



Designing a Workshop for Game Investors

Output 2.1 of the BSGI Project





The concept for investment workshops translates the intention of work package 2 to pilot transnational actions that would encourage the private-for-profit sector to engage with incubators and start-ups. Following this rationale, the output will summarise the decision-making process that led to the consensus on the most suitable design for a competence building pilot workshop to be carried out with investors.

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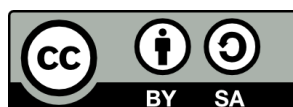
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Workshop design for game industry investors

This investor workshop design is meant to be used as a guideline for organising workshops for current and aspiring game industry investors. More specifically, the content plan is targeted at investors who concentrate on seed and pre-seed investments and have relatively little or no experience in investments in the game industry. There are content suggestions for investors with no experience in games, and games professionals with no experience in investing.

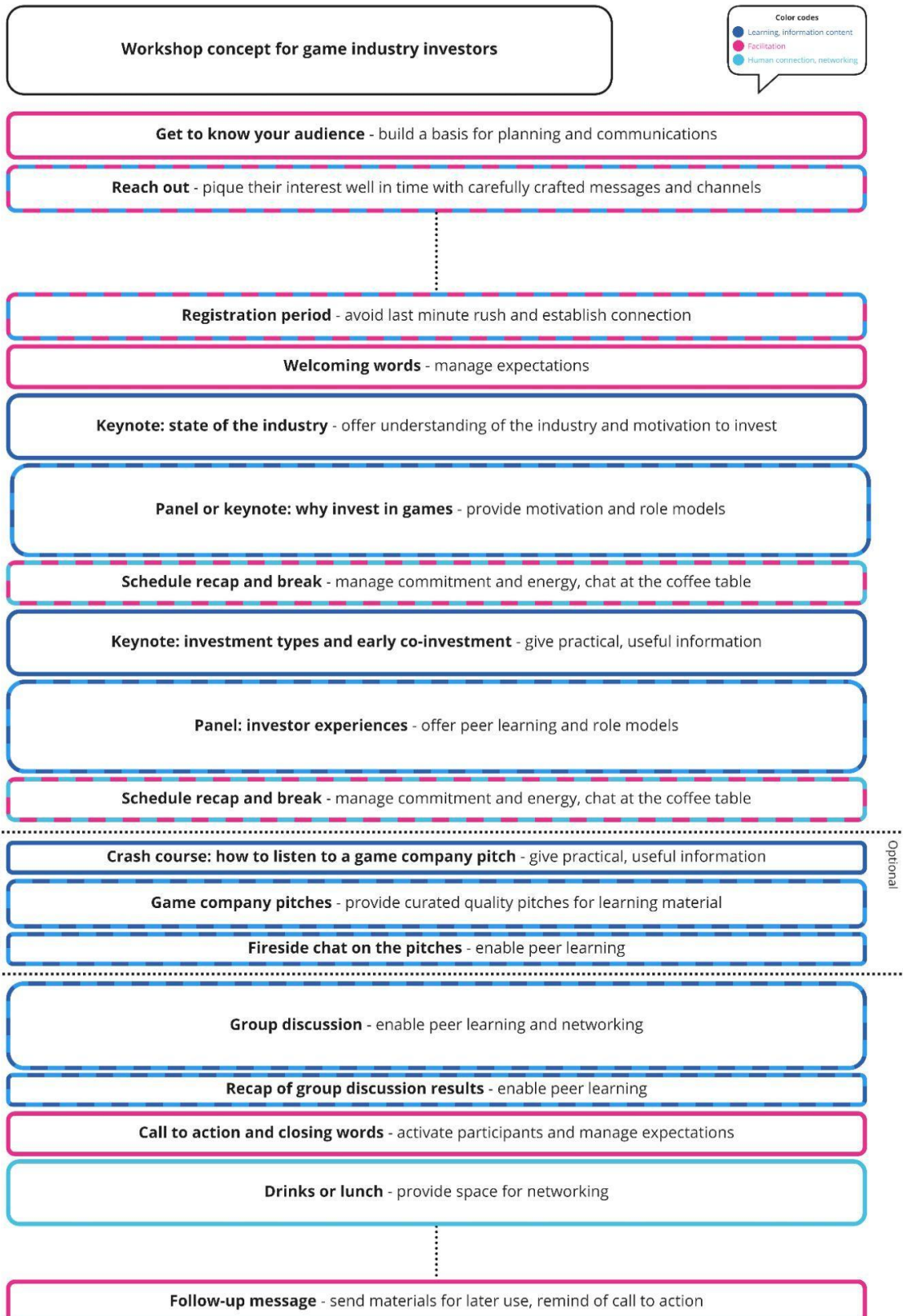
The main goals of this workshop design are to encourage and train the target group to invest in games, and to give them an opportunity to network and get peer support.

We recommend organising investor workshops on-site. This supports networking and holds the attention of the time-pressed target group better.

Connecting the workshop to an existing event, like an industry or investment conference, will make it easier to reach out to the right audience. Select the event according to your audience: investor events for investors looking into games, and game industry events for game professionals looking into investing, for example. Try to find something they would attend even if your event didn't exist.

The contents of each block can easily be tailored to better fit the exact needs of each workshop organizer and target group. The length of the workshop can also easily be altered by adding or removing content blocks. Read the block descriptions at the end of this document carefully to understand the function of each block before making changes. The core functions of the blocks are also color coded in the image.

This investor workshop concept was developed by the Baltic Sea Games Incubation (BSGI) project, based on research, a workshop pilot, and attendee feedback. A full description of the research, pilot, and feedback are also published by the project.



Workshop building block descriptions

The exact content of each building block can be easily edited to match your event, goals and target audience. You can also use the same principles and ideas to craft a shorter - or longer - workshop, according to your needs and goals.

Get to know your audience. While it is always important to know your audience before planning an event, this need is emphasised with a time-pressed and high-profile audience like investors. We recommend interviewing at least a couple of members of your target audience to find out their needs and interests very well.

Reach out. Use the information you collected on the first step to choose an event you'll connect your workshop to, and to carefully craft a communication plan - messages, timing, channels, and collaboration partners. Start reaching out well in time. Use existing channels and organisations to spread your message - or send it personally to hand-picked guests, if that fits your goals better. Be sure to get very high-quality speakers and use their expertise as a part of your message.

Registration period. An offline event always needs a registration period. On top of registering your guests, this time should be used to establish a connection with and between them and make them feel welcome. We recommend offering them a coffee buffet or similar.

Welcoming words. When you're ready to start the event, it's time for welcoming words. Use this time to manage expectations; remind the participants of the reason for your workshop and present them with a schedule for the event. You may want to mention some practical "housekeeping" rules; what they should do if they want to talk, for example.

Keynote: state of the industry. Having an introduction to either the game industry as a whole or your local industry is a great primer for the event especially if your audience isn't too familiar with the industry yet. If they are, you could consider a deeper dive into some more specific topic. For example, the financial potential of blockchain and Play to Earn, the importance of the industry for your local economy, or the value of angel investors for startups and the industry ecosystem.

Panel or keynote: why invest in games. Complement the first keynote with a more personal angle to motivations for investing in games. A panel of experienced game investors or a keynote by one can give participants role models and deeper insights on motivations also beyond monetary profits.

Schedule recap and break. Remember to give your participants enough breaks - for rest, but also for networking. Right before a break, remind the participants of the event schedule, and especially of the next item; this will help them stay oriented and committed. Consider giving them a heads-up slightly before it's time to end the break, so they can finish their discussions and exchange business cards without delaying the program. Having the coffee buffet available during the breaks is a good choice.

Keynote: investment types and early co-investment. Insights in types, tools and styles of investing in games can help the participants to figure out how to get started. Fine-tune the topic to fit your audience. If they don't have experience in investing yet, you may want to explain some basic terminology, legal considerations, and industry standards. If they have already been investing, but are largely unfamiliar with the industry, introducing some organisations and common practices in the area of games is more helpful.

Panel: investor experiences. Just like a motivation panel complemented the introductory keynote, a panel on practical experiences can complement the keynote on investment types and offer some role models for the participants.

Crash course: how to listen to a game company pitch. Before diving into real-life game company pitches, prime the participants by having an experienced investor explain what they are looking for when listening to a company pitch. This will help them get the most out of the pitches and learn while listening to them.

Game company pitches. A curated selection of quality pitches from game companies can act as a practical example for the participants. Select three different types of companies; you'll get some variation but avoid exhausting the participants' interest. Keep the pitches short and leave some time for questions afterwards. Depending on the nature of your event, you can have the audience, some of the speakers, or a moderator ask the questions.

Fireside chat on pitches. Get some of the panelists or keynote speakers to briefly comment on the pitches in a quick fireside chat to support the group discussions.

Group discussion. Depending on the size of your event, share the participants into smaller groups; for example, a group of 3-6 people should be able to keep up an inclusive conversation. You can assign each group a moderator or ask them to select a group leader.

If you have company pitches as a part of the event, discussing them is a good choice. Give the groups some talking points to support discussion. Which pitching company are they most interested in? Why? What would they like to hear more about? Do they agree or disagree with the fireside speakers?

Alternatively, you could add to the commitment of your guests by crowdsourcing investment related topics from the audience, or by suggesting a list and having them vote which ones will be used. If you use this option, you should let the investors choose which discussion to join. They could even be free to move around as they wish between discussions (see: The Law of Two Feet).

Recap of group discussion results. To facilitate even more peer learning and reflection, have the moderators or leaders of each group briefly recap what they discussed in their group.

Call to action and closing words. At the very end of the event, it's time for the closing words. Don't forget to add a call to action, whatever yours might be - encourage them to invest, or remind them of a program or event to join. Remind them of the purpose of the event, and that now it's their turn to take their new skills to action.

Drinks or lunch. Networking and peer learning is important for early-stage investors. Give them the opportunity to get to know each other more by offering them a round of drinks or a buffet lunch.

Follow-up message. It is a good practice to have something to share with the participants after the event, so they can remind themselves of their learnings later. Whether it's a recording, presentation materials, or some useful links, be sure to share something meaningful with them in a couple of days after the event. You can also use this opportunity to remind them of your call to action.

THE PROJECT

The extension project “Baltic Sea Game Incubation – Piloting Network Activities to Foster Game Incubation in the BSR” (BSGI) builds upon the BGI-project and continues to work on boosting the game industry in the Baltic Sea Region – giving special attention to capacity building. Its main objective is to enhance business support of game incubators through strategic transnational collaboration with other game incubators in the Baltic Sea region (BSR). Joining forces in transnational cooperation will significantly raise the impact on industry development as opposed to acting alone. A viable international incubation network, a standardised incubation approach with powerful support tools and the expansion of the talent pool will enable young game studios and game developers to compete successfully in the game market and turn it into a growth market.

Read more at <https://baltic-games.eu/171/project-extension-bsgi/>

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