

Scottish Video Games Industry Manifesto

for the Scottish Parliament
Election 2026

A call for political parties and the next Scottish Government to unlock the future of video games and interactive entertainment in Scotland.



Interactive Entertainment Scotland is the trade association for the video games and interactive entertainment (VG&IE) sector in Scotland. Our ambition is to work with the next Scottish Government, as well as all political parties, the VG&IE industry and key stakeholders to make Scotland a top destination for video games development.

To achieve this, we are calling for a higher recognition of Scotland's VG&IE industry and for the next Scottish Government, and all political parties to work with us to achieve the following priorities:

- **Priority 1. Review and strengthen existing policy support for our industry**
- **Priority 2. Unlock access to funding for growth, innovation and investment**
- **Priority 3. Invest in Scotland's games talent pipeline**

We are fully cognisant of the number of competing priorities there are for the next Scottish Government, as well as the amount of pressure there is on the national budget.

However, the Scottish Video Games Industry Manifesto is designed with this in mind with practical initial actions which could be transformational for our industry.

This Manifesto's three core priorities and subsequent asks are only the first steps of what we hope to do. We believe this document, which blends several practical reforms with more ambitious goals, will be the nation's first video games industry Scottish Parliament Election Manifesto and show the level of intent and maturity of our ecosystem. It is hoped that it will form part of a foundation which will be further built upon over the coming years with the next Scottish Government, political parties, industry and key stakeholders.





The story so far

Scotland is home to a world-leading video games ecosystem – one which combines cutting-edge technology, world-class creative talent and global export potential. Our unique combination of creative talent, interlinked community, world-leading higher education, technological innovation and enterprise provides the perfect bedrock and growth medium for the next era of VG&IE. Beyond economic growth, however, our industry in Scotland has continued to prove why it is also valuable – artistically, culturally and beyond – we have a remarkable ability to innovate, adapt and weave complex stories which connect and move people all over the world.

Scottish video games developers have created some of the world's most iconic titles from

Grand Theft Auto (Rockstar North, formerly DMA Design) and Lemmings to modern hits like the console ports of Minecraft (4J Studios) and independent (indie) titles such as Monstrum (Team Junkfish) and BAFTA winning Viewfinder (Sad Owl Studios) among other great Scottish titles.

With its flourishing indie scene and acknowledged international strengths in mobile development, IP generation and digital production, Scotland is already well-placed to lead the charge into the next chapter for VG&IE. From small or solo developers through to large international companies, from service providers to educational institutions, and the wider ecosystem around it, it is time for the industry's full potential to be harnessed.

Ambition and opportunity

2025 marked a transition for the global industry, moving from a 'high growth' period into a new phase of sustainable growth. This transition, alongside a global retrenchment in investment appetites and some fundamental changes in the ways that consumers engage with digital content has created a time of both challenge and opportunity for the Scottish games industry.

In 2025, Scotland's pre-eminence as a creative and cultural hub for the global industry was further cemented when the DICE Europe summit was held for the first time in Edinburgh and an additional day in Dundee. This event saw 150 of the world's most influential video games industry

leaders, investors and policymakers discussing the future of the sector.

The 2026 Scottish Parliament Election presents a unique opportunity that we must not miss. With this industry Manifesto, we are calling on all political parties in Scotland and the future Scottish Government to work hand-in-hand with us and to provide continued and enhanced support at a pivotal time to help unlock the VG&IE's full economic, social and cultural potential.

It is time to further harness our unique strengths once again to secure Scotland's future success in a time of rapid change for the industry.



Priority 1. Review and strengthen existing policy support for our industry



Scotland's video games industry currently benefits from Scottish Government support through initiatives such as Techscaler, CodeBase as well as support for the DICE Europe event in Scotland. We believe Scotland can go even further by embracing the inter-disciplinary nature of the sector, enhancing its knowledge and by strengthening baseline data.

The VG&IE ecosystem touches upon a number of sectors from creative to enterprise, education to technology, innovation and beyond. A holistic approach to our industry would lead to better outcomes for our sector unlocking cultural, educational and creative capital, further innovation, bolstering growth and creating more jobs for Scotland.

Through a task-and-finish review or similar exercise, the next Scottish Government should work with the industry to:

- Identify opportunities to foster a cross-policy agenda for Scottish VG&IE industry by strengthening existing ways of working and exploring new possibilities within other relevant policy sectors.
- Co-develop ways to strengthen institutional knowledge and understanding of our industry within the Scottish Government and governmental agencies – both with those who already work with our sector and those who could stand to benefit.
- Develop a data strategy for Scotland's video VG&IE industry, providing accurate, timely insight to shape policy and investment.

Priority 2.

Unlock access to funding for growth, innovation and investment

As a whole, the UK's games industry is worth £6 billion in Gross Value Added to the UK economy and it is estimated that there were roughly 2,800 games companies in the UK in 2022.¹

Beyond this, the 'spillover' value of innovations which have come out of the VG&IE industry and into other sectors such as high-end TV and film is estimated to be about £760 million Gross Domestic Product (GDP).²

The UK Government has seen a return on investment from the VG&IE industry through their Video Games Tax Relief Programme. According to a recent study, it is estimated that for every £1 in Government support through reliefs, Government receives roughly £3.43 in return.³ Additionally, in 2025 it identified the video games industry as a high-growth sub-sector.⁴

While the UK's video game industry is ranked sixth in the world for size, our businesses are driving a significant portion of their revenues through export activity.⁵ This is exemplified by the UK's industry being the fourth largest global exporter for video games.⁶ The VG&IE industry has

a proven track record in attracting inward investment from all over the globe.

Over the past years, other devolved nations have also leaned into the potential of the VG&IE sector by creating targeted programmes like The Games Scale Up Fund in Wales and the Project Prototype or Project Production Funds in Northern Ireland.

The value of the nation's video games industry is seen by the Scottish Government. Examples of current support includes a number of wider funding opportunities and initiatives, as well as the Scottish Government funded 2025 Techscaler programme trip to Japan for video games companies.

Nonetheless at a time where access to the right finance and support at the right time is proving more difficult than it has previously been, which is causing stagnation for developers of all shapes and forms, we need the next Scottish Government to go even further. It is time to fully back the VG&IE industry in Scotland which has more than just economic might but also soft power with cultural and societal impact and influence globally.

¹<https://ukie-cms.project-n.com/wp-content/uploads/2025/04/Ukie-Video-Games-Industry-Manifesto-11.pdf>

²<https://ukie-cms.project-n.com/wp-content/uploads/2025/04/Ukie-Economic-Impacts-of-Video-Games-Technology-Spillover-Web-2.pdf>

³Pg 37, <https://cms.ukie.org.uk/wp-content/uploads/2025/04/VGEC-Business-Case-Nordicity-Final-Report-to-Ukie.pdf>

⁴<https://www.gov.uk/government/news/380-million-boost-for-creative-industries-to-help-drive-innovation-regional-growth-and-investment>

⁵<https://newzoo.com/resources/rankings/top-10-countries-by-game-revenues>

⁶Pg 47, <https://pec.ac.uk/wp-content/uploads/2024/03/UK-Trade-in-a-Global-Creative-Economy-Creative-PEC-State-of-the-Nations-March-2024.pdf>



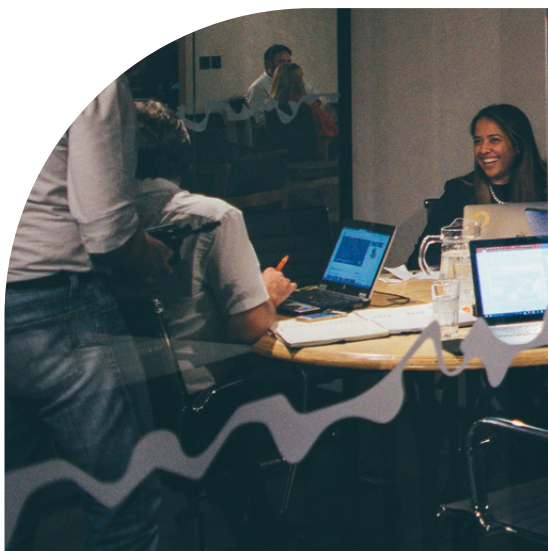
We are asking the next Scottish Government to:

- Work with the VG&IE sector to enhance understanding and collaboration with Scottish Government agencies relevant to the sector so that appropriate funding opportunities can be promoted to industry, supporting access to finance but also support for games to export globally.
- Consider long-term finance for tried and tested programmes which already support the Scottish VG&IE industry in order for more companies to benefit and scale.
- Provide a commitment to collaborate with industry to shape the development of a targeted, pilot VG&IE funding scheme, drawing on best practice from other devolved nations and countries.
- Ensure that funding and support reaches all corners of Scotland by working closely with industry to understand where existing and nascent clusters are.
- Explore funding and finance opportunities for the VG&IE sector with the Scottish National Investment Bank.



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Priority 3. Invest in Scotland's games talent pipeline



What makes the Scottish video games ecosystem so unique is the interconnectedness of its higher education institutions and the wider industry. Education is a lifelong process, and by integrating digital and video game skills in primary and secondary education, not only could the talent pipeline be further solidified as world leading, but more pupils would come out of education with enhanced skills for life.

We are looking for the next Scottish Government to work with the video games industry to co-develop strategies which support people in every stage of life to succeed. By having a seat at the table when creating these strategies, the sector can help ensure that policies are up to date and relevant for our industry and beyond.

We are asking the next Scottish Government to:

- Collaborate with industry, key stakeholders and experts to explore ways to ensure that Computing Science and Digital Creativity are visible and consistently available across primary and secondary schools, to help more young people gain digital skills and further close the gender and attainment gap in the sector.⁷
- Work with industry to explore funded apprenticeships within the VG&IE sector, as well as opportunities for reskilling and up skilling.

⁷<https://futurescot.com/girls-performing-better-at-nat-5-and-higher-level-for-computing-science-but-gender-gap-in-access-to-subject-persists/>



About Interactive Entertainment Scotland

Interactive Entertainment Scotland (IES) is dedicated to representing and advancing the interests of the Scottish games industry. Bringing together developers, publishers, and stakeholders from across the ecosystem, IES provides a unified voice for Scotland's games sector, building strong relationships with Holyrood and ensuring the industry is represented across the UK and internationally.

IES advocates for the needs and priorities of Scottish games businesses, fosters collaboration across studios, education, government, and investors, and creates opportunities for growth through scaling, exports, and global showcase. With a mission to establish Scotland as a global leader in games, IES is committed to driving economic growth, nurturing talent, and inspiring the next generation of creators.



