

Operations Implementation Program Guidelines

RTO7's offer of the Implementation Programs for 2025/26 is contingent upon the Ministry of Tourism, Culture & Gaming's approval of RTO7's 2025-26 Business Plan.

Applications will be open from January 31, 2025, until February 28, 2025. A second, and potentially limited, intake will be held later in the year only if funds are not fully allocated in this intake. We highly recommend getting applications in before the deadline, regardless of when your project will occur during the year.

You will need to attest in your application to having read these detailed Guidelines. If the documents linked below do not appear automatically, you may find them in your downloaded documents or reach out to kclarke@rto7.ca.

General Program Overview

The Operations Implementation Program (OIP) is designed to assist BruceGreySimcoe tourism operators with a \$1,000 social media advertising campaign to promote their operations as part of RTO7's 2025/2026 Business Plan. Examples of eligible operational expenses that can be used to leverage marketing funds include property taxes, mortgage costs, insurance, inventory purchases, etc.

Application Process

Please contact Kim Clarke (kclarke@rto7.ca) before submitting to ensure the eligibility of your proposed idea.

- Applications will be open from **January 31, 2025, until February 28, 2025**. A second, potentially limited intake will be held later in the year only if funds are not fully allocated in this intake.
- Before applying, read the entire application and review RTO7's [sustainable tourism goals](#).
- Complete your application.
- If your project is approved (typically you will be notified by the end of March) a Confirmation Letter 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.
- Note that all projects must be fully completed by March 31, 2026.

Partner Eligibility

- Tourism Operator - The term 'tourism operator' is defined as a tourism, festival, heritage and cultural, consumer-facing organization that has direct access to the consumer and relies on that tourism consumer for their income.
- 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. DMO's, BIA's, Chambers and Municipalities may apply for one festival per fiscal year.

- The product, experience, festival etc. must be located within Bruce, Grey and/or Simcoe Counties.
- Organizations must be legally registered to operate in Ontario with all necessary permits in place (federal, provincial, municipal), and there must be no outstanding legal issues that would affect the processing and outcomes of this project and collaboration with RTO7.
- Future funding of partners will require timely completion of the project in question and the final partner report, a high level of responsiveness and communication and demonstration of favourable outcomes from previous funding.
- Note: We want you to be open to the idea of starting on a journey towards economic, social and environmental sustainability. Sustainability isn't a requirement to get funding for 2025/26. However, projects that show they're working to include or improve sustainable practices—using clear and measurable plans—may be prioritized in the application review process. The Operations Implementation Program application process is competitive, and many people apply for the available funds. We welcome applications from all eligible businesses and organizations. No matter where you are in your sustainability efforts, we're here to guide you through the process.
- RTO7 reserves the right to limit the number of programs/funds that one stakeholder may receive in one year. Stakeholders are limited to 1 OIP program per season.
- If you are applying to promote a festival or event, a lead time of 7 to 8 weeks from the start of the festival is required. This allows for 3-4 weeks to build the campaign and 4 weeks to have the campaign in market.
- RTO7 wants to see businesses continue to evolve and to learn from campaigns supported in the past and ultimately, stand on their own. Therefore, in 2025/26 RTO7 may not support applications for the same project completed in previous years.

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). While campaigns will be run through the BruceGreySimcoe Ads Manager (for billing purposes), the campaign will run as sponsored ads on your social media platforms.
- To launch the campaign, you will need to allow The Aber Group to act as an advertiser on your page. In Facebook, only individuals with "full control" (not partial) will be able to accept or assign task access. If you have [Facebook access](#) to a Page, you can view your access.

To view your Page access on Facebook:

- Log into Facebook, then click your profile photo in the top right corner
- Click to see all profiles, then select the page you would like to switch into
- Click your page profile photo on the top left side to go to your Facebook page
- On the left bar that now appears, click Settings
- From there, click Page Setup and Page Access
- Under People with Facebook Access, click your profile to see your access levels, Page Owners will have profiles that say they have full control and will be able to accept access invitations.

- 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.
- 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 (e.g., 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).

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 copies of invoices and proof of payment (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 (unless you are unable to find the person with full control of the Facebook Page, then the \$200 admin fee applies) 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 and you can legally operate in Ontario.
- Maintain a current [operator listing](#) on BruceGreySimcoe.com
- You have claimed your [Google Business Profile](#)
- Partner has submitted any relevant content (project related or otherwise) to [Destination Ontario's](#) 'Always ON Content Intake'
- Sign up for the [RTO7 E-Newsletter](#) (funding updates, announcements, etc.).
- The partner and one front-line staff person will complete a [Typsy](#) online training course. If you have not completed one yet, we recommend Social Media for Hospitality, Dealing with Difficult Guests, Sustainability 101, or Interacting with Guests. All partners must complete at least one course by March 31, 2026. RTO7 staff may ask for a review/testimonial on the courses completed.
- The campaign must be supported by informed frontline staff where appropriate.
- 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.
- 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 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 promptly may cause the campaign to be delayed or cancelled.
- You must identify BruceGreySimcoe and the Province of Ontario as partners:
 - description field in the ads will read "Funded by the Province of Ontario"
 - 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.
- 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.

Campaigns take approximately 3-4 weeks to set up and launch so please ensure you have included enough lead time. Should you require a faster turnaround, high-resolution images and/or videos, messaging and your landing page **MUST** be ready to share at the time of the application.

Administration Fee

The \$200 Administration Fee will be waived for 2025/26 unless you cannot accept the Facebook request from The Aber Group.

Data Collection

There are several tourism metrics we encourage you to consider tracking. For example:

- Sales or conversions
- Postal codes
- Click through rate
- Website clicks (Google Analytics)
- Guest satisfaction rating
- Number of inquiries
- Employee turnover

Refer to the [Resource Guide](#) for more information.

EnviroNics Analytics postal code analysis can be provided upon request (free of charge) for project partners. The analysis of your postal code data will be useful to you in determining the audience targeting for the campaign and future product development. [These](#) are the markets, segments and activities that RTO7 targets i.e. the geographic audiences and types of tourists we are aiming to attract and activities.

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.

You are required to track and report on the metrics you select in your application in the final report.

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.
 - HST and Agency Fees are applicable to the \$1,000 ad spend. **RTO7 will cover the full cost of the campaign including HST and additional Agency Fees. There is no cost to the partner, unless you are unable to accept the advertiser request.**

Facebook/Instagram Sponsored Posts

- Maximum 6 ads can be created.
- Minimum 5, maximum of 10 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.
- An RTO7 staff person 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 RTO7.
- In order to launch the campaign, you will need to allow The Aber Group to act as an advertiser on your page.

If you do not have full control of the Facebook Page, and cannot determine how to move forward at this stage of the program, the campaign will need to run through the BruceGreySimcoe platforms and you will be required to pay a \$200 administrative fee.

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.

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](#). You will need to determine if you want to apply for the Operations Implementation Program or the Social Media Advertising program. You will not be accepted into both programs.

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 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 can 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. This program will close on February 10, 2025.

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 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.