# From Innovation Dialogues to Action Plans

Engaging with Industry and Public Authorities

**Part 6 - LATVIA - VENTSPILS**

bgi

These nine reports give the reader an overview about the status of the video, computer and mobile game industry in the Baltic Sea Region as a whole and nine of its hotspot regions. The main goal of these document is to provide several examples of how to approach framework changes for an emerging industry such as the game industry, taking different contexts into consideration.

Part 6 of 9 - Latvia - Ventspils

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# EXECUTIVE SUMMARY

## Strategic Highlights

With several success stories, the games industry in the Baltic Sea Region has been booming for the past decade. With exponential increases in turnover, company revenues in the billions, and thousands of people added to its work force, the gaming industry still shows high potentials with already very renowned Nordic and Polish game producers.

The gaming industry is no longer a niche market for a specific consumer segment - gaming has become a viable form of entertainment for players from all backgrounds and ages. Roughly, 1,500 game industry companies exist in the Baltic Sea Region, generating a combined revenue of 5 billion euros. Although this is approximately 5 times smaller than China and 4 times smaller than the US, it shows the importance and the growth potential of the industry in the region. Moreover, with the advent of mobile gaming and improvements to hardware used in playing these games, the regions/companies are looking for ways on how to grow, build more games and impact more lives.

This report gives the reader an overview about the status of the video, computer and mobile game industry in the Baltic Sea Region as a whole and of nine of its hotspot regions. The main goal of this document is to provide several examples of how to approach framework changes for an emerging industry such as the game industry, taken different contexts into consideration.

The snapshot per region introduces their specific context; the communication map delineates the different players, influencers and decision-makers involved in game politics and implementing actions for improving current framework conditions for each region.

To understand the different settings that determined the way for the next course of action, the local dialogue events, where different stakeholders from the industry and the public authorities met to define the strengths and bottlenecks of both the industry and the respective framework conditions are described. The outcomes of

those meetings were SWOT and TOWS matrixes and concrete plans for actions to be performed during the Baltic Game Industry project and beyond.

There were several joint topics/areas of interests that came out of those dialogue events.

For some countries (Denmark, Lithuania), the discussion quickly turned to cluster management or cluster creation. Although cluster development is a difficult concept to define, the idea would be to somehow formalise the cooperation between incubators/accelerators, educational institutions, private companies and public organisations. This would facilitate access to global and national support programmes and incentives for the video games and creative industry and its members. The cooperation in form of a cluster might also support the human resources development/mobilisation among enterprises, or among research systems and enterprises including the attraction of highly qualified human resources.

Other regions are planning to open a game hub or incubator to find the best and the brightest and equip them with entrepreneurial skills, such marketing, management, sales and last but not least game development. The partners from Estonia, Germany and Poland are planning to focus their efforts on building an infrastructure for innovation with game developers as a new instrument in support of the game industry. The idea would be to help indies or non-formal teams, but also young, innovative studios develop a mature approach to business.

Funding-related topics (funding, public support etc.) were discussed by several regions (Sweden, Finland, Germany): the lack of public support, obstacles in accessing information on support instruments targeted for games industry or just knowing which the current bottlenecks to raise the capital are.

Joint marketing efforts were raised by Germany, Finland, Sweden as one of the possible actions to perform as public-private co-operation. This is based on the assumption that improved marketing measures would attract new risk funding and foreign talent to the regions. With the lack of talents in most regions, improved recruiting and marketing actions are necessary to recruit not only local/national level talents, but foremost non-European and Eastern European talents to improve the regional industry's international business performance. Furthermore, if claimed to be important by the city officials, the game industry needs to be more visible in regions marketing statements.

Finally, education-related topics (all the partners). With the objective to increase number of highly qualified specialists for the game industry, the grassroots level of the industry will be tackled. Although global talent is more easily accessible today than ever before, local education and initiatives need to be introduced to allure those talents to the region in the first place. The sooner young industry talents are exposed to business-driven game development and education, the easier it will be to create solid business cases and find artistic vision. So, game education and informal education activities (youth clubs, hackathons etc.) play a crucial role in building local talents.

The above-described process initiated a continuous dialogue in the regions and countries. Although many of the detected areas for improvement require activities the impact of which will only become measurable in the long or medium term, we expect the dialogues to continue and form the gaming-hub of Europe.

Your Baltic Game Industry project team

# LATVIA - VENTSPILS



*Source: Ventspils Digital Centre*

## Snapshot of the Situation

Like Estonia, the gaming industry of Latvia is part of the 'creative industries sector' and therefore is under the responsibility of the Ministry of Culture, which places *Gaming Industry* in the category of *Computer games and interactive software*.

So far, a separate analysis of the gaming sector without gambling industries has not been commissioned nor a report compiled by any (government) institution of Latvia which clearly indicates poor interest in gaming sector. Despite the previous statement, Latvian gaming sector is slowly but steadily growing, as shown in Image 1.1. In the last 4 years, the turnover and profit of all game companies registered in Latvia has doubled which indicates a positive development of this sector.
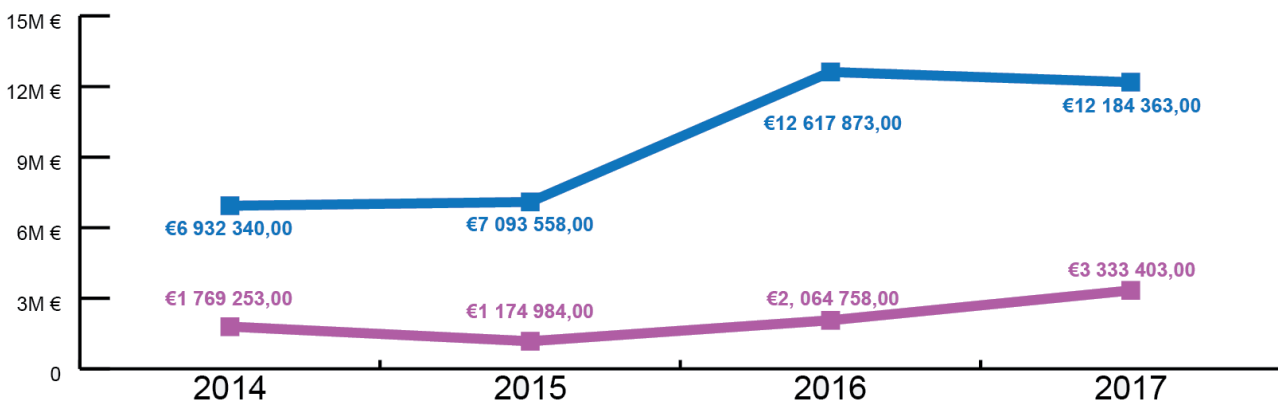


*Image 1.1. Turnover (blue) and profit (purple) of gaming industry companies (lursoft.lv)*

Currently, there are 61 game development companies registered in Latvia. As shown in Image 1.2., there are only 20 (32%) successful companies which operate without money loss among which there are only 4 (6%) with profits higher than 1,000 EUR in 2017. All other (41) companies show negative profit. Another shortcoming, no less important, is the lack of proper gender diversity in the gaming sector with only 12% of employees being women. This results in unused potential for any industry, a fact which has already been widely analysed. Various research papers[1] [2] [3] highlight the very positive impact of reducing the gender gap on both overall STEM disciplines and overall development and economy.
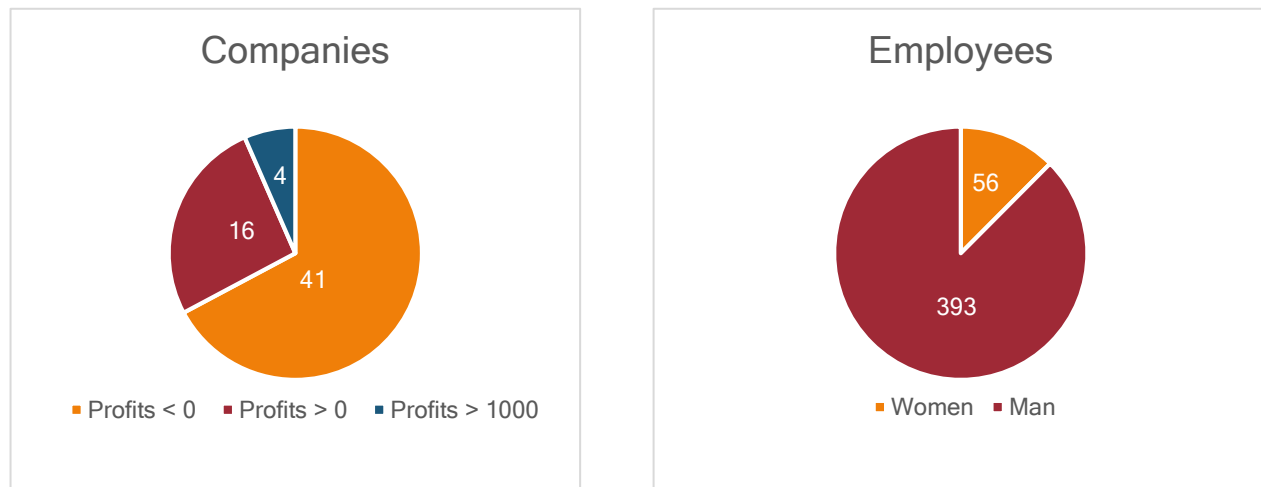


*Image 1.2. Number of companies (left) and gender diversity in the workplace (right) (lursoft.lv)*

Most companies have offices in Riga. Other cities are Kuldīga, Ogre, Valmiera, Rēzekne, Jelgava and Sigulda. Some Latvian companies also have offices in Vilnius, Parnu and Tallin[4]. One might easily notice that Image 1.3. strongly indicates low regional diversity emphasising Riga as the centre of gaming companies in Latvia which is directly related to geographical aspects (central part of country), number of students and therefore universities in the area, allowing to organise efficiently meet-ups, game jams, hackathons, and educational courses which is critical to maintain the game developer community. On the other hand, the number of people in a city is not always the critical ingredient to establish and successfully run a gaming ecosystem as proven in the case of Skövde (Sweden) with around 34 – 35k citizens (approximately the same people density as in Ventspils, Latvia). The key ingredient for the Skövde game landscape is the quality and availability of education, access to start-up incubators and various support mechanisms.

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[1] Botella, C., Rueda, S., López-Iñesta, E. and Marzal, P., 2019. Gender Diversity in STEM Disciplines: A Multiple Factor Problem. *Entropy*, *21*(1), p.30.

[2] Levine, M. and DiScenza, D.J., 2018. Sweet, Sweet Science: Addressing the Gender Gap in STEM Disciplines through a One-Day High School Program in Sugar Chemistry. *Journal of Chemical Education*, *95*(8), pp.1316-1322.

[3] Watson, P., Cooke, A. and Thornby, J., 2018. Guest editorial: Girls' and women's participation in STEM: Past lessons and possible futures. *International Journal of Gender, Science and Technology*, *10*(2), pp.193-195.

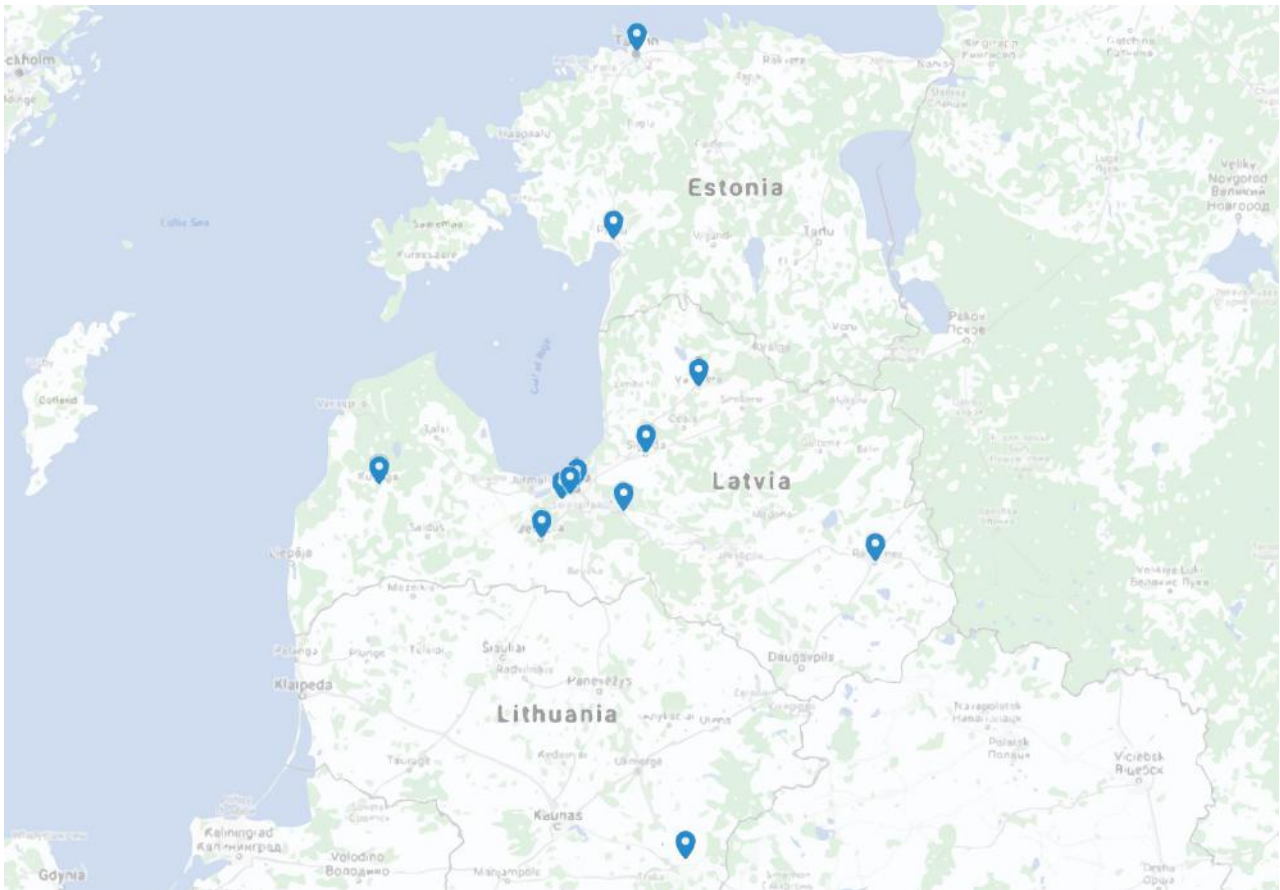[4] Estimated data by Game Dev Latvia Association

*Image 1.3. Locations of offices of Latvian gaming companies*

In this regard, education is one topic that needs to be discussed further, starting with primary and ending with higher education.

## Government priorities

According to the Review on the Economic Development of Latvia, rapid increase in jobs continued in ICT services, where the number of occupied jobs increased by 2.1 thousand in Q3 2018. The number of jobs mainly increased thanks to the growing labour demand in computer programming and information technology service activities. This indicates positive tendencies in the IT sector which makes the Game Dev sector outlook rather optimistic.

In cooperation with the German-Baltic Chamber of Commerce and Industry, the Ministry of Economics has started in-depth talks with the German leading manufacturers of smart technologies and services (SAP, Siemens, Bosch, Phoenix Contact, Weidmueller) to promote cooperation with Latvian businesses. So far cooperation in the context of Industry 4.0 concept has been the focus of the discussions to raise the productivity of Latvian manufacturers in the area of research and services on IoT (Internet of things) and Artificial Intelligence. Companies are increasingly more interested in developing the industry process using advantages of data and opportunities offered by automation. Unfortunately, the gaming sector is not part of these considerations, from which we draw the conclusion that gaming is not yet within the scope and remit of the Ministry of Economics.

## Education

*Primary Education*

_Ventspils Digital Centre (VDC)_ has offered for several years already, various after-school activities to their pupils. Every year, the number of children increases and during school year 2018/2019 more than 700 children have been taking courses related to robotics, programming, drones, Minecraft, etc. As a partner of BGI, Ventspils Digital Centre will continue integrating game dev courses and currently has developed new study courses related to game development which will be offered during the next study year.

*Higher Education*

_Alberta College_ organises various courses and workshops related to programming basics of game development. In addition, LTD "innoWate" scholarships are in place for students with the bachelor study program "Computer game development", allowing to advance their study projects and gain specific knowledge to potentially found a start-up company.

_University of Culture and economics_ offers a study program "*Computer games design and graphics*" which is a professional bachelor study program in computer graphics design.

_Vidzeme University of Applied Sciences_ has a master's program Virtual Reality and Smart Technologies which provides extensive knowledge about Virtual Reality and Augmented Reality (VR/AR) technologies, their usage and role in innovation. A vital part of the program is the opportunity for students to gain hands-on experience whilst working on live projects alongside various tech businesses, start-ups and industry professionals to solve current problems and create new solutions.

_Ventspils University of Applied Sciences (VeUAS)_ teaches as part of their bachelor study program programming with gaming elements using the engine software Unity. The gaming sector had previously not been within the scope of their study programs, but this is changing rapidly as more and more academic personnel engage in various activities related to the gaming industry. Additionally, VeUAS operates a Smart Technology Research Centre which offers various R&D services for the industry and has advanced experience with various computer vision and machine learning projects. Currently, thanks to the Investment and Development Agency of Latvia a curated voucher program arranges for first experiences with gaming companies offering various machine learning solutions.

## Community

In Ventspils, there has not been an organised and active game developer community to speak of until recently. This is not the case in the capital city where Game Dev Latvia Association (officially founded in 2014, though an active endeavour through several individuals has existed since 2007) is meanwhile doing an excellent work in popularising the game development sector, assuring cooperation and networking amongst game developers and providing them with education opportunities as well as experience exchange. To this end, they organise a GameDev Latvia Meetup every fortnight, bringing together game developers, enthusiasts, educators and entrepreneurs. And also contests, conferences, game jams, often within the framework of local and international exhibitions.

**Existing Framework**

The tax system is the responsibility of the national government, which precludes local governments from performing any manipulations like offering tax credit for specific companies, for example. In this respect, companies and institutions need to operate with various existing support mechanisms and business incubators. As described below, lots of options are already in place, however most support instruments present a lack of experience with the gaming sector.

*Ventspils Digital Centre*

Ventspils Digital Centre is a municipal institution of Ventspils City Council with following thematic competences and working areas:

- Facilitating the involvement of Ventspils municipality, residents and entrepreneurs in the information society and e-Government;

- Actively building up the information society and implementation of e-solutions on local, regional, national and international level;

- Providing business support services for start-ups and SMEs;

- Hosting seminars and experience exchange forums for EU project developers and implementers;

- Forming, supporting and developing the infrastructure of information and communication technologies, and many more.

Ventspils Digital Centre renders a wide range of services to inhabitants, municipal employees and departments, business companies and other legal entities. Within the scope of Baltic Game Industry project, VDC sees the gaming sector as a priority target.

Ventspils Digital Centre has been encouraging companies for several years strongly to use the opportunity to obtain co-financing for the implementation of ICT ideas through the ICT pilot project competition organised by Ventspils City Municipality. The competition aims to provide support for commercial enterprises implementing new ICT solutions — carrying out the development, testing and introduction of infrastructure, equipment and software in Ventspils —, turning the city of Ventspils into a smart technology centre. The competition is organised to promote the implementation of Ventspils ICT Sector Development Strategy & Action Plan 2014–2020. To qualify for co-funding from the municipality, projects submitted for the competition must cover at least one of the following topics: smart governance, smart economy, smart mobility, smart living, smart people, and smart environment. The maximum aid for each ICT project pilot is up to 80% of the eligible costs. The minimum aid is € 2,000, while the maximum aid is € 15,000.

## Communication Map

During the dialogues with local and state government, companies and NGO's, a first version of communication map has been drafted which is shown in Image 1.4. below.
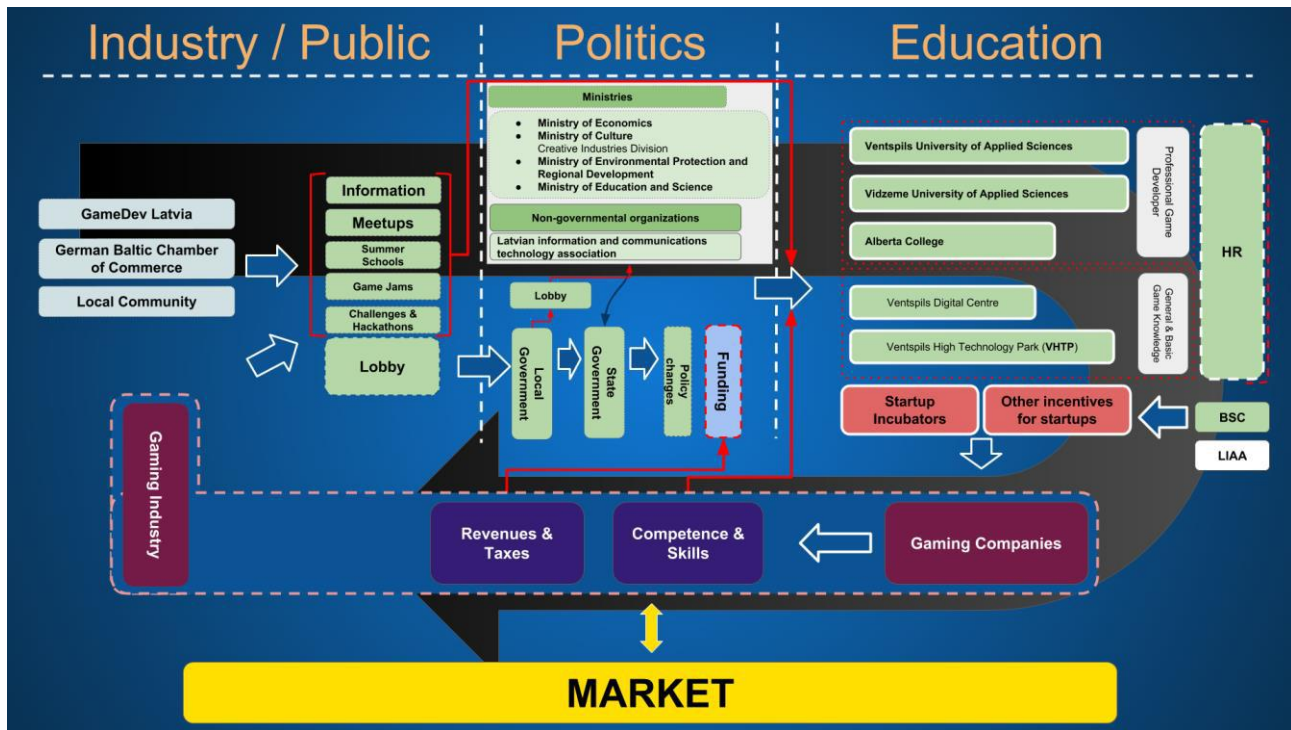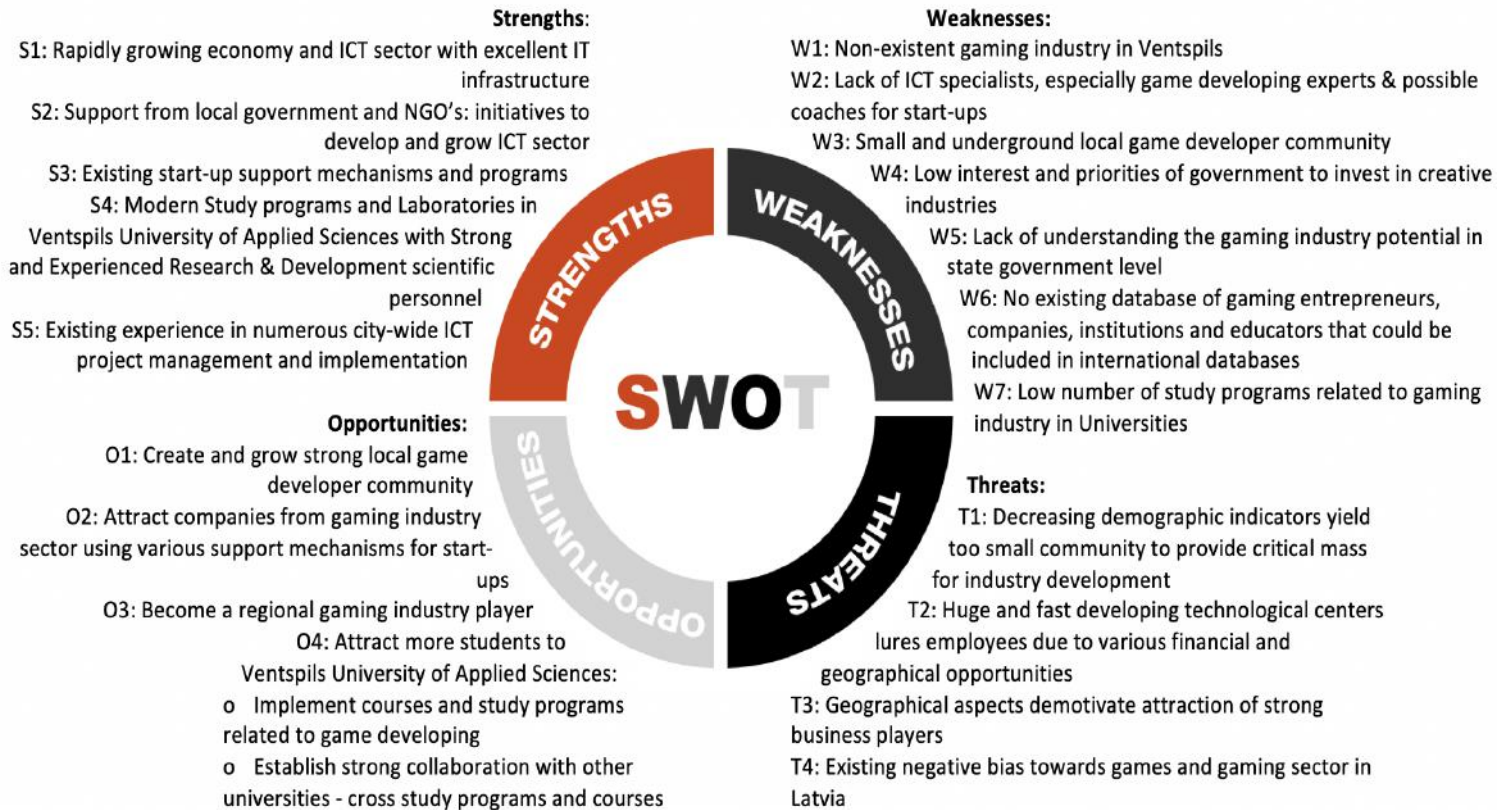


*Image 1.4. Communication map*

We have chosen a simple communication model which is divided in three main parts: (1) Industry / Public, (2) Politics and (3) Education which is assumed to be the main pillar of the gaming industry. Demand for educational programmes should come from the industry and public community to initiate social and financial pressure on policy makers (market demand) and educators (meetings, summer schools, game jams, etc). Well managed, all those pillars together must resonate enough in social media and news in order to work as a lobby instrument which will potentially leave feedback on community and push stakeholders to consider the gaming sector as a priority to invest time / finances / education / human resources, etc. Ideally or, let's say, in a perfect universe, the push from the demand would require the universities to implement study courses and workshops dedicated to game design and development. As a result, more and more specialists will be produced, allowing the start-up incubators to operate and finally provide human resources for new and existing companies in the market. The loop closes as those newly created and existing companies keep up the demand and lobby. It should be highlighted that we expect industry and education pillars to strongly interact with international stakeholders.

# SWOT Analysis

SWOT analysis was carried out after a careful investigation of the gaming sector in Ventspils, yielding results below shown in *Table 1.1.*

**Strengths:**
S1: Rapidly growing economy and ICT sector with excellent IT infrastructure
S2: Support from local government and NGO's: initiatives to develop and grow ICT sector
S3: Existing start-up support mechanisms and programs
S4: Modern Study programs and Laboratories in Ventspils University of Applied Sciences with Strong and Experienced Research & Development scientific personnel
S5: Existing experience in numerous city-wide ICT project management and implementation

**Weaknesses:**
W1: Non-existent gaming industry in Ventspils
W2: Lack of ICT specialists, especially game developing experts & possible coaches for start-ups
W3: Small and underground local game developer community
W4: Low interest and priorities of government to invest in creative industries
W5: Lack of understanding the gaming industry potential in state government level
W6: No existing database of gaming entrepreneurs, companies, institutions and educators that could be included in international databases
W7: Low number of study programs related to gaming industry in Universities

**Opportunities:**
O1: Create and grow strong local game developer community
O2: Attract companies from gaming industry sector using various support mechanisms for start-ups
O3: Become a regional gaming industry player
O4: Attract more students to Ventspils University of Applied Sciences:
o   Implement courses and study programs related to game developing
o   Establish strong collaboration with other universities - cross study programs and courses

**Threats:**
T1: Decreasing demographic indicators yield too small community to provide critical mass for industry development
T2: Huge and fast developing technological centers lures employees due to various financial and geographical opportunities
T3: Geographical aspects demotivate attraction of strong business players
T4: Existing negative bias towards games and gaming sector in Latvia

## Topics Identified



# The Innovation Dialogue

A priority of Ventspils Digital Centre is to develop gaming industry in Ventspils, Kurzeme, and cooperate with industry stakeholders from Central and East Latvia, working on a unified framework which can successfully interact with and be a part of the huge international gaming industry. A key aspect is cooperation, not competition, especially when the gaming sector is still in its early stages. In this respect, goals and aims should be realistic, reachable and as effective as possible.

The base of all industries is education. As mentioned before, Latvia puts high priorities on the ICT sector, therefore universities are prone to teach ICT related courses. Although creative industries require more than implemented STEM study programs. Currently VDC are pushing various game-related study courses for children. Similar efforts need also to be done in higher education. Therefore, we chose to initiate the discussions with local government, local enterprises and representatives of the education sector as changes in education are critical for such initiatives.

**Kick-off meeting of the Innovation Dialogue**

**April 16th, 2018**

Introducing the themed workshops at Ventspils Digital Centre

3 attendees (upon invitation):

- Matīss Stepiņš (representative of the BGI project)
- Elīna Kroņkalne (director of Ventspils Digital centre)
- Egons Spalāns (deputy executive director of ICT issues - Ventspils city council)

**Conclusion:** human resources development will be the main focus of strategy.

**Next step:** start an active dialogue with the educational institutions to understand their capacity

**First dialogue: Meeting with educators and company representatives at "ICT Cluster Meetup"**

**April 19th, 2018**

10 attendees (plus around 30 listeners):

- Matīss Stepiņš (VDC)
- Ģirts Edvarts Stepiņš (VDC)
- Dita Lašinska (VATP)
- Vairis Caune (Ventspils University of Applied Sciences, Smart Technology Research Centre)
- Mārtiņš Salauskis (Ventspils University of Applied Sciences)
- Rita Bergmane (Ventspils Technical college)
- Egons Spalāns (Deputy executive director of ICT; Ventspils City council)
- Sandra Rožkalne (educational board)
- Agris Traškovs (Accenture Latvia)
- Alīna Driksmane (TestDevLab)

**Conclusion:** The event solidified the notion (based on the interest from local educational facilities and the city council) that the focus in Ventspils should be laid on education and its possibilities to create new specialists in the field of the game industry.

**Next step**: meeting with educators and representatives from education sector

**Second dialogue: "Changes in Education"**

**May 10th, 2018**

4 attendees:

- Elīna Kroņkalne (Director of Ventspils Digital centre)

- Ineta Tamane (Director of the education department of Ventspils city council)

- Oskars Tērvids (Deputy director of the education department of Ventspils city council)

- Daiga Silarāja (Director of the Ventspils Creative House)

**Conclusion:** Members of the educational infrastructure were sceptical of the concept of creating a new university program dedicated to game development during the project lifetime, but were open-minded in laying the groundwork for such a possibility in the future - e.g. generating interest and knowledge in ICT in other fields of education (a focus that the city of Ventspils has taken for the past few years). The common denominator was that the most realistic approach would be to make tweaks and improve currently existing educational opportunities for all age groups.

**Next step**: while most of the possibilities discussed were hypothetical, it gave a better understanding of the scope of possible educational changes. This leads to the necessity of further dialogues with educational policy makers and specialists to start a process of elimination to, hopefully, ascertain specific actions.

**Third dialogue: "Tweaking the Current Education"**

**May 23rd, 2018**

4 attendees:

- Elīna Kroņkalne (Director of Ventspils Digital centre)

- Ineta Tamane (Director of the education department of Ventspils city council)

- Raita Rollande (Prorector of Ventspils University)

- Kristīne Vāgnere (Director of Ventspils Technical college)

**Conclusion:** Local educational policy makers and specialists were open to the idea of including game development elements and they already had some specific ideas of what and how that could be achieved. This gave us a good idea of what future action plans could look like and a bright outlook that these stakeholders would engage in helping to plan them.

# TOWS Analysis

## S/O
### USE STRENGTH TO MAXIMISE OPPORTUNITIES

S2, S4 / O1, O4: Create and grow strong a local game developer community. Attract more students to Ventspils University of Applied Sciences.

S1, S2, S3, S4, S5 / O2, O3: Attract companies from gaming industry sector using various support mechanisms for start-ups. Become a regional gaming industry player.

## S/T
### USE STRENGTH TO MINIISE THREATS

O1, O3, O4 / W1, W2, W3: Establishing the community and attracting the companies will mitigate the lack of specialists necessary for incubators, start-ups, universities, etc.

O3 / W4, W5, W6: Increasing the industry will foster a prioritisation of games in political considerations of< local and state governments.

O4 / W7: Changes in education.

**TOWS**

## W/O
### MINIMISE WEAKNESSES BY USING OPPORTUNITIES

S1, S4 / T1: Industry growth positively impacts the economy which later leave positive marks on demography. Although demography is definitely out of the scope of BGI.

S1, S2, S3, S4, S5 / T2, T3: Becoming a strong player ensures the continuity of industry development.

S1, S2, S5 / T4: Negative bias is eliminated when positive impact on economy has been made as well as various projects have successfully been implemented.

## W/T
### MINIMISE WEAKNESSES AND AVOID THREATS

All the mentioned opportunities must be used in combination with strengths in order to eliminate weaknesses and mitigate threats.

The main activities to conduct are:

• Develop strategy of gaming sector development. Include it in Ventspils City ICT strategy

• Create (and later execute) the strategy to continue the development of the gaming industry in Latvia and Ventspils Region

• Establish and execute the communication plan to eliminate

# The Action Plan

## Steps towards an Action Plan

*Step 1: Changing the perception of gaming industry: acknowledging its potential and impact on economy*

Within the scope of the first step multiple events were organised:

**Meeting with Lilita Sparāne, Head of Creative Industries Division, Ministry of Culture**

**October 23rd, 2018**

4 Attendees:

- Lilita Sparāne (Ministry of Culture)
- Zanda Jaunskunga (Ministry of Culture)
- Oskars Krēsliņš (Representative of German-Baltic Chamber of Commerce)
- Gundars Bergmanis-Korāts (Representative of Ventspils Digital Centre)
- Jānis Kūlbārdis (Representative of Ventspils High Technology Park)

Valuable discussion with consensus about currently unused potential of gaming sector. Ministry of Culture expressed support for initiatives to develop gaming industry in Latvia and established valuable communication channels with government.

**Round table discussion "GameDev Industry Development: Regional and Government level challenges"**

**February 19th, 2019**

14 Attendees:

- Lorenzo Pilia (Berlin Games Scene, A MAZE)
- Gundars Bergmanis-Korāts (Representative of Ventspils Digital Centre)
- Egons Spalāns (Ventspils City Council)
- Oskars Krēsliņš (Representative of German-Baltic Chamber of Commerce)
- Aleksandrs Karru (Representative of German-Baltic Chamber of Commerce)
- Laura Vilsone (Game Dev Latvia)
- Jānis Paiders (Ministry of Education and Science)
- Vairis Caune (Ventspils University of Applied Sciences)
- Andre Nitzschmann (Digital Health Cluster)
- Aleksandra Serebrjakova (Ventspils Hight Technology Park)
- Guntis Čoders (Business incubator by Investment and Development Agency of Latvia)
- Kristiān Kārkliņa (Creative Industries incubator by Investment and Development Agency of Latvia)
- Juris Zebnickis (MadCap Games, Apelsin Games)
- Jānis Dzērve (GoEXANIMO, HyperTown)

High level international discussion about our strengths, weaknesses, challenges and threats of developing the gaming industry sector. Lorenzo Pilia brought valuable experience, lessons learned and advice from Germany. All local participants agreed on continuation of this event which will take place in Riga, May 16.

In addition to various events, Ventspils Digital Centre had an initiative to sign a collaborative document, a *Memorandum of Understanding* with following establishments:

- Game Dev Latvia Association (local and international community)
- Ventspils Digital Centre (municipal authority, policy changes, education)
- Ventspils High Technology Park (business incubators, start-up support mechanisms, education)
- Ventspils University of Applied Sciences (higher education & research)

The stakeholders were chosen to bring together local and international community with educators, Game Development association and existing and potential industry representatives.

The document will be signed on May 14th due to careful planning and coordination of activities each part pledge to work on. This will be the first document of its kind dedicated to gaming industry development. All involved stakeholders have agreed on terms, aims and expected outcomes.

| Expected outcomes | Expected impact measures |
| --- | --- |
| Government-level recognition of gaming industry | # Social and public support (participation and acknowledging) of various initiatives<br><br># Strategies, statistics, plans of gaming sector development curated by government |

*Step 2: Development of gaming industry development strategy:*

Ventspils Digital Centre is working on a strategy for gaming industry development to be integrated in the Ventspils development strategy. This step requires collaboration and external expertise from industry, NGO's, government and its institutions.

Outcomes: Strategy

Involved stakeholders: Local and state government, educators, representatives of game sector.

*Step 3: Human Resources with changes in education (tricks and tweaks of current study programs)*

Ventspils Digital Centre is already a pioneer in Ventspils regarding the innovative, modern and actual after-school activities related to gaming, robotics, drones, programming, design and arts. The continuously growing number of participants indicates a high interest in such fields. In this regard, VDC is working on advancing the current action plan in order to prioritise following fields: 3D technologies, game development, digital crafting and VR technologies. Our aim is not only to provide high level after-school activities, but also to change perception about gaming and game development which will motivate young scholars and students to develop their skills in gaming and game development related aspects.

Outcomes:

- Number of recruited experts
- Number of students

Involved stakeholders:

- Ventspils University of Applied Sciences (adapting current study programs)
- Ventspils Digital Centre (new courses for children)
- Local community
- Representatives of ICT sector

*Step 4: Initiatives of community building events*

Ventspils Digital Centre has a substantial experience in organising and leading both local and international events and projects. In this regard, regular gaming and game development events are planned to be organised in Ventspils.

Outcomes: Regular contests, jams, summer schools, courses, etc.

Involved stakeholders: Local and international community, educators, entrepreneurs

## Summary of the Action Plan

Our action plan can be summarised as a table where within the scope of the BGI project, we have identified 5 main actions most of which will be continued also beyond the BGI project lifetime.

| No. | Activity | Description | Indicative Timeframe |
|---|---|---|---|
| 1 | Changing the perception of gaming industry | Acknowledging its potential and impact on economy. Lobby. Signing the memorandum with essential stakeholders. Collaboration with industry, educators, NGOs and government. Establishing regular and reliable communication. | Continuous |
| 2 | Strategic Planning | Development of a gaming industry development strategy in order to work on favourable framework conditions. | 05.2019 – 10.2019 |
| 3 | Human Resources | Taking part in activities to solve problems related to human resources: adapting the current study programmes. | 09.2019 – continuous |
| 4 | Community Building | Initiatives of regular community building events. Potentially organising competitions, summer schools and game jams. Idea of popularising the gaming by establishing *gaming corner* at VDC. | 05.2019 – continuous |
| 5 | Projects | Within the scope of competence and resources, develop and implement projects related to promotion and development of gaming industry sector. | 09.2019 - continuous |

| No. | Expected outcomes | Metric |
|---|---|---|
| 1 | Regular and reliable information flow between stakeholders. | • Initiative of creating the database and/or unified web resource (in collaboration with other stakeholders) |
| 2 | Collaboration | • Clear and realistic strategy with achievable goals<br>• Joint projects and events<br>• Joint educational courses |
| 3 | Maintained community | • Number of participants |
| 4 | Changes in education | • Number of courses<br>• Number of afterschool activities |
| 5 | Human Resources | • Number of experts from industry |
| 6 | Projects | • Number of developed and implemented projects |

The public version of the action plan can be viewed at https://digitalaiscentrs.lv/projekti (please click on tab "Baltijas spēļu izstrādes industrija – Stiprinot reģionālo attīstību") or at https://www.flipsnack.com/5CFDB6F569B/bgi_goa2-3-output-la-ve.html.

**THE PROJECT**

The project 'Baltic Game Industry' (BGI) aims to foster the game industry in the Baltic Sea region - turning an ambitious game developer scene into a competitive and attractive business sector with sound innovation potential and thus making the region a game hotspot with worldwide competitiveness.

The partnership works together on framework condition improvements, on making business support services fit for the special needs of game start-ups and finally on new business opportunities for game developers in other industry sectors, such as health care. The core element is the installation of durable game incubators, programmes and schemes for game start-ups across the region.

BGI effectively combines policy and business development. Tailor-made game business support fosters a durable economic growth of this innovative industry in the whole region. The introduction of VR technologies in non-game industries contributes to boosting innovation beyond games. The common branding of the Baltic Sea region as game innovation hotspot will attract international clients, investors, creative entrepreneurs and qualified workforce.

Read more at www.baltic-games.eu

**PROJECT LEAD**

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**PROJECT PARTNERS**

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- Estonia: Tartu Science Park Foundation, Tartu City Government
- Finland: Neogames Finland, Metropolia University of Applied Sciences, City of Helsinki
- Germany: Hamburg Institute of International Economics, HTW Berlin University of Applied Sciences, State of Berlin, University Medical Center Hamburg-Eppendorf
- Latvia: Foundation "Ventspils High Technology Park", AHK Service SIA, Ventspils City Municipal
- Lithuania: Kaunas Science and Technology Park, Lithuanian Innovation Centre
- Poland: Krakow Technology Park LLC, Institute of Psychiatry and Neurology
- Sweden: Swedish Games Industry Association, Invest Stockholm

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