
NEWS RELEASE

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Ministry of Tourism, Arts, Culture and Sport

B.C. launches plan to revitalize tourism, creating opportunities for people

RICHMOND – B.C. has launched a new three-year roadmap for rebuilding and revitalizing tourism, creating jobs and opportunities for people and communities in every part of the province.

“B.C. is a world-class destination, and we know the pandemic has hurt tourism,” said Melanie Mark, Minister of Tourism, Arts, Culture and Sport. “As the world opens up again, we’re working together to rebuild and revitalize this critical industry that adds so much to our planet, our people and our shared prosperity.”

The renewed Strategic Framework for Tourism responds to the call to action from the sector to support its recovery from COVID-19. It outlines a roadmap for a more resilient tourism sector by rebuilding to 2019 levels by 2024.

“Every single person connected to the tourism industry has demonstrated incredible fortitude and leadership during the COVID-19 pandemic,” Mark said. “I have been constantly impressed by the dedication and hard work of tourism operators and staff to pivot, realign their businesses and take care of each other. Now, together, we’re going to build back stronger by making our mark to ensure B.C. is first in line to benefit from pent-up demand for world-class tourism experiences.”

A flourishing tourism industry is a key pillar of the StrongerBC Economic Plan and contributes to an inclusive, sustainable and innovative economy that works for all people. Requested by B.C.’s tourism industry leaders and the Tourism Task Force, the update of this framework focuses on provincial priorities of putting people first; lasting and meaningful reconciliation; equity and anti-racism; a better future through fighting climate change; and a strong, sustainable economy that works for everyone.

To continue to support tourism businesses in B.C. to come back stronger, the Province is investing \$1 million toward investments in event-bid preparation and sponsorships to attract large-scale arts, culture, and sport events, and public conferences and exhibitions. Investing now in event programs will kick-start the events industry’s recovery and will position B.C. as a safe, world-class, event-hosting jurisdiction once again. This is in addition to the \$8 million government recently announced for the Business Events and Conferences Restart Fund to help restart business travel by attracting and hosting business events, conferences and exhibitions.

The Tourism Task Force emphasized how challenging it has been for industry to find the skilled workers it needs. This is why government is investing a further \$2 million for post-secondary education and training to support B.C. students who enrol in tourism and hospitality certificate, diploma or degree programs, tourism-related apprenticeships, and trades training and

development programs. This program, now in development, will prioritize students who are Indigenous, immigrant or refugee applicants, as well as those from rural or remote locations, and people with accessibility needs. More details will be provided soon.

As part of the Province's continuing tourism recovery initiatives, government has committed \$6 million this year through 2024 for Destination BC to market B.C. as a destination of choice in the highly competitive international market.

"We are very enthused about the Province's further investment in tourism recovery," said Walt Judas, CEO, Tourism Industry Association of BC. "These funds come at an opportune time as our industry looks to rebuild our workforce, products and service levels to once again welcome guests from all over the world in the months and years ahead."

This funding builds on the \$570 million the B.C. government has invested in recovery supports for the tourism sector, including the Small and Medium Sized Business Recovery Grant and the Circuit Breaker Business Relief Grant that are providing funding to nearly 8,200 tourism and hospitality businesses. This funding has supported programs such as the Festival, Fairs and Events Recovery Fund, Tourism Accommodation and Commercial Recreation Relief Fund, business support through Indigenous Tourism BC, and tourism infrastructure development.

Government investment in pandemic support for the hard-hit tourism sector was made early and continues with the sustained rollout of new recovery investment programs spanning the breadth of tourism recovery – from HR recruitment and retention, including engaging students, to resuming large-scale conferences and events, and furthering destination development.

A well-managed, thriving tourism industry makes life better for people: it is integral to the province's economy and features prominently in B.C.'s economic plan. These initiatives, plus the resumption of strong international marketing efforts, position B.C. as a world-class destination with the programs in place to support a strong economic recovery that will be felt at all levels of community.

Quotes:

Krista Bax, CEO, go2HR –

"This program for training will no doubt spur interest from students as they see a supported pathway to a career in tourism and hospitality. We can't wait to welcome these new students to our industry. Opportunities await them in an industry that values diversity and is proud to contribute to community vitality throughout our province."

Richard Porges, CEO, Destination BC –

"Spending more time and money in B.C. compared to domestic travellers, international visitors are vital to the industry's strong recovery. As the world reopens for travel, this additional funding will enable Destination BC to be even more effective in the incredibly competitive market for international travellers, bringing more tourism dollars to businesses in every corner of the province."

Brenda Baptiste, chair, Indigenous Tourism BC –

"We look forward to revitalizing tourism, creating jobs, and building capacity and opportunities

for Indigenous communities and businesses. Our industry has collaborated and found innovative solutions, and we look forward to a solid roadmap for recovery with the Strategic Tourism Framework.”

Quick Facts:

- The Tourism Task Force recommended the Strategic Framework be updated to reflect the new operating environment that has resulted from COVID-19 and to provide opportunities to support mid-term recovery and long-term resiliency for the tourism industry.
- Government will monitor the framework's delivery through key performance indicators that will be shared publicly.
- Budget 2022 committed almost \$25 million to destination development, international marketing, business events and conferences recovery, marquee events bids, and tourism training.

Learn More:

For more information on B.C.'s tourism framework, visit: <http://gov.bc.ca/tourismframework>

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