Video games & immersive content development

Webinar for Creative Europe Desks

European Education and Culture Executive Agency

11 February 2022

Content cluster: Introduction

European slate development

+

European mini-slate development

European co-development

Video games and immersive content development
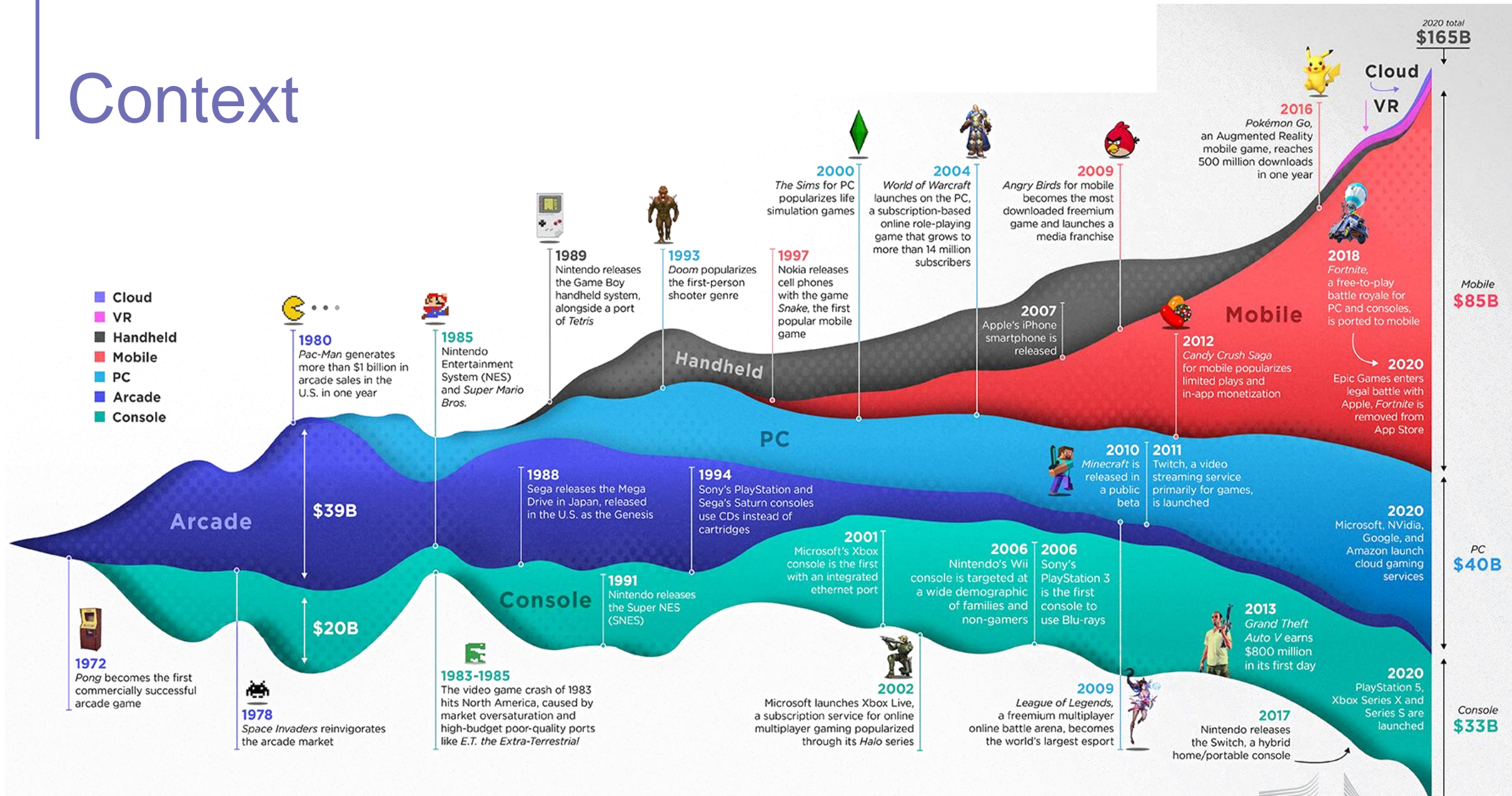
TV and online content

Video games and immersive content development

"An entire generation of talented people - engineers, artists, scriptwriters, musicians, programmers - have been busy creating a whole new art form for us. The name of this new game is interactivity."   Ralf H. Baer

European Commission

Objectives

- **Increase** the **capacity** of European video game (VG) producers, XR studios and audiovisual production companies to develop VG and interactive immersive experiences with the potential to reach global audiences

- **Improve** the **competiveness** of the European VG industry and other companies producing interactive immersive content in European and international markets by enabling the **retention of intellectual property** by European developers

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Context

2020 total $165B

Cloud

VR

2016 *Pokémon Go,* an Augmented Reality mobile game, reaches 500 million downloads in one year

2000 *The Sims* for PC popularizes life simulation games

2004 *World of Warcraft* launches on the PC, a subscription-based online role-playing game that grows to more than 14 million subscribers

2009 *Angry Birds* for mobile becomes the most downloaded freemium game and launches a media franchise

1989 Nintendo releases the Game Boy handheld system, alongside a port of *Tetris*

1993 *Doom* popularizes the first-person shooter genre

1997 Nokia releases cell phones with the game *Snake,* the first popular mobile game

2007 Apple's iPhone smartphone is released

Mobile

2018 *Fortnite,* a free-to-play battle royale for PC and consoles, is ported to mobile

Mobile $85B

2012 *Candy Crush Saga* for mobile popularizes limited plays and in-app monetization

2020 Epic Games enters legal battle with Apple, *Fortnite* is removed from App Store

- Cloud
- VR
- Handheld
- Mobile
- PC
- Arcade
- Console

1980 *Pac-Man* generates more than $1 billion in arcade sales in the U.S. in one year

1985 Nintendo Entertainment System (NES) and *Super Mario Bros.*

Handheld

PC

2010 *Minecraft* is released in a public beta

2011 Twitch, a video streaming service primarily for games, is launched

Arcade

$39B

1988 Sega releases the Mega Drive in Japan, released in the U.S. as the Genesis

1994 Sony's PlayStation and Sega's Saturn consoles use CDs instead of cartridges

2001 Microsoft's Xbox console is the first with an integrated ethernet port

2006 Nintendo's Wii console is targeted at a wide demographic of families and non-gamers

2006 Sony's PlayStation 3 is the first console to use Blu-rays

2020 Microsoft, NVidia, Google, and Amazon launch cloud gaming services

PC $40B

$20B

1991 Nintendo releases the Super NES (SNES)

Console

2013 *Grand Theft Auto V* earns $800 million in its first day

1972 *Pong* becomes the first commercially successful arcade game

2002 Microsoft launches Xbox Live, a subscription service for online multiplayer gaming popularized through its *Halo* series

2009 *League of Legends,* a freemium multiplayer online battle arena, becomes the world's largest esport

2020 PlayStation 5, Xbox Series X and Series S are launched

Console $33B

1978 *Space Invaders* reinvigorates the arcade market

1983-1985 The video game crash of 1983 hits North America, caused by market oversaturation and high-budget poor-quality ports like *E.T. the Extra-Terrestrial*

2017 Nintendo releases the Switch, a hybrid home/portable console

Video games and immersive content development

Funded activities

- Development of a **single** VG or interactive immersive experience project with
  - narrative storytelling
  - original content and/or quality gameplay
  - high level of originality and innovative and creative value
  - high level of commercial ambition: physical and digital distribution, location-based entertainment
  - extensive cross-border potential

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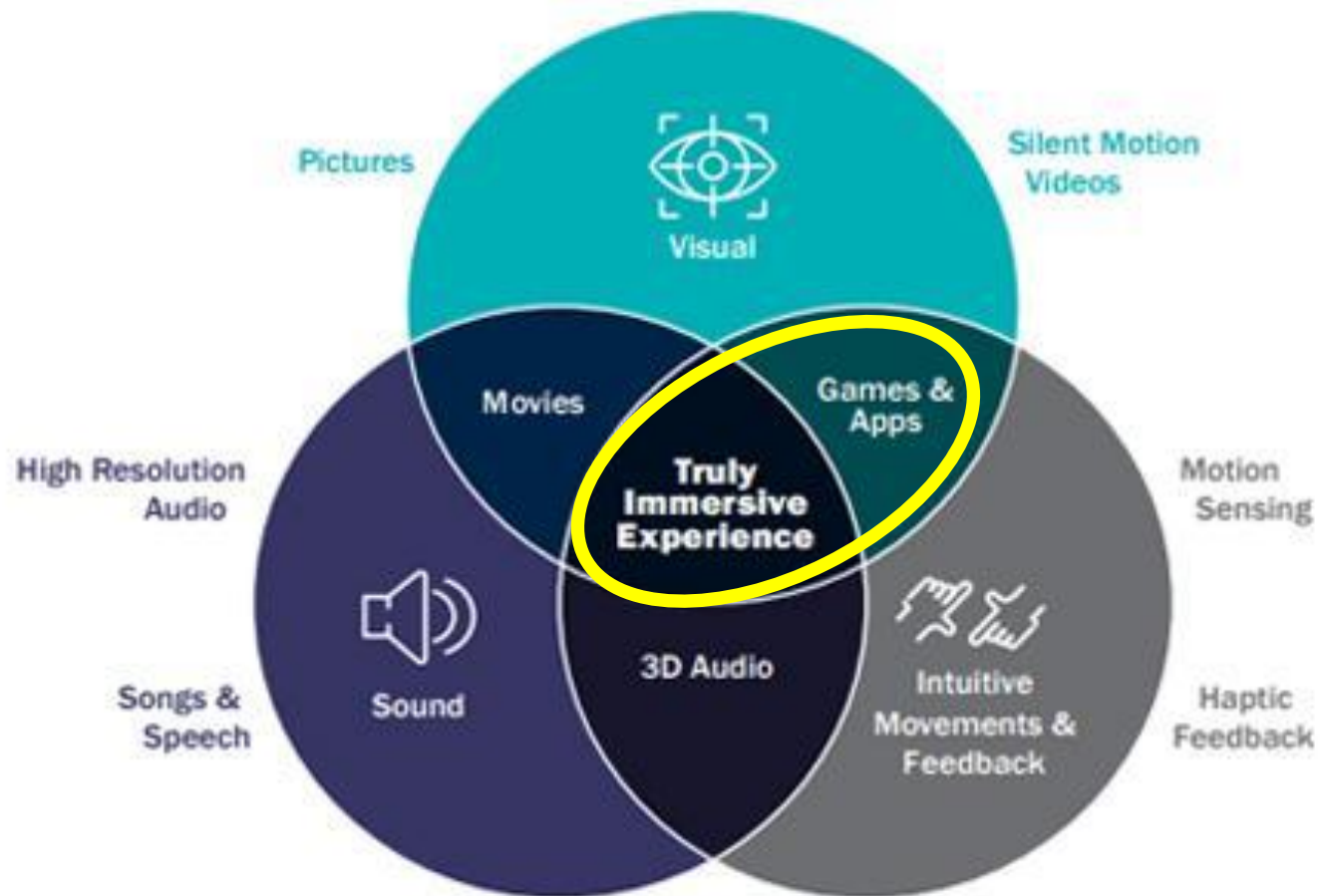
Funded activities

Funded activities

AR

MR

VR

XR
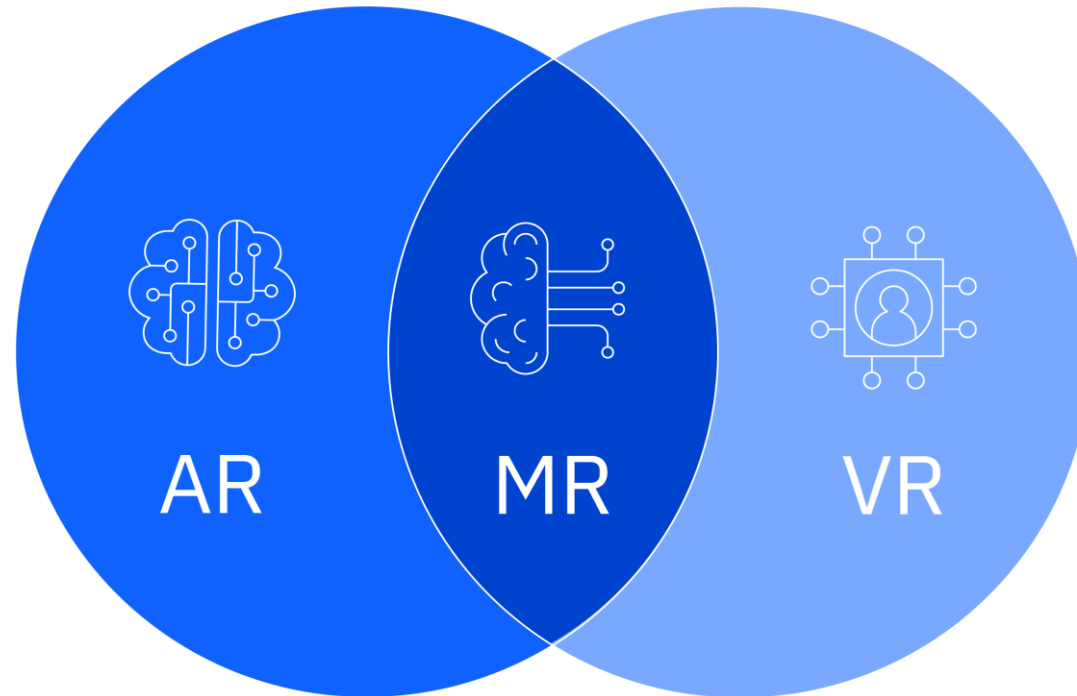
Augmented Reality (AR)
Digital content on top
of the real world

Mixed Reality (MR)
Digital interacts with
the real world

Virtual Reality (VR)
Digital environments
that shut out the
real world

IBM Institute for Business Value

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Expected impact

- Increased quality, appeal, feasibility and cross-border potential for selected projects

- Stronger position on European and international markets for companies selected for funding

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Timetable and budget

- Deadline: 12 April 2022

- Results: September 2022

- Budget: 6M EUR

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Eligible participants

- European

- Video game, XR studios or audiovisual production companies

- Able to demonstrate recent experience in producing commercially distributed eligible works

- Only applications by single applicants (i.e. mono-beneficiary, affiliated entities allowed if needed)

- Only one application as applicant (i.e. coordinator) for either Video Games/Immersive Content, Slate, Mini-slate or Co-development (can be partner in co-development)

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Eligible participants

- European: established in one of the MEDIA countries
  - and owned directly or by majority participation by nationals from MEDIA countries
  - for publicly listed companies: location of the stock exchange determines the nationality

Company profile	Main objective and activity
Video game production companies	Video game production, (entertainment) software development
XR studios	Virtual, Augmented or Mixed Reality content production
Audiovisual production companies	Audiovisual production

Publishing companies are NOT eligible

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Eligible participants

- Applicant must demonstrate recent experience in producing at least one work fulfilling the following conditions:
    - ✓ **narrative VG** or **narrative immersive experience** (interactive or not)
    - ✓ **commercially distributed** (i.e. generated income) in the period between 01/01/2019 and the deadline
    - ✓ **not** falling under the **ineligible types of work**
    - ✓ **not** produced as **work-for-hire** for another company
    - ✓ **not** produced by another company, even if a member of the applicant company has a **personal credit**
    - ✓ **not** in **early access**, the production phase must be finished

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Eligible participants

- Previous work must be detailed in the MEDIA Database (just as the submitted work)

- If the previous work is ineligible or not encoded = application is ineligible (i.e. no other works will be considered)

- The information provided in the MEDIA Database must be CORRECT and PROOF must be available upon request (consequences in case of false/incorrect statements – see exclusion)

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Eligible activities

- Development of a **single** work or prototype

- **Narrative** VG or interactive **narrative** immersive experience: the story must be told **throughout** the VG or experience, and not only as an introduction or an ending

- **Development** = phase starting from the first idea until the production of the first playable prototype or first trial version, whichever comes first

  - Entry into production (i.e. as soon as the first playable/first trial is available): min. 10 months after deadline

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Eligible activities

- Start of **production phase**: min. 10 months after deadline

- Why?

  - Fin. Reg., Art. 193: '3. Grants shall not be awarded retroactively for actions already completed'

  - playable prototype = completion of development phase = action completed

  - Target for signing Grant Agreement: 9 months after deadline

  - 10 months: legal certainty + feasible

  - Previously supported projects, average duration of development phase : 22 months

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Eligible activities

Stages

Development	Production	Post-production
• Discovering	• Developing content	• Polishing
• Planning	• Producing assets	• Testing
• Designing	• Integrating all elements	• Certifying
• Prototyping		

Dev Team Size

Milestones

First playable prototype

Pitch

Green-lighted

Alpha

Beta

Precertification

Certification

Game Shipped

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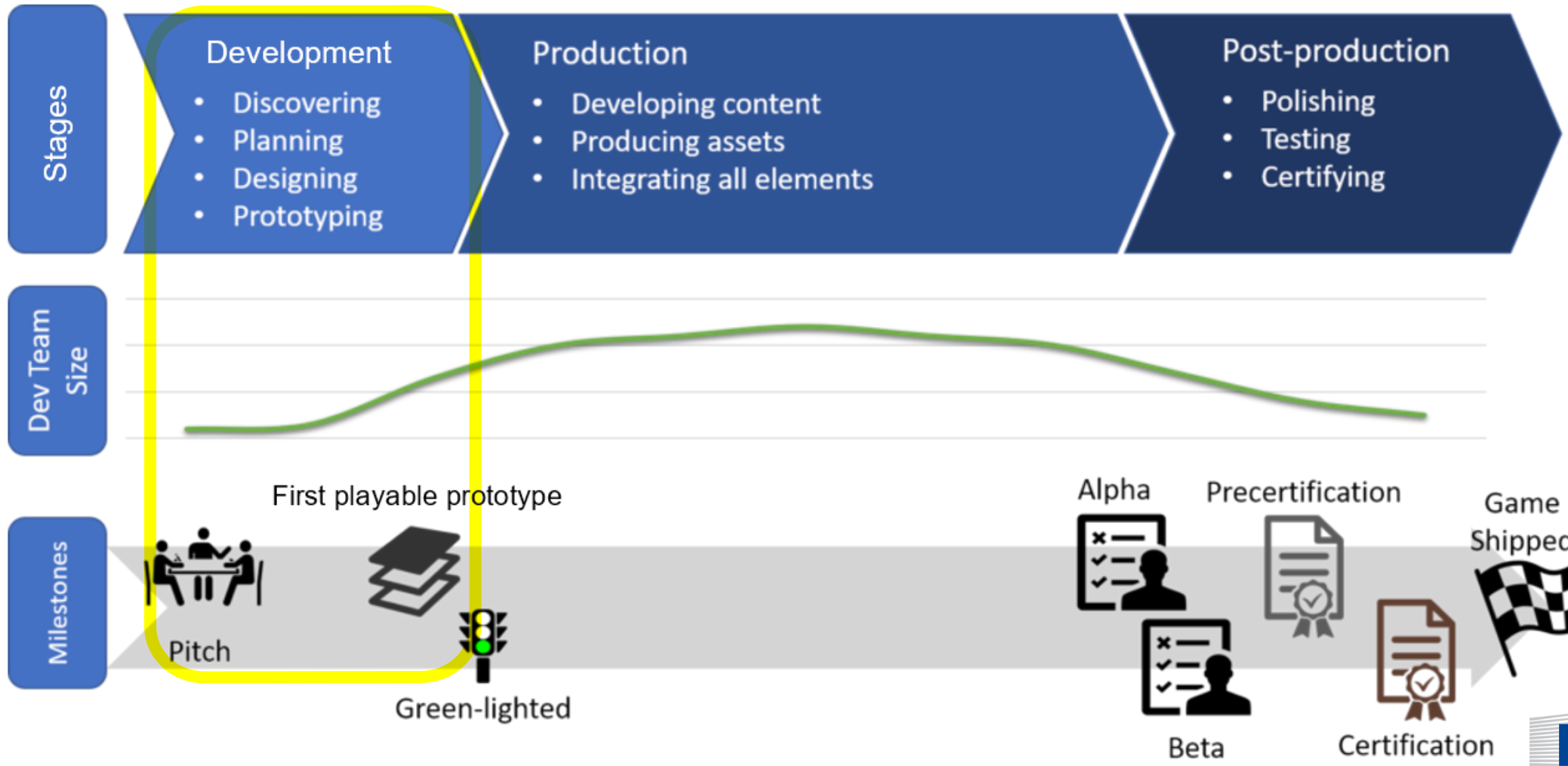
Eligible activities

- The work must be **intended** for **commercial exploitation**

- The applicant must own the majority of rights (incl. rights of adaptation if relevant) to the project through a signed contract

- Ineligible projects
  - Puzzle games, memory games, sports games, racing games, running games, rhythm/singing/dancing games, social games, quiz games, party games, versus-fighting games, word and spelling games, number games, mind games, even if they have a narrative element
  - Projects where **professional education, training or therapy** is the **main objective**
  - **Multimedia art projects and installations**
  - **Immersive tours, events, music videos and immersive experiences used in retail**

Eligible activities

- Works of a **promotional nature** being part of a promotional campaign or advertising for a specific, destination (tourism), product and/or brand and institutional productions to promote a specific organisation or its activities

- Projects including pornographic or racist material or advocating violence

- **Platforms** for games or interactive experiences and websites being, or dedicated specifically to, social platforms, social networking, internet forums, blogs or similar activities

- **Tools and software services aimed solely at technological development** and/or used solely for further developing already existing game or interactive experience concepts

- **Reference works** (encyclopedias, atlases, catalogues, databases and similar), "how-to" works (instructional guides, manuals and similar) and (interactive) e-books

- Information or purely transactional services

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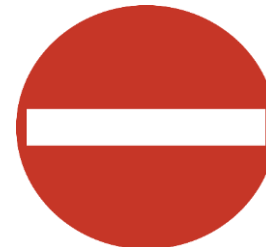
Eligible activities
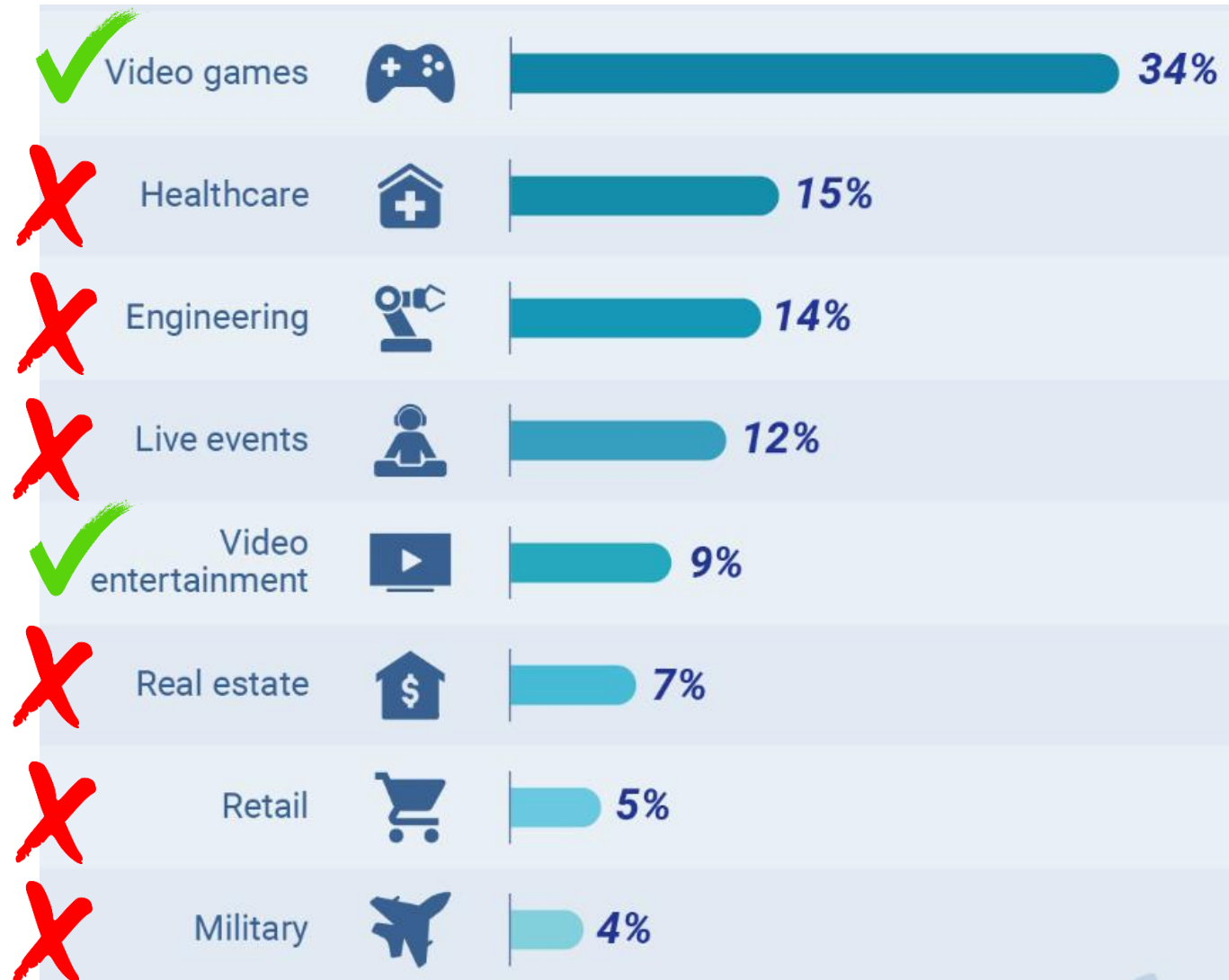
Financing

- **Customised lump sum**: output-based lump sum established after applying a **max. 50% co-financing rate** to a verified and approved detailed budget

- Max. EU grant : EUR 150 000

- Pre-financing: 70% if financial capacity is good

Financing

- Estimated budget:
  - All costs must be incurred by the applicant
  - All costs must be incurred during the eligibility period of the action
- Duration action: normally not more than 36 months (extensions possible if justified and requested through an amendment)
- Start of the action:
  - Default: after signature of the Grant Agreement
  - Retroactivity to date of submission with justification + approval

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How are proposals assessed?

How are the proposals assessed?

ADMISSIBILITY CRITERIA

▸ Submission requirements

ELIGIBILITY CRITERIA

▸ Eligible participants
▸ Eligible activities

FINANCIAL AND OPERATIONAL CAPACITY AND EXCLUSION

▸ Expertise and solvency
▸ Situations of exclusion (eg bankruptcy)

AWARD CRITERIA

▸ Evaluation of the quality of the proposal

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Admissibility criteria

- Submit **before** the deadline (No late submissions)

  - BUT: you can resubmit revised versions up till the deadline

- Submit **electronically** via the Funding & Tenders Portal Electronic Submission System (No applications by email/on paper)

- Submit using the **templates** provided in the Submission System (Not the templates on the topic page -> for info only)

- Submission only possible when **complete** (all mandatory parts and mandatory annexes)

- Respect the page limitations (Part B, Creative dossier)

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Financial and operational capacity

- Financial capacity: have stable and sufficient resources to implement the project and contribute their share

  - Based on annual accounts (to be uploaded in Participant Portal in case of selection)

- Operational capacity: have the know-how, qualifications and resources to implement the project

  - evaluated based on 'project management' criterion

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Exclusion - declaration

Application forms

Proposal ID **101048379**

Acronym **GillNetTest**

Declarations

?

Field(s) marked * are mandatory to fill.

1) We declare to have the explicit consent of all applicants on their participation and on the content of this proposal. * ☑

2) We confirm that the information contained in this proposal is correct and complete and that none of the project activities have started before the proposal was submitted (unless explicitly authorised in the call conditions). ☑

3) We declare:
- to be fully compliant with the eligibility criteria set out in the call
- not to be subject to any exclusion grounds under the EU Financial Regulation 2018/1046
- to have the financial and operational capacity to carry out the proposed project. ☑

4) We acknowledge that all communication will be made through the Funding & Tenders Portal electronic exchange system and that access and use of this system is subject to the Funding & Tenders Portal Terms and Conditions. ☑

5) We have read, understood and accepted the Funding & Tenders Portal Terms & Conditions and Privacy Statement that set out the conditions of use of the Portal and the scope, purposes, retention periods, etc. for the processing of personal data of all data subjects whose data we communicate for the purpose of the application, evaluation, award and subsequent management of our grant, prizes and contracts (including financial transactions and audits). ☑

The coordinator is only responsible for the information relating to their own organisation. Each applicant remains responsible for the information declared for their organisation. If the proposal is retained for EU funding, they will all be required to sign a declaration of honour.

False statements or incorrect information may lead to administrative sanctions under the EU Financial Regulation.

Exclusion criteria are based on a declaration in Part A of the application.
Read each declaration carefully

Amongst others: if the applicants misrepresented information required as a condition for participating or failed to supply that information

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Award criteria

- Common structure

  1. **Relevance (35 points)**

  2. **Quality of content and activities (25 points)**

  3. **Project management (20 points)**

  4. **Dissemination (20 points)**

- Overall threshold: 70/100

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Award criteria

1. Relevance (35 points)

- **Originality** and **creativity** of the concept against existing work, including originality of the story (10 points)

- Level of **innovation**: "cutting edge" technique and content, such as use of new or latest technologies or platforms, innovation in gameplay, level of immersion and interactivity, innovation in visual/graphic approach, innovative use of cinematography and viewing (15 points)

- Adequacy of the strategies presented to ensure **a more sustainable and environmentally-respectful industry** (5 points)

- Adequacy of the strategies to **ensure gender balance, inclusion, diversity and representativeness**, either in the project/content or in the way of managing the activity (5 points)

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Award criteria

2. Quality of content and activities (25 points)

- Quality of storyteling
- Quality of visual approach
- Quality of the graphic and sound design
- Accessibility measures for users with disabilities and other impairments
- For non-immersive video games:
  - ✓ Quality and originality of the gameplay
  - ✓ Integration between gameplay and storytelling
  - ✓ Quality of the level and character design
- For interactive immersive video games and experiences:
  - ✓ Quality of the immersive experience
  - ✓ Level and quality of interactivity

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Award criteria

3. **Project management (20 points)**

- Adequacy of the **development strategy** (10 points)
- Adequacy of the **financing strategy** and **feasibility potential** of the project (10 points)

4. **Dissemination (20 points)**

- **Potential for** European/international **exploitation** and **distribution** (10 points)
- The **marketing strategy** allowing to reach audiences at an early stage (10 points)

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How to apply?

How to apply

- Any application must consist of:
  - Part A: Administrative information (but also duration and max. EU grant)
  - Part B: 'Technical' description of the project (information that allows to assess the award criteria) + definition of work packages and deliverables
  - Part C: KPI-related data linked to the applicant
  - PDF with information about film(s)/work(s) to be generated via the MEDIA Database: data related to the previous work(s) and works submitted for funding
  - Mandatory annexes (downloaded together with Part B)

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How to apply

- Mandatory annexes:
  - ✓Detailed budget table (mandatory template)
  - ✓Creative dossier of the project submitted for funding (mandatory template)
  - ✓Proof of ownership of rights (and rights of adaptation) for the project
  - ✓Supporting documents of co-production, distribution and financing
  - ✓Declaration on ownership and control (mandatory template)

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How to apply

- Part B: A correct definition of work packages and deliverables are crucial elements in order to obtain the full EU grant

- Work package structure (mandatory):

  - WP1: Artistic development (narrative part, characters, graphic approach, etc.)

  - WP 2: Technical development (GUI, HUD, etc.)

  - WP 3: Financing, distribution and marketing activities

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How to apply

- Deliverables:
  - Will need to be submitted during the lifetime of the project
  - Applicants need to be realistic: reduction of EU grant in case of partial implementation (request amendment if needed)
  - Mandatory deliverables:
    - WP 1: Updated creative development (treatment, script, bible, game design document)
    - WP 1 and/or WP2 : Update on key crew/casting
    - WP 2 : Link to prototype / trial version / trailer / teaser if produced
    - WP 3 : Updated financing/budget and production schedules
    - Interoperable standard identifier

Questions?

MEDIA Creation Channel in Teams (tag David Deleu and Miroslava Rueda Rodriguez)

EACEA functional mailbox: EACEA-MEDIA-DEVVGIM@ec.europa.eu

Thank you

Creative Europe
2021-2027

PUSH BOUNDARIES

Slide 7, source: pixabay.com