Application Info Sheet Prototype Funding

(Last revised 3/1/2024)

General information regarding the prototype funding

Gamecity Hamburg as part of Hamburg Kreativ Gesellschaft implements and is the main contact for Hamburg's prototype funding program.

- 400,000 euros per year will be granted in up to two funding rounds. The application phases for the two funding rounds start in March and September.
- The number and quality of the applications in the first funding round determine whether or not there will be enough budget for a second funding round in the same year. If that's not the case, the next funding round will start in March of the following year.
- Funding for prototype development is provided as a non-repayable grant on a de-minimis basis.
- The grant may amount to up to 80 percent of the estimated project costs but not more than 80,000 euros per project. If it is planned to finance the project through simultaneous funding with funds from the prototype funding and the federal computer games funding (Computerspielförderung des Bundes) or comparable public funding (cumulation of funding), a project can be funded by Gamecity Hamburg with a maximum of 120,000 euros. Applicants who wish to cumulate funding and submit a corresponding cost and financing plan are thereby obligated to apply to the other funding programs. For a cumulation, funding recipients must fulfill the requirements of all participating funding programs. A personal contribution of at least 20 percent of the eligible development cost has to be accounted for and exhibited by the applicant.

Who can be funded?

- Developers and developer communities (natural and legal persons)
- Small and medium-sized enterprises (SMEs)[1]
  [1]An SME is defined as an enterprise which, at the time of application, employs fewer than 250 persons and whose turnover in the preceding year did not exceed 50 million euros. Also, the applying company must not be owned as to 25 percent or more of the capital or the voting rights by one or more enterprises that do not meet the definition of an SME.

Prerequisite for the application is that they are already resident in Hamburg or can prove that they will relocate their headquarters to Hamburg or open a branch or business premises in Hamburg upon receipt of funding. The prerequisite for payment of the first instalment is the actual existence of a business premises in Hamburg.

Goals of Funding

- Funding promotes the quality, market opportunities, and diversity of digital games developed in Hamburg.
- For use as start-up financing, the funding supports founders, start-ups and companies in developing prototypes in order to publish the project independently or find additional investors.
- The aim is to attract founders, start-ups, and companies alike and keep them at the location while also creating new jobs in the industry.

Criteria for Funding

The eligibility criteria for funding form the basis for the funding recommendation issued by the awarding committee. The order of the criteria provides information on the weighting used to make the funding recommendation.

Funding for prototypes is generally only possible if the projects are considered to be of high quality and marketable, and also meet several or all of the following criteria:

- **Promotion of young talent:** The developer of the prototype has recently set up a company or is about to do so. Projects realized during degree programs or are the result of hobby development prove the competence of the applicant and the team in terms of the development of sophisticated digital games.
- **Team:** The team has already worked together successfully or has the necessary experience and the necessary human resources for the project. Also positive is when the team contributes to the diversity of Hamburg's games landscape.
- **Market potential:** The exploitation strategy includes a market analysis on the project in question, which indicates successful marketing among the intended target group.
- **Location effect**: The development of the project creates jobs and/or the procurement of development services in Hamburg.

Other criteria that can be used are the amount of funding applied for and the applicant's own financial contribution.

Application for Prototype Funding in 3 steps

1. Consultation Appointment

A consultation appointment is mandatory and is recommended at least two weeks before the respective submission date in order to be able to resolve any arising questions timely and prepare potential applicants for their application in the best possible way. Appointments with the corresponding Gamecity Hamburg contacts can be arranged by email to funding@gamecity-hamburg.de.

Before making an appointment, the applicant must have carefully read the guidelines for funding prototypes and the FAQ (both to be found here: https://gamecity-hamburg.de/funding/apply-now/).

The following information from the applicant is also required to be sent to funding@gamecity-hamburg.de when making an appointment:

- Short project outline (max. half a page of text or a slide)
- Aimed funding amount for the project / planned proof of personal contribution
- Concrete questions regarding the application / funding of the project

2. Online Application

The application must be submitted before the end of the application period. The online application form can be found here: https://airtable.com/shriLG0QklFbSp1b4.

When filling out the application form, please make sure:

- to submit all information and documents either in German or English.
- to submit the application form fully completed, because your data will not be saved during filling of the application form.
- to check your application carefully, as it cannot be changed by you after sending it.
- to contact funding@gamecity-hamburg.de if you have a change to your application after you have submitted it.
- not to exceed the maximum size of 5 megabytes per attachment.
- to submit the documents that have to be submitted in a single signed physical copy in time. You can already send these documents by mail before you submit the online application form.
- to submit the following documents by mail in a single signed copy (templates can be found at https://www.gamecity-hamburg.de/funding/apply-now/) :
  - De-minimis declaration,
  - Data protection declaration,
  - Declarations funding application,
  - and SME confirmation (required for applications from companies).

Adress:
Hamburg Kreativ Gesellschaft mbH
Gamecity Hamburg / Prototype Funding
Hongkongstraße 5
20457 Hamburg

Overview of the questions in the online application form

Question 1: Project Name

Working titles are also possible and can be changed to the final project title at a later time. A project/working title is necessary to identify the project during the application phase.

Question 2: Applicant's Data

Please state whether you are applying as a natural person/group of natural persons or a company, please give the contact data for the main contact person here.

Question 3: Pitch Deck (max. 12 slides)

The PDF document may not exceed 12 slides and 5 MB file size. Contents and layout of the pitch deck are up to the applicant except for the following, mandatory content:

Mandatory content for the first slide:

- Project name
- Calculated prototype development cost
- Grant requested
- Applicant/Applying Company
- Targeted platforms
- Describe your project in one sentence.

The rest of the Pitch Deck can be built up as the applicant sees fit for the project, but has to contain at least the following:

- Project Description
- Core Gameplay / Features
- USPs
- Team
- Reference to the funding criteria
- Market analysis & exploitation strategy
- Outlook for the next steps after the end of the funding period

Question 4: Additional Project Description (max. 10 pages – as short as possible)

The PDF document may not exceed 10 DIN A4 pages and 5 MB file size. The applicants decide what additional information about their projects is relevant for the awarding committee, but must include at least these contents:

- Genre, setting, target group
- Story synopsis (only a story synopsis and no long exposition), if applicable
- Concept and content for prototype including milestones (Regarding the timing of the milestones: please use July as the regular project start date if you apply in the first funding round, use December if you apply in the second funding round, unless the project is to start at a later date)
- Team & externals involved in the development of the prototype
- Derivation of USPs based on market/ competition analysis
    - Why can the project be well-positioned in the market with these USPs?
    - What is the applicant's assessment of the competition based on the market analysis?
- Exploitation strategy
- Location effect
- Brief overview with links to relevant previously released games, if applicable

Additional question on the application form:
For which platforms are you aiming with your prototype?

Question 5: Intended Funding Period

July should be entered as the earliest possible start date for the project for the first funding round and December as the regular earliest possible start date for the project for the second funding round, unless it is planned to start the project at a later date. The maximum funding period for a project is 12 months.

Question 6: Reference Material – Mood board, video, demo, graphics or animations

Applicants are encouraged to implement some of their most essential graphics into the pitch deck or additional project description. Additional material can be uploaded.

Mood board, video, demo, graphics or animations can be uploaded as a PDF file or as a link.

Important: the applicant must make clear which content has been created for the project and is characteristic for the intended graphical style. At the same time, the applicant must make clear which contents inside a mood board are not part of the project but instead material from other sources.

Question 7: Cost and Financing Plan & Proof of own Funds

A complete cost and financing plan pursuant to the template is required as an Excel file. The value added tax attributable to the eligible expenses is not eligible for funding. Therefore, all expenses must be reported as net amounts.

Additional questions:

- Total calculated project cost
- Grant requested
- Own funds/personal contribution

Proof for the personal contribution has to be uploaded.

A bank statement of the applicant may not be older than 7 days on the day of the application submission to be eligible.

Question 8: Diversity Checklist

The Diversity Checklist is part of the application process since the first funding round in 2024. This checklist provides information on how diverse the team is and to what extent the project includes diverse themes and characters. Applicants whose team and/or project contribute to the diversity of Hamburg's games landscape can receive a bonus in the evaluation by the awarding committee. On the contrary, applicants are not disadvantaged in the evaluation process if that is not the case for their team and/or project. The filled-out Diversity Checklist should be uploaded here.

Question 9: Commercial register or registration certificate

Commercial register excerpt, business registration (if available), or a registration certificate ("Meldebescheinigung") for natural persons in Hamburg are required.

Question 10: Signed documents to be submitted in the original

It is required to sign the provided document templates and send them by post to Kreativ Gesellschaft. The original documents can also be submitted before submitting the online application form.

- De-minimis declaration
- Data protection declaration
- Declarations funding application
- SME confirmation (for applications by companies)

3. Pitch in front of the Awarding Committee

After reviewing all applications, the awarding committee will choose the applicants who will be invited to pitch their projects. The applicants will be informed about the date in time. During the 10-minute pitches, the applicants present their project in form of a pitch deck to the awarding committee, which allows further questions and feedback.

The awarding committee will give a recommendation for funding on the basis of both the application and the pitch.

Information, templates & forms

More information, FAQ, documents, templates and the link to the online application form can be found at https://www.gamecity-hamburg.de/funding/.

Contact for all questions regarding Prototype Funding

Dennis Schoubye, Head of Gamecity Hamburg, mailto: funding@gamecity-hamburg.de