

GREENSHOOTS

Creative England & Microsoft Greenshoots
December 2016

Application Guidance

Background Information

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 has partnered with Microsoft to develop Greenshoots, a programme of financial and business support intended to stimulate the commercial development and growth of the games industry in the English regions, outside of Greater London, by providing investment to game companies that demonstrate high-growth potential.

Through the Greenshoots fund, investments of between £50,000 and £200,000 will be awarded to SME games companies for the development and commercial release of new game IP. The game can be released on any platforms, but must include Windows 10 on PC and/or Xbox One.

Investments will be made on a commercial basis under a revenue share scheme. All investments require a minimum £1 for £1 match. Please see “Key Points” below for more details.

In addition to the funding, companies selected for the programme will also receive the following additional benefits:

Programme Support

- Enrolment to the ID@Xbox Programme for Xbox One Development Kits.
- Access to Windows 10 devices for testing purposes (Subject to availability and at the sole discretion of Microsoft)
- Bespoke technical guidance and support directly from Microsoft.
- Though the Bizspark Microsoft programme all companies selected for the Greenshoots programme will receive select Microsoft tools and services for free. T&Cs can be found at <https://www.microsoft.com/bizspark/>
- Dedicated marketing support from the team at Xbox

Eligibility

The fund is open to companies who satisfy the following criteria:

- Are a games company based in any of the English regions outside of Greater London.
- Have previous, demonstrable game development experience.
- Qualify as an [SME](#) and be registered at Companies House.
- Can provide a £1 for £1 match to any investment received (See “Key Points” for more details).
- Have an idea for an innovative new entertainment game that can be available for commercial release within approximately 18 months of receiving Creative England funding

- The Greenshoots 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 so we can check it does not exceed the ‘De Minimis’ threshold. For the avoidance of doubt SEIS investment does contribute to your overall state aid allowance.

Key Points

- Greenshoots is delivered by Creative England with the support of the UK Government Department for Business, Innovation and Skills through its Regional Growth Fund (RGF).
- The total funding pot will be allocated as investments between **£50,000** and **£200,000**.
- Beneficiary companies must match the Creative England investment £1 for £1 with their own funding. For example, if a company were awarded **£50,000** of Greenshoots funding they must also leverage **£50,000** of private sector funding to contribute to the project.
 - The availability of matched funds must be evidenced, by way of a recent company bank statement, at the point of application
- Investment and match funding can only be used to pay for costs directly associated with the project named in the application. The funding cannot be used to pay dividends, corporation tax, or any other tax liabilities.
- The beneficiary company must retain the majority rights of the IP created using the Greenshoots funding (i.e. not working on a “work for hire” basis).
- The IP created should be available for commercial release, on designated platform(s), no later than 18 months after receipt of funding from Creative England
- Beneficiary companies must aspire to grow as a result of the funding, and applicants must clearly demonstrate their ability and desire to create and safeguard jobs within the company. The creation and safeguarding of jobs within a company will be a contractual obligation of receiving Greenshoots funding.
- As a guide, Creative England look for a minimum of 1 job to be created or safeguarded for every £7,000 of Greenshoots funding awarded. As an example, an investment of £50,000 would be expected to safeguard and/or create approximately 7 Jobs.
- The total jobs target can be a combination of both jobs created and safeguarded. Job creation does not need to necessarily be evidenced immediately. You will have two years to create the number of jobs stated in your application. If you have any questions regarding job creation, or would like further clarification, please contact us for assistance (See “Contact Details” below).
- Jobs created and/or safeguarded must be permanent, full-time positions enrolled in the company PAYE.
- Beneficiary companies will be required to pay Creative England **5%** of the total amount of their Greenshoots funding as contribution towards legal and due diligence costs.

Exclusivity

- Qualifying projects must be entirely new intellectual property (as opposed to porting or evolving from existing intellectual property)
- Qualifying projects can be developed for any operating system and platform, but must include a dedicated version for Windows 10
- The Windows 10 version of the project must commercially release no later than any other operating system (eg IOS, Android, Steam)
- Any Xbox one version of the project must commercially release no later than any other home console version
- The Windows 10 and/or Xbox One version of a project should have at least the same features as any other operating system or home console version and one or more specific feature(s) or element(s) that are exclusive to the Windows 10 and/or Xbox One platform (E.g. skins, game modes, levels etc.). Cross-Play functionality between the Xbox and PC versions would qualify as an exclusive platform feature

Eligible Project Expenditure

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

We anticipate the project costs will be made up of the following eligible expenditure:

- Hardware/ software purchases
- Marketing costs
- Fees (e.g. consultants, freelancers, attending industry events, paying private testing groups)
- Overheads (eg: office rental and associated costs)
- Employee salaries/Workforce costs

Ineligible Project Expenditure

If project expenditure is deemed ineligible, it cannot be paid for with Greenshoots funding. Ineligible expenditure includes:

- Expenditure which is not forecast in your budget or subsequent approved revisions
- Alcohol and entertainment
- Expenditure undertaken outside of the project lifetime
- Any personal or company tax liabilities

Timeline

Please be aware that these dates may be subject to change

- **Applications open:** 12th December 2016
- **Applications close:** 13th January 2017
- **Shortlisted companies invited to pitch:** 25th January 2017

*Please ensure you are available to pitch in person on 25th January 2017. Pitches will take place in Bristol.

Monitoring and Evaluation

If your application is successful, you will be required to complete monitoring reports on a quarterly basis for up to three years after receipt of funding. These reports will ask for information relating to the progress of the funded project, employee numbers and company turnover.

Marketing

If your application is successful and you are awarded an investment, you will be required to co-operate with reasonable requests for promoting the support of Creative England; including the inclusion of the funding logo suite on press releases related to the product launch and participation on potential showcase events. You may also be contacted for press interviews; however, participation in these is at your discretion. We will never publicly release information about your project or product without asking your permission first.

Contact Details

For further guidance please visit: <http://www.creativeengland.co.uk/games/greenshoots>

If you have any questions, please contact: games@creativeengland.co.uk