**2017/18 Partnership Program Guidelines & Application**

**GENERAL PROGRAM OVERVIEW**

Regional Tourism Organizations (RTOs) are eligible to receive a “partnership” allocation from the Ministry of Tourism, Culture and Sport (MTCS) as part of their annual funding intended to encourage more partnerships, strategic coordination and leveraging of regional resources.

The Ministry’s objectives in doing so are to:

* Enhance tourism across the province
* Support the RTO as a leader in regional tourism
* Maximize support for tourism at a regional level by encouraging strong partnerships, expanding the breadth and diversity of funding partners
* Encourage RTOs to engage industry partners to broaden their financial base to extend reach
* Support a coordinated approach that aligns planning, marketing, product development, investment attraction, and workforce development in the region to promote sustainability and increased competitiveness of tourism across the province
* Assure the transparency and accountability of funding through the transfer payment agreement process

The partnership allocations are NOT grants, but matching fund projects managed by RTO7 and conducted jointly with partners. These projects will align with RTO7’s mandate and goals, target audiences, segments and activities as outlined in the current business plan, which will be posted here as soon as approved by the Ministry.

* [Geographic Target Markets, Segments & Activities](http://rto7.ca/Documents/Public/Partnership-Funding-Projects/RTO7-Geographic-Target-Markets) (geographic audiences and types of visitors RTO7 is aiming to attract and types of activities we’re promoting)

They are also an opportunity for RTO7 to collect information that attempts to measure how successful the initiative has been in creating awareness, visitation and spending. The data collected from partners may then be aggregated with other data in the longer term to provide a clearer picture of the state of tourism within the region, informing future decision-making. **Partners must be prepared to commit to and follow through on collection of jointly determined data related to the projects undertaken.**

The [type of data](http://rto7.ca//Documents/Public/Partnership-Funding-Projects/Type-of-data-partners-might-be-required-to-report-en) that partners might be required to include in the final report to assess performance depends on the project and the objectives in question. Future funding of partners will in part be determined by completeness and timely submission of reporting.

**PARTNER ELIGIBILITY**

Partnership projects may be undertaken by private tourism businesses, DMOs (Destination Marketing Organizations), tourism organizations, municipalities and tourism associations/interest groups within Bruce, Grey and Simcoe counties.

In order to be considered, businesses or organizations must be established and be able to demonstrate the capacity (financial and otherwise) to execute the project in partnership. This includes providing timely responses to queries from RTO7 and Agencies, etc.

Tourism businesses/organizations outside BruceGreySimcoe (e.g. a provincial association) can apply as long as there is strong involvement from relevant BGS stakeholders.

Joint projects with other RTOs will be considered (keep in mind each RTO has their own structure for Partnership Allocations).

**RTO7 PARTNERSHIP PRIORITY AREAS OF CONCENTRATION**

[Signage](http://rto7.ca//Documents/Public/Partnership-Funding-Projects/Rationale-signage-17-18) (click for rationale)

Funds are available to conduct a signage plan, to fabricate and install tourism wayfinding signs and cycling signs conforming to the [RTO7 Wayfinding Signage Standards & Specifications Manual](http://rto7.ca//Documents/Public/Partnership-Funding-Projects/RT07_signmanual_20160219_annotated-2017-18).

Note this type of project is most often undertaken by Municipalities or Counties (or by Conservation Authorities or Recreational Organizations) and funding does not apply to any other types/formats of signage or electronic signage. Signage plans are only eligible for those implementing the RTO7 system.

[Digital Advertising](http://rto7.ca/Documents/Public/Partnership-Funding-Projects/Rationale-Digital-Advertising-17-18)

The role of digital advertising (e.g. adwords, Facebook ads, banner ads, etc.) is to promote assets/events and does not apply to website design, upgrades, etc. Media buys are managed by RTO7’s Agency of Record (The Aber Group Inc.).

RTO7 is pleased to extend this offer to past partner campaigns in good standing recognizing the momentum that has been established in attracting visitors to the region and the net positive effects of these partnerships as well as the challenge to stakeholders to sustain if this partnership did not continue. RTO7 is temporarily removing the restriction of a maximum limit to the number of times a partner can participate in the Digital Advertising partnership.

[Image Production (Images/Video)](http://rto7.ca//Documents/Public/Partnership-Funding-Projects/Rationale-Video-17-18)

This category includes development of videos and/or imagery database(s) through RTO7’s respective Agency(ies) of Record (Hunt Productions and Andrea Hamlin Photography) and is intended to support digital advertising of assets/events.

[Experience Development / Consumer Research / Workforce Development](http://rto7.ca//Documents/Public/Partnership-Funding-Projects/Rationale-Experience-Development-17-18)

This category is typically for larger projects, often in the planning stages. Funding is available to develop business or marketing plans for product/experiences, for feasibility studies, etc. Research and workforce development projects are also eligible within this category.

[Website Portal Development](http://rto7.ca//Documents/Public/Partnership-Funding-Projects/Rationale-Website-Portal-Development-17-18)

Working with RTO7’s Agency of Record and using the architecture and template developed for [www.brucegreysimcoe.com](http://www.brucegreysimcoe.com), a dedicated destination microsite may be developed for tourism DMOs and organizations representing/managing multiple tourism partners, (primary purpose is tourism promotion), allowing for data sharing amongst partners. Note there is limited availability of partnerships in this category.

Language Translation Services

Language translation by Agency of Record of web and print materials relevant/suited to these markets (e.g. beaches or cycling pages for promotion in Quebec). Languages include French, Mandarin, Simplified Chinese and Spanish.

[Video Advertising Campaign](http://rto7.ca//Documents/Public/Partnership-Funding-Projects/Rationale-Video-Advertising-17-18)

This new category of partnership provides access to digital advertising using short videos developed through RTO7 or their own approved video collateral (must be 60 seconds or less). The lower buy-in of this partnership provides partners with a low-risk introduction to the benefits of video advertising through social media and can be an effective complement to other forms of advertising.

Be sure to maximize your investment with RTO7 by claiming and updating your listing on [www.brucegreysimcoe.com](http://www.brucegreysimcoe.com), registering for access to our Stakeholder Site [www.rto7data.ca](http://www.rto7data.ca) housing free imagery, research, reports, etc. Contact Communication Coordinator Ginny Henry ghenry@brucegreysimcoe.com for assistance in doing so.

**APPLICATION PROCESS**

*Please contact us prior to submitting your application to ensure your understanding of the Partnership Program and that your proposal meets eligibility requirements, etc.*

* Review all links in the Guidelines/Application relevant to your project type
* Once submitted to partnerships@rto7.ca, your application will be reviewed to ensure that it is complete and that it aligns with RTO7’s strategy.
* If your project is approved, a [Partnership Agreement](http://rto7.ca//Documents/Public/Partnership-Funding-Projects/PF-Agreement-Template-2017-18) outlining the initiative terms and conditions will be drafted for signature by both parties – among other things the agreement outlines
	+ Project timelines which must be adhered to (all projects must be completed prior to March 31, 2018)
	+ Performance measurement expectations
	+ Acknowledgement of RTO7 and Province of Ontario support
	+ Successful completion of a final report outlining performance measures and outcomes within 30 days of project completion
* Applications will be accepted from now on a continual basis (as long as funds remain available) with final deadlines to apply as follows:
	+ Digital Advertising Aug 31/17
	+ Signage Sept 30/17
	+ Experience Development Aug 31/17
		- **N.B. To ensure sufficient time to complete the project, experience development projects approved and with consultant work underway by August 31/16 will receive 1:1:1 funding; projects underway any later receive 1:1 funding**
	+ Video/Image Production Oct 31/17
	+ Website portal development Aug 31/17
	+ French translation Oct 31/17
	+ Video Advertising Oct 31/17
* Note that the project maximum on the Video Advertising category is 4 videos
* If an approved project is delayed or cancelled, the Partner is requested to advise RTO7 as soon as possible to allow other projects/stakeholders to access funds made available.

**CONDITIONS OF FUNDING**

**Professional Development**

* All eligible project partners (a representative) will be required to complete the free [**BruceGreySimcoe Service Excellence online training program**](http://rto7.ca/Public/Resources/BGS-Tourism-Service-Excellence-Training) **(**1 hour online course) prior to project award and submit a copy of Certificate of Completion to RTO7.

**Procurement**

* MTCS requires procurements (other than Signage) to be done by RTO7.
* MTCS has authorized use of the municipalities’ procurement process for Signage procurements (which should align with [MTCS procurement requirements).](http://rto7.ca//Documents/Public/Partnership-Funding-Projects/MTCS-Procurement-Requirements-17-18)
* Partners may provide in-kind contributions to projects, but may not be reimbursed for project expenditures, i.e. all paid work must be completed by third parties (e.g. municipalities may not pay or reimburse their Public Works or Roads Departments to install signage – if a municipality is to install, it would be considered an in-kind contribution).

**Project Expenses/Payment**

* MTCS requires RTOs to be responsible/accountable for administration of project funds, meaning the RTO cannot pay or reimburse the partner. RTO7 will invoice the partner for their contribution. Payment (in the form of a cheque or electronic funds transfer) is due upon receipt of the invoice (*prior* to the project’s start)
* **All funds quoted include HST** and so should your application and project budget e.g. if a minimum project contribution is $10,000, that includes HST
* There will be no reimbursements of payments made prior to the project start date.
* Capital expenses (other than Signage as outlined below) are not eligible.

Applicants should be aware that RTO7, through funding agreements 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 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.

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| Category | Tourism Wayfinding Signage | Product/Experience Development | Image Production | Digital Advertising  | Video Advertising | DMO Web Portal Development | Translation Services |
| Eligible Partners | Private and non-private tourism operators, destination marketing organizations, tourism organizations, municipalities, and associations/interest groups with a primary purpose in tourism in BruceGreySimcoe |
| Objective | Improve the visitor experience through implementation of RTO7 signage & wayfinding specifications | Enhance development of tourism experiences (products, training and research) | To grow visitation by developing competitive collateral offerings for the partner and the BGS website. To aid in the recruitment of employees. | To grow visitation by reaching targets markets where the consumers search most for information about a possible destination. | To grow visitation by reaching targets markets through social media.  | Using architecture & template developed for BruceGreySimcoe.com; a dedicated destination microsite for destinations and to share data amongst all partners. Limited to Tourism DMOs whose primary purpose is to facilitate tourism promotion. | To provide French language translation for services in web and print media |
| Additional RTO7 funding? | NO | STAGED | YES | YES | YES | YES | NO |
| Participation Partner $ : PF $ : RTO7$ | $1 : $1 | $1 : $1 : $1 if approved and consultant work is underway by August 31$1: $1 if approved and consultant work is **not** underway by Aug. 31 | $1 : $1 : $1 | $1 : $1 : $1 | $1:$1:$1 | $1:$1:$.5 | $1:$1 |
| Example Funding | $10,000 investment by partner receives $10,000 from partnership fund for a total project of $20,000 | $10,000 investment by partner receives $10,000 from partnership fund plus $10,000 from RTO7 for a total project of $30,000 – subject to above time frames. | $1,400 investment by partner receives $1,400 from partnership fund plus $1,400 from RTO7 for a total project of $4,200 | $10,000 investment by partner receives $10,000 from partnership fund plus $10,000 from RTO7 for a total project of $30,000 | $500 investment by partner receives $500 from partnership fund plus $500 from RTO7 for a total project of $1,500 | $4,300 investment by partner receives $4,300 from partnership fund plus $2,150 from RTO7 for a total project of $10,750 | $2,000 investment by partner receives $2,000 from partnership fund for a total project of $4,000 |
| Partners fundingMinimumMaximum | $10,000$50,000 | $ 5,000$25,000 | $ 750 (video)$ 466 (image)$10,000 | $10,000$25,000 | $ 500$ 500 | $4,300 English only $4,850 English & French | $ 750$5,000 |
| Example initiatives or projects | Local trail group partners to implement RTO7 wayfinding signage along trail network.Municipality implements RTO7 program or develops an implementation plan.Cycle signage is installed along routes. | Research into viability of a new tourism product/experienceDevelopment of a business/marketing plan to take a product/experience to market.Develop. of Tourism Destination PlanData collection & analysis. | Outfitter videos a canoe or paddle board experience.A campground videos a single or collection of activities at the campground.A tourism destination photo shoot.A recruitment video for students. | A ski resort develops and advertises a campaign digitally.A festival develops and advertises a campaign digitally. | An operator promotes an activity through social media | DMO web site with dedicated URL, URL specific analytics, revenue generation attributes and ability to manage content. Must share operator data with RTO7 and partners on the BruceGreySimcoe.com platform. | Translating web pages that are suited to the French Language market e.g. Beaches pages or micrositesTranslating inserts into mass distribution print publications with target messages e.g. Beaches pages in a DMO guidebook for distribution in Quebec |
| Submissions Accepted | Now to September 30, 2017 | Now to August 31, 2017 | Now toOctober 31, 2017 | Now toAugust 31, 2017 | Now to October 31, 2017 | Now to August 31, 2017 | Now to October 31, 2017 |

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**Experience Development / Consumer Research / Workforce Development**

* + Managed by RTO7
	+ $1 receives $1 + $1 ($1 partner matched by $1 partnership funds plus $1 RTO7 funds) to a combined maximum of $75,000 per project. Example $10,000 leverages to $30,000
	+ Minimum $5,000 investment from the partner (can be a single tourism entity or a tourism group/DMO/tourism organization)
* Deadline
	+ The deadline for experience development applications is August 31, 2017.
	+ Projects that are a) approved and b) **consultant work is underway by August 31, 2017** will receive 1:1:1 funding
	+ Projects in which consultant work is **NOT** underway by August 31, 2017 will receive only 1:1 funding

**Regional Tourism Organization 7**

**2017/18 Partnership Program Application**

**Experience Development / Consumer Research / Workforce Development**

*Please type directly into the form and save a copy to your computer.*

*Print off and sign the final page.*

*Application forms should be emailed to* *partnerships@rto7.ca**.*

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| **Stakeholder Partner/Applicant****Organization’s legal name, website address** (for multiple partners - please identify lead partner here and attach details of additional partners on a separate page) |  |
| **Contact Information** of person responsible for this application/lead partner contactPlease include name, title, address, phone and email |  |
| **Project Name** |  |
| **Project Date(s)** |  |
| **Funding Amount to be Contributed by Partner** (i.e. cheque to RTO7) |  |
| **Funding Ratio** | **🞏 $1 : $1 : $1** |
| **Total project budget** |  |
| **In-kind contributions by partner** |  |
| **Target Segments / Markets / Activities** | Check all that apply**[RTO7 Target Segments:](http://rto7.ca/Documents/Public/Partnership-Funding-Projects/RTO7-Geographic-Target-Markets)**☐ Up & Coming Explorers☐ Connected Explorers☐ Nature Lovers☐ Pampered Relaxers☐ Sports Lovers**RTO7 Target Markets:**☐ GTA☐ Southwestern Ontario☐ Quebec☐ BruceGreySimcoe ☐ International**RTO7 Target Activities:**☐ Arts and Culinary☐ Camping☐ Cycling☐ Festivals and Events☐ Golf☐ Trails☐ Resorting☐ Skiing☐ Waterways☐ Winter outdoor adventure |
| **Project Overview** Please provide a description of your project and what success/benefits will look like upon completion of this project.If this is a workforce development project, please indicate which workforce the proposed project supports (e.g. one sector, one County, the region, etc.) |
|  |
| **Please explain the incremental nature of the project – what is new or enhanced about what you want to do (i.e. it’s not something that would have happened regardless)** |
|  |
| **What do you see as the key activities and critical deadlines (milestones) of the project? Keep in mind a third party will be conducting the work required.** |
|  |
| **Goals & Objectives** Please state all relevant goals and objectives of the project and provide baseline performance data against which to evaluate (e.g. increase visitor spending, visitation, investment, etc.) * What is the economic benefit of the initiative upon successful completion?
* Is this a region-wide initiative or local initiative?
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| **Indicate how your organization will evaluate the success of the project.**What SMART performance measures will you use to determine if each of the goals and objectives above have been met? (examples below) |
| * *# in attendance and variance (+/-) to last year’s event*
* *# of overnight stays/bookings and variance (+/-) to last year’s event*
* *# Referrals to tourism partners*
* *# of hits on the website directly related to the project*
* *# of inquiries – by phone, by email, through social media channels*
* *# of new partners engaged*
* *Capacity building*
* *Evaluation ratings*
* *Other*
 |
|  |
| **Preparation – please confirm the following** |
| ☐ All applicant partners are united on goals and objectives☐ All applicant partners are committed to a multi-year time frame if required☐ One organization will be responsible for representing the group and will be the  lead organization for future contact☐ If this is a workforce development project, the proposed project aligns with the recommendations in the [BruceGreySimcoe Tourism Workforce Study](http://rto7.ca/RTO7/files/34/34db090d-a128-4e74-90cc-76459374240b.pdf)[ ]  Partner will acknowledge RTO7’s and the Ministry’s support by displaying the ‘BruceGreySimcoe – Always in Season’ Logo ([JPG](http://rto7.ca/Public/Files/Brand-Assets/BGS-Logo-with-Tagline/BGS_Logo_AlwaysInSeason_CMYK-1.aspx), [EPS](http://rto7.ca/Public/Files/Brand-Assets/BGS-Logo-with-Tagline/BGS_Logo_AlwaysInSeason_CMYK.aspx)) with an active link to [www.brucegreysimcoe.com](http://www.brucegreysimcoe.com) and the ‘Ontario Yours to Discover’ Logo ([JPG](http://rto7.ca/RTO7/files/fd/fd203508-bf7f-411a-9a6a-ae47346f001b.jpg), [EPS](Microsoft/Windows/INetCache/Content.Outlook/1RHDG065/bef96a3d-c544-4c26)) on their website for (at minimum) for a minimum of one year[ ]  Partner has registered (free) as an operator on the [www.brucegreysimcoe.com](http://www.brucegreysimcoe.com) website, added/updated listing and listed offerings, events etc. [ ]  Partner has [signed up](http://rto7.ca/Public/Special-Pages/Mailing-List-Signup) to receive RTO7’s e-blast communications[ ]  At least one representative of the partners’ organization has completed the BruceGreySimcoe Service Excellence Training (Name:\_\_\_\_\_\_\_\_\_\_\_\_\_\_\_\_\_\_\_\_\_\_) |
| **Sustainability – what is your sustainability plan for the project during and upon completion of this phase.** Please address the following: financial, engagement, risk management, etc. |
|  |
| I confirm that the source of funds to be contributed and the proposed expenses are [consistent with all program guidelines](http://rto7.ca/Documents/Public/Partnership-Funding-Projects/Experience-Dev-Eligible-Source-of-Funds-and-Expens-en). ­­­­­­\_\_\_\_\_\_\_\_\_\_\_\_\_\_\_\_\_\_\_\_\_\_\_\_\_\_\_\_\_\_\_\_\_\_\_ \_\_\_\_\_\_\_\_ Authorized Signature Date \_\_\_\_\_\_\_\_\_\_\_\_\_\_\_\_\_\_\_\_\_\_\_\_\_\_\_\_\_\_\_\_\_\_\_\_\_\_\_\_\_\_\_\_\_\_\_Name and Title  |