

Doelger's Swarm gathers after Covid delay

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Production of The Swarm got underway in Italy

Production has begun on Emmy-winning producer Frank Doelger's TV adaptation of Frank Schätzing's environmental thriller novel *The Swarm* after the major international copro was delayed by the Covid-19 outbreak.

The novel centres on humanity's struggle against an unknown collective intelligence that lives beneath the sea. The series has started shooting in Italy, with the action scheduled to move to Belgium later in the summer.

The project was the first to emerge from [Intaglio Films](#), the joint venture between Germany's [ZDF Enterprises](#) and [Beta Film](#), which has been headed by *Game of Thrones* alum Doelger for three years.

Fellow German prodco ndF International Production (ndF IP) is collaborating on the eight-part drama, with broadcasters ZDF, France Télévisions and Rai coproducing, alongside ORF, SRF, Scandinavia's Nordic Entertainment Group and Hulu Japan.

Oscar-nominated producer Mark Huffam (*The Martian*, *Game of Thrones*), Ute Leonhardt (*Killing Eve*, *Sex & the City*), Schätzing and Till Groenemeyer are among the exec producers, with Friedemann Goetz from Intaglio and Charlotte Groth from ndF IP producing.

"After three years of intense preparation and a year of delay due to the Covid crisis, the film adaptation of *The Swarm* is finally getting off the ground," said Frank Zervos, coproducer at ZDF.

"The variety of settings we are able to depict in Italy is incredible – from Canada to Peru to Norway and more," added ndF IP exec producer Eric Welbers. "We are pleased that, among other things, this will allow us to contribute to a green production, which lies very close to our hearts and will additionally enrich the series."

The international ensemble cast includes Cécile de France (*The New Pope*), Alexander Karim (*The Lawyer*), Leonie Benesch (*Babylon Berlin*) and Barbara Sukowa (*Hannah Arendt*).

"Adapting *The Swarm* for television provided several creative challenges, one of the most exciting of which was to reimagine the characters to reflect the increasing diversity of the scientific community," said Doelger. "This allowed us to put together a cast which I believe would have been unimaginable in 2004 when the novel was written."

In related news, Intaglio partner Beta Film has expanded its Nordic distribution line-up after partnering with Oscar-nominated Danish director Lone Scherfig on her new series *The Shift*, billed as a work of 'Nordic light' rather than the 'noir' the region has become famed for.

The cast of the drama, which is set in a contemporary hospital maternity ward, is led by Danish star Sofie Gråbøl (*The Killing*, *The Undoing*, *Fortitude*) and the show is produced for Danish broadcaster TV2 and streamer TV2 Play.

Shooting of the eight-hour series starts this week in Copenhagen. Beta is handling sales in territories excluding Scandinavia and Benelux.