

InGAME

Innovation for Games
and Media Enterprise

Whale Song Park Call for Game Developer

Open Call Summary

[Abertay Game Lab](#) seeks a partner to develop a suite of mini games that will be showcased at Whale Song Park, a digital playpark on Dundee's waterfront, from August 2021. [InGAME: Innovation for Games and Enterprise](#) will deliver a User Testing Lab as part of the project.

Scope: An four-player interactive arcade cabinet will be installed in Whale Song Park providing players a fast-paced team play experience around 8 social play mini-games which increase in difficulty over the play session. The games will make use of the unique design of the arcade cabinet, which is made up of four individual large scale LED screens. The game will provide a team play experience where players complete both solo activities on their own screens and team activities which spread across all four player screens. Players are ultimately playing to win more play time and keep the fun going.

Developers are invited to pitch to develop the series of pre-designed mini-games, co-design game balancing for fun and pace, define art style and finesse game feel to create an engaging multiplayer gameplay experience suitable for players aged 5 - 15 (and beyond).

Budget: **£15,000** commission fee (total budget for winning individual or team)

Applications will close on 23:59 on 14th May.

Applications will be assessed by an experienced and impartial panel of InGAME and Abertay Game Lab staff. However, external specialists will also be consulted in some

circumstances. All applications will be treated in confidence. Applications will be assessed on: relevant evidence and experience; quality and clarity application; commitment to specified key dates; and deliverables and eligibility.

Applicants should respond to this open call by completing the [online form] and attaching relevant, supporting materials. Any queries about the open call should be directed to [InGAME](#) with the subject line, Whale Song Park Open Call..

- Any interviews will be held by video call on Wednesday 2nd June
- The name of the chosen development partner will be decided on or before Friday 4th June 2021
- Contract negotiations will begin immediately with the successful candidate and should conclude no later than Monday 7th June 2021.
- All other candidates will be notified on or before Friday 4th June 2021
- The successful applicant will need to be available to start the commission by week commencing 14th June 2021.
- The successful applicant will need to commit to post-launch support for a period of 8 weeks.

IP ownership will be held by Abertay University, however, we are keen to discuss an equitable licencing agreement with the successful applicant.

Project Brief

Purpose

The project aims to create a multiplayer gameplay experience on an innovative arcade installation which makes up part of the interactive installations being created for Whale Song Park. The arcade cabinet will complement a 35-foot whale sculpture with interactive light and sound installations and play structures located in the new park area beside the River Tay and V&A Dundee.

The commission is to collaborate with the park designer, [Lee Simmons](#), and [Paul Robertson](#) and [Lynn Love](#) from Abertay Game Lab to develop a series of social play mini-games and a robust user experience for this unique outdoor gameplay installation. The game concept is in place and the developer will work with the team to finesse existing mini game concepts,

create system architecture, and define game visual style in line with the technical specification of the arcade. The developers will also help to test and develop game balancing and game feel to create a satisfying user experience for the player.

Objectives

- Develop mini game system architecture
 - Develop a robust system that supports between 1 and 4 players and also allows players to drop-in and drop-out of play
 - Develop a system which has an appealing idle mode
 - Develop system which reads and reacts to input from custom input devices
 - Develop system which utilises four unique player screens
- Collaborate on game concept development
 - Finesse game balancing to enhance gameplay
- Define Game visual style and UX
 - Develop visual style
 - Develop engaging and accessible UI/UX
 - Enhance game feel within technical specification of screen and input devices
 - Participate in on-site testing at Abertay university to finesse visual style and game feel working with physical mock-ups of the arcade cabinet
- Create sound appropriate to game's setting in an outdoor interactive playpark
 - Sound must complement/align with other interactive soundscapes in the space
- Key outputs:
 - Stable video game prototype with sound.
 - Source code for on-going maintenance only beyond the scope of the project (IP for the source code will remain with the developer).

Scope

- The developer will be responsible for collaboration on game concept development, creation of system architecture, definition of visual style and UX, and creation of sound.
- The developer will contribute to the creation of the game prototype and will work with the project team to install the game on the hardware onsite in Whale Song Park.
- The developer will support bug fixing leading up to the launch of the park to ensure the software integrates seamlessly with the hardware to create a positive UX for

players and will also ensure that the software reacts to the unique user behaviours that will be encountered in a public play space (see design specification for more information.)

- Beyond installation, the developer will be responsible for ensuring its stability for a period of 8 weeks beyond the initial installation. Beyond this period, Abertay Game Lab will be responsible for upkeep and maintenance.

[Whale Song Park Arcade Cabinet Game Specification Document](#)

Budget

- A total commission budget of £15,000 will be awarded.
 - Commission budget is based upon a resource plan for 50 developer days at £300 per day.
 - Development plan assumes 2 developers at 25 days per developer.
- It is the responsibility of the winning applicant to provide a fully-costed budget.
- The commission budget will cover all development costs, and any materials, equipment or expenses required to develop and deliver the suite of mini-games.
- Exclusions to note:
 - Hardware costs associated with the development, installation and maintenance of the arcade cabinet are considered out of scope. Budget refers to software development costs only.
 - Costs associated with user experience testing are considered out of scope (and will be covered by InGAME).
 - Design direction and feedback will be provided throughout development.

Timeline

- Issue - Friday 30th April 2021
- Application Close - Friday 14th May 2021
- Shortlisting Confirmed - Wednesday 19th May 2021
- Interviews - Wednesday 2nd June 2021
- Award - Friday 4th June 2021
- Contracts Issued - Monday 7th June 2021
- Development:
 - Wednesday 16th June 2021 - Co-design session working with project team
 - Wednesday 7th July 2021 - Delivery of alpha build

- Thursday 8th July 2021 - InGAME User Testing Lab (onsite at Abertay with arcade hardware)
- Wednesday 28th July 2021 - Delivery of beta build
- Thursday 29th July 2021 - InGAME User Testing Lab (onsite at Abertay with arcade hardware)
- TBC - Installation and bug testing on site at Whale Song Park
- TBC - Arcade Launch
- TBC - On-going maintenance (8 weeks support and maintenance from launch)

Deliverables

- Milestones:
 - Contract signed - Monday 14th June 2021 (50% payment upon signature)
 - Alpha Build - Wednesday 7th July 2021
 - Beta Build - 28th July 2021 (40% payment upon approval)
 - End of maintenance period - 8 weeks post-launch (10% payment upon approval)
- Final Deliverables:
 - Stable video game prototype with sound.
 - Source code for on-going maintenance only beyond the scope of the project (IP for the source code will remain with the developer).

Qualities, Attributes and Experience

- Essential skills, attributes and experience requirements:
 - Unity/Unreal gameplay programming skills
 - 2D Visual design and animation skills (pixel art) for game development
 - UX/UI design skills
 - Audio design skills
 - Track record of delivering video game software for publishing (self published is acceptable)
- Desirable skills, attributes and experience requirements:
 - Experience of working with custom or alternative controllers
 - Social Play / Multiplayer gameplay design experience

Eligibility

Applicants eligible for this commission are:

- A practitioner, freelancer or studio with relevant and demonstrable game development skills and experience.
- Based in Scotland.
- Committed to upholding [InGAME Ethics and Social Responsibility Framework](#).
- Committed to granting InGAME the use of anonymised data and insights related to the project in academic and industry-facing research publications.

Application Criteria

This is an open and competitive process, applications will be judged against the following criteria:

- **Eligibility.** Can an applicant demonstrate their eligibility?
- **Track Record.** Can an applicant demonstrate appropriate skills and experience?
- **Opportunity Insight and Consideration.** Can an applicant demonstrate consideration and compatibility in response to the brief?

How to Apply

Please complete the online form form, detailing:

1. Eligibility
 - a. Full Name of Lead Contact
 - b. Contact Email Address
 - c. Contact Phone Number
 - d. Organisation Name (if applicable)
 - e. How do you describe your organisation
 - f. Please confirm that you are based in Scotland. Your locations and postcode:
2. Track Record
 - a. We are seeking to commission a game development partner. Please provide details of your relevant past experience and current in-house expertise.
 - b. We'd like to get know your previous work. Please provide no more than 5 examples of previous projects. We welcome links to relevant demos, flyers, trailers, product pages or press coverage.

- c. We'd like to understand your approach to collaboration. Please provide details of a past game development collaboration and your approach to project management.
3. Insight & Consideration
 - a. Why does this opportunity appeal to your company and how will you benefit from the collaboration?
 - b. Reviewing the Whale Song Park Arcade Cabinet Game Specification Document against the commission budget and milestone delivery plan outlined above. Please outline a production plan covering development timeline, budget breakdown, resource plan and stakeholder dependency considerations.
4. Commitment
 - a. Do you commit to engaging collaboratively with Abertay Game Lab and InGAME throughout the commission, as outlined below?
 - b. Do you commit to attending a (remote) Collaboration Inception Lab prior to commission commencing?
 - c. Do you commit to commencing the commission by 14th June 2021
 - d. Do you commit to undertaking regular (remote) design and production meetings with key Abertay Game Lab and InGAME stakeholders at agreed intervals throughout development?
 - e. Do you commit the milestone plan outlined above?
 - f. Do you commit to responding to design direction and user testing feedback?
 - g. Do you acknowledge that the commission budget will enable the development of an audience-facing suite of mini games but does not allow for overheads or margins to be charged.
 - h. Do you agree to the reporting terms of InGAME and that non-commercially sensitive insights will be published in industry and academic reports as part of the collaboration?
 - i. Do you acknowledge that IP ownership will be held by Abertay University?
 - j. I have read and understood the [draft Service Agreement template](#) that will be issued to the successful applicant?

Key Dates & Deadlines

- Deadline for application: 14th May 2021
- Invitation to interview: 19th May 2021
- Selection interviews: 2nd June 2021

- Notice of outcome: 4th June 2021
- Final Delivery of Commission: [TBC](#)
- Whale Song Park Launch: [TBC](#)

Background

About Whale Song Park Arcade Cabinet

The arcade cabinet is located in a digital play park in a prime location on Dundee's waterfront, next to V&A Dundee. For more information in general about the waterfront redevelopment and waterfront place in particular, please visit [here](#). The site itself is regularly frequented by families, cyclists, professionals commuting or taking lunch/coffee breaks, skaters of all ages and teenagers. As the location attracts a diverse range of visitors, the target audience is broad, however, the games should be accessible.

As Whale Song Park is being pitched as a digital playpark, we are targeting families in particular, with children aged between 5-15. The mini-games concepts we have devised aim to be easy to learn and grasp to help to enhance accessibility to younger players, whilst the competitive, collaborative and unique aspects of the technology (and the play it enables) should enhance appeal to players between 10-15.

The arcade cabinet is made up for four screens which create a monolithic cube of screens that facilitate 360-degree play around the arcade. The arcade cabinet will host a series of fun mini games that can be played by 1-4 players. The games will allow players to play alone on their individual screens and together across all four screens in a collaborative play experience. The mini games will be short, fun and engaging. Each will have simple inputs and UI to teach the player how to play quickly and the gameplay experience will be fast paced. The games will make use of visual and aural feedback throughout, but audio must also be sensitive to the other interactive elements within the park (particularly interactive audio installation).

Due to the public nature of the installation, the game must be flexible, supporting any number of players between 1 and 4. It must also support players joining or leaving the game during active play and will require an appealing idle state that invites interaction whilst also complementing the overall aesthetics of the park.

About InGAME

InGAME: Innovation for Games and Media Enterprise is the UK centre for research and innovation in games and media enterprise. Embedded within the Dundee videogames cluster, the InGAME R&D Centre is a partnership between the universities of Abertay, Dundee and St Andrews and local, national and international industry and economic development partners. The purpose of InGAME is to drive innovation and growth within the Dundee videogames cluster.