

TOUR OPERATOR PARTNERSHIP PROGRAM 2026-2027





WHAT IS THE TOUR OPERATOR PARTNERSHIP PROGRAM?

Partner with Tourism Nova Scotia (TNS) to promote Nova Scotia travel packages and experiences to travellers through 2027.

The Tour Operator Partnership Program (TOPP) supports tour operators with targeted marketing activities designed to drive awareness and sales of Nova Scotia travel packages.

The program focuses on initiatives that align with TNS's marketing efforts in priority markets with the highest potential for visitation through 2027.

Research indicates a significant share of travellers from the United Kingdom and Germany use a travel agent or tour operator when planning and booking their trips to Canada.

TOPP provides an opportunity to co-invest with Tourism Nova Scotia to increase destination awareness and drive demand from key domestic and international markets.



Halifax Waterfront

HOW DOES IT WORK?

Tour operators are invited to apply by submitting a proposal that outlines the Nova Scotia travel packages they offer and how they plan to promote them.

Successful applicants will receive support in the following areas:

- Market research insights
- Product development and planning
- Support to execute proposed activities

All project costs must be incurred between the date of application approval and March 31, 2027. Successful applicants will work in collaboration with TNS to prioritize and implement approved activities.

ELIGIBLE ACTIVITIES

- Digital marketing (such as social media advertising, search engine marketing, display, and video ads)
- Paid/sponsored content
- Direct mail and print advertising
- Other activities will be considered based on their strategic “alignment” with Nova Scotia’s marketing efforts

INELIGIBLE ACTIVITIES

- Capital costs
- Staff wages
- Website development, management, and hosting
- In-house campaign management fees

Priority will be given to proposals incorporating paid media opportunities.

Projects will be funded on a 50/50 cost-sharing basis, unless otherwise agreed.

TNS’s level of investment will be determined based on product alignment and the tour operator’s ability to convert proposed activities into sales.

Applications will be accepted on a rolling basis until the program budget is fully allocated, or until February 28, 2027, whichever comes first.



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WHO IS ELIGIBLE?

Tour operators based in Nova Scotia, across Canada, or internationally, with a demonstrated ability to sell multi-day Nova Scotia vacation packages to travellers (Fully Independent Traveller (FIT) and/or group) in priority markets.

Eligible partners must be able to collaborate with TNS to develop and promote compelling travel packages that showcase a range of Nova Scotia experiences, including small towns and villages, vibrant cities, and iconic locations such as the Bay of Fundy, Cabot Trail, Peggy's Cove, Lunenburg, and the Halifax waterfront.

Tourism Nova Scotia is dedicated to advancing equity, diversity, inclusion and accessibility (EDIA) in Nova Scotia. We encourage and prioritize applications from underrepresented businesses, organizations, and individuals, as well as those that offer tourism activities that amplify and reflect underrepresented communities, experiences and voices.

APPLICANTS MUST:

- Be in operation for at least one year, with a demonstrated focus on marketing to travellers, including established sales channels, a strong website, and active social media presence.
- Manage the marketing and sales of the tourism package, including all associated costs, operational impacts, required permits and licences, partnership agreements, and any risks or liabilities.
- Obtain TNS approval for all marketing activities prior to distribution.
- Demonstrate ability to sell multi-day package/product and commit to offering it through 2027.
- Be in good standing with the Provincial Registry of Joint Stock Companies (if NS based business).
- Be in good standing with the Department of Communities, Culture, Tourism & Heritage. Previously funded applicants must have provided a final evaluation report approved by TNS.
- Comply with all applicable federal, provincial, and municipal laws and regulations.
- Agree to track and report on project performance, including metrics such as room nights booked, passenger numbers, visitor origin, marketing engagement, and proof of associated costs.



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HOW TO APPLY?

Interested tour operators must submit the following:

- A detailed listing of your Nova Scotia product/packages
- A marketing plan outlining proposed activities, including channels, target markets, audience demographics, and performance targets (e.g., reach, frequency, distribution)
- A detailed project budget, including costs for each activity and disclosure of any additional partnership funding
- An evaluation plan outlining how results will be measured and reported to Tourism Nova Scotia, including agreement to reporting timelines

Submit your proposal by email to the program contact, Natalie Shaw, at Natalie.Shaw@novascotia.ca or a member of our [Market Development Team](#). If you encounter any barriers or need accessibility support during the application process, please contact the program contact at least two weeks before the deadline for assistance.

EVALUATION CRITERIA

Applications will be assessed based on:

- Alignment with Tourism Nova Scotia's strategic priorities and priority markets through 2027.
- Strength and detail of the proposed plan, including:
 - Clearly defined objectives and tactics
 - A comprehensive project budget
 - A robust evaluation approach
- Demonstrated return on investment (potential sales relative to investment)
- Past marketing performance (where applicable)
- Experience developing, marketing, and selling high-quality Nova Scotia travel product/packages
- Company history of sound business practices



ADDITIONAL PROGRAM INFORMATION

Eligibility does not guarantee acceptance into the program. If an application is successful, Tourism Nova Scotia (TNS) may fund some or all of the proposed marketing activities at its discretion. Tourism Nova Scotia reserves the right to determine eligibility and funding decisions at its sole discretion.

All information submitted as part of an application is considered non-proprietary. Tourism Nova Scotia may already be exploring or implementing similar ideas.

Applicants may request feedback on the outcome of their application after a formal decision has been made and communicated in writing.

Successful applicants will be required to enter into a written agreement with Tourism Nova Scotia and deliver on the approved activities as outlined in the contract.

PROGRAM CONTACT

For more information about TOPP or to submit your proposal, please contact a member of our [Market Development Team](#) or:

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