The Next Phase: 2012-2017
A Five-year Strategy for Aboriginal Cultural Tourism in British Columbia
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Message from the Chief Executive Officer

The Aboriginal Tourism Association of British Columbia (AtBC) has become a world leader in the development of authentic Aboriginal cultural tourism. Together AtBC, our stakeholders, and Aboriginal communities throughout British Columbia have demonstrated a collective ability to work together and produce significant growth in tourism since 2006.

Our growth as the Aboriginal cultural tourism sector has been unprecedented and AtBC understands that consumer demands for existing authentic Aboriginal cultural tourism destinations and potential for new Aboriginal cultural tourism products have created a promising future.

I want to acknowledge our stakeholders and Aboriginal leaders who continue to recognize the tremendous opportunity Aboriginal cultural tourism sector provides for employment, cultural revitalization, and economic benefits for communities and entrepreneurs.

The Next Phase 2012-2017 has been produced based on timely sector research, consultation with AtBC stakeholders, and economic assessment of the consumer demand. Therefore AtBC is confident that the strategy provides a formula for future success and continued sector growth that leads global trends.

The future growth for authentic Aboriginal cultural tourism will ensure growth of the entire tourism industry and The Next Phase 2012-2017 will ensure success.

Thank you,

Keith Henry, Chief Executive Officer
Aboriginal Tourism Association of British Columbia
Our vision is a prosperous and respectful Aboriginal cultural tourism industry sharing authentic products that exceed visitor expectations.
The Next Phase outlines AtBC’s strategy for growing the province’s Aboriginal cultural tourism industry over the next five years. It builds on AtBC’s experience in successfully implementing the Aboriginal Cultural Blueprint strategy and is timed to take advantage of the current trend towards increased visitor demand for authentic Aboriginal cultural experiences.

AtBC will invest $10 million over five years into coordinated capacity building, product development and marketing initiatives. Through this investment, AtBC will increase visitor volume, employment and revenue as well as tax revenue generation.

To be successful, The Next Phase will require strong partnerships with the Federal Government, Provincial Government and Destination Marketing Organizations. AtBC will continue to strengthen these partnerships and will work to support “Gaining the Edge”, British Columbia’s five-year tourism strategy, as well as Canada’s Federal Tourism Strategy.

AtBC’s 5-year Strategic targets for success for the Aboriginal cultural tourism industry are:

- Revenue of $68 million (10% growth per year).
- Employment at 4000 full-time equivalent (10% growth per year).
- 100 market-ready Aboriginal cultural tourism businesses (10% growth per year in every region).

Key Strategies

- Push for Market-Readiness
- Partnerships
- Focus on Online Marketing
- Key & Emerging Markets
- Authenticity & Quality Assurance
- Coastal Connections
**Our mission** is to provide training, awareness, product development and marketing to support a sustainable authentic Aboriginal cultural tourism industry in British Columbia while contributing to cultural preservation and economic development.
Recognized as a World Leader

The Aboriginal Tourism Association of British Columbia (AtBC) was formed in 1996 and has since become recognized as a world leader in the Aboriginal cultural tourism industry. From humble beginnings, AtBC has grown to represent more than 150 stakeholder businesses located in the six tourism regions of British Columbia.

AtBC is governed by Aboriginal cultural tourism business leaders working in British Columbia who dedicate their time to ensure AtBC represents and meets the needs of the industry.

AtBC is frequently utilized by other countries and provinces as a resource for best practices in Aboriginal cultural tourism.

2010 New Zealand
AtBC hosted a delegation from New Zealand who were researching the successful implementation of the Aboriginal Cultural Tourism Blueprint strategy.

2011 Taiwan
AtBC hosted an indigenous group seeking best-practices for the creation of their own cultural tourism industry.

2011 Yellowknife
At the request of the North West Territories Government, AtBC presented “lessons learned” and success stories to a territorial tourism conference.

2011 Belize
AtBC is assisting the Government of Belize in the development of its indigenous cultural tourism industry through the adaptation of front-line training and community awareness training programs.

2011 AtBC Board of Directors (left to right, back row first): Richard Krentz; Doug Green; George Taylor; Sharon Bond; Bill Helin; Lori Simcox; Brenda Baptiste; Sophie Pierre; Lillian Hunt.
In 2005, AtBC designed the Aboriginal Cultural Tourism Blueprint Strategy (Blueprint) and subsequently secured $10 million dollars for its implementation. The Blueprint enabled AtBC and the Aboriginal cultural tourism industry in British Columbia to reach unprecedented levels of success. Investments into the Blueprint were made by Aboriginal Affairs and Northern Development Canada (formerly known as INAC), Western Economic Diversification, and the Province of British Columbia through the Ministry of Jobs, Tourism, and Innovation.

AtBC achieved all identified and agreed performance indicators for the implementation of the Blueprint as established by our funding partners. The evidence demonstrates that a well-coordinated provincial Aboriginal cultural tourism strategy yields strong results and that AtBC is highly capable of implementing such a strategy.

### A Proven Record of Success

| Revenue for the Aboriginal Cultural Tourism Industry ($millions) |
|------------------|------------------|------------------|------------------|------------------|------------------|
| 2006 | 2007 | 2008 | 2009 | 2010 | 2011 |
| 20 | 26 | 37 | 38 | 40 | 42 |

| Tax Revenue Generated by the Aboriginal Cultural Tourism Industry ($millions) |
|------------------|------------------|------------------|------------------|------------------|
| 2009 | 2010 | 2011 |
| 11 | 11 | 12 |

| Jobs in the Aboriginal Cultural Tourism Industry (full-time equivalent) |
|------------------|------------------|------------------|------------------|------------------|
| 2006 | 2007 | 2008 | 2009 | 2010 |
| 1,718 | - | 1,984 | 2,018 | 2,266 |

The Next Phase

Five-year Aboriginal Cultural Tourism Strategy 2012-2017
The Time is Right

The 2010 Winter Olympic and Paralympic Games raised both domestic and international interest and consumer demand continues to increase for authentic Aboriginal cultural tourism experiences. This presents an incredible opportunity for the growth of the province’s Aboriginal cultural tourism industry.

More and more visitors to British Columbia want to experience Aboriginal culture, art and lifestyle. The result is that the Aboriginal tourism market has increased by 26% domestically, 8% for the US visitors, and 12% internationally (as of 2010). The emerging Chinese market is substantial and another significant opportunity for Aboriginal cultural tourism.

Overall Aboriginal Cultural Tourism Incidence Rates Increased by 69% between 2006 and 2010.

Based on Tourism BC Visitor Survey incidence statistics.
One in four visitors to British Columbia is interested in adding an Aboriginal cultural tourism experience to their trip.
The Next Phase, AtBC’s five-year Aboriginal cultural tourism strategy, is designed to build on the success of the original Blueprint strategy and to continue to expand the Aboriginal cultural tourism industry in British Columbia.

AtBC will invest $10 million over five years into coordinated capacity building, product development and marketing initiatives. Through this investment, AtBC will increase visitor volume, employment and revenue as well as tax revenue generation.

AtBC’s 5-year Strategic targets for success for the Aboriginal cultural tourism industry are:

- Revenue of $68 million (10% growth per year).
- Employment at 4000 full-time equivalent (10% growth per year).
- 100 market-ready Aboriginal cultural tourism businesses (10% growth per year in every region).

Targets for Success

Capacity Building

Product Development

Marketing

10% Annual Growth
Key 5-Year Strategies

**Push for Market-Readiness**

The number of Aboriginal tourism businesses in the province that are not Market-Ready is 192. This number includes businesses that are already operational as well as businesses that are still in the development phase.

AtBC will deliver capacity building training programs that will help start-up businesses successfully become operational.

AtBC will deliver product development training programs that will enable operational businesses achieve the Market-Ready designation.

**Partnerships**

AtBC will continue to strengthen existing partnerships with the Provincial and Federal governments and will work to ensure the Provincial and Federal tourism strategies are successful.

AtBC will develop and expand partnerships with each of the regional Destination Marketing Organizations to help establish regional Aboriginal cultural tourism plans.

AtBC will continue to assist Aboriginal communities throughout the province in economic development initiatives related to tourism.

AtBC will increase partnerships with non-Aboriginal tourism businesses in order to increase the availability of authentic Aboriginal-themed vacation packages.

**Focus on Online Marketing**

Recognizing the tremendous technological shift now firmly underway, AtBC will continue to shift its marketing focus towards online activities.

Social media activity will become an integral part of every campaign and AtBC will ensure that all of its online marketing activities are successful on a range of desktop and mobile devices.

AtBC will expand its collection of digital image and video assets. The production of engaging content and the cultivation of user-generated content will be primary goals.
**Key & Emerging Markets**
AtBC will maximise the benefit of its marketing efforts by focussing on key markets. These include:
- British Columbia
- Alberta
- Ontario
- California
- Germany

AtBC will monitor the potential of emerging markets such as China, India and Mexico and respond with appropriate programs that will take advantage of the enormous potential these markets represent.

**Authenticity & Quality Assurance**
AtBC will continue to increase the number of Authentic Aboriginal certified tourism businesses in order to satisfy increasing visitor demand for authentic Aboriginal cultural tourism experiences.

AtBC recognizes the connection between Aboriginal cultural tourism experiences and the purchase of Aboriginal gift ware and art. AtBC will expand the existing Authentic Aboriginal certification program to include certification of authentic Aboriginal artisan products.

AtBC will develop a quality assurance program to help ensure that every visitor receives the best possible experience when they include an Aboriginal cultural experience in their visit.

**Coastal Connections**
AtBC will develop programs connecting British Columbia’s diverse coastal experiences. These programs will target existing Aboriginal cultural tourism businesses as well as coastal communities in the process of developing their tourism potential and will focus on three niche markets:
- Cruise ships
- Pocket cruise ships
- BC Ferries
Be a Part of the Excitement!

AtBC encourages all interested individuals, businesses and organizations to work together with AtBC to help grow British Columbia’s Aboriginal cultural tourism industry. Through committed partnerships, all stakeholders will benefit and communities in every region of the province will see increased prosperity.

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