

# 2020/21 Partnership Program Guidelines

## (Revised May 2020)

Please note that the 2020/21 Partnership Program Guidelines have been revised to reflect current conditions. In general, this includes putting funds where we think they best benefit the operator, increasing leverages where possible to benefit operators, lowering some of the minimum partner contributions, and giving preference to tourism operators.

### GENERAL PROGRAM OVERVIEW

*You will need to attest in your application to having read these detailed Guidelines. If the documents linked to below do not appear automatically, you may find them in your downloaded documents. In addition to reading the Guidelines, you may wish to watch this [video](#) which explains the basic material addressed herein.*

**Note:** We are currently approving and actioning all Partnership Programs. To date we have in excess of 50 projects that are currently being assisted through our Partnership Programs. Expenditure of funds in Partnership Programs is contingent on adherence to the Province's Emergency Orders.

This year, the Ministry of Heritage, Sport, Tourism and Culture Industries (MHSTCI) has provided RTO7 with a "partnership allocation" of \$\_\_\_\_\_ (to be completed once known) towards partnerships with industry to encourage collaborations, strategic alignment and leveraging of regional resources to create awareness, visitation and spending.

This program is not a grant. Matching funds are provided by RTO7 for projects we manage and execute jointly with partners that align with RTO7's mandate, goals, target audiences and activities as found in our current [COVID-19 RECOVERY PLAN 2020/2021](#).

### Partner Eligibility

To undertake a Partnership project, applicants must be:

- Established businesses or organizations (with all required operating permits), including
  - private tourism businesses (note that preference in awarding funds this year will be given to tourism operators i.e. consumer facing organizations that have direct access to the consumer and rely on that consumer for their income)
  - DMOs (Destination Marketing Organizations)
  - tourism organizations, associations/interest groups
  - municipalities
- Capable of demonstrating financial and other capacity to execute the project in partnership (including

- meeting agreed upon timelines).
- Located within Bruce, Grey & Simcoe Counties
  - organizations outside BruceGreySimcoe may apply if there is 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 Partnership programs).
- Future funding of partners will in part depend on timely completion of the project in question and the final partner report, as well as your responsiveness and communication.

Partner contributions (i.e. matching funds) must

- be cash (provided to RTO7 by cheque, EFT or INTERAC e-transfer).
- NOT be funding from Ontario Government programs, such as Celebrate Ontario, or Ontario Government agencies such as Destination Ontario, the Ontario Trillium Fund or other RTOs.

**Note that as part of the application, you will need to attest to having read the Guidelines and relevant Application(s), including all informational links identified as Mandatory in the Attestation Matrix. The [Resource Guide](#) contains useful information on many topics and you may wish to bookmark or save this document for future reference. Where appropriate in the applications, we have provided both a written link to the relevant information in the document, and a brief video link, meaning you can choose to either read or watch the content.**

## **Project/Partner Requirements**

### **Project Requirements**

- Projects must be conducted by third parties i.e. Partnership funds cannot be used to pay or reimburse partner organizations. Third parties may include either one of RTO7's Agencies of Record - H Productions Videography, Andrea Hamlin Photography, The Aber Group Inc. for digital advertising or Seventy-eight Digital for website portals - or a subcontractor identified through an RTO7 led procurement process.
- The only exception to RTO7 leading the procurement process is for Signage projects, in which the municipality/partner procures for suppliers as long as procurements align with [RTO7](#) procurement requirements.
- Signage (conforming to the [RTO7 Wayfinding Signage Standards & Specifications Manual](#)) is the only capital expenditure that is eligible within the Partnership Program.
- If an approved project is delayed/cancelled prior to start, you must advise RTO7 as soon as possible to allow other projects/stakeholders to access funds made available. Any expenses incurred prior to cancellation of a project will be your responsibility.

### **Partner Requirements**

You must:

- 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 and the Agency of Record or consultant assigned to the project to ensure timely and constructive execution of the project.
- Identify BruceGreySimcoe and the Province of Ontario as partners
  - with logos on website with active links back to BruceGreySimcoe.com and ontariotravel.net respectively

- with logos on all printed collateral supported through the program
- in all press releases related to the project
- Tag @BruceGreySimcoe and @ontariotravel using #brucegreysimcoe on Facebook, Twitter and Instagram posts related to the project.
- Complete the free [BGS Tourism Service Excellence Program](#)/
- Consider having at least one representative of their 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.).

## 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 and consumer sentiments 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 (waived for 2020/21).* 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 (not waived). 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 see the [Administration Fee](#) and [Admin Fee FAQ](#).

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 activities that RTO7 targets i.e. the geographic audiences and types of activities we promote are outlined [here \(video\)](#). 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 \(Performance Metrics video\)](#) and [Importance of Data](#) video).

## RTO7 Partnership Program Streams [\(Video\)](#)

### Video/Image Development

This category includes development of videos and/or imagery through RTO7's respective Agency(ies) of Record (H Visual Media and Andrea Hamlin Photography) that can subsequently be used in advertising of assets/events, etc.

### Storytelling

This category provides opportunities for partners to tell their individual and community stories. With RTO7, you will vet current work samples in order to procure a qualified writer that is familiar with the product/experience and locale that the story is about. Stories will be used by all partners and made available to Destination Ontario and MHSTCI.

## Digital Advertising

For the purposes of this program, digital advertising includes adwords/search, Facebook/Instagram ads, banner/display ads, etc. to promote assets/events. This category does not include 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 recognizing the momentum that has been established in attracting tourists to the region as well as the challenge to stakeholders to sustain this momentum if this collaborative partnership did not continue.

## Social Media Advertising (Video & Image) Campaign

This category provides access to digital advertising using short videos or images developed through RTO7 or your own approved video/image collateral (priority will be given to videos of 60 seconds or less). RTO7 has had great success with this in our BruceGreySimcoe campaigns, and the lower buy-in of this partnership provides partners with a low-risk introduction to the benefits of social media advertising as an effective complement to other forms of advertising.

There are two ways to participate in this program:

- 1) Boost the BruceGreySimcoe Seasonal Partner Facebook/Instagram Campaign  
RTO7 will use your recent collateral jointly developed (video or imagery) in our seasonal marketing campaign (directing traffic back to your website). You have the option of boosting RTO7's existing \$1,000 investment in this collateral. Campaign targeting (audience, etc.) will be determined by RTO7 – you simply let us know which video or imagery you wish to boost and send us a minimum of \$500 to a maximum of \$1,000 you'd like to add to this campaign. We'll match your funds, so you end up with a campaign ranging from \$2,000 to \$3,000.
- 2) Conduct your own separate campaign through the Aber Group  
You do your own campaign using either your own video or a jointly developed video. We'll contribute double your funds. This program has a minimum investment of \$500 to a maximum of \$1,000 by the partner. (Example - you send us \$500 – we'll add double that amount for an \$1,500 campaign). In this campaign you have greater flexibility as you determine campaign targeting (audience, messaging, etc.).

The primary difference between the two is that in the first you are leveraging an existing campaign (but as such RTO7 determines target audience etc. for the campaign) while the second provides greater flexibility (through communications with the agency you are able to determine target audience, timing, etc. of the campaign). Although the second option does not leverage an existing investment, the leverage is 1:2 rather than 1:1. The details of each of these options is outlined further in the Social Media Advertising (Video & Image) Campaign Application.

Note: As of April 2020, the new Operational Implementation Program offers social media advertising in exchange for an operator's investment in their operations – you may wish to start by reviewing this program and if it does not meet your needs, then consider one of the above programs to which you will contribute cash.

## Tourism Wayfinding, Trails & Cycling Signage

Funds are available to conduct a signage plan for installation of RTO7 Tourism Wayfinding Signage, to fabricate and install tourism wayfinding, trail and cycling signs (including purchase of posts for Great Lakes Waterfront Trust cycling signage for the 2020/21 year). Note that plans and signs must conform to the [RTO7 Wayfinding Signage Standards & Specifications Manual](#) (which has been updated as of March 2020).

As signage that gets people more efficiently to their destination supports our sustainability objectives, this program **has been expanded this year** to allow for support of elements of signage systems that the RTO7 Signage specifications do not address, and that meet the minimum criteria below:

- Provincially recognized and executed in the majority of Ontario's Tourism Regions
- In support of our targeted activities
- Long-lasting, durable construction (RTO7 reserves the right to have an expert review the fabrication specifications to ensure they meet a minimum standard)
- Appropriate design for use e.g. if on roadways, legible at driving speed, etc.
- All signage must be installed as per governmental regulations relevant to the installation. RTO7 does not assume any responsibility for the design, fabrication and installation of the signage

Examples of this might include some Bruce Trail signage, Conservation Area signage, Great Lakes Waterfront Trail signage, etc. Contact us for consideration if you think your system may be eligible. Note that all signage projects this year (including these adjunct systems) will be leveraged at \$1:\$0.50 (\$1 Partner funds and \$0.50 of Partnership Funds).

Note that signage projects are 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 signage system.

### **French Translation Services**

French language translation by Agency of Record (MJ Translation Inc.) of web and print materials relevant/suited to these markets (e.g. beaches or cycling pages for promotion in Quebec).

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

This category is typically for larger projects, often in the planning stages. Funding is available to develop destination or marketing plans, for large-scale product/experience development, for feasibility studies, etc. Research and workforce development projects are also eligible within this category. Recent examples include a Sustainable Tourism Action Plan for Northern Bruce Peninsula and a Tourism Strategy & Action Plan for the Town of Saugeen Shores.

### **Website Portal Development**

Working with RTO7's Agency of Record (78 Digital Inc.) 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) and allowing for data sharing amongst partners.

## **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 you are considering a project that is *smaller in scope* and involves the *development and implementation of an Experience*, please review the [Experience Implementation Program](#).

If you have *invested in capital improvements to your operation and are interested in smaller-scale social media advertising* (that will be crafted through RTO7's Agency of Record), consider the [Tourism Implementation Program](#)

If you have *invested capital to improve the sustainability (social, financial and environmental) of your operation and are interested in small-scale social media marketing* that will be created through RTO7's Agency of Record, consider the [Sustainable Tourism Implementation Program](#).

For a full list of RTO7 Partner Programs, please visit [rto7.ca](http://rto7.ca) or talk to RTO7 staff about options.

## Partner Support

RTO7 will endeavour to secure matching funding from our partners throughout the region. 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.

## Application Process

Please contact Alex Hogan ([ahogan@rto7.ca](mailto:ahogan@rto7.ca)) prior to submitting to ensure eligibility of your proposed idea.

- Complete and submit your application to [partnerships@rto7.ca](mailto:partnerships@rto7.ca) for approval – be sure to **include HST** in your figures. Click [here](#) for a sample of a completed application (Digital Advertising).
- If your project is approved (typically you will be notified within two weeks), a [Partnership Agreement](#) outlining timelines, performance measurement etc. will be signed by you and RTO7.
- Successful projects will be managed in Basecamp, which allows all parties to track the project's progress.
- RTO7 will invoice you for your contribution. Payment (in the form of a cheque, electronic funds transfer or INTERAC e-Transfer) is due upon receipt of the invoice (*prior* to the project's start). Note that no expenses incurred prior to the signing of the Agreement – or April 1 - will be paid.
- Applications will be accepted on a continual basis (as long as funds remain available). Note that all projects must be fully completed (including your completion of a final report within 30 days of completion) by March 31, 2021. It is strongly recommended that you submit applications before the dates listed below – in particular, Signage and Experience Development projects require significant completion time before year end.

○ Video/Image Production	Oct 31/21
○ Experience Development	Aug 31/21
○ Storytelling	Oct 31/21
○ Digital Advertising	Aug 31/21
○ Social Media (Video/Image) Advertising	Oct 31/21
○ Signage	Sep 30/21
○ French translation	Oct 31/21
○ Website portal development	Aug 31/21

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.



**PARTNERSHIP PROGRAM AT-A-GLANCE (see individual programs for details)**

Category	Tourism Wayfinding Signage	Product/Experience Development	Image Production	Digital Advertising	Video/Image Advertising	DMO Web Portal Development	Translation Services	Storytelling	BGS Seasonal Campaign - Partner FB/Instagram Campaign
<b>Eligible Partners</b>	Private and non-private tourism operators, destination marketing organizations, tourism organizations, municipalities, and associations/interest groups with a primary purpose in tourism in BruceGreySimcoe								
<b>Objective</b>	Improve the tourist experience through implementation of RTO7 signage & wayfinding specifications	Enhance development of tourism experiences (products, training, workforce development 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	To provide stories of experiences and products that disperse tourists to areas that have capacity for growth	To grow visitation by reaching target markets through social media. Using videos/static images developed in Partnership Program. This campaign will top up the existing Partner FB/Insta component in the Seasonal Campaigns that RTO7 already allocates part of its base funding to. RTO7 determines media buy - it will be the same media buy for additional funds as being used for base campaign.
<b>Additional RTO7 funding?</b>	NO	SEE BELOW	YES	YES	YES	NO	NO	YES	NO
<b>Participation Partner \$ : PF \$ : RTO7\$</b>	\$1: \$0.50)	\$1: \$0.75	\$1: up to a maximum of \$1 : \$1	\$1: up to a maximum of \$1: \$1	\$1: up to a maximum of \$1:\$1	\$1: up to a maximum of \$1	\$1: up to a maximum of \$1	\$1: up to a maximum of \$1:\$1	\$1: up to a maximum of \$1
<b>Example Funding</b>	\$10,000 investment by partner receives \$5,000 from partnership fund for a total project of \$15,000	\$10,000 investment by partner receives \$7,500 from partnership fund for a total project of \$17,500	\$1,435 investment by partner receives \$1,435 from partnership fund plus \$1,435 from RTO7 for a total project of \$4,305	\$15,000 investment by partner receives \$15,000 from partnership fund plus \$15,000 from RTO7 for a total project of \$45,000	\$900 investment by partner receives \$900 from partnership fund plus \$900 from RTO7 for a total project of \$2,700	\$6,500 investment by partner receives \$6,500 from partnership fund for a total project of \$13,000	\$1,000 investment by partner receives \$1,000 from partnership fund for a total project of \$2,000	\$1,000 investment by partner receives \$1,000 from partnership fund, plus \$1,000 from RTO7 for a total project of \$3,000	\$1,000 investment by partner receives \$1,000 from partnership for fund for a total project of \$2,000  This \$2,000 is added to the BGS base funding amount of \$750, for a total buy of \$2,750.
<b>Partners funding Minimum</b>	\$5,000	\$ 5,000	\$ 800 (video) \$ 600 (image) \$5,000	\$7,500	\$500	\$6,500 English only	\$ 350	\$ 500	\$ 500
<b>Maximum Example initiatives or projects</b>	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/experience  Develop. of Tourism Destination Plan  Research and/or development of Workforce related planning	Outfitter videos a canoe or paddle board experience.  A recruitment video for students.	A ski resort develops and advertises a campaign digitally.  An attraction 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 microsities	DMO develops and implements story telling of experiences that directs tourists to activities that have capacity for growth and relieve pressure on environs, both natural and manmade, that are experiencing overcrowding.	Video developed in Partnership Program that is being promoted in the BGS Seasonal Campaign can have additional exposure with a \$1,000 investment from partner which is matched by \$1,000 from Partnership Program.
<b>Submissions Accepted</b>	Now to September 30, 2020	Now to August 31, 2020	Now to October 31, 2020	Now to August 31, 2020	Now to October 31, 2020	Now to August 31, 2020	Now to October 31, 2020	Now to October 31, 2020	Now to November 30, 2020

**PARTNERSHIP PROGRAM AT-A-GLANCE (see individual programs for details)**

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