

**Note:** Expenditure of funds on Implementation Programs is contingent on the Province’s Declaration of Emergency and Emergency Orders being lifted and adherence to subsequent orders; in the meantime, applications will be processed and those approved will have required plans put into place so that we are prepared to implement as soon as change orders have occurred.

# Sustainability Implementation Program

## General Program Overview

The Sustainability Implementation Program (SIP) is designed to support stakeholders in BruceGreySimcoe to promote a new **sustainable** product, experience or initiative they’ve invested in by matching that investment with a social media campaign at a 2:1 ratio – for every one dollar you contribute, RTO7 will contribute two dollars toward the social media campaign. For example, the development of a new experience in the shoulder season, the implementation of a green initiative to help combat climate change or the development of an experience that instills a sense of community pride for both residents and visitors.

## Sustainability<sup>1</sup>

The aim of sustainable tourism is to increase the benefits and to reduce the negative impacts caused by tourism for destinations. Long-term sustainability can be achieved by seeking a suitable balance between:

- Protecting natural environments, wildlife and natural resources when developing and managing tourism activities (environmental),
- Providing authentic tourist experiences that celebrate and conserve heritage and culture (socio-cultural), and
- Creating socio-economic benefits and well-being for host communities through employment and income earning opportunities (economic).

Sustainable tourism development is a complex and continuous planning process of reinvesting in your most precious assets over time (people, places and processes). It can build local pride and confidence and requires the informed participation of all relevant local stakeholders, as well as strong political leadership.

It includes moving from a volume to a value-based approach, in which the tourist’s experience is more meaningful/satisfying and serves to raise their awareness about [sustainability issues](#) and promote [responsible and respectful tourism practices](#) on their part.

## Partner Eligibility

### Who can apply

- Established businesses or organizations including
  - Tourism Operator - The term tourism operator is defined as a consumer facing tourism business that has direct access to the consumer and relies on that consumer for their income
  - Destination Marketing Organizations and Not-for-profit organizations who run tourism focused activities such as “Friends” groups.

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<sup>1</sup> Definition ideas from UNWTO and the Tourism Foundation.

- Chambers of Commerce/Business Improvement Areas that coordinate tourism activities.
- Tourism Organizations/Associations that coordinate tourism activities.
- Municipalities/Conservation Authorities that organize tourism activities.
- You must be capable of demonstrating financial and other capacity for the project.
- You must be located within Bruce, Grey & Simcoe Counties.
- Organizations outside BruceGreySimcoe may apply if the physical structure and activity or festival takes place in BruceGreySimcoe.
- Future funding will in part depend on timely completion of the project in question and the final report, as well as your responsiveness and communication.
- Organizations must be legally registered to operate in Ontario.
- **Note that as part of the application, partners will need to attest to having read both the [Guidelines and Application documents](#), including all informational links.**

All projects must take place within BruceGreySimcoe before **March 31, 2021**.

## Project/Partner Requirements

### Project Requirements

The following are some ideas of sustainable initiatives that you could implement in order to qualify for SIP:

#### Business Operations and Planning

- Have membership, support and/or training through sustainability organizations (e.g. Sustainable Tourism 2030).
- Evidence of action to lower footprint (i.e. monitoring of utility consumption and waste production appropriate for business size or taking action to lower carbon footprint).
- Have dedicated financial efforts for assessing and managing environmental risks and impacts (including climate risks)

#### Tourist Information and Promotion

- Provide product packaging and/or cross marketing of at least 3 other tourism attractions and services within BruceGreySimcoe that can extend stay, expenditure and diversity of experience during times that you have excess capacity.

#### Tourist Experience & Sense of Place

- Marketing campaign to encourage tourists to reduce consumption and waste, reduce environmental impacts, and/or green alternatives.
- Marketing campaign to encourage responsible and/or respectful tourism.
- Take measures to reduce impact on surrounding land and biodiversity (i.e. plant native species, reduce paved area, install bird-feeders).
- Marketing campaign to encourage responsible and/or respectful tourism.
- Long-term planning for maintenance, expansion and product development for tourists and potential tourist increase (i.e. washrooms, parking etc.).
- Include Indigenous language and/or local cultural content in promotional materials.

You must demonstrate how your new investment will accomplish at least one of the items listed above by financially investing in your operation to achieve your goal(s). For every one dollar you put into your improvement (i.e. capital improvements or investments, marketing to support a new geographic target, etc.),

RTO7 will contribute two dollars to the social media campaign. You must be able to prove these expenditures by providing receipts for the purchases with the final report. Regional Tourism Organization 7 (RTO7) will support you by providing a minimum \$500 including HST to a maximum of \$5,000 including HST towards social media marketing. Therefore a \$1,000 investment will turn into a \$2,000 social media campaign.

### Partner Requirements:

- Carry liability insurance, name RTO7 as an additional insured party and supply RTO7 with a Certificate of Insurance.
- Have a website/social media page, phone number and email address that are regularly monitored and contain current information.
- You must have an active Facebook page set up prior to applying.
- You commit to monitoring the Facebook/Instagram posts daily for the duration of the campaign.
- [Google Analytics](#) is activated on your website prior to the start of the campaign.
- Your website must be updated with the current content before the call with The Aber Group is scheduled. This includes any point of sale portals.
- You must supply a minimum ten (10) current (past 3 years), high-resolution images and/or one (1) video for use in the campaign. Maximum video length is 60 seconds. Please note: the best performing creatives on Facebook currently average 7 seconds, so videos around 15 seconds are encouraged.
- Select one representative only to act as the decision maker and liaison with RTO7.
- You will supply the names and email addresses of program contacts to add to Basecamp (RTO7's project management program).
- One (1) call with The Aber Group will be scheduled to gather information about the campaign so The Aber Group can develop the copy for the Facebook/Instagram Ads. Additional calls will be with RTO7 staff OR at RTO7 staff's discretion, one (1) additional call can be scheduled with The Aber Group. Additional communication outside of the call will be done through Basecamp.
- Must identify BruceGreySimcoe and the Province of Ontario as partners
  - with logos on your website with active links back to BruceGreySimcoe.com and ontariotravel.net respectively. RTO7 will provide these logos.
  - with logos on all printed collateral supported through the program.
- Social media posts must tag @BruceGreySimcoe (Facebook, Instagram, Twitter) and use #brucegreysimcoe.
- Complete the free [BGS Tourism Service Excellence Program](#).
- You are strongly encouraged to have at least one representative from your organization also complete the [It's Your Shift \(Sexual Harassment & Violence\) Training](#).
- Maintain a current [operator listing](#) on BruceGreySimcoe.com.
- Maintain a current [operator listing](#) on [Ontariotravel.net](#).
- Sign up for the [RTO7 E-Newsletter](#) (funding updates, announcements, etc.).
- You are required to complete a final report and supply copies of invoices demonstrating the \$500 - \$5,000 investment within 30 days of the completion of the project. Failure to do this may result in ineligibility to participate in RTO7 programs in the future.

### Ineligible contributions

The following contributions are not eligible contributions for partners' financial outlay:

- Grants and flow-through to partners or other organizations
- Charitable funding
- Political parties or lobby groups
- Recipients of funding from Ontario Government programs such as Celebrate Ontario, Tourism Event Marketing Program or Destination Ontario, etc.
- In-kind donations

Partners who use third party agencies for social media marketing are eligible for this program however we will communicate/work with ONLY the lead partner and NOT the third-party agency. This program is first and foremost an educational opportunity for partners to learn about the social media marketing process. This program is not intended to be a grant.

## Administration Fee & Data Collection

**Note: The Administration Fee will be waived for 2020/21; Environics Analytics postal code analysis will still be provided however upon request (free of charge). That said, please still read the links below to markets, segments and activities that RTO7 targets – note that we are monitoring these, and they are subject to change/updating as new patterns emerge. Please also see the tourism metrics we encourage you to consider tracking.**

**All approved partnership applications will require the payment of a \$200.00 administration fee.** For a limited time, RTO7 will provide to the primary applicant [Environics Analytics analysis](#) of postal code data they provide (a minimum of 500 codes per application). For applications involving multiple partners, if desired, additional partners may have their postal code or mobility data (municipalities only) analyzed at the market rate of \$600.00 per partner. In some cases, partners wishing to undertake multiple projects may be able to combine their projects where appropriate to avoid incurring multiple administration fees. For questions relating to the Administration Fee, please click [here](#).

This data (provided postal codes are provided a minimum of 30 days in advance of your campaign) will be useful to you in your marketing targeting and product development. The markets, segments and activities that RTO7 targets i.e. the geographic audiences and types of tourists we are aiming to attract and types of activities we promote are outlined [here](#). The data you provide through postal codes will be aggregated across all partners in the longer term to form a clearer, more refined picture of the state of tourism within the region to inform your and our future decision making.

In addition to postal code data, the data that you may be required to include in your final reporting to assess performance will depend on the project and objectives in question. As data is the backbone of good tourism planning, the metrics that are considered most useful to RTO7 and/or stakeholders are elaborated on [here](#).

## Program Opportunities

### Social Media Marketing Support

Eligible partners will receive the following per new initiative:

- \$1,000 - \$10,000 of social media advertising directed to the partners website home page through Facebook/Instagram sponsored posts.

### Facebook/Instagram Sponsored Posts

- You must have a Facebook page
- Maximum three (3) ad campaigns can be created
- Minimum ten (10) current (past 3 years), high-resolution photos including logo must be provided and/or one (1) video
- [You must add the RTO7 Agency of Record](#), The Aber Group, as advertisers to your Facebook page
- [You are responsible for managing comments from the post daily](#)
- You will receive a one-page report following the campaign that details
  - Impressions
  - Reach
  - Click Through Rate (CTR)
  - Total Clicks
  - Cost Per Click (CPC)

- Reactions/Comments/Shares
- Total Spend
- The total amount includes HST. RTO7 will cover Agency Fees to set up the campaign and provide reporting over and above the amount requested in the application.
- Partners will receive support to develop the demographic and geographic targeting, as well as interests for each of the ad campaigns.
- Partners will receive one (1) interim report approximately halfway through the campaign highlighting performance to date.
- Stakeholders may add to the campaign by adding funds for social media marketing to increase the total budget for the campaign.

Please note that targeting will not change for the duration of the campaign unless results are far less than anticipated by the agency and/or RTO7.

## Other RTO7 Programs

Tourism Operators who are looking for help to advertise their businesses post COVID-19 should apply for the [Operations Implementation Program](#). RTO7 will match \$1,000 of operational expenses with a \$1,000 social media campaign.

If projects are larger in scope requiring a feasibility study, in-depth research or a substantial marketing investment, RTO7's Partnership Program would be a more suited avenue under the [Experience Development Category](#).

Stakeholders looking to develop a new experience should look at the [Experience Implementation Program](#).

If partners are looking for visual assets (photo or visual), please apply through [RTO7's Video/Image Production](#) category under the Partnership Program portfolio.

Festival organizers interested in support should apply for the [Festival Implementation Program](#).

For the full list of programs please visit [rto7.ca/programs](http://rto7.ca/programs) or talk to RTO7 staff about options.

## Partner Support

RTO7 will endeavour to secure matching funding from our partners throughout the region. 100% of this matching funding will be used to develop a more robust Operation Implementation Program campaign. Please note that if this additional funding is secured that recognition of this investment made by the partners may/will need to be recognized similar to the Province of Ontario and BruceGreySimcoe.

RTO7 will announce these partnerships as they are formalized.

**Applications will be accepted on an ongoing basis until January 31, 2021 or until the program is fully subscribed.**

Applicants should be aware that RTO7, through funding arrangements with the Province, is bound by the *Freedom of Information and Protection of Privacy Act*, R.S.O. 1990, c.f 31, as amended from time to time, and that any information provided to RTO7 in connection with their application, project or agreement may be subject to disclosure in accordance with the requirements of the Act.

Partners agree to permit RTO7, if required, to verify/audit information submitted (at the discretion of the Province) to ensure that it is complete and accurate, and that funds were used for the purpose(s) intended.

