

RTO7's offer of the Implementation Programs for 2023/24 is contingent upon the Ministry of Tourism, Culture & Sports' approval of RTO7's 2023/24 Business Plan.

**Note: that preserving the environment and social fabric in and around our communities is a priority for RTO7 and where possible, we will integrate "Plan Ahead/Book Ahead" messaging into all program criteria.**

RTO7 reserves the right to limit the number of programs/funds that one stakeholder may receive in one year. Stakeholders are limited to 1 social media advertising program per season (OIP, SIP, Social Media Advertising) and a maximum of 2 applications per year.

RTO7 will continue to support businesses applying to do very much the same project that was done in the previous year. However, we want to see businesses continue to evolve, to learn from campaigns supported by RTO7 and ultimately, stand on their own, therefore RTO7 may not support applications for the same project in 2024/25.

# Operations Implementation Program

## General Program Overview

The Operations Implementation Program (OIP) is designed to assist BruceGreySimcoe tourism operators in their stabilization and recovery efforts from the effects of COVID-19 with a \$1,000 social media advertising campaign to promote their operations as part of RTO7's 2023/2024 Business Plan. Examples of eligible operational expenses that can be used to leverage marketing funds include property taxes, mortgage costs, insurance, inventory purchases, etc.

## Partner Eligibility

### Who can apply?

- Tourism Operator - The term 'tourism operator' is defined as a tourism, festival, heritage, cultural and sport, consumer-facing organization that has direct access to the consumer and relies on that tourism consumer for their income.
- Established (2 years of operation) as per the Tourism Operator definition above.
- Franchises, DMOs, BIA's, Chambers and Municipalities will be considered on a case by case basis. Please contact RTO7 staff BEFORE applying.
- Festival and event organizers may use this program as a part of their marketing efforts.
- You must be located within Bruce, Grey and/or Simcoe Counties.
- 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 [resource documents](#), including all informational links.**

All projects must be completed before **March 31, 2024**.

## Project/Partner Requirements

### Project Requirements:

Stakeholders interested in the Operations Implementation Program will be required to demonstrate the following:

- You have an active Facebook PAGE (for business) and are actively engaged on the platform (i.e. post at a regular frequency and respond to comments within 24 hours).
- You need to be the Facebook page owner or have access to this individual in order for our social media Agency of Record to schedule the ads to run on your platforms (this can be found under page roles in your page settings).
- You must have current collateral (produced in the last 3 years); high-resolution images (Min 1MB) and/or 1-3 videos (60 seconds or less) that can be used in a social media campaign. See Resource Guide for best practices.
- Your website is mobile-friendly, must be up to date and reflect your current offerings, hours of operation, and contact information.
- Partners will need to have a landing page consistent with what is portrayed in the video/imagery (i.e. a campaign promoting ice fishing should have a related video and direct traffic to an ice fishing landing page or at minimum, a page outlining a variety of winter activities, of which ice fishing is one).

In this time of transition, partners are encouraged to consider opportunities to shift to more sustainable tourism practices where possible. Visit our RTO7 Sustainable Tourism website [here](#) for more information.

RTO7 will match your investment in operational expenses (e.g. mortgage payments, rent, insurance, inventory purchases, etc.) with a \$1,000 social media advertising campaign. You must be able to demonstrate these expenditures by providing proof of payment of the expenditure (e.g. cancelled cheque or e-transfer confirmation) with the final report. Please note that each expense can only be used once when accessing RTO7 programs. Aside from the operational expenditures invested, there is no cost to the operator. RTO7 will cover the cost of the media spend, additional agency fees, and HST.

### Partner Requirements:

- You must carry liability insurance of at least \$2,000,000 and provide RTO7 with a certificate of insurance to demonstrate this coverage.
- You must attest that there are NO outstanding legal issues that would affect the processing and outcomes of this project and collaboration with RTO7.
- Sustainable business practices and RTO7 supports that when visitors can plan or book ahead, not only does it help to improve the quality of visitors to the region but also helps our stakeholder manage their business more effectively, therefore, plan ahead/book ahead messaging must be included where possible.
- You commit to [monitoring the Facebook/Instagram posts](#) daily for the duration of the campaign.
- [Google Analytics is activated](#) on your website prior to the start of the campaign.
- Select 1 or 2 representatives to act as the liaison with RTO7. This person should be responsible for your social media marketing and can act as the decision-maker. They must have the capacity to execute the project and respond to team communication in a timely manner. Failure to communicate in a timely manner may cause the campaign to be cancelled or fail.
- Once the project is approved, the partner commits to using [Basecamp](#) (RTO7's project management program) for all communications regarding the project. You will supply the names and email addresses of program contacts to add to Basecamp.
- You must identify BruceGreySimcoe and the Province of Ontario as partners:
  - with logos on your website with an active link back to BruceGreySimcoe and Discoverontario.com. RTO7 will provide these [logos](#).

- with logos on all printed collateral supported through the program.
- Social media posts should tag @BruceGreySimcoe and @Ontariotravel (Facebook, Instagram, Twitter) and use #brucegreysimcoe and #DiscoverON.
- The applicant and one front-line staff person will complete one of the following [Typsy](#) online training courses: Social Media for Hospitality, Dealing with Difficult Guests, Sustainability 101, or Interacting with Guests. To be completed by March 31, 2024.
- 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 proof of \$1,000 of expenses (receipts) 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.**

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.

## Administration Fee

**Note: The Administration Fee will be waived for 2023/24; 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 changes/updates 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 (this fee is 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 click [here](#).*

## Data Collection

This data (if postal code data is 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, 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 investment:

- \$1,000 of social media advertising that will show as sponsored ads from the partner's social media platforms (Facebook and Instagram).
- The sponsored ads will have a call to action that will direct visitor traffic to the operator's website home page or Facebook page.
  - The \$1,000 ad spend is applicable to HST and Agency Fees. **RTO7 will cover the full cost of the campaign including HST and additional Agency Fees. There is no cost to the partner.**

### Facebook/Instagram Sponsored Posts

- Maximum 6 ads can be created.
- Minimum 5, maximum of 10 [current images](#) and/or 1-3 videos must be provided for use in the campaign. Images MUST be high resolution (min 1MB) and videos should be 60 seconds or less.
- The RTO7 Program Coordinator will be your point of contact and will liaise between the partner and the Agency of Record.
- The Agency of Record will write the ad copy and create the sponsored ads using the information provided in your application and during your application review call with the RTO7 Program Coordinator.
- You must add the RTO7's Agency of Record, The Aber Group, [as advertisers to your Facebook page](#). An invitation will be sent by The Aber Group which can only be accepted by the Facebook page owner. This will allow the Agency of Record to create and schedule the partners sponsored ads.
- The sponsored ads will run for approximately 4 weeks.
- [You are responsible for managing comments from the post daily](#) with accurate and positive engagement.
- You will receive a final report following the campaign that details
  - Impressions
  - Reach
  - Click Through Rate (CTR)
  - Total Clicks
  - Cost Per Click (CPC)
  - Reactions/Comments/Shares/Saves
  - Total Spend.
- You will receive support from RTO7 staff to develop the demographic and geographic targeting, as well as interests for each of the ad campaigns.
- You will receive one midterm report approximately halfway through the campaign highlighting performance to date.

Please note that targeting will not change for the duration of the campaign unless the results are below industry standards as identified by the agency and/or RTO7.

**RTO7 Applications will be accepted on an ongoing basis until January 31, 2024 or until the program is fully subscribed.**

## Other RTO7 Programs

If you have cash that you would like to add to the social media advertising campaign in order to increase its size and scope, please see the [Partnership Program Social Media Advertising](#).

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

Stakeholders who want to promote sustainability efforts that fall within the pillars of social, environmental, or economic sustainability, may apply through the [Sustainability Inclusivity Program](#). For more information on the pillars and the efforts of RTO7 in the area of sustainability, please visit our [Sustainable Tourism website](#).

Stakeholders who would like to promote job opportunities through their social media platforms may apply to the [Recruitment Implementation Program](#).

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 and Simcoe 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.

Non-profit applicants from Simcoe County may be eligible for the Tourism, Culture & Sport Enhancement Fund. Please contact Tourism Simcoe County staff for more details.

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.