



# ONTARIO MARKET INVESTMENT FUND

## Application Guidebook

All applicants are encouraged to read these guidelines before completing an application form.

# INTRODUCTION

## The Ontario Market Investment Fund

Ontario consumers are increasingly interested in and committed to buying local food. There are varying definitions of what “local” means. It can cover a broad range of activities, from the purchase of Ontario-produced foods at a supermarket to a basket of vegetables bought at a local farmers’ market. But we can all agree that eating more Ontario products is good for everyone. It’s good for farmers, for the environment and good for our economy.

The objective of the Ontario Market Investment Fund is to develop economic opportunities through trade events, marketing campaigns and industry research initiatives that foster partnerships and collaboration for the promotion of Ontario foods.

### How to apply

In order to be considered for funding under the Ontario Market Investment Fund applicants must complete an application form that includes details about the need for the project, its purpose, objectives and benefits and information on performance measurement in the short and longer term.

Applications are accepted on an ongoing basis and may be submitted either online, electronically, by email or in hard copy. Please allow at least eight weeks for the review of your application.

### Who may apply?

The Ontario Market Investment Fund encourages collaboration and partnerships.

Eligible applicants include, but are not limited to;

- Strategic alliances between individuals, businesses, producers, processors, community organizations, including not-for-profit, and/or municipalities
- Agriculture and food industry associations in Ontario, including food retail and food service industry

Individuals or individual businesses are not eligible to apply as sole applicants - they must have at least one co-applicant for an application to be considered.

# ELIGIBLE PROJECTS

The Ontario Market Investment Fund will support innovative market research, communications and/or marketing projects that encourage Ontarians to buy locally-produced foods. Examples of eligible projects include:

## **Market Research**

- projects that will improve the understanding of, and access to, market opportunities for local Ontario foods such as emerging opportunities in developing ethnic markets or consumer demand for region-specific food products.

## **Development of Market Opportunities**

- projects that create local food networks linking farmers, food processors, retailers, institutional food service companies, restaurants, culinary tourism events and consumers to encourage Ontarians to buy locally.

## **Communication Initiatives**

- projects that build capacity and develop skills within local food networks, commodity organizations and other stakeholder groups for the promotion of Ontario foods through marketing campaigns.

## **Consumer or Trade Events**

- culinary tourism events that build new relationships between the food service sector, producers and consumers.



# FUNDING

Projects are cost-shared with the provincial government investing up to 50 per cent of the project's eligible cost. Grants of up to \$100,000 per approved project are available.

Funding from other provincial programs cannot be combined with funding from the Ontario Market Investment Fund. Funding from other levels of governments can be used. *Failure to disclose all funding or possible funding sources may cause the termination of the application or Agreement.*

A project is defined as one specific endeavor to achieve a particular goal. Applicants must complete one project prior to applying for additional project grants. Applicants who re-apply to the Ontario Market Investment Fund for an additional project must show incremental positive change from the previous project.

Eligible expenditures include, but are not limited to:

- Market research designed to increase understanding of consumer and trade channel demands and sector capabilities
- Advertising and promotional materials
- Project management costs related to the delivery of the project

Project payments must be supported by paid eligible invoices; however approved projects may receive a 20 percent initial payment upon signing a Funding Agreement with the Province.

Ineligible expenditures include, but are not limited to:

- In-kind contributions
- Hospitality costs
- Land, buildings and major infrastructure
- Direct wage subsidies for existing staff
- Debt restructuring, fundraising or financing
- Normal or on-going business and operational expenses
- Costs incurred prior to the approved project start date
- Costs incurred in preparing an application

# SELECTION PROCESS

An Industry Panel will review applications on an individual basis and make recommendations to the Minister of Agriculture, Food and Rural Affairs. The panel has wide representation and the members have expertise in food industry, agriculture, business and rural economic development.

Applications are assessed on an individual basis according to their fit with the objective of the program and evaluation criteria that includes:

- Potential to increase consumer awareness of Ontario foods as well as their willingness to buy Ontario foods.
- Demonstrated financial support as evidenced by the ability to raise 50 percent or more of the amount required to complete the proposed project.
- Strength and breadth of the proposed partnership, which can be measured by the inclusion of established and emerging agricultural and food industry groups, retail and/or food service trade channels.
- Demonstrated economic benefit to Ontario.
- Measurement of meaningful performance results.
- Lead applicants must submit all expense claims and a final report prior to submitting a second application.



## SUCCESSFUL PROJECTS

All applicants for approved projects will be required to sign a Funding Agreement with the Province of Ontario. Applicants are strongly advised to review the sample Agreement posted on the Ontario Market Investment Fund website prior to approval and to seek legal counsel regarding the terms and conditions of the Agreement.

All applicants must invest in the project, share in the risks and have a vested interest in completing the project. Applicants must demonstrate their ability to complete the project and carry on needed work after the project is completed. Applicants must establish and present the positive impact the project will have on the awareness and consumption of Ontario produced foods.

All parties signing Agreements with the Province of Ontario are required to have comprehensive general liability insurance with coverage for at least \$2 million per occurrence. This insurance must show the Province (Her Majesty the Queen in right of Ontario) as an additional insured on the policy and contain the endorsements specified by the Agreement and is required throughout the term of the Agreement. A Certificate of Insurance will be required to be submitted to the Ministry prior to the signing of an Agreement.

Municipalities and First Nations are required to submit a Municipal By-law or Band Council Resolution allowing the municipality or the band to enter into an Agreement with the Province of Ontario. All companies and incorporated entities will also be required to provide proof of current status (i.e., certificate of status) and constituting documents (i.e., articles of incorporation or letters patent, etc.) which indicate the full and proper name of the organization as well as the proper signatories to the Agreement.

In the event that your business or organization is not incorporated (i.e., sole proprietorship, unincorporated association, etc.), please be advised that the individual who signs the Agreement on behalf of the business or organization will be assuming personal liability for the project. Moreover, this individual would be subject to all the terms and conditions set forth in the Agreement.

## CONFIDENTIALITY

Application forms and supporting material submitted to the Province of Ontario will be subject to the *Freedom of Information and Protection of Privacy Act*. Any information submitted in confidence should be clearly marked “CONFIDENTIAL” by the applicant.



# YOUR APPLICATION

Check out our website at [www.ontario.ca/omif](http://www.ontario.ca/omif) for information and application forms.

Information and advice on how to develop a project and complete an application is also available from consultants in the regional offices of the Ministry of Agriculture, Food and Rural Affairs. A listing of offices and phone numbers is available on our website.

Applications are accepted on an ongoing basis and may be submitted either online at [www.ontario.ca/omif](http://www.ontario.ca/omif), electronically by email to the Ontario Market Investment Fund at [omif.omafra@ontario.ca](mailto:omif.omafra@ontario.ca) or in hard copy, (one unbound copy) to:

Ontario Market Investment Fund  
Ontario Ministry of Agriculture, Food and Rural Affairs  
1 Stone Road West, 4NW  
Guelph, Ontario N1G 4Y2

**Agricultural Information Contact Centre: 1-877-424-1300**

**E-mail: [omif.omafra@ontario.ca](mailto:omif.omafra@ontario.ca)**

**Northern Ontario Regional Office: 1-800-461-6132**

**[www.ontario.ca/omif](http://www.ontario.ca/omif)**



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