



2022-2023 Partnership Fund Information

INTRODUCTION

RTO 9 continues to offer partnership funding opportunities to our individual tourism operators to help with pandemic recovery and rebuilding efforts as we continue to cautiously reopen the region. We anticipate that the need and popularity of the program will be greater than ever, but also recognize that planning windows will be shorter because of continued uncertainty surrounding the easing and tightening of business restrictions.

To this end, RTO 9 has implemented some changes to the program to help tourism operators even more during the 2022 – 2023 fiscal year.

WHAT'S NEW

- 1) Applicants who are not incorporated but do have a CRA Business Number (BN) can now apply for partnership funding.
- 2) There is one general application.
- 3) There are 4 categories to apply under. Choose one category when applying.
 - a. New or Enhanced Tourism Product/Experience. Tourism products are experiences that draw visitors to the South Eastern Ontario region for longer periods of time. This can also be a festival or event. Funding can be utilized for equipment rental, workshop facilitator fees, performer fees, tent rentals and porta potty rentals etc. Tourism operators are encouraged to reach out to Lori McIsaac to discuss specific budget items at lmcisaac@region9tourism.ca
 - b. Digitizing Your Tourism Business. Expenses considered under this category may include costs associated with search engine optimization, content creation, digital marketing strategy, social media strategy, online booking system, e-commerce tools, photography or videography to enhance your website or social media content.
 - c. Signage – Expenses may include costs associated with the development of signage, road and directional signage for urban and rural tourism businesses.
 - d. Other – Apply under this category if you would like RTO 9 to consider funding for another initiative.

NOTE: We are unable to fund alcohol, swag items, direct partner labour or other capital infrastructure expenses. Please reach out to Lori McIsaac to further discuss your project before applying.

- 4) There will be two application intake periods this year:

Pandemic restrictions continue to change rapidly, making planning a challenge. We don't want our operators to lose out on the opportunity to partner with us, so we have created two

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application intake periods this year. The first is targeted at projects taking place between April 1, 2022 -September 5, 2022.

To provide additional time for planning of projects later in the year, a second application intake period will be available in mid-summer for projects occurring between September 6, 2022-March 31, 2023. Please submit your application for the timeline that all or most of your project will take place in.

Intake periods for applications are as follows:

Intake #1 Applications available February 15- March 6, 2022, for projects beginning April 1 - September 5, 2022

Intake #2 Applications available July 5 - July 25, 2022, for projects beginning September 6, 2022 - March 31, 2023

Note: All applicants will be notified regarding their application as quickly as possible but no later than 30 business days from the close of the intake period.

SHARING YOUR SUCCESS STORY

Please note that our program is not a grant, it is a Partnership Program. RTO 9 can help your project with more than just money. We have a wealth of knowledge, resources, ideas and free coaching that can make your project even more successful, and we may be able to help market your project through our social media channels.

Communication is key with any partnership. RTO 9 wants to know how things are going as you hit project milestones. More importantly, RTO 9 wants to share your story of success across the region to motivate others to think about investing in their business to help grow the tourism economy.

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HOW DO I BECOME A PARTNER (How do I apply?).

Things to consider before completing the online application.

Look at your proposed project through a tourism lens. Is your project going to help you drive and retain visitors from outside of your area? Is there an opportunity for them to spend money while they are here? Are you working with other business partners to expand your projects offering and interest level from visitors? Appealing to a wider audience is vital to the success of many projects and is another key benefit of being a partner with RTO 9. We might share your projects story with RTO 9 followers when you tag us in your social media posts using #southeasternontario. The online application will ask you for the following regarding your project:

Step 1 Project Description and Objectives

Describe the rationale and demand for your project. How it will fit with one or more of RTO 9's pillars (see Partnership Guidelines). Explain how the partnership with RTO 9 will further the success of the project. Describe your project's goals, project stages and milestones. What is your project's unique selling proposition?

Step 2 Assessment and Performance Measures

How will you measure the success of your project using S.M.A.R.T. performance measures: Specific, Measurable, Attainable, Relevant and Timely.

Step 3 Project Timelines

Provide details and timelines around key pre and post project activities: planning stages, marketing activities, post-project analysis etc.

Step 4 COVID Health & Safety Protocols

Provide the steps you are taking to ensure ongoing Health & Safety protocols are being addressed if your project is an event, festival, or a tourism product.

Step 5 Active Partner Contributions

Detail partners who are actively involved in the delivery of your project (other businesses contributing to the event, festival, or tourism product experience). Provide information and mutual partnership benefits.

Step 6 Other Financial Contributions

Outline any other funding or grant contributions that you have applied for or have been approved for.

Step 7 Project Budget and Financing

Identify and substantiate a detailed project BUDGET using the table below. RTO 9 reserves the right to contact other agencies funding the project as may be required. RTO 9 reserves the right to review estimates of costs and procurement practices for the project. Detail which expenses you are asking RTO 9 to fund.

Please note your 50% investment can't come from other provincial sources (e.g. grants).

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Please note that the minimum contribution is \$2,500.00 (some exceptions apply) and the maximum matching contribution is \$25,000 from RTO 9.

Step 8 Project Economic Benefits and Expected Impact:

How the project will benefit the local or regional economy in terms of tourism development in the region i.e. direct impact on job creation, tourism growth, overnight stays, product development, business competitiveness. Describe your ongoing plans for the project.

Step 9 Communications Plan:

Outline your communication plan with respect to the requirement for recognition of your Destination (DMO/DMP) and the Province of Ontario, Media releases/ newsletters, social media platforms. Placement of the RTO 9 logo and Ontario logo (provided) with a link to sites are mandatory. Utilization of relevant RTO 9 and #southeasternontario hashtags.

Step 10 Management and Support Plan:

Describe your organization's structure and its capacity to co-manage the project. When more than one partner is involved in the project, provide letters of commitment from each partner describing their involvement in the project. Identify internal plans for ensuring project success. Do you have access to legal services and advice?

Step 11 Supporting Documentation

Please attach required supporting documentation in one file including: Proof of incorporation or CRA Business Number document, letters of support from partners, Destination Management Organization, Tourism Office, City Council etc.

Step 12 Past RTO 9 Partnership Fund Project History

Please indicate any of your organizations past projects that have been supported through the RTO 9 Partnership Fund program.

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WHAT ELSE SHOULD I DO?

RTO 9 provides you with lots of opportunities over and above the partnership program to help your tourism business. We offer free virtual [webinars and workshops](#) aimed at enhancing your tourism business skill set. Past topics have included: Smartphone Photography for Your Business, Creating Partnerships with Indigenous Tourism Operators, Social Media Tips and Strategies and much, much more. We've got a lot to offer. Check us out with these suggestions:

- Visit and browse our industry partner website [RTO9.ca](#)
- Sign up for the newsletter in the red banner at the bottom of the page.
- Read the 2022-2023 Partnership Guidelines to learn more about the Partnership Fund Program
- If your project is going to strengthen the tourism potential in our region and if it's interesting, unique and has a broad appeal, we should talk! If you are in the development phase and need a little push to get your tourism project to market, we should talk!
- Reach out to the Director of Experiential Tourism Development, Lori McIsaac at lmcisaac@region9tourism.ca to further discuss your partnership idea before completing your online application.

Visit our Industry social pages: [Facebook](#), [Instagram](#), [Youtube](#)

Check out what consumers see at [South Eastern Ontario](#)

And how we connect with visitors to our region: [Facebook](#), [Instagram](#), [Youtube](#), [Twitter](#)