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*PORTUGUESE AUDIOVISUAL CULTURAL ENTREPRENEURIAL ECOSYSTEM:
BOUNDARIES, COMPONENTS AND ATTRIBUTES¹*

**ECOSSISTEMA EMPREENDEDOR CULTURAL DO AUDIOVISUAL DE
PORTUGAL: FRONTEIRAS, COMPONENTES E ATRIBUTOS**

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INTRODUCTION

The literature on entrepreneurial ecosystems (EEs) began with a predominantly multisectoral approach focused on high-tech and high-impact entrepreneurship (STAM, 2015). However, Pugh, Schmutzler, and Tsvetkova (2021, p. 611) pointed out the risks of such a narrow approach, especially when ignoring “underdeveloped regions, non-technological industries, and workers or other less favored contexts.” For Pugh, Schmutzler, and Tsvetkova (2021), this limited perspective of studies on EEs hinders the understanding of regional sustainable development. It can be misguided when adopted as a guideline for public entrepreneurship policies in contexts other than high technology.

This concern has already been noted in previous studies (EICHELBERGER; PETERS; PIKKEMAAT; CHAN, 2020; PURBASARI; WIJAYA; RAHAYNU, 2019). For example, Loots, Neiva, Carvalho, and Lavanga (2021, p. 643) showed, based on a case study of creative industries in the city of Porto, Portugal, that: “the frameworks of existing entrepreneurial ecosystems (EEs) function well when examining sub-ecosystems beyond high-tech and high-growth activities, namely in the cultural and creative industries”. Brydges and Puch (2021) also analyzed a sector of the creative industries - the fashion industry - from the perspective of EEs. More recent studies, adopting a sectoral perspective, have broadened the possibilities for research in the

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field of EEs (BORRERO; YOUSAFZAI, 2024; FELIZOLA; MARQUES; SILVA, 2024; REIS; VILLAR; GIMENEZ; MOLENTO; FERRI, 2022).

Thus, in this editorial, we present a brief description of the cultural entrepreneurial ecosystem of the audiovisual sector (EECAV)⁴ in Portugal, based on the model developed by Gimenez (2024). For this description, we used the Portuguese Classification of Economic Activities (PORTUGAL, 2025). Additionally, we pointed out the relevance of Portuguese legislation for the audiovisual sector and the promotional actions of the Institute of Cinema and Audiovisual (ICA). We also described Portugal's recent experience with *Cash Rebate*, a financial support mechanism for the audiovisual sector. These three themes illustrate the cultural, social, and material attributes of Portugal's EECAV, as Spigel (2017) classified.

CULTURAL ENTREPRENEURIAL ECOSYSTEM OF THE AUDIOVISUAL SECTOR: BOUNDARIES AND ATTRIBUTES

Based on the combination of the concepts of entrepreneurial ecosystem and cultural ecosystem (HOLDEN, 2015), whose intersection would characterize a space for entrepreneurial activities in the field of culture, Gimenez (2024) coined the term cultural entrepreneurial ecosystem (CEE), proposing its application in the audiovisual field. Figure 1 represents a cultural entrepreneurial ecosystem in the audiovisual field (CEEAV).

Gimenez (2024, p. 4) argues that "... to understand the structure and functioning of a cultural entrepreneurial ecosystem, it is necessary to identify the organizations that carry out the most diverse activities that take place within the ecosystem". In other words, it is necessary to understand how a cultural entrepreneurial ecosystem is configured, based on its boundaries and the components that integrate it.

⁴ In Portugal, the terms cinematographic activities and audiovisual activities are used to differentiate the market to which they refer, the former relating to cinema and the latter relating to television and other means of audiovisual exhibition. In this text, unless explicitly indicated, the word audiovisual refers to the set of cinematographic and audiovisual activities, which is common practice in Brazil.



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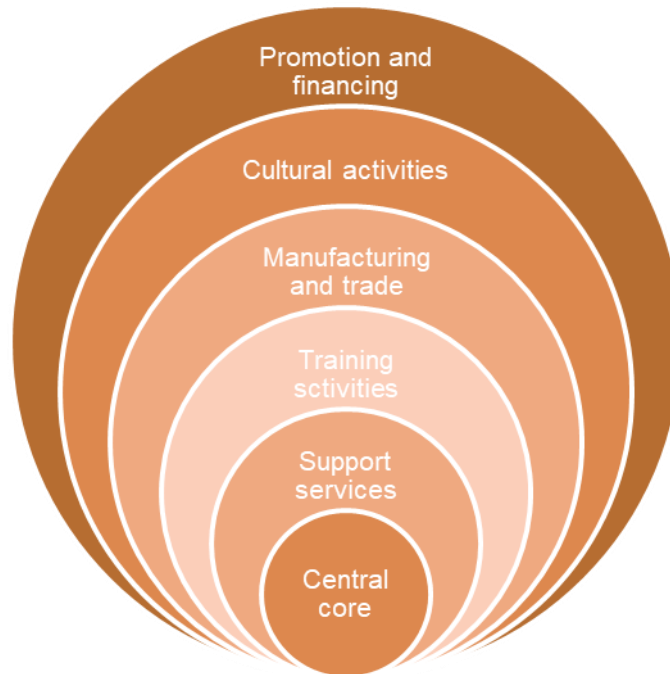


Figure 1: Boundaries of the cultural entrepreneurial ecosystem of the audiovisual sector

The Central Core includes enterprises or activities directly involved in audiovisual production and access: film, video, and television program production; film, video, and television program post-production; film, video, and television program distribution; film exhibition; broadcast television; pay television; and *streaming* services.

Support Services include enterprises that provide services to the central core. These include, among others, sound recording and music editing, reproduction of recorded materials on any medium, photographic and similar activities, transportation rental, labor selection and agency services, travel agencies, hotels and similar establishments, restaurants and other food and beverage service establishments, accounting, consulting, and tax auditing.

Training Activities encompass training organizations and activities that supply talent to the core and support services: higher education; technical-level professional education; technological-level professional education; and art and culture education.

Manufacturing and Trade include organizations that provide products and services necessary for organizations operating in the core and support activities,



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such as audio and video reception, reproduction, recording, and amplification devices; optical, photographic, and cinematographic equipment and instruments; blank, magnetic, and optical media; and lamps and other lighting equipment.

The Cultural Activities category includes activities in the field of cultural economics that may be directly or indirectly connected to the audiovisual sector. These include, among others, printing of newspapers, books, magazines, and other periodicals; publishing of books, newspapers, and magazines; radio activities; portals, content providers, and other Internet information services; performing arts, shows, and complementary activities; artistic creation; libraries and archives; museum activities and exploration, artistic restoration, and conservation of historic sites and buildings and similar attractions.

Finally, Promotion and Financing include activities that stimulate entrepreneurial actions in the audiovisual sector: promotion agencies, investment funds, public administration in general, regulators of cultural activities, and associative organizations linked to culture and art.

In another aspect of the configurational analysis of EEs, Spigel (2017, p. 50) suggests that "... ecosystem theory should focus on the internal attributes of ecosystems and how different configurations of these attributes reproduce the overall ecosystem". In this sense, Spigel (2017) proposes three classes of EE attributes - cultural, social, and material - that must be understood to adequately diagnose EEs and support policies.

Cultural attributes are composed of beliefs and perspectives on entrepreneurship in a given region and include attitudes related to business practices and acceptable business norms, valuing entrepreneurship, attitudes toward risk and innovation, and stories of entrepreneurship as a source of inspiration for new entrepreneurs.

Social attributes refer to resources composed of or acquired through social networks within a region, such as: the presence of skilled workers willing to work in startups; the availability of investment capital from family and friends, angel investors, and venture capitalists; the presence of social networks that connect entrepreneurs,



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consultants, investors, and workers and allow for the free flow of knowledge and skills; and the presence of mentors and role models, successful local entrepreneurs who provide advice to young entrepreneurs.

Finally, material attributes are those that have a tangible presence in the region and are classified into five groups: political and governance actions through government programs or regulations that either support entrepreneurship through direct financing or remove barriers to the creation of new businesses; the existence of universities and other higher education institutions that train new entrepreneurs and produce new knowledge that spreads throughout society; and support services provided by companies and organizations for new ventures, for example, patent attorneys, incubators, or accounting services; the physical infrastructure that refers to the availability of facilities and telecommunications and infrastructure to enable the creation and development of new ventures; and the market represented by the presence of sufficient local opportunities to allow the creation of ventures and easy access to global markets.

By articulating the two models (GIMENEZ, 2024; SPIGEL, 20217), it can be seen that the better the quality of cultural, social, and material attributes, the greater the number of enterprises and entrepreneurs in the central core of an EECV. In other words, the activities carried out by the organizations and actors of the other five frontiers of Gimenez's (2024) model will enhance the presence of the attributes defined in Spigel (2017), which will result in better performance of the EECV in terms of the quantity and longevity of entrepreneurial activities.

THE FRONTIERS OF THE CULTURAL AUDIOVISUAL ENTREPRENEURIAL ECOSYSTEM IN PORTUGAL

The Portuguese Classification of Economic Activities was recently revised by a decree-law published on February 12, 2025 (PORTUGAL, 2025). Inspection of the list of activities classified in this document allowed for the classification of these activities according to Gimenez's model (2024). Table 1 summarizes this information.



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In total, there are 56 different economic activities that attest to the complexity of the EECAV. A complete diagnosis of this ecosystem would involve tabulating the number of enterprises in each of these economic activities. However, this is beyond the scope of this editorial, whose main objective is to highlight how this ecosystem can be configured by describing its parts and possible components.

Table 1 – Frontiers of Portugal's Audiovisual Cultural Entrepreneurial Ecosystem

Boundary	Activity
Central Core	Film, video, and television program production activities; Film, video, and television program post-production activities; Film and video distribution activities; Film projection activities; Television programming and broadcasting and video distribution activities
Support Services	Reproduction of recorded media; Hotel establishments; Restaurant activities (Food); Mobile food service activities; Event catering; Contract catering and other food service activities; Legal activities, except for notary offices; Accounting and tax consulting activities; Auditing and account reviewing activities; Advertising agency activities; Graphic design and visual communication activities; Photographic activities; Travel agency activities; Organization of fairs, congresses, and similar events;
Training activities	Vocational secondary education; Post-secondary non-tertiary education; Higher education; Teaching of cultural activities
Manufacturing and Trade	Manufacture of non-ophthalmic optical instruments and equipment and magnetic and optical information carriers; Manufacture of photographic and cinematographic material; Retail sale of audiovisual equipment; Retail sale of optical material, except ophthalmic, photographic, cinematographic, and precision instruments
Cultural Activities	Newspaper printing; Wholesale trade of books, magazines, and newspapers; Retail sale of books; Retail sale of newspapers, magazines, and other periodicals and stationery, except for machines and other office supplies; Retail sale of cultural and recreational goods; Book publishing; Newspaper publishing; Publishing of magazines and other periodicals; Other publishing activities, except for software publishing; Sound recording and music publishing activities; Broadcasting and audio distribution activities; News agency activities; Other content distribution activities; Literary creation and music composition activities; Visual arts creation activities; Other artistic creation activities; Performing arts activities; Operation of theaters and performance venues; Library activities; Archival activities; Museum and collection activities; Historical site and monument activities; Conservation, restoration, and other activities supporting cultural heritage.
Promotion and Financing	Activities of credit financial institutions; Fund management activities; Central government; Autonomous regional government; Local government; Public administration - cultural, sports, recreational, housing, and other social activities, except compulsory social security and the environment; Activities of professional organizations; Cultural and recreational associations

Source: Prepared by the authors, 2025



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Gimenez (2024, p. 12) summarizes the relevance of this type of action by proposing that

a diagnosis of this type of ecosystem could indicate, for example, barriers or limitations in the provision of support services, in the training of talent for the sector, in interaction with other cultural activities, in the manufacture and trade of products and services necessary for audiovisual activities, etc. In other words, the ecosystemic view can help in the formulation and implementation of ecosystemic policies that would complement traditional policies focused on only one dimension of the audiovisual sector, i.e., policies on production, distribution, exhibition, training, or conservation.

CULTURAL, SOCIAL, AND MATERIAL ATTRIBUTES OF THE CULTURAL ENTREPRENEURIAL ECOSYSTEM OF THE AUDIOVISUAL SECTOR IN PORTUGAL

This section presents three aspects of Portugal's EECAV that exemplify its cultural, social, and material attributes.

Cultural attributes: legislation on film and audiovisual activities in Portugal

In summary, cultural attributes can be understood by examining values, norms, and attitudes toward entrepreneurship in the audiovisual field. To illustrate a relevant component of the cultural characteristics of Portugal's EECAV, since 2012, Portugal has had a law that "establishes the principles of state action in the context of promoting, developing, and protecting the art of cinema and cinematographic and audiovisual activities" (PORTUGAL, 2012). Initially regulated by decree-law the following year (PORTUGAL, 2013), it underwent further regulation in 2018 (PORTUGAL, 2018), based on the amendment to the Cinema Law (2014). Finally, in the context of the revision of the European Union's Audiovisual Media Services Directive in 2021, a new decree was issued that "regulates the Cinema Law concerning the collection of fees and the investment obligations to which operators are subject" (PORTUGAL, 2021).

In summary, for more than a decade, Portuguese legislation has been guided by the promotion and stimulation of cinema and audiovisual media, guided by the principles defined in 2012:



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a) support for the creation, production, distribution, exhibition, dissemination, and promotion of cinematographic and audiovisual works as instruments of *expression of cultural diversity, affirmation of national identity, promotion of the language, and enhancement of Portugal's image in the world*, particularly with regard to deepening relations with Portuguese-speaking countries; b) protecting and promoting the art of filmmaking and, in particular, new talent and first works; c) adopting support measures and programs aimed at fostering the *development of the business fabric and the market for cinematographic and audiovisual works*, in accordance with the principles of transparency and impartiality, competition, freedom of creation and expression, and cultural diversity; d) promoting interaction with agents in the film and audiovisual sectors, the media, education, and telecommunications; e) promoting the long-term conservation of film and audiovisual heritage through measures that ensure its preservation (PORTUGAL, 2012, emphasis added).

The highlighted parts of the quote emphasize the dual logic of a cultural entrepreneurial ecosystem in which processes of economic and market value creation are present, under a logic of competition, and symbolic and cultural value, under a logic of social coexistence. This dual logic is one of the main characteristics of what Gimenez (2024) calls the cultural entrepreneurial ecosystem.

Social attributes: financing of film and audiovisual activities in Portugal

According to Spigel (2017), social attributes refer to the various types of resources accessed or acquired by those undertaking CE. For example, this theme could be illustrated by the multiple forms of competitions that the ICA holds annually to award financial support to audiovisual activities, as determined by the decree regulating the Cinema Law (PORTUGAL, 2018). However, as the ICA performs a more diverse range of actions, this will be the subject of the next section, which illustrates one of the material attributes of Portugal's EECaV.

Here, we describe the Cash Rebate, a system of incentives for film and audiovisual production, created under the Tourism and Cinema Support Fund (PORTUGAL, 2018a), with a dual purpose:

stimulating film and audiovisual production and attracting international film shoots to Portugal, which contribute to promoting the country's image internationally, in line with the objectives of film and audiovisual policy as a cultural activity (PLANAPP, 2023).



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Cash Rebate supports: the production of films intended for screening in cinemas or for broadcast on television or exploitation through on-demand audiovisual communication services or other audiovisual communication services; and the provision of technical services in the field of film and audiovisual production, including the rental of imaging, lighting, and machinery equipment, as well as technical post-production activities (PLANAPP, 2023).

This support is aimed at projects of the following types and formats: feature-length fiction, documentary, or animated films intended for initial exploitation in commercial movie theaters; independently produced audiovisual works designed for television broadcast (TV movies; single-episode television documentaries; animated television specials; television series); fiction, animated, or documentary works, either single episodes or series (PLANAPP, 2023).

As a strategy to attract international investment to Portugal by encouraging co-production partnerships between Portuguese and foreign production companies,

the incentive covers up to 25% of eligible expenses, and this reimbursement rate may be increased to 30%. Eligible expenses (see Article 9 of the Regulation on Incentives for Film and Audiovisual Production) are expenses related to personnel and the acquisition of goods and services in Portugal, as well as project development expenses incurred in the national territory in the twelve months prior to the submission of the application for admission to the incentive, including expenses related to copyright transfers, provided they are indispensable to the production of the work. Up to a limit of 35% of total expenditure in Portugal, expenses related to the remuneration of producers, directors, screenwriters, and other authors of the work, as well as the main actors, are also eligible (PLANAPP, 2023, p. 10).

Financing operations carried out between 2018 and 2022 under the Cash Rebate system were evaluated in PLANAPP (2023). For 168 projects supported during the period, €128.7 million was attracted, with an incentive of €27.0 million, i.e., a 21.0% reimbursement of expenses incurred. As pointed out in the Cash Rebate system evaluation report, there are indicators of a positive impact on the sector's performance.

In general, since 2012, there has been a growing trend in the average annual growth rate of production and post-production companies in Portugal, with the latter showing a more pronounced growth rate during the Cash Rebate period (2017-2020) than in the previous period (2012-2016). It is not intended to establish a causal relationship between the Cash Rebate



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incentive and the evolution of the main economic indicators of the film and audiovisual sector, but it is important to note that the incentive accompanies and contributes to a positive growth dynamic revealed by official statistics (PLANAPP, 2023, p. 28).

Material attributes: the action of the Institute of Cinema and Audiovisual (ICA)

As in the case of the two previous categories of attributes, the material attributes of EEs can be very diverse. In Spigel's (2017) proposal, this category has the most significant number of groups (5). The ICA's actions are examples of a group that includes political and governance actions that support entrepreneurship through direct financing or remove barriers to entrepreneurial action in SEs.

According to information on the ICA website, this is a public institute integrated into the indirect administration of the State, endowed with administrative and financial autonomy and its own assets, under the supervision of the Minister of Culture, Youth, and Sports. Its mission is the development of cinematographic and audiovisual activities. The ICA was created in March 2007, and its predecessors were the Portuguese Film Institute (IPC), created in 1971, the Portuguese Institute of Cinematographic and Audiovisual Art (IPACA) of 1994, and the Institute of Cinema, Audiovisual and Multimedia (ICAM) of 1998 (ICA, 2025).

The ICA's activities cover a wide range of areas, including: the allocation of annual financial support through public tenders; establishing protocols with various entities in the field of cinema and audiovisual media; ensuring national representation in international institutions and bodies in the fields of cinema and audiovisual media; registering companies and cinematographic and audiovisual works; and providing information, contributing to a better understanding of the cinema and audiovisual sectors (ICA, 2025a).

Highlighting its financial support activities, Table 2 summarizes the variety of support provided through public tenders held by the ICA in 2025. In total, €21,857,464.59 was distributed across eight programs covering production activities, in larger volumes, and training and exhibition in smaller volumes.



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Table 2 – Public tenders by the Institute of Cinema and Audiovisual

Competition	Description	Investment (Euros)
New Talents and First Works	Support for production in the following categories: feature-length fiction films, short fiction films, documentary films, and short animated films, or through the launch of specific tenders for this purpose (Support for first works LM Fiction).	3,900,000
Support for Audience Development in Schools	Training Activities for Children and Young People	400,000
Support for Screenings at Festivals and Alternative Circuits	Screenings at Alternative Venues	440,000
Support for Internationalization	International Dissemination and Promotion of National Works Distribution of National Works in International Markets	1,177,464.59
Support for Audiovisual and Multimedia	Writing and Development of Audiovisual and Multimedia Works Production of Audiovisual and Multimedia Works - Fiction/Documentary Production of Audiovisual and Multimedia Works - Animation	7,550,000
Support for cinema	Writing and Development of Cinematographic Works First Feature-Length Fiction Films Second Fiction Feature Films Complementary Short Fiction Films 1st Cinematographic Documentaries 2nd Cinematic Documentaries Animated Feature Films	7,690,000
Luso-Brazilian Protocol	Luso-Brazilian Protocol	350,000
Ad Hoc Program	Ad Hoc Support - 1st Call	350

Source: Prepared by the authors based on (ICA, 2025b)

FINAL CONSIDERATIONS

This editorial presented a partial view of Portugal's EECV based on the analysis of secondary data. The main objective was to highlight the possibility of an ecosystemic view of the audiovisual sector, identifying its components according to Gimenez's (2024) model and illustrating some of its attributes based on Spigel (2017). By providing this example of the application of the cultural entrepreneurial ecosystem concept, focused on Portugal's audiovisual sector, we hope to stimulate future studies in different geographical contexts. We also suggest that further research be conducted on ecosystem dynamics and their relationship with ecosystem performance.



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In the case of Portugal, data from ICA (2025d) show that between 2020 and 2024, Portuguese films represented, on average, 11.72% of total cinema releases; and only 3.42% of box office revenue and 3.86% of audiences. Could the social and material cultural attributes of Portugal's EECAV and the configuration of its components across the various boundaries presented here help to explain the low participation of Portuguese films in their own national exhibition market?

Another interesting line of research from an ecosystem perspective concerns the potentially exclusionary nature of a configuration. Who is part of the ecosystem? Who is outside it? Burnay, Félix, and Tavares (2024) conducted a study on the participation of women in the Portuguese audiovisual industry, revealing significant gender differences, for example, in terms of higher income and majority participation of men in certain roles, particularly the most artistic and technical ones. The difficulties faced by women in working professionally in the EECAV can be explained by an ecosystemic view.

In short, there are a variety of analyses that can be made based on the application of the concept of entrepreneurial ecosystem in the audiovisual industry. The invitation remains open to the scientific community.



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