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Serbia's Firefly preps dramas, builds studio

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SFF: Firefly Productions in Serbia is ramping up drama production with three new series and is also building a studio complex outside Belgrade to service anticipated regional growth.



Ivana Miković

The company was launched last year by former BBC news producer Ivana Miković in partnership with other producers from Serbia. It has now sealed a deal with Serbian telco and cable TV company Telekom Srbija for three dramas series.

The shows include criminal-turned-businessman saga Tycoon (10×50'), gangster series The Clan (10×50') and music-driven detective thriller Underneath (10×50'). Production on all

three starts in October.

Firefly will produce the shows, financed by Telekom Srbija, and they will air on Telekom-owned cable network SuperStar as well as on Serbian public broadcaster RTS under licence.

The three shows form part of a 16-title drama development slate that Miković has been working on, she told C21 here at the Sarajevo Film Festival (SFF).

The company is also soon starting construction on Firefly Studios outside Belgrade, housing two 2,000 square metre sound stages and a smaller 800 square metre one, as well as six hectares of backlot, a production offices, water tank, horse stables and related facilities.

The decision was driven not only by the lack of studio space in this region, said Miković, but also by the Serbian government last month increasing its film/TV tax incentive scheme to attract international production.

"Serbia has opened up a lot. Big companies like Netflix and Amazon are already looking at content from this region. And last week, we passed a new law so that if international producers spend more than €5m (US\$5.5m) in Serbia they get a 30% rebate," said Mikovic.

"The studios in Hungary are always full and our crews are very good and cheaper than elsewhere in this region, so I decided to launch Firefly Studios. Construction starts in October and it'll be open for business next summer."

Miković – who has previously worked at RTS, Fox TV in Serbia and Antenna Group, and also ran the B92 channel – said the new studios would cost around €6.5m to build.

"Production in Serbia is booming. For our population of six million, we have seven major free-to-air channels as well as two good cable platforms, Telekom Srbija and SBB, and they're all competing for the best content."



Ed Waller
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