



## 2023-2024 Partnership Fund Information

### INTRODUCTION

RTO 9 continues to offer partnership funding opportunities to our individual tourism operators to help with pandemic recovery and rebuilding across the region. This program is intended to provide operators with resources to better develop their tourism offering and promote visitation within South Eastern Ontario.

Partnership Funding is not available to DMO/DMP offices, Business Investment Areas, Chambers of Commerce, Municipalities, or any other membership-based associations. The funding is intended to assist operators grow their business.

### WHAT'S NEW

- 1) Applicants who are not incorporated but do have a CRA Business Number (BN) can apply for partnership funding.
- 2) Indigenous operators must be 51%+ Indigenous owned and controlled and in lieu of a CRA Business Number (BN), must be able to provide a Certificate of Indian Status Registry Number or a Métis Registry Number.
- 3) A letter of support from your DMO/DMP is now mandatory.
- 4) All partner contributions must be made electronically – via either EFT or e-transfer.
- 5) There is one general application. Applicants are asked to submit a maximum of 8 pages per application – less is more.
- 6) There are 3 categories to apply under. Choose one category when applying.
  - a. New Events. Expenses associated with getting a new event or festival launched in South Eastern Ontario. Funding can be utilized for rental equipment, workshop facilitators, performer fees, tent, porta potty rentals etc.
  - b. Development of Indigenous Tourism Product. Expenses considered under this category may include costs associated with business planning, branding, website development, contracting of an Indigenous operator, etc.
  - c. Development of Guided Experiences or Trails. Expenses may include costs associated with the development of new guided experiences/trails and may include directional signage, mapping, translation services, third-party training, app development, etc.

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

# 2023-2024 RTO 9 Partnership Opportunities

- 7) There will be two application intake periods this year. See the table below for opening and closing dates. The first intake period is targeted at projects taking place between April 1, 2023 -September 4, 2023. The second application intake period will be available in mid-summer for projects occurring between September 5, 2023-February 15, 2024. 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 13 - March 3, 2023, for projects beginning April 1 – September 4, 2023

Intake #2 Applications available July 3 – July 21, 2023, for projects beginning September 5, 2023 – February 15, 2024

*Note: All applicants will be notified regarding their application as quickly as possible but no later than 25 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 and requires a buy-in of 50% of eligible project costs from the applicant. 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 a 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.

## 2023-2024 RTO 9 Partnership Opportunities

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 can help promote your project to a consumer/visitor audience through our South Eastern Ontario social channels. Please refer to [this blog post](#) on how to connect with us on various channels.

### 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 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 5 Other Financial Contributions

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

### Step 6 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). Please note that the minimum contribution is \$2,500.00 (some exceptions apply) and the maximum matching contribution is \$25,000 from RTO 9.*

## **2023-2024 RTO 9 Partnership Opportunities**

### **Step 7 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 8 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 9 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 10 Supporting Documentation**

Please attach required supporting documentation in one file including: Proof of incorporation, CRA Business Number document, Certificate of Indian Status Registry Number or Métis Registry Number, a letter of support from your local Destination Management Organization or Tourism Office, and any additional letters from external partners, City Council etc.

### **Step 11 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.

## **2023-2024 RTO 9 Partnership Opportunities**

### 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 have a lot to offer. Check us out with these suggestions:

- Visit and browse our industry partner website [RTO9.ca](http://RTO9.ca)
- Sign up for the newsletter in the red banner at the bottom of the page.
- Read the 2023-2024 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 Operations Manager, Meg Dabros at [mdabros@region9tourism.ca](mailto:mdabros@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](#)