

Application Guide for the FedDev Tourism Relief Fund (TRF)



What is the TRF?

The **Tourism Relief Fund**, administered by Canada's regional development agencies (RDAs) and Innovation, Science and Economic Development Canada (ISED), (<https://www.feddevontario.gc.ca/eic>) has been designed to support tourism businesses and organizations in order to adapt their operations to meet public health requirements while investing in products and services to seize new market opportunities and facilitate their future growth.

TRF enables Region 9, Regional Tourism Organization (RTO 9) to provide support to tourism-dependent Small- and Medium-Sized enterprises (SMEs), not-for-profit organizations, municipalities and Indigenous tourism operators, within its service area.

Grants applied for to RTO 9 will normally range from \$5000 to \$100,000.

Non-repayable funding will support costs related to product development and enhancement of tourism experiences to help tourism businesses adapt to the 'new normal', modernize tourism offerings, and encourage the adoption of more environmentally sustainable practices. In addition, funding will support destination development that will position communities to take advantage of post-pandemic opportunities through strategic planning for medium to long-term investments, as well as supporting destination development.

Expenditure of funds in the Tourism Relief Fund is contingent on adherence to the Province's Framework guidelines and Emergency Orders.

Please note that the Tourism Relief Fund 2022/23 Guidelines continue to reflect current conditions. In general, this includes investing funds that benefit the tourism operator, tourism industry and leverage Tourism Region 9 into a more profitable and sustainable tourism destination.

The safety of residents, employees and tourists is of paramount importance in all our efforts to promote your experiences and the region. This program may be suspended with little or no notice if directed by the Government of Canada, Province of Ontario, local health units or municipalities.

Note also that preserving the environment and social fabric in and around our communities is a priority for RTO 9 and where possible.

Eligible Costs/Activities

Eligible costs include those relating to activities for both Product Development and Destination Development.

- Creating, adapting, and enhancing protocols and permanent infrastructure to meet health and safety requirements to accommodate visitors and employees to keep businesses operating;
- Helping operators traditionally reliant on international markets to create innovative tourism offerings attractive to local and domestic visitors;
- Modernizing operations, attractions, greening initiatives, and online sales services;
- Supporting businesses with the local promotion of tourism products, including digital and virtual reality experiences;
- Developing capacity for more inclusive tourism experiences (e.g. staff training to ensure welcoming, inclusive environments to diverse clientele, gender-neutral washroom facilities);
- Providing support to local communities to develop sustainable tourism plans based on research and market analysis, and designed to rebuild tourism confidence in communities;
- Supporting seasonal dispersion by equipping tourism SMEs to extend their product offering to increase visitation during the winter and shoulder seasons;
- Supporting destinations to implement tourism plans that create or improve local assets, facilities, and planning for key infrastructure;
- Supporting the development and the implementation of tourism economic development recovery plans that consider possible key market reactions when travel can safely resume
- Developing and enhancing tourism services and experiences;
- Implementing strategies to re-activate and animate downtown cores, main streets and business districts through activities, public art, and mixed use spaces;
- Supporting scale-up and market expansion activities for key enterprises essential to economic vitality and the local business climate; and,
- Some consideration of marketing expenses

Examples of Potential Projects

Public-sector infrastructure projects, like (but not limited to):

- Public space enhancement/development such as public parking, public washrooms, gender-neutral washrooms, etc.
- Public space safety and security enhancements to meet health and safety requirements to accommodate visitors and employees
- Accessible infrastructure development such as ramps, elevators, widening walkways, etc.
- Sustainable building retrofits such as installation of solar panels, efficient energy systems, water efficiency improvements, etc.
- Event space enhancement/development
- Walking/Bike Trail development or enhancement
- Signage and way finding
- Public space Wi-Fi
- Electric vehicle charging stations
- Content development (e.g. images, videos, etc.)
- Digital solutions development (e.g. website, booking/payment platforms, chatbots to facilitate booking, augmented reality to improve experiences, etc.)
- Travel trade partnerships development

Private-sector infrastructure projects, like (but not limited to):

- Facility seasonal preparation/enhancement (i.e. shoulder/winter season)
- Sustainable operator facility retrofits such as installation of solar panels, efficient energy systems, water efficiency improvements, etc.
- Event space enhancement / development
- Operator facility safety and security enhancements
- Operator facility electric vehicle charging stations
- Content development (e.g. images, videos, etc.)

Ineligible Costs

Ineligible costs include, but are not limited to, the following:

- Costs of land, building or vehicle purchase
- Refinancing
- Costs of intangible assets such as goodwill, whether capitalized or expenses
- Depreciation or amortization expenses
- Interest on invested capital, bonds, debentures, or mortgages
- Bond discount
- Losses on investments, bad debts and any other debts
- Fines or penalties
- Costs related to litigation
- Non-incremental wages
- Fees for administrators, including payments to any member or officer of the Recipient's Board of Directors
- Opportunity costs
- Hospitality and entertainment costs
- Costs of individual membership in a professional body (e.g. professional designations)
- Lobbyist fees
- Gift cards

Note: Please contact RTO 9 if you are unsure about an eligible or ineligible cost.

Eligible Applicants

Eligible applicants include tourism entities that cater mainly to visitors, such as:

- Incorporated businesses, primarily small- and medium-sized enterprises (SMEs)
- Not-for-profit incorporated organizations (including tourism associations and destination marketing organizations and destination marketing programs)
- Co-operatives (for-profit and not-for-profit)
- Municipalities, Municipal Development Corporations and related entities
- Post-secondary institutions
- Indigenous /First Nations / Métis Settlement owned businesses or organizations, an Indigenous organization such as Indigenous-led not-for-profits and organizations which include but are not limited to First Nations as represented by their Chief and Council, tribal Councils, Indigenous Organizations, Métis and Inuit organizations and Settlements

To be considered eligible for this fund, applicants must meet at least one of the following criteria:

- be a key supplier or operator in the visitor experience
- be part of a defined tourism cluster or a tourism dependent community, including supporting downtown cores or
- provide an anchor product or service in a tourism destination

Note: Only one application will be accepted per applicant.

Ineligible Applicants

Ineligible applicants include businesses that are in the following industries:

- Restaurants
- Retail Sector
- Hotel Chains

Financial Support

RTO 9 will provide non-repayable contributions of up to \$100,000 for up to:

- 50% of eligible costs for for-profit businesses
- 100% of eligible costs for not-for-profit organizations

Priority Considerations

Priority consideration will be given to projects that:

- Support the Indigenous tourism sector
- Are led by a business/organization of strategic importance to the tourism sector in the region
- Show collaboration with the Chamber of Commerce, BIA's and DMO/DMP's
- Contribute to the economic development of a region
- Contribute to job creation in the region
- Take place in a tourism-dependent community/region, including projects supporting downtown core
- Invest in clean technology
- Support diversity

- Increase jobs (from a baseline)
- Support multiple businesses or organizations
- Increase tourism products
- Increase the number of visitors
- Increase the amount of training
- Align with the RTO 9 priorities of: Product Development, Workforce Development, Investment Attraction and Partnerships

Projects must be completed by December 31, 2022.

If an approved project is delayed/cancelled prior to start, you must advise RTO 9 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 and any advanced TRF funds must be returned in full to RTO 9 immediately.

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 RTO 9 to ensure timely and constructive execution of the project.
- Identify South Eastern Ontario, the [Government of Canada](#) and [Federal Development Agency Southern Ontario](#) program administrators and funders with logos on website with active links back to South Eastern Ontario and Government of Canada and Federal Development Agency Southern Ontario with logos on all printed collateral supported through the program and in all press releases related to the project.
- All announcements, advertising, communications must be approved by Federal Development Agency Southern Ontario and RTO 9.

Application Process

- Complete your application – be sure to exclude HST in your figures.
- If your project is approved (approval process will be completed June 1st), a Contribution Agreement will be entered into which outlines timelines, performance measurement etc. that will be signed by you and RTO 9. Applications will be accepted on a continual basis from April 12th to May 15th. Note that all projects must be fully completed (including your completion of a final report within 30 days of completion) by December 31, 2022.

Applicants should be aware that RTO 9, 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/Federal Government of Canada 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 RTO 9 in connection with their application, project or agreement may be subject to disclosure in accordance with the requirements of that Act. Partners to permit RTO 9, if required, to verify/audit information submitted (at the discretion of the Province/Government of Canada) to ensure that it is complete and accurate, and that funds were used for purpose(s) intended.

Submitting an Application

Start the online application process with RTO 9 [here](#).