

News Release

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Funding boost for large-scale media projects targeting the international market

Singapore, 22 April 2010 – From massively multiplayer online games to films that can be distributed globally and next-generation digital media applications that serve users worldwide – the Media Development Authority (MDA) is scaling up the capability of Singapore’s media companies to undertake large-scale media projects targeting the international market.

Addressing some 300 members of the industry at its annual Media Business Forum, MDA today announced a slate of project calls across television, film, animation, games, interactive media, publishing and music, with an emphasis on projects that are internationally-marketable and scale across media platforms.

Said Dr Christopher Chia, MDA’s Chief Executive Officer: “Over the past few years, Singapore media content and applications have made inroads into the global market; our television content can be seen in some 70 countries and our digital media applications are enjoyed by millions in over 210 countries. Singapore media companies have been taking on larger-scale projects, after years of delivering high quality projects through global co-production. Some have even gone on to the creation of their own intellectual property that is recognisable globally.

“Those whom have made content that informs, entertains or educates and found markets globally, have in their own ways – carried a little of Singapore to many parts of the world – be it through the stories, the films, the TV series, the publications, the games, or any of the content that is shown in so many countries worldwide. Companies that have made their mark with international collaborations have in turn also begun to attract more production work to Singapore, therefore creating jobs for

those more inclined to create, opening up new opportunities in terms of jobs, skills' transfer and business opportunities in the media sector.”

In total, nine different project calls today open for submissions, of which four are new and five are recurring calls. Please see Annex A for details.

S\$20 million boost over three years for next-generation games with GAME+ Programme

To take Singapore games to the next level, MDA has earmarked S\$20 million over three years to implement the GAME+ Programme, which aims to address the needs of the entire games value chain by providing support for concept development all the way to go-to-market strategies.

It includes the newly launched INSPIRE+, which will see MDA co-investing up to 30 per cent in large-scale, bigger-budget game content projects such as the development of multi-million dollar massively multiplayer online games.

Complementing this is INVIGORATE+, which starts its series of quarterly calls today targeted at start-ups and individuals for proposals for games on emerging platforms such as social networking sites, mobile phones, handheld devices and online game services. Providing aspiring game developers with further support are GAME+ Development Centres that will offer mentoring and guidance. Internationally renowned game development institute DigiPen and the School of Interactive and Digital Media in Nanyang Polytechnic are partnering MDA to establish the first GAME+ Development Centres in Singapore.

In addition, MDA is also partnering industry and other partners to create demand for games that encourage developers to approach and apply games in new and different ways. Under INNOVATE+, MDA today issued a joint call with the Central Provident Fund Board for financial management games on social networking sites and mobile phones. Aside from CPF Board, MDA will continue to work collaboratively with other industry partners.

Spurring interactive digital media adoption in other economic sectors

MDA will also focus on driving sector transformation by embedding interactive digital media or IDM in other economic sectors to create new consumer experiences.

Building on the Future of Media concept introduced last year to fuel industry-driven innovation, MDA today launched a Cross-Sector (X-sector) initiative to stimulate the commercialisation of new IDM content, applications and services for deployment in five economic sectors: Education, Learning & Training; Advertising; Wellness & Healthcare; Tourism & Hospitality; and, Sports. The X-sector call invites industry players to collaborate with technology companies, which are making available the research outcomes previously supported by the IDM Programme Office (IDMPO) for deployment in the five pre-identified sectors.

The call represents the move to mesh industry needs with research outcomes by extracting commercial opportunities from existing research and development projects supported by the multi-agency IDMPO hosted within MDA.

“The IDMPO has, over the last three years, funded R&D of diverse technologies. Some of these are now ready to be applied into creation of marketable products and solutions. The X-sector initiative aims to catalyse the commercial deployment of these technologies in depth within a particular sector. We begin the initiative with five economic sectors that possess rich possibilities for the overlay of digital media and will explore extending the programme to other key sectors. The vision is to bring about ‘IDM everywhere’ across the economy beyond just the media sector,” added Dr Chia.

In addition to the four inaugural calls described above, recurring calls that open for project submissions at today’s Media Business Forum include Spearheading Publishing Innovation for New Enterprise (SPINE), Content 360° TV and Public Service Content, which collectively aim to prepare locally-produced publishing and television content for cross-platform business enhancement and overseas distribution.

Returning for a second round of project calls are Music, which is on the hunt for initiatives that can raise the international profile of Singapore’s music industry; and, the International Film Fund, which seeks film proposals that have international box office potential.

These nine project calls come on the heels of last week’s launch of the International Animation Fund to solicit proposals for internationally-marketable animated TV series, telemovies and films.

In the cases of the International Film Fund and International Animation Fund, MDA co-investment of up to S\$5 million a project aims to encourage big budget film and animation projects that will be represented worldwide by well-established international distribution companies, namely Distribution Workshop and FremantleMedia Enterprises respectively.

Moving forward, MDA will drive more project calls at regular intervals throughout the year to stimulate a steady project pipeline for the media sector.

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For media queries, please contact:

Chia Pei Siang (Ms)
Manager, Communications
Media Development Authority
Tel. : +65 9726 3151
Email : chia_pei_siang@mda.gov.sg

Goh Ee-waye (Ms)
Assistant Manager, Communications
Media Development Authority
Tel. : + 65 9726 3157
Email : goh_ee-waye@mda.gov.sg

Media Development Authority of Singapore (MDA)

Formed in 2003, the Media Development Authority of Singapore (MDA) plays a vital role in transforming Singapore into a Global Media City and positioning it at the forefront of the digital media age. MDA spearheads initiatives that promote developments in film, video, television, radio, publishing, music, games, animation, media services and Interactive Digital Media. At the same time, in ensuring clear and consistent regulatory policies and guidelines, MDA helps to foster a pro-business environment for industry players and increase media choices for consumers. For more information, visit www.mda.gov.sg and www.smf.sg.

Annex A – Calls for proposals announced at Media Business Forum 2010

Please log on to www.smf.sg and access the **Funding** page to download the complete information and application form of each call for proposal.

(A) NEW PROJECT CALLS

GAMES

1) INSPIRE⁺

INSPIRE⁺ aims to take the Singapore games industry to the next level by catalysing the creation of big-budget next-generation games. Through these projects, commercialised games based on franchisable, globally recognised IPs will put Singapore on the world map for high-end games development. The first Inspire⁺ call will focus on developing massively multiplayer online games (MMOGs) for international audiences. MDA will co-invest up to 30 percent of qualifying project costs.

All game platforms capable of supporting next generation MMOGs are allowed. The deadline for submissions is 30 June 2010 and selected projects are expected to commence on 1 September 2010.

2) INVIGORATE⁺

INVIGORATE⁺ calls will be held quarterly for both Singaporean individuals and companies looking to bring their ideas from concept to commercialisation on a variety of emerging digital platforms such as social networking sites, mobile phones, handheld devices, online game services (PlayStation Network, WiiWare, Xbox Live). MDA will support up to 50 percent of qualifying project costs.

The submission deadlines for the four quarterly calls are: 7 June 2010, 13 September 2010, 10 January 2011 and 8 March 2011. For individual game developers with no proven track record, successful applicants' proposals will receive supervision from one of the GAME⁺ Development Centres.

3) INNOVATE⁺

INNOVATE⁺ aims to drive innovation in game development by creating demand for game projects, paving the road for developers to approach and apply games in new and different ways.

INNOVATE⁺ calls are made jointly with MDA's industry and agency partners based on demand requirements. The first INNOVATE⁺ call to open today is made jointly with the Central Provident Fund Board to create financial management games on social networking platforms as well as for mobile phones. Successful applicants will receive a grant of up to 75 percent of qualifying project costs. The deadline for submissions is 7 June 2010.

INTERACTIVE MEDIA

4) Cross-Sector (X-sector)

The X-sector call is a sector-based call for proposals for the development of new interactive digital media applications, services and/or content, with a focus for commercialisation. The inaugural call seeks for proposals for the following five pre-

identified sectors – Education, Learning & Training; Advertising; Wellness & Healthcare; Tourism & Hospitality; and, Sports.

The call invites industry players to collaborate with one or more of 10 short-listed technology companies to submit a proposal for development of new application, content or services suitable for one or more of the five pre-identified sectors. 30 July 2010 is the submission deadline for Learning and Advertising sectors, while 27 August 2010 is the submission deadline for the Healthcare, Tourism and Sports sectors.

(B) RECURRING PROJECT CALLS

TELEVISION

5) Public Service Content (PSC)

Under the PSC call for programming ideas, MDA is looking for innovative concepts that have public service value, the potential to reach viewers in Singapore and beyond, and cross platform potential. Only concepts for projects to be produced in the main languages of English, Chinese (Mandarin), Tamil and Malay (*Bahasa Melayu*) will be accepted. The closing date for submissions is 21 May 2010.

6) Content 360° TV

The Content 360° TV initiative aims to foster the development of digital production studios to deliver TV and/or video productions for new media platforms. These platforms include the development of new media properties, or episodic online video programmes distributed exclusively online, in partnership with sponsors and online distribution partners. The Content 360° TV Initiative Call for Proposals seeks submissions from eligible media companies for programmes with strong cross-media cross-platform elements aimed at international distribution and viewership. Submissions close on 4 June 2010.

To date, nine proposals from three previous calls have been selected for funding, of which two are currently in production, namely *LoveQ.TV* (working title) by The Very Love Company; and *NowShowingLife.TV* (working title) by Interactive Digital Reality.

FILM

7) International Film Fund (IFF)

The second call for IFF closes on 12 July 2010. Launched last May at the Cannes Film Festival, the IFF aims to help Singaporean production houses and post-production houses assume executive producer or co-producer roles with international partners in films that have international commercial appeal. Through this, MDA supports local companies in the film ecosystem build up their international reputations, scale up their capabilities and attract further feature film projects to Singapore. All films funded through the IFF will be represented by Hong-Kong based international sales agent, Distribution Workshop.

From the inaugural round, two projects have received support: *BAIT*, Singapore's first stereoscopic 3D film co-produced by Singapore's BlackMagic Design and Australia's Arclight Pictures and Pictures in Paradise; and, *Neon Sign*, the first Singapore-China-Korea film co-production involving CJ Entertainment and Beijing Polybona Film Distribution Co., Singapore's Bang Productions and Korea's Nabi Pictures.

PUBLISHING

8) Spearheading Publishing Innovation for New Enterprise (SPINE)

The fourth call of SPINE aims to further encourage the creation and development of original publishing IPs into brands and franchises that live on multiple media platforms ranging from print, online, TV to mobile and handheld devices. Submissions close on 22 June 2010.

Examples of projects supported under SPINE include the digital extension of Communication Resources-owned lifestyle magazine *August Man* onto online and mobile platforms; Scrawl Studios' development of e-learning content and children's book series based on its popular animated series *Nanoboy*; and, the publishing of a series of Major Reference Works in both the print and digital format by World Scientific Publishing Co.

MUSIC

9) Music

The Music call invites proposals to take Singapore's music industry to the next level. Companies are encouraged to explore bold ideas that leverage Singapore's regional branding, supported by innovative business models. The new initiatives should create viable and sustainable models to discover, groom, showcase and deploy Singapore's musical talents, both locally and regionally; and/or position Singapore as a music hub in Asia. Submissions close on 11 June 2010.

A project that received support under the inaugural call in 2009 was the Singapore Entertainment Awards 2010, which showcased and honoured Singapore's media talents through a sold-out concert attended by 11,000 people. MDA supported the telecast of the concert on cable channels E-City and TVB 8, reaching out to audiences in the region. Another initiative that received support was the creation of Republic of Pop, a soon-to-be-launched online repository of all information relating to Singapore music undertaken by local company Music and Movement. Besides profiling and promoting local talents and music productions, this platform would also facilitate the discovery and matching of suitable partners for music projects.

(C) A PROJECT CALL LAUNCHED ON 12 APRIL 2010

ANIMATION

10) International Animation Fund (IAF)

IAF, launched on 12 April 2010 at MIPTV, aims to stimulate original animation co-productions in and with Singapore. Application is open from all over the world for new animation content in any format, including television series, telemovies and theatrical features. MDA will co-invest up to S\$5 million for each qualifying project. FremantleMedia Enterprises is MDA's partner for this initiative, and will represent the chosen projects as worldwide distributor.

All applications must reach MDA by the close of business on 30 June 2010, and proposed projects must have a Singapore partner. Short-listed applicants will be required to pitch face-to-face, in Singapore, to an evaluation panel comprising senior executives from MDA and FremantleMedia Enterprises.