Playtesting

1. Overview & Progress

Functional minimum

- ☑ ~~One map~~
- ☑ ~~Basic resources: food, water, workers~~
- ☑ ~~Basic facilities: 2 or 3 crop fields, water wells~~
- ☑ ~~Basic turn structure: action points dependent on worker amount, recalculating resources at end of round~~
- ☑ ~~2 soil types: degraded & arable~~

Low target

- ☑ ~~Seasons to improve turn variety (Normal, Dry, Rainy)~~
- ☑ ~~Basic soil change system: arable soil will degrade during dry season if not protected by certain plants, half-moons will turn soil arable during rainy season~~
- ☑ ~~Differentiation between conventional and permaculture fields (plant resilience to seasons)~~
- ☑ ~~Half-moons as a buildable structure for land reclamation~~

Desired target

- ☑ ~~Basic surface water system: water will be retained in natural "pits", and half moons, and will either dry up over time or sink into groundwater~~
- ☑ ~~Easy groundwater system~~

☑ ~~Crops need different levels of water, they can die if they are not cared for~~
☑ ~~More crops, with properties related to game mechanics~~
☐ Weather events: Storms, Droughts, Sandstorms… which make it harder for the player to reclaim land, or even directly degrade land occasionally

High target

☐ Procedural level generation
☐ Saving and loading games
☐ Visual improvements: i.e. some animals roaming around in green areas
☐ Audio improvements: larger sound and music variety

Extras

☐ Interconnected cities / regions with specialisations
☐ In-game "Making-Of" section with additional information about the Great Green Wall project
☐ Multiplayer Mode

Green: finished subtasks
Blue: not yet started

	Interrim Demo			Alpha Release			Playtesting		Final Release	
	CW 19	CW 20	CW 21	CW 22	CW 23	CW 24	CW 25	CW 26	CW 27	CW 28
Functional Minimum										
Basic Art Assets	■	■								
Building First Map		■	■							
Unity Setup	■		■							
Resources & Turn System	■	■	■							
Placing "Buildings"	■	■								
UI & Main Menu		■								
Sounds & Music 1		■	■							
Low Target										
Soil Change System		■	■							
Season System & Effects				■	■					
Art Assests: Seasons, Crops, new Soil				■	■					
Additional Crops				■	■					
~~Community Buildings~~				■	■					
Sounds & Music 2					■					
Desired Target										
Ground Water System					■					
Surface Water System					■					
Water Stats for existing Crops					■	■				
Art Assets: Water, Weather, new Crops					■	■				
Tutorial						■	■			
~~Weather Events~~					■	■				
High Targets & Finalization										
~~Procedural Level Generation~~						■	■	■		
Saving & Loading							■	■		
Audio Improvements								■	■	
Visual Improvements								■	■	
Feedback integration									■	■
Bugfixing									■	■

2. Pre-Testing Changes

In-Game Menu

Players can open the menu now while playing and change settings or levels from there. They can also close the game altogether.

Info Panel

We included an info panel that explains the basic features to the players. Players can open the info panel any time during playing when they need more information to adjust their strategy.

Sprites

We made some changes to the sprites, which include some minor visual changes as well as bigger changes worth mentioning. Crop tiles were changed to better qualify for the game theme and mechanics. Wheat tiles were slightly changed to represent millet. Bean tiles were combined with old wheat tiles to represent corn. Some new sprites for icons were created.

- - Millet Crop Tiles

- - Corn Crop Tiles

- - Sun and Rain Icons

- - Water and Food Icons

3. Playtesting Session

After the Game was updated for playtesting, we invited several people. All playtesting happened either in person or online with screen sharing enabled, so we could monitor the participants.
After a brief introduction to the game, we let the participants discover and play on their own and only intervened when critical bugs or gameplay progression issues occurred. The participants were allowed to play as long as they liked and had time for.

After the playtest we shortly interviewed the participants and then used a Google Form to gain feedback and sentiment from the players with the following questions:

Demographic information:
- Age
- Gender
- How often do testers play games

- Preferred gaming platform(s)
- Types of games they usually play
- If they have participated in a game playtest before

General Game Questions:

- What was your first impression of "Green Wall"?
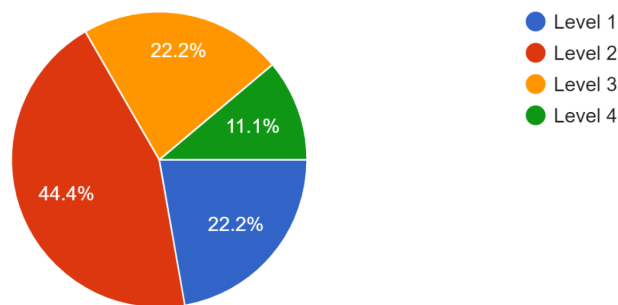- How much time did you spend testing "Green Wall"?
- Which level was your favourite?
- Why was this your favourite level?
- Which level was your least favourite?
- Why was this your least favourite level?

Formal Elements:

- Shortly describe the objective of the game.
- Was the objective clear at all times?
- What was your strategy for winning?
- Did you find any loopholes in the system? If yes, which?
- What elements do you think could be improved?

Dramatic Elements:

- Was the game's premise exciting?
- Did the story enhance or detract from the game?
- How would you make the story and game work better as a whole?

Procedures, Rules, Interface and Controls:

- Were the procedures and rules easy to understand?
- How did the controls feel? Did they make sense?
- Could you find the information you needed on the interface?
- Was there anything about the interface you would change?
- Did anything feel clunky or awkward?
- Are there any controls or interface features you would like to see added?

4. Results

Demographics

Age Distribution

- 77.8% of the players are between the ages of 25-34.
- The remaining 22.2% are between the ages of 18-24.

Gender Distribution

- The players are evenly split between male and female.

Gaming Frequency

- 22.2% play games daily.
- 44.4% play games several times a week.
- 11.1% play games once a week.
- 22.2% play games rarely.

Preferred Platforms (selecting more than one platform is possible)

- 88% prefer PC.
- 33% prefer consoles.
- 11% prefer mobile devices.

Preferred Game Genres

- Action: 55.6%
- Adventure: 55.6%
- Strategy: 55.6%
- Puzzle: 44.4%
- Simulation: 22.2%
- Shooter: 11.1%
- Roguelike: 11.1%

General Game Questions

What was your first impression of "Green Wall"?
5 responses
- Pretty interesting topic. Putting the player in this planning position seems like a good idea, motivates to learn about large-scale solutions.
- Cozy game to relax with nice music
- It was fun resource management game, but there was a clear optimal way to play. Visual clarity could be improved. Gameplay was relatively quick to understand.
- Reminds me of old city building games, not too complex but still enough to make strategies and choices
- great and interesting theme, cozy and engaging gameplay loop

How much time did you spend testing "Green Wall"?

9 responses

- 5 min
- 5 - 15 min
- 15 - 30 min
- 30 - 60 min
- over 60 min

55.6%
11.1%
33.3%
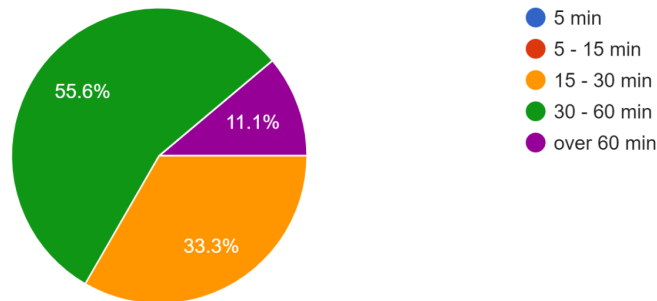
Which level was your favourite?

9 responses

- Level 1
- Level 2
- Level 3
- Level 4

22.2%
11.1%
44.4%
22.2%

Why was this your favourite level?

9 responses

- It felt like I was most productive in level 2
- love the challange
- I spent the most time in level three. I liked the setup of the map and found it challenging to change the strategy a little bit depending on the season.
- The addition of seasons and soil changes made this level more fun than the first one. I wasn't really interested in free-play levels without objectives or clear goals.
- Addition of season and more challenges made it more interesting
- Ich hab nur ein Level gespielt wegen Zeitdruck
- Did not really like any of them.
- More variety
- clear structure and tasks with step by step progress

Which level was your least favourite?
9 responses

- Level 1
- Level 2
- Level 3
- Level 4
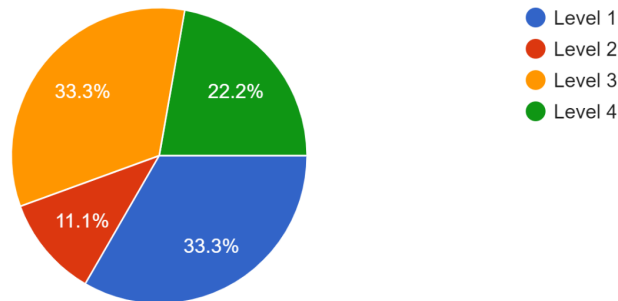
Why was this your least favourite level?
9 responses
- My influence on the surrounding felt somewhat random
- because I love the challange, it was fun but I like the harder level better
- This was quite tricky, because of the large amount of water that kept expanding during the rainy season.
- I wasn't really interested in free-play levels without objectives or clear goals.
- I wasn't interested in playing more after spending time on levels 1 and 2 and experiencing all gameplay mechanics
- Ich hab nur ein Level gespielt
- See above
- Tutorial Level
- the second level was little bit confusing, because the seasons weren't explained enough and the effect of halfmoons did take to long

Formal Elements

Shortly describe the objective of the game.
8 responses:
- Resource Management
- Improving the land, producing more food and water, following quests
- Sustain/improve the environment & build a stable village
- The goal of the game is to produce enough food for an expanding village. You're supposed to harvest different plants and make sure that you get enough food and water during every season.
- really good and precisely,
- Producing more food, optimization
- Min Max field to create food and huts
- the objectives are to prevent the land from erosion in the dry season and flood in the rain season by prepare the soil, water management and planting the right plants

Was the objective clear at all times?

1 = Clear, 5 = Unclear

Was the objective clear at all times?

9 responses
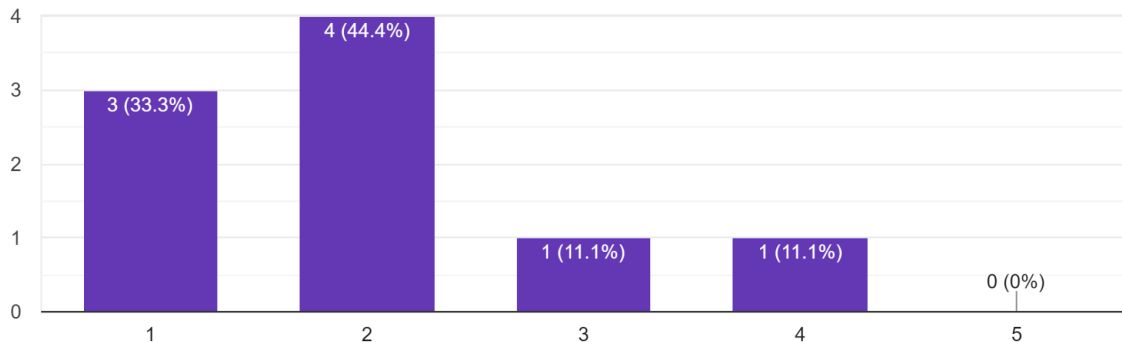
What was your strategy for winning?

9 responses:

- Spamming Wells
- Build many farming huts and wells, more huts if I have surplus production
- Millet+Farmhut all over the place, with wells/huts when needed
- The strategy for me was to plant as much as possible, to keep the soil from getting too dry and to prevent the pools of water from expanding too much
- first build a few well to always get water and planting always a lot of millet - to keep the balance between village people and food which is needed
- Focusing on food production and huts to increase action limit at the beginning
- Try to create gathering huts and max field around them
- was unable to check the fun box...
- Trying to get arable soil which I did not get how to do because wells dont really explain well what they are doing

Did you find any loopholes in the system? If yes, which?

6 responses:

- No
- no
- It was pointless to plant corns or harvest trees, since planting millet was much more efficient.
- Not sure if Millet+Farmhut is intended to work this well
- I didnt't find any loopholes
- I only used millet crops after some point, I spammed wells instead of using halfmoons for producing water tiles

What elements do you think could be improved?

9 responses:

- Effectivity of Half Moons

- I couldn't feel the effects of seasons and tile changes clearly. What seasons do and how some of the tiles work could be explained more thoroughly.
- Some indication on tiles for when they're about to change would be nice
- I think more different elements could be added, for example more different plants.
- nothing really worked A+
- More strategic choices could be implemented, there is not enough challenge after I build the farming huts and wells for stable income
- UI, Gameplay loop, more elements, explain seasons better, better visual feedback, texts are too long and clumsy, longterm goals not really explained
- the balancing of the halfmoons, the waterconsumption of the trees, it would be nice if the function of the seasons and waterlevel would be more transparent to the player
- The tutorial, the ui, the saturation of textures. Music is awesome though

Story, Game Flow, Dramatic Elements

Game's Premise

- 88.9% (8 players) found the game's premise exciting.
- 11.1% (1 player) did not find the game's premise exciting.

Did the addition of story and flavour text enhance the gameplay?

- (Strongly Agree):   22.2% (2 players)
- (Agree):   22.2% (2 players)
- (Undecided):   44.4% (4 players)
- (Disagree):   11.1% (1 player)
- (Strongly Disagree):   -

The story and flavor texts were rated positively overall, with the highest concentration of ratings at 3 (neutral). This indicates room for improvement in making the story more engaging.

Feedback on Story Integration and Gameplay

- One player suggested adding an animated intro to capture attention as not everyone reads the "read me" section and the abundant text.
- Few players mentioned that the story is explained at the beginning but not incorporated later. They suggested adding info panels to inform players about real-world parallels of game elements.
- Multiple players felt that the story and quests enhanced the gameplay and increased motivation and served as a tool to set goals for players.
- One player felt the story was good for teaching the game during the tutorial stage, but wasn't sure if enhanced gameplay beyond that.

- One player suggested the addition of characters and dialogue.
- One player was unaware of the story / disregarded it completely.
- Few players noted that the tutorial text boxes were too long and suggested making the tutorial text more accessible.
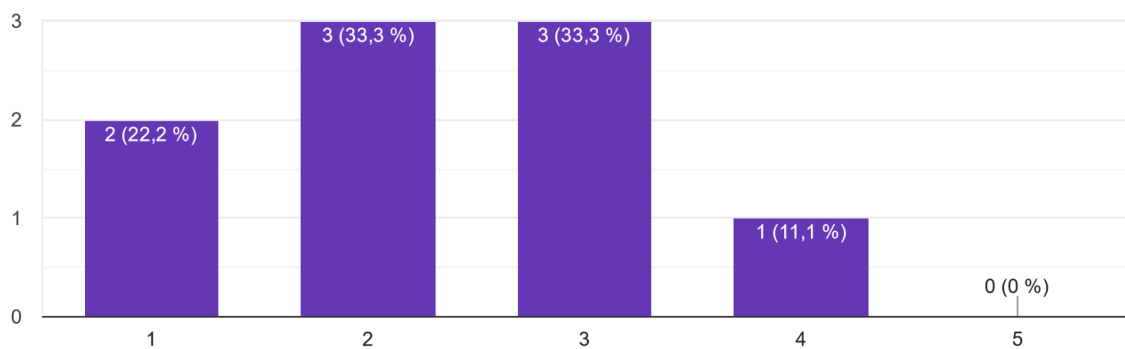
Procedures, Rules, Interface and Controls

Were the procedures and rules easy to understand?
1 = Easy, 5 = Difficult

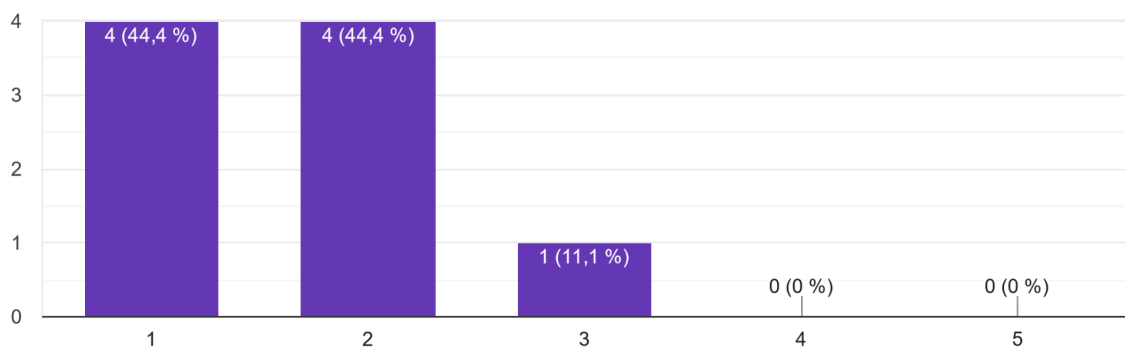Were the procedures and rules easy to understand?
9 Antworten

How did the controls feel? Did they make sense?
1 = Understandable, 5 = Confusing

How did the controls feel? Did they make sense?
9 Antworten

Could you find the information you needed on the interface?

1 = Enough information, 5 = Not enough information

Could you find the information you needed on the interface?

9 Antworten
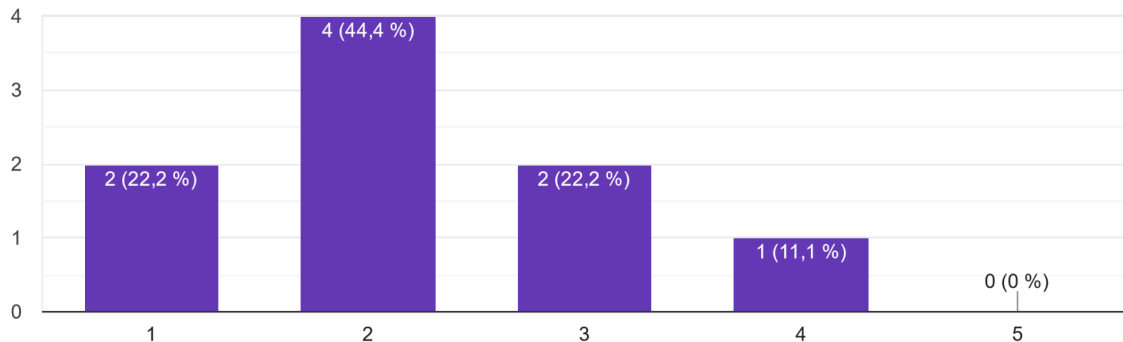
Was there anything about the interface you would change?

8 responses:

- maybe at the beginning to fade in the "buildings and crops"
- The menu on the right that explains all the different items in the game was a bit buggy. In theory it's a good idea to make it pop out as you click on the little arrow though.
- Click on quest indicator to display full text again. The length of flavor text on quest descriptions makes it hard to read and understand
- Info panel could be more obvious
- Make more visible where the Action-Points are
- Needs major overhaul
- Information about the tiles (i.e. is a crop fully grown and ready to harvest)
- i would also add information about the diffrent soil types, grass and water tiles and how they work in the information panel

Did anything feel clunky or awkward?

8 responses:

- no
- Some tiles that were shown as "soil" weren't able to be planted on because they were out of frame. I think it would be better if they just showed up as "deserted" so you wouldn't get the idea that it's possible to expand in that direction even further.
- The borders of playing field is not clear, plants outside the playing area confused me when I first started.
- When clicking on unworkable tile, an empty red panel opens it was confusing
- Most of it xD
- pressing on tiles felt annoying
- Sometimes huts could not be placed and no information given

- if you open the plan menu i tried to close it with a left m,ouse click instead the right mouse click

Are there any controls or interface features you would like to see added?
9 responses:
- Some sort of tool that highlights where areas are about to change
- no - its really good!
- I think the controls and the features are fine as they are
- An option to revert changes on tiles, demolish buildings
- Visual clarity of growing and harvestable plants could be better
- Streamer Interaction :D
- Let me press on buildings first and put them on tiles like in most games
- No
- a summary of the water and food consuption/production per turn. it would by nice, if the AP consumtion of the buildings would be displayed at all time in the information panel and building panel

5. Interpretation and Evaluation

Demographic Information

The majority of the playtesters are aged between 25-34, with an equal representation of male and female gamers. Most of them play games several times a week, with a strong preference for PC as the gaming platform. The favourite game genres among the playtesters are action, adventure, and strategy, with a notable interest in puzzle games. Simulation, shooter, and roguelike games have less popularity among the group.

General Game Questions

Players enjoyed the strategic planning and relaxing gameplay. They found the game engaging and cozy, reminding some players of classic city-building games and offering some strategic depth. They also felt motivated to learn more about the topic and strategies used in real life. Most players also spent sufficient time (30-60 mins) playing the game.

The clear winner, as a favorite level, was level 2. Levels 2 and 3, in general, were appreciated for their challenges, seasonal changes, and strategic variety. Also, levels with objectives were preferred by most players.

Levels 3 and 1 were the least favorite ones. Some found the tutorial levels were less appealing due to the lack of challenge. For others, free-play levels with less clear structure were less appealing, and the influence on surroundings felt unpredictable.

People found the game understandable but suggested improvements for visibility and more precise information. Some reported issues with tile borders and placement mechanics.

Formal Elements

Overall, test persons were able to understand and explain the objective of the game. Most test persons were clear on the objective. Only two test persons had trouble finding a strategy. Most test persons' strategy was to build many wells and farm millet since this combination seemed to be too strong. Half of the test persons didn't find any loopholes. The other half of the test persons pointed out that wells and planting millet work too well. Some test persons mentioned that the different features need more balancing, especially half-moons. They also would like more elements added, like different strategies or plant types. Test persons wish for better explanations of the water system and the seasons. Other test persons indicated that the tutorials were too long.

Procedures, Rules, Interface and Controls

Controls were already well understood and felt natural. There are few minor improvements possible, for example it was suggested to add simple indicators for camera movement and improve how the "Build Menu" is closed.

In general, the procedures, mechanics and rules of the game were well understood, but there were also specific areas noted for improvement. While most mechanics were clear, we found that players needed more information about the soil change system. For one, the system needs a better introduction and explanation during the tutorials. But even when the concept is understood, players still need better indicators about the current state of their soil and how it is going to change.
To a lesser degree this can be extended to information about crops. While the information about crop growth is clear in general, it is easy to overlook harvestable crops, which can be especially frustrating when players are short on food resources.

Players also reported a few bugs and several other minor improvement suggestions, which we added to our task list accordingly.

6. Further Steps

Important:
- Info screen doesn't work correctly, probably due to different screen resolutions.
- Placement of huts doesn't work correctly since it takes up four tiles. Only building them works correctly at the moment.
- When performing an action using the farming hut, that doesn't work, it still costs action points
- Half-moons take too long to become water tiles.
- Sometimes, tiles display wrong sprites and go back to normal when interacting with tiles.
- Sometimes during harvesting other tiles disappear.
- Font readability isn't good enough for long texts.
- Improve closing of build menu.

Maybe Important:
- Crops can be harvested before fully grown.
- Some sprites need resizing/adjusting.
- Players want to open the quest text again after closing the initial message.
- Players can build on sand.
- Building huts with no available slots consume actions but do nothing.
- Improve explanation on building villager huts.
- More information about the different soil types
- Difference between rocky tiles and hard soil is hard to tell.
- Clicking on tiles that don't have actions creates a red window.

Minor:
- Level 1: Huts are hidden behind quest info panel.
- Level 2: Players were confused by the term "Lakes".
- Display amount of food ready to be harvested.
- Adding action point costs for buildings and crops to info panel.
- It wasn't obvious that grass could be turned into arable soil.
- Trees increase water consumption.
- Quest texts are too long.
- Add tutorial for camera controls.
- Main menu is sometimes overlapped by quest text.