



Experiential Tourism Program

Program Guidelines

What is Experiential Tourism?

Experiential tourism is a form of tourism in which people focus on experiencing a particular place by actively and meaningfully engaging with its history, people, culture, food, and environment. Experiential tourism connects visitors with the essence of a place and its people. It engages guests in a series of memorable travel adventures, revealed over time, which are inherently personal, engage the senses, and make connections on an emotional, physical, spiritual, or intellectual level.

What is the Experiential Tourism Program?

Eastman Tourism Association (ETA) has developed the *Experiential Tourism Program*, a two-phased training program to help build and enhance tourism in Eastern Manitoba.

ETA is seeking unique and authentic experiences that will help make Eastern Manitoba a more sought-after travel destination. Experiences will be thoughtfully created and brought to market over a time span of 1.5 years. Program participants will gain valuable experiential tourism knowledge and a sought-after experience that visitors can enjoy for years to come.

Any tourism business or non-profit agency in Eastern Manitoba with a unique and engaging story to tell should contact Eastman Tourism to see if you have what visitors are looking for.



**FACILITATING EXPERIENCE
DEVELOPMENT
TO ENHANCE TOURISM IN
EASTERN MANITOBA**



Experiential Tourism Program Values

The Experiential Tourism Program builds a **resilient, inclusive** tourism industry in Eastern Manitoba with **sustainability** and **diversity** at the core of our work. Experiential tourism **connects** visitors to a place by actively and meaningfully engaging with its history, people, culture, food, and our natural world. Through our unique coaching process, we believe in **co-creating** a **vibrant** tourism industry with **passionate** entrepreneurs, discovering the **heart** of their tourism experience.

Background

In 2021, ETA delivered a Coach-the-Coaches Program that trained a team of eight *Tourism Experience Development Facilitators* and formed the new *Eastman Tourism Experience Development Team (ETEDT)*. These facilitators work with *Experience Partners* (tourism businesses and non-profit agencies) to support the development of marketable *Tourism Experiences* which can be purchased by visitors to the Eastman Region.

Experiential Tourism Program Process

Twice per year, two experience partners will be selected through scheduled intakes to develop four new tourism experiences per year. Spring intakes will seek applications for experiences suitable for launch in Fall/Winter and Fall intakes will seek applicants for experiences suitable for launch in Spring/Summer.

Priority will be placed on experiences that have the potential to support year-round visitation and meet the types of experiences that visitors are seeking, including culinary, outdoors, heritage, culture, arts, wellness, and Indigenous experiences.

Each selected Experience Partner will be paired with two Tourism Experience Development Facilitators who will provide education, mentorship and support in tourism experience design, delivery, pricing, and marketing.

Experience partners will need to commit the time and resources (financial, human, and material) to prepare their tourism experience for launch within six months. This first phase is referred to as the *Experience Readiness Phase*.

In the Experience Readiness Phase, the Experience Partner learns how to develop a tourism experience and what it takes to be successful. They will learn from information resources, other experiences, and their facilitators. Most importantly, they will learn by doing. Experience Partners will utilize this new knowledge to create a unique tourism experience - a marketable asset and revenue generator for the experience partner.

The experience is well planned out in the Experience Readiness Phase. By the end of this phase, the Experience Partner is ready to promote and launch their new tourism product. At this point, they enter the *Experience Launch Phase*.

In the Experience Launch Phase, Experience Partners work with their facilitators and ETA to prepare for both a soft-launch, and a hard-launch. The *soft launch* includes pilot testing, fine tuning, marketing, and sales preparation. The *hard launch* occurs when the experience is marketed and available for purchase. The hard launch must occur within one year of completing the Experience Readiness Phase.

Providing the Experience Partner successfully completes the Experience Readiness Phase, is market ready, and has adequate resources in place to hard-launch their experience, ETA will provide funding assistance up to \$1,000 to assist with photography and/or videography and developing marketing assets. ETA will coordinate and contract photography and/or videography services for the Experiential Tourism Program.

Who is eligible to apply to the Experiential Tourism Program?

Businesses and non-profit organizations with a visitor/guest focus, and who meet the Experiential Tourism Program Criteria outlined below, are eligible to apply for the Experiential Tourism Program.

Experiential Tourism Program Criteria

To be eligible for the Experiential Tourism Program, the following criteria must be met:

- ❖ Be a business/non-profit registered with the Manitoba Companies Office
- ❖ Have been in operation for at least one year
- ❖ Be physically located in Eastern Manitoba
- ❖ Provide programs/services which target and welcome guests in an inclusive manner
- ❖ Operate legally with relevant licenses, registrations, and certificates (e.g. Food Inspection Certificate, zoning)
- ❖ Carry a minimum of \$2 million general liability insurance
- ❖ Have a website and social media channels
- ❖ Able to take online bookings and payment
- ❖ Have a unique tourism experience idea to highlight and draw visitors to the Eastman Region
- ❖ Will collaborate with Eastman Tourism and other agencies to develop the best experience possible
- ❖ Will incorporate environmentally sustainable practices into developing the experience
- ❖ Will formally launch the experience within one year of completing the Experience Readiness Phase
- ❖ Will attend all training sessions and meetings associated with the Experiential Tourism Program
- ❖ Will invest human, financial, and material resources to develop a unique market ready experience



What is required from the Experience Partner?

Experience Partners must designate a representative to commit to the full program. The full program requires approximately 40 hours spent attending training sessions and meetings (online and in-person), and additional time spent independently planning, completing worksheets and other activities to develop, market, and launch the experience. Dates for each meeting and activity will be determined with program facilitators.

A non-refundable \$1,000 fee is required from the Experience Partner and will be matched by ETA. These funds are invested into photography and/or videography to ensure marketing assets are developed in a consistently high quality, and to bring the experiences to market in the Experience Launch Phase.

Experience Partners will incur additional costs such as purchasing materials and supplies required to launch the experience; expenses will vary by experience. Marketing opportunities outside the scope of the program may arise, which Experience Partners can choose to participate in at their own discretion and expense. All expenses will be calculated and budgeted in the financial planning portion of the program.

How do Experience Partners benefit from the Experiential Tourism Program?

The Experiential Tourism Program is a mutually beneficial partnership with unlimited value. Experience Partners benefit from the support and expertise provided by Experience Facilitators through each step of the program. Knowledge, skills, and tools will be learned and used to develop tourism experiences as revenue generating assets within the business offerings of the Experience Partner.

Eastman Tourism will help to market the new tourism experiences and use them as models which promote Eastman as a vibrant and sustainable tourism destination. Each experience will become part of the growing suite of experiential tourism products that ETA will collectively market on an ongoing basis.

ETA Collaborative Marketing Activities Include:

- ❖ Representation on Tourism Experiences landing pages on the Eastman Tourism website
- ❖ Collaboration with Travel Manitoba, Destination Marketing Organizations, media sources and other agencies to further promote experiences
- ❖ Inclusion in ETA's marketing including print media, digital media, influencer visits, trade shows, etc.



Resources gained from this program are valued between \$10,000-\$15,000, and include:

- ❖ A toolkit of experience development information, worksheets, and templates, with related training
- ❖ Experiential Tourism development expertise from trained Facilitators
- ❖ Guidance, feedback, and evaluations throughout the program and prior to the experience launch
- ❖ Business development support and referrals to business development support agencies as required
- ❖ Funding of \$1,000 from ETA for photography and/or videography to develop marketing assets
- ❖ Contracts and connections to professional photography, videography, graphic design, branding services
- ❖ Connections to regional and provincial destination marketing organizations, influencers, earned media
- ❖ Business exposure through collaborative marketing efforts and inclusion in ETA marketing channels
- ❖ Creation of a marketable tourism asset to drive revenues and generate profits for your business

What are the application deadlines?

Applications for bi-annual intakes must be received by 11:59pm on the following dates:

- ❖ April 15 – Fall and Winter Experiences to be launched by November of the following year
- ❖ October 15 – Spring and Summer Experiences to be launched by May of the following year

Are you interested in being an Experience Partner?

Express your interest in becoming a partner by completing the [online application](#) or using your smart phone, take a picture of this QR code and it will take you directly there.



What happens after I apply?

Following the application deadline, the Selection Committee will review each application. If required, online interviews may be completed with each applicant. Two successful applicants will be selected per intake.

Applicants will be notified of their status by email or phone call no later than one month after the application deadline. Applicants who are not selected will be provided complimentary feedback and resources to strengthen their application and are encouraged to reapply in a subsequent intake.

Successful applicants will be required to pay a non-refundable \$1,000 fee prior to the start of the Experiential Tourism Program training.

Please submit your application to Jenny Dupas, Executive Director, Eastman Tourism Association
admin@eastmantourism.ca | P.O. Box 248, Whitemouth, MB, R0E 2G0 | 204-451-1757