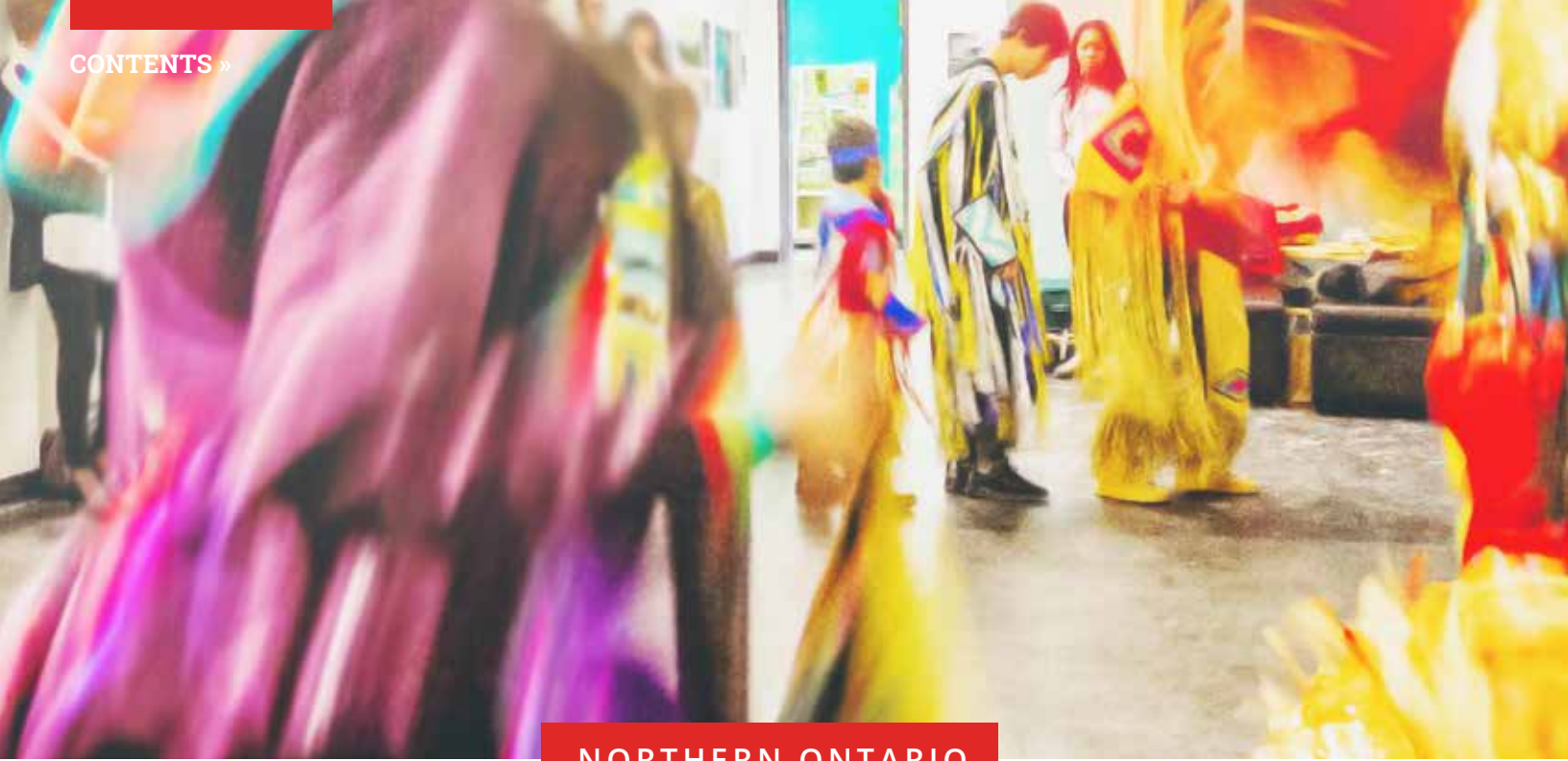


INDIGENOUS TOURISM

NORTHERN ONTARIO INDIGENOUS TOURISM IMPLEMENTATION PLAN

A partnership implementation plan for Indigenous
Tourism Ontario and Destination Northern Ontario.





NORTHERN ONTARIO

Indigenous Tourism Implementation Plan

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Prepared by Destination Northern Ontario
and Indigenous Tourism Ontario Staff | March 2020





Photo: Destination Northern Ontario



Vision

Northern Ontario will be a unique and distinctive tourism destination wherein high-quality products and experiences resonate with consumers, entrepreneurship is valued, and tourism provides local, regional and global connections for the entire region.

Mission Statement

In partnership with industry, Destination Northern Ontario (DNO) seeks to increase tourism, build tourism capacity and advocate on behalf of Northern Ontario tourism.



Vision

To assist Indigenous communities and entrepreneurs with programs that build capacity to produce high quality products and services. Our success will be guided by the positive impact on our people, the environment and the economy. For our welcomed visitors and tourists, we will ensure that our products and services provide a meaningful and memorable Indigenous experience.

Background

In 2015, supported by the Ministry of Heritage, Sport, Tourism and Culture Industries (MHTCSI), Indigenous Tourism Ontario (ITO – then Aboriginal Tourism Ontario) created its Five-Year 2020 Strategic Plan, outlining the organization's goals which included: developing operational sustainability and brand integrity, building capacity and increasing economic opportunities, marketing and branding authentic Indigenous products and services, and providing support for communities and entrepreneurs.

In 2019, the Conference Board of Canada and the Indigenous Tourism Association of Canada (ITAC) reported that Indigenous tourism in Ontario contributes over \$622M to Canada's GDP. This is substantially higher than any other province, totalling 34% of the national GDP contribution for Indigenous tourism. In addition, Ontario's Indigenous tourism industry contributes over 10,750 full-year jobs to the economy, which accounts for 34% of all Indigenous tourism jobs in Canada.

In light of this, ITO commissioned its 2019 Research Report with the goal of working to develop an Action Plan to support Indigenous communities to better leverage tourism and cultural assets to advance economic development opportunities. The outcome of this research report is to provide concrete action items and strategies for supporting and growing Indigenous tourism in the province, based on sound primary and secondary research conducted on behalf of ITO.

The objectives of the 2019 Research Study were as follows:

- 01 **Improve** Ontario's understanding of the Indigenous tourism landscape
- 02 **Examine** and evaluate the success of other jurisdictions and assess their applicability in Ontario
- 03 **Support** Indigenous communities in identifying opportunities to better align their tourism and cultural assets with economic opportunities
- 04 **Inform** Ontario's policy approach to supporting Indigenous economic development

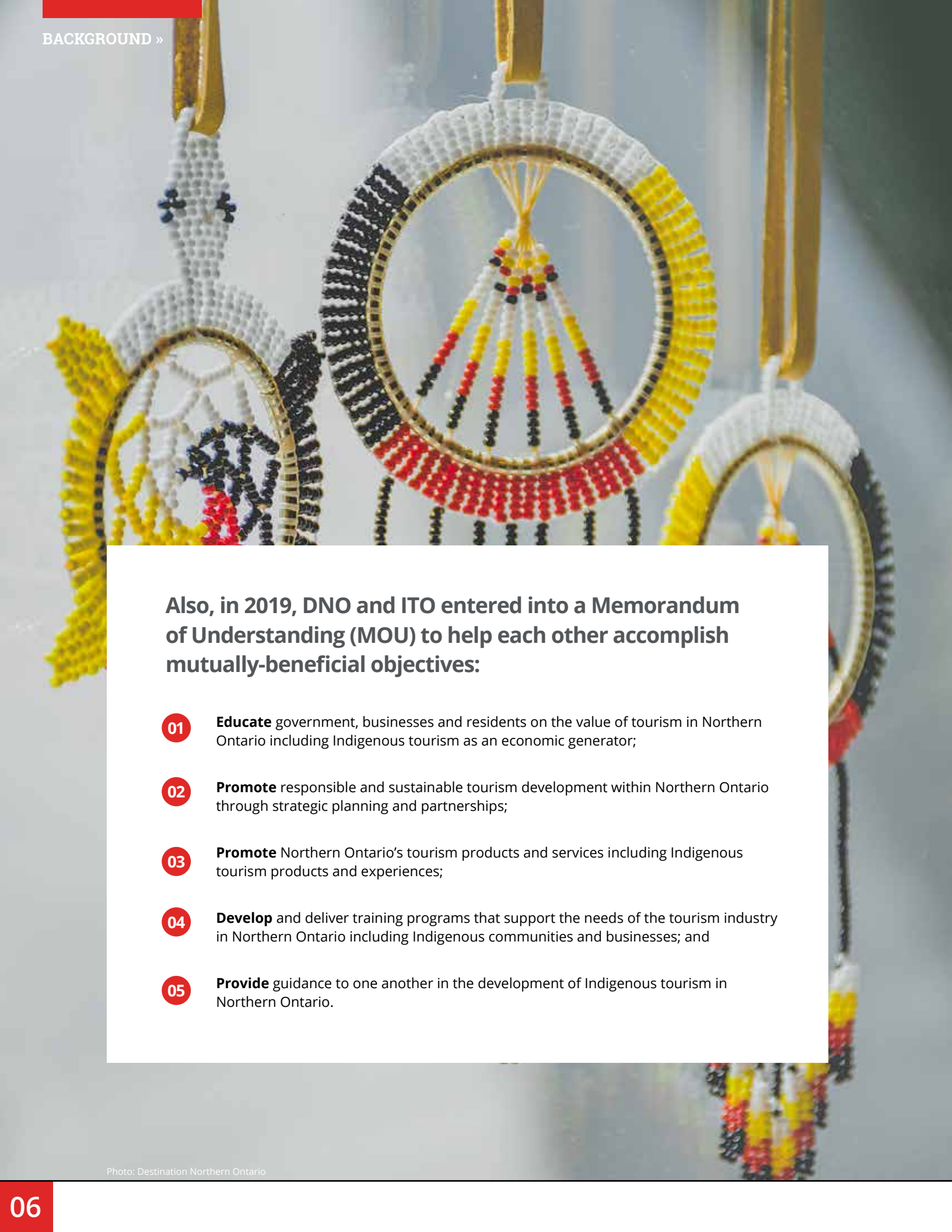


Photo: Destination Northern Ontario

In 2014, Destination Northern Ontario completed the Northern Ontario Product Development Strategy. The strategy recommended that Aboriginal experiences should have a tertiary focus for product development. It said that experiences in this category represent products with a particularly narrow or lesser opportunity from a product market match perspective or are declining in potential and/or relevance as drivers of tourism activity in Northern Ontario.

It noted, however, that support for the development of a range of underlying supporting experiences that showcase local stories, history, arts, culture and heritage and food will further enrich all other products. The strategy stated: “Northern Ontario must build off its successes and opportunities by focusing on best bet product areas for the future”. In light of this and of the establishment of ITO and the progress that it has made to date, developing Indigenous tourism was viewed as a “best bet” product area to develop.

In 2015-16, Destination Northern Ontario began to explore interest in and the potential for food tourism development in Region 13C, specifically in Thunder Bay and the surrounding region by staging a local food forum. Subsequently, food forums were held in Kenora, Algoma, Sudbury, North Bay and Temiskaming Shores and on Manitoulin Island. As DNO began to work with partners to develop regional food tourism strategies, it became clear that there was great potential to develop Indigenous food tourism in the North. Accordingly, in 2018-19, DNO entered into a partnership with Indigenous Tourism Ontario to work together to prepare an Indigenous Food Tourism plan in Northern Ontario as a pilot project for all Ontario and, ideally, beyond.



Also, in 2019, DNO and ITO entered into a Memorandum of Understanding (MOU) to help each other accomplish mutually-beneficial objectives:

- 01** **Educate** government, businesses and residents on the value of tourism in Northern Ontario including Indigenous tourism as an economic generator;
- 02** **Promote** responsible and sustainable tourism development within Northern Ontario through strategic planning and partnerships;
- 03** **Promote** Northern Ontario's tourism products and services including Indigenous tourism products and experiences;
- 04** **Develop** and deliver training programs that support the needs of the tourism industry in Northern Ontario including Indigenous communities and businesses; and
- 05** **Provide** guidance to one another in the development of Indigenous tourism in Northern Ontario.

THE PARTNERS AGREED TO THE FOLLOWING ROLES:

Destination Northern Ontario shall:

- 01 **Seek** input from Indigenous Tourism Association of Ontario in the preparation of its annual business plan as it pertains to Destination Northern Ontario's Indigenous tourism pillar;
- 02 **Seek** input from Indigenous Tourism Association of Ontario in the development of awareness campaigns on the value of Indigenous tourism;
- 03 **Partner** with Indigenous Tourism Association of Ontario in 2019-20 to complete the Indigenous Food Tourism Strategy for Northern Ontario pilot project with an amount that is to be determined;
- 04 **Work** with Indigenous Tourism Association of Ontario to increase awareness of existing industry training programs and seek input with respect to training programs that may be required by the Indigenous tourism industry.
- 05 **Provide** sponsorship support of Indigenous Tourism Association of Ontario in a mutually-agreed-upon amount.
- 06 **Consult** with Indigenous Tourism Association of Ontario as annual business and operation plans are developed identifying areas of possible collaboration; and
- 07 **Provide** other support that may be required, resources permitting.

Indigenous Tourism Association of Ontario shall:

- 01 **Provide** input in a timely manner in the preparation of Destination Northern Ontario's annual business plan as it pertains to its Indigenous tourism pillar;
- 02 **Provide** input in the development of awareness campaigns on the value of Indigenous tourism;
- 03 **Partner** with Destination Northern Ontario in 2019-20 in the completion of the Indigenous Food Tourism Strategy for Northern Ontario pilot project, providing matching funding and expertise;
- 04 **Work** with Destination Northern Ontario to increase awareness of its existing industry training programs and provide input with respect to training programs that are required by the Indigenous tourism industry.
- 05 **Consult** with Destination Northern Ontario as annual business and operation plans are developed identifying areas of possible collaboration; and
- 06 **Provide** other support that may be required, resources permitting.

This Partnership Implementation Plan recommends a path for DNO and ITO to follow to continue to work together to develop Indigenous Tourism in Northern Ontario.

'As one of the most thriving economic activities, tourism is well placed to contribute to Indigenous people in improving their livelihoods. If managed responsibly and sustainably, Indigenous tourism can spur cultural interaction and revival, bolster employment, alleviate poverty, curb rural flight migration, empower women and youth, encourage product diversification, and nurture a sense of pride amongst Indigenous people.'

— United Nations World Tourism Organization

The Case for Indigenous Tourism Development

In 2017, the Ministry of Heritage, Sport, Tourism and Culture Industries released statistics relating to the key characteristics of visitors and visitor spending for Indigenous tourism in Ontario. The data is from 2014.

In 2014, there were 160,000 visits to experience Indigenous tourism in Ontario, 0.1% of total visits to Ontario. Key findings:

- › Tourism visitors spent \$76 M or 0.3% of total visitor spending in Ontario.
- › Ontario residents accounted for 72% of Indigenous tourism visits and 31% of spending.
- › 28% of Indigenous tourism visitors from Ontario are from Region 5 (the GTA) and 27% of Indigenous visits took place in Region 13 (Northern Ontario).
- › The average number of nights spent on Indigenous visits was 3.8, above Ontario's average of 3.1.
- › Indigenous tourism visitors spent an average of \$476 per trip. Of Indigenous tourism visitors, 37% visited an historic site, 34% went to a park and 31% went boating.
- › 40% of overnight Indigenous tourism visits were spent at commercial accommodations.
- › The largest proportion of trips occur from October to December (42%) and July to September (38%).
- › 46% of Canadian Indigenous tourism visitors had a household income greater than \$100,000.
- › 37% of Canadian Indigenous tourism visitors had a university degree.



NATIONAL FOCUS ON INDIGENOUS TOURISM

In 2018, the substantial growth of Indigenous tourism in Canada had attracted national attention. In early 2019, the Conference Board of Canada and ITAC released a draft report of their most recent insights of the economic impact of Indigenous tourism in Canada. It was determined that 1,875 Indigenous businesses participate in Canada's Indigenous tourism with over 39,000 people working in the sector's associated industries. Considering much of this employment is seasonal, Indigenous tourism contributes the equivalent of just under 31,500 full-year jobs to the Canadian economy. 'The combined direct economic footprint of Indigenous tourism in 2017 is estimated to exceed \$1.7B in GDP.' Based on a high-level comparison of ITAC's previous 2014 employment and GDP estimates, the Indigenous tourism sector has substantially outpaced the growth of that of the overall tourism sector for the period of 2014-17.

In *Canada's Tourism Vision 2018*¹, Innovation, Science and Economic Development Canada outlines a 20-point MAP (marketing, access, product) to growth.

Action item # 11 focuses on growing indigenous tourism. It states:

"In 2015, Indigenous tourism generated \$2.7 billion in gross economic output, \$1.4 billion in GDP (up from \$596 million in 2002) and more than \$142 million in taxes.

The number of Indigenous tourism businesses has also grown, from 892 businesses in 2002 to well over 1,500 in 2014.

This trend is encouraging, and reflects the many great products now being offered by Indigenous tourism operators. To build on this, the Federal Government, through Budget 2017, will provide \$8.6 million to support the development of Canada's unique and authentic Indigenous tourism industry".

Destination Canada has further stated that they will take a consumer-centric approach to focus on passions that are emotion-focused and interests that are activity-focused, showcasing areas such as music, culinary, arts, culture, outdoor adventure, LGBTQ2, and Indigenous tourism to grow the seasonal opportunity for tourism businesses.

¹ <https://www.ic.gc.ca/eic/site/095.nsf/eng/00002.html>



PROVINCIAL FOCUS ON INDIGENOUS TOURISM

In 2018, ITO received a total of \$165,000 in organizational funding from the Ministry of Heritage, Sport, Tourism and Culture Industries (\$100,000) and ITAC (\$65,000). As the province's destination marketing organization, Destination Ontario (legally known as the Ontario Tourism Marketing Partnership Corporation) is a key partner for the Indigenous tourism industry.

Destination Ontario's strategic priorities from their Playbook include:

Visitor First Marketing – *Destination Ontario will start with an empathetic understanding of the traveller's needs, interests, planning and purchase behaviour and will focus marketing campaigns on inspiring consumers through their passions and interests. They will map out and establish the best possible position in the visitor path to purchase and focus efforts there to inspire travel to and around Ontario. They will have modern marketing campaigns informed by data and analytics and emerging technology and marketing trends will inform the media in which they market, and activities undertaken.*

Re-Defining Partnerships – *Destination Ontario will lead all partners to align and collaborate toward mutual success. By leveraging a co-marketing approach, we can deliver a greater return on investment. In priority markets, domestically and internationally, we will define and clarify our role and align with our partners. Strong Research, Strong Outcomes* – *Destination Ontario will develop a holistic research approach, prioritizing research and improving how data is mined to incorporate insights into strategic planning and in all marketing activities across the organization. It is their goal to be a provincial leader in the area of research and share findings with partners.*

Dynamic Organization – *Destination Ontario will CONNECT, LEAD and INSPIRE a collaborative approach within their organization and with partners. They aim to be nimble, have the ability to quickly adapt to changes in the marketing landscape, regularly evaluate program performance and collaborate with a common goal and vision.*

The Ministry of Heritage, Sport, Tourism and Culture Industries (MHSTCI) has completed consultations for its new tourism strategy.

Northern Ontario's Current Indigenous Tourism Situation

There have been and are pockets of innovative Indigenous tourism offerings in Northern Ontario.

Great Spirit Circle Trail, located on Manitoulin Island, offers Anishinaabe cultural experiences ranging from soft adventure to wilderness eco-adventures and educational interpretive tours. Also located on Manitoulin Island, Wikwemikong Tourism offers visitors a chance to discover Canada's only officially recognized unceded Indigenous territory through nature-based and cultural tours. In 2018, Wikwemikong Tourism was honoured with the inaugural Indigenous Tourism Award of Excellence by the Tourism Industry Association of Ontario.

Moose Cree Tourism offers cultural experiences including a tour of the community's sites, and adventures out on the land, such as trap-line tours, snowmobile excursions, cross-country skiing, canoeing trips, snow-shoe expeditions, and boat tours up the Moose River to James Bay. The community also offers visitors an opportunity to explore the Cree Cultural Interpretive Centre and the world-renowned Cree Village Ecolodge.

ITO's 2019 research report identified the following locations in Northern Ontario as having the highest concentration of tourism businesses:



- 01 **Wikwemikong** (45 businesses)
- 02 **Moose Factory** (15 businesses)
- 03 **North Bay** (14 businesses)



Photo: Destination Northern Ontario



SWOTT ANALYSIS

In the preparation of the 2019 research report, workshops held in Toronto, Ottawa and four communities in Northern Ontario and community surveys were made available. The surveys were promoted using a province-wide awareness campaign targeting all Indigenous tourism businesses developed as part of the inventory, all 133 Indigenous communities in Ontario, and various organizational partners. A total of 127 responses were received. 78 individuals attended the workshops. The following Strengths, Weaknesses, Opportunities, Threats and Trends were identified through the surveys, the workshops and other research:

Strengths

- › People
- › Land /Environment
- › Culture - Heritage
- › Traditional Knowledge
- › Unique Offerings
- › Support for Indigenous Tourism Development (79% of tourism partner survey respondents currently support the development of Indigenous tourism in Ontario and 95% of tourism partners stated that they would be interested in partnering with ITO on joint initiatives)

Weaknesses

- › Lack of resources (of various sorts)
- › Lack of financial resources and funding
- › Location and remoteness of communities
- › Lack of personnel and capacity amongst leadership and staff
- › Lack of a unified strategy for tourism development
- › Lack of market awareness
- › Lack of accommodations
- › Lack of visitors to Indigenous communities
- › Lack of band-owned land
- › Communication skills/shyness
- › Visitors who do not understand English
- › Lack of trained personnel

Opportunities

- Development of assets and experiences that communities are willing to share (hiking trails, traditional foods, local artisans, ceremonies, some youth activities, sweat lodge teachings, Seven Grandfather Teachings, medicines, drumming, moose hunt, smudging)
- Cultural Authenticity Program tool
- Using tourism to balance core Indigenous beliefs with economic development including bringing back traditional skills, crafts and ways of life.

Threats

- Community members fear misuse of Indigenous culture
- Community members not willing to welcome non-Indigenous visitors
- Misunderstanding between community members and non-Indigenous visitors
- Lack of community support
- Cuts in core base funding to the Ontario Arts Council, including \$2.75 million to the Indigenous Culture Fund (2018)
- Ontario economic growth is expected to be somewhat slower than in the past, primarily due to slower growth in the working-age population

Trends

- Increase in interest in Indigenous tourism experiences worldwide
- Growing concerns about climate change and lack of connection with the earth
- The digital transformation
- 1 in 3 international visitors to Canada are interested in Indigenous tourism experiences
- Growing Millennial travel consumption

Photo: Destination Ontario

TYPES OF INDIGENOUS TOURISM EXPERIENCES

According to the research report, the percentage of Indigenous businesses in Ontario providing accommodations for tourists is 48%. Guided cultural tours, workshops or experiences are offered again by 48% of businesses. A guided outdoor activity or experience is also a primary product offered by 48% of businesses.

Hosting cultural events or performances and Indigenous arts, crafts and/or souvenirs were also popular product and service offerings by Indigenous tourism businesses.

The smallest number of respondents stated that their business offers sports, gaming or entertainment (13%).

Relating to Indigenous cultural experiences, some additional comments offered by respondents regarding their business' core offering included:

- observer (cultural hunting and gathering),
- ATV tours and cultural programming,
- Indigenous cultural sensitivity training, and;
- harvesting wild rice.

Six Steps to Partner to Develop Indigenous Tourism in Northern Ontario:

Survey respondents identified the best ways that ITO can help to build Indigenous tourism in Ontario. Their priorities were:

- Partnerships, networking and knowledge sharing
- Education and cultural exchange
- Capacity building and support tools for communities and operators
- Promoting authentic Indigenous experiences available in a specific region

Some additional responses included:

- Indigenous tourism training for communities
- Inventory of available market-ready Indigenous tourism products and experiences
- Indigenous tourism best practices and success stories
- Community priorities and evidence of community buy-in
- Research results and resources
- Improving service standards
- Knowledge and learning opportunities about Indigenous cultures
- Strong organizational capacity
- Financial support
- Representation of the Indigenous-owned tourism offerings and experiences in Ontario

This section of the implementation plan discusses ways in which Destination Northern Ontario can work with Indigenous Tourism Ontario to deliver on these priorities.



Photo: Destination Ontario



STEP 1: Research

The need for research has been identified as a need in the 2019 research document. An inventory of Indigenous businesses in Northern Ontario exists. Additional research is also needed in the development of the Northern Ontario Indigenous Food Tourism Strategy.



STEP 2: Training

Training (support for operators, service and cultural training, authentic experiential tourism, making visitors feel welcome, guide training, other training) has been identified as a key need through the surveys and workshops.

- Conduct research into specific training needs among Indigenous tourism operators
- Integrate training into Tourism Excellence North's training solutions where appropriate i.e., best practice missions, self-assessment, training in interpretation, storytelling, guide training, etc. within its group learning
- Facilitate industry training to develop new Indigenous tourism products (using CAP and other tools)
- Work with other partners to deliver other training as identified
- Facilitate awareness of training with communities, DMOs, etc.

01

02

03

04

05

06

STEP 3: Product Development

Indigenous tourism partners identified what they believed were the main opportunities that they see for growing Indigenous tourism in Ontario. Sharing Indigenous culture and knowledge through awareness and education was identified as the greatest opportunity for this industry. Product and experience development were also cited as a good opportunity.

Additional common responses related to product development included:

- Wilderness and adventure tourism
- Indigenous experience guides in larger cities
- Family travel experiences
- Indigenous tourism circuits/routes

These opportunities will be explored in partnership with ITO.

Indigenous food tourism development opportunities are emerging from the completion of the Northern Ontario Indigenous Food Tourism Plan..



STEP 4: Investment Attraction

Destination Northern Ontario can leverage its role as a source of information on investment opportunities and sources of funding in support of Indigenous tourism initiatives.

- Help to leverage resources through funders to accomplish Indigenous tourism development priorities (preparation of grant applications etc.)
- Include in DNO investment attraction outreach activities
- Monitor and track investments



STEP 5: Partnerships

Integrate the above with partnership program, core budgets and identify funding sources to leverage resources



STEP 6: Marketing

- Promote successful existing products through Trip Planner and other marketing initiatives
- As new products are developed, integrate into Trip Planner tool and other marketing initiatives
- Highlight existing, enhanced and new Indigenous tourism products on northernontario.travel
- Partner to promote the benefits of Aboriginal tourism in Northern Ontario through multi-media campaigns

INDIGENOUS TOURISM – THE CURRENT CONTEXT & RESEARCH FINDINGS

CASE STUDY

Photo: Destination Ontario

Indigenous Tourism British Columbia

Indigenous Tourism BC (ITBC) is the provincial organization representing and supporting Indigenous tourism development in British Columbia. It has been in existence for over 20 years and is recognized by the First Nations Leadership Council as the official representative of the Indigenous tourism sector in BC. ITBC's mission is to advance a competitive and socially conscious Indigenous tourism industry while contributing to cultural understanding and economic prosperity.

The organization is built around four pillars and strategic performance areas:

- 01** Marketing
- 02** Experience Development
- 03** Partnerships & Special Projects
- 04** Leadership & Organizational Excellence

Each of these pillars guide ITBC's day-to-day activities and long-term organizational strategy.

Developed in 2005, the Aboriginal Cultural Tourism Blueprint Strategy for BC is the foundational guiding document of ITBC, on which the organization's current 5-year strategies are still based. This was the initial work that was completed that laid out a roadmap for what ITBC would eventually become and provided research data to grow the sector as a whole. As a result of this strategy, ITBC was able to secure provincial and federal funding.

ITBC's key initiatives for experience/product development in 2017-18 were as follows:

STRATEGY 1: **Regional Approach**

Accelerate regional Indigenous tourism development in key corridors by embedding regional tourism specialists into high potential tourism regions to improve Indigenous community collaboration/support to increase the number of tier 1 and tier 2 stakeholders.

STRATEGY 2: **Training & Capacity Building**

Assist in development of tier 1 (start-up) businesses to move them towards tier 2 (visitor ready) by utilizing ITBC's Community Support/Cultural Sharing programs to build capacity and understanding about the tourism industry to Chief and Councils, local EDOs and Indigenous entrepreneurs to support businesses along the development path towards visitor-readiness.

STRATEGY 3: **Push for Market-Readiness**

Provide tier 2 (visitor ready) experiences with training to meet tier 3 (market ready) criteria by partnering with regional DMOs and tourism industry providers to build remarkable experiences with Indigenous communities and entrepreneurs to increase the number of businesses that transition as market-ready products.

STRATEGY 4: **Destination Development**

Support Destination BC's Destination Development process to ensure that ITBC and Indigenous communities are participating in planning area sessions so that Indigenous economic development opportunities and needs are fully considered in the long-term destination development strategy.

ITBC offers 12 different capacity building programs aimed at assisting entrepreneurs, communities and individuals:

- Exploring the Potential of Indigenous Cultural Tourism for your Community
- Building Community Support for Indigenous Cultural Tourism
- Establishing Cultural Sharing Protocols
- Establishing an Entrepreneurial Business
- Feasibility Analysis & Business Planning
- Skills Development for Entrepreneurs
- On Call Support for New and Existing Businesses
- Introduction to Indigenous Cultural Tourism Career Opportunities
- First Host Front Line Service Training
- Cultural Interpretation Training
- Building Your Resume

The 3 most popular of ITBC's training programs are: the Cultural Interpretation Training, a 10-day program working with Elders and youth to identify and develop cultural tourism assets and get community buy-in; Community Tourism Engagement Session, a 1-day program which emphasizes the value of tourism for Indigenous communities and; the First Host Front Line Service Training, provided through Destination BC with an additional component, 'First Hosts', specifically geared towards Indigenous operators.

As of November of 2018, it was reported that ITBC received approximately \$2.5 million in funding, 50% of which comes from provincial sources and 50% of which comes from federal sources.





INDIGENOUS TOURISM ONTARIO WORKSHOP CONSULTATION – NORTHERN ONTARIO INPUT



Sudbury Workshop:

Strengths

- › Land base – different areas and territories
- › Plants and species at risk
- › Culture/people
- › Ways of doing things (practices) – from beginning to the end
- › Knowledge /teachings in different territories
- › Geology/geography (interpretive trails)
- › Unique experiences
- › Workforce (youth opportunities)
- › Stories of the area/land
- › Different opportunities/activities (e.g. Pow Wow guide, make an app)
- › Cultural diversity, including multi-language
- › Recent meeting of cultures – “new phenomenon”
- › Local talent
- › Artist connection
- › Women
- › Youth

What is Needed to Grow Indigenous Tourism?

- › Training for product development
- › Entrepreneurship
- › Market awareness
- › Partnerships
- › Capacity building
- › Funding
- › Location/land
- › Strategic plan / First Nations government
- › Business plan
- › Community support
- › Connect / internet
- › Humour
- › Stories of your area
- › Constant ongoing consultation (including Elder consultation)
- › Staff / HR component (attraction and retention)
- › Product identification
- › Experiential tourism opportunity identification – community driven and participatory
- › Development of visuals
- › Unique
- › Community buy-in
- › Understanding and awareness that tourism is an economic driver
- › Business plans – understanding what it is and how to make one; that it's not just to make money but to also benefit and share with the community
- › Building partnerships in the community and off reserve
- › Needs to begin with building trust and relationships

Challenges

- › Authenticity
- › Buy-in from different areas / endorse / innovative
- › Competition – with general tourism products
- › Funding
- › Promotion and advertising
- › Interactive websites
- › Partnerships with non-Native organizations
- › Cultural confidence – understanding what could be offered
- › Conflict in assessing economics in relationship to the cultural product
- › Perception of guest expectations vs. reality
- › Not all tourists expect take aways, most prefer knowledge
- › Fear – cultural appropriation
- › Guidelines / criteria – Indigenous authenticity
- › Socio-economic conditions of communities and members
- › No availability of clean drinking water, adequate housing
- › Priorities of Chiefs and Councils
- › General community readiness
- › Other ongoing lands issues (i.e. land claims)
- › Balance – protecting vs. showcasing sacred sites (i.e. pictographs)

Sault Ste. Marie Workshop

Strengths

- › Organizations supporting/training for outdoor experiences
- › Landscape, natural resources and the diversity across the province – riverways, waterways, forests, shorelines, access to amazing eco-systems that are vast wild and clean
- › Presence of connective waterways
- › Network of national and provincial parks and the Boreal forest
- › Events that are already there (not building from nothing)
- › Cultural camps
- › Landscape – waterways (travel), stories, history, First Nations members and area
- › Culture, tradition and presence
- › Distinct histories that need to be shared
- › Teachings
- › Language = culture (needs to continue)
- › 133 First Nations in Ontario
- › Provincial awareness and understanding
- › Stories and traditions
- › We have the materials, resources, medicines available to create experiences and support them

What is Needed to Grow Indigenous Tourism?

- › The wider community needs to understand, respect and appreciate the Indigenous history of the area
- › We need to listen to the stories
- › Communities need to build opportunities for people to connect with nature (e.g. create infrastructure, trails, etc.)
- › Need people from Indigenous communities to share their culture and history, especially with youth and working with students at schools (more workshops)
- › More awareness from the general public about the Indigenous community (e.g. June 21st event, Pow Wows)
- › Capacity in the Indigenous community to develop programs and products
- › Integration into the school system
- › Promotion of events and involvement in community events/opportunities – community engagement promotes buy-in and awareness
- › Creating a workforce of Indigenous peoples = education, respect, inclusive
- › Promote volunteerism
- › Organizations like ITO for building resources
- › Access to funding
- › Inter-Nation/Tribe networking
- › Solid vision / foundation to build from
- › Recognizing what we already have
- › Marketing – keeping it in the forefront
- › Product development
- › Chief and Council support
- › Pride in the services and what you want to offer
- › Elders and youth – involved to share history, knowledge, teachings (7 Fires) and stories of Indigenous culture
- › Welcoming individuals from outside the community to participate and learn
- › Branding the tourism theme (unified)
- › Other tourism businesses to support one another – acknowledgement / recognition for front line workers (benefits and incentives will create pride and promotion)

Challenges

- › Lack of funding (for marketing, promotion and development)
- › Lack of teachers and Elders
- › Lack of infrastructure
- › Capacity development
- › Awareness from a First Nations perspective – ignorance
- › Employment – lack of interest, skills and incentives
- › Community buy-in and not seeing the full benefit that tourism can provide = lack of support
- › Transfer of intergenerational knowledge – difficulty to have an Elder transfer the knowledge
- › Sacred items (sharing stories) – not know what is “ok” to share (lack of awareness)
- › Health of communities – if communities have big issues to deal with (e.g. clean drinking water), it may be a challenge to focus on other things
- › How much do communities want to share of their cultures?
- › We need those who are offering experiences to have traditional skills – so important to pass down culture to the youth
- › Just the start of reconciliation
- › Preserving what we have (provincial parks, land, etc.)
- › Standing up for tourism – recognizing the economic impact
- › Cultural appropriation
- › Keep it real – intellectual property

Thunder Bay Workshop

Strengths

- › The people
- › Concept of sharing
- › The regional differences in art/crafts, tools, medicine
- › Language
- › Relationship with plants, animals, environment
- › Sharing access to the land
- › Away from the busy urban settings
- › The experience of time on the land (connection)
- › Big water/fresh water/drinking water
- › Scenery/lookouts/viewsapes
- › Fish and game
- › Indigenous peoples used to guide more, now the Americans are very independent and unchecked
- › Musicians, artists and artisans
- › Experimentation
- › Asking lots of questions regarding reconciliation and authenticity
- › T.E.K. – traditional ecological knowledge
- › Hesitancy to share, e.g. pictographs
- › Stories/legends
- › Unique experiences, e.g. picking wild rice, sleeping under a canoe/ in a teepee/ in a wigwam/making a birch bark basket
- › 4 distinct seasons with different events in each
- › People, stories, traditions, culture, water, landscape
- › Pow Wows
- › Food, fall harvest
- › Fishing and berry picking
- › History – treaty sites, pictographs
- › Clothing – arts and crafts, beading, snowshoe making
- › Transmission of knowledge/stories and cultural sharing
- › Opportunity for education
- › Preservation of culture
- › Environment (proximity, intimate relationship, abundance)
- › Traditional knowledge and community champions of culture



What is Needed to Grow Indigenous Tourism?

- › A sense of community ownership (advocacy and allies)
- › More examples of best practices
- › Resources to travel to and learn from
- › Understand what tourists want
- › Resources for entrepreneurs (take an idea and turn it into an experience)
- › Include community input – time to prepare
- › Inclusivity between communities small and large
- › Relationships and partnerships (existing operators and funding sources)
- › Education regarding tourism
- › Visitor expectations
- › Fundamentals of business and business savviness
- › Community needs to accept / want tourism – building an interest
- › Build confidence amongst community members – encouraging and conquering shame / fear
- › Selling it somehow diminishes its sacredness
- › Promoting ideas
- › Training and mentoring – educating the youth
- › Have coordinators (e.g. at the hotels) who make arrangements with the guides, or have an experience broker
- › Access to information sharing (contacts, experiences, coordination)
- › Acquiring funding and navigating funders (keep it simple)

Challenges

- › Lack of available training
- › Remote/isolated locations
- › Lack of interest in sharing
- › Fear – was illegal up until just a few decades ago, e.g. Pow Wows, language
- › Lack of coordination – who leads, e.g. Band, EDO, ITO
- › Basic business skills training, e.g. business planning, accounting, regulations/laws
- › Who defines ‘authentic’?
- › Elder/grandparents haven’t even shared teachings with children/grandchildren – priorities
- › Funds
- › Local capacity – skill set
- › Transportation
- › Maintaining authenticity, respect and meaningful collaboration
- › Cultural acceptance and education
- › Connectivity, WI-FI
- › Check points for dry communities
- › Food supplies – wild game/ fish regulations
- › Presentation, interpretation and education
- › Community acceptance of visitors
- › Marketing – access, representation and dollars
- › Geography – access, affordability
- › Indigenous diversity
- › Trust – colonization
- › Government’s (Feds, provincial, municipal) dedication to tourism
- › Handicrafts (time, labour, fair pricing, experiences, understanding)

Kenora Workshop

Strengths

- › Variety of experiences – travel between locations
- › Natural resources – space, rocks, trees, lakes
- › People/community members
- › Unique culture/skills
- › Land skills (living off the land)
- › Discovering medicine in wild ginger
- › History and heritage – traditional teachings
- › Pow Wows
- › Youth/Elder teaching centres
- › Kay Nah Chi Wah Nung (Manitou Mounds) Historical Centre
- › Seine River
- › Size and location of communities lends itself to an authentic experience
- › Food – wild rice, blueberries
- › Traditions

What is Needed to Grow Indigenous Tourism?

- › History of the land
- › Providing a platform to share
- › Sustaining our language
- › Improving infrastructure (including accommodation and linkages to existing infrastructure) Leadership – or a catalyst
- › Elder involvement in the following – a vision, a plan, tools to assist and people
- › Involving the whole community – youth, Elders, etc.
- › Training (e.g. heritage interpreter)
- › Communications

Challenges

- › Racism – them and us mentality
- › Existing, non-authentic place names, symbols lead to misunderstanding (expropriation of the culture)
- › Capacity
- › Priorities within communities – facing bigger issues
- › Visibility
- › Accommodations
- › Understanding the difference between sharing the culture and protecting the sacred
- › Making a living – guide, promoter, etc.
- › Funding dollars to help support and grow entrepreneurs and businesses
- › Conflict of interest
- › Technology that overrides the authenticity of the Indigenous tourism product



“As overseas travellers increasingly look to Northern Ontario as a destination of choice for unique cultural experiences, the time could not be better to be embarking on this journey with our partners”,

- **Marty Kalagian, Chairman, Destination Northern Ontario**
November 20, 2019, Northern Ontario Tourism Summit,
signing of Memorandum of Understanding



“Destination Northern Ontario has always been proactive in reaching out to work with the Indigenous tourism sector to help to grow our industry which is so vitally important to tourism here in the North and in our province. It is our plan to consult on a regular basis to ensure that we continue to play a cutting-edge role in that development”.

— **Kevin Eshkawkogan, Executive Director, Indigenous Tourism Ontario**

November 20, 2019, Northern Ontario Tourism Summit, signing of Memorandum of Understanding



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