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Creative Europe support for Video Games

This document has been prepared with the help of Creative Europe Desk - a promotion and advice office for the European Commission's funding programme for the cultural, creative and audiovisual sectors.

Creative Europe's MEDIA sub-progamme can offer support for European video games companies with proven experience who want to develop an innovative narrative-led video game, regardless of platform or expected distribution method, which is intended for commercial exploitation

For more information visit: **creativeeuropeuk.eu/ funding-opportunities/development-video-games**

Who can apply?

Applicant companies must:

+ be established in one of the countries participating in the MEDIA sub-programme and must be majority owned by nationals from those countries

+ be registered with Companies House for a minimum of 12 months

+ have video game production as their main business activity (evidenced by the following SIC Code: 62011 Ready-made interactive leisure and entertainment software development)

+ own the majority of the IP rights to the project for which support is being sought

+ be able to demonstrate that they have developed/produced one previous commercially, distributed, narrative-led video game as evidence of their track record.

How much money is available?

Approximately €2.5 million is available each year to fund around 30 projects Europe-wide.

The non-repayable grant awarded to each project can range from €10,000 to €150,000 and is limited to 50% of the eligible development budget.

The grant must be matched by other sources of funding or through the companies own investment.

How can the grant be spent?

Only activities relating to the 'development' phase (from initial idea, to production of the first playable prototype or trial version) of the video game are eligible.

The grant can be used in four main areas during the 'development' phase:

+ rights acquisition, research, writing, improving the character design, level design, gameplay etc.

+ production of a playable prototype (trial version, alpha version or beta version – whichever comes first)

+ travel to meet potential investors, attendance at events and conferences, brochures, website, pitching documents

+ staff salaries, insurance, legal and accounting costs

The costs within the proposed budget are eligible from the date of submission of the application.

What is required of the track record project?

The track record video game must:

+ be a completed, eligible, narrative-led video game

+ be credited to the applicant company (personal credits or any work contracted/sub-contracted by another company cannot be considered)

+ have been commercially distributed (this is demonstrated by a relevant sales report showing revenues generated during the last two calendar years).

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What's the definition of 'commercial distribution'?

+ commercial distribution means that the video game has to generate revenues. These revenues can be generated from the retail sales of the game, from the sales of in-game items or from advertising, or any other method.

+ the business model for the submitted project must be clearly outlined in the application and the applicant must be able to provide a proof of sales/revenues for the track record project.

+ being commissioned and paid by a client to produce a video game does not constitute commercial exploitation.

What's the definition of a 'narrative' game?

Applicants need to provide an overview of the story and narration within the video game, including descriptions of any real or imaginary inter-connected characters and events.

The following projects are not eligible video games (these relate to both the track record project and the project for which support is being sought):

+ tools and software services aimed solely at technological development and/or used solely for further developing already existing game concepts

+ information or purely transactional services

+ projects promoting tourism

+ multimedia art projects and installations

+ websites being, or dedicated specifically to, social platforms, social networking, internet forums, blogs or similar activities

+ projects including pornographic or racist material or advocating violence

+ works of a promotional nature being part of a promotional campaign or advertising for a specific product and/or brand

+ institutional productions to promote a specific organisation or its activities

+ platforms for games

+ (interactive) e-books, interactive fictions, interactive animations, interactive documentaries

+ puzzle games, memory games, mind games, sports games, racing games, running games, rhythm/singing/dancing games, social games, quiz games, party games (although narrative games can include elements of these), versus fighting games.

At what stage should I apply?

The beginning of the 'production' phase must not be scheduled to occur within 8 months from the date of application. This includes the testing and debugging of your playable prototype.

If you have already created/released a playable prototype of the video game then it is too late to apply.

How are the forms assessed?

Applications are assessed centrally in Brussels. They are checked for eligibility before being sent to two experts who assess each application based on the published award criteria. The experts are all professionals working in the European video games industry.

Applications can score a maximum of 100 points, taking into account the following award criteria:

+ the quality of the storytelling and the originality of the concept

+ the quality of the content and gameplay

+ the use of innovative techniques and content

+ the quality of the development strategy

+ the potential for the game to be sold internationally

+ the quality and adequacy of the distribution, communication and marketing strategies

+ the suitability of the game to its target audience

+ the potential and adequacy of the creative team

+ the quality of the financing strategy and the feasibility potential of the project

Projects that can demonstrate that they are specifically targeted at audiences under 12 years of age will be awarded five additional points.

What kinds of video games projects from the UK have received Creative Europe support?

+ In 2014 Plug-in Media received €78,000 for CreateWorld (working title), which is a suite of connected mobile apps filled with interactive toys, games and missions.

+ In 2015, four of the 31 successful companies were from the UK: Italic Pig, Revolution Software, The Chinese Room and SFB Games. The UK received the highest total allocation of €547,000 from the EU-wide budget of €3.4 million.

What should I do next?

Creative Europe Desk UK offers free advice and support to UK applicants and organises a range of workshops, seminars and industry events throughout the year. Our team of specialists is based across the UK, in London, Manchester, Edinburgh, Glasgow, Cardiff and Belfast.

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