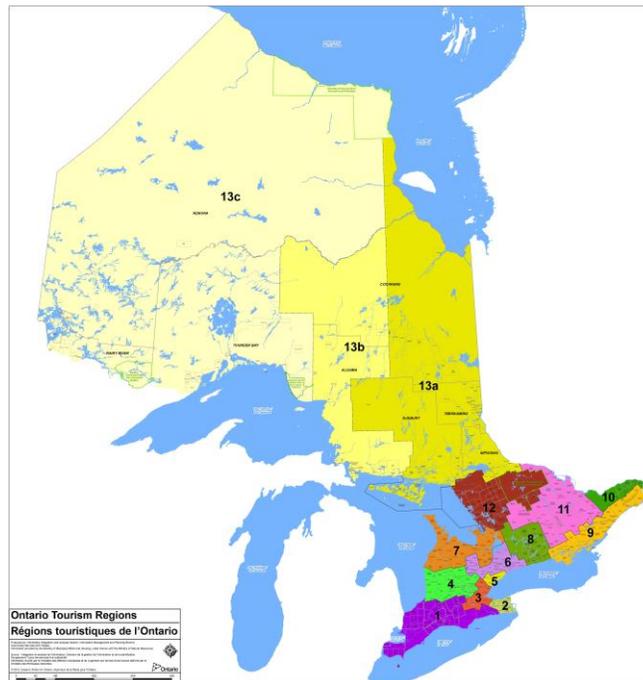


Ministry of Tourism, Culture and Sport

Regional Tourism Organizations Guide for 2014-15



January 2014

This document is for Regional Tourism Organizations funded by the Ministry of Tourism, Culture and Sport to provide leadership in supporting competitive and sustainable tourism regions in Ontario.

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How the Guide is organized

Section 1: Introduction

This section provides an overview of this Guide and the Ministry of Tourism, Culture and Sport's (the Ministry) regional tourism approach, goals and objectives, performance measures framework and key priorities.

Section 2: Transfer Payment Accountability Directive

This section describes Ontario government requirements for good governance and accountability practices as outlined in the Ontario government Transfer Payment Accountability Directive.

Section 3: Transfer Payment Agreement

This section describes the Transfer Payment Agreement (TPA), its clauses and schedules and the Ministry/Regional Tourism Organization (RTO) negotiating process and timelines.

Section 4: Schedules

This section provides RTOs with detailed direction on developing plans and budgets and what the Ministry requires and looks for in reports and financial statements.

Section 5: Partnership Funding

This section discusses the goals of partnership funding and the associated eligibility rules and processes for RTOs to carry out this portion of the program successfully.

Section 6: Resources

This section provides RTOs with information on frequently asked topics, best practices and relevant resources.

Contacts for further information

Section 1: Introduction

PURPOSE

The purpose of this guide is to provide the board members and staff of Ontario's 13 RTOs with the parameters that will allow the development of effective proposals. This includes outlining the government requirements that must be met to ensure effective and appropriate use of public funds. This guide is intended to help RTOs understand their responsibilities as transfer payment recipients and the Ontario government financial policies and directives. The information provided in this guide will be updated on a regular basis.

CONTEXT

The Regional Tourism Approach

The 2009 Ontario Tourism Competitiveness Study made 20 recommendations to government on how to grow tourism in Ontario. One of these recommendations was to establish tourism regions, each with their own destination marketing and management organization, to better coordinate tourism activities across the province. In response, the Ministry established 13 tourism regions, each with a strong RTO, to create a more competitive and coordinated tourism industry in Ontario. RTOs are independent, industry-led, incorporated not-for-profit organizations.

The Ministry's [Regional Tourism Unit](#) (RTU) is responsible for providing support and advice to the RTOs.

Ontario's Regional Tourism Organizations

RTOs lead tourism growth in the regions by coordinating the development and delivery of tourism strategies in partnership with local tourism operators and other industry stakeholders (e.g., Destination Marketing Organizations).

RTOs are active participants in the regions and are responsible for:

- Undertaking research to identify strengths, gaps and opportunities to inform regional activities and decisions;

- Developing and delivering marketing campaigns;
- Offering training to tourism operators and stakeholders (e.g., frontline customer service training, utilizing technology and social media, etc.);
- Attracting new, and retaining existing, tourism investments; and,
- Undertaking activities to create tourism assets that benefit the region such as creating product inventories, signage/way-finding, offering visitor itinerary customization capabilities, and providing regional booking engines.

RTOs are responsible for working with industry partners to grow tourism through activities such as strategic planning, research, product development, workforce development, investment attraction and marketing.

The Ministry 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 key to the future sustainability of tourism across the province.

RTO Funding

The funding approach for each region consists of three components:

Base Funding

- Each RTO receives \$500,000 in base funding

Proportional Funding

- Each RTO receives proportional funding. As a means of determining proportional allocations, historical tourism data (such as overnight visits) are used to calculate each region's contribution to tourism

Partnership Funding

- RTOs are eligible to receive additional funds from the Ministry where the RTO can demonstrate they have secured funds from eligible partners in support of regional activities
- Partnership funding is capped at a maximum of 20% of the proportional allocation available to the RTO to a maximum of \$1.5 million

RTO funding is to build-on (not replace or compete with) municipal and other existing supports for tourism.

Goals and Objectives

The goals and objectives of the regional tourism framework are for the RTOs to provide leadership and coordination to support competitive and sustainable tourism regions. As a result, each region is better equipped to attract more visitors, generate more economic activity, and create more jobs across the province.

Performance Measures

Performance measures are intended to clarify goals, document the contribution toward achieving those goals, and document the benefits of the program and services. Developing performance measures should be part of the planning process to see the impact programs and products have on tourism in the region. Performance measures also help to maximize the impact of dollars spent on programs, products and services. Performance and/or outcome measurement is not simply a count of activity or units rather it is a process of determining what needs to be measured, then gathering data to measure progress towards the achievement of the outcomes.

The Ministry worked with the RTOs to develop a Performance Measurement Framework including a logic model and eight strategic performance measures that would be used by all RTOs. The development and implementation of the RTO performance measures supports continuous improvement while complementing regular reporting and TPA results. These performance measures are not intended to compare the RTOs or help determine or influence funding allocations. These performance measures are in addition to the operational measures identified through the TPA process. The goal of this framework is to:

- Allow RTOs to maximize their effectiveness as regional tourism destination and marketing leaders and demonstrate value to stakeholders.
- Inform RTO strategic planning and decision-making.
- Assist RTOs in measuring progress and successes against objectives.
- Support continuous improvement – complement regular reporting and results.
- Allow Ministry to measure progress toward objectives and inform policy/program decision-making.
- Assist in helping ensure/demonstrate accountability.
- Help to tell the RTO story.

KEY PRIORITIES (Pillars)

RTOs are expected to develop and deliver strategies to meet the following destination management priorities in their region:

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

Example activities can include:

Governance and Administration

- Develop a strategy, including the vision, mission and values, and structure to support achievement of the RTOs purpose.
- Ensure an effective Board of Directors (e.g., governance training, board meetings, annual general meetings, selection/retention/succession planning, review and updating of by-laws).
- Staff the RTO with the right leadership and high performance employees.
- Define expectations, roles, responsibilities and decision-making authorities within the RTO and for the Board of Directors.
- Create controls over revenues and expenditures, ensure funds are appropriately used and prepare regular reports that compare actual financial results to budget (e.g. clean audit).
- Develop an engagement strategy that includes meaningful community outreach, stakeholder engagement, supports collaboration and development of partnerships.
- Ensure stakeholder confidence in the organization and communicate activities and results.
- Monitor the performance of the RTO against longer term objectives.

Product Development

- Work with tourism partners to undertake research, surveys and data analysis.
- Collaborate with tourism partners to undertake product or asset inventories; develop itineraries; improve the market-readiness of existing tourism

experiences; undertake market-match studies; showcase local distinctiveness; create/develop new niche tourism products to entice and target new visitors (e.g., gardens, culinary, golf, biking, etc.); create tour routes; implement signage; and/or enhance programming and interpretation of experiences.

- Adapt programs into other languages or accessible formats.
- Establish annual targets for each product development strategy, so that the results can be compared to the desired or expected return.

Investment Attraction / Investor Relations

- Work with public and/or private sector partners (e.g., municipalities, economic development officers, tourism operators and investors) within the region to identify opportunities for new or existing tourism infrastructure investments.
- Reach out to existing tourism businesses/investors to help support tourism industry investments.
- Collaborate to identify tourism businesses/investor opportunities and encourage business expansion or new business development.
- Help the Province facilitate awareness of existing programs that can assist small and medium sized tourism businesses.

Workforce Development and Training

- Work in collaboration with regional partners and other RTOs to develop tourism sector-based strategies that help address the needs of tourism employers and workers and provide visitors with enhanced experiences.
- Identify and participate in projects to address short- and long-term sector skill needs and other workforce development issues.
- Develop linkages with employment and training community partners and government programs to advance workforce development within the tourism sector.
- Establish annual targets for workforce/training strategies, so that the results can be compared to the desired or expected return.

Marketing

- Work with tourism partners such as local Destination Marketing Organizations (DMOs), businesses, sector associations and the Ontario Tourism Marketing Partnership Corporation (OTMPC) to create a regional brand and marketing plan that wisely invests resources to maximum effect.

- Identify target markets (geographic and demographic) and determine marketing strategies and best tactics to implement (e.g., media relations, web presence, social media, tourism operation relations, advertising, collateral, consumer shows, direct marketing, etc.).
- Determine what will be advertised, who will produce it and what will be the estimated production time.
- Determine placement dates to ensure that the selected target markets can be successfully reached.
- Establish annual targets for each market/tactic, so that results can be compared to the desired or expected return.

Section 2: Transfer Payment Accountability Directive

All RTOs sign a Transfer Payment Agreement (TPA) with the Ministry that holds them accountable for how funding is to be used within the region. The TPA governs the contractual relationship between the Ontario government and the RTOs and is based on principles set out in the Ontario government Transfer Payment Accountability Directive (TPAD).

The TPAD includes key mandatory requirements for ministries to take a risk-based approach to the administration of transfer payments. The TPAD refers to those who receive transfer payments as “transfer payment recipients”, whether they are different levels of government, not-for-profit organizations, First Nations, for-profit operators, or individuals.

The principles in the TPAD are:

- Transfer payment recipients are responsible for undertaking provincially funded activities and are accountable to ministries for the funds they receive and the results achieved.
- At all times the government is held accountable for protecting the public interest.
- Risk assessment is used in the design of transfer payment programs, the selection of eligible transfer payment recipients to deliver programs, and the choice of appropriate accountability requirements for transfer payment agencies.
- Value for money is expected in the expenditure of government funds. Value for money is use of public resources with due regard for economy, efficiency and effectiveness.
- Transparency guides good governance and accountability practices for ministries, classified agencies, and transfer payment recipients.

TP ACCOUNTABILITY CYCLE

The TPAD sets out a process called the TP Accountability Cycle, in which:

1. Expectations are clearly defined;
2. Agreements incorporating those expectations are established;
3. Ongoing monitoring and reporting demonstrates that expectations are met and objectives are achieved; and
4. Corrective action is taken if necessary.



Figure 1 TP Accountability Cycle

TP ROLES AND RESPONSIBILITIES

TP Cycle	Ministry Roles & Responsibilities	Transfer Payment Recipient Roles & Responsibilities
Defining Expectations	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> Be accountable to the elected Ontario Legislature for public funds. Determine priorities for tourism funding, based on overall strategic priorities set by the Ontario government. Ensure that funding partners are aware of government statutes, regulations, and policies and guidelines for funding transfer payment programs. Set out expectations and requirements for good governance and accountability practices that will support effective use of public funds. 	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> Be accountable to the Ministry for public funds received, including any funds paid to third parties in order to meet objectives (e.g. Outside Paid Resources) Understand Ontario government and the Ministry priorities and know how the funding received relates to those priorities. Comply with statutes, regulations policies and guidelines related to the public funds. Comply with governance and accountability expectations and requirements to support effective use of public funds.
Agreements	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> Set program targets to be achieved by Ministry funds. Allocate Ministry resources and negotiate TPAs to support achievement of desired outcomes. 	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> Use public funds effectively and efficiently according to targets set out in the TPA, other agreements or directions from the Ministry. Design supports and services to achieve the Ministry priorities and objectives for public funds.
Monitoring and Reporting	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> Monitor transfer payment recipient achievements against agreed upon deliverables. Assess and manage risk as an integral part of the administration of transfer payment funding. 	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> Assess and manage risks and implement action plans to reduce risk. Prepare action plans in response to identified risks. Report on deliverables as required in the TPA.
Corrective Action	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> Take corrective action in proportion to identified risks, when deliverables are not met or reports are not submitted on time. Monitor action plans to mitigate identified risks. 	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> Explain factors contributing to non-compliance as requested by the Ministry. Undertake corrective action as requested by the Ministry. Monitor progress on action plans to mitigate identified risks.

BROADER PUBLIC SECTOR ACCOUNTABILITY ACT

The Ontario [*Broader Public Sector Accountability Act, 2010*](#) is a statute that contains rules and accountability standards for designated broader public sector organizations on expenses, perquisites, and the procurement of goods and services. Designated public sector organizations include publicly funded organizations receiving funds of \$10 million or more during the previous fiscal year of the government of Ontario. Additional information about the BPSAA can be found at http://www.mgs.gov.on.ca/en/Spotlight2/STDPROD_098054.html

Section 3: Transfer Payment Agreement

TPA OVERVIEW

The TPA comes into effect once the RTO and the Ministry have signed the agreement. RTOs need to be familiar with the clauses and schedules encompassed in this legal document.

The TPA is a negotiated agreement based on the RTO's Financial and Operational Business Plan. Here are its different components:

- **Schedule A:** includes the date of effectiveness of the agreement, the parties to the agreement, legal definitions and articles. Read this section carefully as it outlines a number of procedural requirements (e.g., procurement, insurance, record maintenance).
- **Schedule B:** outlines the payment dates or milestones, maximum funding, payment amounts, and additional provisions such as contract expiration date.
- **Schedule C:** is the initiative description and timelines for the year starting April 1, 2014 and ending March 31, 2015. This section includes the Financial and Operational Business Plan and Marketing Plan. RTOs are required to include key performance measures.
- **Schedule D:** details the RTO budget. The budget and quarterly cash flow must align with the activities and timelines in Schedule C.
- **Schedule E:** RTOs are required to report on the use of the funds received. The specific reports and timelines are outlined in Schedule E. These reports must be comprehensive, accurate and received in a timely manner. Reports are of the utmost importance, not only to attest to the appropriate use of funds, but also because the Ministry uses the data internally and externally to demonstrate and communicate the return on investment of regional funding. Strong performance measures (quantitative and qualitative) help tell the story of how RTOs contribute to tourism growth/development and economic activity. The performance measures outlined in Schedule C form

the basis upon which RTOs will report through progress reports and year-end reports. Further, these measures are expected to be used to inform future year objectives, activities and timelines. For these reasons it is important to invest the time required to prepare and submit a thoughtful Schedule C.

MULTI-YEAR TPAs

The Ontario government Transfer Payment funding is annualized funding and as such it is dependent on the Ministry receiving the necessary appropriation from the Ontario Legislature. However, the Ministry entered into two-year TPAs with RTOs in 2013-14 to:

- a. Enable RTOs to better plan for activities that may span over one year;
- b. Provide funding commitment levels for the RTOs; and,
- c. Address cash flow concerns between the end of one contract and the negotiating and finalizing of the next.

The RTO must provide the Province with revised (updated) Schedules “C2” and “D2” for the fiscal year April 1, 2014 to March 31, 2015. If the Province is satisfied, in its sole and absolute discretion, with the revised schedules, the Province will communicate its satisfaction to the RTO at which time the schedules will form part of this Agreement from the date of such notice.

Multi-year TPAs provide multi-year funding commitments, but the funding is divided by fiscal year and annual allocations still need to be expensed within each fiscal year. For any activities that span over more than one fiscal year, the RTOs are required to allocate appropriate funds in each year from the corresponding budget. Any unused funding allocated for an initiative in one year cannot be carried over into the next fiscal year. Based on the year-end reconciliation, any unused funding or any funding used for in-eligible expenses may be recovered by the Ministry.

TPA NEGOTIATING PROCESS AND TIMELINES

It is important to note that updated 2014-15 schedules must be in place between the Province and the recipient before the funding is flowed. As such, the TPA

process needs to be completed in a timely manner. Please note that the process and timelines only apply if all materials are received on time and completed to the satisfaction of the Ministry.

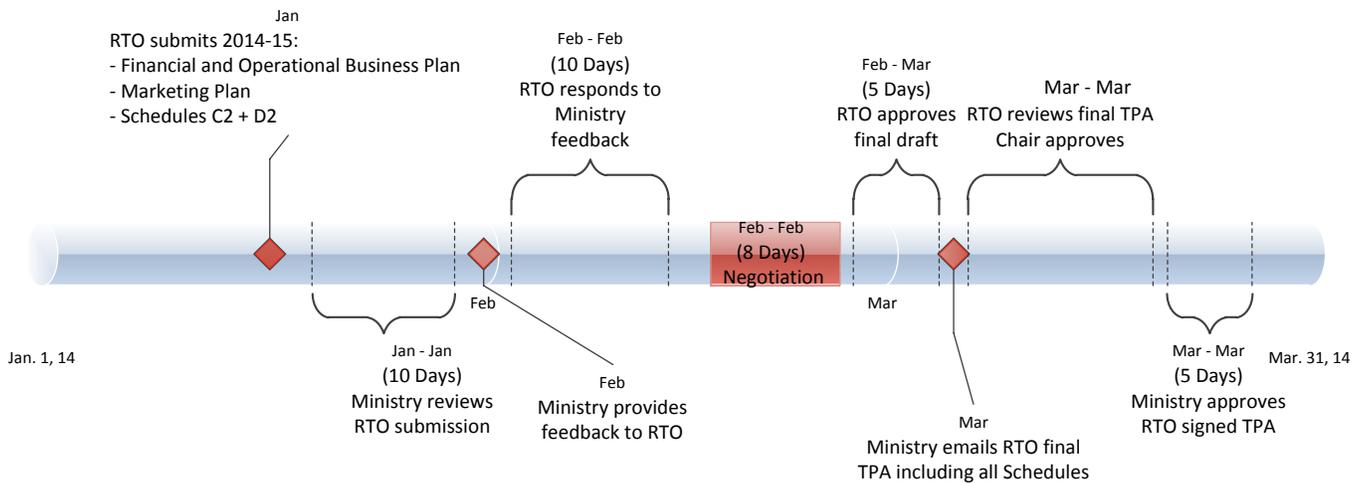


Figure 2 TPA Negotiation Process

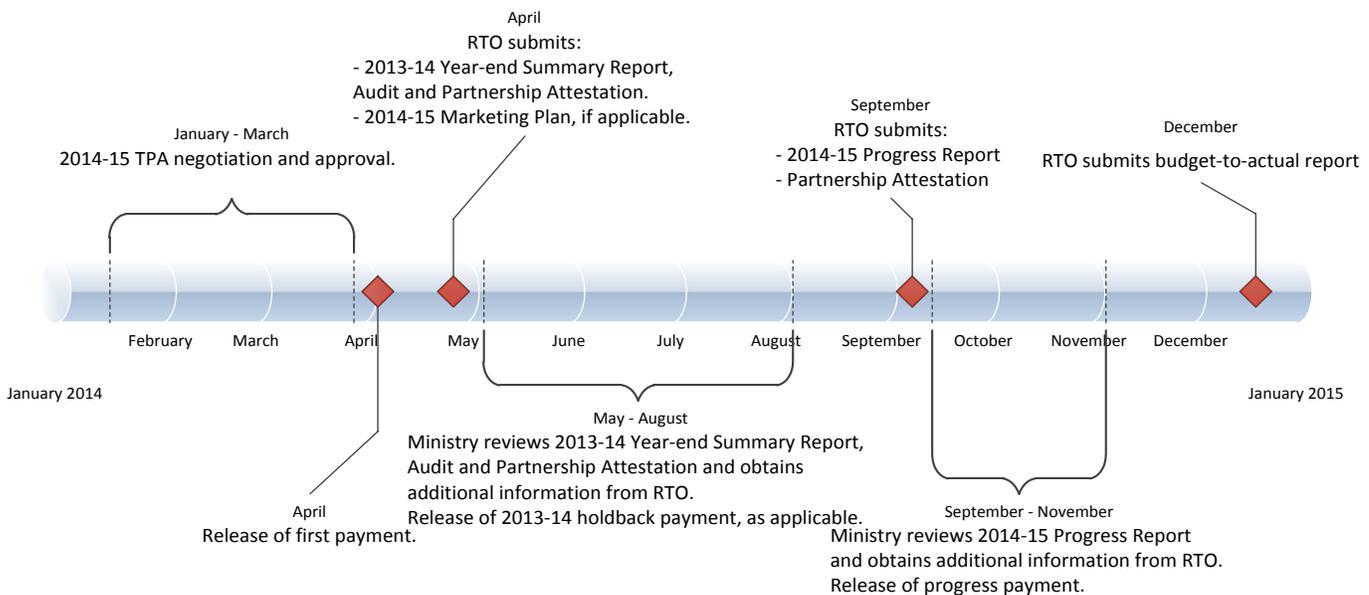


Figure 3 RTO-Ministry TPA Cycle

1. Financial and Operational Business Plan review by the Ministry (10 business days):

- The RTO submits its 2014-15 Financial and Operational Business Plan, Marketing Plan and draft Schedules C2 and D2 templates to both its RTU Tourism Advisor and the Toronto office;
- Where additional information is required, RTU staff will work with the

- RTO to obtain the information prior to beginning the Ministry review;
- The Ministry notifies the RTO by email when the RTU is in receipt of all the information needed to start the Ministry review;
- The review will then begin and will be completed within 10 business days;
- The RTO will receive feedback from the Ministry.

2. TPA Negotiations (23 business days):

- The RTO is expected to respond to the initial feedback from the Ministry within 10 business days;
- The Ministry and the RTO negotiate the Schedules. The negotiations will be concluded within 8 business days, provided the RTO is available to respond;
- The Ministry will email a final draft TPA including the Schedules at the end of the negotiation process;
- The RTO is expected to approve the final draft within 5 business days.

3. TPA execution (15 business days):

- The Ministry emails the final TPA, inclusive of all schedules, to the RTO;
- The RTO reviews the final version and the Chair approves by email;
- A TPA signature is required if changes have been made to Schedules A, B or E. If this applies, the RTO prints two copies of the TPA, signs and returns to the RTU Toronto office within 10 business days;
- The Ministry approves the RTO email approved or signed TPA within 5 business days.

4. Initial payment (10 business days):

- The Ministry notifies the RTO by email when the payment request has been submitted;
- Where a signed TPA is required, one original TPA signed by both parties is returned to the RTO;
- RTOs should expect payment to be deposited in their accounts within **10 business days following notification of when the payment request was submitted.**

It should be noted that all Ontario government payments are processed centrally and not by the Ministry of Tourism, Culture and Sport.

Completion of the review phase prior to the end of March or during the first week of April will ensure that payments are administered as early as possible in the new fiscal.

In-year Amendments

In the event that the RTO identifies activities they wish to undertake for which funding has not been provided within the scope of Schedule C2, the RTO will need to seek written approval prior to initiating or committing funding.

Authorized Signing Officer

The ministry's accountability relationship is with the RTO governing body – the Board of Directors. As such, the Ministry requires that all reports and TPAs are signed by an Authorized Signing Officer. The Ministry deems Authorized Signing Officer as the Chair on behalf of the RTO Board of Directors. The Executive Director may also sign the reports and TPAs in addition to the Chair.

Section 4: Schedules

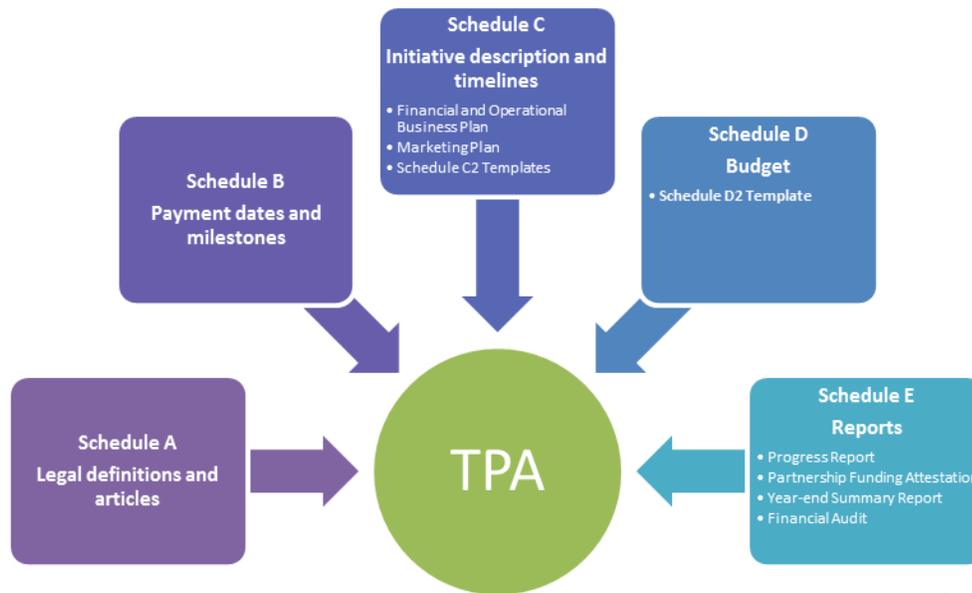


Figure 4 TPA Schedules

Schedule A: Schedule A is prepared by the Ministry

Schedule B: Schedule B is prepared by the Ministry

Schedule C: The Financial and Operational Business Plan, Marketing Plan and Schedule C2 Templates are prepared by the RTO. The Schedule C2 is finalized through negotiations with the Ministry.

Financial and Operational Business Plan (Business Plan)

The preparation of an annual Business Plan is an important requirement for each RTO. The Business Plan must identify strategic areas that the RTO will focus on to continue to build the region’s tourism industry and the steps it needs to take with its partners to achieve the desired results. The Business Plan addresses the five pillars of destination management for which funding is being provided.

What the Ministry looks for in the Business Plan

Executive Summary	<p>A high level summary:</p> <ul style="list-style-type: none"> • The top 3-5 major successes in the past years; • What the RTO will focus on in the coming year;
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	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> • Shifts in focus from the past and why; and, • Mission and vision statement which outline your goals and where you want to be as an organization.
<p>Regional Overview and Assessment</p>	<p>This is where the RTO showcases in-depth research and understanding of the industry and region. Include relevant tourism research, market analysis, trends and competitive analysis.</p> <p>Example sources:</p> <ul style="list-style-type: none"> • MTCS Research Unit: Regional Profiles, Tourism Regional Economic Impact Model (TREIM), etc. • Statistics Canada • Ontario Tourism Marketing Partnership Corporation • Consumer Insight Research • RTO internal research • Other relevant research conducted by industry partners, including Premier-Ranked Tourism Destination Framework reports, Tourism Development Fund-supported studies, etc.
<p>Strategic Overview</p>	<p>This section outlines what key objectives and activities the RTO is seeking funds to accomplish. There should be a clear linkage on how these key objectives and activities support the regional overview and assessment referred to in the previous section.</p> <p>This section should also provide an overview of how the proposed RTO areas of focus fit with what regional stakeholders are doing or asking be done. It is important that RTOs show how they are helping build tourism capacity in their regions – including how their activities complement those of other key industry, economic development and community stakeholders.</p> <p>This will help describe the strategic thinking behind what the RTO is proposing to do.</p>

Business Operations	<p>Describe if or how the business operations of the RTO have changed to support the strategic focus and objectives.</p> <p>Outline/update the organizational structure; Ensure that there are clear and accountable monitoring of activities and reporting mechanisms within the organization and to government; Outline the engagement & communication mechanisms used to ensure stakeholder engagement.</p> <p>Identify any barriers or possible risks to successfully delivering on the plan and include what steps are being undertaken to address these risks.</p>
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Marketing Plan

The **Marketing Plan** should include both strategies for increasing tourism visitation and the tactics employed to get there.

What the Ministry looks for in the Marketing Plan

General	<p>The Marketing Plan must include measureable strategic marketing objectives for the RTO based on current research, comparative analysis and past performance of marketing tactics and results.</p> <p>In some circumstances, campaign tactics will evolve throughout the year as campaigns build on previous efforts or respond to the market. In these instances the Ministry will work with the RTO to establish dates for submission of the tactical details.</p>
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Marketing Objectives	<p>Marketing objectives should follow the S.M.A.R.T rules. Objectives should include growth goals that are specific to the campaign(s) and that build on previous benchmarks. Where possible, objectives should consider conversion/leads/return on investment targets. Where benchmarks are not currently available it is key that these be included in the tracking and measurement for the existing year.</p> <p>Examples:</p> <ul style="list-style-type: none"> • To increase overnight tourism sales to partner accommodations by 15% through the spring value campaign. • To increase sales of signature summer festivals tickets by \$50,000. • To increase investment of marketing dollars by Outdoor Product partners for fall winter campaign by \$75,000.
Product Positioning	<p>Overview of products/experiences and the competitive context in which it is offered.</p> <p>Identify the business context for positioning, by campaign, as applicable (i.e. seasonal occupancy, product availability, product strength, extending length of stay, new business, repeat visitation).</p>
Priority Target Markets	<p>Identify consumers in the primary and secondary target markets for whom the campaigns are directed, geography, demographics (i.e. age, gender, income, education), psychographics (behavioural/lifestyle factors) and motivational/activity characteristics.</p> <p>In addition to market research that has been done by the RTO it is encouraged that the Marketing Plan includes assessment of Consumer Insight Research Segmentation Reports with identification of RTO specific priority target groups.</p>

Marketing Tactics	<p>Include a comprehensive overview of paid, partnered and promotional activities associated with the campaign(s).</p> <p>Where multiple campaigns are undertaken the information should be presented in a campaign specific format. Format may vary but should include the following information:</p> <ul style="list-style-type: none"> • Timing: campaign dates • Tactics: all media formats – Print, TV, Radio, Out-of-home, Website, Digital – SEO, SEM, Social Media, Pay Per Click, Mobile, Local, E-mail/Newsletters, online advertising, media relations, sponsorship, database development, trade/consumer events, travel trade • Partnered Activities: tactical initiatives with partners – i.e. OTMPC, CTC, FEO, Attractions Ontario which are primarily purchased opportunities or; leveraged partner opportunities (i.e.; Local accommodations partnership, industry specific product group, one or group of DMO partners etc.) • Tracking /Measurement: tracking measures to assess activity, efficacy, conversion, call to action response; return on investment etc. RTOs are encouraged to utilize campaign specific urls; lead generation to partners; and conversion (to sales) rates.
Marketing Budget	<p>Allocations should be provided by campaign. This should be calendarized to allow the Ministry to understand the financial pressures associated with the Marketing Plan. The marketing budget should align with the Marketing pillar of the TPA budget.</p>

Converting the Business Plan and Marketing Plan into the TPA

As part of Schedule C2, RTOs are expected to use Ministry templates to incorporate activities and timelines into the TPA (**Appendix A**). It should be a brief

summary of what you are planning to accomplish over the fiscal year based on the Business Plan and Marketing Plan.

**Schedule C2
Template**

- **Strategic Priorities**
- **Objectives**
- **Performance Measures**
- **Key Activities and Timelines**

KEY PRIORITIES or PILLARS: The activities are organized under the five destination management pillars:

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

The Schedule C2 template (Appendix A) is used to outline the key priorities, objectives, performance measures, activities and timelines associated with funding being requested. The use of this template is required.

For each pillar, the use of more than one Schedule C2 template may be needed. For example, under the Key Activity “Marketing”, an RTO may require one Schedule C2 template to describe the work associated with social media marketing, a second Schedule C2 template to scope the work associated with trade shows/FAM tours and perhaps a third or fourth to describe the work of other major marketing initiatives.

The RTO is to base the number on what is required to most effectively communicate key priorities, activities and objectives.

PERFORMANCE MEASURES

The RTO is also required to develop internal operational measures that measure progress toward meeting the strategic objective identified. As an example, if one of the objectives of a marketing campaign is to drive qualified consumers to your web site and direct them to operators your measures may include:

- A 20% increase in web traffic
- A 15% increase in referrals to operators

The operational measures should be related to “objectives” rather than associated activities. The intent is to measure progress toward meeting the objective.

They should be S.M.A.R.T.

Letter	Major Term	Minor Terms
S	Specific	Significant, Stretching, Simple
M	Measurable	Meaningful, Motivational, Manageable
A	Attainable	Appropriate, Achievable, Agreed, Assignable, Actionable, Ambitious, Aligned, Aspirational, Acceptable, Action-focused
R	Relevant	Results-oriented, Resourced, Resonant, Realistic
T	Timely	Time-oriented, Time framed, Timed, Time-based, Timeboxed, Time-bound, Time-Specific, Timetabled, Time limited, Trackable, Tangible

Regular review of progress against performance measures is recommended. The information collected will help in identifying adjustments required and inform future planning and decisions as part of continuous improvement.

KEY ACTIVITIES: within the Schedule C2 template, RTOs should identify the activities necessary to achieve the objective(s). It is expected that these will provide a clear sequence of the major steps and that the flow of activities that will contribute to achieving the objective.

It is not expected that every step be included, however, the level of detail needs to describe the work. For example, if an objective is to develop two new products, introduce them to the market in year and attract 500 visitors, then the key activities should describe what this entails.

Example Key Activities:

- Identify product opportunities with partners
- Leverage funding, if available
- Undertake feasibility review on opportunities identified
- Assess & determine best prospects
- Procure (if needed) for product development
- Project manage the work
- Launch new products
- Monitor activity & feedback from partners/visitors
- Modify/adjust product (if needed)
- Assess impact

Key activities that would not be considered complete –
EXAMPLE

- Develop 3 new products
- Launch

TIMELINES: It is required that the quarter in which the key activities will take place be identified (mark box with X or ✓). For the activities that span more than one quarter, this can be reflected by marking each quarter in which the activity will occur. When providing reports, this information will be useful in assessing how the activities are progressing or what changes to activities or timelines may be needed.

Schedule D: Developing your Budget

Budget	The budget should link to the key objectives and activities and only reflect RTO funding provided by the Ministry. A well informed budget uses historical costs and other data to help estimate future costs.
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Converting the Budget into the TPA

<u>Schedule D2 Template</u>	The Schedule D2 Budget template (Appendix B) is formatted to reflect the five major pillars.
• Pillars	RTOs are to provide a quarterly budget itemized by the five major pillars, with sub-categories reflecting Schedule C2 activities.
• Sub-categories	

Schedule E: Developing Reports

RTOs are required to submit, at minimum, one progress report and a year-end summary report in each fiscal year. In some cases, and depending on individual RTO negotiations, additional reporting may be required.

Starting in 2014-15, RTOs are asked to submit a budget-to-actual report with a year-end forecast in the month of December. The report will cover the period April 1st – December 15th and will forecast to March 31st. This report will provide the Ministry with an up to date and accurate financial position of the RTOs to support year-end planning.

The Ministry provides RTOs with report templates. Failure to submit satisfactory reports (as per the TPA) will result in delay in payment until reports have been received and approved by the Ministry.

The reports must clearly:

- Describe the progress toward completion of all listed activities;
- Describe the progress toward attaining the performance measures;
- Describe the progress toward meeting the initiative's objectives;

- Identify any activities that will not be completed as planned, explain why this is the case and describe how this impacts the implementation of the initiative;
- Report on the budget and ensure alignment with TPA line items.

In addition to the reports, the recipient may choose to provide electronic copies of the following:

- All reports and documents produced as part of the initiative;
- Samples of all brochures, programs or handouts produced as part of the initiative;
- Samples of all marketing materials produced as part of the initiative.

Variance

A variance occurs when there is a change (+/-) between the original budget and actual spending for a particular line item. Variance explanations are required for all budget/financial reporting.

RTOs need to identify all variances where the % is 10% or greater and where the variance dollar value is \$10,000 or greater. The explanation should include the causes of the variance, any action plan to address them and the strategy to minimize the likelihood of occurrence in the future.

Financial Statements

RTOs provide the Ministry with audited financial statements prepared in accordance with Canadian generally accepted accounting principles for each fiscal year in which the RTO has received funding.

The Ministry receives and reviews financial information in conjunction with non-financial information and undertakes compliance activities in order to: determine whether funds have been expended for the purposes intended; ensure terms and conditions of funding agreements have been met; and ensure that the recipient's financial situation is sufficiently stable in order to assure continued delivery of funded services.

Essential requirements for annual financial reporting:

- Capture the specified fiscal year (April 1 – March 31)
- Use an independent and qualified third-party for the audit
- Carry out the audit when activities, as described in the TPA, are completed
- Report expenses net of rebates, credit and refunds
- Properly allocate shared costs to the program

The RTO is required to submit **audited financial statements** for the organization and a **schedule of revenues and expenses** as per the TPA.

Audited financial statements

- Include an Opinion, Balance sheet, Statement of Operations/Income Statement, Cash Flow Statements, notes and other standard elements
- Include a funding reconciliation table to outline amounts due to/from the Ministry explain discrepancies between the amounts stated in the agreement and the amounts in the financial statements, references to the corresponding page/notes in the financial statements and other adjustments as applicable

Schedule of revenues and expenses as per the TPA

- Include only RTO funding from the Ministry and matched partner funding received through the partnership funding program
- Identify interest earned on funding from the Ministry as a separate line under Revenue
- List expense line items consistently with the line items in the budget (Schedule D)
- Include an Opinion, Notes and other standard elements as applicable
- In the Opinion, include an assessment of the RTOs compliance with all of the Schedules of the TPA

If the funds were not used for the intended purpose(s) or specified services were not delivered, the funds must be returned to the Province via a cheque payable to the Minister of Finance.

Section 5: Partnership Funding

Partnership funding was introduced in 2013-14 as part of the revised funding approach for RTOs.

Partnership funding is intended to:

- Build support for tourism at a regional level by encouraging strong partnerships
- Encourage RTOs to engage industry partners to broaden their financial base
- Support a coordinated approach that aligns planning, marketing, product development, investment attraction, and workforce development in the region

The Ministry is currently reviewing the Partnership Funding Program guidelines. This section will be updated in February 2014.

Section 6: Resources

COSTS

Eligible Costs

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

Ineligible Costs

1. Grants and flow-through to other organizations;
2. Charitable fundraising;
3. Advocacy;
4. Donations to political parties or lobby groups;
5. Capital expenses;
6. Prize money; and,
7. Expenses that do not relate directly to the delivery of the TPA.

This is not an exhaustive listing, should you have any questions please consult with your Regional Tourism Advisor.

Harmonized Sales Tax (HST)

RTOs may be able to claim HST and other types of rebates on eligible purchases and expenses.

The funding provided by the Ministry is intended to cover all eligible purchases and expenses for the specific fiscal year less any costs for which the RTO has received, will receive, or is eligible to receive a rebate. As a best practice, RTOs are encouraged to apply for rebates on a regular basis.

Rebates received within the fiscal year should be reinvested in the same fiscal year. Rebates received in the following fiscal will be considered when calculating the overall costs for the year in which the rebate applies. Any underspending as of year-end must be returned to the Province via a cheque payable to the Ministry of Finance.

MODERN CONTROLLERSHIP

Procurement

RTOs are expected to meet TPA requirements related to procurement. The TPA Section 7 states:

7.0 Tendering for Goods and Services and Disposal of Assets

- 7.1** The Recipient will manage the Initiative wisely and prudently achieving value for money. The Recipient will acquire all supplies, equipment and services, including any advertising-related services, purchased with the Funding through an appropriate competitive process. Subject to article 36, where the purchase price exceeds \$5,000, the Recipient will, at a minimum, obtain at least three written quotes unless the Recipient can demonstrate that the supplies, equipment or services the Recipient is purchasing is specialised and is not readily available.
- 7.2** In carrying out a competitive process, the Recipient must:
- a. Develop a clear description of the product/service which includes sufficient details concerning the requirements; and
 - b. Apply consistent, transparent and objective evaluation criteria.
- 7.3** The Recipient 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.

RTOs are also recommended to use the [Procurement Guideline for Publicly Funded Organizations in Ontario](#), which is a summary of best practices in the procurement of goods and services for organizations funded by the Ontario government.

Guiding Principles behind Procurement Best Practices

It is good practice to observe certain procurement best practices or guidelines to ensure the process is open, fair and transparent.

Responsible management

No matter how small the organization or the procurement, there should be an adequate organizational structure, policies and procedures to be able to manage procurement contracts fairly and effectively.

Value for money

Buyers should consider factors such as the requirements of the business, alternatives, timing, supply strategy and total life cycle costs of the good or service when evaluating vendors' submissions.

Vendor access, transparency and fairness

Publicly funded organizations should provide all qualified vendors with fair access to the purchase of goods and services. Buyers should avoid conflict of interest, both real and perceived, and choose the successful vendor in a fair and non-discriminatory process.

Quality service delivery

Procurement activities should result in the delivery of the required product or service at the right time and place to organizations.

Upholding Ontario's trade agreements

Organizations should recognize and respect Ontario's trade agreements with other jurisdictions that open access to publicly funded procurement where they apply.

Supply Chain Code of Ethics

A supply chain code of ethics should govern the conduct of buyers, vendors and all others involved in supply chain activities. It defines acceptable behaviour for ethical, professional and accountable supply chain activities.

Personal integrity and professionalism

The public expects their taxpayers' money to be used with honesty, due diligence and care. Individuals involved with supply chain activities are expected to conduct themselves with integrity and professionalism, show respect for each other and the environment, and safeguard confidential information. Organizations should

not engage in any activity that creates, or appears to create, a conflict of interest.

Accountability and transparency

All activities involved in the purchase of goods and services using public funds should be fair and transparent, and for the purpose of acquiring the best value for money.

Compliance and continuous improvement

Organizations should establish and regularly review their own policies and procedures around supply chain management. They should make improvements as necessary, acquire additional supply chain knowledge and skills, and share best practices.

Non-Competitive Procurement

It is recognized there may be circumstances where a competitive procurement process is not possible.

In those rare circumstances where a non-competitive procurement is deemed necessary, it is expected that an RTO will:

- Have a written business case (and documentation of the due diligence taken) to support or defend the decision;
- Have appropriate RTO approval recorded; and,
- Be prepared to provide the rationale if challenged by suppliers/vendors, stakeholders or others.

The Ministry does not require an RTO to seek or obtain Ministry approval in deciding to pursue a non-competitive procurement process. However, it expects the RTO to respect and apply the procurement provision in the TPA along with the best practices identified in the [Procurement Guideline for Publicly Funded Organizations in Ontario](#). An RTO may be required to provide the rationale/support for non-competitive procurement decisions either as part of normal TPA requirements or in response to a complaint or inquiry received.

Travel, Meals and Hospitality

The Broader Public Sector (BPS) Expenses Directive for travel, meals and

hospitality establishes mandatory expense rules for designated BPS organizations and serves as a guideline to all other publicly funded organizations. This directive is in alignment with the Travel, Meal and Hospitality Expenses Directive which sets out the rules for travel, meal and hospitality expenses for the Ontario government, including its classified agencies and other entities identified by legislation.

As a best practice, RTOs are encouraged to review the [Broader Public Sector Expenses Directive](#) and [OPS Travel, Meal and Hospitality Expenses directive](#) when developing internal processes and policies for comparison purposes.

Both directives are based on four key principles.

A. Accountability - Organizations are accountable for public funds used to reimburse travel, meal and hospitality expenses. All expenses support business objectives.

B. Transparency - Organizations are transparent to all stakeholders. The rules for incurring and reimbursing travel, meal and hospitality expenses are clear, easily understood, and available to the public.

C. Value for Money - Taxpayer dollars are used prudently and responsibly. Plans for travel, meals, accommodation and hospitality are necessary and economical with due regard for health and safety.

D. Fairness - Legitimate authorized expenses incurred during the course of the business of an organization are reimbursed.

RESOURCES

Acknowledgements

In accepting public funding from the Ministry, 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 (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. 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.

French-Language Services and Attracting Francophone Markets

Francophone visitors are an important market for Ontario. The *Discovering Ontario* report recommended that Ontario should focus on strengthening its appeal to French-speaking markets, especially Québec and France.

RTOs can use a part of their yearly allocation from the Ontario government to undertake activities that will appeal to Francophone visitors, including translating documents, hiring bilingual staff, targeting Francophone markets and implementing French-language services.

For information on how to make your organization bilingual, please consult the Office of Francophone Affairs' [Toolbox](#) or Heritage Canada's [Making your Organization Bilingual](#).

Contacts for further information

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Nancy Fallis	Tourism Advisor (RTO 3)	519-873-4482	Nancy.Fallis@ontario.ca
Caroline Polgrabia	Tourism Advisor (RTO 5)	416-326-4819	Caroline.Polgrabia@ontario.ca
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APPENDIX A

**SCHEDULE “C2”
DESCRIPTION AND TIMELINES**

STRATEGIC PLANS FOR PRIORITIES

The information contained below should be taken from the RTO 2014-15 Financial and Operational Business Plan and Marketing Plan. It should be a brief summary of what you are planning to accomplish over the fiscal year.

KEY PRIORITY:

RTOs are expected to research and develop strategies to meet the following destination management priorities:

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

STRATEGIC FOCUS:

List the key areas you will focus your efforts.

OBJECTIVE(S):

Outline the desired results that the RTO envisions, plans and commits to achieve. Objectives should be S.M.A.R.T (Specific, Measurable, Attainable, Relevant and Time-Bound). Demonstrate its measurable benefits and its anticipated impact(s)

PERFORMANCE INDICATORS:

Describe how the key activities outlined below will assist the RTO with meeting your proposed objectives, and how you plan to measure your success. Identify all anticipated outputs and qualitative and quantitative performance indicators. Performance measures (or “indicators”) typically relate to the objectives. Indicators could include the increase in number of visitors to a selected sample of operators, number of enquiries, % increase in bookings through various marketing modes, etc.)

Key Activities 2014-15	Continued or New Activity	Q1	Q2	Q3	Q4

APPENDIX B

**SCHEDULE "D2"
BUDGET**

Expenses	Q1	Q2	Q3	Q4	Total
Governance and Administration					
Insert Additional Line Items	\$0	\$0	\$0	\$0	\$0
Sub-Total	\$0	\$0	\$0	\$0	\$0
Product Development					
Insert Additional Line Items	\$0	\$0	\$0	\$0	\$0
Sub-Total	\$0	\$0	\$0	\$0	\$0
Investment Attraction/ Investor Relations					
Insert Additional Line Items	\$0	\$0	\$0	\$0	\$0
Sub-Total	\$0	\$0	\$0	\$0	\$0
Workforce Development and Training					
Insert Additional Line Items	\$0	\$0	\$0	\$0	\$0
Sub-Total	\$0	\$0	\$0	\$0	\$0
Marketing					
Insert Additional Line Items	\$0	\$0	\$0	\$0	\$0
Sub-Total	\$0	\$0	\$0	\$0	\$0
Partnership Funding					
Insert Additional Line Items	\$0	\$0	\$0	\$0	\$0
Sub-Total	\$0	\$0	\$0	\$0	\$0
ELIGIBLE FUNDING TOTAL	\$0	\$0	\$0	\$0	\$0
PARTNERS' CONTRIBUTIONS	\$0	\$0	\$0	\$0	\$0
INITIATIVE TOTAL	\$0	\$0	\$0	\$0	\$0