

Kvarken Film Network

Project report 20.3.2025

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Serie R: Rapporter



Interreg



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Aurora



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Introduction

The Kvarken Film Network is an Interreg Aurora project carried out during the second half of 2024. The project was implemented by a consortium consisting of Kvarken Council, Novia UAS, Film i Västerbotten, and Yrkesakademin i Österbotten. The project mapped the current state of the audiovisual (AV) industry in the Kvarken region, engaged key stakeholders, and laid the groundwork for future cross-border collaboration. The results indicate a clear need for structured support to harness the industry's growth potential. The project has already yielded tangible results, as AV professionals from both Finland and Sweden have begun participating in industry events in neighbouring countries. Discussions on co-productions are already taking place, and film exchanges between festivals in Umeå and Vaasa have started.

In the Kvarken Film Network project, we set out to explore whether there is a need for cross-border cooperation in the Kvarken region. Through a survey, we investigated the potential benefits of creating a shared film and audiovisual hub. We aimed to assess how collaboration could strengthen the industry, stabilize employment fluctuations, and enhance expertise in cross-border partnerships. Cross-border collaboration offers many advantages in film production, such as access to multi-country financing. Throughout this project, working across borders has provided valuable insights, allowing stakeholders to learn from each other and evaluate the foundation for future cooperation.

Project Activities

The Kvarken Film Network project encompassed a broad range of activities, including conducting a stakeholder survey, workshops, benchmarking sessions, and industry events held both in-person and digitally to engage stakeholders across regions.

Key activities included meetings with Film i Dalarna and Film i Västernorrland, facilitating knowledge exchange and best practices. Discussions with Rise (Research Institutes of Sweden) explored the development of a Kvarken Film Fund, while collaboration talks with Umeå Municipality and Edelvik Folkhögskola aimed to strengthen local engagement. Regular internal meetings ensured efficient financial management and project alignment.

The project actively engaged with the Kvarken Council through regular updates and strategic planning sessions. A presentation at the Kvarken Council board meeting introduced the network's vision to key decision-makers, while discussions

with Lakeuden Elokuvakomissio, Ålands Filmkommission, and Film Tampere provided valuable insights from different regional film industry models. Participation in the Mediated Geographies conference contributed to the exchange of knowledge between academia and the film sector.

To ensure the successful execution of the project within the Interreg Aurora framework, several planning meetings were held, including a project startup session, regular strategic discussions, and presentations on the project's role in EU cooperation. The kick-off event and workshop in Vaasa brought together partners to define strategic goals, while participation in Umeå Film Festival industry days fostered networking, benchmarking, and sectoral dialogue.

Additionally, the project participated in the Kvarken Councils event Cultural Platform Kvarken in Umeå. Workshops at Film i Västerbotten encouraged industry engagement, further strengthening partnerships within the network.

Through these activities, the Kvarken Film Network established a foundation for ongoing cross-border cooperation, fostering innovation and development in the regional film industry.

Contribution to the UN Sustainable Development Goals

The Kvarken Film Network project aligns with several of the United Nations Sustainable Development Goals (SDGs) by fostering cross-border collaboration and strengthening the audiovisual (AV) industry in the Kvarken region. By developing a more competitive and sustainable film industry, the project supports economic growth, reduces inequalities, and enhances regional attractiveness for professionals in the sector.

Stakeholder survey

During the project, a stakeholder survey was conducted in the Kvarken region (Ostrobothnia and Västerbotten), which confirmed a strong interest in cross-border collaboration from both countries. The survey also highlighted significant growth potential in the region, a lack of resources on both sides, and the fact that both regions are less developed than their surroundings. In Ostrobothnia, the film industry is fragmented and lacks sufficient support structures. Additionally, both Ostrobothnia and Västerbotten experience migration to more developed regions, particularly the capital areas. These findings validate our initial premise that there is a demand for cooperation within the film and AV industry in the Kvarken region. We also investigated the

filmmaking ecosystem, analyzing the roles of filmmakers, decision-makers, and industry stakeholders. This process allowed us to compare how the industry functions in our respective regions and initiate discussions with potential funders, organizations, municipalities, and city representatives. In Ostrobothnia, we have reached out to South Ostrobothnia and Central Ostrobothnia to initiate future cooperation. We have communicated our vision and started conceptualizing how a structured collaboration could be established. Film i Västerbotten have informed Film i Västernorrland and Filmpool Nord, Norrbotten about the project and future plans. Based on our stakeholder analysis, we have developed a plan for a full-scale Interreg project, "Kvarken Film Hub," which aims to create a joint film industry in the region. The goal is to build a sustainable ecosystem capable of handling large-scale film productions while providing employment opportunities for AV professionals.

Results

Through the stakeholder survey, we have gained a better understanding of the audiovisual industry in the Kvarken region. The survey results have been compiled, and are published as an appendix to this report.

Through the project, AV professionals in Ostrobothnia and Västerbotten have established valuable connections, fostering new collaborations. The partnership between the Industry Days at Umeå Film Festival and Ostrobothnia Film Fest has already created opportunities for filmmakers to network across borders and present their work at both festivals. Additionally, the project has sparked interest from related industries, such as the gaming and music sectors, leading to broader industry connections.

From the outset, the goal of this small-scale project was to assess the interest and need for a larger implementation project. As a direct result, we now have an active and dynamic collaboration between multiple organizations and events. The regional cooperation within both Ostrobothnia and Västerbotten has also been strengthened. The project team has applied for a full-scale Interreg Aurora project, "Kvarken Film Hub", in March 2025, which aims to continue and expand the work initiated in this project and on developing administrative structures to facilitate long-term cross-border cooperation.

Kvarken Film Network

The audiovisual industry in the Kvarken region: Current status and future possibilities

Summary of the survey

Anna Norberg

(translated from Swedish)

Interreg



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Section 1 – General Summary

Structure of the Compilation

- The survey responses are compiled question by question, meaning the same answers may appear multiple times if they were given as responses to multiple questions.
- The questions are summarized based on the following structure: Overall (common aspects for all respondents), Sweden, and Finland. In some cases, Swedish and Finnish responses are very similar, so certain questions have only been compiled at the overall level.
- If someone from outside Västerbotten, Ostrobothnia, or Southern Ostrobothnia has provided an answer that stands out, this is noted. Otherwise, respondents from Norrbotten and Uusimaa (Nyland) are counted under Sweden and Finland, respectively.
- Responses to each question are ranked in descending order, from the most frequently mentioned to those mentioned by only one or a few respondents.
- A total of 64 people participated in the survey, but for most questions, the number of responses is lower. The total number of respondents for each question is noted.

Who Responded (More detailed information is in Section 3)

- 55% are from Sweden (34 people from Västerbotten, 1 person from Norrbotten).
- 45% are from Finland (24 people from Österbotten, 3 people from Southern Österbotten, 2 people from Uusimaa/Nyland).
- 70% men, 30% women.
- The average age is 43.5 years.
- 42% work full-time in the audiovisual industry, 34% work as freelancers, 19% work part-time, and the remaining 5% work on a voluntary or hobby basis.

Attitudes Toward Cross-Border Collaboration

- The attitude toward collaboration is positive. Respondents believe it could be a win-win situation and express curiosity about learning more about each other's film industries. There is a willingness and potential to create something significant, provided the regions get the opportunity.
- Many potential benefits are highlighted, such as the possibility of creating larger and better productions, increasing job opportunities, boosting the industry's attractiveness, strengthening the regions' positions in the industry, and positioning the Kvarken area as a hub and catalyst for Nordic collaborations.

- Several concrete collaboration opportunities are suggested: a joint documentary festival, an archipelago drama set in the Gulf of Bothnia, a shared film industry registry for the Kvarken region, a Talent AC/BD-style collaboration between Västerbotten and Österbotten/Southern Österbotten, an opportunity for young people from Österbotten to participate in the Lynx film camp in Västerbotten, and more.
- However, some concerns are also raised.

Challenges of Collaboration

- Although the regions are relatively close, which is considered an advantage, distance, infrastructure, and logistics are seen as significant challenges, especially for those not located near Umeå or Vaasa.
- There is a lack of knowledge about each other's film industries, and several respondents emphasize that Sweden and Finland differ more than one might expect. The differences in work culture are crucial to consider.
- Language barriers are also highlighted as a potential challenge. There is an opportunity to improve collaboration not just geographically but also linguistically. However, Finnish respondents express concerns that the collaboration may end up being exclusively Swedish-speaking.
- Additionally, it is repeatedly mentioned that the film industry in Österbotten is significantly less developed than in Västerbotten, mainly due to the absence of a central coordinating force for the region's film industry. This raises concerns about whether a fully reciprocal collaboration is feasible.

Challenges Within the Film Industry

- Throughout the survey, financing difficulties are a recurring issue. Respondents from both countries state that there is a capital city-centric structure, making it difficult to sustain a career as a film worker in Västerbotten and Österbotten. Establishing connections with major financiers and film companies is also challenging, and both national and international (and even regional, in Finland's case) networks need to be developed.
- Many are forced to leave the regions, making the availability of experienced film workers another challenge.
- Distribution is another recurring issue—there is a need to improve the regions' visibility and reach.

- Better infrastructure, including equipment rental and film studios, is frequently mentioned as a key requirement for fostering regional productions.

Section 2 – Background Information

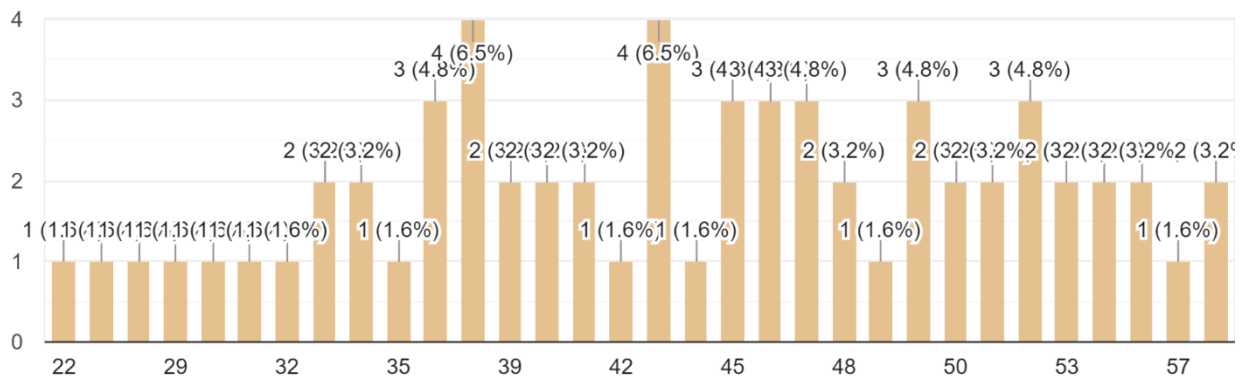
Age (62 Responses)

Overall:

- Average age: Approximately 43.5 years.
- Median age: 44 years.
- Youngest: 22 years, Oldest: 62 years.

Ålder: Ikä: Age:

62 responses



Sweden:

- Average age: 43 years.
- Median age: 44 years.

Finland:

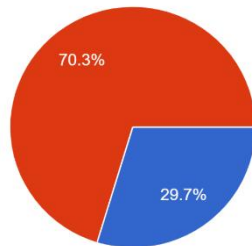
- Average age: 44 years.
- Median age: 44 years.

Gender (64 Responses)

Overall:

- Women: 19 respondents
- Men: 45 respondents

Kön / Sukupuoli / Sex
64 responses



- Kvinna / Nainen / Woman
- Man / Mies / Man
- Ickebinär / Ei-binääri / Non-binary
- Annat alternativ / Muu / Another option
- Osäker / Epävarma / Unsure
- Vill inte säga / En halua sanoa / I don't want to say

Sweden:

- Women: 13 respondents (37%)
- Men: 22 respondents (63%)

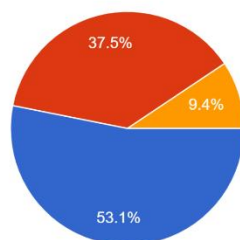
Finland:

- Women: 6 respondents (21%)
- Men: 23 respondents (79%)

Residence (64 Responses)

- Västerbotten: 34 people
- Ostrobothnia: 24 people
- Other regions: 6 people
- Southern Österbotten: 3 people
- Uusimaa/Nyland: 2 people
- Norrbotten: 1 person

Vilket område bor du i? Millä alueella asut? What region do you live in?
64 responses

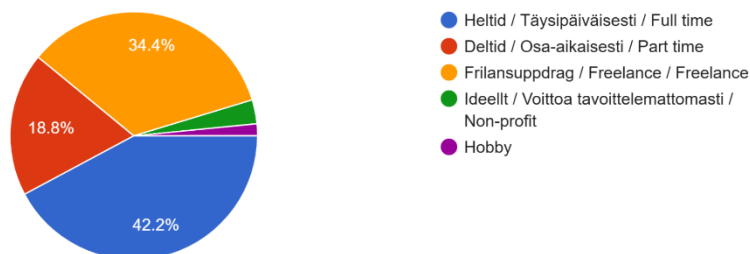


- Västerbotten
- Österbotten / Pohjanmaa / Ostrobothnia
- Annan region / Muu alue / Other region

Employment in the Audiovisual Industry (64 Responses)

Hur sysselsätter den audiovisuella branschen dig? Miten audiovisuaalinen ala työllistää sinua? How does the audiovisual industry employ/engage you?

64 responses



- Sweden: 34% full-time, 17% part-time, 46% freelance, 3% hobby.
- Finland: 52% full-time, 21% part-time, 21% freelance, 7% voluntary work.

Roles in the Audiovisual Industry (64 responses)

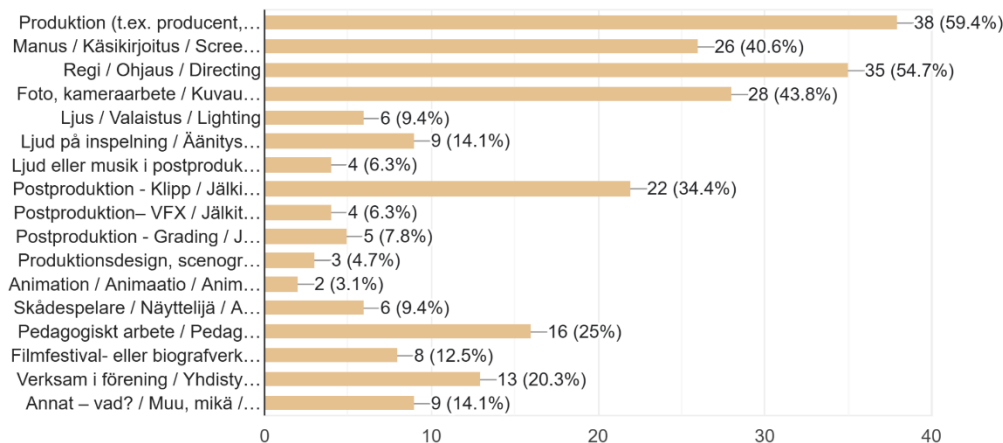
Overview

In both countries, production, screenwriting, directing, cinematography, and editing are the most common responses.

Some differences are that Finland, compared to Sweden, has more people working in post-production and association activities, while Sweden has more people engaged in film education.

Vilken roll har du inom audiovisuella industrin? Du kan välja flera. Mikä on roolisi audiovisuaalisella alalla? Voit valita useita. What type of work do you mainly do? You can choose multiple.

64 responses



Sweden

- Production: 20
- Screenwriting: 14
- Directing: 19
- Cinematography: 15
- Lighting: 2
- Sound recording: 4
- Sound and music post-production: 2
- Post-production editing: 10
- Post-production VFX: 1
- Post-production grading: 1
- Production design: 1
- Animation: 0
- Acting: 3
- Educational work: 11
- Film festival/cinema activities: 2
- Association work: 3
- Other: 5
 - Nurse
 - Casting
 - Local producer, location manager
 - Film consultant
 - Project manager and film worker

Finland

- Production: 18
- Screenwriting: 12
- Directing: 14
- Cinematography: 13
- Lighting: 4
- Sound recording: 5
- Sound and music post-production: 2
- Post-production editing: 12
- Post-production VFX: 3
- Post-production grading: 4
- Production design: 1
- Animation: 2
- Acting: 3
- Educational work: 6
- Film festival/cinema activities: 6

- Association work: 10
- Other: 5
 - Organizing and managing sound for events, video, and streaming to Zoom and YouTube
 - Developing structures within the AV industry
 - Cultural producer
 - Graphic designer
 - TV host and editor

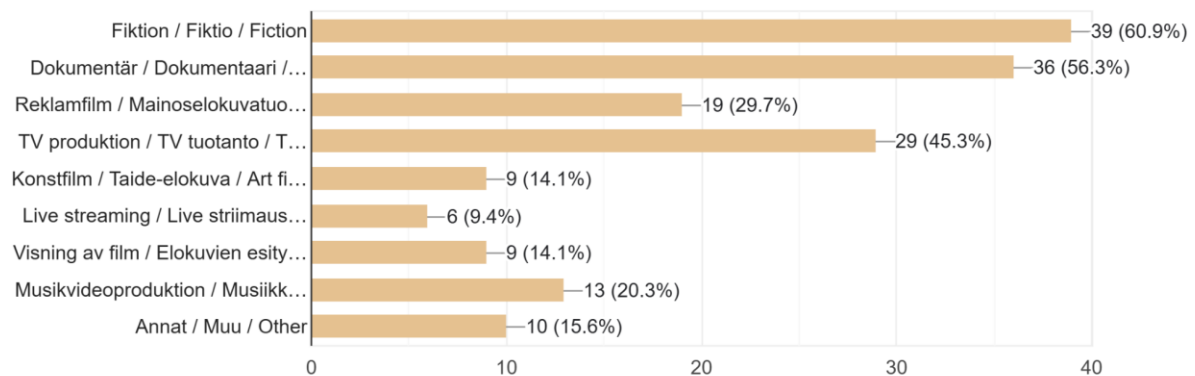
Which industry sectors do you work in? (64 responses)

Overview

Among Swedish respondents, fiction and documentary are the most frequently mentioned sectors. These are also major fields in Finland, but one clear difference between the countries is that significantly more Finnish respondents work in TV production and live streaming compared to their Swedish counterparts.

Inom vilka branschområden arbetar du? Du kan välja flera. Millä aloilla työskentelet? Voit valita useita. In which sectors do you work? You can choose multiple.

64 responses



Sweden

- Fiction: 24
- Documentary: 20
- Commercial film: 10
- TV production: 10
- Art film: 6
- Live streaming: 0

- Film exhibition: 3
- Music video production: 5
- Other: 4
 - Healthcare
 - Consulting
 - Films commissioned by organizations and municipalities
 - Research

Finland

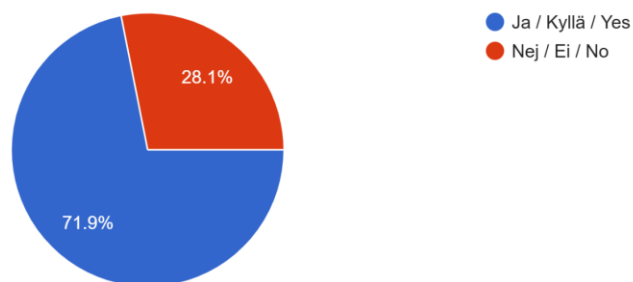
- Fiction: 15
- Documentary: 15
- Commercial film: 8
- TV production: 19
- Art film: 2
- Live streaming: 6
- Film exhibition: 6
- Music video production: 7
- Other: 6
 - Live music and music recording
 - Children's and youth films
 - Graphic design, web design, and event production
 - Media industry teaching
 - Film culture, industry activities

Education Related to the Audiovisual Industry (64 responses)

Overview

Har du utbildning kopplat till audiovisuella industrin? Onko sinulla audiovisuaaliseen alaan liittyvää koulutusta? Do you have education related to the audiovisual industry?

64 responses



Sweden

- Yes: 26 people (74%)
- No: 9 people (26%)

Finland

- Yes: 20 people (69%)
- No: 9 people (31%)

Sweden:

- Folk high schools (Edelvik, Biskops Arnö, Kalix)
- Film high school
- University programs (film studies, media, communication, journalism, film and TV scenography, cultural studies, screenwriting)
- Kulturama in Stockholm
- Stockholm University of the Arts and Umeå University Art School
- Film-related courses in various countries (Poland, USA, Norway, South Africa)
- Vocational education (screenwriting for film and TV)
- Courses organized by Film i Västerbotten

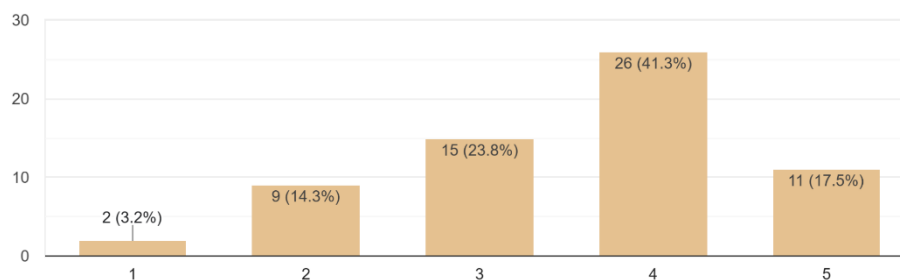
Finland:

- Universities of applied sciences (medianom, cultural producer, media production)
- Folk high schools (sound engineering, documentary film)
- University programs (journalism, media, film and TV, event organizing, streaming)
- Kulturama in Stockholm

How satisfied are you with your work situation? (63 responses)

Overview

Hur nöjd är du med din nuvarande arbetssituation? Kuinka tyytyväinen olet nykyiseen työtilanteeseesi? How satisfied are you with your current work situation?
63 responses



Sweden:

- Average score: approximately 3

Finland:

- Average score: approximately 4

Section 3 – The Future of the Film Industry in the Region

Major Opportunities for Development Over the Next Five Years (55 Responses)

- There is a positive outlook on cross-border collaboration, with many respondents believing that co-production between Västerbotten and Österbotten could be beneficial for both sides. Other types of collaborations, such as joint film screenings, workshops, seminars, and cultural exchanges, are also highlighted.
- A strong emphasis is placed on regional film production—there is a desire for a sustainable and continuous film climate with more and larger productions, allowing professionals to remain in the region while also attracting productions from elsewhere.
- Many respondents stress the importance of feature films and TV series, as these provide more stable employment opportunities.
- There is a strong wish to reduce the loss of talent to other industries due to financial instability.
- Increased financial support is a common concern for both Västerbotten and Österbotten.
- Respondents express a need for a stronger and broader network, both within and between the regions, as well as with major production companies like YLE and SVT.
- Many note that the concentration of production and workforce in the capital regions isolates film workers in the north from key decision-makers and financiers.
- The idea of a shared creative hub—studios, offices, and better coordination—is primarily raised by Swedish respondents but also mentioned by some Finnish respondents.
- Finally, there is a strong desire to improve film distribution—films from the regions need better access to national and international audiences.

Section 4 – Skills Development

What type of skills development do you consider most relevant for you?

Overall (55 responses)

- A strong focus, from both Västerbotten and Österbotten, is placed on skills development related to various aspects of production. The main areas highlighted are cinematography, scriptwriting, directing, and producing, but also lighting, sound, editing techniques, and post-production.
- The primary demand is for masterclasses, A-function training, and education targeted at professionals with extensive experience to enable them to work on larger productions. However, training for newcomers to the industry is also desired.
- Many are interested in workshops as a form of training.
- There is also interest from both sides in learning more about AI.
- Some respondents from Västerbotten request skills development in distribution, which is also mentioned on the Finnish side.
- While the majority are interested in education, it is worth noting that some express skepticism—some believe it may be better to allocate resources elsewhere and that they would prefer to work rather than undertake more training.

Sweden

- Several respondents in Västerbotten want skills development related to finance—funding, film fund issues, film business economics, finding financiers/investors, and budgeting.
- There is interest in learning more about co-production and co-financing.
- Interest is also expressed in pitch workshops—understanding what financiers look for and how to write funding applications effectively.
- A few respondents mention different types of inspirational gatherings—idea forums, feedback meetings, and events with industry professionals who work on international productions.
- Other topics mentioned by individual respondents include: further development in youth film activities, film commissions, film rights/contracts, in-depth documentary storytelling, and education on creating structure and a sustainable work environment as a freelancer.

Finland

- One respondent requests acting courses for film.

- Another respondent emphasizes internationalization—better networks, knowledge, and understanding of how to enter the global market.

What do you primarily want to work with, and what is needed to achieve that?

Overall (48 responses)

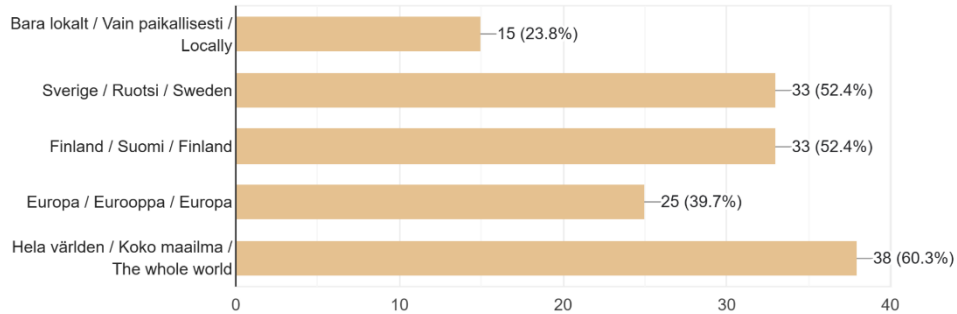
- Respondents from both countries share similar thoughts in this area.
- Most want to work with directing, cinematography, scriptwriting, and producing.
- Some also wish to work with editing, acting, scenography, dramaturgy, AI video, live streaming/podcasting, and live sound.
- There is a balanced interest in both fiction and documentary filmmaking, with some interest in advertising as well.
- A common desire among respondents is to highlight and tell stories from their own region.
- The primary need to achieve this is funding. More resources and larger productions are required in these parts of Sweden and Finland so that filmmakers can work and make a living in their respective regions.
- Other key factors mentioned include networking (within production and distribution companies, as well as among film workers themselves—one respondent suggests creating a film industry register for the Kvarken region), gaining more experience, securing work on larger productions to learn from, mentorship from established professionals, and constructive feedback.
- Access to equipment and production spaces is also mentioned as an important factor.

Where would you consider taking a course?

Overall (63 responses)

- Not included in the table, but in the figures below, only the “largest” response is counted (i.e., if a respondent answered Sweden, Finland, and Europe, only Europe is counted, as Sweden and Finland are implicitly included).

Om du skulle gå en kurs. Var skulle du kunna tänka dig att gå den? Jos osallistuisit kurssille, missä harkitsisit sen suorittamista? If you were to atten...ourse, where could you consider participating in it?
63 responses



Sweden

- Only locally: 4
- Only Sweden: 0
- Sweden and Finland: 2
- Europe: 2
- Worldwide: 26

Finland

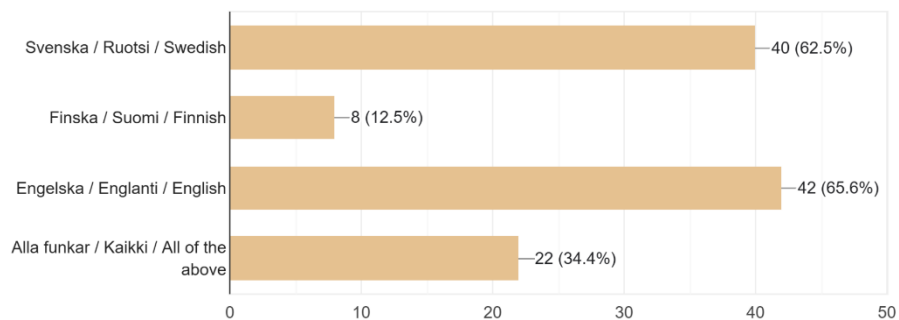
- Only locally: 1
- Only Finland: 1
- Sweden and Finland: 6
- Europe: 9
- Worldwide: 12

In which language(s) can you participate in courses?

Overall (64 responses)

På vilket/vilka språk skulle du delta i kurser? Millä kielillä osallistuisit kurssille? In which languages would you participate in a course?

64 responses



Sweden

- Swedish: 32
- Finnish: 1
- English: 30
- Any language: 2
- Two respondents stated they only want to take courses in Swedish, one respondent only in English. The vast majority can take courses in both Swedish and English.

Finland

- Swedish: 3
- Finnish: 3
- English: 7
- Any language: 22
- Three respondents only want to take courses in Finnish and English, while another three only want courses in Swedish and English. One person prefers courses only in English. Otherwise, the remaining respondents can take courses in all listed languages.

Section 5 – Work Life

What are the biggest strengths of the film industry in your region?

Overall (55 responses)

- Common strengths mentioned by both sides include talent, skills, diversity, creativity, drive, collaboration, good atmosphere, strong community spirit, and a reliable network within the region.
- It is worth noting that six people (two from Västerbotten and four from Österbotten) state that they cannot identify any strengths or that the film industry is not functional.

Sweden

- A strong emphasis is placed on the support and importance of Film i Västerbotten and its various programs and initiatives (such as Northern Motion, Talent AC/BD, and In Focus: Boost).
- A regional, easily accessible network is seen as a strength.
- Another highlighted strength is the region's travel budget, which enables exchange with Filmpool Nord and Film i Västernorrland.

Finland

- A strong sense of community and willingness to collaborate.
- The region's untouched landscapes, beautiful, diverse, and interesting locations are mentioned, mainly by Finnish respondents.
- Four respondents from Österbotten state that there is no functional film industry in the region.

What are the biggest weaknesses of the film industry in your region?

Overall (55 responses)

- A common and recurring weakness is the lack of funding and financial support, including the absence of a film fund.
- Another issue is the difficulty of accessing larger film projects and the lack of incentives to bring productions to the north.
- Both sides express that their regions are "too far from where things happen." Film production is centralized in major cities, excluding the northern regions. As a result, many move away from Västerbotten and Österbotten. A Kvarken-region collaboration is seen as a key solution to better utilize local resources.

Sweden

- Västerbotten specifically mentions a lack of B-crew positions and weak workforce regeneration.
- Another identified weakness is a perceived lack of interest from Region Västerbotten and Umeå municipality.
- One respondent highlights gender disparity, stating that significantly fewer freelance women can afford office space compared to men.

Finland

- Finnish respondents strongly emphasize that the lack of a well-developed network and a small film industry force professionals to leave the region.
- The absence of a well-funded regional organization and a coordinating entity is another concern—there is fragmentation within the industry.
- Visibility is another issue—successful projects are needed to put Österbotten on the map.

What type of funding, resources, or support would make the biggest difference for your professional development?

Overall (47 responses)

- Production support, both for smaller projects to foster creative growth and, more importantly, for larger productions.
- Several respondents on both sides request work stipends.
- Development and continuity funding.
- Travel support to strengthen national and international networks and establish a foundation for future co-productions.

Sweden

- A film fund and financing for larger projects.
- Affordable access to production spaces and equipment.
- Support for strategic distribution.

Finland

- Skills development, training, and support for writing funding applications.
- Regional support from the Finnish Film Foundation.
- Network-building activities.

Would you like to change or improve anything in the film industry to make it more sustainable and inclusive in your region?

Overall (44 responses)

- A recurring theme is the need for a film fund (Sweden), a film commission (Finland), and better financial opportunities—elements that could make the industry more sustainable by creating a synergy effect, leading to more productions and a more stable economic situation for film workers in the regions.
- There is a shared desire from both sides to improve gender equality, with more equal meeting spaces, greater inclusion of women, and more women on set. However, some also express concerns about quotas being a dilemma.
- Both Västerbotten and Österbotten wish for a centralized equipment and technology hub.
- Training on sustainability and gender equality issues within the film industry.
- Broader networks and more collaborations to include more people, for example, through a film worker registry.

Sweden

- An organized props, set decoration, and costume storage system to make better use of existing resources and reduce waste, as well as repurposing discarded materials for props and set design.
- Improved collaboration with folk high schools and university programs.
- Increased engagement with young people and new talents.
- Breaking down regional barriers to facilitate cooperation.
- More evenly distributed funding from the Swedish Film Institute across the country.
- One respondent wishes for less elitism.
- There is also a request for training opportunities to be offered in English.

Finland

- Finnish respondents would like an organization that can coordinate resources and address the region's needs for development, support, and marketing.
- Some express that cross-language collaborations could be further developed.
- Distribution is another area that could be improved.
- The Finnish side also desires more training opportunities in general.

What are the biggest challenges you face in your work in film?

Overall (50 responses)

- Once again—money. It is particularly difficult to secure funding from major financiers and streaming companies and to convince them that film workers in these regions are experienced enough. Additionally, gaining support and trust from SVT and YLE can be challenging.
- The financial unpredictability of the industry and the struggle to make a living from filmmaking is another major challenge. There is a lack of secure continuity.
- There is also a reported shortage of producers in these parts of the countries.
- A stable distribution channel is missing, making it difficult to showcase the potential of projects and attract an audience for finished productions.
- Another challenge is the strong centralization of the industry around the capital cities in each country.

Sweden

- Difficulty in securing support from the Swedish Film Institute and their new policy (which allocates more money to fewer projects) is seen as problematic.
- Other challenges mentioned include arbitrary decision-making (though it is not specified by whom), a lack of local actors, and long distances.

Finland

- It is perceived as difficult to invest in challenging and unconventional projects since financiers are reluctant to take risks.
- Another challenge is that resources in Österbotten are insufficient.

Section 6 – Collaboration

What advantages would an expanded collaboration between Västerbotten and Österbotten bring?

Overall (59 responses)

- Respondents from both Sweden and Finland highlight very similar advantages (and many of them!). These can be summarized as follows: a cross-border exchange could generate both creative and financial synergies. The advantages mentioned include:
 - Opportunities for international co-productions, leading to financial benefits and, in turn, enabling the creation of feature films and TV series.
 - Cultural exchange and a wider range of stories.
 - Increased attractiveness and a stronger industry position for both regions—a shared Kvarken-region film industry could also serve as a hub and catalyst for Nordic collaborations.
 - More job opportunities.
 - Larger and better productions.
 - Greater reach, increased visibility, and possibly a wider audience.
 - Knowledge exchange.
 - New energy, ideas, and insights.
 - Geographical proximity allowing people to find work without having to relocate far away.
 - Larger networks, more colleagues, and a shared higher level of competence.
 - Potential to strengthen collaboration with SVT and YLE—this could, for example, lead to Finnish-language TV productions for SVT Minoritet.
- It is worth noting that several respondents answered with question marks (which, in a way, is expected since the question concerns a potential future that no one knows for sure), and a few stated that they know too little to answer—indicating a general lack of knowledge about the neighboring region.

What measures would you like to see to promote collaboration between Västerbotten and Österbotten within the film industry? What would make it easier for you?

Overall (50 responses)

- A strong emphasis is placed on getting to know each other better. More knowledge is needed about the neighboring region—what strengths and skills exist? What projects are underway? How does each country's financing system work?
- This can be achieved through regular, joint, and concrete courses, workshops, networking and pitching events, meeting places, and film screenings/festivals.
- There is also a desire for clearer communication channels, such as a shared newsletter and a film worker registry.
- A few respondents suggest focusing on young people, offering scholarships and internships in each country.
- Travel support to visit each other and see locations and people in real life. The possibility of applying for residency placements is another suggestion.
- Financial support in the form of joint funding opportunities and support programs (similar to Talent AC/BD) and scholarships.
- One respondent wants a distributor who actively engages in regional film distribution.
- A (Swedish) respondent also suggests language courses.
- Norrbotten: Transport is a problem, as it is difficult to travel by train and bus.

What challenges do you see in collaboration between the regions within the film industry?

Overall (46 responses)

- The two most frequently mentioned challenges are distance, infrastructure, and logistics, and language barriers.
- Regarding infrastructure, it is noted that while the ferry connects Umeå and Vaasa, Västerbotten and Österbotten are large regions, making travel distances even longer within the areas.
- Another concern is potential cultural and work style differences—that different ways of working, financing models, and film cultures could make collaboration difficult. Västerbotten and Österbotten currently have little knowledge of each other's film industries.

- Accessing natural meeting points, networking opportunities, and financing is another challenge—there is concern that the initiative might get stuck at an administrative level without real results.
- Time-consuming and possibly complicated bureaucracy is another mentioned challenge.
- Potential difficulties with currency exchange, customs, and insurance when renting equipment were also raised.

Sweden

- One Swedish respondent wonders whether increased collaboration between the two countries could weaken national industry structures.

Finland

- The same concern is expressed by Finnish respondents. How do we include Finnish Österbotten? Since Västerbotten is already much further ahead—how can a more mutual collaboration be developed, rather than just having Västerbotten come over to produce? The fact that Österbotten is behind makes collaboration more difficult.
- There is also concern about whether Sweden has the same interest in collaboration. And how can this avoid becoming only a Swedish-language initiative?
- Finally, the perceived high threshold of working with unfamiliar film workers and companies is another challenge.

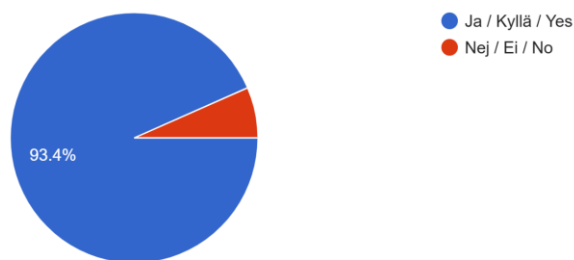
Would you like to be part of a digital film worker directory for the Kvarken region?

Overall (61 responses)

- Three respondents from Västerbotten and one from Österbotten answered no (and three people did not answer at all). Apart from them, everyone else wants to be included in a film worker directory.

Skulle du vilja vara med i en digital filmarbetarkatalog för Kvarkenregionen? Haluaisitko tulla mukaan Merenkurkun alueen digitaaliseen elokuvatyö...tal film worker directory for the Kvarken region?

61 responses



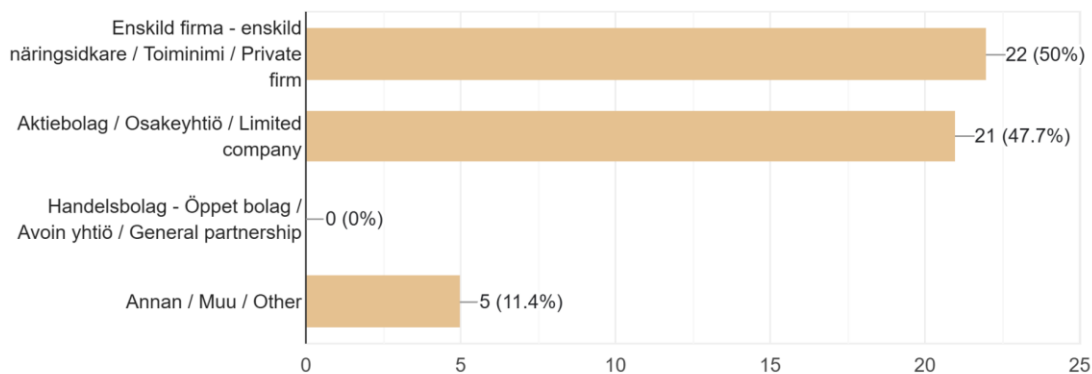
Section 7 - Companies

What type of company do you have?

Overall (44 responses)

Vilken typ av företag har du? Minkä tyyppinen yritys sinulla on? What type of companies do you have?

44 responses



Sweden

- Limited company: 10
- Sole proprietorship: 13
- Partnership: 0
- Other: 3
 - Employee in an association (+ limited company)
 - None

Finland

- Limited company: 8
- Sole proprietorship: 9
- Partnership: 0
- Other: 2
 - Light entrepreneur
 - Limited partnership

What services does your company primarily offer?

Overall (44 responses)

Most professional roles are represented, and several respondents provide broad answers (“film production,” “everything in film,” “the entire production chain”). However, more specific roles mentioned include:

- Producing
- Directing
- Screenwriting
- Dramaturgy
- Teaching, mentoring, and film education
- Event production and coordination of cultural events
- Journalism
- Music
- Cinematography, drone filming, and still photography
- Editing
- Post-production
- Casting
- Production services, location scouting, and management
- DIT
- Acting
- Sound and lighting technology
- VFX
- AI video
- Live sound reproduction and audio mixing
- Graphic and web design

There is also a mix between fiction, documentary, and commercial film.

Section 8 – Film Fund Västerbotten

What are your thoughts on establishing regional film funds in the Kvarken region to enable large-scale productions such as feature films and TV series? What opportunities and risks do you see?

Sweden (24 responses)

The respondents are generally positive! A film fund is considered essential for local film companies and workers to survive. There are significant opportunities, but also some risks.

Risks/challenges of a film fund:

- That the fund's money is allocated to Stockholm-based companies that bring in their own teams for key positions (one respondent hopes, however, that Stockholm productions can be attracted to the region, similar to Norrbotten).
- That potentially strict spending requirements could make projects difficult to realize.
- That guidelines associated with the film fund might hinder creativity.
- The initial challenge of recruiting enough personnel to meet the film fund's demands.
- Possible early-stage imbalance if only a few production companies receive funding.
- Securing additional financing beyond the film fund.
- Unequal resource distribution and lack of transparency.
- Fewer short films being produced, with new filmmakers struggling to gain support for experimentation—risking that the film fund becomes restrictive. It is crucial that regional filmmakers are not forced to compete with large-scale productions from the south.

Opportunities with a film fund:

- Strengthening the local film industry and enabling the production of feature films and TV series (though quality should be prioritized over quantity).
- Allowing film professionals to remain in the region while fostering creative talent.
- Providing opportunities to develop filmmaking at a higher level.
- Opening doors for co-productions on larger projects.
- Creating films with a Västerbotten/Österbotten identity and cultural perspective.
- Increasing visibility and making it easier to reach audiences.

Several respondents from Österbotten also provided input and are positive about a film fund.

Are there any skills you believe are missing in your region for large-scale film production? If so, which ones?

Sweden (22 responses)

Some believe there is sufficient expertise, but most respondents emphasize a lack of experience, practical application, and seasoned film workers and companies. Many competent generalists exist, but specialized professionals for large productions are scarce.

Specific missing roles mentioned repeatedly include:

- Producers
- Cinematographers
- Editors
- Actors
- Coordinators
- Location managers
- Technical staff (both A- and B-crew)
- Props specialists
- Post-production staff
- Directors, screenwriters, and line producers

The number of available film workers is seen as a challenge, and existing film companies are relatively small. Additionally, respondents highlight the lack of a dedicated film studio.

Section 9 – Film Commission Österbotten

What are your thoughts on establishing a film commission in Österbotten to facilitate large-scale productions such as feature films and TV series? What opportunities and risks do you see?

Finland (18 responses)

Finnish respondents are generally positive about a film commission, though some concerns were raised.

Risks/challenges of a film commission:

- Successfully establishing the necessary infrastructure. Some fear that Österbotten, and Finland in general, lacks the financial resources required.

- Ensuring the potential regional benefits are realized—particularly by involving other industries.
- That Österbotten as a film region is underdeveloped, with too few local professionals to sustain a functioning and profitable film commission.
- Due to Österbotten's size, a broader regional collaboration could be more beneficial.

Opportunities with a film commission:

- A film commission could "get the ball rolling," enabling larger productions, creating jobs, and allowing film professionals to make a living in the region.
- Cultural exchange and networking opportunities beyond the region, which could increase skill levels and develop film infrastructure.
- Strengthening local productions by creating a sustainable filmmaking ecosystem in Österbotten.

Sweden (10 responses)

Some Swedish respondents also provided insights. They are generally supportive and see a film commission as a valuable link between government agencies and production companies. However, concerns include:

- That a film commission is a costly way to market a region.
- That interest in the initiative may not be matched by sufficient funding to sustain it.
- That a film fund might be a more effective alternative.
- The difficulty of executing large-scale productions without the necessary experience and expertise.
- That a film commission does not automatically lead to local productions or talent development.

Are there any skills you believe are missing in your region for large-scale film production? If so, which ones?

Finland (11 responses [+10 responses taken from the same question to Västerbotten])

Many respondents state that while there is a foundational level of expertise, the number of film professionals with experience in large-scale productions is very limited, and high-level specialist skills are lacking. The shortage is considered significant across most roles.

Specifically mentioned missing skills include:

- Producers (and larger production companies)
- Project managers
- Cinematographers
- Directors
- Production managers
- Coordinators
- Location scouts
- Sound technicians
- Lighting technicians
- Post-production professionals

Another frequently mentioned issue is the lack of rental services for high-end technical equipment.

Respondents also express a desire for better talent development initiatives to strengthen the region's overall competence.

Section 10 – Co-production

Have you previously worked on Nordic/international co-productions? If yes, what have you learned? Do you have any experiences or advice to share?

Overall (40 responses)

Determining the exact number of respondents with prior experience in Nordic/international co-productions is somewhat challenging, as some answers do not explicitly state "yes" or "no." However, based on the 40 responses received:

- 15 Swedes answered yes, and 8 no.
- 10 Finns answered yes, and 7 no.

A common theme in the responses is that cultural differences are greater than one might expect, requiring an understanding of these differences. One key takeaway is that working methods vary significantly between countries. Some respondents suggested that a "crash course" on how the respective local industries operate would be beneficial.

As a result, successful co-productions require time, patience, thorough pre-production, and clear communication to help film professionals navigate potential pitfalls and adapt to the collaboration.

Both Swedish and Finnish respondents also emphasize that local knowledge is crucial for successful international collaborations.

Sweden

The Swedish side highlights the risk of losing some control in co-productions, making it essential to get to know the region and its film professionals early on and establish clear communication with the producer and director from the start.

A few respondents mention that the language situation can be complex, sometimes making it challenging to ensure full inclusion for all team members.

Several Swedish respondents have experience working with Norway, and some suggest that Norway should also be included in this initiative.

One respondent points out that bureaucracy can consume a significant amount of resources in international collaborations.

Section II – Additional Thoughts

Sweden

Several respondents praise the survey and consider it a great initiative!

One key issue raised is the challenge of distribution, where respondents believe there should be more collaboration.

One person expresses interest in including Norway in a similar initiative.

Finland

One respondent believes that AI should be the primary focus for film and TV production in the Kvarken region, as the industry is evolving and it is crucial to engage with major companies.

Lastly, there is hope that sufficient financial resources will be available to attract international and Nordic co-productions. Respondents also suggest that inspiration and valuable knowledge could be drawn from other film funds and film commissions that have been active for a longer period.

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