

£30 million funding boost to help the next generation of games developers take their ideas to the next level

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£28.5 million UK Games Fund to support video games studios with great ideas create the next Grand Theft Auto or Tomb Raider

- London Games Festival kicks off with £1.5 million of new government funding to help it attract investment in British talent
- Measures form part of government's Creative Industries Sector Plan, part of the UK's Modern Industrial Strategy, to turbocharge economic growth

Video game developers with great ideas for the next generation of smash hit games are being urged to apply for a share of a new £28.5 million pot of funding.

The move represents a doubling in funding for the sector as the government puts the Creative Industries Sector Plan into action. These targeted investments are expected to pay dividends to the taxpayer by driving economic growth and creating jobs. Applications for funding will open from 14 April.

The UK is already an international powerhouse in gaming, having created global hits like Grand Theft Auto, Fable, PowerWash Simulator and No Man's Sky. Across the UK, there are more than 2,000 gaming companies, employing tens of thousands of people recognised globally for their talent and creativity.

Through the Games Growth Package, the government will support newly-formed and expanding developers to turn blueprints for games into reality, enabling them to sell their product both in the UK and around the world.

The package is launching as leading games companies from around the world gather at the London Games Festival. Today the government can also announce that £1.5 million of new funding has been awarded to the festival over the next three years, to help ensure the UK remains at the centre of the sector globally.

The funding will help strengthen investor partnerships, doubling the value to £30 million per year of private investment deals at the festival.

Creative Industries Minister Ian Murray said:

Video games are not only great fun, they are big business – and for too long their value to the British economy has been overlooked.

That is why the government has thrown its full support behind the sector with £30 million of new funding. This will turbocharge the careers of some of our most talented game developers, creating more jobs and economic growth right across the country as their ideas come to fruition.

The video game market is bigger than ever before, with £8.8 billion being spent by gamers per year, meaning there are excellent expansion prospects for our world-class sector. This new funding will empower developers to take advantage of these opportunities, creating jobs and driving economic growth.

The sector has strong footholds in areas outside London including Dundee, Leamington Spa and Guildford, and this additional funding will help ensure it thrives in all regions of the UK.

The Games Growth Package was a key commitment in the Industrial Strategy's Creative Industries Sector Plan, a £380 million growth blueprint to ensure the UK's creative sectors remain the best in the world.

Grants from the UK Games Fund will be split into three categories:

- An Entry Track, with grants of up to £20,000 available to newly formed companies with limited track records but strong potential for growth.
- An Emergent Track, with grants of up to £100,000 for prototyping new games.
- An Expansion Track, with grants of up to £250,000 - the largest ever provided by the Fund - available to take games forward to completion and enable studios to scale up.

This is on top of significantly increased support for the sector from the British Business Bank and the UKRI research body and generous games tax relief. Additionally, £20 million of funding has been provided by the government to Tay Cities Region to back local talent in advancing creative technologies like computer games and virtual reality to drive new products and grow the economy.

It also builds on work such as Ukie's Made in the UK games campaign, which showcases the best homemade games like RuneScape and Tomb Raider, and the business that built them.

The government has also commissioned the Chartered Trading Standard Institute to develop new guidance to help gamers better understand their consumer rights when purchasing their favourite games. The guidance clarifies business obligations and consumer rights under the law when selling and purchasing digital content, including video games. A CTSI-led consultation will launch in the coming months to inform this guidance.

As part of the government's wider plans to grow the gaming sector, it will engage with the newly-established UK Esports Advisory Panel, a Ukie-led forum between government and the esports sector which will ensure the UK remains a world leader in this industry.

This is the latest step in the delivery of the Creative Industries Sector Plan, following recent events to promote funding for innovation and access to finance.

Paul Durrant, UK Games Talent and Finance CIC Founder and Director, said:

We welcome this strong reinforcement of government support for the UK video games development sector. The three track funding approach will ensure that support is provided across the broadest level of the UK sector.

Nick Poole OBE, Chief Executive of Ukie, said:

We welcome the Government's Games Growth Package as a strong vote of confidence in

the UK games industry.

We have been pleased to work with the DCMS team to help shape this package of support, ensuring it reflects the needs of studios across the country. Targeted support across the development pipeline will help studios start, scale and stay globally competitive.

As we look ahead to a defining year for games made in the UK, we will continue working closely with government to support growth, drive innovation, and create high-quality jobs across the country.

Dr Richard Wilson OBE, TIGA CEO, said:

Access to finance is a persistent challenge for many game developers. TIGA has previously called for more prototype and content funding to enable studios to access the investment they need to make great games. Today's announcement of an increase in grant funding for newly formed companies, prototype funding and expansion funding is great news for studios, the games industry and the wider UK economy.

Michael French MBE, Head of Games London & Festival Director, London Games Festival, said:

Over the last ten years, LGF and Games London has supported talent across the UK and helped establish London as one of the world's largest hubs for games makers - but this commitment from national government into the London Games Festival has fast-tracked our deeper ambitions.

The efforts are already paying off: This week sees the largest showing yet for our festival, which will help to further promote London and the UK as a video games centre of excellence to global investors and decision makers. This can only keep growing over the next three years and we are excited to help raise the international profile of the UK's games market, reach bigger audiences nationally and around the world, and facilitate investment into games businesses up and down the country.

Nick Button-Brown, Chair, UK Video Games Council:

This is an amazing statement of intent by the government and a sign of their long-term support for gaming in the UK.

<https://www.gov.uk/government/news/30-million-funding-boost-to-help-the-next-generation-of-games-developers-take-their-ideas-to-the-next-level>