



Big Mountain Productions Sustainability and Environmental Policy

Driving Best Practice

Overview

Big Mountain Productions is firmly committed to playing its part in order to reduce carbon emissions and actively seek to find alternative, more sustainable ways of making content to help the creative media industry create a sustainable and reputable future for the industry by embedding sustainability into everyday working practices.

The company is committed to hiring locally across all departments for all productions, has been at the creative vanguard in developing, pitching and producing editorially sustainable-led productions (Country House Auction for C4, Peataí for RTE/BBC, Bua Nó Bás for TG4), employs hybrid working practices to encourage sustainable practice among teams, is ultimately committed to pivoting its studio production expertise to virtual production in the next 3-5 years and has already embarked on a virtual production Proof of Concept sizzle for a broadcaster, backed by multiple funders including Future Screens NI and NIS.

The company has also taken part in recent sustainability events such as BBC Climate Creative Conference 2024. <https://www.bbc.co.uk/academy/events/climate-creatives-2024/>

This policy document will give an overview of how Big Mountain will integrate best practice into the day-to-day working environment.

It is important to note that the policy is a living document that will be subject to updates and changes in our bid to continually review, adapt and subsequently update to strive for Net zero.

Big Mountain – Sustainable Principles

Big Mountain sees sustainability in all things. From our day-to-day working practices to working practices through all aspects of a production – **OFF SCREEN AND ON SCREEN**

In this document, we will highlight how Big Mountain integrates sustainable practices both on screen and off, to offset our own carbon footprint but also to influence and initiate conversations with audiences by raising awareness and helping to develop an understanding of climate change and mitigations

We are committed to taking responsibility for our actions and are always mindful of impacts:

OFF SCREEN

BEHIND THE SCENES

Productions/Programming

- **Programming** – Big Mountain is committed to developing, pitching and producing climate-aware programming such as Country House Auction for C4 – a new format around the sale and provenance of antique items conducted in situ and across digital portals. Previous productions have employed sustainable practices and processes such as UGC (User Generated Content) in long running TV formats (Peatai S1,S2,S3)
- **Development** – Big Mountain is committed to a 3-year arc developing productions specifically for the new virtual studio in Belfast. The company has secured funding to produce a Proof of Concept for new IP as well as developing new shows in this exciting sustainable environment.
- **New Products** – the company is committed to researching new innovative ways to produce its content more sustainably including B2B digital sales and products that utilise the new virtual studio in Belfast.

Office Practice

- **Location** – the Big Mountain office is strategically placed, equi-distant to the main broadcasters in Ireland and travel and transport links.
- **Hybrid Working** – prompted undoubtedly by Covid, Big Mountain initiated Hybrid working at the outset of lockdown and discovered it was an extremely cost and climate effective way to work. We utilise zoom for weekly generic catch ups with all staff and subsequent zoom calls with specific productions as necessary. Digital messaging, Email and whatsapp are regular daily forms of communication between all teams. Hiring and recruitment is undertaken predominantly via zoom.
- **Travel** – Hybrid working has significantly reduced the need for travel. For meeting purposes, we endeavour to car share. (**Access to SKY's contact in Enterprise to ensure Hybrid and/or EV transport is excellent news enabling us to improve our sustainability**). Commissioner and buyer meetings are predominantly held via Zoom, Google Meets or Teams.

- **Accommodation** – We actively seek to find accommodation that employs sustainable practices and processes.
- **Printing** - printing is kept to a minimum - print on demand - minimise paper usage - greyscale only
- **Energy Efficiency**
 - Office lighting automatically switches off
 - Reduced office footprint and consolidated working areas
- **Development** – At the development stage of production, we always consider potential locations and potential impacts in terms
 - Paperwork
 - Energy Consumption
 - Meetings
 - Recces
 - Travel
- **Initiatives** - At Big Mountain we strive to think differently through recycling
 - Book swop
 - Sustainable clothing - using charity shops

Production Practice

Pre-Production – At the outset of a production we set the Sustainability tone

Actions/Considerations

- Initiate Albert to further action decisions taken to maximise sustainability and reduce our carbon footprint
- Travel – Big Mountain review crew travelling – minimising numbers required on locations and initiating car sharing and/or use of public transport where possible
- Transport – (HVO)
- Energy usage required – minimising impacts
- Accommodation – AirBnB/Economy Hotels
- Location Amenities – Green Flagged when possible
- Food – Catering - locally sourced and responsibly grown - Vegan/Vegetarian – consider no meat day (where possible avoid beef/lamb/pork)
- Suppliers – identifying suppliers that have embraced sustainability – local where possible – (utilisation of sustainable batteries/choice of camera/LED lighting)
- Initiate Carbon Action Plan

Production

We set standards to encourage cast, crew and contributors to make sustainable decisions through the use of:-

- Green Memos

- Leading by doing
- A ban on single use plastics
 - eg: slotting cups to minimise waste collection
 - using triple bins - waste - compostable and recycling bins (clearly marked)
 - carpooling/shuttle buses (from accommodation if possible)
- Innovating and utilising new technology
- Employing new practices and processes – remote direction and use of UGC (User Generated Content) in productions. Use of Drone instead of aerial photography.
- **Use RIMMS where possible** - [RIMMS - Digital Release Forms and Documents for Television](#)
- Gathering Evidence
- Ensuring that catering when used on set provides where possible “green meals” with low food miles & locally sourced produce.

Post Production

- Push/Pull System to facilitate remote working
- Real time digital communication apps, eg Splashtop and Frame-IO (check spelling to facilitate remote working between producer and editor)
- Remote VO facilitated by outside audio suppliers, Kaboom
- **Delivery Takeaway**
- Broadcaster deliverables
- Albert certification achieved
- Audiences will be aware, if initially subliminally of the sustainable choices that have been made in the production

Production REVIEW

- What have we learned
- What did we do well
- What could we have done better
- Update Sustainability Policy accordingly
- Share findings with the team.

ONSCREEN

Big Mountain has a clear commitment to portraying sustainability onscreen.

Audience Engagement. Commonwealth Scientific and Industrial Research Organisation (CSIRO) have said *‘By embedding climate messaging into popular culture like reality TV and Hollywood movies, climate narratives are being delivered to mass audiences, promoting a shift in social norms and behaviour change at scale.’ (Nilsson/Goodwin 2024)*

Garnering audience interest in sustainability is therefore crucial, and govt research affirms a level of trust in TV which inspires viewers to act.

(<https://assets.publishing.service.gov.uk/media/671a44b2593bb124be9c1445/desnz-pat-summer-2024-net-zero-and-climate-change.pdf>)

With research suggesting 53% of the UK public appreciate the high importance of the impact of climate change, we would like to build on this in various ways including, but not limited to: -

- **Development:** - When developing content, sustainability messaging is intrinsic to the story telling. This messaging is shared with the production team and they are encouraged to further develop sustainability threads and think of ways in which environmental issues relevant to and relating to their content, explicitly or implicitly can be further enhanced. This threading is tracked so that we are confident, when these themes appear onscreen, there is a clear and appropriate sustainability theme throughout the programme/series.
- **Genre:** - Sustainability has relevance in all genres of programming produced by Big Mountain. Our portfolio includes: - Fact. Ent, Factual and Documentary. Themes can be incorporated through scripting and visual cues (e.g., using electric cars or highlighting renewable energy).
- **Storytelling:** - We will strive to show ordinary people acting positively on environmental issues and reaffirming these actions with accessible language, highlighted the bigger picture and flagging accountability. Furthermore we will actively seek to include or refer in passing to related negatives: – changes to landscape, extreme weather and positives:- walks in nature, pockets of nature, like potted plants and consider impacts of both both physically and mentally.
- **Sustainable Themes:** Our productions will actively seek to deliver sustainable solutions such as sustainable travel, energy use, food choices, and waste reduction. This approach will also be reflected on screen from referring to, where relevant, the effects of climate change (e.g., extreme weather) to promoting sustainable travel, energy, and food practices and showing solutions like REDUCE, REUSE. RECYCLE; Plant based food: Electric vehicles; Bees etc.

Conclusion

In conclusion, Big Mountain's mission is to continue to adopt, adapt and develop our sustainability policy, improving production on production. Our commitment will be delivered both on screen and off. We will continue to identify new trends, technologies, and innovations to continue to reduce our carbon footprint.

