

The safety of residents, employees and tourists is of paramount importance in all our efforts to promote your experiences and the region. Advertising may be suspended with little or no notice if directed by the Province of Ontario, local health units or municipalities.

Preserving the environment and social fabric in and around our communities is a priority for RTO7 and we will integrate "Plan Ahead/Book Ahead" messaging into all program criteria as appropriate.

RTO7 reserves the right to limit the number of programs/funds that one stakeholder may receive per year.

EXPERIENCE IMPLEMENTATION PROGRAM

General Program Overview

The Experience Implementation Program is designed to help **coach and educate stakeholders** on how to create NEW experiences/products or MODIFY existing products to add an experiential element. This program may **fund** experiences and products to get them to market. All experiences/products must take place in BruceGreySimcoe.

This program is appropriate for stakeholders who would like to build or modify a product or experience that could be marketed through multiple channels including digital, radio, out of home and/or print. If successful, you will send RTO7 a Request for Reimbursement for 50% of eligible expenses following execution and proof of payment to the supplier. RTO7 will NOT pay your supplier direct.

RTO7's Tourism Experience Development Team can assist you to develop or augment products and experiences that help to differentiate your product and/or experience and BruceGreySimcoe in Ontario. The goals for any project should include at least one of the following;

- Increase length of stay
- Increase yield per visitor to see an increase in revenue
- Encourage visitors to return more frequently
- Diversification of offerings
- Increase sustainability
- Pivot to meet [Ontario's Framework for Reopening our Province](#)
- Decrease seasonality.

Preference will be given to projects that expand the use of sustainable practices.

Partner Eligibility

Who can apply:

- Established businesses or organizations, including
 - Private tourism businesses
 - Destination Marketing Organizations
 - Chambers of Commerce/Business Improvement Areas
 - Tourism Organizations/Associations
 - Municipalities/Conservation Authorities
- You must be capable of demonstrating financial and other execution capacities to execute the project in partnership such as completion of reports and enough staffing to execute the idea.
- You must be located within Bruce, Grey or Simcoe Counties

- organizations outside BruceGreySimcoe may apply if there is a strong involvement from the relevant BGS stakeholder
- Joint projects with other RTOs will be considered (keep in mind each RTO has their own structure for programming).
- 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, you will need to attest to having read both the Guidelines and [Resource Guide documents](#) including all informational links.

Project/Partner Requirements

Project Requirements:

In order to participate within the program, some minimum standards must be met to meet the needs of today's tourists. Experience and Product implementation will follow the same base criteria (see basic eligibility criteria in the [Resource Guide](#)). Product implementation projects will target a fairly wide market and focus on activities and services (as defined in the [Resource Guide](#)). These can be guided or self-guided. Examples of product implementation projects might include route development for a paddling, cycling, culinary trail or guided tour. Product implementation projects will only be required to meet the basic criteria for support.

Experience implementation projects must meet some additional requirements (see experience projects [in Resource Guide](#)) as they will create stronger emotional engagement, have a higher yield per person and appeal to niche markets. (Examples of projects might include paddling under a full moon, a make your own appetizer at a local restaurant using local ingredients, or a songwriting session with a local songwriter.) Experiences should be targeted towards the tourism market and should aim to:

- Improve quality and sustainability
 - Does the project attract support from other partners including the local DMO, Municipality or other businesses?
 - Do you have a green policy or initiative to try and reduce waste?
 - Do you have a risk management policy?
 - Do you conduct visitor surveys that are used to help improve the experience for future offerings?
 - Can you pivot to offer the experience while meeting [Ontario Framework for Reopening our Province?](#)
- Reduce seasonality
 - Does the new experience/modification expand your operating season?
 - Does the new experience/modification attract people to come at a different time of day?
- Increase length of stay/increase return visits
 - Has the investment created more activity for people to do while they're here?
 - Does the new experience/modification encourage visitors to return more often?
- Increase tourist visitation and expenditures
 - Are visitors encouraged to extend their stay?
 - Are there additional opportunities to increase the economic impact? For example, additional expenditures in other experiences?
 - Are visitors encouraged to return to the community again?
 - Can it be offered to social bubbles or customized for smaller groups?

Marketing for products or experiences should fit within the [existing targets of RTO7](#).

Priority will be given to projects that involve multiple stakeholders and/or actioning existing research that RTO7 has supported.

Partner Requirements:

- You have a website/social media page(s), phone number and email address that are regularly monitored.
- Select one representative only to act as the decision maker and liaison with RTO7.
- You must carry liability insurance in the amount of \$2,000,000 and add RTO7 as an additional insured party. You must supply RTO7 with a **Certificate of Insurance**.
- You must be legally registered to operate in Ontario.
- You have all required operating permits (federal, provincial, municipal, etc.).
- You follow the [Ontario Framework for Reopening our Province](#) if necessary.
- Identify BruceGreySimcoe and the Province of Ontario as partners with [logos](#) on website including
 - active links back to BruceGreySimcoe.com and destinationontario.com respectively
 - logos on all printed collateral supported through the program
 - in all press releases related to the project
- Social media posts related to the product or experience tag @BruceGreySimcoe and @ontariotravel using #brucegreysimcoe and #DiscoverON on Facebook, Twitter and Instagram.
- You or someone from your organization must complete the free [BGS Tourism Service Excellence Program](#) by March 31, 2022.
- 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](#) with Destination Ontario
- Sign up for the RTO7 E-Newsletter <http://rto7.ca/Public/Special-Pages/Mailing-List-Signup>. (funding updates, announcement, etc.)

INELIGIBLE EXPENSES

- Brochure development
- Imagery/Video Development ([Please see Partnership Program](#))
- Website Development
- Graphic Design costs
- Grants and flow-through to partner/other organizations
- Charitable funding
- Donations to political parties or lobby groups
- Capital expenses (RTO7 [Tourism Wayfinding Signage](#) expenses can be applied for through the Partnership Program)
- Prize money or performance fees
- In-kind donations
- Funds given to organizations for operating costs such as salaries and wages or to a political party
- Operational Funds
- Staffing.

ADMINISTRATION FEE & DATA COLLECTION

Note: The Administration Fee will be waived for 2021/22; 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

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, [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 market 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

The Experience Implementation Program includes the following opportunities:

- Coaching (approximately 10 hours per project).
- Tools and templates to assist with the development process.
- Education to shift thinking, moving to a more experiential focus from product development, training on consumer segmentation or marketing support.
- Marketing support through matching funds on approved expenses (2:1 with a minimum partner contribution of **\$250** to a maximum of **\$500**) for **new** products and experiences or **enhancements** to existing products or experiences. You are required to pay all expenses to vendors and RTO7 will reimburse approved expenditures with proof of purchase and a copy of payment receipts. You **must** provide a request for reimbursement upon request or by a specified deadline to be eligible for reimbursement. Failure to meet this requirement will result in non-reimbursement from RTO7 for these expenses.

EXPERIENCE / PRODUCT IMPLEMENTATION FUNDING

There is an opportunity for funding at a 1:2 ratio to help advertise products and experiences to increase the likelihood of success. This is in addition to coaching provided by RTO7. The minimum partner buy-in for the program is \$250 and \$500 is the maximum. For example, you contribute \$500 and RTO7 will contribute \$1,000. RTO7 must approve expenses and you must provide copies of receipts with a request for reimbursement for 66.67% of approved expenses to receive payment. All expenses must be approved by RTO7 prior to the start of the project. **All approved funds must be spent and RTO7 must receive the request for reimbursement by March 31, 2022.**

Eligible Marketing Expenses:

- Digital – Social Media, E-newsletters, Display Ads, etc. (Website development costs are ineligible)
- Radio
- Television ads only. (Video creation/editing are ineligible)
- Out of Home (Billboards excluding creative and production costs)

- Print – Newspaper, Magazine, Guidebook etc. Ad development including graphic design or imagery development are ineligible
- Distribution of Brochures – Printing of brochures is ineligible
- Promotional materials.

RTO7 will review the marketing budget and indicate which line items are eligible **PRIOR** to any expenditures.

Project partners who wish to access this funding should have prepared the following **prior** to submitting an application:

- Have an idea you wish to develop and have investigated the feasibility of it.
- Have committed staff resources to ensure that the idea is executed.
- Completed basic market research (For example, completed comment cards, Trip Advisor comments, Google Reviews or other sources of customer feedback).
- Determined what the goal(s) is(are) following the project (For example, create a new revenue source for a slower season, create a new partnership that leads to revenue generation, or creation of a new experience for an existing product that leads to increased profit generation).
- Marketing budget for the new experience.
- Have an operational website that can have the new product/experience added easily.
- [Have Google Analytics set](#) up on your website.

Other RTO7 Programs

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](#).

Tourism businesses interested in a social media marketing campaign who have operating expenses of at least \$1,000 can apply for the [Operations Implementation Program](#).

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

Stakeholders who have invested in capital improvements to their operation and are interested ONLY in social media marketing that will be crafted through RTO7's agency of record should apply for the [Tourism Implementation Program](#).

Stakeholders who have cash to put towards a social media advertising campaign should use the [Social Media Advertising Program](#) stream of the Partnership Program.

Stakeholders who have invested capital to improve the sustainability (social, financial and environmental) and are ONLY interested social media marketing that will be created through RTO7's agency of record should apply for the [Sustainable Tourism 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.

If you have expenses as a direct result of COVID-19, please see the [RTO7 COVID-19 Recovery Programs](#).

For the full list of programs please visit rto7.ca/programs or talk to RTO7 staff about options.

For Bruce County applicants

Bruce County provides grants to tourism operators. In many cases, RTO7 is able to leverage these grants with RTO7 funding programs. Please contact RTO7 staff and/or [Bruce](#) staff for more details.

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

Applicants should be aware that RTO7, through funding agreements with the Province is bound by the *Freedom of Information and Protection of Privacy Act* (Ontario) and that any information provided to the Province in connection with the Project or otherwise in connection with the Agreement may be subject to disclosure in accordance with that Act, 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 that Act. Partners 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 purpose(s) intended.