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Brazilian producers get doc copro training

Industry body Brazilian TV Producers (BTVP) is launching a training programme to help the country's producers to successfully pitch documentary coproductions to international broadcasters.

The event, in November and December, will work with the producers behind 40 selected pitches to teach them how to maximise the quality, content and international viability of their projects in order to attract overseas networks into partnership with Brazilian broadcasters.

"The goal is completely coproduction," Jacques Bensimon, the not-for-profit organisation's senior international strategic consultant, told C21. "The idea is to make very strong Brazilian productions that are also done for the international market."

BTVP already runs a training programme in animation, an area of the audio-visual sector that the Brazilian government has identified as a priority, and decided to create one for documentaries after seeing the difficulty that local producers were having in getting international funding.

"They were attending events like Mipcom but they weren't going to Sheffield or Hot Docs," explains Bensimon, a former president of the National Film Board of Canada. "They were very timid and didn't know how to get oriented into all of this."

Trainers at the event have been sourced from networks including Arte, the BBC and Nat Geo and from training institutions like the London Documentary Film School and the European Film School.

The programme, intended to be held annually, has been funded principally by two Brazilian government organisations: the Secretariat Audio-Visual at the Ministry of Culture and export arm APEX. Private funds like film industry body Rio Films have also contributed.

"I think Brazil and Brazilian filmmakers are ready for the international market and I think they have been absent," Bensimon said. "The rest of the world has tended to work always with the same partners, and we stay pretty much blocked within the northern part of the industry."

"I don't believe in the north making films about the south; I think those are bygone days. We have to make sure the process is carried out on an equal footing between the north and the south until we don't distinguish between the two."

Emily Brookes
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