



2024-25 ONTARIO CREATES INTERACTIVE DIGITAL MEDIA FUND GUIDELINES

Discoverability and Commercialization Program

Deadline: Continuous, closes December 18, 2024

**THIS PROGRAM IS ONLY ACCESSIBLE TO PROJECTS THAT HAVE RECEIVED FUNDING
SUPPORT FROM IDM FUND: PRODUCTION**

The Discoverability and Commercialization Program documentation includes:

- Discoverability and Commercialization Guidelines (this document)
- [Ontario Creates Program Policies](#)

Applicants must review BOTH documents prior to submitting an application.

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1. Introduction

The Ontario Creates Interactive Digital Media (IDM) Fund is aimed at strengthening and stimulating economic growth in the interactive digital media sector. These guidelines outline the IDM Fund Discoverability and Commercialization program, designed to increase the visibility and financial viability of **projects that receive Production support through the IDM Fund**.

The Discoverability and Commercialization program is open to IDM Fund Production recipients for activities that take place during and/or after a product is made publicly available to an audience (Public Launch, see page 2 for details). Activities must commence within 18 months of Public Launch and conclude within one year of notification of a successful application.

In assessing the proposed activities, Ontario Creates will take into account the extent to which they drive engagement, increase product reach and facilitate revenue generation. Funding is limited. Applications are evaluated on an ongoing basis as they are submitted. The priority is to support activities that have clear and measurable results projections with a plan to achieve these goals.

Ontario Creates is committed to:

- supporting diversity and gender parity;
- providing enhanced accessibility support to people with disabilities, people who are Deaf and people who have barriers to accessing technology; and
- fostering respectful workplaces in all the sectors and companies we support.

Please see [Program Policies](#) for important details.

2. Eligible Applicants

Applicants **must be the recipient of IDM Fund Production program funding** for the project for which they are requesting Discoverability and Commercialization support. The applicant must receive approval to apply by sending an Application Inquiry from their IDM Fund Production project page in the Online Application Portal (OAP).

3. Eligible Activities

Eligible activities must:

- Have a measurable impact on engagement, product reach and revenue generation;
- Contribute to the critical and commercial success as part of or after Public Launch*, and not overlap with activities appearing in the production budget;
- Commence no later than 18 months after Public Launch and conclude within one year of notification of a successful application;
- Not be underway at the time of submitting the application or, for an activity already in progress, demonstrate how funding would enhance the scope and impact of the activity (expenses incurred prior to submission of the application are not eligible); Use Ontario suppliers where possible.

*Public Launch occurs when a product is made publicly available to an audience and may include releases commonly known as early access, soft-launch, and beta release. The project should be in a position to generate revenue once Public Launch has occurred. Release of a demo is not considered a Public Launch.

Applicants can submit an application six months before and up to 16 months after Public Launch (once an application is received it takes approximately two months before the applicant is notified of the decision). Significant discoverability and commercialization opportunities that arise after this period may be eligible in some cases. Please contact Ontario Creates for more information.

Note: Activities that take place prior to Public Launch are eligible for IDM Fund Concept Definition and Production programs:

- Concept Definition – Discoverability expenses are eligible for funding during this period, up to 20% of Labour, Equipment and Materials;
- Production – Discoverability expenses are eligible for funding during this period, up to 30% of Labour, Equipment and Materials costs.

Discoverability and Commercialization activities can include, but are not restricted to:

- activities broadly defined as live operations (management of and updates to projects after Public Launch) and ongoing operational costs;
- development of downloadable content/DLC;
- porting to new interactive platforms for releases that occur after the Public Launch;
- creating marketing materials and tools (website, trailer, giveaways, posters, social media assets, etc.);
- advertising and co-op (paid placement with retailers);
- offers and promotions, consumer contests and other audience/user engagement and retention campaigns;
- PR, influencer, social media campaigns;
- community development and management; and
- project-related/launch events.

Production activities (polish, testing, bug fixes, certification, general admin/overhead), wishlist-building activities, ports to additional platforms, demos, and DLC that are released at the time of Public Launch are considered Production activities and are not eligible for support through this program.

Applicants may submit one Discoverability and Commercialization program application per eligible project.

4. Budget, Financing and Timeline Requirements

The Discoverability and Commercialization program will provide a non-refundable contribution of up to 50% of the budget for eligible activities with a minimum contribution of \$15,000 to a maximum of \$50,000.

Financing:

- The remaining 50% must come from an alternate source (applicant company, third party funder, etc.);
- At least 10% of financing must be in the form of a cash contribution;
- Realistically valued “in-kind” services may be included in the financing plan;
- Ontario Creates may request written verification of financing.

Budgets:

- Costs that are covered in the IDM Fund Concept Definition, Production, and Global Market Development* programs are not eligible;

- Expenses incurred prior to submission of the application are not eligible;
- A company's ongoing operational expenses will not be considered;
- Administration costs are capped at 15% of the budget.

Budgets and financing plans must be submitted on the provided excel template and must include all costs through to completion and delivery of the activities.

Applicants are advised to include quotes if third party services are required to complete the activities.

Timelines:

- Applications can be submitted six months before and up to 16 months after Public Launch;
- The applicant must begin incurring expenses no later than 60 days after notification of a successful application;
- Activities must be completed with all expenses incurred and all deliverables provided to Ontario Creates within one year of notification of a successful application.

Applicants are encouraged to submit their application at least eight weeks prior to requiring funds in order to provide sufficient time to process the application.

*The IDM Fund Global Market Development program provides funding for interactive digital media companies to attend key international events. If attendance at international events is an element of your marketing activities, you may apply to the Discoverability and Commercialization program for assistance with enhanced marketing, registration and booth costs above the limitations outlined in the Global Market Development program guidelines.

Please note that budget items for international activities will only be eligible for events that are included in your Global Market Development plans. Discoverability and Commercialization program budget items will not be eligible for Global Market Development program support.

5. Application Process and Evaluation

This program has continuous intake, with a closing date of December 18, 2024.

Applicants must receive approval to apply by sending an Applicant Inquiry from their IDM Fund Production project page in the Online Application Portal (OAP). Approval will be based on the current status of the Production project and timing for the planned Discoverability and Commercialization activities. Please consult Ontario Creates if you have any questions. Ontario Creates staff will review the applications to make final recommendations for funding. Applicants will be notified about the status of their application within 8 weeks of application submission.

6. Decision Criteria

Ontario Creates will select the funding recipients based on the appropriateness of the strategy and the potential impact on the applicant company. Applicants should ensure that their application material clearly conveys the strengths of their application with respect to the program guidelines. The number of applicants who will receive funding is dependent on the timeliness of receipt of the application in the program cycle, and the individual needs of each applicant. Applications will be evaluated on a first come first served basis.

Ontario Creates applies a lens of diversity, equity, and inclusion to the evaluation criteria for this program, and directs jury members to do the same. Applicants proposing projects/activities that support and reflect diversity are expected to tangibly demonstrate a genuine and sustained commitment to these equity-deserving communities. Ontario Creates may identify particular underrepresented communities within a particular sector.

The provincial definition of diversity includes but is not limited to: ancestry, culture, ethnicity, gender identity, gender expression, language, physical and intellectual ability, race, religion (creed), sex, sexual orientation and socio-economic status.

Applications will be assessed according to the following criteria:

Criteria	Weighting	Considerations May Include:
Feasibility of the project	25%	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> Clearly described activities Reasonable, detailed budget with appropriately allocated costs Realistic, well-planned schedule with dates and clear key milestones Risks identified and addressed Thoughtful consultation, collaboration, and participation of equity-seeking communities
Expected Results	30%	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> Clearly stated and supported by research Categorized by activity and platform (where applicable) Realistic, measurable and achievable Generate a positive return on IDM Fund: Production and DCP investment Growth of company as a result of activities being completed

		<ul style="list-style-type: none"> • Likelihood of commercial and critical success • Other significant benefits to the company and/or the Ontario economy that are likely through support of this project
Demonstrated effectiveness of activities in achieving goals for engagement, product reach and revenue generation	30%	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> • Clearly defined audience and market, supported by research included in the application • Activities are relevant to engaging the target audience and generating revenue, supported by research • Likelihood of activities achieving the expected results • Choice of activities is informed by best practices in the industry
Background and ability to implement the plan	15%	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> • Information about the company, including diversity among senior leadership, staff, or contract employees • Explanation of company policies and/or activities that support diversity, equity and inclusion • Track record of the company in the industry and with Ontario Creates • Access to the capacity, skills, knowledge and expertise required to complete the proposed activities • Explanation of experience in delivering similar projects, managing similar activities and establishing best practices • Rationale for choice of service providers (if used) including industry track record

7. Successful Applicants

Successful applicants will receive funding during the course of their activities, triggered by pre-determined deliverables as follows:

- 60% on execution of the Ontario Creates agreement;
- 25% on delivery of an interim report;
- 15% on delivery of a final report.

8. More Information

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These guidelines are for the 2024-25 deadline only. This document is subject to change for future deadlines . Applicants are advised to consult the Ontario Creates website for any relevant Frequently Asked Questions documents and Ontario Creates IDM Fund Bulletins for clarifications and alterations to these guidelines.

Ontario Creates is an agency of the Government of Ontario that facilitates economic development, investment and collaboration in Ontario's creative industries including the music, book, magazine, film, television and interactive digital media sectors.
ontariocreates.ca