

Introduction

The Gamefonds (Game Foundation) stimulates the development of artistic games. Artists, designers and animators can submit an application for the development or production of (part of) a game, together with a game developer or a (cultural) institution. Applications are assessed by a committee consisting of experts in the field of the development and production of games, the field of the visual arts, the field of culture and new media and the field of animation.

The committee not only assesses the applications, but also plays a mediating role by promoting the cooperation between different parties, and where necessary, looking for distribution opportunities and additional financing possibilities.

The Gamefonds is an initiative of the Foundation for Visual Arts, Design and Architecture, the Foundation for the Promotion of Dutch Cultural Media Productions and the Ministry of Education, Culture and Science.

Background

On 26 September 2008, the Mediafonds (Media Foundation) and the Foundation for Visual Arts, Design and Architecture awarded the Ding! Prize for the artistic development of games to the Stedelijk Museum Amsterdam and SubmarineChannel, a platform for digital visual culture.

The prize, which was awarded during the cross media festival PICNIC '08, was accompanied by a sum of € 50,000. The Call for ideas also aimed at gauging the interest in cooperation between artists and game designers. The large number of applications submitted – twenty, during a short space of time – and the quality of the proposals that were submitted, also resulted in the decision to continue along this path and set up a new arrangement for games.

The jury consisted of Bas van Berkestijn (chairman), Marinka Copier and Martijn van Boven. They are now also members of the advisory committee of the Gamefonds. Erik van Schaaik, an expert from the animation sector, also joined the committee.

An arrangement started from 1 November 2008 which is intended to promote the artistic quality of virtual games. The arrangement also promotes cooperation between artists, designers, animators, game developers and (cultural) institutions. The arrangement is administered by the Foundation for Visual Arts, Design and Architecture and the Mediafonds. It is an experimental arrangement, which will in principle last for two years. A sum of € 500,000,-- is available for each year. The arrangement was established with the support of the Ministry of Education, Culture and Science.

Who can apply for a subsidy?

Artists/designers/animators, game developers / (cultural) institutions can apply for a subsidy. There must always be cooperation between the artist, designer or animator and a game developer or (cultural) institution. In addition, a financial contribution is required from a third party. This must be reasonable in relation to the subsidy applied for from the foundation.

Submitting a subsidy

The subsidy is applied for from the BKVB Foundation or the Mediafonds. An application comprises:

- an application form
- a plan for the development or production of (part of) a game;

- an explanation by the creator and by the person with final responsibility for the game in terms of content;
- an explanation of what will make the game special from the artistic point of view;
- visual material with earlier work by the creator(s);
- if available, a game or part of a game developer earlier;
- a comprehensive budget, including the subsidy applied for from the Gamefonds;
- a marketing plan;
- other information which the applicant considers relevant for the assessment of the application.

It is possible to make an application for a subsidy for every stage of the development of the game. Therefore this could be at the stage of the initial idea, but also at the last stage of production. Six copies of the application must be submitted to one of the two foundations. If an application is not submitted in full and in six copies, it will not be processed.

Assessment

The plan for the game, the earlier work, the budget that was submitted, the marketing plan and the other information that was sent in will all be assessed in the assessment for the subsidy.

The criteria for the assessment are:

- The expected artistic quality of the game.
- The extent to which triggers are incorporated which challenge the player to continue to play and explore the universe of the game.
- The feasibility of the plan. Is it to be expected that the plan will actually be achieved?
- The quality of the marketing plan. Is it to be expected that the game will be able to attract sufficient numbers of people?
- The nature of the cooperation between the artist, animator or designer and the game developer or (cultural) institution.
- The effectiveness of the budget and the extent to which parties other than the foundations are prepared to make an acceptable financial contribution to the development of the game.
- The extent to which the artist, animator or designer involved is integrated in Dutch culture and society.

Committee

The BKVB Foundation and the Mediafonds have established an advisory committee which consists of four experts: Bas van Berkestijn, Martijn van Boven, Marinka Copier and Erik van Schaaik. Bas van Berkestijn established the game developer W!Games, which amongst other things, created the game My Horse and me for the Nintendo Wii. Marinka Copier works for the Utrecht Institute of Higher Education for the Arts and carries out research into games, play and digital culture. She is a lecturer in Play Design & Development and head of the course Game Design & Development, Game Art and Interaction Design. Martijn van Boven is an artist. His work is at the cutting edge of experimental film and computer art. Erik van Schaaik is an animator, and in 2009 his work The phantom of the cinema was the Dutch entry for the Oscars in the category of short animated films. This committee assesses the applications of visual artists, designers, animators, game developers and (cultural) institutions. In addition, the committee plays a mediating role by promoting the cooperation between various parties and where necessary, looking for distribution opportunities and additional financing possibilities.

The time for making an application

Applications can be submitted throughout the year. The advisory committee meets regularly to assess the applications that have been submitted. If the application has been submitted a week before the next meeting, it is dealt with at that meeting if possible. Applications which arrive later are dealt with at the following meeting. Therefore it is advisable to contact the advisory secretaries (Bonnie Dumanaw / Auke Kranenborg) for information about the exact dates of meetings and deadlines. The final decision on awarding or rejecting a subsidy will be made within a month after the committee has informed the management of its recommendation.

NB: The subsidy is granted as an advance. It is definitively determined on the basis of a report on the content and the financial settlement is made on the basis of invoices.

The completed forms, together with the appendices that are required, can be sent to:

Fonds BKVB

For the attention of Gamefonds, Bonnie Dumanaw

Postbox 773

1000 AT Amsterdam

or:

Mediafonds

For the attention of Gamefonds, Auke Kranenborg

Herengracht 609

1017 CE Amsterdam