



# PROGRAM GUIDELINES

## Marketing and Events Partnership Program

Winter 2024

### Program Overview:

The Marketing and Events Partnership Program (MEPP) provides the opportunity for provincial tourism-focused businesses and organizations to partner with Tourism Saskatchewan. The program supports the promotion of [market-ready](#) tourism products, services, attractions, and events to audiences within and outside of the province. The program also supports the creation of quality content marketing assets.

Support is available through the following categories:

- Content Development
- Market Research
- Digital Marketing and Development
- Traditional Media Advertising
- Marketplace Tradeshow (Outfitters)

### Assistance:

- The program is competitive and application based. Exceptional applications from approved partners may receive up to \$15,000 of support.
- Applications submitted without a marketing plan or supplier quotes will not be considered for funding support.

### Eligible Applicants:

- Legally registered Saskatchewan-based tourism organizations that have been in operation on or before January 1, 2023
- Incorporated community non-profit organizations
- Urban and rural municipalities
- Indigenous, First Nations and Métis communities/groups
- Community associations
- Resort Accommodations
- Private operators
- In good standing with Tourism Saskatchewan and all Government of Saskatchewan ministries, Crown Corporations and agencies

### Ineligible Applicants Include:

- Charity fundraisers
- Retail businesses and consortiums
- Anniversaries, reunions, and homecomings
- Canada Day celebrations
- Seminars and clinics
- Religious and political gatherings
- Accommodations
- Restaurants, nightclubs & bars
- Regional parks and privately-owned campgrounds
- Travel agencies

- Golf courses
- Farmer's Markets
- Applicants with an existing MEPP agreement

#### **Program Requirements:**

- Marketing and content development activities must promote a tourism business, attraction, experience, festival or event. Packaged activities and travel offers are preferred.
- Preference will be given to applicants who demonstrate a commitment to digital marketing, content development and have identified their target market.
- Traditional Media Advertising activities must occur at least 40 km outside of the business/event/organization's location and be designed to attract tourists to the promoted event, business, attraction or experience.
- Research projects require consultation with Tourism Saskatchewan prior to submission.
- Traditional Media Advertising will only be considered for support as part of a larger marketing plan.
- Activities proposed for support must take place between April 1 2024 and March 31, 2025.

#### **Ineligible Expense:**

- All product development costs. Such requests should be directed to Tourism Saskatchewan's the [Tourism Diversification Program](#).
- Any expenses subsidized fully or partially by other programs offered by Tourism Saskatchewan or any Government of Saskatchewan ministry, Crown Corporation or agency.
- Taxes, such as GST and PST
- Capital assets – video production or photography equipment, software, private highway signs, display units and other associated marketplace items and operating costs.
- Services or work directly undertaken or provided by the applicant, such as salaries and benefits, travel costs or sales to a third-party supplier.
- Services or work provided by applicant's family members, current employees, the business owner or business partner as sub-contractors or service providers.
- In-kind contributions (e.g. travel time or travel expenses to accompany a third-party supplier, food, or accommodations for a third-party supplier)
- Commercial sales and/or promotion of real estate
- Prizes, giveaways, and merchandise
- Salaries, wages, and management fees
- Mobile app creation and development
- Domain registration and monthly hosting fees
- Logo/brand development costs
- Research subscriptions
- Self-published marketing material (such as, but not limited to, posters, brochures, signs, handbills, tickets, rack cards and event programs)
- Self-promotion of consumer marketplace attendance
- License fees

#### **Application and Evaluation Process:**

- The MEPP 2024 Winter intake will open January 15, 2024, and close at 5:00 p.m. CST February 27, 2024.
- **New and Returning Applicants** - to start an application, click [here](#).
- If you have questions about the MEPP application, please reach out to [MEPP@tourismsask.com](mailto:MEPP@tourismsask.com).
- **Online application forms must be completed by 5:00 p.m. CST February 27, 2024.** An example of the application can be found [here](#). Please note, only applications submitted online will be accepted. No other format will be accepted. Only one application per applicant will be considered.

- Preference will be given to applications that include a fully developed, evidence-based marketing plan. Review the [Marketing Plan Criteria](#) provided for MEPP applicants to ensure you meet the market planning requirement.
- Tourism Saskatchewan reserves the right to postpone or suspend MEPP without notice.
- Applications for Market Research activities require consultation with Tourism Saskatchewan prior to submission.
- Tourism Saskatchewan reserves the right to validate the qualifications for third-party service providers before services are rendered.
- Applications will be reviewed by the Marketing and Events Program Adjudication Committee for: Marketing plan quality and ROI, digital presence, supplier integrity, applicant financial commitment to marketing activities.
- All applicants will receive a response within two months of the program's closing date.

**Table A - MEPP 2024 Eligible Expenses**

Funding Support Category	Marketing Activities Eligible for Funding Support
<b>Content Development</b>  <b>Description:</b> Development activities that result in visual or written content for business website development, online presence development, advertising and promotional materials.  <b>Supplier Requirements:</b> All eligible activities <b>must</b> be delivered through a qualified third-party service provider.	<b>Content Asset Creation</b> Written content, photography, and videography. <b>Includes:</b> <ul style="list-style-type: none"> <li>• Video production services (pre and post).</li> </ul>
	<b>Social Media Content Creation and Account Management (supplier-managed)</b> <ul style="list-style-type: none"> <li>• Social media page account creation, page set-up and design for Facebook, Instagram, YouTube and LinkedIn.</li> </ul> <b>Includes:</b> <ul style="list-style-type: none"> <li>• Monthly cost to have a qualified supplier create, schedule, and post content on behalf of the business, on their social media pages.</li> </ul>
	<b>Content Strategy Development</b> <ul style="list-style-type: none"> <li>• Costs related to the development of an evidence-based strategic plan specific to social media activities for business accounts (excludes consultancy fees and market research costs).</li> </ul>
	<b>Social Media Influencer Campaigns</b> <ul style="list-style-type: none"> <li>• Costs related to the creation and delivery of an Influencer's social media campaign.</li> </ul>

Funding Support Category	Marketing Activities Eligible for Funding Support
<p><b>Market Research</b></p> <p><b>Description:</b> Research activities that provide market insights and analysis to position your businesses and inform marketing decisions.</p> <p><b>Consultation with Tourism Saskatchewan is required prior to application submission.</b></p> <p><b>Supplier Requirements:</b> All eligible activities <b>must</b> be delivered through a qualified third-party service provider.</p>	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> <li>Consumer market research (e.g., A/B testing, competitor analysis, market trend analysis, target audience identification, etc.).</li> <li>Customer experience research (e.g., customer journey mapping, customer sentiment and satisfaction, brand health, etc.).</li> <li>Panel research (includes panel access fees).</li> <li>Market segmentation.</li> <li>Economic impact studies.</li> <li>Complex data analysis (excludes software licensing fees).</li> </ul>

Funding Support Category	Marketing Activities Eligible for Funding Support
<p><b>Digital Marketing and Development</b></p> <p><b>Description:</b> Digital marketing activities that promote marketing channels owned by the business such as the business website, landing pages and social media pages or channels.</p> <p>Marketing development activities that improve business online presence in the areas of website user experience, social audience engagement, and online reviews.</p> <p><b>Supplier Requirements:</b> Activities can be managed and delivered either in-house <b>or</b> through a qualified third-party service provider.</p>	<p><b>Targeted Digital Advertising Campaigns</b> Display or video advertising on websites that target a defined consumer audience.</p>
	<p><b>Search Engine Marketing Campaigns (SEM)</b> Online search advertising such as Google Ads.</p>
	<p><b>Social Media Marketing Campaigns (SMM)</b> Social media advertising such as Facebook ads and/or boosts.</p>
	<p><b>Website Development</b></p> <ul style="list-style-type: none"> <li>Website build or rebuild.</li> <li>Mobile website upgrades.</li> <li>Website content updates (includes translation costs).</li> </ul> <p>User-experience upgrades such as: website add-ons/plugins enabling customer interactions with the business website in real-time (e.g., online reservations, booking and payment).</p>
	<p><b>Search Engine Optimization (SEO)</b></p>

	<b>Website content management services</b> (Excluding domain registration and monthly hosting fees)
	<b>Online Software Platform Subscriptions (Self-managed)</b> Annual and semi-annual subscriptions to online software platform services that help the business self-manage day-to-day tasks related to customer engagement and business reputation: <ul style="list-style-type: none"> <li>• Customer Relations/Feedback Management – e.g. MailChimp, Constant Contact, SurveyMonkey.</li> <li>• Social Media Account Management – e.g. Hootsuite, HubSpot.</li> </ul> Online Reputation Management, including account set- up and platform orientation (onboarding) fees.
	<b>Online Software Platform Management (Supplier-managed)</b> <ul style="list-style-type: none"> <li>• Monthly cost to have an eligible subscription based online software platform managed by a qualified supplier on behalf of the business.</li> </ul>
	<b>Digital Marketing Strategy Development</b> Costs related to the development of an evidence based strategic plan specific to Digital Marketing activities (excludes consultancy fees and market research costs).
	<b>Set-up costs and campaign management fees for all items listed above</b>

Funding Support Category	Marketing Activities Eligible for Funding Support
<p><b>Traditional Media Advertising</b></p> <p><b>Description:</b> Marketing activities that promote your tourism business. These activities <b>must</b> be part of an integrated, multi-faceted marketing campaign that includes eligible Digital Marketing activities.</p> <p><b>Supplier Requirements:</b> Activities <b>must</b> be delivered through a qualified third-party service provider.</p> <p><b>Maximum Support Level:</b> up to 50%</p>	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> <li>• Television Commercials (includes online pre-roll video ads).</li> <li>• Radio Commercials.</li> <li>• Display Ads in publications (Newspapers, Magazines, Periodicals, etc.).</li> <li>• Billboards - Standard &amp; Digital (includes production and placement costs where applicable).</li> </ul>

Funding Support Category	Marketing Activities Eligible for Funding Support
<p><b>Marketplace Tradeshows</b></p> <p><b>Description:</b> Attendance at consumer marketplace events or tradeshows for up to two attendees.</p> <p><b>Supplier Requirements:</b> Asset development activities <b>must</b> be delivered through a qualified third-party service provider.</p> <p><b>Maximum Support Level:</b> up to \$3,000 per show</p>	<p><b>Attendance costs:</b></p> <ul style="list-style-type: none"> <li>• Booth space rental.</li> <li>• Booth furnishings rental.</li> <li>• Transportation.</li> <li>• Accommodations (individual).</li> <li>• Meals.</li> </ul> <p><b>Display booth asset development:</b></p> <ul style="list-style-type: none"> <li>• Display unit design and artwork costs.</li> </ul> <p><b>Associated costs/service fees:</b></p> <ul style="list-style-type: none"> <li>• Advance booking deposit fees.</li> <li>• Advance shipping costs and onsite storage of display units.</li> </ul>