

Press Release

Prototype Funding: Hamburg Extends Financial Support Programme for Digital Gaming Industry Start-Ups

Hamburg, 18 August 2010: Developing a prototype is the first and most crucial step in seeking potential investors or publishers and breaking into the digital games market. Since 2006, gamecity:Hamburg has helped businesses get started with the Prototype Funding Programme: A convincing business plan and concept will entitle your start-up company to receive repayable financing of up to 100,000 euros from the Free and Hanseatic City of Hamburg. In place for three years, the programme is due for regular evaluation at the end of the year. Hamburg's city council approved its extension in May.

The "Gamecity" approach to prototype funding is unparalleled in Germany. Besides making up to 100,000 euros available to fledgling games ventures to develop a specific game concept, the aim is to link these companies up with potential partners. The programme has been a success: Thus far, 14 different games projects have received prototype financing. This in turn has aided the founding of new enterprises which currently employ more than 75 salaried staff members. In July, northworks Software GmbH was the first company to repay the financing amount – funds which the City of Hamburg can now allocate to new applicants.

The support programme is geared toward small and medium-sized businesses already based or planning to locate in Hamburg. An essential eligibility requirement for the repayable contribution is a sound business plan. It should illustrate the competitive advantages of the proposed game at the conceptual and technical level, show the applicants' professionalism, and demonstrate the venture's market potential. Apart from a creative development team and a viable game concept, a project must have a solid commercial basis. Throughout the approval period, a panel of experienced professionals from the games industry network advises the representatives of the Free and Hanseatic City of Hamburg on the allocation of the support funds.

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Additional information: Find out more about gamecity:Hamburg at www.gamecity-hamburg.de. Additional information about the industry initiative Hamburg@work is available at www.hamburg-media.net.

About gamecity:Hamburg

gamecity:Hamburg has approximately 1,800 members and is Germany's largest regional network of the games industry. As a division of the Hamburg@work initiative for media, IT and telecommunication, gamecity:Hamburg is concerned with creating optimal local conditions for the digital entertainment industry. Its target groups are computer, console and mobile game developers and producers, as well as related industries such as advertising, technical service providers, online agencies, and music and film production companies from Hamburg and Europe. The network helps companies to establish cooperation agreements and to break into new markets. In addition, gamecity:Hamburg supports local businesses by providing a broad range of services including workshops, industry meetings, joint trade show appearances in Germany and abroad, affordable office space, start-up consulting, qualification programmes and funding for prototype production. To provide demand-oriented training of junior staff, a Games master's degree programme was created in cooperation with the Hamburg University of Applied Sciences (HAW Hamburg) which began in the 2010 summer term. Gamecity:Hamburg is a public-private partnership headed by Stefan Klein (Hamburg@work) and Achim Quinke (Quinke Networks). Detailed information is available at www.gamecity-hamburg.de.

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