



2024-25 ONTARIO CREATES INTERACTIVE DIGITAL MEDIA FUND GUIDELINES

Global Market Development Program

Deadline: April 29, 2024 by 5:00pm ET

The Ontario Creates Interactive Digital Media (IDM) Fund – Global Market Development (GMD) program documentation includes:

- Ontario Creates IDM Fund Guidelines – GMD (this document)
- [Ontario Creates Program Policies](#)

Applicants must review ALL of the documents listed above prior to submitting an application.

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1. Introduction

The **Global Market Development (GMD)** program provides eligible Ontario companies with funding to participate in international activities that support company growth and produce measurable business and market development results (sales, financing, licensing and/or publishing deals, audience awareness, media coverage, partnership development, etc.). The proposed global market development plan must support the company's content creation and exploitation activities. Primary activities supported include targeted sales trips and attendance at international market events.

The GMD program will provide up to \$15,000 capped at 50% of a participating company's eligible expenses to engage in international business and market development activities between August 1, 2024 and August 31, 2025.

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 face barriers to accessing technology to complete an application; and
- fostering respectful workplaces in all the sectors and companies we support.

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

2. Program Deadline

The deadline for complete submission is April 29, 2024 at 5:00 pm ET, through the Online Application Portal. Applications and documentation received after this deadline will not be considered.

Decisions will be communicated to applicants within fourteen weeks of the deadline.

3. Eligible Applicants

Applications will be accepted from *established* and *new* interactive digital media content creation companies.

Established Companies must meet one of the following tests: at least 25% of the company's revenue or 50% of the company's expenditures over the previous two fiscal years comes from the creation of screen-based content projects that are similar in nature to their current projects.

They must also have at least one owner or full-time employee with a minimum full-time equivalent of three years of experience in the creation of professional, commercialized content for interactive platforms, networks or devices (video games, mobile content, elearning content, web series, etc.) that is similar in nature to their current projects.

A company is considered *new* if it has less than a year of operation or it has not yet released a product. *New* companies must:

- have an executive team including at least one owner or full-time employee with a minimum full-time equivalent of three years of experience in the creation of professional, commercialized content for interactive platforms, networks or devices that are similar in nature to their current project;
- be majority-owned by individuals that are Ontario residents;
- be prepared to incorporate immediately if their application is successful; and
- meet the relevant eligibility criteria for established companies on incorporation.

Work that is completed while enrolled in a post-secondary education program is not considered professional content creation.

New companies and first-time applicants should contact Ontario Creates at least three weeks in advance of the deadline to determine their eligibility before submitting an application.

Companies must also meet the following requirements:

- be Ontario-based;
- companies with more than 365 days of operation must be able to demonstrate that they were Ontario-based for at least one year prior to the deadline;

- Be Canadian-owned;
- be incorporated in Ontario or federally or prepared to incorporate immediately if their application is successful; and
- be in good standing with Ontario Creates at time of application submission.

The following companies are ineligible:

- a company that is working exclusively on client-driven or fee-for-service projects;
- a company that is primarily engaged in marketing, design and branding service work for clients;
- private colleges and training institutions;
- a company that is delivering online services for individuals;
- a company that is not in good standing with Ontario Creates or one that is associated with an entity that is not in good standing with Ontario Creates;
- not-for-profit and public sector entities; and
- a company that holds a broadcast license or that has an ownership association with a company that holds a broadcast license.

Ontario Creates will only accept one application per company or associated company per fiscal year.

Up to three representatives per company, per activity will be considered. At least one of the participating representatives at each activity must be a decision maker at the executive level within the applicant company. Companies are advised to choose the individual(s) best suited to take advantage of this opportunity. To be eligible, company representatives must:

- be a full time employee or owner of the applicant company (sales agents, external consultants, etc. are ineligible);
- be Canadian citizens or landed immigrants / permanent residents; and
- be Ontario residents.

Ontario Creates will consider providing support for a senior, long-term, part-time employee who has the authority to make key decisions for the company. If required, please contact Ontario Creates in advance of your application to determine if an exception would be allowed.

4. Eligible Activities and Projects

Eligible activities include virtual and in-person participation in international markets and events, planned sales trips or media tours to key territories to meet with identified leads and participation in trade missions organized by industry associations and government agencies. Proposed activities must take place outside of Ontario. All activities, whether virtual or in-person must focus on international audience and business development opportunities.

NEW IN 2024: This program will support participation in:

- [pre-approved GMD activities](#); and

- additional activities not included on this list (Ontario Creates permission required in advance/prior to the event) provided the primary purpose for attending is business and/or audience development.

Applicants are expected to include a list of ALL targeted activities (pre-approved and additional activities) as part of their application and demonstrate how these activities support their overall global market development plans.

Activities supported through this program must contribute to the applicant company's business and market development goals related to their proprietary interactive digital media content projects. Eligible interactive content projects include:

- video games
- mobile content
- e-learning content
- XR experiences
- web series

Projects must:

- include the creation or development of unique, creative and professional content by the applicant company;
- be released on an interactive digital media platform, network or device as the primary distribution channel;
- be intended for a consumer audience or to be used by students attending primary, secondary or post-secondary institutions as the primary audience;
- be intended for use by individuals or groups of individuals;
- be intended to educate, inform or entertain;
- consist of a combination of at least two of text, sound (music, sound effects, voice, etc.) and images (pictures, animations, video, etc.)
- be intended for commercial exploitation.

Proposed activities and market development goals must not be related to projects that are:

- primarily intended to sell products and/or services;
- primarily intended to promote companies and corporate and/or institutional agendas;
- primarily intended for use by corporations/businesses;
- primarily intended for interpersonal communication;
- primarily catalogues and databases;
- primarily repurposed live, linear and streaming content that have not been augmented or enhanced;
- primarily user generated content, social networking tools and/or distribution of licensed content projects provided by a third party;
- primarily technology, hardware, software, applications, tools, services, platforms, etc.;
- and
- contrary to public policy in the opinion of Ontario Creates.

Ontario Creates reserves the right to only relate to a portion of the business and market development plan submitted by the applicant company. Attendance at an event that is

primarily for professional development, for training, to participate as a speaker, to receive an award, etc. will not be supported through this program.

While companies are strongly encouraged to submit carefully considered, realistic and well researched activity plans for the period covered by the GMD program, Ontario Creates is open to adjustments to a participating company’s activities as required due to external pressures and unforeseen circumstances.

NEW IN 2024: Successful recipients do not need to notify Ontario Creates regarding changes for pre-approved activities. All other changes (to a maximum of three) must be reasonable and will require notification and permission from Ontario Creates through the OAP prior to the change.

5. Eligible Expenditures

NEW IN 2024: Companies should complete the [GMD Activity Calculator](#) to calculate the amount of their request based on eligible costs in the table below. Budgets are not required as part of the application. GMD requests are capped at 50% of estimated eligible expenses; the [GMD Activity Calculator](#) is a tool to help calculate these costs. It is the responsibility of the applicant to ensure that their request is accurate and reflects the planned activities and spending levels. Consistent underspends in the program may result in reduced contributions in subsequent years.

Event Costs	Registration and booth/exhibitor expenses. (Virtual and In-person)
Travel Costs	NEW IN 2024: Ontario Creates has established benchmarks based on geographic region. These amounts are for round-trip travel for one person: <ul style="list-style-type: none"> • North America, Central America, or the Caribbean – C\$1,000 • Europe – C\$2,000 • South America, Middle East, or Asia – C\$2,000 • Australia or Oceania - \$2,500 • Africa – C\$3,000 All travel must originate in Ontario, unless approved otherwise by Ontario Creates. (In-person)
Accommodation Costs	NEW IN 2024: Hotel expenses are capped at C\$600/night and should be at moderate rates that reflect the average per destination/activity. Ontario Creates will relate to accommodation expenses for a maximum of three days on either side of an event provided the purpose for extending the stay is to pursue business development activities. (In-person)
Per Diems	Capped at C\$100/day. Including daily meals and incidentals. Ontario Creates will relate to per diem expenses for a maximum of three

	days on either side of an event provided the purpose for extending the stay is to pursue business development activities. (In-person)
Marketing Materials	Design, production and shipping material specifically created for the proposed activities. Acceptable marketing materials include activity-specific printed catalogs, event program advertisements, postcards, flyers/one sheets, product samples and demos. Capped at 30% of the total costs. (Virtual and In-person)

For budgeting purposes, Ontario Creates contributions allow arrival the day prior to and departure the day after an in-person event. Expenses for extended stays over weekends are not eligible.

While companies may incur additional expenses that do not correspond with the categories above, the amount of the Ontario Creates contribution will be based only on the eligible expenses listed above. Expenses that are considered ineligible for the purpose of this program include:

- staff and operations costs;
- hospitality and entertainment costs;
- core business costs such as design and printing of business cards and standard catalogs;
- communications costs such as mobile phone fees, long distance fees, etc.;
- costs associated with ineligible company representatives and additional representatives over and above the cap for this program;
- individual travel insurance related to business travel;
- additional expenses incurred due to public health-related measures; and
- additional support – costs covered in full or in part by a third party such as a festival or market place (e.g., registration, accommodation, airfare). The balance of uncovered costs, if any, will be considered an eligible expenditure.

In addition, applicant companies that are receiving support for a specific activity through another Ontario Creates program are not eligible to receive additional support through the GMD program for the same activity.

Companies are advised that if they are participating in activities that are supported by other government agencies, regional or municipal funding bodies or other third party organizations, expenses financed by those organization may not be eligible for support through the GMD program. If you are unsure of how your participation in such activities affects you, please contact the program consultant for clarification.

All eligible expenses must be reasonable and appropriate in the opinion of Ontario Creates. A cost report is required on conclusion of the program and Ontario Creates reserves the right to spot audit the cost report and review receipts. Participants must retain all necessary receipts for this purpose.

6. Application Process

Applicants must submit their applications electronically through the Online Application Portal (OAP) at <https://apply.ontariocreates.ca/>. A list of required application materials is outlined in the application form on the OAP.

7. Decision Criteria and Evaluation

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 and strengthen diversity and gender parity in Ontario 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 states: the dimensions of diversity include, but are 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
Track Record	30%	<ul style="list-style-type: none">• global market readiness• prior results and success in international markets• previous performance in Ontario Creates programs• diversity among senior leadership, staff or contract employees, particularly equity-deserving communities within the interactive digital media industry• company policies and/or initiatives that support diversity, equity and inclusion, particularly underrepresented communities within the interactive digital media industry
Business and Market Development Plan	30%	<ul style="list-style-type: none">• clarity of company's global market development plan• suitability of activities for projects• suitability of activities for program• suitability of plans for activities
Impact and Results	20%	<ul style="list-style-type: none">• anticipated impact of activities on revenues, project success and company growth• defined, achievable and measurable business and audience development results (sales, financing, licensing and/or publishing deals, audience awareness, media coverage, partnership development, etc.)
Project Strengths	20%	<ul style="list-style-type: none">• suitability of projects for global market• readiness of projects for activities

		<ul style="list-style-type: none"> the extent to which the projects support and reflect diversity, particularly equity-deserving voices within the interactive digital media industry
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Applications will be reviewed and evaluated by Ontario Creates staff. This is a competitive process and only those applications that best meet the requirements of the program will be accepted. Funding allocations will be proportional to the number of applications received. Applicants may receive less than requested to ensure that all companies have an opportunity to receive support through this program. Failure to achieve targeted results in previously funded cycles may be taken into account in funding decisions. Previous successful applications to the GMD program do not guarantee continued funding. Consistent underspends in previous cycles of the program may result in applicants receiving an amount lower than their request.

8. 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;
- 40% on delivery of a satisfactory final report and all deliverables outlined in the agreement

Applicants will be required to provide a cost report summarizing total spending as part of their final report. The amount of Ontario Creates' contribution is based on the actual spend and the final payment may be adjusted accordingly. Participating companies are responsible for making all arrangements for travel, registration and accommodation as required.

- **Payments** - The payment schedule will be determined by a company's schedule of activities. Payments will be tied to reporting requirements which include delivery of an interim report at approximately the halfway point and a final report on conclusion of the program.
- **Reporting** - Interim, final and follow-up reports must include an assessment of business and market development results to date and a comparison of actual results with those proposed in the participating company's application. Further report criteria is outlined in the Ontario Creates agreement. A follow-up report may also be required six months to one year after the conclusion of the program that summarizes results of your company's international business and market development activities. This report is not tied to a payment but failure to respond to requests for this report will have an impact on a company's eligibility to receive further support from Ontario Creates programs.
- **Strategic Support** - In appropriate situations Ontario Creates may provide strategic support related to key industry events to supplement the funding provided through this program. Strategic support may take the form of access to an industry consultant to provide targeted advice to participating companies, pre-event briefing sessions, networking opportunities during an event, etc. The decision to provide strategic

support will be made by Ontario Creates and will be based on the number of Ontario companies attending an event, the assessed need for strategic support and the level of interest in these activities.

- Accessibility - Successful applicants with disabilities and who are Deaf may be eligible for supplementary funds for accessibility expenses required to complete their project deliverables.

9. More Information

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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