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Creative England GamesLab Leeds

Programme Guidance

The GamesLab Leeds Programme

Creative England operates with the core purpose of supporting the sustainable growth of independent creative businesses, and the talent that feeds them, in every part of England outside of London.

Creative England's GamesLab is a programme of investment and support, designed to aid and sustain the growth of a region's burgeoning games industry, through the development of innovative games and IP. Working with emerging and established companies, the GamesLab Programme aims to create the conditions necessary for the region's most innovative and commercially astute games companies to flourish.

GamesLab Leeds is intended to stimulate the development and growth of the games industry in the Leeds City Region* by supporting companies with demonstrable high-growth potential. By coupling investments with business support in the form of one-to-one mentoring and group workshops, we endeavour to offer our grant recipients the best possible chance of success

The focus of the GamesLab programme is to foster Research, Development and Innovation in the sector

What will the programme deliver?

Grant funding: key points

- Investments will be awarded in amounts between £10,000 - £30,000
- The lower level investments will be awarded to support the development of beta prototyping and principle Research and Development. This strand of funding will be aimed at start-ups and work-for-hire companies.
- Higher level investments will be awarded for the development of more sophisticated prototypes, leading to new IP generation, with a preference for emerging technologies
- Creative England would expect beneficiary companies to spend the entirety of their their grant **within four to five months** of receiving funding
- Creative England would expect the projects funded through the programme to have been completed **within six months** of receiving funding
- GamesLab will appoint a small panel of business / games industry experts to mentor the funded companies on a one-to-one basis

***For the purpose of the GamesLab programme Leeds City Region includes nine local authorities. They are: Bradford, Calderdale, Craven, Harrogate, Kirklees, Leeds, Selby, Wakefield, York and North Yorkshire County Council**

What type of business are eligible for programme support

To access support you must be:

- An SME registered at Companies House. The definition of an SME can be found [here](#).
- Registered and trading in the Leeds City Region
- Committed to developing your business and expanding your team. We ask that a minimum of 1 job is safeguarded or created within the business for every £7,000 Creative England invests.
- Companies who will retain the rights of the IP created
- We encourage applications for funding from businesses that are also contributing their own private match funding to the product or service being developed. Although the availability of match funding isn't a requirement, it will be looked upon favourably during the assessing and scoring of applications

Please note that the Creative England GamesLab programme operates under 'De Minimis' State Aid rules. This means a private company cannot receive over €200,000 worth of public sector support granted under 'De Minimis', from whatever source, in any three year rolling period. As part of the application process, applicants will be asked to list any state aid received

The programme is most beneficial for:

- SME games companies with high growth potential
- Start-up companies under 12 months old that have spun out of Universities and other Academic and/or Research Institutes
- Work-for-hire companies that provide development services within the games industry on a contract basis and are now looking to pivot and develop their own IP
- Digital product/service providers who are keen to move into the game space
- Established game developers currently unable to commit resources to Research, Development and Innovation due to pressure from commercial deadlines

What type of projects are suitable for funding through the programme

Grants will be awarded to fund:

- Games or games-related products or services that offer something fundamentally new and innovative to the market, in terms of either technology, functionality or design.
- Products or services that are new to the business itself. These products or services don't have to be available commercially but must be fundamentally different, and improved, to those already used in the business, in terms of technology or functionality.
- Research and Development of new and emerging technologies (VR, AR, Wearable Tech, New Gen devices etc) with a view to commercialise them or adapt them for their own IP.
- Projects that encourage links and synergises between SMEs and Research and Development Institutes – including universities.

Application process

If you are interested in receiving grant funding from Creative England the first stage is to complete the online eligibility and application form which can be found at www.creativeengland.co.uk/games

Although the application form will be live continuously we be assessing and progressing applications in four rounds

January 2017

March 2017

May 2017

July 2017

Applicants shortlisted at this stage will be invited to pitch the Creative England GamesLab team, in person, at a central Leeds venue.

Applicants successful at pitch stage would then begin Creative England's due diligence and contracting process, with the aim to have grants paid out to beneficiaries within 6 weeks of pitching.

Applicants who successfully receive grant funding through the programme will be allocated an industry mentor, based on their specific project /business needs and ambitions. The beneficiary will then receive a minimum of 8 hours of one-to-one mentoring to help that business exploit the opportunities presented by GamesLab funding to its fullest extent.

Budget

When submitting an application for funding you will be asked to provide a project budget outlining how you will spend the entirety of the grant funding awarded by Creative England. If the application is approved the grant beneficiary is required to spend the grant according to their original, approved budget. While we appreciate that development is a fluid process, and there is some need for flexibility, any significant deviation will need to be approved by Creative England prior to the transaction taking place

Eligible Expenditure

Project expenditure must relate to the project named in the application and not to support other areas of your business. The budget will be approved as part of the contracting process and this will evidence area of anticipated spend.

Creative England anticipate the project costs will be made up of the following

- Salaries and freelancer / contractor costs. NB, to be eligible these costs must relate to staff time spent working on the project funded by GamesLab Leeds grant and not wider business activity
- Hardware /software
- Marketing
- Attendance at industry events
- Payment for licences

Ineligible Expenditure

- Expenditure which is not forecast in your budget
- Overheads
- Alcohol and Entertainment
- Contingencies

- Goods and services purchased outside of the procurement guidelines (see below for more detail)

Procurement

Grants awarded through the GamesLab programme are public funds and so it is imperative that any and all beneficiary spend represents value for money.

For this reason if the beneficiary intends to spend over £2,500 on any one transaction they must first obtain three quotes to demonstrate market rate. These quotes must be obtained prior to transaction taking place

The beneficiary does not necessarily need to progress with the cheapest quote, But, if they do not, then they will be required to provide Creative England with a detailed and valid rationale behind their decision

For any expenditure under £2,500 obtaining a single quote for the product or service is sufficient

More detailed information on the GamesLab procurement requirement will be provided to companies who progress through the process

Please note that Creative England reserve the right to reject project expenditure as ineligible if the correct procurement procedure has not been followed

Monitoring and Evaluation

Grant beneficiaries will be required to complete quarterly reports and financial returns. During this process you will be asked to

- Describe the development activity undertaken on the project over the last quarter
- Report on employment levels and business turnover
- Evidence exactly how GamesLab grant funding has been spent over the last quarter through the provision of receipts and invoices

Marketing

As a recipient of GamesLab funding you would be required to co-operate with reasonable requests to promote the support of the programme, for example, including the programme logo on press releases and on the company website. Creative England will never publically release information about your project or product without asking your permission first.

Further information about Creative England and GamesLab Funders

Creative England

Creative England is a national agency that invests in and supports creative ideas, talent and businesses in film, TV, games and digital media. We aim to grow the brightest, the best, and those with the most promise so that individuals and businesses can achieve their full creative and commercial potential. We help identify future opportunities to grow the economy and generate jobs. With offices in Salford, Bristol, Elstree and Sheffield we are a national agency with strong local and regional links. For more information visit www.creativeengland.co.uk

European Regional Development Fund

The project is receiving up to £500,000 of funding from the England European Regional Development Fund as part of the European Structural and Investment Funds Growth Programme 2014-2020. The Department for Communities and Local Government (and in London the intermediate body Greater London Authority) is the Managing Authority for European Regional Development Fund. Established by the European Union, the European Regional Development Fund helps local areas stimulate their economic development by investing in projects which will support innovation, businesses, create jobs and local community regenerations. For more information visit <https://www.gov.uk/european-growth-funding>

Regional Growth Fund

The Regional Growth Fund (RGF) is a flexible and competitive £3.2 billion fund operating across England from 2011 to 2017. It supports projects and programmes that are using private sector investment to create economic growth and sustainable employment. For more information please go to www.bis.gov.uk/rgf. Creative England's business development programme, providing development funding and market expertise to small creative and digital businesses, supported by the Government's Regional Growth Fund