



HAMILTON • HALTON • BRANT

PARTNERSHIP FUND PROGRAM GUIDE

In recognition of strong partnerships and a coordinated approach, Regional Tourism Organizations (RTOs) are eligible to receive additional funds from the Ministry of Tourism Culture and Sport (MTCS) where they can demonstrate that they have received funds from other sources in support of regional activities. These “partnership” funds are part of the annual funding allocation to the RTOs.

This program matches contributing funds from partners within the region, thus leveraging budgets for partner initiatives.

RTOs are expected to use all MTCS funding to develop and deliver strategies to support the following destination management priorities:

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

Hamilton Halton Brant Regional Tourism Association (HHBRTA) is committed to working with their regional partners in the development of high quality, new or enhanced experiences that will drive new visits and spending to the region.

Definition of “Partnership”

In the context of the funding model; “partnership” is defined as the agreement of the RTO to work with one or more entities on a specific project in support of the RTO’s business plan.

Process

The process starts with a conversation with HHBRTA’s Partnership Fund Manager, Adrienne Carter, to assess eligibility and project scope. If the project aligns with the upcoming business plan of HHBRTA, then it can be considered for matching funding.

Proposals for projects that will occur in the next fiscal year (April 1, 2016 to March 31, 2017) will be considered if presented before December 18, 2015.

If approved, a Memorandum of Understanding (MOU) will be written outlining the project scope, objectives, performance measurements and key activities for the initiative. As the fund matches partner contributions; an invoice will be issued by HHBRTA with the MOU. The partnership officially begins with the signing of the MOU and HHBRTA receiving the partner's fund contribution.

Once the project is complete the partner is required to report on the Project Objectives and Performance Measurements as outlined in the MOU.

**All Project Proposals must be presented to HHBRTA by December 18, 2015
for next fiscal year (April 1, 2016 to March 31, 2017).**

Memorandum of Understanding

The Partnership requires the signing of a Memorandum of Understanding (MOU). This document is created jointly between the partner and HHBRTA staff. It clearly describes the project and expected deliverables. It outlines the strategic focus, describing how the project fits into HHBRTA's business plan. Project objectives (goals), performance indicators (measurements) and key activities are outlined in the MOU, as all these elements will need to be tracked during the project and reported on at the conclusion of the project.

Project Objectives outline the overall goals for the initiative (ie: Reach into the GTA market); they are qualitative. Performance Indicators are the specific measurements identified to assess the successes of the project; they are quantitative. Meaning, they are the action taken to obtain the objective (ie: Place 2 ads in the Toronto Metro News). These objectives and indicators need to be S.M.A.R.T.; Specific, Measurable, Attainable, Realistic and Time-bound.

Performance Indicators must be tracked by the partner during the initiative.

As a partnership, each party needs to be committed to the common objectives as described in the MOU. Items of this commitment include the partner(s) adding the HHBRTA and Ontario logos to any marketing material; adding a link to the HHBRTA leisure site on their website. In turn HHBRTA incorporates the initiative into its seasonal marketing campaigns as appropriate. This can include event listings, mentions in social media or e-blasts, or other collateral produced by HHBRTA. Partners may also be asked to provide relevant images of the project so that HHBRTA can maximize the marketing reach.

HHBRTA will work with the partner(s) in the marketing or product development for the project, thus aligning the HHBRTA's marketing brand with the partner(s) brand image developed for the initiative. The partner(s) will have access to HHBRTA's Agency of Record to develop a comprehensive marketing strategy for the project and staff resources for product development.

Key activities are also identified in the MOU. This lists who is responsible for what tasks for the initiative and the timeframe in which the tasks will take place. Generally, the partner is responsible for the operational tasks to get the project done, such as creating a marketing piece, booking media buys, hiring suppliers for project requirements, etc. HHBRTA is then responsible for all the financial aspects and reporting to the Ministry on the progress and completion of the project. Partners must provide the information needed for these reports.

Financial Accounting

This Fund matches partner cash contributions for their project. Partner contributions “flow into” the HHBRTA Partnership Fund; they do not “flow through” to the partner(s).

The Partnership Fund is not a grant or sponsorship.

Partner cash contributions will be eligible for matching Partnership Funds (at a 1:1 ratio). Meaning, it can match partner contributions at a dollar for dollar ratio; it cannot exceed that ratio. So if a partner contributes \$5,000, the partnership fund will match that \$5,000 and there is now \$10,000 for the project. **All budget numbers must account for and include all applicable taxes.**

The partner contribution must be cash; in-kind does not qualify. As well, the partner contribution cannot come from a provincial source; such as a provincial grant (Trillium, Celebrate Ontario grants cannot be matched for example).

All funding must be managed by HHBRTA, in accordance with MTCS requirements. Therefore, all revenue of the Partnership will be deposited in an established HHBRTA Partnership checking account. This means that the partner will only pay one invoice for the project; to HHBRTA for their contribution. Partners do not pay supplier’s invoices directly.

All invoices for the project are to be directed to HHBRTA.

If there is an overspent on the project it will have to be covered by the partner(s). If there is an underspent then the finances will reflect a lower contribution from the Partnership Fund; there are no refunds. The project budget will be developed in consultation with HHBRTA staff; to ensure that the funds are fully utilized. A Project Budget will be established and information communicated to both partners. Remember, all budget expenses are inclusive of all sales taxes.

The partnership books shall be maintained at HHBRTA’s office, and each partner shall at all times have access to them. The books shall be kept on a fiscal year basis, commencing on April 1, and ending on March 31, the following year. They shall be closed and balanced at the end of each fiscal year. An audit shall be made as of the closing date.

The project does not start until all parties have signed the MOU and the partner(s) contribution to the project is received by HHBRTA. HHBRTA will issue an invoice to the partner for their contribution with the MOU. Partners are not to incur costs or submit supplier invoices for the project before HHBRTA has received their cash contribution.

Reporting

Partners will need to track the project objectives and performance indicators as outlined in the MOU and submit the results in a timely manner at the conclusion of the project. HHBRTA will incorporate that information into a final partnership report to the Ministry of Tourism Culture and Sport in a year-end report.