

Backgrounder

Travellers around the world are telling us that they want to explore and live a life that's less ordinary. We've promised these travellers that our country is the place where they can fulfill this dream. Canada's tourism operators are key to delivering on that promise.

The Program

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 called the *Signature Experiences Collection*® (SEC) 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 experiences to capture the attention and imagination of consumers around the world, and to entice them to visit Canada now. The tourism industry's response to the program has been overwhelmingly positive. We have welcomed 163 experiences from across the country into the collection since the program started in 2011. Our winter 2012 intake begins November 15th and ends December 15th. The list of current SEC members is always available at www.canada.travel/SEC.

The CTC is calling on the tourism industry and its leaders to keep helping us discover those extraordinary experiences that will intrigue international travellers and entice them to pick Canada over the competition. We're asking destination marketing organizations across the country to let their local tourism industry know about the program and to encourage high potential businesses in their area to apply at www.canada.travel/SEC.

Member Benefits

Experiences in the SEC are helping Canada win more international travel business, which is the biggest benefit of the program. Of course, there are also marketing benefits for tourism businesses that work to include themselves in the SEC. The program will give tourism businesses that qualify (based on the program criteria) a chance to reach key international audiences by way of CTC marketing, media and sales campaigns that cover 11 markets. These campaigns use the very best approaches like social media, travel media relations and web marketing.

So far, promotion of Signature Experiences in the CTC's media, marketing and sales channels has been extensive. The program has been launched to media and trade in all of the CTC's priority markets. Extensive effort has been put into creating Website content for the experiences on the CTC's consumer Websites, and Signature Experiences are featured throughout the CTC's global platform marketing creative. These are just a few examples of the exposure that tourism businesses will see for their experience as part of being in the collection.

How to Apply

Businesses that want to become part of the collection need to apply. But before you do, be sure you take advantage of the free marketing tools that are available, like our **Brand Toolkit**, our **Experiences Toolkit** and our **Explorer Quotient® (EQ) Toolkit**. Failure to demonstrate that they sell an actual “experience” and low marketing knowledge are the most common reasons that tourism businesses are denied entry into the collection. Applicants that take the time use these toolkits and complete a quality application improve their chances of being selected.

Once your application is submitted, an expert panel will then review your submission to see if it meets the criteria for membership. Not all applicants will be accepted.

For answers to your questions or to read the selection criteria, application process and online application form visit www.canada.travel/SEC.