GAME DESIGN DOCUMENT

GAME OVERVIEW

Title

- Working Title: *Heximperium*

Genre

- Casual 4X (Single-Player, Turn-Based)

Platforms

- PC - Steam

Engine

- Unity

Pitch

- A **streamlined single-player 4X** (Explore, Expand, Exploit, Exterminate) that **replaces warfare (Exterminate) with a tactical puzzle** for the final scoring. The player **manages scouts**, **claims tiles**, **invests in infrastructures** to grow his empire, then **entertains his people by organizing a big party**.
- Marketing :
  Single-player, **miniaturized 4X game** in a low fantasy universe where the player **grows his empire and scores** through smart **entertainment placement**—**replacing** the traditional "**exterminate**" phase with an final "**entertain**" puzzle. Explore a **procedurally generated map**, expand your territory to gather new resources, exploit them to develop your economy, and then when your empire is thriving, entertain your people by placing entertainments into a final dedicated phase (**Explore, Expand, Exploit, Entertain**).
  Designed as a **fresh take on the 4X genre**, it introduces **newcomers** to 4X mechanics while offering **regular** players a more **relaxed, streamlined experience**—without sacrificing deep strategic planning.
- Elevator :
  A concise single-player 4X experience that replaces traditional objectives with a puzzle-like scoring system.

- Key selling points:
  - **"Experience Streamlined 4X"**: Fewer mechanics, same strategic depth—making it more accessible.
  - **"Stress-Free Game"**: No competitors, no defeat—just score as much as you can.
  - **"Master Scoring"**: Optimize your scoring with a unique scoring system that rewards creativity and planning.
  - **"Single Player & Adult-Life Friendly"**: Play whenever you want and finish a full session in just 1–2 hours.

Pillars

- **Minimalist 4X Experience**: Captures the essence of 4X in a compact, approachable format.
- **Puzzle Scoring**: No warfare; instead, the player uses puzzle-like mechanics for scoring points.
- **Clarity & Accessibility**: All costs, incomes, and information are clearly communicated to the player.

References

- Classic 4X games (*Civilization*, *Humankind, Endless Space*) for the overarching structure.
- Board games (*Carcassonne*) for tile management.
- *Dorfromantik* & *Islanders* as a reference for simplicity and clarity.

GAME DESIGN

3C (Character, Camera, Controls)

- **Character** :
  - The player takes on the role of an unseen ruler managing the empire's expansion, resource acquisition, and growth. There is no avatar or persona—this is a purely strategic perspective, allowing the player to interact directly with the hex map and its resources.
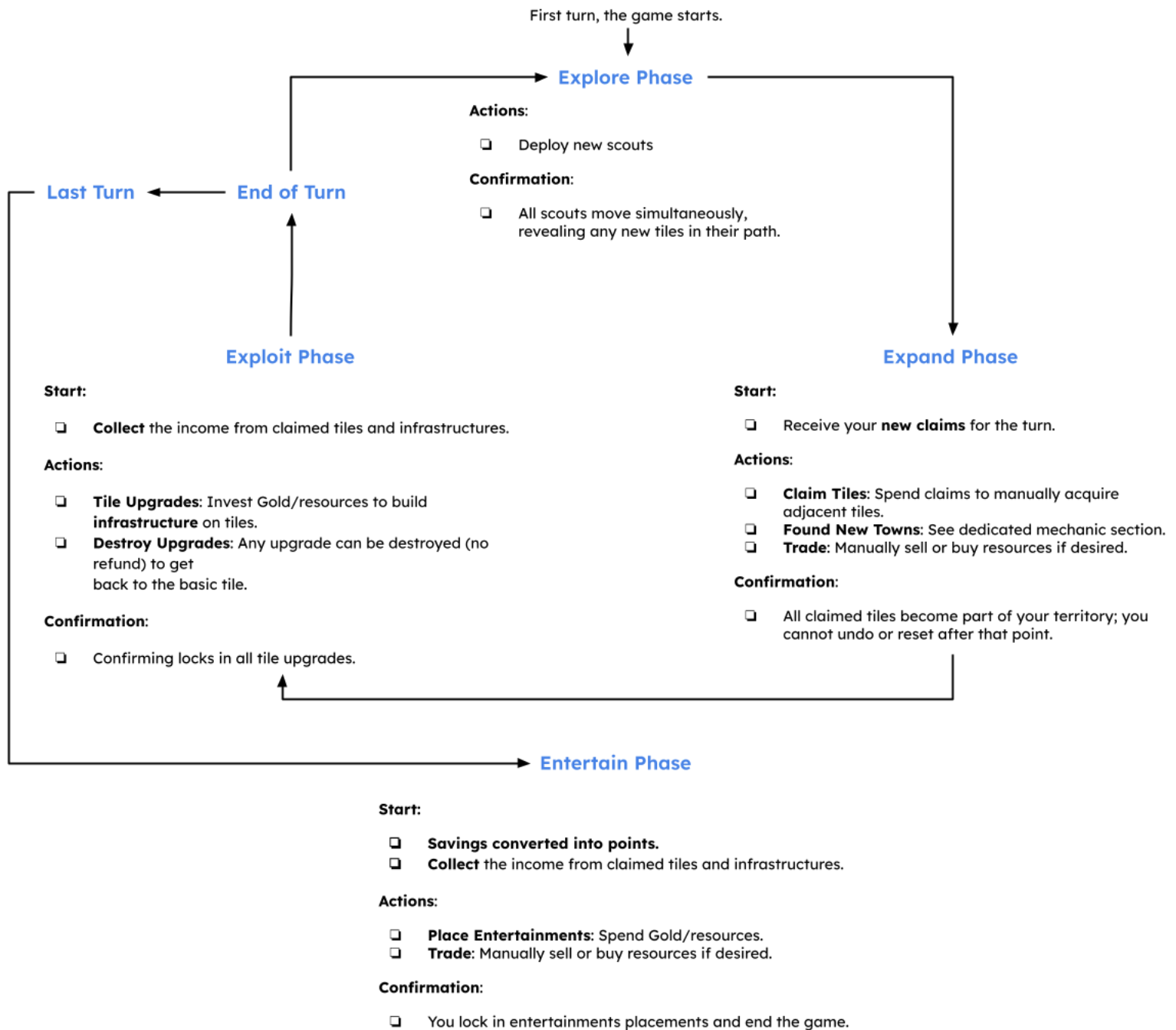
- **Camera** :
  - **Orthographic**
    - **Top-down** view of the hex grid.
    - No rotation or tilt; the map is always oriented in a fixed direction with an angle of 65° on X.
  - **Zoom**
    - **Continuous zoom** controlled by the **mouse wheel** (exponential speed).
    - **Minimum Zoom**: Focus on a small cluster of tiles (around a dozen).
    - **Maximum Zoom**: Overview of the entire map.
    - The zoom speed and exact values will be **fine-tuned** during prototyping.
  - **Panning**
    - **Keyboard**: Move the camera using **WASD** or **directional arrow** keys.
    - **Edge-Scrolling**: Moving the mouse cursor to the screen edges also pans the camera.
    - **Click-and-Drag**: **Right-click** and drag the mouse to move the view.
    - The camera is **locked within the map bounds**, preventing scrolling into void space.
  - **Accessibility & Rebinding**
    - **All camera controls** (keybinds for panning, zoom speed, etc.) are fully **rebindable**.
  -
- **Controls** :
  - **Mouse**
    - **Left Click**: Select/interact with tiles, confirm actions in UI (e.g., building infrastructure).
    - **Right Click**: Camera panning (as already noted under "Camera").
  - **Keyboard**
    - **WASD / Arrow Keys**: Camera panning.
    - **Enter**: End turn / proceed to the next phase.
    - **Escape**: Open pause menu or settings.
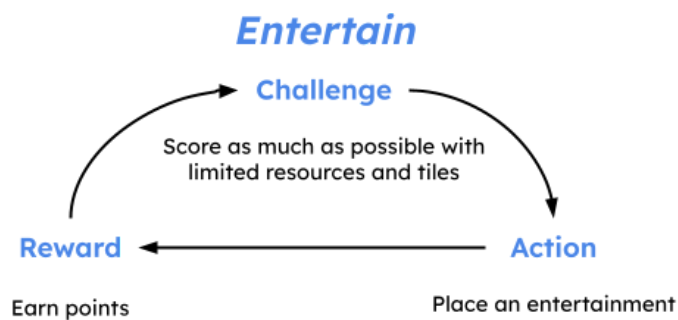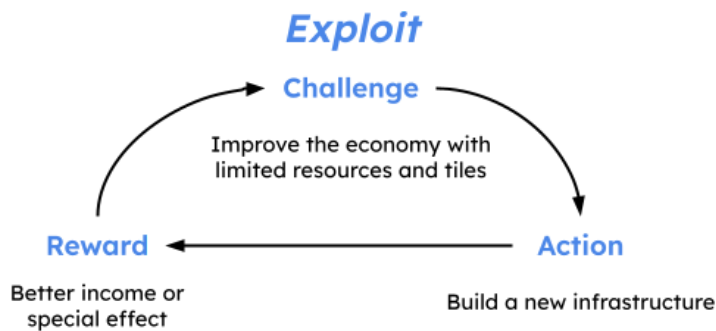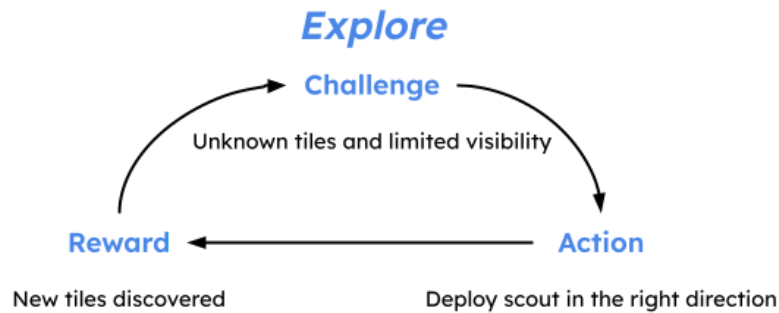   - **Space**: Recenter camera to main Town.

Gameplay Loop

Each **turn** is split into three **phases**, in the order of **Explore → Expand → Exploit**.
The player must **finish** each sub-phase before moving on to the next turn.
After the **last turn** (20 turns) the **Entertain** phase starts.

First turn, the game starts.

Explore Phase

Actions:

- ❏ Deploy new scouts

Confirmation:

- ❏ All scouts move simultaneously, revealing any new tiles in their path.

Last Turn ← **End of Turn**

Exploit Phase

Start:

- ❏ **Collect** the income from claimed tiles and infrastructures.

Actions:

- ❏ **Tile Upgrades:** Invest Gold/resources to build **infrastructure** on tiles.
- ❏ **Destroy Upgrades:** Any upgrade can be destroyed (no refund) to get back to the basic tile.

Confirmation:

- ❏ Confirming locks in all tile upgrades.

Expand Phase

Start:

- ❏ Receive your **new claims** for the turn.

Actions:

- ❏ **Claim Tiles:** Spend claims to manually acquire adjacent tiles.
- ❏ **Found New Towns:** See dedicated mechanic section.
- ❏ **Trade:** Manually sell or buy resources if desired.

Confirmation:

- ❏ All claimed tiles become part of your territory; you cannot undo or reset after that point.

Entertain Phase

Start:

- ❏ **Savings converted into points.**
- ❏ **Collect** the income from claimed tiles and infrastructures.

Actions:

- ❏ **Place Entertainments:** Spend Gold/resources.
- ❏ **Trade:** Manually sell or buy resources if desired.

Confirmation:

- ❏ You lock in entertainments placements and end the game.

Each **phase** has its **own gameplay loop**, giving unique interest to it.

Explore

Challenge
Unknown tiles and limited visibility

Reward
New tiles discovered

Action
Deploy scout in the right direction

Expand

Challenge
Expand the territory with limited claims

Reward
New tile exploitable

Action
Claim a new tile

Exploit

Challenge
Improve the economy with limited resources and tiles

Reward
Better income or special effect

Action
Build a new infrastructure

Entertain

Challenge
Score as much as possible with limited resources and tiles

Reward
Earn points

Action
Place an entertainment

Available during all phases:

- **Reset**: allow the player to **undo all actions** in the current phase, as long as he hasn't confirmed it yet. Will be implemented later.
- **Upgrade tree**: Available in a dedicated menu at every phase, offering upgrades for every aspect of the game.

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Mechanics

All written values are subject to change.

Tiles

Each tile on the grid is defined by its type, which can be one of the following.

Basic Tiles

Simple tiles that only **generate Gold**. They can be **enhanced** (see below) to **increase income** or **add a special effect**.

- Meadow → 1 Gold
- Hill → 1 Gold
- Forest → 2 Gold

Resource Tiles

Specific tiles, bringing **Special Resources** and a reduction of Special Resources cost to their associated system if enhanced.

- Wild pasture → Horse Ranch, reduction to Exploration oriented Infrastructures and Upgrades.
- Flax field → Weaving Hut, reduction to Expansion oriented Infrastructures and Upgrades.
- Stone deposit→ Quarry, reduction to Exploitation oriented Infrastructures and Upgrades.
- Crystal vein → Crystal Mine, reduction to Entertainment oriented Infrastructures and Upgrades.

Hazardous Tiles

Harsh terrain that **slows scouts** and **provides no income**. They can be enhanced but only with **one basic Infrastructure** that cannot be enhanced and does not combine with others. **Claiming** a Hazardous tile **removes the slow** effect.

- Mountain → Goat Pen
- Desert → Nomad Tent
- Water → Fishing Hut
- Swamp → Peat Pit

Special Tiles

Specific tiles, with **powerful effects** unlocked once the tile is claimed. Rarity is variable. Cannot be enhanced. Will be designed and implemented later.

Resources

Resources are divided into **two categories**: **Gold**, used for general actions, and **Special Resources**, which serve specific strategic purposes.

Gold

- **Primary currency** used for:
    - Building infrastructures
    - Enhancing infrastructures
    - Unlocking upgrades
    - Placing entertainments
- **Income Source**: Gold is generated passively each turn from claimed tiles and can be increased through infrastructures and upgrades.

Special Resources

Special Resources is a **unique resource** generated by four different infrastructures. This resource is used for **specialized choice**:

- Enhancing infrastructures
- Unlocking upgrades
- Placing entertainments

Scouts

Scouts are **specialized units** designed to **explore the map**, uncovering new tiles.

Acquisition

During the **Exploration** phase the player can place as many **scouts** as his current **limit** allows him (base limit 1, upgradeable). The scouts are **free** and every time when scout expires the player can replace it with a new scout.

Scout Variables

Scouts are governed by **three variables**, all **upgradeable**:

1. **Speed**
   - Definition: Number of tiles a scout can move per turn.
   - Base Value: 2 tiles per turn
2. **Lifespan**
   - Definition: Number of turns a scout remains active before vanishing.
   - Base Value: 2 turns
3. **Reveal Radius**
   - Definition: Number of tiles revealed around the scout's current position.
   - Base Value: 1 (the tile the scout is on and adjacent tiles)

Mechanics

- **Direction Assignment**
  - The player assigns a starting point and direction for each scout.
  - Scouts move in a straight line along their assigned direction each turn.
- **Interaction with Hazardous Tiles**
  - Movement Cost: Moving into a hazardous tile doubles the movement cost (i.e., costs 2 instead of 1).
- **Starting position**
  - Default: Scouts can only start in towns.
  - Infrastructure: Certain infrastructures will allow scouts to start from new positions, enabling access to additional scouting areas.
- **End Condition:** Vanish when lifespan ends or map edge is reached.
- **Fog of War:** Revealed tiles remain visible permanently.

Claims

Claims are a fundamental mechanic that allows the player to **expand his empire's territory** by acquiring new tiles. Each turn, the player earns a certain number of claims, which he can use to **manually select** and add **adjacent tiles** to his domain.

Earning Claims

- **Base Claims per Turn**: The player gains a fixed number of claims at the start of each turn.
  - Initial Value: 4 claims per turn at the start of the game.

Using Claims

- **Manual Selection**: The player uses claims to select adjacent tiles and add them to his empire.

- ○ Adjacent Tiles Only: New tiles must be directly adjacent to already claimed tiles.
- **Claim Cost**
  - ○ Basic & Resource Tiles: 1 claim per tile.
  - ○ Hazardous Tiles: 2 claims per tile (reflecting their role as obstacles).
  - ○ Special Tiles: 3 claims per tile (aligned with their higher rarity and powerful effects).

Towns

Towns serve as key **expansion points**, allowing the player to establish new territories **without relying solely on adjacent tile** claims. Unlike other infrastructures, towns can be **placed directly on unclaimed tiles**, effectively creating **separate regions** that remain part of the same empire.

Mechanics

- **Placement**: New towns can be established during the *Expand Phase*.
- **Tile Restrictions**: Towns can only be placed on basic tiles. There are no other placement restrictions.
- **Unlocking Towns**: The number of towns a player can found starts at one and increases through a specific upgrades.
- **Cost**: Founding a new Town cost 100 Gold.
- **Confirmation & Permanence**: Once a town is placed and the *Expand Phase* is confirmed, it cannot be destroyed or relocated.

Functionality

- **Expansion Hubs**: Towns can create a new territory not linked to the initial one, and so starting claim tiles disconnected from the initial territory.
- **Scouting Points**: Towns serve as starting points for scouts, identical to the initial town. There is no concept of a "capital"; all towns function equally.

Infrastructures

Infrastructures represent **tile enhancements** that unlock **resources**, increase **Gold yield**, or provide **special effects**. Each infrastructure is **tied to specific tile types**, meaning it can only be built on compatible terrain. Some infrastructures are available in a **limited number** (can be upgraded).

Basic tiles have 4 choices, Hazardous and Resources tiles only have 1.

Infrastructure	Allowed Tiles	Effect	Cost	Available copy
Village	Meadow, Hill	+X Gold (X equal the sum of the income of adjacent tiles)	40 Gold	3
Windmill	Meadow, Hill	Remove base tile income. +2 Gold to surrounding Farms	20 Gold	
Farm	Meadow, Hill	+2 Gold	5 Gold	
Tavern	Meadow, Forest	+3 Gold, Scout Starting Position	15 Gold	4
Shrine	Hill, Forest	+1 Gold to surrounding claimed tiles	15 Gold	
Lumber Camp	Forest	+4 Gold	10 Gold	
Woodcutter's Guild	Forest	+2 Gold per Lumber Camp in the empire	50 Gold	2
Goat Pen	Mountain	+1 Gold	5 Gold	
Nomad Tent	Desert	+1 Gold	5 Gold	
Fishing Hut	Water	+1 Gold	5 Gold	
Peat Pit	Swamp	+1 Gold	5 Gold	
Horse Ranch	Wild Pasture	+3 Special Resources -1 cost in Special Resources for Upgrades and Enhancements related to Exploration)	10 Gold	
Weaving Hut	Flax Field	+3 Special Resources -1 cost in Special Resources for Upgrades and Enhancements related to Expansion)	10 Gold	
Quarry	Stone Deposit	+3 Special Resources -1 cost in Special Resources for Upgrades and Enhancements related to Exploitation)	10 Gold	
Crystal Mine	Crystal Vein	+3 Special Resources -1 cost in Special Resources for Upgrades and Enhancements related to Entertainment)	10 Gold	

Infrastructures enhancements

The seven **infrastructures** of the **Basic tiles** can be **enhanced once**. The player has the choice between **two enhancements**, those two always contain **one economy** related (Exploitation), and the other is related to **one of the other systems** (Exploration, Expansion, Entertainment).

They cost some **gold and Special Resources**, and the cost in **Special Resources is reduced** by the number of Infrastructures built on **Resources tiles**.

Infrastructure	Enhancement Name	Effect	Related System	Cost
Farm	Enclosed Farm	+4 Gold	Exploitation	3 Special Resources
	Freehold Farm	+6 Gold but cannot be boosted by Windmills	Exploitation	3 Special Resources
Windmill	Granary Windmill	Each adjacent Farm (except Freehold Farm) gives +2 Gold to the Windmill	Exploitation	10 Gold & 5 Special Resources
	Festival Bakery	+2 Gold & Tasting Pavilion on this tile and around gain +10 Points	Entertainment	10 Gold & 5 Special Resources
Tavern	Merchant's Lodge	+3 Gold per Tavern, Village and Town in the empire	Exploitation	15 Gold & 5 Special Resources
	Explorer's Lodge	+3 Gold & +1 Scout limit	Exploration	15 Gold & 5 Special Resources
Village	Market Village	+6 Gold for each unique Infrastructure adjacent	Exploitation	10 Gold & 15 Special Resources
	Celebration Village	+2 Gold & Minstrel Stage and Parade Route on this tile and around gain +5 Points per Celebration Village in the empire	Entertainment	10 Gold & 15 Special Resources
Shrine	Temple	+1 Gold to each adjacent Infrastructure	Exploitation	10 Gold & 10 Special Resources
	Waystone Chapel	+2 Gold & +1 Claim	Expansion	10 Gold & 10 Special Resources
Lumber Camp	Sawmill	+2 Gold & +3 Special Resources	Exploitation	5 Gold & 10 Special Resources

	Outfitter's Camp	+1 Gold & Scout starting position & Scouts starting here get +1 Speed & +1 Lifespan	Exploration	5 Gold & 10 Special Resources
Woodcutter's Guild	Artisan's Guild	+2 Gold per Resource tile with an infrastructure in the empire	Exploitation	30 Gold & 20 Special Resources
	Settler's Guild	+4 Gold per town in the empire & +1 Town limit	Expansion	30 Gold & 20 Special Resources

Gold costs and income rationalized here :

📗 Heximperium - Infrastructure_Economy_Balance

Towns enhancements

Towns can be enhanced along **four distinct paths**, each corresponding to a **core system.** The **first enhancement** defines the **specialization**. After this, the Town can be further enhanced by choosing one of **two advanced enhancements** within that same system.

Enhancement	Level	System	Effect	Cost
Frontier Town	2	Exploration	Scouts starting from this Town generate +2 Gold per tile revealed. Grants access to two Exploration-oriented enhancements	20 Gold + 10 Special Resources
Pathfinder Town	3	Exploration	Scouts from this Town gain +2 Speed & +1 Reveal Radius	30 Gold + 15 Special Resources
Surveyors' Town	3	Exploration	+1 Scout Limit. On enhancement, spawn 1 Scout at this Town (does not count toward the limit)	30 Gold + 15 Special Resources
Dominion Town	2	Expansion	Claiming a tile produces +1 Gold Grants access to two Expansion-oriented enhancements	20 Gold + 10 Special Resources
Territorial Town	3	Expansion	+3 Claims per turn	30 Gold + 15 Special Resources
Strategists' Town	3	Expansion	+2 saved Claims per turn Saved Claims produces +2 Gold at the end of the Expand phase	30 Gold + 15 Special Resources

Trade Town	2	Exploitation	+6 Gold per turn Grants access to two Exploitation-oriented enhancements	20 Gold + 10 Special Resources
Industrial Town	3	Exploitation	All enhanced Resource tiles produce +1 Special Resource per turn	30 Gold + 15 Special Resources
Mercantile Town	3	Exploitation	All infrastructures adjacent to this Town generate +3 additional Gold	30 Gold + 15 Special Resources
Festive Town	2	Entertainment	Entertainment tiles cost 1 less Gold Grants access to two Entertainment-oriented enhancements	20 Gold + 10 Special Resources
Wonders Town	3	Entertainment	All Mystic Gardens gain +5 Points	30 Gold + 15 Special Resources
Cultural Town	3	Entertainment	Grants +50 Points for each unique Entertainment type adjacent to this Town	30 Gold + 15 Special Resources

Entertainments

Entertainments are placeable only during the **Entertain phase** (after the last turn) and are here to **mark** as many **points** as possible.

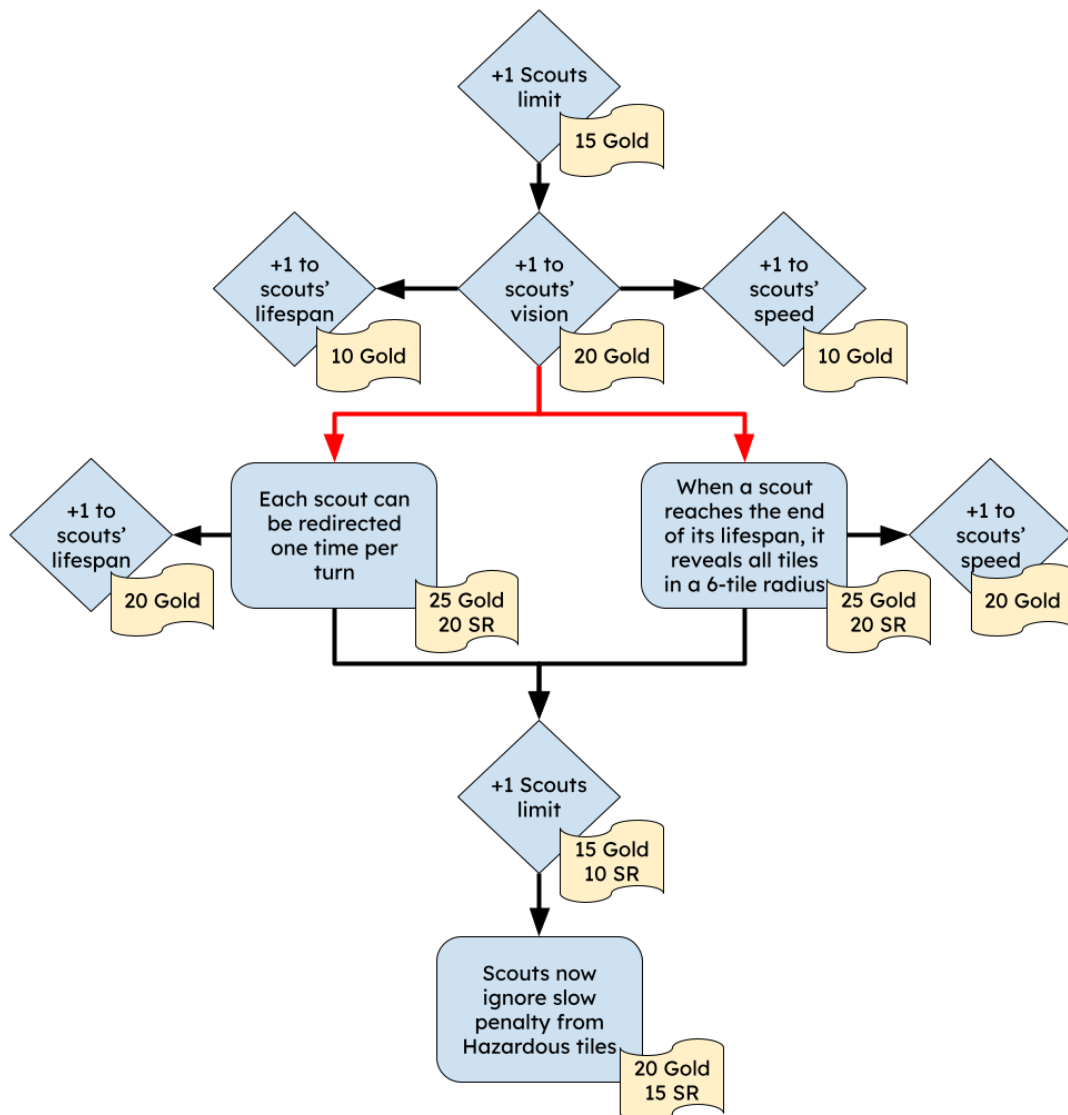| Entertainment	Usage	Effect	Cost
Minstrel Stage	Filler	Grants +5 points	10 Gold
Tasting Pavilion	Blob cluster	Grants +3 points Gains +4 for each adjacent Tasting Pavilion and Minstrel Stage	10 Gold & 5 Special Resources
Parade Route	Zone builder	Grants +2 points Gains +3 points for each other Parade Route connected to this one through a continuous line of Parade Routes A **single** Minstrel Stage can bridge a one gap tile between Parade Routes (without bringing more points)	10 Gold & 10 Special Resources
Mystic Garden	Pattern breaker	Grants + 5 points Gains +5 points for each adjacent entertainment that is a different type of this one	15 Gold & 10 Special Resources

Upgrades

At any phase, the player can access **Upgrade Trees**.
 Currently, two trees are available: **Exploration** and **Expansion**. Additional trees for **Exploitation** and **Entertainment** will be introduced later.
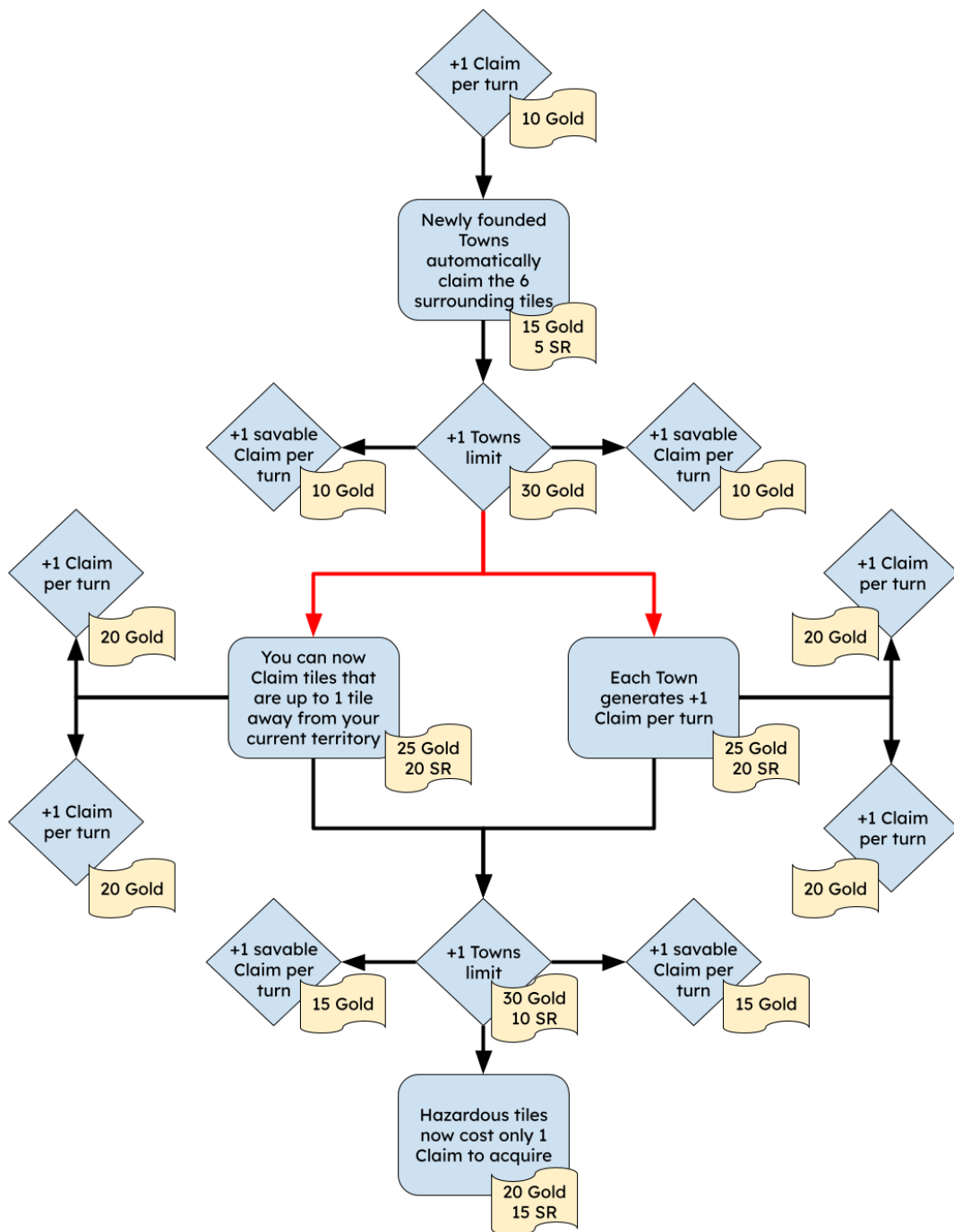 Each tree provides a mix of **stat boosts** and **unique mechanical perks**, allowing players to shape their strategy.

Red arrows indicate **exclusive choices** — selecting one upgrade will **lock the other path.**

Exploration tree

Expansion tree

```
                        ┌─────────────┐
                        │ +1 Claim    │
                        │ per turn    │
                        └──────┬──────┘
                          10 Gold
                               │
                               ▼
                    ┌──────────────────┐
                    │ Newly founded    │
                    │ Towns            │
                    │ automatically    │
                    │ claim the 6      │
                    │ surrounding tiles│
                    └──────────────────┘
                       15 Gold
                       5 SR
```

- +1 Claim per turn — 10 Gold
- Newly founded Towns automatically claim the 6 surrounding tiles — 15 Gold, 5 SR
- +1 savable Claim per turn — 10 Gold
- +1 Towns limit — 30 Gold
- +1 savable Claim per turn — 10 Gold
- +1 Claim per turn — 20 Gold
- You can now Claim tiles that are up to 1 tile away from your current territory — 25 Gold, 20 SR
- Each Town generates +1 Claim per turn — 25 Gold, 20 SR
- +1 Claim per turn — 20 Gold
- +1 Claim per turn — 20 Gold
- +1 Claim per turn — 20 Gold
- +1 savable Claim per turn — 15 Gold
- +1 Towns limit — 30 Gold, 10 SR
- +1 savable Claim per turn — 15 Gold
- Hazardous tiles now cost only 1 Claim to acquire — 20 Gold, 15 SR

Trade

During the Exploit and Entertain phases, players may **trade Gold and Special Resources** at a **fixed rate**. Trading is **less efficient than direct production** and is intended as a flexible fallback.

- **Buy:** 2 Special Resources for 10 Gold
- **Sell:** 2 Special Resources for 5 Gold

Trade is unlimited but costly—timing and resource planning remain key to efficiency.

Tutorial

Format: 2 turns on a small, controlled map
Goal: Introduce core systems step-by-step with minimal cognitive load
Tone: Interactive, no-fail, clearly guided

Introduction - Pre-Turn 1

Narration:
Welcome to Heximperium.
As ruler of a rising domain, your task is to build a thriving economy, expand your influence, and guide your people toward prosperity.
You have a limited number of turns to shape your empire before the arrival of the Grand Jubilee — a grand celebration of your nation's unity and culture.
When the time comes, you will be responsible for organizing the festivities, placing grand entertainments across your lands to earn glory and acclaim.
Every decision you make will echo in that final celebration. Let's begin.

Objective:

- "Start your first turn"

Explore Phase – Turn 1

Narration:

Before expanding your territory, you need to uncover what lies beyond. For this, you have access to Scouts.
Scouts are dispatched from Towns and travel in a straight line across the unknown, revealing the surrounding land.
They move each turn until their lifespan ends or they reach the edge of the map.

Objectives:

- "Click on your Town to spawn a Scout"
- "Now select a direction by placing your cursor and clicking"
- "End the phase to watch your Scout begin exploring"

Expand Phase – Turn 1

Narration:

Now that you've revealed new lands, it's time to claim them for your domain. Your territory is outlined by a pink border, and you can expand it to any tile directly adjacent to it.
You gain a fixed number of Claims each turn. Claims do not carry over, so plan ahead and use your Scouts wisely to ensure you always have options for expansion.

Objectives:

- "Click on an unclaimed tile adjacent to your domain"
- "Click the Claim button to add it to your territory"
- "Finish the phase"

Exploit Phase – Turn 1

Narration:

Now it's time to grow your economy.
Claimed tiles produce a small amount of Gold by default, but you can build Infrastructures on them to significantly increase income.
Each tile type offers different building options, and some infrastructures interact with others, creating powerful combos.

Objectives:

- "Click on the highlighted tile"
- "Click the highlighted interaction to build a Farm"

Narration:

This tile now produces more Gold. Let's go a step further by building a Windmill nearby — it will boost the Farm's output.

Objectives:

- "Click on the next highlighted tile"
- "Click the highlighted interaction to build a Windmill"
- "End the turn"

Explore Phase – Turn 2

Narration:

Well done — you've completed your first turn.
You're now back in the Exploration phase. You've reached your current Scout limit, but don't worry — you'll unlock ways to increase it later.
For now, just observe as your existing Scout continues its path, revealing more of the world.

Objective:

- "Finish the phase."

Expand Phase – Turn 2

Narration:

During the Expansion phase, you can do more than just claim new tiles — you can also found new Towns.
Towns are expensive, but they can be placed on unclaimed tiles far from your current territory, letting you expand from a new location and unlock fresh strategic options.
Take this extra Gold and try it yourself.

Objectives:

- "Click on an unclaimed tile, preferably one not adjacent to your current territory."
- "Click the highlighted interaction to build a new Town."
- "Finish the phase."

Exploit Phase – Turn 2

Narration:

You've learned how to grow and expand your nation — now it's time to improve what you've built.
Infrastructures can be enhanced using Gold and Special Resources. Take this bonus to get started.
Special Resources are only produced on specific tiles, so use Scouts to locate them and exploit them efficiently.

Objectives:

- "Click on the highlighted Farm."
- "Click on the highlighted Enhancement option."

Narration:

Well done! This Farm will now generate even more Gold.
Each infrastructure has two enhancement options, and not all focus on economy — some connect to other systems.
Upgrading Towns opens even more strategic choices.

Objective:

- "Finish the turn."

Entertain Phase – Grand Jubilee

Narration:

You've reached the end of this era. Now it's time for your people to celebrate during the Grand Jubilee.
You'll receive one full turn of income to place Entertainments and score as many points as possible.
This time, you'll get some extra resources to help organize the festivities.
Remember: savings from before this phase are converted into points, but not at a good rate — invest wisely to make your celebration grand.

Objectives:

- **"Click on a claimed tile."**
- **"Place an Entertainment."**
- **"Place as many Entertainments as you can or want."**
- **"Finish the game."**

Tutorial Complete

Narration:

You now know all the basics to play Heximperium — expanding your territory, building a thriving economy, and organizing a celebration worthy of your people.
You're ready to begin a full game and aim for a high score. Good luck, and may your empire flourish!

MAP DESIGN

For now, the game uses **fixed maps** — one small map for the tutorial and one for the main game.
Later in development, once the prototype is more advanced, the map system will support **procedural generation**.

To support this, we're planning for multiple **biomes**, each with distinct tile distributions and characteristics. Initial biome types include:

- **Grassland**
- **Mountain**
- **Desert**
- **Swamp**

These biomes will influence terrain layout and provide variation in gameplay through different infrastructure options, resource availability, or movement constraints.

Special rules

Starting position

The player's starting position is **always at the center of the map**, placed on a **Grassland tile**.

The **18 surrounding tiles** (within a two-hex radius) must meet the following conditions:

- **No Special tiles**
- **Maximum of four Hazardous tiles**

At game start:

- The center tile is automatically replaced by a **Town**
- All tiles within **one hex of the center** (the immediate 6 surrounding tiles) are automatically **claimed** as part of the player's initial territory

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UI

UI Overview & Goals

Core Principles

- Clarity and Minimalism: Emphasize easy navigation, show only relevant information.
- Phase-Based Separation: Only show actions relevant to the current phase.

Color-Coded Phases

- Each phase has a unique color tint, to guide the player.
  - Explore → Blue
  - Expand → Green
  - Exploit → Yellow
  - Entertain → Purple
- This quick color association makes it instantly clear which phase the player is in, supporting the game's emphasis on sequential, phase-by-phase gameplay.

Menus Structure

Menu Flowchart
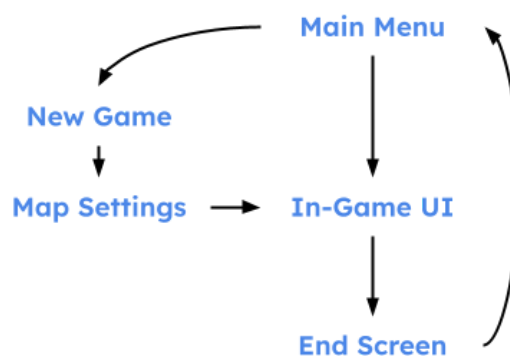
Menu Roles

- **Main Menu:** Start a new game, load a saved game, access settings, exit.
- **Map Settings:** Let the player select map size, difficulty, seed, etc.
- **In-Game UI:** The main gameplay interface, described in detail below.
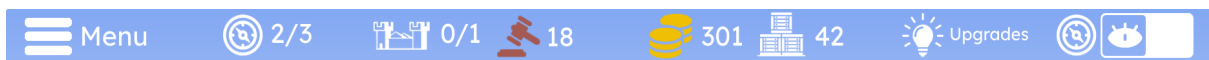- **End Screen:** Displays final score and offers restart or main menu options.

In-Game UI Layout

This section details the standard HUD elements visible during gameplay.

Global

Resource Bar

- Show scouts and town limits.
- Show current available Claims.
- Shows current Gold and Special resources.
- Hovering a value opens a tooltip explaining current income.

Resources Bar Mock-up

Upgrades Menu

- A button is available in the resource bar to open the Upgrades Menu.
- The menu is divided in four categories, one for each Upgrades tree.
- Hovering an upgrade shows its effect and its costs.
- Exclusive upgrades are linked by a chain, when one is bought the other becomes red.

Phase Indicator

- A clear "Phase Title" label showing the active phase (Explore, Expand, Exploit, Entertain).
- The whole UI change is color depending on the current phase.
- A button "End Phase" is present to confirm the phase and pass to the next.

Phase indicator Mock-up

Color palette

Information Pop-up

- Appears when hovering on a tile or an entertainment.
- Displays tile type, current income and claim cost (if not claimed) or entertainment's points.
- For the tile popup an offset is added (depending on the zoom) to avoid overlapping the neighbors of the tile.

Scouts and Entertainments visual toggles

To improve tile visibility during play, the interface includes contextual **toggle buttons**:

- **Scouts Toggle**
  During the main game, players can hide Scouts using a toggle button (useful when Scouts obscure tile details).
  At the start of each **Exploration Phase**, this toggle is automatically set to **ON** to ensure Scouts are visible again.
- **Entertainment Toggle**
  During the **Entertain Phase**, all Scouts are automatically hidden.
  A separate toggle is available to hide or show placed **Entertainment tiles**, allowing players to check the underlying tile before making decisions.

Explore Phase

All tiles serving as starting positions for scouts are highlighted.

Clicking on those tiles shows a button to place a scout at this position. By doing so the player has a new scout and has to choose a direction.

Expand Phase

Clicking on an unclaimed tile locks the pop-up and adds a button "Claim" (red out if not enough claims) and a button "Found new Town" (red out if not available).

Exploit Phase

Clicking on a claimed tile without an infrastructure shows a radial menu listing all possible infrastructures for the tile. Hovering those infrastructure buttons, shows a pop-up detailing the infrastructure (cost, effect and what the player will actually gain with it). Clicking on a button builds the infrastructure.
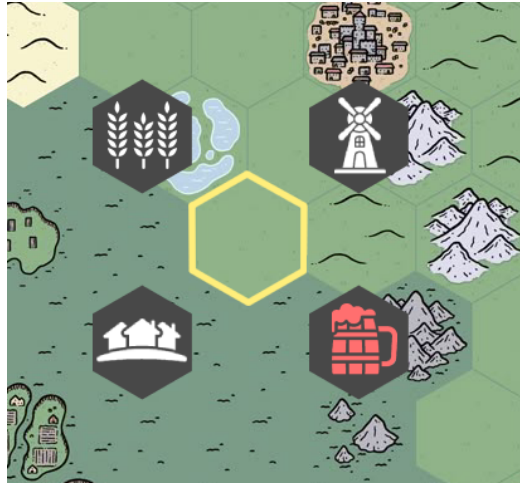
Infrastructure menu Mock-up

Unavailable infrastructures are in red (not enough resources or cap reached).

Entertain Phase

Clicking on a tile shows a radial menu listing all entertainments available. Hovering an entertainment show its cost, effect and highlight the tiles having an entertainment that synergize with this one.

ART DIRECTION

For now, the game will use **placeholder art**. The focus is on developing and testing the **core mechanics** and gameplay systems.

Visual design will be addressed later in production, once the prototype is stable and the key concepts are validated.

VFX & Animations

Type	Trigger	Details
VFX	Scout/Entertainment spawn	Sparks around the tile
Animation	Scout/Entertainment spawn	Fade in icon
Animation	Tile revealed	The tile spins on itself (one side fog of war, the other the actual tile) then stops on the actual tile side
Animation	Claim tile	Borders spawn as a point in the center of the tile, then expand to reach the edges

VFX	Claim tile	Sparks around the tile when the animation is complete
VFX	Build or destroy infrastructure	Big dust cloud over the whole tile, hiding the transition
VFX	Score reveal at the end of the game	Big fireworks around the score
Animation	Select a tile	Highlight around the tile

UI Style

The interface adopts a **minimalist**, **flat-colored** design with **slight transparency**, inspired by titles like *Humankind*. Its key elements include:

- **Light, Neutral Background Panels**: Softly tinted panels that allow a partial view of the map underneath.
- **Clean Iconography and Typography**: Straightforward, modern icons and a clear, readable font to minimize visual clutter.
- **Consistent Layout**: UI components are grouped logically, ensuring important information stands out without overwhelming the player.
- **Reduced Ornamentation**: Minimal gradients and borders, focusing on function over form to keep the player's attention on the board.