

2019-20-
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EXPERIENCE IMPLEMENTATION PROGRAM

REGIONAL TOURISM ORGANIZATION 7
VERSION 5.0, FEBRUARY 2019

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EXPERIENCE IMPLEMENTATION PROGRAM

Note: RTO7's offer of the Partnership Program for 2019/20 is contingent upon Ministry of Tourism, Culture & Sport approval of RTO7's business plan.

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 will also potentially **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 radio, out of home, print and/or digital. Partners will invoice RTO7 for 50% of eligible expenses following the expenditures.

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

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

DEFINITIONS

Product - A good, activity or service that is delivered to consumers with a moderate level of differentiation, is available to a fairly wide market and is focused more on cost-based pricing or is free. For example, a self-guided culinary touring route or guided interpretive hike through a park.

Experience – Experiential travel engages visitors in a series of memorable travel activities, revealed over time, that are inherently personal, engage the senses, and make connections on an emotional, physical, spiritual, social or intellectual level¹. For example, writing a song with a Juno award winning songwriter, a behind the scenes tour at a museum where you can touch important historical objects or hunting for wild mushrooms with a local guide and using them to cook a soup for lunch.

Coaching – This involves working with experience/product providers or groups to work through the steps in the development cycle. This could include brainstorming to find the right partners, using the experience development templates, helping to create action/marketing plans to bring products

¹ Nancy Arsenault, (2004). *Defining Tomorrow's Tourism Product*.

or experiences to market, or asking the relevant questions to shift thinking. This would involve helping to drive the process forward, but as a “guide on the side”. The stakeholder takes the lead in seeing the project through to completion.

EXPERIENCE DEVELOPMENT SPECIALISTS

RTO7’s Experience Development Specialists can assist stakeholders develop or augment products and experiences that help to differentiate BruceGreySimcoe from other regions in Ontario. The goals for any project should include at least one of the following;

- Increase length of stay
- Increase yield per visitor
- Encourage visitors to return more frequently
- Diversification of offerings
- Increase sustainability
- Decrease seasonality.

Program opportunities include:

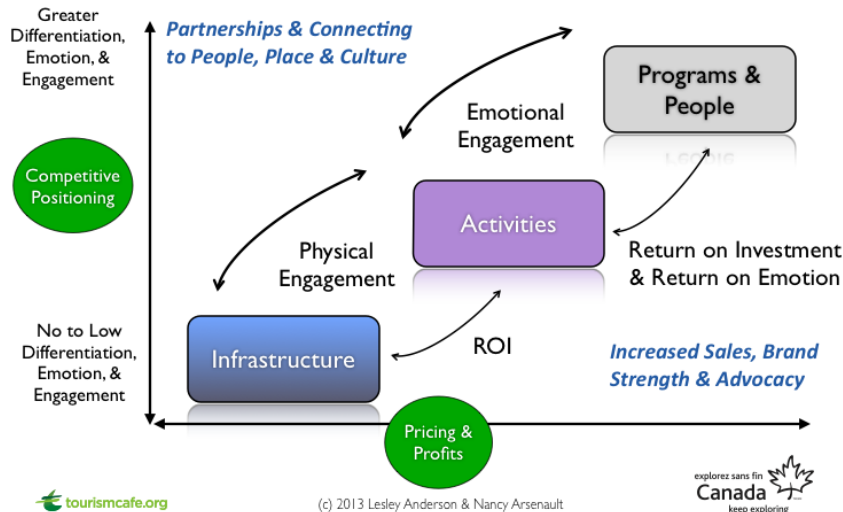
- Coaching (approximately 10 hours per project)
- Tools and templates to assist with the development process
- Marketing support through matching funds on approved expenses (1:1 with a minimum partner contribution of **\$500** to a maximum of **\$2,500**) for **new** products and experiences or **enhancements** to existing products or experiences. Partners are required to pay all expenses to vendors and RTO7 will reimburse approved expenditures with proof of purchase (copy of receipts). Partners **must** provide an invoice 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.
- Education to shift thinking moving to a more experiential focus from product development, training on consumer segmentation or marketing support.

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 below). Product implementation projects will target a fairly wide market and focus on activities and services (as defined above). 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 below) as they will create stronger emotional engagement, have a higher yield per person and appeal to niche markets (see figure below). Examples of projects might include an art class within a unique setting, a make your own appetizer at a local restaurant using local ingredients, or a song writing session with a local songwriter. Experiences should be targeted towards the tourism market and should aim to:

- Increase length of stay
- Increase repeat visits
- Increase sustainability
- Increase visitor spending and/or
- Reduce seasonality

Benefits from Raising the Bar on Engagement, Personalization, Connections & Value



BASIC ELIGIBILITY CRITERIA (“MARKET READY”)

Who can apply:

- Private tourism businesses
- Destination Marketing Organizations
- Chambers of Commerce/Business Improvement Areas looking to develop a tourism product or experience
- Tourism Organizations/Associations hoping to develop a new product or experience within BruceGreySimcoe
- Municipalities/Conservation Authorities within BruceGreySimcoe

Requirements:

- Businesses or organizations must be established and be able to demonstrate the capacity (financial and otherwise) to execute the project
- Able to execute and meet agreed upon timelines. Applicant determines deadlines for completion as part of the milestones in the application.
- Organizations must be legally registered to operate in Ontario
- Tourism businesses/organizations outside BruceGreySimcoe (e.g. a provincial association) can apply as long as there is strong involvement from a relevant BruceGreySimcoe stakeholder and part of the experience or product must be within the geographical boundaries of BruceGreySimcoe
- Carry liability insurance and add RTO7 as an additional insured party. Partner must supply RTO7 with a **Certificate of Insurance**.

- All required operating permits (federal, provincial, municipal, etc.)
- Have a website/social media page(s), phone number and email address that are regularly² monitored
- Identify BruceGreySimcoe and Ontario as *partners* on website with active links back to BruceGreySimcoe.com and ontariotravel.net respectively
- Identify BruceGreySimcoe as a partner in all press releases related to the product or experience
- Social media posts related to the product or experience tag @BruceGreySimcoe and use #brucegreysimcoe on Facebook, Twitter and Instagram
- Identify BruceGreySimcoe and the Province of Ontario as partners on all printed collateral supported through the program by including each logo
- Complete the free BruceGreySimcoe Service Excellence online training program prior to submitting an application. Program information can be found [here](#)
- Maintain a current operator listing on BruceGreySimcoe.com
- Maintain a current operator listing on Ontariotravel.net
- Join the RTO7 E-Newsletter <http://rto7.ca/Public/Special-Pages/Mailing-List-Signup>

Marketing for products or experiences should fit with the existing targets of RTO7.

Target Markets

Geographic targets

- Greater Toronto Area
- Southwestern Ontario
- BruceGreySimcoe
- Quebec
- USA Border States

[OTMPC/RTO Consumer Segmentation Targets \(Ontario and US\)*](#)

- Up & Coming Explorers
- Connected Explorers
- Nature Lovers
- Sports Lovers
- Pampered Relaxers
- Knowledge Seekers (mostly focused on experiences)

*You must sign into www.rto7data.ca to access profile details.

Prizm5 Target Segments³

- Kids & Careers (06)
- Urbane Villagers (02)
- Arts & Affluence (03)
- Suburban Success (04)
- Asian Sophisticates (05)
- Empty Nests (10)
- South Asian Achievers (20)

² Regularly – minimum daily during your operating season, and bi-weekly during the off season

³ Prizm5 segment descriptions are located in the FAQ

- Heartland Retirees (33)
- Our Time (39)
- Serenity Springs (54)

Best bet activities within BruceGreySimcoe have been identified through various studies and reports. Projects that are focused on these activities will be given priority.

Targeted Activities

- Water-based tourism
- Nature and outdoor recreation
- Culinary and agritourism
- Culture
- Cycling
- Resorting
- Touring

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

EXPERIENCE PROJECTS (“EXPERIENCE READY”)

Experience Implementation projects will engage visitors on an intellectual or emotional level and therefore, will require more development than products (For example, developing the experience story and creating “WOW” moments). The threshold for “experience ready” is greater than being a product being “market ready”. Experiences must meet the basic eligibility criteria as well as satisfy the following requirements:

- Must identify which area the experience will focus on or combination of
 - Art
 - Culture
 - Nature
 - Culinary⁴
- Goes beyond the traditional tourist path
- Dives deeper in to authentic, local culture
- Connects with people and enriches their lives
- Engages visitors in memorable travel activities that are inherently personal, engage senses or makes connections
- Tells the story of the place, person or product

EXPERIENCE / PRODUCT IMPLEMENTATION FUNDING

There is an opportunity for funding at a 1:1 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 \$500 and \$2,500 is the maximum. For example, the partner contributes \$1,000 and RTO7 contributes \$1,000 for a total of \$2,000. Payment will be done retroactively. The partner **must** be able to

⁴ Four realms of an experience, Earth Rhythms, Inc.

cover all expenses up front. RTO7 will release payment of the approved amount upon receipt of the invoice from the partner with accompanying proof of approved expenses, copies of invoices for eligible expenses must be submitted by date specified by RTO7 to qualify for payment. All expenses must be approved by RTO7 prior to the start of the project. **All approved funds must be spent and RTO7 invoiced by March 31, 2020.**

Eligible Marketing Expenses:

- Digital – Social Media, E-newsletters, Display Ads, etc.
- Radio
- Television (ads only. Video creation/editing are ineligible)
- Billboards
- 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
- Website development costs are ineligible
- All capital costs are ineligible

RTO7 will review 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 they wish to develop and have done some work to determine the feasibility of it
- Are able to commit staff resources to seeing the idea executed
- Completed basic market research (For example, completed comment cards, trip advisor comments, 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, or creation of a new experience for an existing product)
- Marketing budget
- Have an operational website that can have the new product/experience added easily
- Have Google Analytics set up on their website

If partners are interested in video or photography development, please refer to the Partnership Program for Video/Image Production.

SUSTAINABLE TOURISM

As tourism grows within Region 7, overcrowding is a concern in some destinations within the region, with the potential to adversely affect the tourism product offering. In support of a longer-term shift amongst both stakeholders and tourists towards improving profitability and considering sustainable tourism as the new norm of travelling, this year RTO7 will pilot providing increased support for initiatives such as moving tourists around the region to areas with capacity for growth, encouraging stakeholders to build shoulder season/weekday offerings, helping tourists to understand what it is to be a Responsible Tourist, etc.

New for 2019/20, RTO7 is proud to support the efforts of our partners in the development of Sustainable Tourism operations, products and experiences and will pilot offering free enhancements/value adds to our

partners actively undertaking and supporting Sustainable Tourism practices as outlined in the Criteria below. Partners must be actively engaged in a current RTO7 program to be eligible for these enhancements.

Sustainability Criteria

Definition

The Partner provides experiences consistent with BruceGreySimcoe's (BGS) sense of place and proactively plans to adapt to future needs. There is sufficient evidence that legitimate steps are being taken to improve the partner's impact on the local community and/or natural environment.

Criteria

Business Operations and Planning

- Have membership, support and/or training through sustainability organizations (e.g. Green Tourism Canada)
- Communicate with and address concerns from local residents, indigenous and business community
- Have a code of conduct/ ethics including cultural, environmental and indigenous issues
- Have succession plan for management and employees
- Provide living wage and benefits to employees
- Evidence of sustainability considerations in planning documents
- Evidence of action to lower footprint (i.e. monitoring of utility consumption and waste production appropriate for business size)
- Have a sustainable sourcing plan in place (e.g. fair-trade coffee, Eat Local Grey Bruce)
- Have dedicated 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
- Possess standards, certifications, or awards from third-party organizations related to sustainability (i.e. community support, environmental performance, etc.)

Tourist Experience & Sense of Place

- Encourage tourists to reduce consumption and waste, reduce environmental impacts, and/or green alternatives
- Take measures to reduce impact on surrounding land and biodiversity (i.e. plant native species, reduce paved area, install bird-feeders)
- 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

Indigenous Cultural Tourism Partners ONLY

- Indigenous cultural content follows local protocols
- Indigenous tourism business owned by a) majority indigenous people b) majority owned indigenous companies c) indigenous-controlled organizations
- Indigenous-focused educational background provided to guests before and during visit

Proposed Partnership Project

- Proposed project addresses the sustainability of tourism in some manner (environmental, social, economic)

Note that a signed attestation of the partners' efforts to impact on local community and/or the natural environment is required in order to be eligible to receive one of the enhancements outlined below. Eligibility for an enhancement will be based on the degree to which the above criteria are met and will be at RTO7's discretion.

Enhancements 2019/20

A featured listing on the BruceGreySimcoe Website, plus one of:

- [Green Tourism Canada](#) certification program (value up to \$1,200)
- Sustainable Storytelling (value up to \$1,500)
- One day Photo Shoot with Andrea Hamlin (value up to \$1,500)
- 30 second Video Production with H Visual Media (value up to \$1,500)
- Increased Facebook (or like product) Video/Image Campaign of \$1,500 added to RTO7's existing \$1,000 spend on your video/images within the BruceGreySimcoe marketing campaign (value up to \$1,500)

INELIGIBLE CONTRIBUTIONS AND EXPENSES

- Brochures 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
- Funding from Ontario Government programs, such as Celebrate Ontario, or Ontario Government agencies such as Destination Ontario, the Ontario Trillium Fund or other RTOs
- In-kind donations
- Funds given to organizations for operating costs such as salaries and wages or to a political party

Applications will be accepted on an ongoing basis until December 31, 2019 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, R.S.O. 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 purpose(s) intended.