

Eligibility & Selection Criteria

The Canadian Tourism Commission (CTC) is Canada's national tourism marketing organization. We promote Canada in 11 countries internationally to increase the market potential of every tourism business in Canada, large and small.

Because it's never been more important to stand out in the marketplace, the CTC is building a collection of travel experiences that will be used to show the world what Canada is all about. We're looking for experiences that can deliver what our research tells us our priority consumers are seeking when they select a vacation destination.

Tourism businesses that deliver these engaging experiences are being invited to apply to become part of this collection. The CTC's marketing and sales teams will draw on this collection of *Signature Experiences* to capture the attention and imagination of consumers around the world, and to entice them to visit Canada now. These campaigns use the very best approaches like social media, travel media relations and web marketing. In essence, the experiences on this list will be showcased as celebrated ambassadors of Canada's tourism brand.

Eligibility

Only Canadian-based tourism businesses are eligible to apply. The application process is open to both private-sector companies and public-sector organizations that offer travel experiences. All members of the program must meet the following eligibility criteria.

A *Signature Experience* applicant must:

1. Be in business for at least three years.
2. Be the owner, provider and deliverer of the experience. Tourism businesses that repackage or resell another company's experiences are not eligible to apply.
3. Must actively market* in one or more of the CTC's primary international markets or must be planning to enter and invest in one or more of these same markets within the next two years. These markets include the United Kingdom, France, Germany, Australia, Japan, South Korea, China, the United States, Mexico, Brazil and India.

* "Actively market" means, as a company, directly making marketing investments in the CTC's international markets or in partnership/association with a provincial tourism marketing organization and/or a local destination marketing organization.

Selection Criteria

The CTC has established selection criteria. Applicants must:

- Sell an “experience.”
- Meet international demand.
- Practice a high standard of international marketing.

You sell an ‘experience.’

A *Signature Experience* is an exceptional travel experience offered by a Canadian-based tourism operator. The CTC has already identified a number of experiences for membership in the Collection. Businesses like Sonora Resort in British Columbia, Sucrerie de la Montagne in Quebec, Tranquility Cove Adventures on Prince Edward Island and Inniskillin Winery in Ontario offer the types of immersive, hands-on and unique *Signature Experiences* that today’s travellers are looking for.

Specifically, a *Signature Experience* must fulfill most of the following requirements:

- Be authentic (a celebration of what is unique about Canada). *Signature Experiences* reflect a genuine, accurate, correct and truthful representation of Canada’s nature, people and/or culture and are duly and reliably delivered by the experience provider.
- Engage a variety of senses.
- Engage international travellers in an immersive way with Canada’s renowned nature.
- Offer opportunities to experience and learn about our Canadian culture, history, cuisine and vibrant cities.
- Enable visitors to engage and connect in immersive and meaningful ways with Canadians as a people.

You meet international demand.

Applicants must be in the business of selling what CTC target consumers are looking for. The CTC will determine your “market fit” based on a wealth of business intelligence. To start, we’ll be looking to see if your experience falls under one or more of Canada’s unique selling propositions. These are the five experience categories that make Canada different and unique: vibrant cities on the edge of nature; personal journeys by land, water and air; active adventure among awe-inspiring natural wonders; award-winning Canadian local cuisine; and connecting with Canadians.

We’ll also evaluate your experience against Explorer Quotient™ (EQ), our market segmentation research tool. As Canada’s national tourism marketer, it’s our job to know everything we can about Canada’s most valuable customers. To do that, we’ve had to go beyond traditional market research to find out exactly why different types of people seek out entirely different types of travel experiences. EQ tells us what our customers are like and what they want to do when they come to Canada.

Visit www.canada.travel/toolkits and click 'EQ Toolkit' to learn more about how EQ can help your business or experience.

You practice a high standard of international marketing.

We're looking for businesses that know what it takes to market to an international audience. The program will give businesses that qualify a chance to reach key international consumers by way of CTC campaigns, which cover 11 markets and include the very best approaches like social media, travel-media relations and web marketing. The experiences on this list will also be showcased as celebrated ambassadors of Canada's tourism brand.

Signature Experiences Collection candidates should meet as many of these points as possible:

- Have a functional website.
- Use high-resolution, experiential imagery and descriptive writing that evoke reader interest and emotion.
- Have rights-free, high-resolution images available for promotional and editorial use.
- Make use of video to allow visitors to better understand the travel offering and/or geographic area being visited.
- Be willing to host and provide in-kind support to international media and/or trade familiarization tours.
- Leverage social-media channels as part of an integrated marketing plan to attract international visitors.
- Execute an internationally focused marketing plan and/or be an active member and marketing partner with local, regional and/or provincial marketing agencies that are engaged in international marketing.
- Demonstrate a commitment to enter and stay in at least one of the CTC's core international markets (UK, Germany, France, USA and Australia) for a minimum of three years.
- Have the ability/willingness to adapt to the needs of overseas clients.
- Understand the roles played by receptive tour operators, tour operators, travel wholesalers and retail travel agents, as well as retail pricing, agent commissions and wholesale net rates at each level.