



# Information session

## Video Games & Immersive Content Development

### 21 November 2023

This info session will be recorded using WebEx for the purpose of publication on EACEA's website. Only the presentations will be recorded: the Q&A sections will not be recorded

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# Video games & immersive content development 2024 Call for proposals



Info session

*European Education and Culture  
Executive Agency*

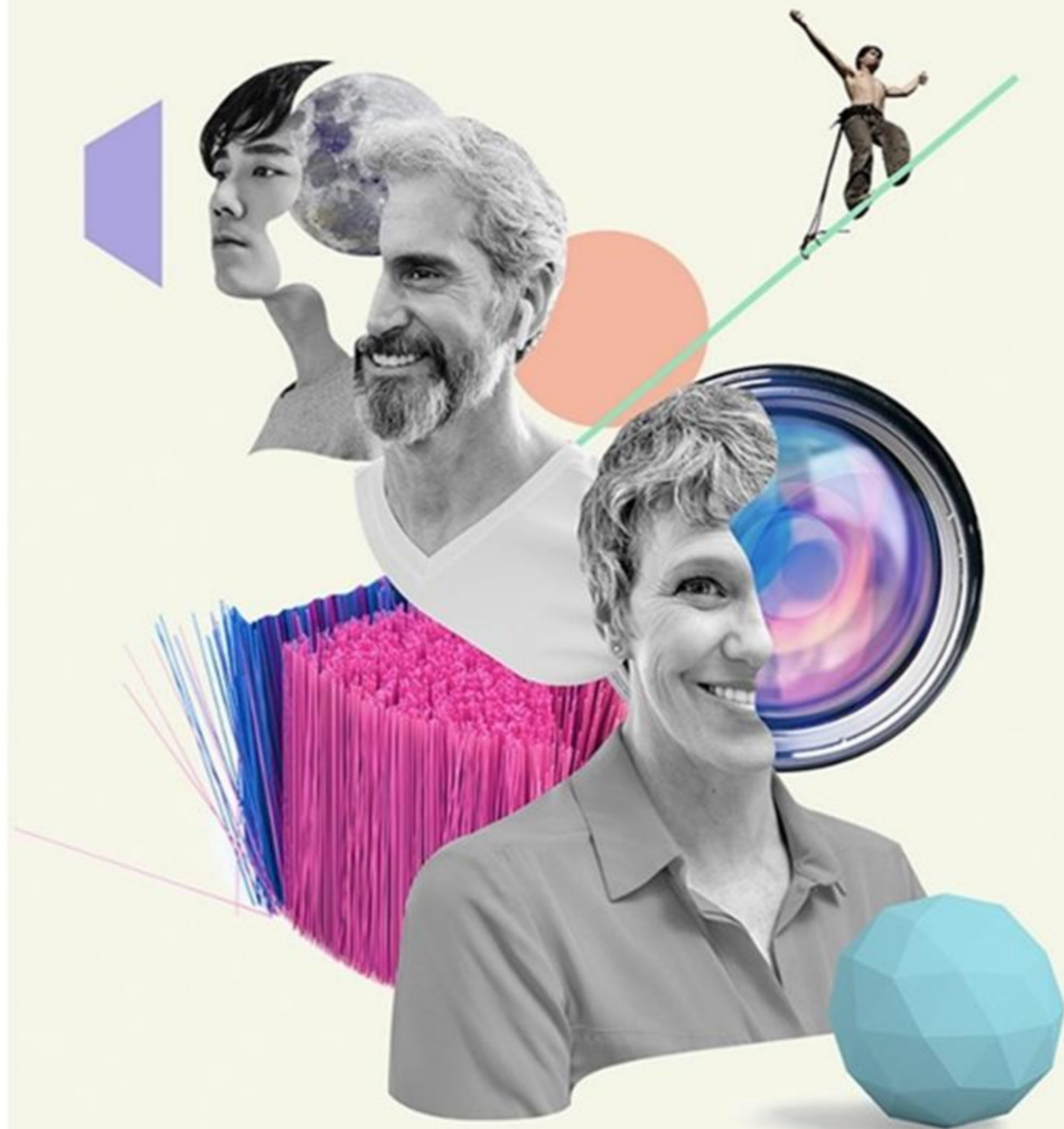
*21 November 2023*

# Agenda

1. Introduction: Policy context
2. Objectives and eligibility criteria
3. Q&A

BREAK

4. Assessment of proposals
5. How to apply – common errors
6. Q&A



# Creative Europe 2021-2027

## MEDIA

### Supporting

Europe's audio-visual  
and film sectors

### Audience

New distribution channels  
and strengthened audience  
development

### Policy

Promoting discussion  
and exchange

**PUSH BOUNDARIES**

**Budget**  
1.427 billion

### Content

Collaboration and  
innovation for high  
quality works

### Business

Boosting innovation,  
competitiveness and  
talent

co-funded by  
the European Union



Creative  
Europe  
MEDIA

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# MEDIA: Cross-cutting priorities



EU Green Deal

A more sustainable and environmentally-respectful industry



EU Gender Equality Strategy

Gender-balance, inclusion, diversity and representativeness

# Content cluster



European (mini-)slate development



European co-development



Video games and immersive content development



TV and online content

Development

Production

Increase capacity of producers to develop projects with potential for wide circulation

Foster **competitiveness** of **European independent** production companies and **increase** their **economic weight** on the market

Support cooperation among production companies from different **MEDIA countries**

Support the development/production of high quality **European works** with wide cross-border exploitation potential

Strengthen the **independence** of producers in relation to broadcasters and digital platforms

Originality

Innovation

Commercial ambition



## 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*

# Objectives

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



# Funded activities

- Concept development (pre-production) of a **single** VG or interactive IE 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

# Timetable and budget

- Deadline: 24 January 2024
- Evaluation: February-May 2024
- Results: June 2024
- GA signature: October 2024
- Budget: 7M EUR



# Call 2024: Changes in the Call

- Consortium allowed
- Max. Grant amount increased (200.000€ instead of 150.000€)
- Max. co-financing rate increased (60% instead of 50%)
- Possibility to apply with multiple proposals and get funding for more than one project
- Possibility to apply under other Calls with different projects

# Main changes in Calls

- Check of European ownership and independence only at GAP stage
  - Why: reduction of workload -> speeding up selection
  - Some applications entering GAP may be declared ineligible at that stage only
  - No check will be done on applications not reaching the funding threshold - > may come back next Call and only find out then that they are ineligible if invited to GAP

# Main changes in application documents

- Part C replaced by Key Performance Indicator (KPI) collection tool
- Declaration on language of the submitted materials
- Detailed estimated budget updated
  - Possibility to add decimals to person-month units
  - Clarification of the instructions

# Eligible participants

- European
  - Video game, XR studios or audiovisual production companies
  - Coordinator able to demonstrate recent experience in producing commercially distributed works
- 
- Applications by single applicants or a consortium
    - Main applicant = coordinator
    - Other applicant = partners or affiliated entities of coordinator/partners

# Eligible participants



- **European:** established in one of the MEDIA countries
  - and owned directly or indirectly, wholly 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	VR, AR or MR content production
Audiovisual production companies	Audiovisual production

**Publishing companies are NOT eligible**

# Eligible participants

- Coordinator must demonstrate recent experience in producing at least one work fulfilling the following conditions:
  - ✓ a **VG** or **IE** (interactive or not) – **no longer needs to be narrative and can also be a type of work that is ineligible for funding!**
  - ✓ **commercially distributed** (i.e. generated income) in the period between 01/01/2021 and the deadline
  - ✓ **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)





# 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)

# Eligible activities

- Concept development (pre-production) of a **single** work or prototype
- **Narrative VG** or **interactive narrative IE**: the story must be told **throughout** the VG or IE, 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**

# Eligible activities

- The work must be **intended for commercial exploitation**
- The consortium 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 / ineligible projects

- Ineligible projects:
  - 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



# Financing

- **Customised lump sum:** output-based lump sum established after applying a **max. 60% co-financing rate** to a verified and approved detailed budget
- Max. EU grant : EUR 200 000
- 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

# Q&A





**STRETCH YOUR LEGS ...  
TAKE A CUP OF COFFEE ...**

**BACK IN ...**





# 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

# 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 max. 70 pages – does not include the other annexes)

# 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

# Exclusion - declaration

## Application forms

Proposal ID 101048379

Acronym GillNetTest

[Table Of Contents](#)
[Validate Form](#)
[Save](#)
[Save&Close](#)

## 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

# 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



Consult breakdown of the criteria in the Call and keep all elements in mind when preparing your application

# Award criteria

## 1. Relevance (35 points)

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

# Award criteria

## 1. Relevance (35 points)

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



# Award criteria

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

- a) Quality of storytelling
- b) Quality of visual approach (e.g. artwork, mock-ups, sketches, mood boards)
- c) Quality of the graphic and sound design
- d) Accessibility measures for users with disabilities and other impairments

# Award criteria

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

### e) For non-immersive video games:

- ✓ Quality and originality of the gameplay
- ✓ Integration between gameplay and storytelling
- ✓ Quality of the level and character design

### f) For interactive immersive video games and experiences:

- ✓ Quality of the immersive experience
- ✓ Level and quality of interactivity

# Award criteria

## 3. Project management (20 points)

### a) Adequacy of the **development strategy** (10 points)

Adequacy of the development plan, schedule, development budget and foreseen partnerships to the needs of the project

### b) Adequacy of the **financing strategy** and **feasibility potential** of the project (10 points)

# Award criteria

## 4. Dissemination (20 points)

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

# 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 has been replaced by a Key Performance Indicator (KPI) collection tool
  - 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)

# How to apply

- Mandatory annexes:
  - ✓ Detailed budget table (**mandatory** template)
  - ✓ Creative dossier (description of gameplay, information on GUI/HUD, level and character design, pictures, graphic bible, script, storyboard, creative director's note, etc.)
  - ✓ Proof of ownership of rights (and rights of adaptation) for the project
  - ✓ Supporting documents of co-production, distribution and financing
  - ✓ Information on independence and ownership and control: breakdown of shareholding of the company (**mandatory** template)
  - ✓ Declaration on language of the submitted materials

# 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**, use these exact names):
  - WP1: Artistic development (narrative part, characters, graphic approach, etc.)
  - WP 2: Technical development (GUI, HUD, etc.)
  - WP 3: Financing, distribution and marketing activities





# How to apply

- Deliverables:
  - Will need to be submitted during the lifetime of the project
  - Be realistic: reduction of EU grant in case of partial implementation (request amendment if needed)

# How to apply

- **Mandatory** deliverables (use these names!):
  - 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
  - WP 3: Updated distribution and marketing strategies
  - Interoperable standard identifier



# Common mistakes in submission system

- **Acronym and short summary** (to be encoded when starting the application)
  - Acronym: helpful if it refers to the company/project (i.e. not VG2023 for example)
  - Short summary (abstract): must deal with objectives, activities, type and number of persons benefiting from the project, expected results, type and number of outputs to be produced. **Do not include confidential info.** The **synopsis** of the **project** goes in the **MEDIA Database**

# Common mistakes in Part A

- Budget (EU grant requested) incorrectly encoded in Part A**



- Entire production budget instead of EU grant requested
- Different amounts than in the budget
- Zero(s) too much or too little (e.g. 1M instead of 100K)

## Application forms

Proposal ID SEP-210993925

Acronym Test2Prod

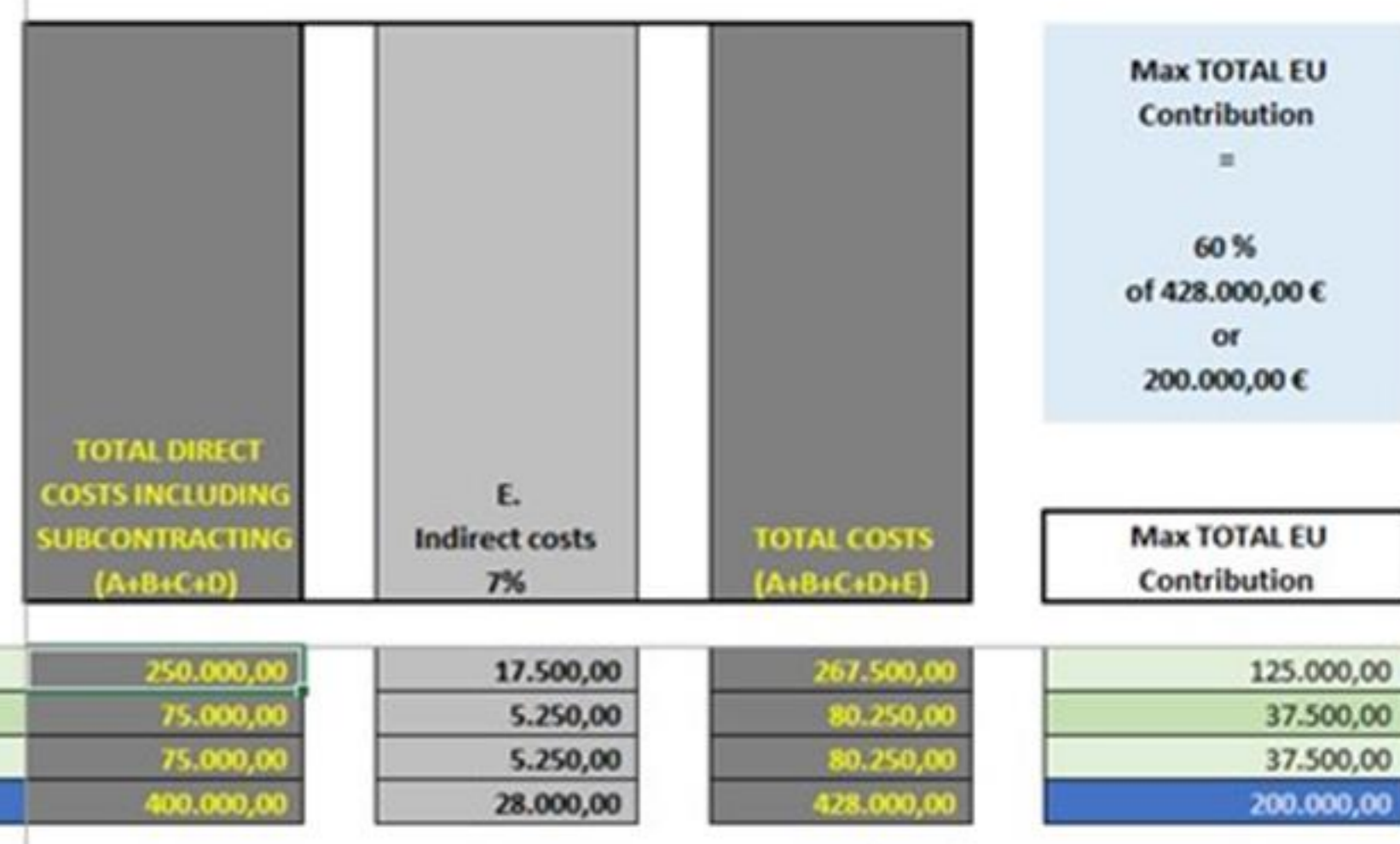
### 3 - Budget

No	Name of Beneficiary	Country	Requested grant amount
1		BE	125 000,00
2		BE	37 500,00
3		FR	37 500,00
Total			200 000,00



[Click here to go to the column Max TOTAL EU Contribution](#)

		TOTAL DIRECT COSTS INCLUDING SUBCONTRACTING (A+B+C+D)	E. Indirect costs 7%	TOTAL COSTS (A+B+C+D+E)	Max TOTAL EU Contribution
Coordinator	COO	250.000,00	17.500,00	267.500,00	125.000,00
Partner 1	PAR1	75.000,00	5.250,00	80.250,00	37.500,00
Partner 2	PAR2	75.000,00	5.250,00	80.250,00	37.500,00
<b>TOTAL</b>	<b>Consortium</b>	<b>400.000,00</b>	<b>28.000,00</b>	<b>428.000,00</b>	<b>200.000,00</b>



# Common mistakes in estimated budget

- Max. grant amount and max. co-financing rate incorrectly encoded in 'Instructions' sheets → incorrect calculation of the max. EU contribution in the 'Proposal Budget' sheet → incorrect requested EU grant !!!!
- Do not forget to break the type of employees down

*FILL IN THE VALUES BELOW BEFORE STARTING:*

Insert the name of your call :	CREA-MEDIA-2024-DEVVGIM
Insert the acronym of your project :	Acronym
Maximum grant amount as stipulated in the call :	200.000,00 €
Maximum co-financing rate as stipulated in the call :	60,00%

Document which will be created with format .XLSX will be placed in the same folder where this workbook is placed.

**Create XLSX document**

*Double-Click to activate*

A1. Employees (or equivalent) man days (you can change the types based on your structure)

Producteur et personnel du producteur  
Techniciens cadres et réalisateurs  
Techniciens non cadres  
Comédiens  
Stagiaires

Max. grant amount = EUR 200.000  
Max. Co-financing rate = 60%

# Common mistakes in estimated budget

- Encode applicants correctly and click on **apply changes!**
- Encode work packages correctly and click on **apply changes!**

**List of Beneficiaries and Affiliated Entities**

*Actions (double-click to activate)*

BE NR/AE	BE/TP name	Acronym	Country
BE 001	COORDINATOR	COO	DK
BE 001 / AE 001	AFFILIATED ENTITY	AE	NO

<b>APPLY CHANGES</b>	<b>Add a Beneficiary</b>
<b>Remove this Beneficiary</b>	
<b>Remove this Affiliated Entity</b>	<b>Add an Affiliated Entity</b>

**List of Work Packages**

WP Nbr	WP Label
WP 001	Artistic development
WP 003	Technical development
WP 004	Financing, distribution and marketing activities

Partnership in Part A

Work packages in Part B

**MANDATORY**

# Common mistakes in estimated budget

Only encode **eligible costs!**

## **Eligible costs:**

1. Actually incurred by the beneficiary(-ies) and not by third parties
2. Incurred during the eligibility period of the action (not before, not after)
3. Declared under one of the eligible cost categories
4. Incurred in connection with the action and necessary for its implementation
5. Identifiable and verifiable (i.e. recorded in the beneficiary's accounts)
6. Comply with national law on taxes, labour and social security
7. Reasonable, justified and comply with the principle of sound financial management

# Common errors in estimated budget

## Ineligible costs – most relevant examples:

- Costs incurred **before/after** the eligibility period
- Costs for **ineligible** activities
- In-kind contributions: e.g. deferrals
- Financial support to third parties
- Costs for loans
- Deductible or refundable VAT
- Costs covered by the flat rate for indirect costs: office rent, electricity, telephone, postage, copies, internet, etc.





# Common errors in estimated budget

## Encode staff costs under the correct categories:

- **Employees:** personnel working for the applicant under an employment contract (or equivalent appointing act) and assigned to the action.
- **Natural persons under direct contract:** persons working with the applicant under a contract *other* than an employment contract but assigned to the action. These « in-house consultants » should work under similar conditions than those of an employee concerning tasks, premises, results and salaries.
- **Seconded persons:** natural persons employed by a third party against payment but temporarily assigned to work on the action proposed in the application, and this for an organisation (i.e. the applicant) that is not their current employer. The applicant must reimburse the actual costs incurred by the third party (not with profit).

# Common errors in estimated budget

- **SME owners (and natural person beneficiaries):** SME owners that work on the action without receiving a salary. You need to estimate the number of days and units that the person will work on the action and apply unit costs established in Decision C(2020) 7115 and set out in Annex 2a. Note that you need to keep proof of the number of units declared.
- **Volunteer costs:** not eligible

In case of doubt, consult the Annotated Grant Agreement:

[https://ec.europa.eu/info/funding-tenders/opportunities/docs/2021-2027/common/guidance/aga\\_en.pdf](https://ec.europa.eu/info/funding-tenders/opportunities/docs/2021-2027/common/guidance/aga_en.pdf)

# Common errors in estimated budget

Provide explanations on units and grouped costs in the 'Any comments' tab of the budget



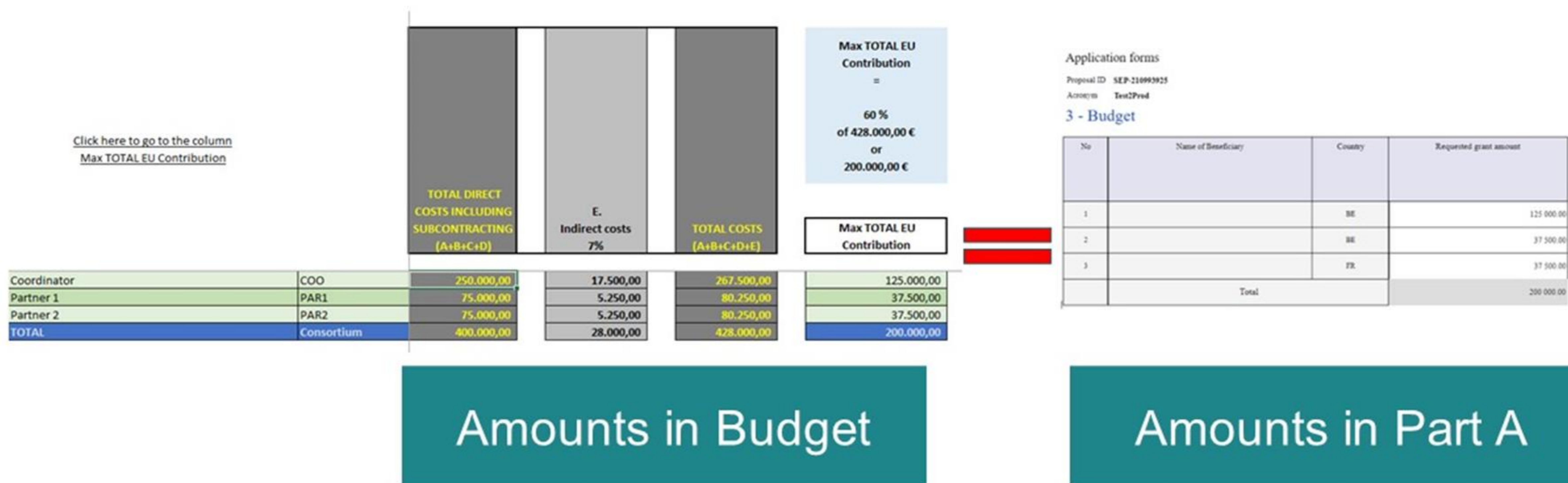
Any comments			
nr	BE ref	WP ref	Comments
A1	BE001	WP1	Personnel costs (in-house consultants) for the Artistic development of the product
A1	BE001	WP2	Personnel costs (in-house consultants) for the Artistic development of the product
C3	BE001	WP2	Costs for localisation of the script and costs for asset and technical development software (subscription-based software such as Adobe Creative Suite etc - no depreciation)
A1	BE001	WP3	Personnel costs (in-house consultants) for the Artistic development of the product
A3	BE001	WP3	Costs for accessibility consultancy
C1	BE001	WP3	Travel, accomodation and substinence costs for the attendance at meetings with producer and selected events (see Part B - Section 5.2)
C3	BE001	WP3	Costs for the attendance to the course for Certified Accessible Player Experiences® Practitioner

Particularly important for:

- Subcontracting costs (must also correspond with info detailed in PART B)
- Purchases if not depreciated (Equipment must be depreciated, detail to be provided in tab 'Depreciation Costs'). **Equipment should – as a rule of thumb – be depreciated!**
- Production costs and technical costs of prototyping
- Other

# Common mistakes in estimated budget

- Do not forget to fill in the **Requested EU Grant Amount** and make sure that it corresponds to the budget in Part A



# Common errors in Part B

- Use the template!!! (goes for all **mandatory** templates)
- Do NOT put it in another format
- Do NOT add other types of documents such as CVs
- Do NOT leave mandatory sections blank (no info = 0)
- Provide information in the correct section
- Ensure that the info is coherent with the rest of the documents in the application
- Ensure that it is readable

# Common errors in info on shareholding

- First encode the applicant **company** (i.e. not natural persons) in the 'Instructions' sheet, and – if any – the affiliated entity (must respect eligibility conditions!)
- Encode the entire shareholding of the company and make sure that it is coherent!
  - If the shareholder is a **company** → Legal person
  - If the shareholder is an **individual** → Physical person
- Do not forget to encode the nationality, i.e. either country where the company is registered or nationality of the physical person

# Common errors in info on shareholding

- Main activity: **only** to be filled in for legal persons, i.e. companies!
- If the shareholder is a legal person, provide the **full chain** of shareholding as requested, with **all the necessary elements** (nationality!), until the level of physical persons (or stock market) is reached

%	If any of the listed shareholders is a legal person/company, please describe below the full chain of its own shareholders, including percentage of shares and nationalities. If the company is publicly listed, provide the location of the stock exchange

# Frequent errors in applications - Other

- Do not forget to **encode the work(s) in the MEDIA Database** – may render the application ineligible
- Do not forget to **upload the PDF generated** from the MEDIA Database in the application
- Do not forget to complete **KPI Tool** and Declaration on language of the submitted materials
- **Make sure to upload the annexes in the right slot!!!**

If not all mandatory documents are there, the application can be considered **inadmissible**



# Frequent errors in applications - Other

- Do not add documents that are not requested
- Do not use old templates
- **Submit on time!**

The better applications are structured, the quicker the evaluation, the quicker the decision!

# Q&A





# Content questions?

Creative Europe desks:

<https://ec.europa.eu/culture/resources/creative-europe-desks>

EACEA functional mailbox:

[EACEA-MEDIA-DEVVGIM@ec.europa.eu](mailto:EACEA-MEDIA-DEVVGIM@ec.europa.eu)



# Technical (IT) questions?

IT related individual questions regarding the Portal Submission System: <https://ec.europa.eu/info/funding-tenders/opportunities/portal/screen/support/helpdesks/contact-form>

F&TP support section: <https://ec.europa.eu/info/funding-tenders/opportunities/portal/screen/support/support>

# Thank you



Creative Europe  
2021-2027

**PUSH BOUNDARIES**



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Slide 7, source: pixabay.com

