming.
- The intended use(s) of the designated space(s) and details of road closures and/or any temporary structures that will be erected.
- Notice of any production vehicles that will be parked on public roads, as encroachment fees may apply.
- Name, phone number and email address of the primary applicant.

The specific permits you will require from the parish council, and relevant fees to be paid, will be assessed based on their review of your application. The average processing time is ten (10) business days, provided all relevant

information has been submitted. If approved, parish council permits are issued only when the fees are paid in full.

In cases where the police permit for the use of a space for which parish council permit fees have been paid is refused, applicants may bring the letter of refusal and council receipt to the local parish council office for a refund (less a 500 JMD administrative fee), provided that the application to the police was submitted at least ten (10) working days prior to the intended date of use.

For additional information about liaising with local parish councils and police for film production purposes, you may contact the Revenue Department of the Kingston and St. Andrew Municipal Corporation at 876-922-4320 or 876-948-5119.

### **Police Approval and Assistance**

Application by written request is also required for the issuance of police permits. If special support is mandated, or otherwise desired in particular situations, the police may be engaged in accordance with the Police Private Service Policy, for which set hourly rates have been established.

For requests regarding traffic control and/or private security, applications should be submitted to the Commanding Officer for the area where filming will take place, at least ten (10) business days prior to the scheduled shoot date. Applicants are advised of the relevant fees after their request and the production requirements have been assessed by the Commanding Officer.

For the engagement of police in activities other than traffic control and private security, applications must be submitted directly to the Commissioner of Police at least three (3) weeks prior to the proposed shoot date, either in hard copy or by email. Submit hard copy applications to the Office of the Commissioner of Police, located at 101-105 Old Hope Road, Kingston 6. Submit email applications to [cpsecretariat@jcf.gov.jm](mailto:cpsecretariat@jcf.gov.jm).

Remember, the content of applications for police permits for activities related to film production should always include:

- Your letter of endorsement from the Film Commission.
- A brief/synopsis of the film.
- Specific and adequate details on the nature of the use of space and, if any, of the support being requested.
- The schedule for the use of space and, if any, for the support being requested.

For additional information, contact the Jamaica Constabulary Force directly at 876-927-4312/3 or 876-754-0558, or speak with your Production Manager.

## SECURITY

Several private security companies are available to provide reliable infrastructural, remote and/or mobile security arrangements specific to your needs, including the protection of personnel, production equipment and other assets. By way of the process outlined in the preceding section of this chapter, you also have the option of engaging paid-duty police officers to direct traffic, provide escorts and meet other security-related production support needs at your filming locations.

Discuss the security arrangement options with your local Production Manager. You may also contact the Film Commission for guidance.

There have been no safety or security crises on set in Jamaica to date. Production Managers and security personnel go the extra mile to ensure that cast and crew are safe and sound.

## TRANSPORTATION

Getting around can be easy and efficient. There is a convenient mix of private and public transportation options. Licensed taxis (identifiable by red license plates) can be chartered via directory item listings under “taxi” in [Jamaica Yellow Pages](#). In terms of professional, safe and expedient group travel, the [Jamaica Union of Travellers Association](#) (JUTA) are among the top go-to-guys for getting around. Public buses are operated by the [Jamaica Urban Transit Company](#) (JUTC). Alternatively, when travelling parish-to-parish, you can book seats on the [Knutsford Express](#) coach service.

If you decide to rent a car, GPS navigators and other location applications (such as Google maps) would be great resources to have on hand. **Visitors need to remember though...in Jamaica, we drive on the left!**

Consult with your Production Manager to determine the transportation arrangements — including hiring transportation coordinators — that work best for you.



/ GOVERNMENT /  
POLICIES  
AND FRAMEWORKS<sup>9</sup>

SCENE FROM “MANGO WARS,” A KYLE CHIN FILM.

## BUSINESS REGISTRATION

The Companies Office of Jamaica (COJ) incorporates local companies and registers local and overseas companies, firms and individuals doing business in Jamaica. COJ encourages and administers oversight for the compliance of businesses with the *Registration of Business Names Act, 1934*, the *Companies Act, 2004*, and the *Companies (Amendment) Act, 2017*.

There are two primary registration formats:

- Business Name registration — a sole trader, partnership or trade name is registered under the *Registration of Business Names Act*.
- Company registration — an enterprise is registered under the *Companies Act*. The enterprise can be either non-profit (charity, club, NGO, etc.) or profit-generating. Companies registered as “limited company” are recognised as separate legal entities from their members, with respect to rights and liabilities.

### REGISTERING AN OVERSEAS COMPANY

Overseas companies may operate in Jamaica but must be registered at COJ. The current registration fee is 25,000 JMD. Once registered, an overseas company must file their Annual Returns, Balance Sheet and Profit and Loss statements, yearly, in accordance with the Companies Act.

Any company incorporated outside of Jamaica that establishes a place of business in Jamaica must, within one month of the establishment of the place of business, file Form 31 along with a certified copy of the company’s Charter, Statute or Articles or other instrument defining the constitution and name of the company, in order to fulfil their registration requirement. The copy of the Charter, Statutes or Articles of the company should be certified by an official of the Government body responsible for issuing the original documentation.

For detailed information on registering a company in Jamaica and accessing the relevant forms, contact the [Companies Office of Jamaica](#).

Production companies that are registered with COJ are eligible for a variety of business incentives and benefits.

## INCENTIVES FOR THE FILM INDUSTRY

Film producers creating content in Jamaica can access certain benefits, once they complete the required registration and approval processes successfully. The main incentives available are:

1. **Bond waivers** for approved items being imported temporarily.
2. **Productive Input Relief (PIR)** for approved items being imported permanently by local film producers, exempting them from import duties.
3. **Facilitated access** to public spaces (fees may apply) and special permits.
4. **Employment Tax Credit (ETC)**, which reduces Corporate Income Tax liability. ETC provides for a maximum of 30 percent credit for local companies' Pay As You Earn (PAYE) obligations,<sup>10</sup> which can reduce income tax liability to as low as 17.5 percent.
5. **Double Taxation Avoidance Agreements (DTAAs)**, which govern the levying of taxes, by two or more jurisdictions, on the same asset or income.

Bond waivers and PIR are administered by the Jamaica Customs Agency and the Ministry with responsibility for Entertainment, and JAMPRO assists them in verifying companies that apply. For details on how to apply for bond waivers and PIR refer to the earlier chapters, "Film Registration" and "Filming in Jamaica: The Basic Elements."

Once your film is registered, the Film Commission can also assist you in connecting with relevant authorities regarding facilitated access (to public spaces and special permits) and in negotiating the terms. For information regarding items/activities that require special permits, see the "Special Permits and Licenses" section of the "Filming in Jamaica: The Basic Elements" chapter.

Local companies registered on the Entertainment Registry are allowed to deduct ETC when determining their taxable income.

In order to most effectively benefit from a DTAA, we recommend hiring a specialist in international taxation, as this can be a complicated process. The list of existing double taxation avoidance agreements is posted on [TAJ's website](#).

## **CO-PRODUCTION TREATIES**

Co-production treaties are formal agreements established between governments, which allow film productions and their associated benefits to be shared between producers from the participating countries. Such agreements can vitalise all partners' film industries (and screen-based industries in general) by enabling stronger global competitiveness and growth, as they develop and/or transform their storytelling cultures. Provided that opportunities unfold for their industry players to share best practices, learn directly from each other's experiences and capitalise on improved efficiencies synergistically, the likely returns are cultural, social and

<sup>10</sup> The Pay As You Earn (PAYE) system is the method of determining income tax and statutory contributions for individuals and employers.

economic. Where official treaties are not ratified, some of these benefits are still attainable at the project-specific level.

**There are three primary types of co-productions, the first two of which are the types normally executed within the context of ratified treaties:**

1. Co-productions where creative control is shared between local and foreign partners and there is a mix of local and foreign talent in key creative positions.
2. Co-productions based on co-financing agreements, whereby one partner provides funding and the other partner undertakes production of the audio-visual content.
3. Co-ventures in which an official treaty is not ratified, but individual production companies develop a unique, project-focused memorandum of understanding and execute productions on that basis.

With more treaties being ratified, international co-productions are becoming an increasingly attractive option for producers globally.

In 2007, Jamaica signed a co-production treaty with the United Kingdom, and we continue to be the only Anglophone Caribbean country with whom the associated benefits are available. British producers working with Jamaican producers have access to tax breaks, new sources of joint project funding, and easier movement of production equipment across borders. Simultaneously, co-produced films qualify as national films, so Jamaican producers are able to take advantage of domestic fiscal benefits and other business opportunities for which they are uniquely positioned.

For an outline of the eligibility requirements and how producers can apply for co-production status, you can read the full co-production agreement between the Government of Great Britain and Northern Ireland and the Government of Jamaica [here](#).

### **WHY CO-PRODUCE WITH JAMAICA?**

Whether or not they are covered by treaties, the potential advantages for foreign and local filmmakers who undertake co-productions are numerous. They typically include:

- Access to cross-border incentives (such as foreign and/or local tax relief/subsidies, grant funding, lifting of quotas, etc.).
- Ability to pool financial resources and share risk.
- Opportunities to share creative, technical and physical resources (leading to greater efficiencies).
- Capacity to deliver projects at a larger scale.
- Access to larger combined markets.
- Improved understanding of various distribution channels through shared networks.

# IMMIGRATION AND VISA<sup>11</sup>

Under normal circumstances, persons travelling to Jamaica must present a passport that is valid for at least six months beyond their date of arrival, as evidence of their identity and nationality. The passport must be issued by a recognised government authority, have a photograph of the holder and provide the holder with a re-entry authority to the country of issue or an entry authority to another country.

Some passport holders require a visa to enter Jamaica. Click [here](#) for a list of countries that require visas to enter as at the date of this publication.

As soon as you begin planning your production in Jamaica, check the immigration and customs regulations carefully by consulting your nearest Jamaican Consulate. Visas can be obtained there.

Prior to confirming your itinerary, ensure that all members of your crew have:

- A passport that is valid and will remain valid for at least six (6) months beyond your arrival date.
- A visa/visa exemption and work permit/work permit exemption, as applicable.
- Airline tickets showing onward travel from Jamaica (i.e. return travel).
- Waiver(s) of Duties/Bonds for personal electrical equipment and items being imported temporarily.
- Permits/licences for any and all restricted items being brought into Jamaica.
- A copy of the film registration letter from the Film Commission

A list of Jamaican Consulates, complete with contact information, is available on the [Ministry of Foreign Affairs and Foreign Trade's website](#).

## MULTIPLE ENTRY VISAS

A Multiple Entry Visa is necessary for any production staff who will be entering and leaving the country multiple times during a production. Application forms are available from your nearest Jamaican Consulate or PICA's offices. The requirements for obtaining a Multiple Entry Visa are:

1. Previously stamped visa or a visa exemption in passport.
2. A completed *Application for Re-entry Visa* form.
3. *The processing fee.*

If a visitor presents their documentation in person, the PICA office can stamp and return the passport immediately.

## VISA EXEMPTIONS

Even though a visa exemption is possible, if a visa is required for your nationality,

<sup>11</sup> You are encouraged to verify with the Film Commission the specific details that may be relevant to your production team prior to finalizing your itinerary.

we recommend that you complete the visa application process as your first course of action.

In exceptional cases, a period of visa exemption can be granted to individuals visiting Jamaica for less than six months. To apply for a visa exemption, submit the application and fee to the Film Commission, at least ten (10) working days prior to the arrival of your production personnel. Essential information requirements for each individual include:

1. Name of person as stated in valid passport.
2. Date of birth.
3. Passport number and copy of biometric page.
4. Position on project.
5. Dates of arrival and departure.
6. Port of arrival.

The Film Commission will forward the documentation to PICA and liaise with local officials to facilitate the immigration process upon your arrival. Please note the exemption **cannot be applied for after arrival**.

### **ALIEN REGISTRATION**

Alien registration is mandatory for persons who will be in the country for more than six (6) months. The requirements are:

1. A visa or a visa exemption previously stamped in passport.
2. A completed *Application for Re-entry Visa* form.
3. Two (2) black and white passport photos.
4. The processing fee.

If visitors present their documentation in person, the PICA office can stamp and return the passports immediately.

### **EXTENSION OF STAY**

Foreign nationals, engaged in gainful employment in Jamaica, who want to extend their stay must have:

1. A passport that is valid and will remain valid for at least six (6) months.
2. A work permit, exemption, receipt or official letter from the Ministry of Labour and Social Security.
3. An entry visa, if applicable for [their country of nationality](#) .
4. The processing fee.

The Film Commission is able to assist you with navigating the process. In this case, the passport will be returned within five (5) business days.

## WORK PERMITS

Whether a work permit is required depends on the nature of a visitor's activities to be conducted in Jamaica and the duration of their stay. Crew and cast members who will be in Jamaica for more than six (6) months and are foreign nationals must apply for a work permit, whereas those who will be working in Jamaica for six (6) months or less may apply for an exemption. Refer to the upcoming section titled "Work Permit Exemptions," for information on how to apply for exemptions.

The Film Commission can facilitate the processing of work permit applications on behalf of a production company, if the following items are submitted at least ten (10) business days prior to the arrival of cast and crew:

1. Completed *Work Permit/Exemption* application forms. Blank forms are available [here](#).
2. Processing fees to be paid at any branch of the National Commercial Bank (NCB). Copies of the bank vouchers you receive, titled *Accounts copy* and *Work Permit copy*, should be attached to your application.
3. Two (2) passport-size photographs of the applicant certified by a Justice of the Peace or notary public with a valid Commission.
4. Proof of the applicant's academic or professional qualifications (e.g. copies of diplomas, certificates, etc., certified by a Justice of the Peace or notary public with a valid Commission).
5. The résumé of the applicant.
6. The applicant's official police record issued by the appropriate security authority in the applicant's country of domicile.
7. Proof of Business Registration, or Certificate of Incorporation of the business, notarised by a Justice of the Peace or notary public with a valid Commission.
8. Copy of the applicant's Tax Registration Number (TRN) card certified by a Justice of the Peace or notary public with a valid Commission.
9. Copy of the business' Tax Compliance Certificate certified by a Justice of the Peace or notary public with a valid Commission.
10. For some positions, the original newspaper advertisement (that is, the entire page on which it appears), showing the name and the date of the publication, is required.
11. Certified copies of pages from the passport of the applicant showing: (i) proof of identity, (ii) passport number, (iii) date of issue and expiry, (iv) landing status in Jamaica, (v) relevant visas, where applicable.
12. Cover letter from the employer in Jamaica (an individual film producer or production company registered for business operation in Jamaica) requesting

a work permit for the potential employee. The letter should be addressed to:

**The Permanent Secretary  
The Ministry of Labour and Social Security  
1F North Street  
Kingston**

Once the Film Commission has received the documentation and processing fee, we will liaise with PICA and the Ministry of Labour and Social Security for their processing on your behalf.

### **WORK PERMIT EXEMPTIONS**

Cast and crew members who are foreign nationals are eligible for work permit exemptions, if they will be working in Jamaica for six (6) months or less. Those benefiting from visa exemption concessions are automatically exempt from the work permit requirement and may therefore engage in business-related activities, such as location scouting and attending production meetings, during their designated visa-free period. Film crews can work in Jamaica for up to six (6) months on a visa exemption.

You may submit your team members' work permit exemption applications by way of the Film Commission. This requires your submission of the necessary information items for each applicant, at least ten (10) business days prior to the arrival of cast and crew. These include:

1. The completed *Work Permit/Exemption* application form. The forms are available [here](#).
2. One (1) passport-size photograph with the applicant's name written on the back exactly as it appears in their passport.
3. Date of birth of the applicant.
4. Valid passport number of the applicant.
5. Applicant's position on the project.
6. A general statement of the applicant's job duties, if you have not interviewed a Jamaican for the position.

Once the Film Commission has received the documentation above, we will coordinate with the Ministry of Labour and Social Security for their processing on your behalf.

For more detailed information about work permits, including fees and documentation requirements, visit the [Ministry of Labour and Social Security's website](#).

## **LABOUR LAWS**

The Ministry of Labour and Social Security is the government oversight body for employment conditions in Jamaica. They regulate a comprehensive range of benefits and protections for employees. Note that, under Jamaican labour laws,

employers are required to take out valid insurance policies to cover liabilities for injuries at work in respect of their full-time and part-time employees. All local and international production companies filming in Jamaica are obliged to ensure that their employees are adequately covered in case of injury.

For further details regarding labour laws and regulations, contact the [Ministry of Labour and Social Security](#). You may also liaise with the Film Commission for guidance.

## **TAXATION**

Tax Administration Jamaica (TAJ) is responsible for collecting taxes and ensuring the overall statutory compliance of individuals and for-profit as well as non-profit enterprises earning income in Jamaica. Comprehensive information on the proper interpretation of Jamaica's tax laws and regulations are published on [TAJ's website](#). Below is a summary of statutory obligations that are most likely to be applicable to you while filming in Jamaica.

### **GENERAL CONSUMPTION TAX**

The General Consumption Tax (GCT ) is a tax based on consumption that is included in the final price consumers pay for goods and services. Businesses in Jamaica, for which gross sales exceed a specified minimum threshold, are required to register for GCT payment with TAJ and to charge, collect and pay over the tax on the goods and services they supply.

As at the date of this publication, by way of businesses with gross annual sales in excess of \$10M (JMD), standard-rated goods and services are taxed at sixteen and a half percent (16.5%); telephone instruments, telephone services, and prepaid telephone credit are taxed at twenty-five percent (25%); tourism services are taxed at ten percent (10%); and a few goods and services are zero-rated or exempt. For the current GCT rates and illustrations of their application, consult [TAJ publications on GCT](#).<sup>12</sup>

### **PERSONAL INCOME TAX AND EMPLOYER/EMPLOYEE CONTRIBUTIONS**

Jamaican residents are required to make certain statutory contributions, if their income is in excess of the minimum wage, and to pay taxes on all income earned in excess of the income tax threshold. The extent of their obligations are based on the PAYE system. For the current standard PAYE rates and illustrations of their application, consult [TAJ's publications on income tax](#).<sup>13</sup>

Under the PAYE system, self-employed persons and workers employed on the basis of a 'contract for service' (not to be confused with a 'contract of service') are wholly responsible for meeting their statutory obligations. Employers of other categories of workers are obligated to facilitate the statutory compliance of their

<sup>12</sup> Consumers are not charged GCT on either zero-rated or exempt items. The distinction between these categories is that producers of zero-rated items are permitted to claim tax credits for GCT paid on their inputs, whereas producers of exempt items are not. Click [here](#) for the list of zero-rated and exempt goods and services. <sup>13</sup>For technical guidance, the preparer of your returns should especially refer to the current Notes and Instructions for the Completion of Returns of Income Tax Payable.

employees through applicable salary deductions, payments and filings. Employers are also required to make separate statutory contributions corresponding to those employment arrangements.

Unless their country of residence has a double taxation avoidance agreement with Jamaica (in which case the applicable income tax rate here varies by country of residence), non-residents working in Jamaica are currently required to pay income tax at the rate dictated under the PAYE system. In relation to agreements for the avoidance of double taxation, non-residents working in Jamaica may also be eligible for tax credits from their home governments.<sup>14</sup>

### **CORPORATE INCOME TAX**

Corporate Income Tax (CIT) is payable by all companies operating in Jamaica that are generating chargeable income, including non-profit organisations, except those that have received designation as Registered Charitable Organisations. As at the date of this publication, the income tax rate for unregulated local companies is 25 percent.<sup>16</sup> For current information on CIT, consult [TAJ's publications on income tax](#).<sup>17</sup>

Where the maximum ETC is applied, eligible local companies can reduce their effective CIT rate to as low as 17.5 percent. For information on how local and foreign producers can access fiscal incentives, refer to “Incentives for the Film Industry,” earlier in this chapter, and the “Film Registration” chapter.

With the exception of companies incorporated in a country with whom Jamaica has a double taxation avoidance agreement (in which case the applicable income tax rate here varies, based on country of incorporation), unregulated foreign companies operating in Jamaica are required to pay income tax at the same rate as is dictated for local unregulated companies. In relation to agreements for the avoidance of double taxation, foreign companies may also be eligible for tax credits from their governments.<sup>18</sup>

<sup>14</sup>In order to benefit most effectively from a double taxation avoidance agreement, we recommend hiring a specialist in international taxation, as this can be a complicated process. <sup>16</sup>Unregulated companies are companies not regulated by the Financial Services Commission, the Office of Utility Regulation, the Bank of Jamaica and/or the Ministry of Finance and Public Service. Regulated companies generally fall within the financial or public utility services sector. <sup>17</sup>For technical guidance, the preparer of your returns should especially refer to the current Notes and Instructions for the Completion of Returns of Income Tax Payable. <sup>18</sup>In order to benefit most effectively from a double taxation avoidance agreement, we recommend hiring a specialist in international taxation, as this can be a complicated process.

# / INDUSTRY / ASSOCIATIONS

## **JAMAICA ANIMATION NATION NETWORK**

Jamaica Animation Nation Network (JANN) was established to ensure that, in the midst of its rapid growth, Jamaica's animation industry develops in a manner that serves the best interests of local animators and animation studios. Before JANN became an association, it was a Facebook group, where animators and animation enthusiasts could share their work, their energy, and their knowhow, with the intention of developing an active animation community.

Learn more at [animationjamaica.com](http://animationjamaica.com)

## **JAMAICA FILM AND TELEVISION ASSOCIATION**

Jamaica Film and Television Association (JAFTA) is a non-profit association representing the interests of film and television practitioners. The organisation's goal is to develop the local audio-visual community and industry through capacity and relationship-building initiatives.

JAFTA's current flagship initiative is the JAFTA Propella! script-to-screen short film talent discovery programme, funded by the Culture, Arts, Sports and Education (CHASE) Fund in association with JAMPRO.<sup>19</sup>

The objectives of JAFTA are:

- To promote and foster initiatives, programmes, projects

SCENE FROM "CITY OF MINE," A DANIELLE RUSSELL FILM.

<sup>19</sup>The CHASE Fund is an agency of the Government of Jamaica established, in 2002, to receive, distribute, administer and manage contributions from lottery companies for the purpose of investing in five defined areas of national life: culture, health, arts, sports and early childhood education.

and/or services geared at developing the film and television industry.

- To create, facilitate and/or develop content and training tools for skill and capacity-building initiatives.
- To play an active role in the preservation, documentation and promotion of Jamaican film and television content.
- To lobby and advocate on behalf of the Jamaican film and television industry.
- To establish relationships with Caribbean and international bodies and initiatives actively involved in the film and television industries.
- To provide educational screenings, pitching sessions and mentorship, among other skill and capacity-building opportunities.

*Find out more on [JAFTA's Facebook page](#).*

# TRAINING AND / DEGREE PROGRAMMES /

The quality and quantity of advanced studies in film, and creative fields as a whole, have been on the rise in Jamaica. Recent high school graduates have the option of pursuing the pre-tertiary CAPE Level 2 in Animation, Performing Arts or Cinematic Arts as a transitional step,<sup>20</sup> and there are a host of tertiary institutions offering rigorous education and training options in video, television and film production, animation, and arts management.

Here a few of the accredited tertiary-level programmes currently available in Jamaica:

- **Edna Manley College of the Visual and Performing Arts**

Edna Manley College of the Visual and Performing Arts (EMCVPA) is the premiere tertiary arts education institution in the Caribbean region, offering the widest range of programmes relevant to the global creative economy.

For more information visit [EMCVPA's website](#).

- **Excelsior Community College**

Excelsior Community College (ECC) is an innovative, learner-centric, community-focused institution that caters to lifelong learners, offering training courses to meet local and international demand for professional skills. This includes programmes in graphic design, animation, performing arts, and entertainment management, delivered through their School of Performing Arts and their School of Tourism Hospitality and Entertainment Management.

For more information visit [ECC's website](#).

- **iCreate Institute**

iCreate Institute is an arm of the University of the Commonwealth Caribbean that provides diverse training and career opportunities for the regional creative economy. The institute is a key partner of advertising industry leaders, film production companies, animation and gaming outfits, and creative outsourcing initiatives.

For more information visit [iCreate's website](#).

- **Media Technology Institute**

Media Technology Institute (MTI) is the training arm of the Creative Production and Training Centre (CPTC). The institute delivers high-in-demand programmes

<sup>20</sup> The Caribbean Advanced Proficiency Examination (CAPE) provides certification of the academic, vocational and technical achievement of students in the Caribbean who, having completed a minimum of five years of secondary education, wish to further their studies.

in a variety of areas, all of which are registered and recognised by the University Council of Jamaica (UCJ). Its flagship offerings are videography, audio engineering, and voice and speech.

For more information visit [CPTC's website](#).

#### • **Northern Caribbean University (NCU)**

The Department of Communication Studies (DCS), at Northern Caribbean University, is committed to the development of Caribbean creativity and intellect and as well as the promotion of activities demonstrating this.

The Department of Communication Studies (DCS) offers Media and Communication Studies as a four year undergraduate programme in Television, Radio, Public Relations and Journalism.

For more information, visit [NCU's website](#).

#### • **The University of the West Indies, Mona**

The University of the West Indies (UWI), Mona offers filmmaking, animation and other media-related courses in the [Faculty of Humanities' Department of Literatures in English](#) and the [Caribbean Institute for Media and Communication \(CARIMAC\)](#). Students of the university also achieve creative development through a number of internationally esteemed art societies attached to the Philip Sherlock Centre for the Creative Arts, all of which may be contacted through the [Office of Student Services and Development](#).

#### • **University of Technology, Jamaica (UTech)**

The School of Computing and Information Technology at UTech offers a four-year programme leading to a Bachelor of Science degree in Animation and Production Development. This B.Sc. is designed to equip students with the skills required to master traditional and digital tools, as well as the confidence to pursue entrepreneurial ventures in the field of animation.

For more information, visit [UTech's website](#).

### **SPECIAL INITIATIVES**

There is also a steady supply of socially-oriented initiatives, led by tertiary institutions and non-profit organizations alike, that employ film and animation training as a tool for engaging and facilitating the development of youth in underserved communities across Jamaica.

A prime example of a tertiary-led initiative is the University of the West Indies Community Film Project (UWICFP), a three-month training programme implemented in different communities throughout the year. The programme was

initiated in the community of August Town in 2012. Since then, it has expanded to a number of other urban and rural areas. UWICFP exposes its participants to rudimentary filmmaking techniques, and actively encourages them to get directly involved in innovative storytelling and filmmaking around important community and national issues. UWICFP also provides a platform for its graduates to showcase their short films to the public, via a specially created community film festival — the GATFFEST Film Festival.

For more information, visit [UWICFP's website](#).

# C<sup>o</sup>NTACT

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