

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.

# Sustainable Tourism Implementation Program Guidelines

## 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 ratio of **\$1:\$2**. For every \$1 you contribute towards the sustainability initiative, RTO7 will contribute \$2 towards a social media campaign through our digital media buy agency of record. 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. Learn more about sustainable tourism [here](#).

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

## Partner Eligibility

### Who can apply

- Established businesses or organizations including
  - Private tourism businesses
  - Destination Marketing Organizations and Not-for-profit organizations who run tourism focused activities such as “Friends” groups
  - 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 or 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, 2022**.

## 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 1 other tourism attractions and services within BruceGreySimcoe that can extend stay, increase expenditures 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 you will accomplish at least one of the initiatives listed (or similar to those listed above) by financially investing in your operation to achieve your goal(s). You **must be able to match 50% of RTO7's contribution** through this investment (i.e. capital improvements or investments, marketing to support a new sustainable initiative, etc.). You **must** be able to prove these expenditures by providing receipts for the purchases with the final report. Please ensure that expenses are only being used once when accessing RTO7 programs. Funds received from Federal, Provincial or Municipal programs are ineligible as part of your contribution. Regional Tourism Organization 7 (RTO7) will support you by providing a minimum **\$1,500** including HST and fees to a maximum of **\$2,000** including HST and fees towards social media marketing. If you have cash to put towards your campaign, please see the [Partnership Program Social Media Advertising](#) fund.

### Partner Requirements:

- Carry liability insurance of at least \$2,000,000 and supply RTO7 with a Certificate of Insurance.
- Have a website/social media page, phone number and email address that are regularly (at least daily) monitored and contain current information.
- You must have a Facebook PAGE set up prior to applying.
- You commit to monitoring the Facebook/Instagram posts daily for the duration of the campaign.
- RTO7 feels that when visitors can plan or book ahead, not only does it help to improve the quality of visit to the region but also helps our stakeholder manage their business more effectively, therefore plan ahead/book ahead messaging is required, where appropriate, in all ads.
- [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 program is launched. This includes any point of sale portals.
- You must supply a minimum ten (10) 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. Click [here](#) for some best practices.
- 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).
- Must identify BruceGreySimcoe and the Province of Ontario as partners
  - with logos on your website with an active link back to BruceGreySimcoe.com and DestinationOntario.com. RTO7 will provide [these logos](#)
  - with logos on all printed collateral supported through the program.
- Social media posts must tag @BruceGreySimcoe and @Ontariotravel (Facebook, Instagram, Twitter) and use #brucegreysimcoe and #DiscoverON
- 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](#) on DiscoverOntario.com.
- 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 \$750 - \$1,000 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 expenses

The following expenses 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 Reconnect
- 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

**Note: The Administration Fee will be waived for 2021/22; Environics Analytics postal code analysis will still be provided 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, please click [here](#).*

## Data Collection

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:

- \$1,500 - \$2,000 including HST and fee of social media advertising directed to the partners website home page or Facebook 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 five (5), maximum ten (10) [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/Saves
  - Total Spend.
- 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.

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

If you have cash that you would like to add to the campaign, to increase the size, please see the [Partnership Program Social Media Advertising program](#).

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](#).

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

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

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

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

## For Bruce County applicants

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

For more information, please visit the [Resource Guide](#).

## Applications will be accepted on an ongoing basis until January 31, 2022 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.