

2022-23 ONTARIO CREATES INTERACTIVE DIGITAL MEDIA FUND GUIDELINES

Global Market Development Program

Deadline: April 25, 2022 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.

The Ontario Creates Interactive Digital Media (IDM) Fund is aimed at strengthening and stimulating economic growth in the interactive digital media sector.

PROGRAM ADJUSTMENTS FOR 2022 – 2023:

The program has been updated to reflect uncertainty around travel and virtual international business development opportunities. Please read the Guidelines carefully, particularly Section 3: Eligible Activities, and Section 4: Budget Requirements.

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1. Introduction

The Global Market Development 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 Global Market Development 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, 2022 and August 31, 2023 as part of a comprehensive plan.

Ontario Creates values and supports diversity and gender parity at all levels and business roles within creative industries. We acknowledge that many communities continue to face systemic barriers, preventing them from participating meaningfully in these industries. 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, reflect, and strengthen diversity and gender parity in Ontario are expected to tangibly demonstrate a genuine and sustained commitment to these equity-seeking communities*. Ontario Creates encourages applications from companies that are led by BIPOC (Black, Indigenous, or People of Colour) or Francophone individuals and applicants that otherwise meet the provincial definition of diversity.**

Ontario Creates is committed to fostering respectful workplaces in all sectors and companies we support. Please see [Program Policies](#) for more details, including required respectful workplace Applicant Affidavit.

Ontario Creates welcomes applications from people with disabilities, people who are deaf, and people who have barriers to accessing technology. If you would like to request an alternative process or format for submitting an application or request funds (up to \$500 per application) towards service providers to assist with your application, please contact the relevant Program Consultant a minimum of four weeks before the deadline. Support for application assistance is also available to First Nations, Inuit or Métis applicants facing language, geographic and/or cultural barriers. Services may include, but are not limited to, assistance to create an account and navigate the Online Application Portal; transcribe/edit/organize/translate application materials; complete and submit application materials.

* Equity seeking communities are those that face significant collective challenges in participating in society. This marginalization may be caused by, but not limited to, attitudinal, historic, social and environmental barriers based on age, ethnicity, disability, economic status, gender, nationality, race, sexual orientation and transgender status. Equity-seeking communities identify barriers to equal access, opportunities and resources due to disadvantage and discrimination and actively seek social justice and reparation.

** 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.

2. Eligible Applicants

This program is open to interactive digital media content production 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 products.

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, websites, etc.)

In certain cases to support the growth and expansion of Ontario's interactive digital media industry, applications will be accepted *from New* companies. 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 professional experience in the creation of professional, commercialized content ;
- be majority-owned by individuals that have a recent track record of working in Ontario;
- be prepared to incorporate immediately if their application is successful; and
- meet the relevant eligibility criteria for established companies on incorporation.

In addition, owner/operators must be able to demonstrate that they possess significant industry experience including previous attendance at key industry events. *New* companies should contact Ontario Creates in advance to determine their eligibility.

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

Applications from all companies must also meet the following requirements:

- be *Ontario-based*;
 - have a permanent establishment in Ontario which serves as head office and base of operations (i.e. applicant is eligible to pay corporate income taxes in Ontario; and Ontario address is listed as head office in T2 filing);
 - companies with more than 365 days of operation must be able to demonstrate that they had a permanent establishment in Ontario for at least one year prior to the deadline.
- Be a *Canadian-owned organization*;
 - as defined in the Investment Canada Act (Canada).
- be incorporated in Ontario or federally or prepared to incorporate immediately if their application is successful;
- be in a sound financial position; 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.

3. Eligible Activities

Eligible activities include virtual and in-person participation in key international industry 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.

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. These projects must be intended to be experienced by an end user on an interactive digital media platform, network or device. The primary purpose of the projects must be to entertain, inform or educate the end user. The projects must also consist primarily of professional content that includes a combination of two of text, sound and images.

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
- not primarily intended for a consumer audience or for use by students attending primary, secondary or post-secondary institutions;
- primarily intended for interpersonal communication;
- primarily catalogues and databases;
- primarily repurposed linear and streaming content (music, video, books, magazines) 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.

Companies may receive funding to attend the same activity year over year provided that they can demonstrate that they are pursuing new business and market development objectives. Companies that are submitting travel plans that include attendance at the activities with the same projects for more than two consecutive years must provide a case for further support and be able to demonstrate progress made with respect to business and market development objectives for relevant projects.

The number of eligible program activities is capped at five. In the event an applicant applies to the Global Market Development program with more than five activities, only the first five will be considered for funding purposes. 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 Global Market Development program, Ontario Creates is open to adjustments to a participating company's activities as required due to external pressures and unforeseen circumstances. *****NEW IN 2022-23 ***** Up to three activity changes are permitted over the course of the year for which the Global Market Development program applies. Prior to undertaking a new activity, recipients must notify Ontario Creates of the activity change and provide activity-specific information along with a revised budget that includes the costs associated with the new activity. **Any changes, including attending additional activities, that are not approved by Ontario Creates in advance of traveling dates may not be accepted and may result in a reduction of the amount of support provided to the participating company.**

4. Budget Requirements

Companies must complete the budget template summarizing all eligible expenses including:

Event Costs	Virtual and In-person	Including registration and booth/exhibitor expenses.
Travel Costs	In-person	Including flight and local transportation. Air travel should be budgeted at economy rates and should reflect the costs of booking at least 30 days in advance of travel.
COVID-19 Travel Testing	In-person	***NEW IN 2022-23 *** Standard costs for diagnostic tests.
Accommodation Costs	In-person	Hotel expenses should be at moderate per night rates and should reflect the average for the travel 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. Approval at the application stage is required.
Per Diems	In-person	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. Approval at the application stage is required.
Marketing Materials	Virtual and In-person	Including design, production and shipping material specifically created for the proposed activities. Acceptable marketing materials include activity-specific printed catalogs, event program advertisements, post cards, flyers/one sheets, product samples and demos. ***NEW IN 2022-23 *** Capped at 30% of the total costs of each activity.

For budgeting purposes Ontario Creates will cover arrival the day prior to and departure the day after an in-person event. Any additional time at an event must be addressed in the application and a rationale provided. Expenses for extended stays over weekends are not eligible.

While companies may be incurring additional expenses that do not correspond with the categories above, these costs should not be included in the budget. 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:

- ***NEW IN 2022-23 *** 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.; and
- costs associated with ineligible company representatives and additional representatives over and above the cap for this program.

Please note, applicant companies that are receiving support for a specific activity through another Ontario Creates program are not eligible to receive additional support through the Global Market Development program for the same activity.

Companies are advised that if they are participating in activities that are supported by other government agencies and industry associations certain expenses may not be eligible for inclusion in the Global Market Development program budget. Companies should speak with the organizers of these events to determine specific requirements for creating their budget for these activities.

All eligible expenses included in the budget must be reasonable and appropriate in the opinion of Ontario Creates. Ontario Creates reserves the right to request changes to the budget submitted by the applicant company as part of their application to conform to the above guidelines. A cost report is required on conclusion of the program and significant deviations from the approved budget may be disallowed.

5. 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.

6. 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 diversity are expected to tangibly demonstrate a genuine and sustained commitment to these equity-seeking 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.

Specifically the applications will be assessed on the following criteria and relative weightings:

<ul style="list-style-type: none"> • Company track record and profile* including an assessment of: <ul style="list-style-type: none"> • global market readiness • prior results and success in international markets • previous performance in Ontario Creates programs 	30%
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<ul style="list-style-type: none"> • diversity among senior leadership, staff or contract employees, particularly underrepresented 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** 	
<ul style="list-style-type: none"> • Company’s business and market development plan including an assessment of: <ul style="list-style-type: none"> • clarity of company plans for growth • suitability of activities • viability of activity-specific objectives and strategies • alignment of activities with company plans for growth 	30%
<ul style="list-style-type: none"> • Impact and results including an assessment of <ul style="list-style-type: none"> • anticipated impact of activities on revenues, product success and company growth • defined, achievable and measurable business and market development result projections 	20%
<ul style="list-style-type: none"> • Project strengths including an assessment of: <ul style="list-style-type: none"> • suitability of projects for activities and global market • readiness of projects for activities and global market • the extent to which the projects support and reflect diversity, particularly under-represented voices within the interactive digital media industry** 	20%

* Track record and profile includes an assessment of a company’s ability to accurately budget for similar activities. The Ontario Creates contribution may be reduced accordingly.

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. Failure to achieve targeted results in previously funded cycles may be taken into account in funding decisions. Previous successful applications to the Global Market Development program do not guarantee continued funding. (Ontario Creates reserves the right to consult with external industry advisors on the application packages on an as needed basis.)

Ontario Creates will give priority to quantitative business and market development result projections in selecting participants and measuring the success of this program. Quantifiable results include an estimate of the financial impact on the participating company with respect to sales, financing, licensing and/or publishing deals, audience awareness, media coverage, partnership development, etc. Applicants are also encouraged to include descriptions of qualitative results projections in their application.

7. Participant Obligations

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

Participating companies are responsible for making all arrangements for travel, registration and accommodation as required for the activity plan outlined in their application.

- Payments - The schedule for payments 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 will 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 who are deaf or otherwise disabled may be eligible for supplementary funds for accessibility expenses required to complete their project deliverables.

8. 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