

Virtual Museum of Canada (VMC) Investment Programs

Virtual Exhibits Program Guidelines

**Deadline for Proposal Submission –
December 15, 2009, 5 p.m. Eastern Time**

Canadian Heritage Information Network (CHIN)

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La version française de ce document est également disponible.

TABLE OF CONTENTS

PROGRAM OVERVIEW	3
ELIGIBILITY	4
EVALUATION PROCESS	5
VMC Editorial Board	5
Evaluation Criteria	6
VIRTUAL EXHIBITS INVESTMENT SPECIFICATIONS	12
Eligible Costs	12
Non-eligible Costs	13
RENEWAL OF INVESTMENT PROGRAM FUNDED PRODUCTS	14
ANNEX A - INVESTMENT BY MUSEUMS	15
ANNEX B - GUIDELINES FOR CALCULATING COSTS/VALUES	16
Translation	16
Intellectual Property Credit	16
Marketing Credit	17

PROGRAM OVERVIEW

The mission of the Virtual Museum of Canada (VMC) is to engage audiences of all ages in Canada's diverse heritage through a dynamic Internet service freely available to the public in French and English.

Calls for proposals for the Virtual Exhibits Investment Program are held once each year. The proposals are evaluated on a competitive basis and contracts are awarded to those that are successful.

All proposals must be submitted using the on-line proposal form, available on the CHIN Web site, by the deadline specified for each call, and are evaluated by an editorial board.

All participants must use the Learning Object Input Tool (an online Web application available from CHIN web site in the Investment Program section) for the creation of learning object collections relating to their production. Institutions must also create a related lesson plan using the learning object collection. For additional information be sure to consult the FAQ section on the Virtual Exhibits Investment Program.

Online products that receive investment from the Virtual Exhibits Investment Program must be available in both English and French, for a period of five years following the launch of the product.

ELIGIBILITY

CHIN considers contracts with:

- public, not-for-profit museums¹ that have demonstrated their commitment to work collaboratively with colleagues across the country by becoming Contributing or Basic Members² of the Canadian Heritage Information Network; and
- organizations that have an ongoing role in representing museums or managing several institutions (e.g., provincial museum associations, Heritage Branches in certain provinces), are associate members of CHIN, and that are making proposals on behalf of multiple museums.

While institutions may submit more than one proposal for consideration in response to a given call for proposals, the VMC does not invest in more than one production at a time from any institution. As well, if an institution is working on a VMC production, new proposals from that institution are ineligible for consideration by the VMC Editorial Board until the production is launched.

Institutions that are recipients of prior investment from CHIN are eligible only if they are in compliance with, and abide by, all terms and conditions, including all reporting requirements, in agreements previously signed with CHIN.

¹ not-for-profit permanent establishments, exempt from federal and provincial government income taxes, open to the public and administered in the public interest, for the primary purpose of conserving and preserving, studying, interpreting, assembling and exhibiting to the public, for its instruction and enjoyment, objects and specimens of educational and cultural value, including artistic, scientific (whether animate or inanimate), historical, and technological material. Museums thus defined include art galleries, art exhibit centres, botanical gardens, zoological parks, aquaria, planetaria, historical society museums and historical houses, preservation projects, and sites which meet the requirements set forth in the preceding sentence.

² CHIN members are those who have met their contractual obligations, including regularly updating their Museums & Events information.

EVALUATION PROCESS

Proposals for VMC investment greatly exceed the program's budget in any given round.

The VMC Investment Program staff assess all eligible proposals to ensure compliance with VMC requirements including the mandatory criteria identified below. Proposals that do not meet the mandatory criteria are immediately eliminated from consideration. The VMC Secretariat then prepares summary information of all remaining proposals to assist the VMC Editorial Board in its evaluation process.

The VMC Editorial Board's evaluation process includes individual assessments and group discussion. A decision regarding the proposals that are recommended for VMC investment is made at the annual VMC Editorial Board meeting.

The evaluation process spans approximately four months from beginning to end, including the VMC Editorial Board meeting.

VMC Editorial Board

The role of the VMC Editorial Board includes the evaluation of proposals submitted to the Virtual Exhibits Investment Program, taking into account the desired program outcomes, the Virtual Museum of Canada operating principles and content policy, and the specific criteria that are set out below. The Board provides recommendations to the Director General of CHIN with respect to the proposals in which the VMC should invest.

CHIN executes contracts with museums to carry out the proposed productions as soon as the recommendations have been received from the Editorial Board. For reasons of public accountability, CHIN reserves the right to reject Editorial Board recommendations.

The VMC Editorial Board is composed of:

- A chairperson;
- 10-12 members representing diverse expertise (representatives from the museum community, as well as representatives from other relevant sectors (e.g. education, publishing, broadcasting, new media)).

A full list of members is available on the CHIN Web site at the following URL:
http://www.chin.gc.ca/English/Members/Vmc_Investment_Program/editorial_board.html.

Evaluation Criteria

The criteria identified below are considered in the evaluation process. Certain criteria are mandatory; others represent factors that are taken into account as the Editorial Board selects among competing proposals. The Board reserves the right to refine the criteria as the Program evolves.

Even though content is located on Web sites across the country, the VMC is being presented to the public as a collective entity. Proposals are therefore evaluated not only on their own merits but also within the overall context of other existing and proposed content to ensure balance among disciplines and themes, approaches to the presentation of content, and target audiences.

Mandatory Criteria

General

Proposals must include details for the creation of the following online products as a cohesive production on the same subject or topic:

- An exhibit (or game)
- A learning object collection (consisting of no less than **5** learning objects)
- A lesson plan

Any proposal which does not include all of the above components will be removed from further consideration.

All products must be created in both official languages and be available for a period of five years following their launch. Any proposal which does not include evidence of measures to meet these obligations may be eliminated from further consideration.

Specific

- Clearly identified target audience(s) for the proposed content.
 - Specific measures to conduct audience evaluations during the development of the online production.
 - A comprehensive production plan which covers the development of the entire product (i.e. exhibit or game, associated learning object collection and associated lesson plan) and which identifies the duration of each activity.
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- Contribution to the project by the institution and its partners. Note: this contribution does not need to be financial. See [Annex A Investment by Museums](#) for examples.
- Direct involvement of an accredited educational expert during the development of the learning object collection and lesson plan(s).
- Each learning object must contain:
 - a minimum of at least one digital asset;
 - at least one learning objective; and,
 - clearly identified curricular linkages.
- Lesson plan(s) must directly involve the use of the learning object collection identified within the same proposal.

Rated Criteria

Primary Criterion

- Demonstrates a dynamic exploration of Canada's diverse heritage in ways that encourage enjoyment and learning. - 30 points maximum

Very well – 30 points:

- A topic that would appeal to a broad spectrum of Canadians that presents little known information.
- A topic that is worthy of wider dissemination. This would include subject matter related to school curricula, significant historical events, tourism, and current events or issues.
- Treatment and organization of the content that is appropriate to the identified target audience. The proposal demonstrates a creative/original approach to presenting the subject matter. That is to say that the proposed product involves the generation of new ideas or concepts, or new associations with museum content that represents a theme/concept or topic in a new and novel way.
- Demonstrates a dynamic exploration of Canada's diverse heritage in ways that encourage enjoyment and learning
- Audience engagement is a key element of the concept through both interactive and social media elements

Well – 20 points:

- A topic that would appeal to a wide spectrum of Canadians. This would include subject matter related to school curricula, significant historical events, tourism, and current events or issues.

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- Content provided comes from a variety of sources, images, text, audio and video.
 - Treatment and organization of the content is appropriate to the target audience identified and demonstrates some creativity in approach. Audience engagement is encouraged.
 - Demonstrates a dynamic exploration of Canada's diverse heritage in ways that encourage enjoyment and learning

Somewhat – 10 points:

- A topic of some relevance to a broad spectrum of Canadians; Treatment and organization of the content demonstrates little creativity or means for audience engagement.

Not at all – 0 points:

- A topic of very little appeal or relevance to a broad spectrum of Canadians; Proposed treatment and organization of the content is uninspired.

Secondary Criteria

- Exploits the digital medium to create experiences that are not feasible in physical space or analogue media (e.g., through presentation techniques; or, through assembling collections that do not co-exist in physical space). - 20 points maximum

Very well – 20 points:

- Production clearly supports and enhances the identified communication objectives.
- The specific technologies to be used are clearly identified, as well as how they will be used to enhance the presentation of the content and the overall user experience to the extent that it will stimulate users to respond to the content.
- Production presents objects in a manner which is not feasible in physical space using technologies that are adapted to the subject matter (GPS, spatial data).

Well – 15 points:

- Production supports the identified communication objectives.
- The technologies to be used are identified in general terms and a high level description of their use in the presentation of the content is provided.
- Production presents objects in a manner which is not feasible in physical space using technologies.

Somewhat – 5 points:

- Production somewhat supports the identified communication objectives, although the technologies to be used and their application to enhance the presentation of the content and the overall user experience with the content is not clearly presented.
- Production does not clearly indicate that it will present objects in a manner which is not feasible in physical space.

Not at all – 0 points:

- Production does not clearly support or enhance the identified communication objectives. Identification and application of specific technologies are not clear as to how they will enhance the presentation of the content or the overall user experience, in such a way as to stimulate users to respond to the content.
- Production does not present objects in a manner which is not feasible in physical space.

- Provides value for money.
N.B. The ceiling for investment is \$400,000, **including GST/HST** - 25 points maximum

A concept associated with a comparison of the investment against the value of the output and a qualitative and quantitative judgment over the manner in which the resources involved have been utilized and managed.

Very well – 25 points:

- The proposal offers a high ratio of contributions in terms of content and design elements from the lead institution, partners and participants in relation to the investment requested.
- Contributions include most of the following: staff time and expertise, copyrighted materials, artefact/specimen related information, research and writing, as well as the management, coordination and marketing associated with the project and outreach activities.
- Resources have been allocated to most aspects of the project including quality control for both technical and content aspects of the product in both official languages.
- Production provides skills development and capacity building opportunities for the institution.

Well – 20 points:

- The proposal demonstrates a moderate ratio of contributions in terms of content and design elements from the lead institution, partners and participants in relation to the investment requested.
- Contributions include a few of the following: staff time and expertise, copyrighted materials, artefact/specimen related information, as well as the management, coordination and marketing associated with the project.
- Resources have been allocated to aspects of the project including quality control for both technical and content aspects of the product in both official languages.
- Production provides skills development or capacity building opportunities for the institution

Somewhat – 15 points:

- The proposal demonstrates a low ratio of contributions in terms of content and design elements from the lead institution, partners and participants in relation to the investment requested.
- Contributions in only one or two of the following: staff time and expertise, copyrighted materials, artefact/specimen related information, as well as management, coordination and marketing associated with the project.
- Resources have not been allocated to certain aspects of the project including quality control for both technical and content aspects of the product in both languages.

Not at all – 0 points:

- The budget for the proposed product is not in keeping with the perceived value of the finished product in terms of content sources and design elements.
- The ratio for management/operating costs is high in relation to low investment on the part of the lead institution and its partners.

- Involve partnerships³ with other public and private organizations for content development, educational expertise, and/or technical expertise. - 10 points maximum

For the purposes of the VMC Virtual Exhibits Program, partnership is defined as meaning shared risk and ownership, through contribution of expertise and/or collections.

Very well – 10 points:

- Production involves two or more museums and/or organizations as partners contributing content and/or expertise, as well as direct involvement in the development of the overall production, which expands and enhances the breadth, depth and credibility of the content.

Well – 7 points:

- Production involves two or more museums and/or organizations as partners contributing content and/or expertise which expands and/or enhances the breadth and depth of the content.

Somewhat – 3 points:

- Production involves one museum and/or organization as a partner contributing content and/or expertise which expands and/or enhances the breadth and depth of the content.

Not at all – 0 points:

- Production involves no other museums and/or organizations as partners.

³ All partners must commit to their participation by means of a signed partnership letter, which must clearly specify what the partner will be contributing to the project. The signed partnership letter will:

- establish the duration of the partnership;
- confirm the amount of any cash contribution;
- describe any in-kind support and confirm its value;
- identify the specific content/collection(s) that they are providing access to and/or explain the expertise or services that will be provided.

NOTE: For the purposes of the VMC Virtual Exhibits Program, partnership is defined as meaning shared risk and ownership, through contribution of expertise and/or collections.

- Proposed learning object collection and lesson plan(s) contain clearly identified curriculum to which the learning objects relate, as well as, clearly defined learning objectives. - 10 points maximum

Very well – 10 points:

- Curriculum related to the proposed learning object collection and lesson plan is clearly identified (age ranges, subjects, provinces).
- The learning objectives are clearly stated and include reference to the educational outcomes.
- Description clearly identifies the type and number of digital assets to be included in the learning object collection.
- Learning object collection and lesson plan apply to one or more provinces.

Well – 7 points:

- Curriculum related to the proposed learning object collection is identified but not detailed and may be missing elements (ranges, subjects, provinces).
- The learning objectives are stated.
- Description identifies the type of digital assets to be included, but not necessarily the number to be included in the learning object collection.
- Learning object collection and lesson plan apply to one province.

Somewhat – 3 points:

- Curriculum related to the proposed learning object collection is identified in very general terms but lacks specificity (no ranges, subjects, provinces identified).
- The learning objectives are not clear.
- Type and number of digital assets is not clearly indicated.

Not at all – 0 points:

- Information provided is too general or insufficient in clarity to determine the exact curriculum to which the learning object collection and lesson plan relate.
- Little or no detail about learning objectives provided.
- Number and type of digital assets is not detailed or missing.

- Involve youth in the creation of content. - 5 points maximum

Very well – 5 points:

- Production involves youth in an active role in the conceptual and technical development of the production, as well as in a passive role (focus groups).

Well – 3 points:

- Production involves youth in an active role in the conceptual or technical development of the production, as well as in passive role (focus groups).

Somewhat – 1 point:

- Production involves youth in a passive role only (focus groups).

Not at all – 0 points:

- No youth involvement.

VIRTUAL EXHIBITS INVESTMENT SPECIFICATIONS

A ceiling of \$400,000 including GST/HST has been identified for Virtual Exhibit Investment Program productions. Productions are evaluated on their merits of all components (exhibit/game, learning object collection and lesson plan) and in the context of other proposals.

All museums, including the lead institution and its partners, that receive financial benefit through a contract, must be CHIN members.

Certain technical specifications have been defined for VMC products. These are an integral part of the contract for a successful proposal and will affect the cost of developing a VMC production.

A sample contract is available on the CHIN Web site:

http://www.chin.gc.ca/English/Members/Vmc_Investment_Program/agreements.html.

Eligible Costs

In calculating proposed VMC investment in content development productions, member organizations may include costs related to the following areas:

- research and preparation to develop and present content;
- educational expertise costs (salary or contract costs);
- coordination costs;
- salary or contract costs directly associated with the creation of content specifically for the VMC;
- evaluation(s) involving identified target audiences;
- digitization expenses including rights clearance and documentation;
- multi-media development costs;
- development costs for compliance with W3C Web Content Accessibility Guidelines (salary or contract costs);
- payments to artists or other copyright holders for the use of their works;
- translation of content into the other official language and/or verification of translations (see [Annex B](#) for guidance on estimating translation costs);
- translation into additional languages may be eligible depending on the project;

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- software or hardware (e.g., digital scanners) that is directly related to the production of content for the VMC;
 - training or skills development that is directly related to the production of content for the VMC and that will provide longer-term benefit to the organization;
 - up-front costs to cover the establishment of moderation functionalities within a proposed production as directly relates to social technologies (such as blogs and wikis) which are used to enhance the visitor experience with the content of the proposed production;
 - travel costs where these are shown to be essential to the realization of the project;
 - costs incurred by other organizations who partner with member museums in content proposals may be eligible where the costs are shown to be directly related to the development of content for the VMC.

Other proposed costs are considered on their merits in the context of specific proposals. The primary criterion is whether costs are directly related and essential to the on-line production.

Non-eligible Costs

The VMC does not invest in costs related to the following areas:

- digitization projects without contextualization of material;
- establishing Web sites. Note: CHIN will offer hosting services to museums unable to host their own content (Hosting / Internet Service Provider);
- automating collections management records;
- computers, external hard drives, memory cards and servers;
- printers;
- CD-Burner;
- ancillary materials (e.g. CDs, DVDs);
- ongoing costs to maintain moderation of social technologies (such as blogs and wikis) in products following their launch;
- marketing and promotional expenses (including: Communications personnel);
- printed materials such as complementary educational materials (e.g. Teacher's kits);
- contingency, unexplained miscellaneous or overhead costs;
- Intellectual Property credit;

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- creation of new artwork (not including Web graphics);
 - office space rental;
 - Web site maintenance;
 - Internet connection (since CHIN provides this to members);
 - search engine registration;
 - domain name registration.

RENEWAL OF INVESTMENT PROGRAM FUNDED PRODUCTS

The VMC will consider reinvesting in products every five years, at the time of their contract renewal. This investment is intended for products in which there is an interest in making minor updates to the content or the technical functionality of the production (a ceiling of \$25,000, plus GST/HST, applies).

For major updates to existing productions in which the VMC has previously invested, a new proposal must be submitted for review by the VMC Editorial Board during a Call for Proposals period.

ANNEX A - INVESTMENT BY MUSEUMS

Institutions proposing that the VMC invest in their proposals are expected to demonstrate other investment. There is no fixed minimum for this investment; nor does it need to be direct financial contribution. Investment by museums that is acknowledged as valid includes:

- the value of staff, volunteer or other partner time dedicated to the realization of the project (provided that these costs have not been included in the proposal for investment by the VMC);
- the value of the intellectual property being made available to the public without charge in the on-line project. (Note: this in no way implies transfer of ownership of intellectual property or exclusive use; the value assigned represents the fees that might have been paid had the information elements included in the resources been licensed to the VMC). Guidance concerning the formula to be used in calculating the value of the investment is provided in [Annex B](#);
- the value of promotion of the project through museum newsletters, brochures or other promotional activities. To be eligible, the promotion must clearly identify the project as part of the VMC. Guidance concerning the formula to be used in calculating the value of the investment is provided in [Annex B](#);
- the value of in-kind contributions (e.g., equipment and services) by external partners;
- direct financial investment in the project by the museum or other partners/sources.

ANNEX B - GUIDELINES FOR CALCULATING COSTS/VALUES

Translation

Depending on the translator, fees may be established on an hourly or per-word basis. For the verification of a translation, an hourly rate would be more normal. It should be noted that the speed and accuracy of translation is directly affected by the quality of writing in the original language. It may therefore be cost-effective to have the original version reviewed by an editor prior to translation. Similarly, a poor translation will require more time and effort in a verification phase. All estimates, therefore, should be treated as approximations.

Hourly rates: approximately \$75.00 (estimated number of words per hour for translation: 210; estimated number of words per hour for verification: 500).

Per word: approximately thirty cents (\$0.30). (Please note that translation is required for all text including the text incorporated into the interface, alt tags, audio and video transcripts, etc.)

When calculating the translation cost keep in mind that with on-line content there are additional elements to translate such as navigational text, alt tags and audio and video transcripts.

Intellectual Property Credit

As part of their investment in a production, institutions may claim credit for the value of the intellectual property, which they are making freely available to the public. The following formulas for calculating amounts for which credit can be claimed are based on average commercial transactions. Please note that these formulas are not intended as guidelines for institutional negotiations with third parties to acquire rights from others. In such cases, rates negotiated with collective societies or individual rights holders should prevail.

For images, the formula is based on the average licensing fee paid by multimedia developers for the use of an image in a multimedia product with worldwide distribution. For textual information, the formula is based on an average fee paid to independent writers plus the CanCopy fee for transmission/reproduction rights for the Internet. Formulas for audio and video clips are loosely based on average commercial licensing fees, acknowledging that rates for Internet use vary widely.

- Images: \$150 x estimated number of images to be included in the product
- Textual material: \$375.10 per 500 words estimated for product
- Audio clips: \$8.30 per minute
- Video clips: \$30 per second

Marketing Credit

Although the VMC does not invest in costs related to marketing, member museums may receive recognition for the value of their efforts to promote their VMC content or the VMC in the form of a marketing credit. This credit should be included in the proposal budget as part of the investment contributions (in-kind and/or financial) from the lead institution and any partners or participants.

In order to receive recognition for this contribution to the project, details about planned communication activities must be included in the proposal. Eligible activities must mention the VMC, as well as the specific content, where appropriate. The VMC logo must occupy 25% of the total space on promotional materials.

The following marketing activities related to the proposed product are eligible for a marketing credit:

- Launch activities (ceremony, reception, etc.)
- Press releases, newsletters
- Media publicity campaign
- Creation of posters, brochures, flyers, bookmarks or publications (including any mailing costs)
- Development of promotional items
- Presentation concerning VMC content to schools, meetings of museum members, visitors or other groups.

Other marketing efforts may also be credited.