



CODE FUNDING APPLICATION WRITING GUIDE

While there is no set outline or format for the main application document, the following provides a basic template and headings for the high-level overview of your main application document that is required for part of our assessment process.

The document will contain aspects of information that would be found in a typical Game Design Document or Pitch Deck as well as information that would be found in a cohesive Business Plan.

The intention of asking our applicants to complete this process is twofold; it helps our assessors check off the requirements we need to see to make sure your project is viable for the level of funding you are applying for and provides standardisation in our approach.

It is also beneficial for you as an applicant because it will equip you with a “toolbox” from which to draw material when you go to pitch to publishers, platform holders such as Xbox, PlayStation etc. and other financial partners.

While we do not require exhaustive detail, we do require the key points that validates your project and demonstrates that the project is viable and stands out - both in terms of game design and market analysis.

You will not submit your whole Game Design Document nor your entire business plan but you will need to submit a document that conveys the fun and distinct aspects of your title; tone, mechanics or otherwise, and the relevant research-based evidence that proves that your game is worth supporting.

APPLICATION WRITING GUIDE

Headings and Explanations



Introduction & Logline

- Your one-line elevator pitch.
- A brief summary of your game, what it is and who is the target audience.

Gameplay

- Describe what is the engaging mechanic of your game. Tell us what makes the game fun.
- What is the core gameplay-loop(s) of your project? Hint: Use diagrams wherever possible showing the flow of the game.
- Are there any relevant systems that you need to outline on top of the core loop?
- If relevant, include a narrative design summary or script samples (if you have a full script, that is best attached as a separate document).

Art & Animation

- A brief paragraph on the intended art-style and who your influences are and/or what your direction is. We want to know what the target is for the finished product.
- Use a combination of concept/character art and/or screenshots where appropriate. It is more important for you to show the vision of what the final product will look like rather than screenshots with lots of placeholder artwork.
- UI or UI-mockups should also be included in this section.
- Using images of other games is useful, particularly if you are at an early stage in the project, however this should serve as a demonstration in conjunction with some concept or character art. Any art/screenshots that are from outside of your game must be labelled and credited.
- If relevant, environment art should be included in this section (sometimes a separate art-folder can be a good idea, supplementary to the main document.)
- A note on AI-art. We appreciate that for many developers, providing professional-level concept art at an early design stage may not be feasible so many will resort to AI art generators. Please label these “concept art only” in your application. Be mindful that CODE is currently working on the premise that if there is a risk of infringement of intellectual property with the use of AI art in a game, we reserve the right to refuse funding. Be mindful of use of AI art around Māori or Indigenous subject matter where it may not be appropriate. If in doubt, talk to your Regional Content Manager or the Industry Development Manager before submitting.

APPLICATION WRITING GUIDE



Headings and Explanations

Sound Design

- Sound design is often considered an afterthought in applications. However, it is a key aspect of game design and should be included.
- Describe why you are making your design choices around music and SFX.
- Music and sound create the mood and emotion of a game - examples are best used to convey the tone you are aiming for.

Production

- Included a condensed timeline (as derived from the figures on your production spreadsheet).
- Discuss major production milestones and any challenges you may face. It is important that we see the full scope of production, not just the timeline that will be covered by the grant.
- Include all of your plans if you have more than one pathway to release.
- Feel free to include a section on risk management. I.E. Identifying potential risks and what your team is going to do to actively mitigate them.

Finances

- At a KickStart level, we are not expecting definitive answers on where you expect to get additional funding from but we would like to see the beginnings of a realistic plan even if there is more than one.
- At a StartUp level, we most definitely want to see the plan to fund the game through to launch in addition to any monies you may receive from CODE. These can include publisher advances (or intention to receive them), venture capital funding, or any crowdfunding plans (with details).
- Include any relevant publishing deals, market attachments, commercial opportunities, completed crowdfunding efforts and raising attempts.

Go-to-Market

- As a minimum, even at a KickStart level, include ideas around target market (including demographics / psychographics) and how you will reach your audience.
- StartUp applications are expected to include a solid marketing strategy - this could be a combination of; your social media presence(s), website, paid User Acquisition, PR-planning, advertising, platform and publisher planned-engagement or direct marketing activities.
- In both cases we want to see the evidence of your research around your target market and genre.

APPLICATION WRITING GUIDE



Headings and Explanations

Teams

- A brief introduction of your team members should be included in the Main Application Document. It is important to demonstrate that not only is the project viable but the team behind it also has the capability to see the project to launch.
- CVs must be included as supplemental documents for all core team members.
- Feel free to include any additional info about your studio aims here too.

Builds

- When applying specifically for StartUp funding a prototype will be necessary for your application. This does not have to be a polished vertical slice that you would show a publisher or financial partner but it should be at a stage where the assessor can understand the feel of the game.
- For KickStart, submitting a build is not necessary as this level is designed for early stage projects, however if you are applying for funds to help you get to the Vertical Slice stage of development, it may be relevant.

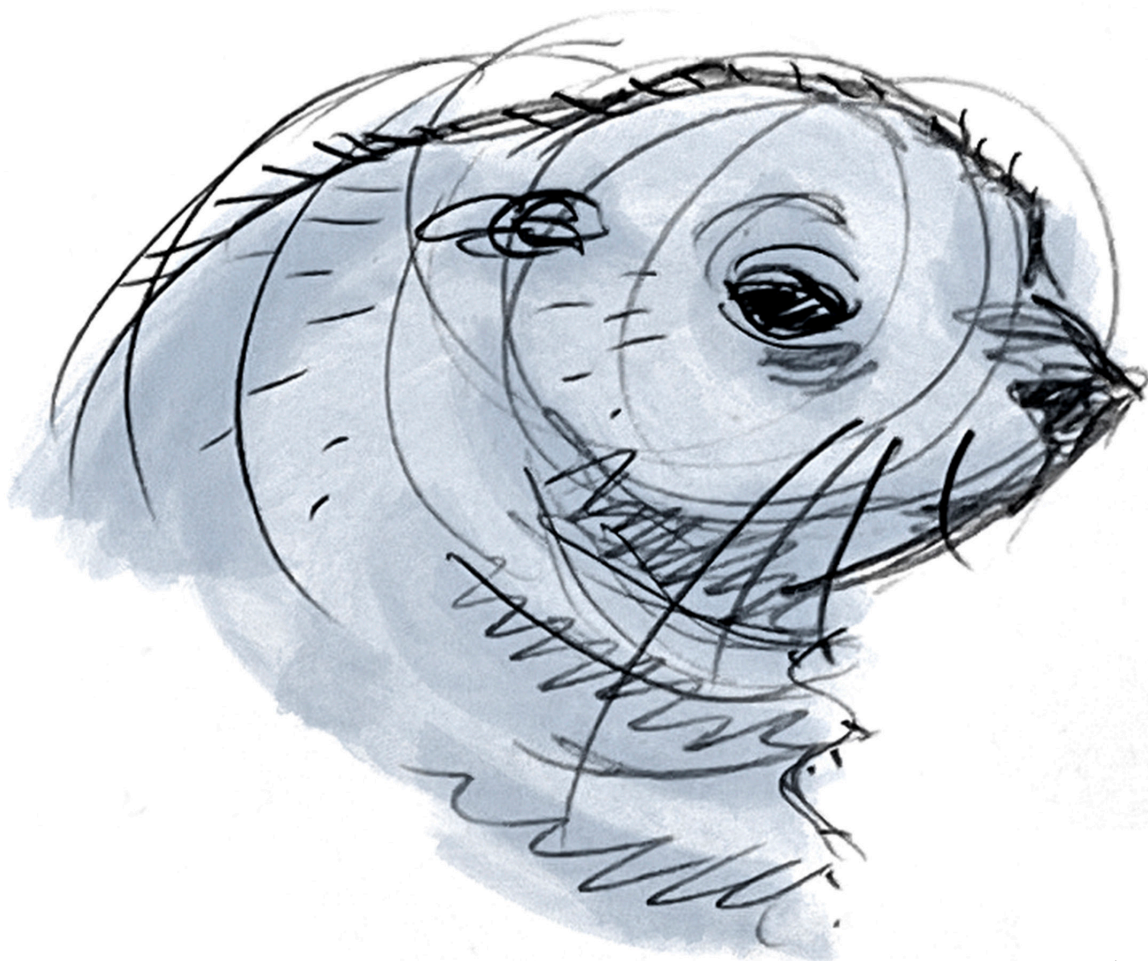


Image: SPOOKYSOFT GAMES

APPLICATION WRITING GUIDE

Headings and Explanations



Information regarding these points will give your application the best chance possible. It is your job to sell the concept of your game to the assessor panel and convince them that you understand the business of games well enough in order for your studio to be successful.

Handy tips include:

- Use diagrams where appropriate or useful.
- Keep your writing clear and concise.
- Write in a third-person business style.
- Please make sure our assessment panel can see your reasoning if you are making any assertions. E.G. “It is believed that that Developer can get 10,000 users on our Discord server by January 202X”- describe how, including the strategy and methodology. Don’t leave the assessors guessing.
- Be specific about your target market. E.G. “we’re targeting mid-core gamers interested in fantasy rogue-likes who will likely have played...” rather than “Male and female gamers, 18-50”.
- Avoid the word “unique” or other stock words/phrases - specificity with language will communicate your proposal more effectively than using similarly common expressions.
- This document should focus on the big picture of what your game has to offer and how the business will become sustainable. The assessment panel does not need to see long asset lists you have yet to complete.
- Use non-discriminatory language.
- Follow guidelines for First Nations content. Cultural consultation is not an afterthought.