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**2023-24 Matched Funding Partnership Program Guidelines**

The Regional Tourism Organization (RTO) program was developed to partner or assist organizations that act in the best interest and promote and coordinate tourism activities with the entirety of the region. RTOs enhance the economic impact of the tourism sector by leveraging partnerships and collaboration across the entire industry. RTOs cannot budget funds proportionally among participating Destination Marketing Organizations (DMOs) or communities and must be used to support the region as a whole.

The Province strongly encourages RTOs to work with all tourism partners including other regions, sector-based organizations, municipalities, and other organizations on matters of mutual interest. Strong partnerships and a coordinated approach are vital to the future sustainability of tourism across the province.

**Matched Funds**

The Tourism Partnership of Niagara (TPN) is eligible to receive “partnership” funds from the Ministry of Tourism, Culture and Sport (MTCS) as part of their funding allocation.

The partnership funding approach is guided by the following set of objectives:

* Enhance tourism across the province.
* Support the TPN as the leader in regional tourism.
* Maximize support for tourism at a regional level by encouraging strong partnerships, expanding the breadth and diversity of funding partners.
* Encourage the TPN to engage industry partners to broaden their financial base to extend reach.
* Support a coordinated approach that aligns planning, marketing, product development, investment attraction, and workforce development in the region
* Assure the transparency and accountability of funding support through the transfer payment agreement process.

The value of partnerships among industry sectors cannot be overstated. Regardless of the partnership allocation of funds, the TPN can maximize support for tourism in their regions by expanding the breadth and diversity of their partners. Strong partnerships and a coordinated approach to product development, regional planning and marketing are essential to the future sustainability and increased competitiveness of tourism across Ontario.

The TPN is expected to use ministry funding to develop and deliver strategies to support the following destination management priorities or pillars:

1. *Product Development*
2. *Investment Attraction/ Investor Relations*
3. *Workforce Development and Training*
4. *Marketing*

**What does Matched Funding Mean?**

The TPN will match dollar for dollar any funds that a DMO/Partner/Applicant, (hereafter referred to as “The Applicant’), contributes to a qualified and approved project/event. The TPN will hold on deposit the Applicant’s funds together with TPN matched funds and will manage the project.

**TPN Role and Responsibilities:**

The TPN will:

* Consult and manage the project development process and compliance considerations at the onset of the project conception, i.e., before the project begins.
* Optimize the project by helping to define marketing strategies.
* Ensure financial commitments and payment obligations are met as the primary financial comptroller of the project.
* Review any procurement consideration and participate in fulfilling any procurement requirements.
* Review and approve any TPN marketing recognition and/or benefits.

**General Criteria**

1. The partnership project cannot start and the TPN cannot enter into agreements with potential partners prior to receiving approval from the Ministry.
2. Generally, the TPN is the lead and has the project management responsibility for any given project.
3. Under exceptional cases, should the TPN be approved by the Ministry to proceed where it is not the lead or project manager, it must be actively involved in the planning, governance and oversight of the project which will ensure that the project is strategically aligned with the TPN business plan and the Ministry accountability requirements.
4. All procurement, whether goods or services, should be led by the TPN regardless of the project lead. Where the purchase price exceeds $5,000, the TPN, will at a minimum, obtain at least, three written quotes.
5. Projects/events to be aligned with activities in TPN’s business and marketing plans.
6. Projects/events must be supported in writing by the appropriate DMO and align to the DMO’s overall marketing strategy.
7. The project/event/activity has to represent:
   * Something new, or
   * Adding an enhancement or something incremental to an existing project/event/activity
8. Minimum amounts - Individual projects will not be less than $20,000 with $10,000 from the applicant and $10,000 matched by TPN.
9. Maximum amounts – Individual projects will be limited to $200,000 with $100,000 from the applicant and $100,000 matched by TPN.
10. DMO/Partner/Applicant must be in good standing with the TPN in respect to any outstanding invoices or outstanding reports due.
11. Funding may not be used to offset existing operational and marketing activities of an Applicant.
12. The Ministry prohibits ‘flow through’ funding to any Applicant.
13. Applicant applications must clearly disclose if the proposal will benefit any private business interests of any TPN Board, Committee members or staff.

**BUDGETS and INTAKE DATES**

TPN will accept applications at any time, however the following the guidelines will be applied for the fiscal period of April 01, 2023 – March 31, 2024.

**Intake Date - This fiscal period ONLY**

* TPN will accept applications on or before Oct. 30, 2023 for the current fiscal period.
* 100% of the budget will be available.

**APPLICATION PROCESS**

Applications must clearly define project deliverables, roles, responsibilities, resource requirements, timelines, and performance measures in addition to a detailed budget outlining all sources of funding and which expenses are to be supported by the TPN.

**STEP #1 – Applicant**

1. Meet with the TPN to discuss and review any potential project ideas.
2. Complete and submit application forms and budget.
   1. The budget must clearly indicate which expenses the TPN will be supporting.

**STEP #2 – TPN**

1. Meets and consults with the Applicant on any potential projects before the application is submitted.
2. TPN staff will review and evaluate each application and recommend those projects to be approved by the TPN Board.
3. Ensures that the project/event/activity is on strategy for the TPN using the Ministry’s Evaluation Criteria
4. Continues to consult with the Applicant to identify and document roles and activities.
5. Works with the Applicant to undertake a procurement process for any expenses in excess of $5,000, which must be in place prior to the project starting.
6. Establishes and negotiates ‘Terms and Conditions’ as part of the Funding Agreement
7. Consults with MTCS Regional Advisor to review and evaluate applications for eligibility.
8. Submits application to MTCS Regional Advisor for final approval.

**STEP #3 – Ministry of Tourism, Culture and Sport**

1. Reviews application
2. Approves application, which may have additional ‘Terms and Conditions’ or comments.
3. Advises the TPN in writing. The Ministry requires at least 7 business days, after the application is received by them to evaluate each application.

**STEP #4 – Funding Agreement**

If all the steps above have been approved, the Applicant will be required to sign a TPN Funding Agreement, which will outline the *“Terms and Conditions”* as well as the defined roles between the TPN and Applicant to undertake project/event/activity partnership.

Disbursement cannot take place until both parties sign the Funding Agreement and all conditions are met.

**Standard Conditions**

1. Confirmation and proof of other funding (if applicable) needs to be in place *within 30 days* of the project/event.
2. Confirmation and proof of insurance requirements (if applicable) need to be place before funds are released.
3. TPN will insert a timing schedule with key milestones and dates for completion by the applicant.
4. A copy of the approved Budget indicating the expenses which TPN will be supporting.
5. A copy of the Performance Measurements/ Metrics, as agreed to in the application form.
6. Detailed list of opportunities and participation for TPN
7. The Applicant will seek written approval, prior to public distribution, of all:
8. TPN & Ministry logo placements
9. Acknowledgement of support from
10. TPN
11. Ministry of Tourism, Culture and Sport
12. Procurement documentation must be completed and on file prior to starting the project.

**Supplier Information**

The Applicant is responsible to ensure confirmation and proof that any supplier connected with this project has:

* + 1. A valid registered HST number
    2. WSIB coverage as required by provincial regulations.

**STEP #5 – MATCHED FUNDING FINANCIAL PROCESS**

**DMO/Partner/Applicant Invoicing**

1. The TPN will invoice the Applicant for their portion of the project/event ***PLUS HST***
2. Funds must be on deposit with the TPN one day in advance of work starting or before the payment of any invoices submitted.
3. TPN Invoices are due when issued.

**Multiple suppliers (> 5)**

1. TPN will invoice the Applicant for 90% plus HST of their funding portion.
2. TPN will invoice the Applicant with final costs and applicable HST as soon as all invoices are received and paid and the project is completed

**Limited suppliers (< 5)**

1. TPN will invoice the Applicant for 100% of their funding portion.

**PAYMENT OF INVOICES**

Disbursement cannot take place until both parties sign the Funding Agreement and all conditions are met.

* The TPN will only fund those items agreed to and specified in the approved budget.
* The TPN will not manage the supplier directly.
* Applicant to approve by signing invoices BEFORE submitting to the TPN for payment. Scanned copies are acceptable.
* All Invoices must be addressed to “The Tourism Partnership of Niagara”.
* TPN will pay invoices in full or partial to the **maximum** of the Funding Agreement
* Should there be an overpayment, the Applicant agrees to repay the TPN to ensure the project stays within the approved maximum project funding.
* TPN will ensure prompt payment of invoices and within standard 30 days of invoice.

**HST REBATE**

The TPN is eligible for HST rebate and receives 50% refund of GST and 82% refund of PST.

The project budget is the ***NET after the HST*** rebate.

As an example:

|  |  |
| --- | --- |
| Supplier Invoice Amount | $ 10,000.00 |
| Plus 13% HST | $ 1,300.00 |
| TOTAL Supplier Invoice | $ 11,300.00 |
| TPN Rebate | $ 906.00 |
| **Amount charged to project** | **$ 10,394.00** |

**FINAL REPORT**

The Final Report will follow the guidelines/templates provided by the TPN and will include but not be limited to:

1. Applicant to complete TPN’s *Final Report* within 30 business days following the project/event/ activity.
2. Description of the activities linked to the Project Description as outlined in the application.
3. Proof of acknowledgment of TPN and Ministry funding support
4. Signed Attestation that the project was completed as outlined in the Funding Agreement.
5. Report on performance measures/metrics
6. Final expenditures and revenues
7. Explanation of variance between anticipated expenditures/achievements and actuals
8. **Copies** of all marketing collateral produced using the funds, including hard copies of materials developed, URLs etc.
9. Number and types of activities
10. Any other details that may be requested by the TPN.
11. The Applicant will not be eligible for future funding if no report is submitted.

**CHANGES, DELAYS, CANCELLATIONS**

Should there be any changes after the application has been approved, the following will apply:

* The Applicant will submit, in writing, the project changes.
* The TPN will seek Ministry approval of any proposed changes.
* If an approved project is delayed or cancelled, the DMO is requested to advise the TPN as soon as possible. This may allow other projects or DMOs to access surplus funds.
* Any unused project funding up to $2,500 will be reassigned by TPN management.

**ELIGIBLE COSTS**

Eligible costs are those deemed reasonable and necessary by the Ministry for the successful implementation of deliverables.

**Ineligible Contributions and Expenses**

1. Grants and flow-through to other organizations
2. Charitable fundraising
3. Donations to political parties or lobby groups
4. Capital expenses.
5. Prize money
6. Expenses that do not relate directly to the delivery of the Funding Agreement
7. Funding from Ontario government programs, such as Celebrate Ontario, or Ontario government agencies, such as the Ontario Tourism Marketing Partnership Corporation, or other RTOs.
8. In-kind donations
9. Funds used for advocacy work, fundraising, hiring a lobbyist, capital expenses, or as prize money.
10. Funds given to other organizations for operational funding, such as salaries and wages, or to a political party.
11. Alcohol expenses (wine, beer, spirits) as part of any hospitality or special event are not eligible unless the primary objective of the event is to promote Niagara region’s wine, beer, and spirits products, i.e., Ice Wine Festival

**OTHER GENERAL**

The Applicant will permit the TPN, 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.

Applicants should be aware that the TPN, through funding agreements 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 the TPN in connection with their application may be subject to disclosure in accordance with the requirements of that Act.

**PROCUREMENT**

**Ministry Procurement Rules**

The TPN is expected to meet Ministry procurement guidelines as follows:

**Tendering for Goods and Services and Disposal of Assets**

1. The TPN will manage the Initiative wisely and prudently achieving value for money.
2. The TPN will acquire all supplies, equipment, and services, including any advertising-related services, purchased with the Funding through an appropriate competitive process.
3. Where the purchase price exceeds $5,000, the TPN will, at a minimum, obtain at least three written quotes unless the TPN can demonstrate that the supplies, equipment or services the TPN is purchasing is specialized and is not readily available.
4. Where the purchase price exceeds $25,000, the TPN will issue a Request for Proposal.
5. In carrying out a competitive process, the TPN must:
   1. Develop a clear description of the product/service which includes sufficient details concerning the requirements; and
   2. Apply consistent, transparent and objective evaluation criteria.

The TPN will not, without the Province’s prior written consent sell, lease or otherwise dispose of any assets purchased with the Funding, the purchase price of which exceeds $5,000.

**ACKNOWLEDGEMENTS**

In accepting public funding from the Government of Ontario, all recipients are required to acknowledge the financial assistance they receive with the use of:

* + - The **“Ontario Yours to Discover” logo on all consumer materials, including all materials produced as a part of partnership projects** (such as consumer websites, social media sites, advertising campaign materials, brochures, etc.)
    - The **Ontario trillium logo on industry only related materials** (such as industry websites, newsletters, training sessions and materials, image bank, reports, etc.)

*Ontario Yours to Discover logo*



OTMPC has a logo for Canadian (domestic) audience that is available in both English and French and a logo for international audiences. Versions of the Ontario Yours to Discover logo can be requested and downloaded for free from the OTMPC’s image database at [www.imageontario.com](http://www.imageontario.com/). Low resolution versions of the logo can be found using the search word “logo.” Higher resolution versions required for print must be ordered through the site and upon check out you will be asked to outline the purpose of its use.

The guidelines for the use of the Ontario Yours to Discover logo are available on pages 22-24 in [OTMPC’s Brand Toolkit](http://www.tourismpartners.com/publications/Marketing/mrktng_OTMPCBrandToolkit.pdf).

*Ontario trillium logo*



When using the Ontario trillium logo please note the following:

1. The Ontario logo should be used only as provided. The visual or structural relationship may not be changed in any way.
2. There is no colour version of the logo. In most applications, the Ontario logo appears in a black against a white or light background.
3. When accompanying other corporate logos, the Ontario Logo should be the same size.
4. The two most commonly used recipient tag lines are: “Funded by the Government of Ontario” or “Funding provided by the Government of Ontario”. These examples are provided for consideration purposes only. Using a tag line is not a requirement.

In addition, the **“The Tourism Partnership of Niagara**” logo is to be displayed on all consumer materials(such as consumer websites, social media sites, advertising campaign materials, brochures, etc.)

