



From Innovation Dialogues to Action Plans

Engaging with Industry and Public Authorities

Part 1 - GERMANY - BERLIN

 bgi

These nine reports give the reader an overview about the status of the video, computer and mobile game industry in the Baltic Sea Region as a whole and nine of its hotspot regions. The main goal of these document is to provide several examples of how to approach framework changes for an emerging industry such as the game industry, taking different contexts into consideration.

Part 1 of 9 - Germany - Berlin

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Berlin, March 2019

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those meetings were SWOT and TOWS matrixes and concrete plans for actions to be performed during the Baltic Game Industry project and beyond.

There were several joint topics/areas of interests that came out of those dialogue events.

For some countries (Denmark, Lithuania), the discussion quickly turned to cluster management or cluster creation. Although cluster development is a difficult concept to define, the idea would be to somehow formalise the cooperation between incubators/accelerators, educational institutions, private companies and public organisations. This would facilitate access to global and national support programmes and incentives for the video games and creative industry and its members. The cooperation in form of a cluster might also support the human resources development/mobilisation among enterprises, or among research systems and enterprises including the attraction of highly qualified human resources.

Other regions are planning to open a game hub or incubator to find the best and the brightest and equip them with entrepreneurial skills, such marketing, management, sales and last but not least game development. The partners from Estonia, Germany and Poland are planning to focus their efforts on building an infrastructure for innovation with game developers as a new instrument in support of the game industry. The idea would be to help indies or non-formal teams, but also young, innovative studios develop a mature approach to business.

Funding-related topics (funding, public support etc.) were discussed by several regions (Sweden, Finland, Germany): the lack of public support, obstacles in accessing information on support instruments targeted for games industry or just knowing which the current bottlenecks to raise the capital are.

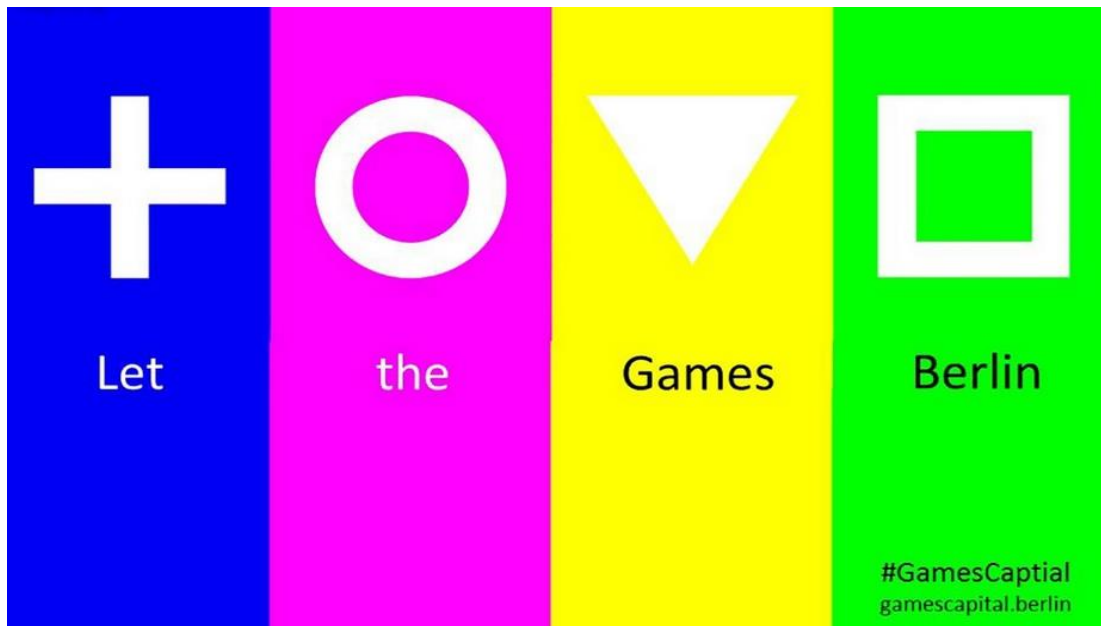
Joint marketing efforts were raised by Germany, Finland, Sweden as one of the possible actions to perform as public-private co-operation. This is based on the assumption that improved marketing measures would attract new risk funding and foreign talent to the regions. With the lack of talents in most regions, improved recruiting and marketing actions are necessary to recruit not only local/national level talents, but foremost non-European and Eastern European talents to improve the regional industry's international business performance. Furthermore, if claimed to be important by the city officials, the game industry needs to be more visible in regions marketing statements.

Finally, education-related topics (all the partners). With the objective to increase number of highly qualified specialists for the game industry, the grassroots level of the industry will be tackled. Although global talent is more easily accessible today than ever before, local education and initiatives need to be introduced to allure those talents to the region in the first place. The sooner young industry talents are exposed to business-driven game development and education, the easier it will be to create solid business cases and find artistic vision. So, game education and informal education activities (youth clubs, hackathons etc.) play a crucial role in building local talents.

The above-described process initiated a continuous dialogue in the regions and countries. Although many of the detected areas for improvement require activities the impact of which will only become measurable in the long or medium term, we expect the dialogues to continue and form the gaming-hub of Europe.

Your Baltic Game Industry project team

GERMANY - BERLIN



Games Capital Berlin, Screenshot from website, © Berlin

Snapshot of the Situation

Berlin is one of the most important hotspots for the German game industry. Like the city, the game community is vibrant and open. It presents a rather mixed landscape, though small studios and start-ups, many of them so-called “Indies”, are definitely the major feature. Not yet quite as mature as the Nordic game industries, it shares already similar characteristics in terms of a culture of sharing and networking. The community is strong, with many experts and representatives that lobby for them and help create awareness and understanding of the industry idiosyncrasies, benefits for the economy as a whole and specific needs to prosper and grow. There are several contact persons and departments in public authorities and affiliated organisations responsible for games, often however, as part of a wider cluster approach (ICT or creative industries or media), in particular Berlin’s Innovation Strategy. The many contact points, the fact that the game politics is a joint undertaking of the Senate chancellery and the Senate administration, and the split responsibility amongst many organisations tend to be somewhat confusing for young entrepreneurs and newcomers to Berlin.

There is already an impressive range of public support in place, from cultural project funding to game event, game network co-funding and location marketing support which adds substantially to the regional profile. At the same time, it makes discussions about improvements more intricate and convoluted.

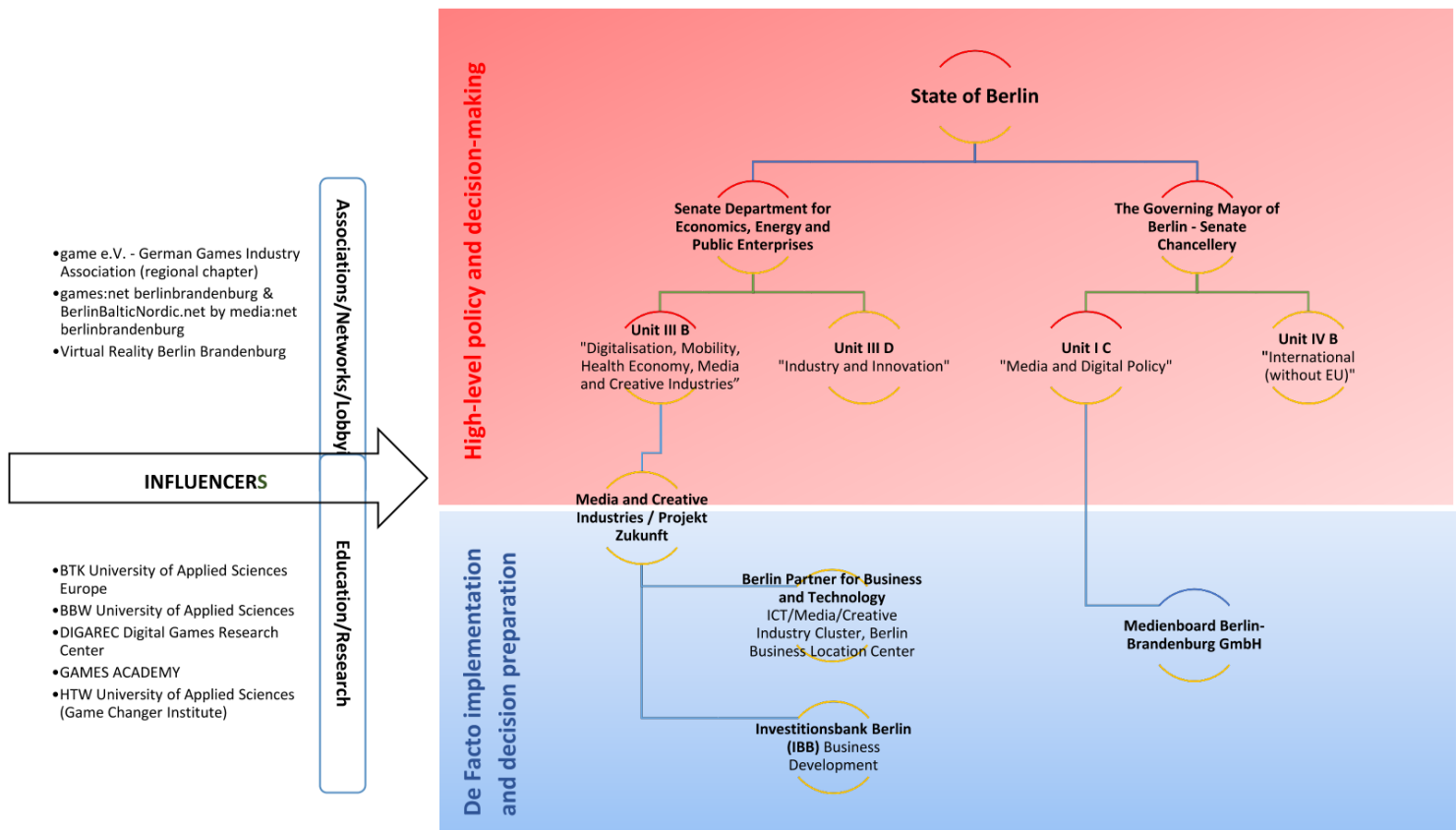
After years of struggling against the demonising image of games as an aggressive influence on young people in favour of a product accepted as being of cultural value, the primary approach taken by representatives both of the State and of the game industry is focused on “game as a creative product” while the entrepreneurial side of the game industries is not that much in focus. While in the more mature industries of the Nordics supporting an entrepreneurial approach in game studios has been recognised as an essential ingredient for a successful game

business, it is a fairly recent consideration in German discussions and in the Indie-biased community of the Berlin game scene.

The situation we were confronted with when planning the innovation dialogue was a mixed one: on the one hand a strong community, an established representation of the industry, and an active engagement in discussions and debate from both the game community and the public authority. On the other hand, although there are many contact persons from the authorities in touch with the community and therefore present a fair amount of knowledge about the community, there was still room for capacity building in terms of concretising issues and arguments on the basis of factual experiences made with the current framework conditions. This provided a valid basis for bringing together key persons from the game industry and the respective public authority contacts to discuss feasible options for improvement of the framework conditions. The state of the discussion is: consensus on the high-level requirements, highly differing opinions on the details and potential solutions.

Communication Map

The communication map delineates the different players, influencers and decision-makers involved in game politics and implementing actions for improving current framework conditions.



Chosen Approach for the Dialogues

At the start of the project, we were fortunate that a whole chain of activities to better understand and communicate the German and Berlin games industry had already been going on: different discussions on issues such as funding were being organised by our associate partners media.net Berlin-Brandenburg and the German Game Association and in parallel a study on the German status of the game industry (commissioned by two Game associations, the federal government and the regional governments of Hessen and Berlin) followed shortly afterwards by a specific Berlin game industry study (commissioned by the Berlin Senate Department for Economics, Energy and Public Enterprises). We, therefore, were in the comfortable situation of entering an already quite informed discussion.

This situation determined our approach for choosing both the concept and issues to be addressed in our regional “Innovation dialogue”. As on-going discussions looked primarily at increasing the amount of and improving the conditions for the existing “content” project funding (games as a culture product), we decided to focus on aspects of fostering the entrepreneurial side of the games business as a complementary aspect to funding games as part of the creative cultural industry. This was also a better fit to the objectives of the Interreg-BSR programme and the collaboration with the BSR regions.

As we found that with the large offer of “quasi-public” events (i.e. an open invitation subject to registration), our purpose would be better answered with a more work-oriented approach. Hence, we proposed a workgroup format with representatives from all parties concerned with the issues in question (see communication map). Based on the areas identified from the SWOT analysis (see below) informed by our discussions with the project partners and Berlin game experts, and the research done in the framework of output 2.1-3.1 (see [interactive map tool](#) on the project website), we determined three areas of potential change.

To investigate feasible and effective improvements within these areas, we formed a separate workgroup per area. To kick-off the Innovation Dialogue, we presented 8 people from the public bodies (see communication map above, from the red and blue coloured fields), 6 people from the influencers and lobby organisations and 8 game companies with our workgroup proposal and asked them to join one or more of them, according to their interest, time and expertise.

SWOT ANALYSIS



The Innovation Dialogue

Kick-off meeting of the Innovation Dialogue

Feb 28th, 2018

Introducing the themed workshops

City Hall

22 attendees (upon invitation): stakeholders and experts from the games community and regional authorities



28 Feb, 2018: Kick-off meeting the Innovation Dialogue with former State Secretary Chief of the Senate Chancellery Berlin Björn Böhning; © BGZ

June 11th, 2018

Work group “Funding” on Topic “Business Development Funding as Incentive for Entrepreneurship”

First Workshop

Office of Berlin Senate Department for Economics, Energy and Public Enterprises

12 attendees (selected mix of stakeholders from the games community and regional authorities)

September 14th, 2018

2nd Workshop Work group “Funding”

Office of Berlin Senate Department for Economics, Energy and Public Enterprises

7 attendees (selected mix of stakeholders from the games community and regional authorities)

The Senate has commissioned an external evaluator for the innovation programmes of the Investment Bank Berlin IBB (the public investor and bank for the State of Berlin). As game developers are mostly applying for funds with the “Medienboard” which is the public instrument for funding cultural production (mainly the screen industry, but lately also games to a lower extent than film in compliance with the state aid regulations in place), the focus of the innovation dialogue was driven by the question why so few game developers apply with the IBB for funds supporting the business development aspects of a company. One topic being already discussed intensively with the different representatives of the game industry is the interpretation or understanding of “innovation” within the IBB innovation schemes. To widen that understanding is part of that discussion.

The Innovation Dialogue group started looking into the IBB schemes in general, to better understand the reluctance of game companies to apply for them, and whether this is due to hindrances in the funding schemes or only to a lack of understanding on the game studios’ side. During the first meeting, a first analysis of the IBB schemes from a games perspective was presented which lead to organising a survey with the game industry on the recent experiences with IBB funding (and its application).

The discussions in the second meeting were based on the survey results and the insights gained from the transnational Innovation Dialogue event in Stockholm (“Invest in Games”). Public and private investors often consider games as being too risky. Though the argument is usually that this has to do with the hit-driven nature of the game business, there is a new understanding of the need for “investor education” to provide for a “safer bet”. Investments happen either into a team (i.e. company) or an IP (i.e. a long-term business strategy), not solely into a particular game (project) which with the first projects often is considered to be a case study or test run for proving the entrepreneurial quality, correct self-assessment of the product power and the strength of the team.

In this respect, another aspect discussed was the lack of understanding of the workings of “marketing” and how this would be eligible within current public funding schemes if correctly interpreted as part of the production cycle rather than traditional “advertising”.

Work group 2 “Game Hub” as a physical place to foster “Talent Growth”**June 15th, 2018**

First Workshop

Venue: Office of Berlin Senate Department for Economics, Energy and Public Enterprises

10 attendees (selected mix of stakeholders from the games community and regional authorities)

September 7th, 2018**Second Workshop**

Venue: Office of Berlin Senate Department for Economics, Energy and Public Enterprises

11 attendees (selected mix of stakeholders from the games community and regional authorities)

Very quickly the discussion led from the initial question of whether an incubator would be the best offer to provide entrepreneurial skills to a “game hub” as a more stable alternative to the existing privately driven collectives. A physical place that would combine co-working of game studios at a mixed stages, support them with revenue-based rents, allow them to work with quality equipment and facilities by sharing them, foster communication, networking, coaching and invite the outside world to join them, a place that would act as a central or first point of contact for newcomers or business interested in working with game developers, was discussed as an excellent option to support the Berlin game developers and community in becoming more professional entrepreneurs in addition to being creative game developers.

This being the consensus view, we started working on a concept for such a location (working title “Games Hub”) and on how to realise the idea with the support of both the game industry and the public authorities. This was also the motivation to join the study visit of the Games Factory Helsinki in January 2019.

Work group 3 “Big Picture” to discuss topics around “Internalisation”**June 25th, 2018**

Venue: Berlin Partner GmbH

11 attendees (selected mix of stakeholders from the big games enterprises, investors and regional authorities)

The greatest problem in attracting foreign talent is that although of all German cities, Berlin is by far the most attractive for experts from overseas (and even most of the times the only one they would move to), it is still not easy to get them to sign a contract and move here. One major problem is the “spouse problem”.

Although there is a variety of information available, it is hard work to find it all, which might explain why HR from big companies don’t seem to be aware of the services on offer. It seems that it would help if we could tie the information together that would be relevant for experts from abroad (outside Europe) and incite them to move here (with their spouse/family).

This in part also makes it difficult for international companies to open up offices in Berlin, as they would want to take part of their staff along.

Final Workshop on topics “Funding”, “Games Hub” and “Internationalisation”

March 20th, 2019

Venue: Office of Berlin Senate Department for Economics, Energy and Public Enterprises

28 participants (selected mix of stakeholders from the games community and regional authorities)



***20 March, 2019:** Final workshop of the Innovation Dialogue at the Senate Department,
with Head of Unit III Dr. Jürgen Varnhorn*

This final workshop was intended for a presentation of the proposed improvements or actions elaborated by the BGI partner BGZ on the basis of the workgroup discussions. For the State of Berlin to consider those proposals, a feedback from the community including also experienced companies, was required to finalise the formulation and nature of the most urgent actions.

Outcomes and Next Steps

Key topics to be investigated for change:

Workgroup 1 - Funding

1. Current business development funding schemes in Berlin focus “Innovation” and “research with HEI”:

Part of the current “innovation” interpretation is that it happens in the research lab, while with games it happens with the developers being often first adapters and with this opening up new horizons. For some schemes, the conditions are the cooperation with HEI, on the understanding that the HEI pours innovation into the companies. However, with games, it would be games pouring the innovation into other branches, or small/individual game developers creating innovative approaches and bringing them to large game companies. Hence the “innovation-driven” collaborations are not necessarily with HEI in the games business. Therefore, the HEI condition should be extended. Also, many games experts do not have a formal HEI education.

Task: To better understand why game companies do not apply as much as other industries for IBB schemes, we undertook an initial survey that might bring more light to the reasons behind the reticence. For this the senate will look into all applications granted to game companies in the past years. The names will have to be treated confidentially, however, for data protection reasons.

Based on this, try to formulate areas that constitute a hindrance for games studio applications with IBB schemes to be submitted to the external evaluator of the IBB innovation support schemes, commissioned by the Senate administration

Next step: A list of improvement requirements was drafted and will be presented by the senate to the IBB.

2. Funding and investment: Should public investment not be done to stimulate private investment?

Understanding why to invest in games can be beneficial to understand why to fund games as a business.

Task: Attend the Invest in Games event to understand how Nasdaq and SGI collaborate in building up private investor’s capacity to (understand how to) invest in games.

Meeting with Business Finland together with IBB and the funding manager of the German GAME association in January 2019.

3. “Marketing” is an important workflow in games development:

However, in none of the Berlin support schemes is this eligible for funding. Here, too, a lack of understanding and the mind-set of the schemes still orientated towards “established (non-IT) industries” needs to be tackled.

Task: Collate information to provide understanding of how game development work flows are and how support needs to adapt to them.

Workgroup 2 – Games Hub

1. Location

A physical games hub requires a central location with affordable rents. Berlin is becoming increasingly difficult in terms of rentable office space. There are hardly any public premises that are available for such a “hub”, and the private spaces are either too expensive or too far from the centre and not well connected to the public transport. The pressure for small companies is increasing as many will soon need to leave their current locations, the contracts with their landlords coming to an end.

Task: The Senate for Economics administration and BGZ investigated several options of potential locations for such a hub and report back to the group.

All visited and contacted locations were presented to the workgroup.

2. Concept

A more detailed concept was deemed necessary to get the community and the senate’s attention.

Task: A more detailed concept for presentation was drafted and discussed in the workgroup.

3. Community-sanctioned

Follow-up with the community and the Senate were to be the next steps. The idea of the game hub was spilling over and being discussed by many stakeholder groups. This leads to a sequence of events provoked by the work group discussions:

21 Nov 2018: The community was invited by the BGI associate partner media.net BB which includes the game network initiative of which a large percentage of the Berlin game community is a member. The game hub idea was presented and approved by the present (mostly Indie and start-up) studios.

9 Jan 2019: Based on this community approval, the state secretary for media, Christian Rickerts was invited to discuss with members and invitees of the game.net initiative several challenges of the Berlin game industry, amongst them the need for working space and the idea of a games hub.

11 Jan 2019: And as third step, there was an invitation by the Green Party to visit the area surrounding the HTW university (also a partner of BGI) and their game incubator, and other potential locations for a game hub, culminating in a discussion with state secretary Christian Rickerts on different options of such a game hub.

4. Capacity building

Gathering more competence by interviewing or visiting similar endeavours:

- Cologne Game House (interviewed by the Senate at the Games.com in August)
- Skövde Game Incubator (study visit within the BGI project. Stakeholders from Berlin: Game Academy and Game collective “Saftladen”)
- Inviting the Game House managing director to the event on 11 Jan with Christian Rickerts
- Visiting the Helsinki Games Factory with representatives of the State, the investment bank, German games association and a consultant of Indie studios

Workshop 3 – “Internationalisation (Big Picture)”

The discussion went straight to the challenge of recruiting foreign non-European talents under the current legal framework and service options.

Task: Investigate the assertion by Berlin Partner that a lot is already in place. Collate the existing information to assess gaps and reconfigure them from a perspective of games developers from non-European countries and the “spouse problem”.

Use the first draft of a study on immigration procedures by our Finnish partner Neogames to determine if a similar study would make sense for Berlin.

25 Jan 2019: After initial research, BGI met with the responsible staff member for Business Integration Services to discuss their findings and potential improvements.

TOWS Analysis

The TOWS analysis lists the whole range of ideas for change options that came up as a result of the research, the interviews, the discussions and work groups regardless of their feasibility to be implemented within the project lifetime. The below collected actions constitute the pool from which to determine feasible actions to be carried out as part of the BGI project. Still, the other actions are being discussed further in order to initiate the process of change beyond the BGI project.

TOWS Analysis

S/O

USE STRENGTH TO MAXIMISE OPPORTUNITIES

1. Provide a Berlin project for the German Game Fund
2. Apply for De Minimis
3. Promote Berlin as a hotspot
4. Create and publish a Berlin agenda and strategy for games
5. Promote Berlin as location for talents-both young and mature
6. Create a Game Hub as a physical "First stop Berlin" and Talent/Business growth centre.
7. Invite Community to enhance new Games Hub (online portal)
8. Create a network of education institutions for games

S/T

USE STRENGTH TO MINIMISE THREATS

1. Apply for De minimis exception for Berlin
2. Adapt business funding to better accommodate games industry
3. Apply to EU for specific funds to promote BSR-wide visibility for games
4. Promote games start-ups as "study case"/pilot for agenda implementation
5. Integrate games as aspect module /building block for smart city and digital plans
6. Expand "innovation" definition in funding etc. (by non-technological innovations)
7. Promote Berlin as location for workforce



W/O

MINIMISE WEAKNESSES BY USING OPPORTUNITIES

1. Invite Community to enhance new Games Hub (online portal)
2. Create a Game Hub as a physical location to foster knowledge transfer, diversity and entrepreneurship
3. Promote Berlin as location for game companies
4. Support for relocation and employment of foreign non-European senior staff
5. Enhance international perspective through networking
6. Stabilise the ecosystem in particular the indie and young Enterprises
7. Establish a BSR wide fund for a common stand at events

TOWS

W/T

MINIMISE WEAKNESSES AND AVOID THREATS

1. Coaching bonus funding add a game expert in coach list
2. Enhance the existing Game Hub Portal
3. Provide / collect tools for knowledge acquisition (marketing/ production)
4. Advertise prominently events with focus on women
5. Provide explanation on how to use funding programmes for games studios
6. Guidelines to involve other industry commissions into your portfolio
7. Promote the innovation driving and game thinking sides of games (not only the return on investment opportunities)

The Action Plan

Steps towards an Action Plan

The final workshop on 20 March 2019 was to lay the groundwork for the action planning. For the State of Berlin one of the key decision-making aspects required a feedback from large studios to not only reflect the opinion of the financial weaker community members. Another aspect was that of what the community was prepared to commit from their side to initiate improvements. To satisfy those demands, we invited on 20 March representatives from all “strata” of the Berlin game community to join the final “innovation dialogue” workshop as a “prequel” to drafting an action plan. Together with representatives from diverse organs and departments from the State of Berlin and affiliated organisations (Senate Chancellery and Senate Administration representations for game policy and funding policies, Berlin Partner for location marketing and recruitment issues, IBB for business development funding), they reviewed the proposed priority areas for improvements.

During the past months, BGI met with representatives of the State of Berlin to prepare internally the action plans. First, the proposals were discussed. Then the time frame and sequence of actions needed to be addressed, in particular in view of the duration and scope of the BGI project. For a medium or long-term approach, we broke down the action into sequenced building blocks. Not all will be publicly announced in detail to be able to react flexible to the development of the activity and results from interim action steps.

However, the areas that we are looking into are motivated by the work group discussions and findings and are directed towards “framework conditions”, i.e. changes implemented by the public authorities:

- Public support for a physical co-working space for game developers
- Capacity building for bespoke support for business development of game studios
- A tailored location marketing for attracting both international games business and talent

Meetings we had with decision-makers in the public authorities:

Internal meetings with the Senate Chancellery (The Governing Mayor’s office) and Senate Administration (Department of Economy, Energy and Public Enterprises) on 4 Jan, 15 Feb, and 21 Feb 2019 on the improvement areas and in preparation of the final workshop.

Internal meeting with Berlin Partners (25 Jan, 2019)

Internal discussions on existing and future support of senior talent recruitment and potentials of improvements (findings from the work group).

Summary of the Action Plan

During the course of identifying possible activities to improve the framework conditions, it became clear that in order to effect a change that would have a significant impact on the status quo, long-term activities are required in the case of Berlin, where the situation is already quite favourable towards the game industry.

The challenges that need to be addressed are often of a structural or fundamental nature such as business culture or long-established arrangements or adopted mind-sets. Therefore, the action plan for the next project phase targets primarily the preparation of the long-term actions or actions that underpin the change of attitudes and behaviour.

Another important factor is that such long-term changes can only be effective if all parties involved join the effort.

To summarise the actions planned, we place them in the context of the long-term goals:

Action 1: Enhance access to economic development for start-up and SME game companies

Long-term goal: Adaptation or extension of the current business development schemes to better adapt to the emerging industries, in particular creative industries with a hybrid nature of IT-based creativity

The main challenges for enhancing both the access to business development funding (short-term) and the schemes themselves (long-term) are

- the deeply rooted cultural attitude that creativity and profit-seeking are contradictions in terms, which has led to public funding in the form of supporting a cultural production (which it predominantly is) on the one hand, and the developers own perception of their work as creative performance on the other. Hence, on both sides the funding bodies and the recipients a change of mindset is at the heart of changing funding and funding schemes: games not only as a project but as a business, requiring entrepreneurship skills to be funded if necessary, to boost the industry.
- the hybrid nature of the games industry and the question of innovation. There is a long-standing viewpoint that innovation is what makes an industry competitive. And as a consequence, technology has to be innovative in order to be driving the economy and survive on the international market, and hence that is where public support will go to. Emerging industries are mostly born digital productions, but for an innovation to take effect, it needs to be applied and promoted. Which is what the games industry does better than most other industry or commercial businesses: driving technological innovation rather innovating new technology. Where games development is mostly innovative, is in non-technological areas such as business models or user experience. However, these types of innovation have not yet become part of the pattern of thinking about innovation.

The public authorities will have their innovation-focused funding schemes evaluated and take the aspects of non-technological innovation from the games industry into consideration.

For the game developers to better understand how to apply for economic development funding and what schemes are available to them, the State of Berlin together with game experts and the BGZ will collate all

information in a way to be easier to understand for young and small companies who cannot employ consultants to their aid.

Action 2: Supporting the establishment of a physical Game Hub

Long-term goal: A centre for innovation with game developers as the core part attracting not only the whole ecosystem of the game industry, but also companies from established industries in search of cross-over effects.

The two main challenges for implementing a Game Hub are

- finding a suitable location (e.g. good size, central, excellent infrastructure, in particular high-speed Internet) and
- the financial risk involved (e.g. risk-owner, sponsorship, low rents).

At the heart of this goal, however, is the concept, not only in terms of feasibility of establishing the hub per se, but in view of cultivating and fostering a vibrant and thriving ecosystem. In order to succeed, this concept needs to come from the industry itself and it possibly requires the management of someone with a deep understanding of the game industry.

The public authorities will offer support and advice in finding a suitable location and funds on the basis of a sound conceptual approach both for the programme/nature of the hub and the financing of the implementation and running. As many different actors in the administration and government are involved, a first step is to promote the idea within the respective public bodies and in the public to which they are responsible.

Action 3: Capacity Building

Long-term goal: Public and private investors and funding agencies have a good understanding of the games industry and who/how to best support them or invest in them

The main challenges addressed here are:

- the games industry is not only hybrid in nature and therefore difficult to grasp by the traditional funding and investment schemes, they are also hit-driven which makes them particularly risky for investing into.
- the games industry is an emerging/young industry. Its primary interest is to thrive or remain successful. It needs public and private support to do so, but the discourse on why this industry is important and worth of long-term investment is still in its beginnings and mostly concerned about justifying the industry as a cultural product and related funding. As yet a “selling point” discourse to investors and economic development funding needs to find a suitable strategy and formulation to create understanding from these parties. There is a lack of awareness for this within the game industry that needs to be addressed.

One of the recognised main issues with funding or investing in games is the lack of knowledge of the games industry on the investor/funding side. The State of Berlin will support endeavours to build more capacity with their funding institutions and also any efforts to improve knowledge generally for investors, public or private.

Action 4: Location marketing

Long-term goal: Improved situation for recruiting non-European and Eastern European talents and improving the regional industry's international business performance

The main challenges in this area are:

- Germany has a large domestic market (2018: ranking the 5th most important consumer market). This does not foster the international orientation of game creation.
- European and German laws make it difficult for international companies to recruit non-European talents
- The games community tends to be a closed circle type of community. But there is also the problem of funding for events which need to prove their value for the region, which often involves them being in German, thus excluding non-German audiences.

There are simple sounding activities that would already improve the situation and can be affected within the BGI project lifetime, such as collating information on the many existing services for foreigners to inform the perspective of an interested game senior talent, addressing e.g. issues such as the spouse or family “problem”. For talents or companies seeking to settle down in Berlin, the portal in support of the newly installed brand “Games Capital” is the perfect site to provide targeted information. Also, profiles of games professions would help determine exceptions to the current immigration rules. The State of Berlin and their partners will provide support in the communication to the responsible authorities.

The public version of the action plan can be viewed at https://bgz-berlin.de/files/action_plan_en.pdf

THE PROJECT

The project 'Baltic Game Industry' (BGI) aims to foster the game industry in the Baltic Sea region - turning an ambitious game developer scene into a competitive and attractive business sector with sound innovation potential and thus making the region a game hotspot with worldwide competitiveness.

The partnership works together on framework condition improvements, on making business support services fit for the special needs of game start-ups and finally on new business opportunities for game developers in other industry sectors, such as health care. The core element is the installation of durable game incubators, programmes and schemes for game start-ups across the region.

BGI effectively combines policy and business development. Tailor-made game business support fosters a durable economic growth of this innovative industry in the whole region. The introduction of VR technologies in non-game industries contributes to boosting innovation beyond games. The common branding of the Baltic Sea region as game innovation hotspot will attract international clients, investors, creative entrepreneurs and qualified workforce.

Read more at www.baltic-games.eu

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- Latvia: Foundation "Ventspils High Technology Park", AHK Service SIA, Ventspils City Municipal
- Lithuania: Kaunas Science and Technology Park, Lithuanian Innovation Centre
- Poland: Krakow Technology Park LLC, Institute of Psychiatry and Neurology
- Sweden: Swedish Games Industry Association, Invest Stockholm

The project "Baltic Game Industry" has been funded with support from the European Regional Development Fund. This publication reflects the views only of the author, and the ERDF cannot be held responsible for any use which may be made of the information contained therein.