

# 2018-2019 Annual Report



IndigenousBC.com



**INDIGENOUS  
TOURISM BC**



We raise our hands to gratefully acknowledge **Destination BC** and the **Province of BC** for the continued investment in our Indigenous communities. You have been our partners since the beginning and have always recognized the importance of Indigenous tourism being a part of British Columbia's identity! Thank you.



Indigenous Tourism BC acknowledges the Federal funding contribution from Indigenous Services Canada and Western Economic Diversification Canada.





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## Chair's Message

On behalf of my fellow Board members and the entire team at ITBC, it's my privilege to present our Annual Report 2018/19.

Tourism is becoming a main engine for growth powering the Indigenous economies of communities spread out across what is now known as British Columbia. In partnership with Destination BC, ITBC leads Indigenous tourism in BC and world-wide.

Like it has for over two decades, our work continues to make sure that Indigenous entrepreneurs and communities have the support they need to excel. As you'll see in this year's annual report, our team continues to inspire other provinces and territories across Canada and Indigenous communities around the world with innovative marketing, experience development approaches, and values-based partnerships.

This year was especially important as we renewed our working partnership with the Indigenous Tourism Association of Canada (ITAC), and set a new agreement with the Nisga'a Lisims Government and Northern British Columbia Tourism Association that will pave the way for new investment along our important Northern Indigenous tourism corridors.

There's no denying that the world is becoming increasingly complex and competitive, but as an Indigenous person, I feel a great sense of peace and confidence that we can look within our own cultures for the answers. This deep belief in ourselves sparked ITBC to break ranks with traditional organizational management, and instead, develop an innovative and more culturally appropriate Indigenous leadership model that continues to prove itself worthy.

We raise our hands in welcome to those many businesses who join us every year and that work tirelessly on behalf of their people and local communities to reconnect youth with their culture, and share the story of their people with the world. The drive, passion, and commitment that these Indigenous entrepreneurs and leaders show everyday has made anything possible.



Limlāmt (Thank you)  
for your ongoing support,

A handwritten signature in black ink, appearing to read 'Baptiste'.

Brenda Baptiste, *Chair*  
Indigenous Tourism British Columbia



# INDIGENOUS TOURISM BC

## Who We Are

Indigenous Tourism BC is a non-profit, Stakeholder-based organization that is committed to growing and promoting a sustainable, culturally rich Indigenous tourism industry. Through training, information resources, networking opportunities and co-operative marketing programs, Indigenous Tourism BC is a resource for Indigenous entrepreneurs and communities in British Columbia who are operating or looking to start a tourism business. Indigenous Tourism BC works closely with tourism, business, education and government organizations to help BC's Indigenous tourism businesses offer quality experiences and actively promotes these experiences to visitors and local residents. [IndigenousBC.com](http://IndigenousBC.com)

Our **VISION** is a prosperous and respectful Indigenous cultural tourism industry sharing authentic products that exceed visitor expectations.

Our **MISSION** is to provide training, awareness, product development and marketing to support a sustainable authentic Indigenous cultural tourism industry in British Columbia while contributing to cultural preservation and economic development.



# The Value of Indigenous Tourism

Indigenous Tourism is on the move. We're the fastest growing sector in BC's tourism industry.

## The Numbers Speak for Themselves

**401** Indigenous tourism businesses in BC

**\$705M** in tourism GDP

**7,400** full-time jobs created

## Full Speed Ahead

**1 in 3** visitors to BC looking to have an Indigenous experience

**7.2M** visitors expected from Canada, Germany, UK, US and China

**89%** of tour operators surveyed indicated they would offer or expand Indigenous experiences as part of their travel packages

## We're Busy Getting Results 2018/19

- **17** training sessions delivered
- **4** new win-win tourism partnership agreements with CCCTA, ITAC, NBCTA and Nisga'a Lisims Government
- **5th** annual Victoria indigenous Cultural Festival:  
**30** Indigenous Nations and **30,000** Visitors
  - Authentic Indigenous Program: **4** New Members
  - Media Relations: **357M** Online Impressions
  - Summer Social Media Campaign: **2.7M** Impressions; **8K** Referrals
- **14** New Marketing Stakeholders
- **95** Market Ready Stakeholders
- **26** Push for Market Readiness Program Recipients



# Executive Summary

With the popularity of Indigenous tourism reaching historic levels, ITBC has been working to ensure work in key areas such as partnerships, marketing, experience development, and leadership and organizational development lift Indigenous tourism to new heights.

On the partnerships side, Indigenous community engagement has never been stronger. Partnership teams developed win-win agreements set to amplify and accelerate regional efforts to see more Indigenous communities chose tourism. Provincially, Destination BC and the Province of BC have committed to renew the Indigenous Tourism Accord and collaboratively work on a new Indigenous Tourism Provincial Alignment Strategy. In the Thompson Okanagan, collaboration with the Thompson Okanagan Tourism Association (TOTA) saw the region awarded ITAC's 2019 International Indigenous Tourism Conference. Four guiding agreements were signed with the Cariboo Chilcotin Coast Tourism Association, Nisga'a Lisims Government, Northern British Columbia Tourism Association and the Indigenous Tourism Association of Canada.

Stronger storytelling and digital platforms are inspiring visitors like never before. Our multi-channel approach continued to drive significant sales through travel trade, to generate expansive coverage in travel media, and to engage and convert new followers across popular social media platform. Rounding out these efforts, Indigenous tourism in BC has a stronger call-to-action with a new user-friendly, intuitive and mobile-first website which makes it easier than ever for visitors and residents to connect, plan and book Indigenous tourism experiences across the province.

Fulfilling our Brand promise and meeting growing global demand for authentic Indigenous experiences keeps ITBC on the frontlines of destination and experience development. Our Push for Market Readiness program over the course of 2018/19 provided needed funding to 26 Indigenous tourism operations and communities. This micro-funding was used to improve digital marketing, capture new photography, advertise, and develop new tours. At the same time, digital information kiosks are using technology like never before in a pilot program designed to amplify the Indigenous tourism story in key tourism regions, to start.



Read about our  
leading focus in  
our latest  
Corporate Plan.

Visit [Indigenousbc.com/corporate](https://Indigenousbc.com/corporate)



Heavy advocacy work continues to make sure that Indigenous values factor into programs and policies that shape the tourism business climate. Whether in person at key meetings or through strategic corporate communications, the story about the promise of Indigenous tourism is being told and heard.

Our most important priority is leadership and our people. We're focused on creating a work climate that rewards high-performing teams, embraces collaboration, unleashes the innovative spirit and values constant improvement. In addition to major human resource improvements and great new hires bringing-in and keeping top talent, ITBC developed an innovative and more culturally appropriate Indigenous leadership model. Instead of a single CEO, three Chief Officers report to and work closely with the ITBC Board of Directors (House of Tyee) and external partners to set corporate priorities and create a winning work environment.



# What We Do



## Activate Experience Development

### OUR ROLE IS TO:

- Link ITBC Stakeholders with marketing training and knowledge that will improve their experience and marketing knowledge
- Connect Indigenous cultural experiences with existing programs in order to help them become market-ready

### THE RESULTS WE WANT TO ACHIEVE ARE:

- More market-ready Indigenous-owned products and experiences
- More Marketing Stakeholders contract with receptive tour operators
- Visitors rave about their Indigenous cultural experience(s) in British Columbia



## Inspire Visitors

### OUR ROLE IS TO:

- Be the lead marketing expert for Indigenous cultural tourism in BC
- Develop focused and efficient marketing approaches that raise awareness, engage target audiences, and help marketing Stakeholders close the sale

### THE RESULTS WE WANT TO ACHIEVE ARE:

- We inspire more of our consumer target market
- Visitors find ITBC Marketing Stakeholder experiences more easily
- Visitors add ITBC Marketing Stakeholder experiences to their itineraries
- More visitors buy ITBC Marketing Stakeholder experiences
- Visitors 'rave' about their Indigenous BC experience
- BC is a top international choice for Indigenous experiences
- Stakeholders value our marketing expertise



## Cultivate Relationships

### OUR ROLE IS TO:

- Be the official lead representative in negotiating and ratifying partnerships focused on growing and strengthening Indigenous cultural tourism in British Columbia
- Source, vet and nurture mutually beneficial partnerships that advance the ITBC VISION and MISSION

### THE RESULTS WE WANT TO ACHIEVE ARE:

- Partnerships and special projects deliver more visitors to ITBC Marketing Stakeholders
- Partnerships contribute financial resources
- ITBC funding is more diversified
- ITBC has the resources to execute on its priorities



## Advocate Indigenous Tourism

### OUR ROLE IS TO:

- Be the official designated representative for Indigenous cultural tourism in BC
- Advocate on behalf of the Indigenous tourism industry in the province to ensure that the right economic, social and environmental conditions are in place to sustainably grow Indigenous tourism

### THE RESULTS WE WANT TO ACHIEVE ARE:

- Stakeholders value our marketing expertise
- We have more market-ready, Indigenous-owned tourism products and experiences



A full-page background image showing a person's silhouette standing on a rocky ridge at night. The person is holding a flashlight that shines a bright beam of light upwards, illuminating the Milky Way galaxy in the dark, star-filled sky. The scene is serene and evokes a sense of exploration and discovery.

We help you on the Path.

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# Partnerships and Special Projects

We cannot hope to succeed alone given the complex operating environment facing the tourism industry. Working together gives us the market power to overcome these obstacles and take fuller advantage of opportunities.

## 1.0 STRATEGY: Facilitate Indigenous Community Engagement Sessions

Accelerate regional Indigenous tourism development in key corridors through ITBC training programs that spark community support, assist existing entrepreneurs and lead to the creation of new tourism businesses.

### RESULT

ITBC delivered its Value of Tourism, FirstHost and Cultural Interpretations training programs to Indigenous tourism operators, community leaders and economic development professionals at 17 training sessions spread out across BC.

## 2.0 STRATEGY: Activate Provincial and Regional Partnerships

Pursue partnerships that directly support our core values, contribute directly to stakeholder development, develop sustainable tourism-related business opportunities.

### RESULTS

- Partnership teams developed win-win agreements that will amplify and accelerate regional efforts to see more Indigenous communities chose tourism. In the Thompson Okanagan, collaboration with the Thompson Okanagan Tourism Association (TOTA) saw the region awarded ITAC's 2019 International Indigenous Tourism Conference. Guiding agreements were signed with the Cariboo Chilcotin Coast Tourism Association, the Nisga'a Lisims Government and Northern British Columbia Tourism Association.
- At the provincial level, ITBC saw its Chair of the Board appointed to both the Minister of Tourism's Engagement Council and the Tourism Industry Association of BC's Board of Directors.
- The national level saw a new agreement forged with the Indigenous Tourism Association of Canada, ITBC joining of a federal trade mission to China, and representation at The Assembly of First Nations (AFN) 39th Annual General Assembly (AGA) in July, 2018.
- The 5th annual Victoria indigenous Cultural festival brought together performance and visual artists from over 30 different first nations. The June 21-23 event attracted an estimated 30,000 locals and visitors. The event is made possible only through close partnerships with the Esquimalt Nation, Songhees Nation, the Royal BC Museum and over a dozen corporate sponsors.
- ITBC fully implemented Salesforce, the CRM technology used in partnership with Destination BC. Salesforce allows ITBC to track any updates within the business, run reports on our Stakeholder list and keep up to date with any tasks scheduled within the system.







# Marketing

Indigenous people are master storytellers with an authentic point of view and beliefs that resonate strongly with a committed audience that follows eagerly. Technology and distribution channels able to carry our cultural tourism message will constantly change, but by staying true to our own stories and learning how to tell them in digital formats, we will succeed at growing Indigenous tourism in markets near and far.

## 1.0 STRATEGY: Activate “Our Story. Your Experience” Consumer Brand

Leverage technology and programs that will deliver and strengthen the ITBC brand promise.

### RESULT

- ITBC’s new user-friendly, intuitive and mobile-first website makes it easier than ever for visitors and residents to connect, plan and book Indigenous tourism experiences across the province developed in partnership with Destination BC. Featuring a clean and concise look, IndigenousBC.com shares compelling video and digital stories that shine a spotlight on thriving and inspirational Indigenous cultures in BC.
- Launched the new Authentic Indigenous designation program, a designation designed for Stakeholders who offer compelling, culturally appropriate Indigenous tourism experiences. Four experiences have already joined the collection: Haida House at Tlaa, Haida Style Expeditions, Spirit Bear Lodge, and Sea Wolf Adventures. ITBC aims to have approximately 15 Stakeholders with the Authentic Indigenous designation by March 31, 2020.




Transform travel and make your business more competitive.  
Stand out and show the world that each sale helps revitalize and  
preserve local indigenous cultures and languages.

Stakeholders apply at: [join.indigenousbc.ca/authentic](https://join.indigenousbc.ca/authentic)

## 2.0 STRATEGY: Inspire Visitors with a Focused and Insightful Marketing Strategy

Promote Indigenous tourism BC's export-ready experiences using a multi-channel approach that includes tour operators and travel media serving key markets.

### RESULTS

#### TRAVEL TRADE

- In May 2018, ITBC attended Rendez-vous Canada in Halifax to promote our 90 market-ready Stakeholders to over 85 tour operators from markets including Canada, United States, United Kingdom, Germany, Switzerland, China, Mexico, France, Belgium and India. ITBC's Marketing Stakeholders Haida Tourism representing Haida House at Tlaa' and Ocean House at Stad's K'uns GawGa, Sea Wolf Adventures, Skwachays Lodge, Spirit Bear Lodge, Squamish Lil'wat Cultural Centre, St Eugene Golf Resort and Takaya Tours also joined Rendez-vous Canada and reported successful meetings with the international travel trade.
- ITBC attended Showcase in Beijing in October 2018 and met with more than 100 Chinese tour operators. ITBC introduced shoulder season experiences to this market.
- In November 2018, ITBC hosted its own travel trade and media event during the AGM in Vancouver. 20 of our Stakeholders had the opportunity to discuss their experiences directly with more than 40 Lower Mainland-based tour operators and media partners.
- In November 2018, ITBC attended Canada's West Marketplace in Banff along with representatives from the Squamish Lil'wat Cultural Centre, Spirit Bear Lodge, Quaaout Lodge and St. Eugene Golf Resort Casino. The team met with 45 world-wide travel trade partners and promoted our Stakeholders' experiences.
- ITBC took part in three familiarization tours with the following Indigenous experience providers to educate our trade partners on Indigenous tourism in BC:
  - Homlaco Wildlife Tours
  - Moccasin Trails
  - Sto:lo Tourism
  - Nisga'a Tourism's Pilot Tour





## TRAVEL MEDIA

- Media outreach in British Columbia, Canada national, US national, Germany, UK and more, resulted in 321 total placements generating over 357M online and 7M offline impressions.
- The ITBC team attended GoMedia 2018 in Calgary and met with more than 30 high value media and key influencers in key markets to promote #IndigenousBC stories.
- In November 2018, ITBC hosted its own travel trade and media event during the AGM in Vancouver. Twenty ITBC Stakeholders had the opportunity to discuss their experiences directly with more than 40 Lower Mainland-based tour operators and media partners.

“Our Story. Your Experience” will continue to drive our consumer identity and brand as we share our connection to the past, present and to the future. The Indigenous gesture of the raising of hands is a way to acknowledge and honour our ancestors as well as give thanks for the opportunity to live and work within our ancestral lands. Finally, “We Raise our Hands” to welcome the world to show and share our living Indigenous cultures in British Columbia.



### 3.0 STRATEGY: Source and Distribute Engaging Content

Create and curate emotionally engaging content and distribute those stories through popular channels and partner networks providing the greatest reach and impact.

#### RESULT

- ITBC worked with the Cariboo Chilcotin Coast Region, Northern BC Tourism and Tourism Vancouver Island to develop the Living Legends series which each tell a compelling story of our Stakeholders in the several tourism regions of BC. Overall, ITBC produced 12 videos which will be distributed over the next fiscal year.
- ITBC also developed nine itineraries covering all tourism regions with links to the included Stakeholders. In addition, more than 20 inspiring blog stories covering our Stakeholder's experiences were developed complete with images and video.
- Between June – August, a peak season social media campaign generated more than 2.7M impressions, over 8,000 referrals, and more than 17,500 advertising engagements.

Measure name	Measure description	2017-2018	2018-2019
<b>Shares</b>	# of incidences that post is shared to network of friends or followers	577/month	610/month
<b>Inspired Users</b>	# of unique users who view 2+ pages/ session on the ITBC consumer Website	14,388/month	Data Unavailable due to new consumer Website launch April 2019
<b>Landing Page Organic Visits</b>	ITBC landing page visits from organic search	5,470/month	6,371/month
<b>Pay-per-Click Cost Per Conversion</b>	Cost of paid search divided by # of visits to a member's experience page found thru either the "Things to Do" or "Places to Go" section of the ITBC website.	\$3.14/ conversion	\$2.09/conversion



# Experience Development

Helping committed Stakeholders improve or start their tourism experience will help BC stand out in the global marketplace and leave visitors feeling emotionally fulfilled in ways that few experiences can.

## 1.0 STRATEGY: Implement “Push for Market Readiness” Fund

Provide targeted funding to improve marketing and sales operations.

### RESULT

The Push for Market Readiness program over the course of 2018/19 provided needed funding to 26 Indigenous tourism operations and communities. This micro-funding was used to improve digital marketing, capture new photography, advertise, and develop new tours.

**The Push for Market Readiness Program means 26 Indigenous tourism experiences are getting the help they need.**



Here are three:

**Gingolx Lodge** - Circle Tour Development and Marketing Support

**Nisga'a Lisims Government**

- Circle Tour Development and Marketing Support

**Tla'amin First Nation (Lund Hotel)** - Digital Marketing Support



## 2.0 STRATEGY: Information Kiosk “Amplify Indigenous Tourism Story”

Leverage new mobile technology and out-of-home marketing tactics to raise awareness of Indigenous tourism opportunities.

### RESULTS

- Working with Thompson Okanagan Tourism Association to build mobile kiosk that uses augmented reality that will travel festival to festival.
- Partnered with Westcoast Sightseeing to create a customized brochure rack hosted at Canada Place.
- Set-in-motion collaboration with Indigenous Friendship Centre of Vancouver and City of Vancouver to develop a mobile information kiosk that will explore and explain traditional Indigenous dwellings.
- Bad Rock Place-names Tour is a partnership with Sto:lo Tourism and Tourism Chilliwack to create an Indigenous cultural tour that includes videos, audio and interactive maps.





We welcomed a record 14 new Indigenous tourism businesses to ITBC this year. We help you grow the success of your business every step of the way

### Startup



Early stage business opportunities being identified for a Nation

### Visitor Ready



Tourism business is accepting visitors and experiences

### Market Ready



Tourism business has expanded and is ready to market locally and nationally

### Export Ready



Experience is well structured and established and ready to market internationally

## We're Growing Fast.

ITBC Welcomes 14 New Marketing Stakeholders in 2018-2019.

- Big Bar Guest Ranch, Clinton
- Copper Sun Journeys, Bella Coola
- Gwaii Naay Island House, Haida Gwaii
- Haida Gwaii Scooter Rentals, Haida Gwaii
- Homalco Wildlife Tours, Campbell River
- Indigenous Artist Market, Fort St. John
- Iskwew Air, Vancouver
- Kispiox Adventures, Kispiox
- Knight Inlet Lodge, Glendale Cove
- Lasqueti Island Hotel, Lasqueti Island
- Moccasin Trails, Kamloops
- Naachim Gallery, Vancouver
- Swiws Spirit Tours, Osoyoos
- Vetter Falls Lodge, Nass Valley



## RESULTS 2018-2019

<i>Measure name</i>	<i>Measure description</i>	2017-2018	2018-2019
<b>Fresh Market Ready Stakeholders</b>	% of new Stakeholders we have recruited from all BC Indigenous businesses that meet the 10 point market ready checklist at the time of application	2 New Stakeholders	14
<b>Market Ready Stakeholders</b>	# of Market-Ready Stakeholders who subscribe to ITBC Marketing program as a Market Ready Stakeholder.	90 Marketing Stakeholders	95
<b>Transitioned Stakeholders</b>	# of Associate Stakeholders who transition to Market-Ready Stakeholders by meeting the market ready checklist.	3 Transitioned Stakeholders	7
<b>Push for Market Readiness Program Recipients</b>	The number of successful applicants who received funding support for business operations	Funds unavailable	26









# Leadership and Organizational Excellence

Our work ensures that Indigenous values weigh heavily in tourism solutions, and that a fair share of the benefits flow to First Nations communities and businesses invested in tourism. This means ensuring that the right economic, social and environmental conditions are in place to sustainably grow Indigenous tourism in British Columbia. Making sure that our own team of leaders and professionals are provided the right climate to succeed is crucial. We must create a work climate that rewards high-performing teams, embraces collaboration, unleashes the innovative spirit and values constant improvement..

## 1.0 STRATEGY: Board Engagement and Activation

The ITBC Board of Directors are respected Indigenous cultural leaders and entrepreneurs. Our directors insist on being at the forefront of the issues and opportunities that will shape ITBC's vision for the future.

### RESULTS

ITBC Board Members represented Indigenous tourism values and interests across all six tourism regions at stakeholder forums, annual general meetings, and summits, including the BC Tourism Industry Conference in late February, 2019.

## 2.0 STRATEGY: Inspire a Strong Corporate Culture

Implementing the 'right' leadership climate and working culture will lift ITBC to higher-levels of performance.

### RESULTS

- Implemented new ITBC Core Values that are reshaping the organization to be more focused, engaged and solutions-based.
- Developed an innovative and more culturally appropriate Indigenous leadership model that instead of a single CEO, requires three senior executive leaders in a shared top-level consensus decision-making system to work in a team-setting in the development and management of strategic and business initiatives. These three Chief Officers report to and work closely with the ITBC Board of Directors (House of Tyee) and external partners.
- Implemented Phase II Human Resources Strategy.
- Expanded ITBC leadership and operational capabilities by hiring a new Chief Partnership and Governance Officer, Director of Training and Development, and Social Media Specialist.

### 3.0 STRATEGY: Provide a Strong Voice for Indigenous Tourism in BC

Promote ITBC programs, services and support through communications channels that will engage Stakeholders and decision-makers.

#### RESULTS

- Proactive corporate media relations resulted in significant coverage of ITBC programs and positions in major influential media outlets such as Business in Vancouver, CBC, SKIFT (North American reach), BC Business and Daily Hive.
- Corporate Twitter @ITBC\_corporate increased followers over 10%, while the ITBC LinkedIn account grew engagement 10% over the same period.

#### RESULTS 2018-2019

Measure name	Measure description	2017-2018	2018-2019
<b>AGM Attendance</b>	# of attendee at ITBC AGM & Forum	100	130
<b>Stakeholder Survey</b>	ITBC stakeholder survey response rate	80%	80%
<b>Corporate Engagement</b>	Total # of interactions with ITBC content on LinkedIn and Corporate Twitter	–	3,560
<b>Stakeholder/ Partner Forums</b>	# of forums	6	17





# Budget

4 STRATEGIC PILLARS	
Marketing	\$742,097
Experience Development	\$563,844
Partnerships and Special Projects	\$362,638
Leadership and Organizational Excellence	\$393,602
General and Administration	\$157,256
Total:	\$2,219,437