



2020-21 ONTARIO CREATES INTERACTIVE DIGITAL MEDIA FUND GUIDELINES

Marketing Support Program

Deadline: Continuous, closes January 31, 2021

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 Marketing Support program. *The Marketing Support program is open to IDM Fund Production recipients for their initial product launch.*

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1. Introduction

The Marketing Support program is designed to increase the visibility and financial viability of Ontario Creates-funded interactive digital media projects when they are released/available for sale in the marketplace. Applicants are encouraged to apply for Marketing Support at least eight weeks before the completion of their market ready product, in order to have funds for product launch marketing activities available.

In assessing the proposed marketing activities, Ontario Creates will take into account factors including the impact of the plan to drive product sales and increase revenue. Funding is limited, and applications will be evaluated as they are submitted. The priority is to support marketing activities that have clear, objective, and measurable results and/or indicate a clear plan to achieve marketing goals that best suit the needs of the completed project.

Ontario Creates encourages applicants who host event-based activities to choose accessible venues and offer accommodations for people with disabilities as required. More information on the *Accessibility for Ontarians with Disabilities Act* can be found here <https://www.ontario.ca/laws/statute/05a11>.

2. Eligible Applicants

- Applicants must be the recipient of IDM Fund Production program funding for the project for which they are requesting marketing support;
- Applicants can submit an application between eight weeks - six months before the product launch;
- Before submitting an application, applicants must first provide an update on the status of their IDM Fund: Production project to the relevant Program Consultant by sending an Applicant Inquiry from their project page in the OAP. The applicant must receive approval to apply from the Program Consultant.

3. Eligible Projects and Activities

Eligible marketing activities must:

- be intended for marketing the project on its initial launch (Production program allows for 20% of costs to be devoted to pre-launch marketing activities);
- include marketing activities not already 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 to date are not eligible);
- be focused on driving product sales and increasing revenue in a tangible and measurable manner (note: expected return on investment will be a key criteria for application assessment);
- use Ontario suppliers where possible (not required);
- not be projects that have already been released to market, either domestically or internationally.

Marketing activities can include, but are not restricted to:

- the creation of specialized marketing materials and tools to promote domestic and international sales (website, trailer, giveaways, posters, etc.);
- advertising and co-op (paid placement with retailers) to increase marketplace visibility in print or online;
- consumer contests and other audience/user retention campaigns;
- publicists and publicity campaigns;
- event costs (facility rental, permits, signage, technical services etc.);
- consultation with an appropriate marketing or social media or PR specialist.

Companies may submit only one Marketing Support program application per eligible project.

4. Budget, Financing and Timeline Requirements

The IDM Fund will provide a non-refundable contribution of up to 75% of the marketing activities budget, with a minimum contribution of \$15,000 to a maximum of \$50,000.

Companies that can demonstrate the need and appropriate plans for larger-scale marketing activities may be eligible for an increased maximum on a case-by-case basis. Prior to submitting an application, please contact Ontario Creates directly to discuss project eligibility.

The remaining 25% must come from the applicant company, and must include a minimum 10% cash contribution. Ontario Creates may request verification that financing is available. Realistically valued “in-kind” services may be included in the financing plan for the marketing activities. Ongoing operational costs are not eligible budget items for this program. A maximum of 15% of the total budget can be applied to administration costs.

Budgets must be submitted on the provided excel template and must include all costs through to completion and delivery of the marketing activities. PDF copies of the budget template are not accepted. If outside third party services are required to complete the activities, it is advisable to include quotes as backup.

Expenses incurred prior to submission of the application are not eligible. The applicant must begin incurring expenses no later than 60 days after notification of Ontario Creates’ decision or the award will expire. Marketing activities must be completed with all expenses incurred and all deliverables provided to Ontario Creates within one year of notification of the decision, or Ontario Creates’ commitment to advance further monies will expire.

Please note that the IDM Fund Global Market Development program specifically 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 Marketing Support 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. Marketing Support 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 January 31, 2021. Applicants are encouraged to apply for Marketing Support at least eight weeks before the completion of their market ready product, in order to have funds for product launch marketing available. All applications must be submitted electronically through the Online Application Portal (OAP) at <https://apply.ontariocreates.ca/>.

After receiving approval to apply from their IMD Fund – Production Program Consultant, eligible applicants can start the application by clicking on “Start New Application” and following the directions through the five step wizard to access the application form. For technical assistance, please contact the OAP Helpdesk at applyhelp@ontariocreates.ca.

A complete list of required application materials is outlined in the application form [on the OAP](#). It is imperative that applications include all requested documentation. Incomplete applications will not be considered.

- Applications will be assessed for completeness and eligibility by Ontario Creates staff following the application submission;
- Ontario Creates staff will review the applications to make final recommendations for funding;
- Applicants will be notified about the status of their application within 4 to 6 weeks of application submission.

All Ontario Creates decisions are final. Ontario Creates reserves the right to alter program guidelines with general public notice to all potential applicants and to refuse any application for any reason. The number of awards and amount awarded is contingent on confirmation of Ontario Creates' annual budget. Ontario Creates is not required to make any minimum number of awards. Subject to the Freedom of Information and Protection of Privacy Act, all information contained in the application will remain strictly confidential. All inquiries pertaining to Ontario Creates Funds are to be directed to Ontario Creates staff only.

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.

Applications will be assessed according to the following criteria:

- Degree to which expected results are well documented in the application, including a description of tangible, measurable, and realistic goals and an explanation of anticipated ROI (30%)
- Impact of marketing activities on the potential for critical and commercial success and revenue generation (30%)
- Quality, innovation, creativity and suitability of proposed marketing activities (20%)
- Feasibility of the activities with respect to scope, budget and schedule (20%)

7. Successful Applicants

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

- 75% on execution of the Ontario Creates agreement;
- 25% on delivery of a final report.

Participant Obligations:

- Agreement - On acceptance into the program, the participating company will be required to sign an agreement covering the terms of their participation in the program including providing Ontario Creates with permission to use the project and delivery materials for promotional purposes. A copy of this agreement is available for review on request;
- Reporting - Participants will be required to provide feedback on the process, business development benefits and other outcomes in order for Ontario Creates to evaluate the program;
- Changes to the Project - Ontario Creates must be notified of any significant changes to the project as defined in the contract and if applicable, changes will require consent of Ontario Creates;
- Deliverables - The agreement with Ontario Creates will outline specific deliverables including, but not limited to: a cost report, copies of marketing materials and an assessment of the program. Since project-related deliverables will vary, certain delivery requirements will be negotiated on a case-by-case basis at contract signing;
- Cost Report - A final cost report and financing statement will be required for all projects supported by the Ontario Creates IDM Fund;
- Credit - –The Ontario Creates IDM Fund support is to be acknowledged with an Ontario Creates credit and logo on the project and all related publicity and promotional materials. Ontario Creates is to be advised in advance of any mention of Ontario Creates or Ontario Creates' involvement in the project in press releases or publicity materials.

8. More Information

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These guidelines are for the 2020-21 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.
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