

Frequently Asked Questions about the Destination BC Co-operative Marketing Partnerships Program (Co-op Program)

The Destination BC Co-operative Marketing Partnerships Program (Co-op Program) is an application-based program that provides co-operative marketing and promotion support to regional destination marketing organizations, community consortiums, sector organizations, and approved individual and paired communities in British Columbia. The program has a total budget of \$4.0 million, and these funds are distributed widely across the province.

The Program was developed in 2015 based on advice from the Destination BC Tourism Marketing Committee, an industry-based advisory committee with members representing all regions of BC and a cross-section of tourism partners. Input was also provided by participants from more than 20 community consultation sessions held throughout BC.

The program aims to increase BC tourism revenues by leveraging private and public funds to maximize marketing impact and return on investment for tourism businesses. The program also helps to support Destination BC's strategic corporate priority of developing a Powerful Marketing Network.

Find more information here: <http://www.destinationbc.ca/Programs/Regions-Communities-and-Sectors/Destination-BC-Co-op-Marketing-Program.aspx>

What's New for 2018/2019:

We have included some additional information this year in the guidelines and application form that will help Destination BC and our industry partners work effectively towards supporting the development of a Powerful Marketing Network.

Key Performance Indicators

Through this program, we would like to work together to collect common Key Performance Indicators (KPIs) that will provide program participants with indicators to help maintain and evaluate the success of your marketing initiatives against industry benchmarks and allow you to make adjustments during the project. These common KPIs will also allow program staff to provide standard reporting and Year-over-Year results to support the program.

Q. Why did you select those KPIs?

The KPIs identified were selected in consultation with Destination BC's Global Marketing team. They were determined to be the most effective for evaluating the progress of marketing activities.

Q. What if my group wants to collect other metrics?

You are welcome to collect and report on any other metrics you feel are relevant to your project.

Q. Is my funding in jeopardy if my interim or final report shows results that are below the industry benchmark?

No. The inclusion of KPIs in the program is as a reference tool; they are not compliance metric under the program. Should any activities you undertake fall below the industry benchmark, this should serve as a point of discussion among the partners as to adjustments that could be made to improve results. You will still be required to submit an interim and final reports as per the terms of the Shared Cost Agreement (contract).

Industry Alignment

We have also added information in the guidelines to reflect ways that Destination BC and partners in the program can work together through activities such as consumer focused asset development, search engine marketing, social media and website tagging.

Brand Alignment

Since the Co-op Program began in 2105, we have worked with many partners on brand alignment opportunities and have had much success. Moving forward, we have identified three tiers of brand alignment that ask industry to identify with. The information on the tiers is found in the guideline document and application form.

Q: Who can apply for this program?

Definitions (from the program guidelines):

- *Community Consortiums*
 - Consortiums (clusters) of three or more eligible Communities.
 - Consortiums should be developed based on a strong unifying theme. Some Consortiums or Communities may already be geographically defined by an existing Destination Marketing Organization (DMO).

- Community definition:
 - Geographic area with a DMO, or where a DMO does not exist, a municipal or village council, or First Nations, or regional district.

- *Individual or Paired Communities*
 - Individual communities or two paired communities and/or Community Destination Marketing Organizations where there is not the opportunity to form Community Consortiums (3 or more). Submitting an application as an Individual or Paired community requires the pre-approval of Destination BC. Please contact program staff to determine if your community is eligible.

- *Tourism Product/Experience Sectors (Sectors)*
 - Province-wide sector associations, societies, or consortiums with representation of province-wide (where it exists) experiential, market-ready tourism product.
 - Sector campaign activities may be open to all sector-related tourism partners, not just members of the sector organization.

Community Examples:

A community is defined as a geographic area with a Destination Marketing Organization (DMO), or where a DMO does not exist, a municipal or village council, or First Nations, or regional district.

Regional Districts:

A regional district can apply on behalf of participating communities in its area. However, there must be a minimum of three communities participating and they must be providing incremental funds for the proposal. In other words, a regional district could not apply with existing marketing funds, but instead must receive new funds from each participating community.

Q: I am an individual business, how do I access this program?

Unfortunately, individual businesses may not apply directly to this program. Individual businesses should look to the sectors, or the communities in which they operate, to determine opportunities for participation. Businesses may also be able to participate in the touring programs offered by their Regional Destination Marketing Organization; details on each region can be found on the organization's website: <http://www.destinationbc.ca/Programs/Regions-Communities-and-Sectors/Regional-Tourism-Programs/Regional-Partners.aspx>

Q: Does each partner need to provide the same amount of funding to participate?

There is no minimum investment required by each partner; therefore partners do not need to contribute equally. However, in the spirit of true collaboration, a reasonable amount from each partner is expected. As an example, the Pemberton, Whistler, and Squamish Mountain Bike program was funded under the VCM Interim Co-op Marketing Program: Tourism Whistler contributed \$15,000; Tourism Squamish contributed \$10,000; and Tourism Pemberton contributed \$2,000. This was a fair contribution arrangement given the size and ability of the respective partners.

NOTE: All communities are expected to participate in the development of the plan and contribute to its collective success. The community with the largest investment cannot take control of the campaign. If the application is for a paired community each community must contribute an equal dollar amount.

Q: Can a community apply as an individual applicant and be part of a consortium or sector application?

If interested parties apply and are accepted as a single community, they may not partner with a consortium on another project. Destination BC encourages tourism partners to seek partnerships with other communities in the province. A single community will be eligible only if there's no opportunity to partner with others. An applicant requires pre-approval from Destination BC to apply as an Individual or Paired Community.

A party can apply as an individual community and also participate in a sector application.

Q: How is the application evaluated?

It is important that all questions are answered, but some sections in the application will be given more weight. The percentages are as follows: Increased tourism revenue in BC (30); Building brand equity (20); Strength of the marketing plan (35); and Ability to execute the program effectively (15).

Q: Why does Destination BC require applicants to participate with sector-specific activities?

Communities and sectors should discuss their applications prior to submission and ensure that their projects complement each other and avoid duplication. Please engage with Destination BC during the application process. When reviewing the applications, Destination BC will provide feedback to applicants where overlaps occur and allow them time to adjust applications.

Q: What are eligible activities under Travel Media Relations?

Travel Media Relations activities will be reviewed to ensure there is no duplication with projects already delivered by Destination BC's Travel Media team. All requests for funds under the Co-op Marketing Partnerships program for Travel Media will be coordinated with the organization's Travel Media Team. An example of eligible costs would include ground costs for hosting media to visit an eligible community. Activities approved under the Co-op Program are not eligible for funding under Destination BC's Visiting Journalist Program.

Q: What are eligible research activities?

Only some research costs are eligible. Applicants requesting funds for a marketing program may have supporting consumer-focused research approved.

Economic impact studies and visitor services research are examples of projects that are not allowed under the program.

Q: What constitutes consumer-focused asset development?

Consumer-focused asset development includes content writing, photography, video development, microsites or consortium landing pages.

Q: Why do you want me to align with the Super, Natural British Columbia® brand?

If all consumer touch points coming from BC share a common thread, we can strengthen the impact of our collective marketing efforts, create a more unified and cohesive look and feel, and build immediate recognition to build a powerful destination brand.

Successful applicants will be asked to align with one of three brand tiers (detailed in the application) and work with specific brand and creative guidelines to achieve alignment.

Q: What if I don't have time or staff to fully implement the activities?

The Co-op Marketing Partnerships program allows a consortium or sector to use up to 15% of Destination BC's funds towards the administration of the program. This can be matched with up to 15% of the Consortium's contribution. Successful applicants can use these funds towards hiring a contractor, or to fund work hours for existing staff.

Q: What level of detail is needed for multi-year applications?

There must be yearly parameters and reporting in order for Destination BC to release the funding.

Q: If we apply for multi-year funding, is the money guaranteed?

Multi-year applications are approved in principle and funding is dispersed annually. All projects will be reviewed against the criteria and funded based on merit and availability of funds.

Q: What if I am interested in other key markets, aside from BC, Alberta and Washington State?

Other markets will be considered, provided the business rationale is discussed with Destination BC and the other markets generate important business for the applicant's area.

Q: What do you mean by "programs that do not carry BC tourism industry operator funds?"

Community consortiums can partner with an organization outside of BC; however, Destination BC will only match funds from BC tourism partners. In these programs, the BC content of the marketing campaign must make up 50% or more of the overall campaign. For example, the Lower Mainland Tourism Alliance (LMTA) culinary campaign with the US-based Amtrak received funding through the 2015/2016 Vancouver, Coast & Mountains' interim cooperative marketing program. Destination BC matched the LMTA's funds, but did not match Amtrak's contribution.

Q: Will the applications be decided on a first-come first-served basis?

No. Applications are reviewed based on merit, quality of the application, available budget and program uptake.

Q: If a sector is not planning on attending any consumer shows, could a consortium apply to do so?

Yes, as long as applicants can show that they have engaged with the sector and that there is no duplication.

Q: Can a community development trust be considered a consortium partner?

Destination BC encourages communities to approach trusts as potential revenue sources for the consortium buy-in. However, a trust will not be considered as one of the three community consortium partners. The intention of the program is to encourage communities to develop partnerships with other communities and not to have funding sources act as one of the partners.

Q: Can a consortium exist over several geographic areas within BC?

Yes. Destination BC encourages such partnerships where the arrangement makes sense.

Q: Why was my application denied total or partial funding?

Applications are assessed based on merit and cross-provincial distribution. To receive funding, proposals must have met all applicable criteria and program guidelines. For information about your specific case, please email Kim.Hood@DestinationBC.ca.

Q: Why did my application receive only partial funding?

In alignment with Destination BC's strategy, marketing funds are to be distributed widely throughout the province at the local level. Due to a high volume of interest in the program and strong applications, funds were distributed to more applications at a partial level in some cases. For information about your specific application, please email Kim.Hood@DestinationBC.ca.

Q: Is this a government grant?

No, this is a co-operative marketing partnership between Destination BC and the applicant. The applicant is required to contribute an amount equal to or exceeding the amount contributed by Destination BC.

Destination BC will require the return of any unspent funds or funds spent on ineligible activities.

Q: My application last year was denied, can I apply again next year?

Yes. We strongly encourage ongoing dialogue among industry partners to find new or expanded partnerships. Please contact program staff to ensure your project meets the criteria and that you are requesting funds for eligible costs.

Q: I would like to join an existing consortium, is this possible?

Yes. We hope many current projects will reapply to the program and expand the opportunity to other communities and businesses. Please contact program staff so we can direct you to the lead contact for an existing consortium.

Q: I received funds from the Co-op Program in Fiscal 2017/2018, am I guaranteed the same funds in the next year?

The Co-operative Marketing Partnership Program is an application-based program. The program will continue to be a competitive process and future proposals will be evaluated on merit. Therefore, budgets should not be based on the assumption of a specific funding level from Destination BC.

Q: Do I need to re-apply every year?

If you submitted and were awarded funds based on a single-year application, you will need to re-apply to the program.

Q: Why do I need to provide interim results to Destination BC in order to receive my next payment?

Interim results give Destination BC insight into the progress of a project to ensure that it remains on schedule and that the maximum return on investment is achieved for the funds spent. It is important to all partners in the project that limited funds are invested wisely and to maximum benefit for all partners. An interim report will allow applicants to evaluate progress and to make changes where necessary in order to achieve success. In addition, this critical information allows Destination BC to make informed decisions in other program areas.

Please see Destination BC's corporate website for information on Key Performance Indicators:
<http://www.destinationbc.ca/Resources/Monitoring-and-Evaluation/Measuring-the-Success-of-Marketing-Activities.aspx>

Q: How do I know what other consortiums and sectors received funding?

A list of successful applicants for Fiscal 2017/2018 can be found on the Destination BC corporate website: <http://www.destinationbc.ca/Programs/Regions-Communities-and-Sectors/Destination-BC-Co-op-Marketing-Program.aspx>