

Portugal's RTP, Ukbar eye anthology series Told by Women as an international franchise



José Fragoso and Pandora da Cunha Telles speaking at [Conecta](#) today

CONNECTA Portugal's public channel RTP and Lisbon production company Ukbar Filmes are planning for their series of TV movies directed by women, Told by Women, to expand into other markets and even become an international franchise.

On Wednesday at **Conecta** Fiction & Entertainment here in Cuenca, Spain, RTP's programme director José Fragoso and Pandora da Cunha Telles, joint CEO at Ukbar Filmes, presented the second season of this anthology series, which premiered on RTP1's primetime in 2022.

This new series increases the number of TV movies from 10 to 20, directed by 20 women of different ages and backgrounds who had not previously directed films. However, these are not their first feature films, but TV episodes of between 45 and 50 minutes long.

"Told by Women is not only opening the door to new voices but is actively nurturing the next generation of Portuguese filmmakers," said da Cunha Telles, creator of the series, who clarified that these are not stories about women, but rather stories directed by women.

The stories also take place in communities with fewer than 100,000 inhabitants throughout Portugal, and the films are shot in those cities and towns.

However, the most striking aspect of the series is its conception as a three-phase format, which allows Ukbar and RTP to have ambitions to scale it up to other countries.

The first stage is training, with mentoring for the directors by international talent; then there is a sustainable and efficient production design, with filming in batches of five back-to-back TV movies, at four times of the year and with a stable team; and finally, internationalisation, with participation in festivals.

The potential export of Told by Women may find a way to adapt it in other countries or even develop the franchise, which includes one director per European country, they explained.

"The production system we created makes the cost per film competitive and makes the project producible," said da Cunha Telles, who estimated that each title in this second instalment will have an approximate budget of US\$300,000.

"Anyone can make one or two TV movies directed by women, but what makes the difference is making 10 or 20 at a time. Because then you have 10 or 20 female directors to show the world," she added.

Although the initiative could be adapted to any country, its creator said she saw greater opportunity in countries with lower production capacities or fewer plans for access to female directors, such as Eastern Europe or Latin America.

"Countries such as France, Spain and the Nordic countries already have different quotas and regulatory systems that give women access to directing jobs. It is the countries without this type of public support that can benefit most from a project like this."

The series, known in Portugal as Contado por Mulheres, also offers different opportunities for international coproduction, according to executives from RTP and Ukbar.

The second season brings together 20 female directors from different generations and from diverse sectors such as film, theatre, dance and advertising. International mentors for this season include Gudny Hummelvoll (Norway), Mariela Besuievsky (Spain) and Francesco Virga (Italy).

With the development phase already underway and the 20 directors onboard, the second instalment of Told by Women will hit Portuguese screens in 2026.

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