

Indigenous Tourism BC ANNUAL REPORT 2024-2025



**INDIGENOUS
TOURISM BC**
CORPORATE

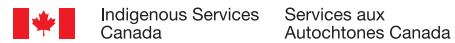
Acknowledging Our Partners

We honour the collaborative work that has strengthened relationships leading us on this good path we are on today. We have made enormous strides with a long list of partners, thanks to our shared belief that Indigenous cultural tourism in BC is not just about business, but also about rediscovery, transformation, and empowerment.

We raise our hands to gratefully acknowledge Destination BC and the Province of BC for the continued investment in our Indigenous Communities and their consistent support of Indigenous tourism operators.



Indigenous Tourism BC also acknowledges the funding contributions from Indigenous Services Canada, and Pacific Economic Development Canada.



27+ Years

25+ Dedicated ITBC Staff Members

593 Stakeholders

377+ Indigenous-Owned Visitor, Market and Export-Ready Businesses

57+ New Stakeholders





We exist to empower Indigenous futures and inspire global visitors by living the brilliance of our ancestors teachings, today.

Everything is Connected.

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Indigenous tourism is growing faster than ever all around the world. More travellers are looking for meaningful experiences that give back. More Canadians are looking to learn and implement Truth and Reconciliation Calls to Action. More First Nations and Indigenous Peoples in BC are looking to support their communities, lands, and economies through tourism.

Canada leads this global growth and British Columbia is home to more than twenty per cent of the Indigenous tourism operators in Canada. After 27 years, and starting from just a handful of Indigenous tourism operators, Indigenous Tourism BC proudly represents the interests of 593 Stakeholders, including Indigenous business owners and First Nations.

We are proud of our success because it means that First Nations and Indigenous Peoples are succeeding and leading in tourism in British Columbia.

Our success isn't luck or coincidence. It is because we continue to live in the brilliance of our ancestors' wisdom—to prioritize meaningful connections to the land and each other, protect and share our cultures, respect our Elders and Knowledge Keepers, and place value and trust in our young people. These ways have guided us through many challenges as First Nations and Indigenous Peoples and now they are helping us to succeed in tourism.

WE ARE PROUD OF OUR SUCCESS BECAUSE IT MEANS THAT FIRST NATIONS AND INDIGENOUS PEOPLES ARE SUCCEEDING AND LEADING IN TOURISM IN BRITISH COLUMBIA.

Indigenous tourism operators in BC are innovators in experience development blending technology and culture, with youth leading as changemakers. Indigenous businesses are creating employment opportunities for community members and in rural areas, with more than half of the Indigenous tourism workforce identifying as Indigenous.

First Nations and Indigenous Peoples are telling their own stories—deciding how and what to share and creating a strong framework to ensure experience authenticity, cultural integrity, and mutual benefit are upheld as Indigenous tourism grows globally.

We give our thanks to the Indigenous tourism operators and communities that are creating economic growth by expressing cultural vitality. To the Elders and Youth who are singing and dancing and telling stories and creating new pathways in Indigenous tourism. To the First Nations that are using the wealth they generate in tourism to care for the land, fund culture and language programs, and increase sovereignty for communities and autonomy for individuals. And to all who share our vision for a sustainable, culturally authentic Indigenous tourism industry in BC that contributes to health and wellness for the land and its people.

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

liml̓amt,
Brenda Baptiste, *Chair,*
Indigenous Tourism British Columbia



Our Intention: Well-being for All

PURPOSE

We exist to empower Indigenous futures and inspire global visitors by living the brilliance of our ancestors' teachings, today.

VISION

To be a leading advocate for Indigenous tourism in BC, working together to build a thriving industry that supports Indigenous sovereignty, prosperity, and community well-being, while reframing perceptions of BC and creating local and global appreciation for Indigenous worldviews.

MISSION

We serve a mandate to partner with Indigenous tourism businesses and First Nations communities to create meaningful tourism experiences that share histories, cultures, and lands on their terms. Through training, product development, and marketing initiatives, we help elevate offerings, broaden the reach of Indigenous tourism and amplify Indigenous voices to gain international recognition and appreciation.



A Strategy for Empowered Indigenous Futures, Inspired Global Visitors

Indigenous Tourism BC is now in its third year of Strengthening Our Roots and Branches, our current five-year corporate strategy. This strategy was created to support the growth of Indigenous economies, increase capacity and competitiveness of Indigenous businesses, execute a focused and insightful marketing strategy, accelerate experience development, establish a strong Indigenous tourism story, and strengthen ITBC leadership.

From its inception in 1996, Indigenous Tourism BC has evolved into a powerful force for Indigenous tourism. We've built something incredible—but the world is changing, and so are we. At the heart of our mission is a truth we've always known: Everything is connected. Our lands, our waters, our stories, our People—woven together in a way that cannot be separated. This belief shapes everything we do.

We are more than just tourism advocates; we are storytellers, culture keepers, and land stewards, driven by purpose and an unwavering dedication to the communities we serve. This interconnection shapes how we serve Indigenous tourism businesses, First Nations communities, and global travellers.

We are responsive and reliable advocates known to and trusted by First Nations and Indigenous Peoples in British Columbia. Leading with Indigenous interests and voices, we are changing the perception of British Columbia for residents and visitors alike.

We serve Indigenous tourism businesses and First Nations communities to create meaningful tourism experiences that share our histories, diverse cultures, connection to the lands, waters, and skies—on our terms.

We are building a future together where travellers don't just see BC, but understand it through the eyes, voices, hearts, and actions of First Nations and Indigenous Peoples. We envision a future where Indigenous tourism is a cornerstone of prosperity, sovereignty, and cultural strength.

The following are the highest priority focus areas within each performance area:

Leadership and Organizational Innovation

Strengthen ITBC's position as a global leader in Indigenous Tourism Development. Strengthen relationships with Indigenous communities to generate stronger local tourism outcomes.

Partnerships and Special Projects

Deliver with excellence on the strengthened partnerships and projects established to build capacity and resiliency. Support reconciliation and stewardship efforts.

Experience Development

Support Indigenous communities, businesses and entrepreneurs in building, enhancing, and enriching Indigenous tourism experiences.

Marketing

Strengthen Indigenous voices, values and presence in marketing efforts throughout BC's tourism industry.



Leadership & Organizational Innovation

STRENGTHEN ITBC'S POSITION AS A GLOBAL LEADER IN INDIGENOUS TOURISM DEVELOPMENT. STRENGTHEN RELATIONSHIPS WITH INDIGENOUS COMMUNITIES TO GENERATE STRONGER LOCAL TOURISM OUTCOMES.



Indigenous tourism in BC represents a vital intersection of economic development and culture rooted in the values and traditions of 204 First Nations communities. With over 30 First Nation languages and 60 dialects in British Columbia, there are Authentic Indigenous cultural experiences in BC that connect visitors to millennia-old knowledge systems and Indigenous-owned businesses that are part of a growing Indigenous tourism economy in the province.

British Columbia hosts more than twenty percent of Indigenous tourism businesses in Canada and provides \$ 1.1 B in annual economic impact contribution. Indigenous tourism is an opportunity for First Nation communities and Indigenous Peoples to create economic sovereignty and share their cultures if and how they choose—it's also tourism in that travellers can feel good about. It's ethical and responsible, and supports Indigenous sovereignty, stewardship, and community prosperity.

AUTHENTIC INDIGENOUS AND INDIGENOUS-OWNED

This year, we successfully refined and relaunched our **Authentic Indigenous** program, with a new Indigenous-owned designation. These significant markers of quality and authenticity are designed to support and promote Indigenous tourism businesses across British Columbia, increasing the visibility of Indigenous success, creating a standard for the province, and ensuring that travellers can easily identify and engage with genuine Indigenous cultural experiences and businesses. Together, these designations create a trusted framework that ensures authenticity, integrity, and mutual benefit in Indigenous tourism in British Columbia.

MORE THAN A BRAND REFRESH

From our beginnings in 1996, Indigenous Tourism BC has grown into a powerful force for advocacy and success in Indigenous tourism. We've built something incredible—but the world is changing, and so are we. We took the time to realign, refocus, and step forward with clarity and confidence and conducted a **brand refresh** to guide our way. We listened. We reflected. We asked ourselves: What makes us who we are? What do we stand for? Our brand strategy is a clear, powerful guide for who we are, what we believe, and how we show up in the world and our brand intention is simple: Well-being For All. For travellers, it means experiences that nourish the mind, body, and spirit. For Indigenous businesses and First Nations communities, it means opportunities, growth, and pride.

BC FIRST NATIONS-LED TOURISM DESTINATION FUND

Since 2008, ITBC has been proudly supported and mandated by the First Nations Leadership Council (FNLC) as the voice of Indigenous tourism interests in BC. In 2024, ITBC followed the necessary procedures and protocols to develop a BC First Nations-led Tourism Destination Fund. This initiative received direction and unanimous support from the Union of British Columbia Indian Chiefs and the First Nations Summit Chiefs, promoting self-determination, self-governance, and sovereignty for First Nations in British Columbia. The BC First Nations-led Tourism Destination Fund prioritizes a Distinctions-based Approach, aligning with the protocols of British Columbia's First Nations and the guidelines of the Declaration on the Rights of Indigenous Peoples Act.

CULTURE AND TECHNOLOGY

As First Nations and Indigenous Peoples, we are rooted in our histories and traditions—but we live the brilliance of our ancestors in today's ever-evolving technological and digital world. Indigenous tourism is experiencing unprecedented global growth, and Indigenous Peoples are taking the lead in its development, ensuring cultural authenticity and integrity that supports economic growth and wellness for all, while innovating in digital presence and tech use for experience development. Indigenous youth are stepping up as leaders, innovators, and change makers, blending culture and technology to create new pathways in Indigenous tourism.

GLOBAL SPOTLIGHT

With First Nations as a distinguishing factor in BC tourism and increased global interest overall, we are seeing Indigenous Peoples and their cultures take centre stage at major events, like FIFA 2026. The world is taking notice, creating new opportunities for Indigenous Peoples in BC to develop businesses that share aspects of their traditions, histories, and cultures.

Every interaction in Indigenous tourism has the potential to create a meaningful impact for everyone involved. This is the vision and goal we share with First Nations, Indigenous Peoples, travellers, partners, and allies. Thank you for walking with us.

Everything is connected.

Paula Amos,
Chief Marketing & Development Officer

Henry Tso,
Chief Financial Officer

Meet our Board of Directors

The Board of Directors at Indigenous Tourism BC provides strategic direction and leadership to the organization. Some of the professional duties of the Board of Directors are:

- Develop and adopt policies and procedures governing all aspects of the organization including staff employment, management, and administration
- Advise the ITBC Stakeholders on activities of the organization and make recommendations for their consideration and action
- Oversee the management of funds of the organization and raise funds for the organization

AT-LARGE

SHARON BOND, Kekuli Café (re-elected)

ALISON EVANS, Gulf Island Seaplanes (acclaimed)

MARIA CLARK, Best Western at Tin Wis (re-elected)

KOOTENAY ROCKIES DIRECTOR

LEANNA GRAVELLE, St. Eugene Resort Hotel (acclaimed)

THOMPSON OKANAGAN DIRECTOR

DESIREE BAKER, Grandpa's Heart at Nicklen Lake (acclaimed)

VANCOUVER, COAST & MOUNTAINS DIRECTOR

LORI SIMCOX, Takaya Tours (acclaimed)

RETURNING BOARD MEMBERS

BRENDA BAPTISTE, At-large, Nk'Mip Campground, Nk'Mip Desert Cultural Centre, Nk'Mip Cellars

JENNA BOWER, At-large, Nk'Mip Desert Cultural Centre

ELIJAH MACK, At-large, Kekuli Cafe (Merritt and Kamloops)

CHYANNE TRENHOLM, Vancouver Island Region, Homalco Wildlife and Cultural Tours

KATHY BROWN, Cariboo Chilcotin Coast Region, Seequest Development Corporation

LESLIE BROWN, Northern BC Region, Davidson's Descendants

There are currently three standing committees: Finance, Governance and Marketing. Each board member serves a two-year term and is elected by voting Stakeholders as needed at the AGM.

Thank you to our 2024/25 Board of Directors for sharing their time, skills, and wisdom with Indigenous Tourism BC and making a valuable contribution to Indigenous tourism businesses, entrepreneurs, and First Nations communities in BC.



SHARON BOND



ALISON EVANS



MARIA CLARK



LEANNA GRAVELLE



DESIREE BAKER



LORI SIMCOX



BRENDA BAPTISTE



JENNA BOWER



ELIJAH MACK



CHYANNE TRENHOLM



KATHY BROWN



LESLIE BROWN



Our Brand

Indigenous Tourism BC (ITBC) proudly unveiled its refreshed branding in 2024, marking a new chapter in our organizational journey.

We serve a mandate to partner with Indigenous tourism businesses and First Nations communities to create meaningful tourism experiences that share our histories, diverse cultures, connection to the lands, waters, and skies—on our terms.

Our refreshed branding reflects our deep reflection, collaboration, and renewed commitment to the principles that have always guided us. We took the time to pause, listen, and reflect on our past, present, and future. And through this process, we rediscovered a powerful truth—**Everything is connected**.

This belief is woven into the very fabric of our work. We are more than just tourism advocates; we are **storytellers, culture keepers, and land stewards**, driven by purpose and an unwavering dedication to the communities we serve. This interconnection shapes how we serve Indigenous tourism businesses, First Nations communities, and global travellers.

Our brand intention is simple: **Well-being For All**. For travellers, it means experiences that nourish the mind, body, and spirit. For Indigenous businesses and First Nations communities, it means opportunities, growth, and pride.

We exist to empower Indigenous futures and inspire global visitors by living the brilliance of our ancestors' teachings, today. This is our purpose. We dream of a future where Indigenous tourism is a pillar of prosperity, sovereignty, and cultural strength. We are building a future together where travellers don't just see BC, but understand it through our eyes. We are connected to our lands, waters, and skies. We are connected to our communities and our traditions. And through this connection, we are reframing perceptions, strengthening sovereignty, and ensuring that Indigenous tourism thrives for generations to come.

“At the heart of our refreshed brand is a simple yet profound purpose: to empower Indigenous futures and inspire global visitors by living the brilliance of our ancestors' teachings, today. Our dream is for Indigenous tourism to become a pillar of prosperity, sovereignty, and cultural strength for generations to come.”

– Paula Amos, *Chief Marketing and Development Officer, ITBC*

Our Stakeholder Pillars

ADVOCATE

We are committed to actively promoting the interests of Indigenous tourism entrepreneurs, businesses, and communities, always putting their needs first.

AMPLIFY

We increase the visibility of Indigenous stories, cultures, and businesses. Promoting and preserving Indigenous heritage by sharing authentic narratives with the world.

EMPOWER

We provide educational opportunities, training, and resources to help Indigenous tourism operators build resilient businesses that prioritize sustainable growth.

CONNECT

We help facilitate building and maintaining a strong, supportive network of Indigenous tourism businesses and partners. Sharing resources, information, and opportunities to enhance collective success and resilience.

INNOVATE

We are focused on innovative approaches and solutions in the tourism industry. Blending the brilliance of traditional Indigenous thinking with modern innovations to support the creation of unique and competitive tourism offerings.

Our Traveller Pillars

COME TO LEARN

We invite travellers to explore old and new truths that will reshape your perspectives. Come connect with the timeless knowledge and teachings passed down by Indigenous ancestors, enriching your journey with profound understanding and respect.

EXPERIENCE THE ENERGY

Everything is alive here, imbued with spirit, and in constant motion. We invite you to immerse yourself in the dynamic energy of our homeland and people. Where you can experience new ways of living and connecting with the natural world around you.

DIVERSE CULTURES DEFINE US

Come experience a diverse place with over 200 Indigenous and First Nations communities, each with their own distinct protocols, traditions, languages, and dialects.

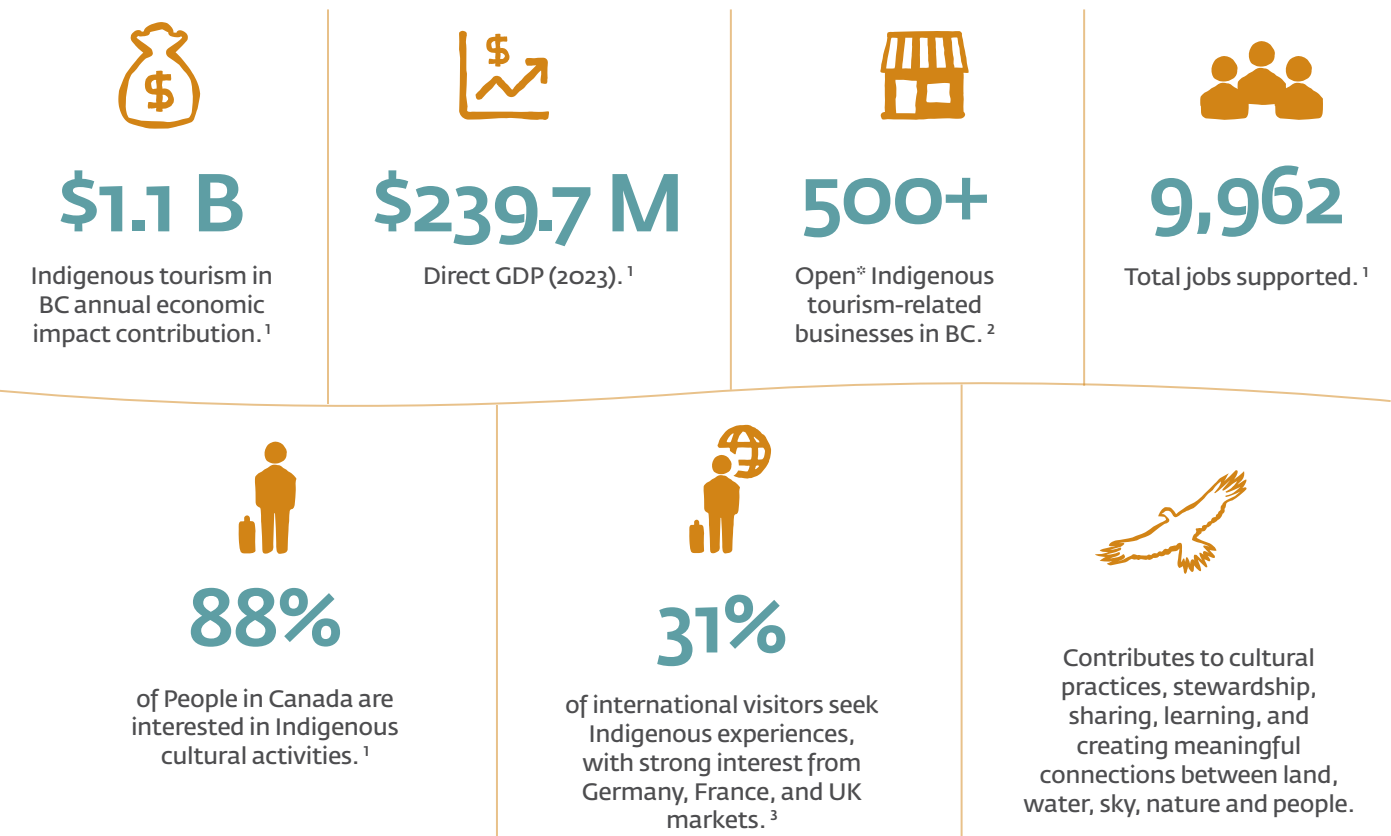
DEEP CONNECTION TO THE LAND, WATER, AND SKY

As the original stewards of this place, we invite you to experience the responsibility and reverence we have for our home. Join us in protecting and regenerating this place for future generations. And, experience a deeper connection to the lands, waters, and skies that will move you.

Indigenous Tourism at a Glance in BC

Indigenous tourism in BC represents a vital intersection of economic development and culture rooted in the values and traditions of 204 First Nations communities. With over 30 First Nation languages and 60 dialects, there are cultural experiences in BC that connect visitors to millennia-old knowledge systems. Tourism, guided by responsible and regenerative travel practices, connects visitors to the land, water, sky, people and place.

A significant economic driver, Indigenous tourism in British Columbia contributes substantially to the economies of First Nation communities and to the province. Indigenous tourism is an opportunity for First Nation communities and Indigenous Peoples to create economic sovereignty and present their culture if and how they choose. The following information comes from the Indigenous Tourism Sector Profile released by Destination BC in March 2025.



¹ (x4) Indigenous Tourism Sector Impact in Canada, Conference Board of Canada, January 2025

² ITBC Stakeholder data

³ Destination Canada, 2025 Global Traveller Research Program.





2024/2025 ITBC Performance at a Glance



Indigenous Tourism BC works to collaborate with and improve our connections within British Columbia’s tourism network. Our commitment to building capacity and success for Indigenous entrepreneurs, businesses, and communities in British Columbia remains at the forefront of our mission.

As an Indigenous-led tourism organization, we support more Indigenous-led responsible cultural tourism in BC. Tourism is the tool we use to advance reconciliation and Indigenous rights, including self-determination and the pursuit of economic, social, and cultural development.

This year, ITBC began implementing the BC First Nations-Led Tourism Destination Fund. The organization also collaborated with the National Aboriginal Capital Corporations Association to support Indigenous tourism businesses receiving funding through the Signature Indigenous Tourism Experiences Stream (SITES) under the ISED Indigenous Tourism Fund.

BC FIRST NATIONS-LED TOURISM DESTINATION FUND

The First Nations Leadership Council (FNLC) has approved and directed Indigenous Tourism BC (ITBC) to lead the development of a BC First Nations-led Tourism Destination Fund, a community-led and managed fund unanimously supported by the Union of British Columbia Indian Chiefs (UBCIC), the First Nations Summit Chiefs (FNS), and the BC Assembly of First Nations (BCAFN.)

Canada and BC Legal Frameworks (DRIPA, TRC CTAs, and the NIES), court precedents, and Indigenous laws and protocols are all clear: Indigenous Peoples have a right to benefit from economic activities in their Traditional Territories.

While other industries like Mining and Forestry are legally required by BC to accommodate Indigenous interests, BC’s \$18.5 billion tourism industry operates in a legislative gap to the exclusion of BC First Nations.

In 2024, ITBC announced that it is creating the BC First Nations-Led Tourism Destination Fund (BCFNTDF) in accordance with a mandate from the First Nations Leadership Council. ITBC asked Allied Certifications Ltd. to lead the development of a draft framework for this program.

The BCFNTDF will *require* BC Tourism Operators to respect and comply with Indigenous Laws & Protocols. These are key components of the BCFNTDF:

- A support program to enable First Nations to articulate and establish independent Indigenous Protocol Compliance Standards in their traditional territories.
- An accreditation program stewarded by ITBC to recognize and reward businesses at the provincial level for complying with Nation-specific protocols where they operate. ITBC will coordinate with DBC and regional DMOs to educate visitors about these new standards at international trade shows and drive demand for Indigenous protocol compliant tourism.
- A Trust Fund will be established to cover the operational costs of this program. Participating First Nations will be asked to contribute a small percentage of their independent protocol compliance program revenue to top up the BCFNTDF each year.
- In 2024-25, ITBC and Allied Certifications created a draft framework for BCFNTDF and initiated strategic relationship-building. We are currently assembling an All-Indigenous Advisory Committee to lead the development of the initiative and seeking trust fund seed funding and funding for upcoming program development costs. In 2026, ITBC will begin extensive consultations with BC First Nations in the co-creation of this program.
- BCFNTDF will play an important role in the resurgence of Indigenous governance in BC, generating up to \$185 million in funds each year for BC First Nations to achieve their self-determined aspirations.

NATIONAL ABORIGINAL CAPITAL CORPORATIONS ASSOCIATION

The National Aboriginal Capital Corporations Association (NACCA) is a network of more than 50 Aboriginal Financial Institutions (AFIs) across Canada. They are committed to promoting economic growth and self-reliance for Indigenous Peoples by providing access to capital and financial services.

NACCA empowers Indigenous entrepreneurs and communities by offering financing, business support, and capacity-building programs. Their network of AFIs helps Indigenous businesses start, grow, and thrive, contributing to the economic development of Indigenous communities across Canada.

NACCA supports ITBC through the Strategic Indigenous Tourism Expansion Program (SITES). This program provides funding and resources to help Indigenous tourism businesses expand and succeed. SITES focuses on building capacity, improving business operations, and increasing market readiness, enabling Indigenous entrepreneurs to achieve long-term success in the tourism industry.

In 2024, NACCA provided substantial funding support to three ITBC Stakeholder businesses.

Partnerships & Special Projects

DELIVER WITH EXCELLENCE ON THE STRENGTHENED PARTNERSHIPS AND PROJECTS ESTABLISHED TO BUILD CAPACITY AND RESILIENCY. SUPPORT RECONCILIATION AND STEWARDSHIP EFFORTS.

ITBC'S ROLE IN PARTNERSHIPS AND SPECIAL PROJECTS IS TO:

- Build the right partnerships that have the potential to strengthen and diversify our funding base, grow Stakeholder confidence in our abilities, nurture Indigenous community support for tourism, expand our market power, and increase the supply of Indigenous tourism experiences to meet growing demand.
- Understand and advance the opportunities that exist when working in partnership with Indigenous communities.
- Secure funding to support Indigenous tourism businesses in their adaptation to aid in long term resiliency and other emergencies and disruptions that may occur.

STRATEGY:

Activate Regional Partnerships

Indigenous Tourism BC works to collaborate with and improve our connections within British Columbia's tourism network. Our commitment to building capacity and success for Indigenous entrepreneurs, businesses, and communities in British Columbia remains at the forefront of our mission.

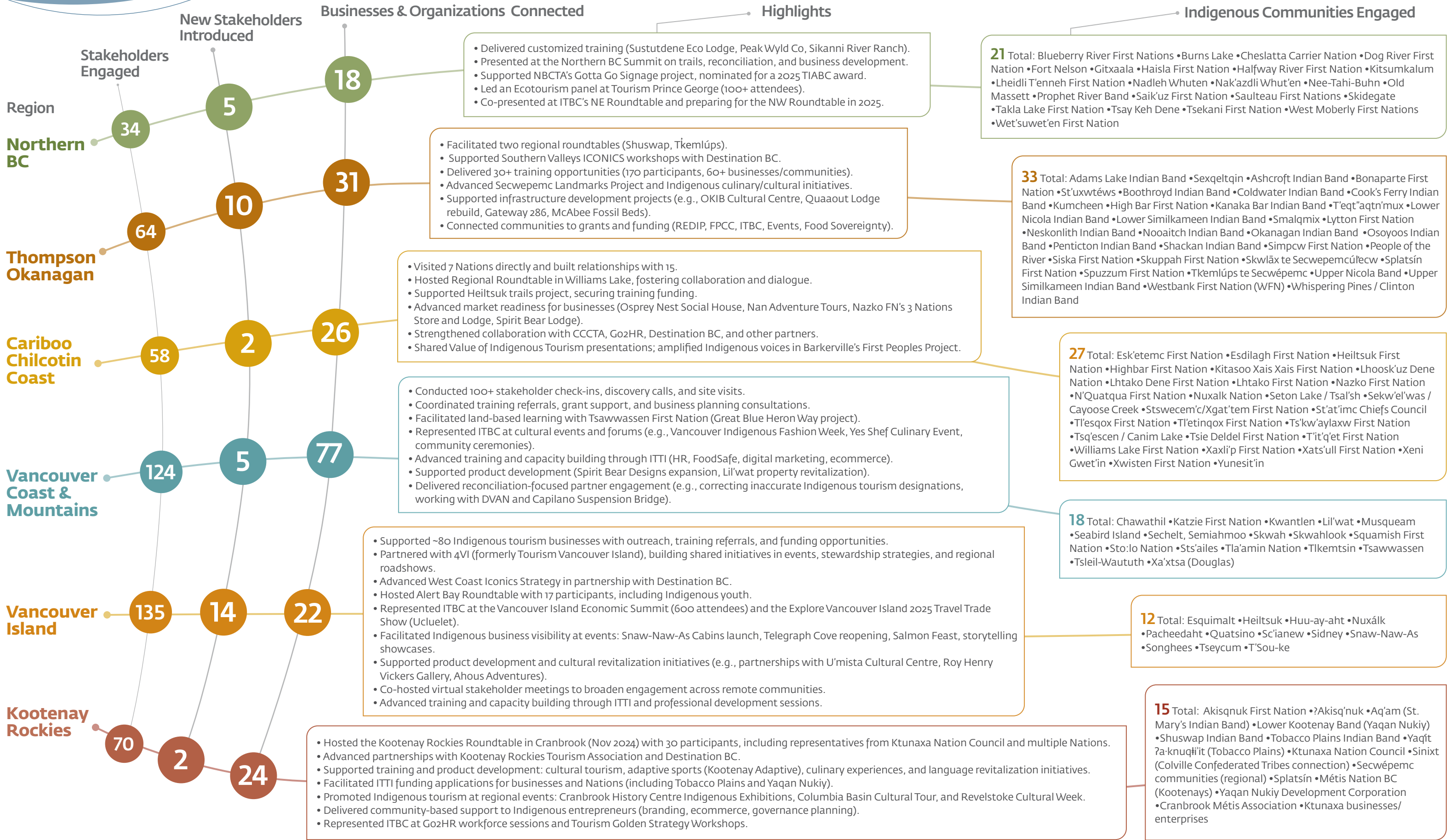
As an Indigenous-led tourism organization, we support more Indigenous-led responsible cultural tourism in BC. Tourism is the tool we use to advance reconciliation and Indigenous rights, including self-determination and the pursuit of economic, social, and cultural development.

ITBC has put more feet on the ground, with dedicated Regional Indigenous Tourism Specialists making new connections and strengthening relationships all across British Columbia, allowing us to increase our outreach to prospective and existing Indigenous tourism Stakeholders.

This year, our dedicated team of 25+ welcomed more than 57 new Stakeholders. Indigenous Tourism BC now proudly represents 593 Stakeholders, including First Nations communities and economic development bodies and over 377 Indigenous-owned visitor-, market-, and export-ready businesses.

“Tourism breathes life into our culture and community”

– Chief Johnathon Prest, *Skwah First Nation*



STRATEGY:

Activate Provincial Partnerships

SHOWING UP IN NEW SPACES

With more dedicated regional staff focused on building relationships and knowledge, we are always on the lookout for ways we can participate in key industry events, panels, and forums as speakers, contributors, and sponsors. Across our engagements, we reached over **1,200 individuals**, not including the outreach done directly by our RITS team.

We search for new intersections between Indigenous tourism in British Columbia and other industries. We seek new audiences and allies interested in learning and contributing to Indigenous success in Indigenous tourism in British Columbia. We want to share our wisdom in new contexts to help shape a future that provides wellbeing for all.

We are attracting larger more relevant and responsible audiences to hear our mission, and new perspectives from Indigenous partners and allies that can help us align our efforts with the values, goals, and needs of curious, interested, and established Indigenous tourism operators in BC.

Attending events allows us to connect our value to industry partners and make new connections with other industries, bodies of knowledge, and potential allies. Making presentations ensures that we tell our story our way and build a supportive and progressive community of Indigenous tourism champions in British Columbia.

EVENT & PRESENTATION HIGHLIGHTS 2024

In 2024, ITBC continued to build meaningful connections and elevate the visibility of Indigenous tourism across British Columbia through active participation in key industry events, conferences, and community initiatives. Our team proudly represented Indigenous voice as, shared insights, and continued to build collaboration across sectors.

Highlights Include:

Indigenous Tourism Week | National Indigenous Peoples Day | Career Panels & Academic Events | VOIT Presentations | College SLCC Youth Workshop | BCHF Golf Tournaments | Lunch 'n' Learn with Inez Cook | Three Stars Dark Sky Festival FAM Tour | Tourism HR Canada Labour Forum | Forward Summit | TOTA Summit | VCM Sustainability Council | BC Economic Development Association Conference | Rising Economy 2025

In addition to a strong presence across numerous industry gatherings, ITBC placed special focus on several key events that deepened **partnerships**, showcased Indigenous excellence, and advanced tourism development in 2024. These included:

BC Tourism Industry Conference and Awards

The **BC Tourism Industry Conference** brings together professionals, leaders, and stakeholders from across British Columbia's tourism sector. On Thursday, March 6, 2025, we honoured outstanding finalists and celebrated the winners at the annual BC Tourism Awards Gala, sponsored by Indigenous Tourism BC and held on the territories of the Skwxwú7mesh (Squamish), səliłwətał (Tsleil-Waututh), and xʷməθkʷəy̓əm (Musqueam). Two ITBC Stakeholders took home provincial awards at last year's gala.

The Indigenous Operator or Experience Award, sponsored by Indigenous Tourism and Indigenous Stewardship Fund, recognizes Indigenous tourism businesses that demonstrate authenticity, cultivate a greater understanding of Indigenous culture, history and traditions, and contribute to the resilience of the local Indigenous community. Xiila-T'aayii accepted the award on behalf of Haida Style Expeditions.

The Tourism Woman of the Year recognizes the achievements, professional expertise, resilience and leadership of outstanding women who play a vital role in the tourism industry. The award was presented to Talaysay Campo of Talaysay Tours.





ITBC Stakeholder Forum and AGM

On November 4-5, 2024, on the shared territory of the Skwxwú7mesh (Squamish), səliłwətał (Tseil-Waututh), and xʷməθkʷəy̓əm (Musqueam) Nations, Indigenous Tourism BC (ITBC) welcomed 102 attendees, including ITBC Stakeholders, Partners, and First Nations Community Members to our 27th Annual General Meeting (AGM) at the Coast Coal Harbour Hotel in Vancouver.

The 2024 AGM was a powerful gathering filled with insightful discussions, knowledge sharing, and meaningful networking. It underscored our shared commitment to advancing Indigenous tourism across British Columbia. Each session, presentation, and conversation highlighted the remarkable dedication of our community and the transformative growth of Indigenous tourism, creating positive impacts for First Nations communities across the province.



STRATEGY:

Invest in Iconics

The **Invest in Iconics Strategy** is a long-term strategy to responsibly increase the benefits of tourism throughout British Columbia through the integration of place branding and destination development to competitively differentiate BC on the world stage.

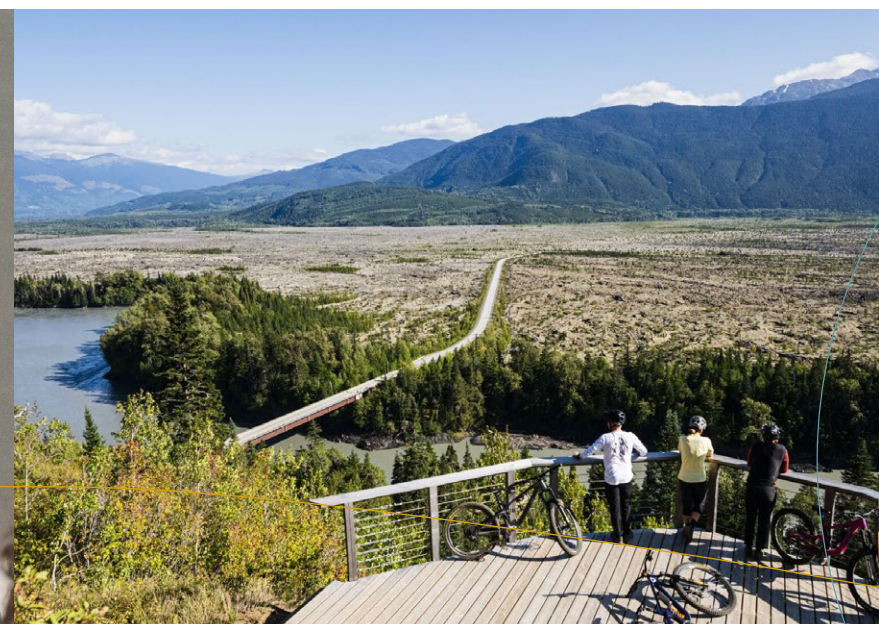
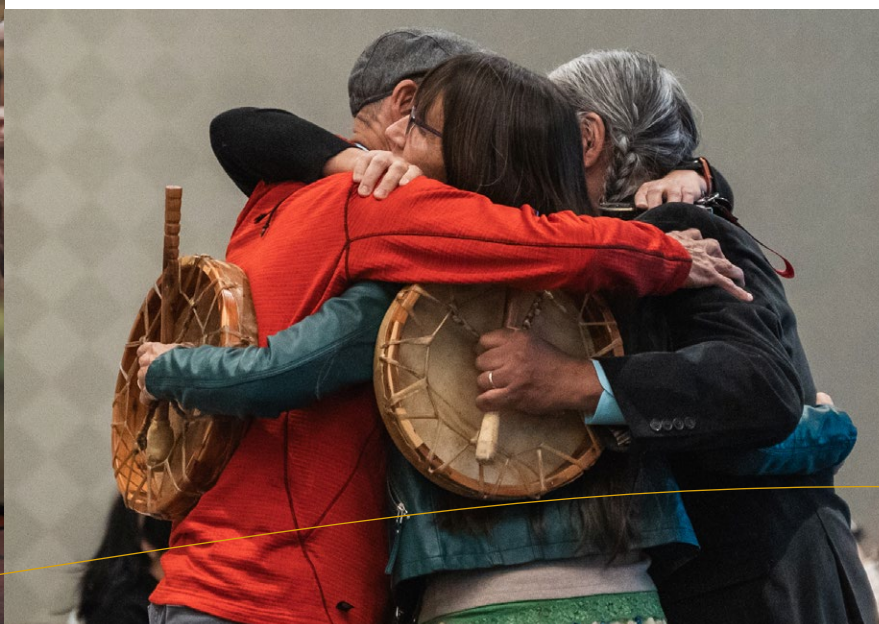
The Invest in Iconics team at ITBC is creating assets, including a video and protocol document that will help others learn about the Invest in Iconics strategy and provide guidance on the appropriate use of Indigenous songs, language, stories, images and videos.

ITBC supports the Invest in Iconics strategy, in partnership with DBC. A key consideration in this strategy is sustainable tourism growth that honours the environment and Indigenous values, protocols, and Territories.

ITBC looks to ensure reconciliation and culture are prioritized to preserve and advocate for Indigenous cultures in tourism, grounded in the concepts of Indigenous well-being outlined by British Columbia Assembly of First Nations (BCAFN).

ITBC emphasizes the importance of genuine engagement and the safeguarding of Indigenous cultures and intellectual property, and operates in alignment with the United Nations and BC Declarations on Indigenous Peoples' Rights.

Direct engagements were facilitated with ITBC Stakeholders to identify key Indigenous considerations and perspectives in the development of the Invest in Iconics Strategy.



Experience Development

SUPPORT INDIGENOUS TOURISM ENTREPRENEURS AND FIRST NATION-DRIVEN DESTINATION DEVELOPMENT AND INCREASE THE NUMBER OF MARKET-READY BUSINESSES WITH TRAINING, TOOLS, AND ACCESS TO CAPITAL FOR ECONOMIC RECONCILIATION AND WELLBEING.



STRATEGY:

Indigenous Tourism Training

IMPLEMENT TRAINING PROGRAMS

In 2019, ITBC launched the Indigenous Tourism Labour Research and Strategy with the support of the Province of British Columbia. ITBC worked with First Nations, Indigenous Skills Employment Training Agencies (ISETs), and Indigenous tourism employers, to support Indigenous people and the tourism industry throughout BC to strengthen their tourism and cultural knowledge and build excellence in the Indigenous and BC tourism industries. This project also advanced the implementation of the Indigenous Tourism Labour Strategy developed in 2021 with the support of the Province of British Columbia.

This project was created to support the recovery and resiliency of the Indigenous tourism sector, with the objectives to:

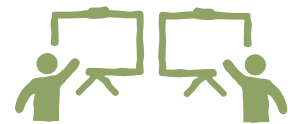
- Promote and develop careers in tourism and hospitality, focused on Indigenous tourism.
- Prepare Indigenous people with the skills and certification requirements expected to work in the tourism and hospitality industries.
- Improve Indigenous peoples' strengths in sharing Indigenous culture and essential skills in comprehension and communication.
- Develop employee, management, and employer skills in workplace safety.
- Promote a safer place for workers by improving the awareness of harassment and prevention of harassment in the workplace.

INDIGENOUS TOURISM TRAINING INITIATIVE (ITTI)

To continue this work, ITBC received \$6 million in October 2023 from the Ministry of Tourism, Arts, Culture & Sport and the Ministry of Social Development and Poverty Reduction to lead the Indigenous Tourism Training Initiative over three years.

At the heart of ITTI's success is ITBC's commitment to relational engagement — honouring protocol and culture. Training is never "one-size-fits-all." It is shaped by relationships, grounded in trust, and delivered in a way that reflects Indigenous teachings and self-determination.

OUR IMPACT AT A GLANCE:



284
training sessions delivered across all six tourism regions of BC - that is almost one workshop per day.



1,701
Participants — every seat filled, each delivery counted.



~500
unique participants — with many returning multiple times, showing trust in the program.



Training delivered in **all six regions:**
VCM, VI, THO, CCC, NBC and KR.

TRAINING PARTICIPATION (April 2024 – March 2025)

| REGION | TOTAL PARTICIPANTS | TOTAL SESSIONS |
|------------------------------------|--------------------|----------------|
| Vancouver, Coast & Mountains (VCM) | 636 | 75 |
| Vancouver Island (4VI) | 438 | 69 |
| Thompson Okanagan (TO) | 256 | 42 |
| Cariboo Chilcotin Coast (CCC) | 186 | 46 |
| Northern BC (NBC) | 133 | 31 |
| Kootenay Rockies (KR) | 52 | 21 |

Our impact is cascading, supporting over 500 unique individuals on a learning journey to upskill, enhance their existing operations, business, community and careers. The ITTI is a tool for Indigenous-owned businesses to accelerate their Stakeholder journey from start-up/ entrepreneur to visitor-, market- and export-ready and for First Nations in B.C to grow in capacity, confidence and skills.

Training Growth Driver: Increased In-person RITS Engagement

In 2024, we hired additional team members, gaining in-person representatives across the province in all 6 regions. The RITS team builds strong relationships with First Nation communities and Indigenous-owned tourism businesses. They have been instrumental in building trust, providing direct support and promoting ITBC programs.

TRAINING GROWTH DRIVER: INCREASED IN-PERSON RITS ENGAGEMENT

In 2024, we hired additional team members, gaining in-person representatives across the province in all 6 regions. The RITS team builds strong relationships with First Nation communities and Indigenous-owned tourism businesses. They have been instrumental in building trust, providing direct support and promoting ITBC programs.

We believe in fostering growth and leadership by empowering individuals to shape a vibrant Indigenous tourism industry. Hands-on training and immersive learning help individuals master new skills and apply them in ways that drive meaningful change within their communities.

With a broad range of skills development categories, there are training opportunities for every person contributing toward the Indigenous tourism sector. We aim to provide impactful training tailored to you, your business and your community.

Business Management | Cultural Awareness | Customer Service | Financial | Health and Safety | Human Resources | Indigenous Cultural Tourism | Leadership | Marketing | Stewardship and Sustainability | Workplace Skills

START YOUR TRAINING JOURNEY OR TAKE THE NEXT STEP IN YOUR CAREER, ON YOUR TERMS.





TRAINING E-NEWSLETTER

Our dedicated training newsletter now has 1,505 subscribers, supporting outreach and continuous learning for First Nations and Indigenous Peoples in BC tourism.

SQUAMISH LIL'WAT CULTURAL CENTRE INDIGENOUS YOUTH AMBASSADOR PROGRAM (IYA)

A 10-week immersive cultural and tourism education program. Participants gained training in business foundations, cultural tourism, and customer service. The program concluded with work placements in Food & Beverage, Retail, and Cultural departments.

TIN WIS RESORT

The training provided in Tofino demonstrates the breadth of our training program. In 2024, the **Best Western Plus Tin Wis Resort** received 130+ instances of training including:

- Chainsaw Safety training
- Emergency First Aid with CPR C
- Accommodations-specific Leadership for Hospitality Professionals series
- Tourism Digital Marketing Accelerator
- Entrepreneurial and community leadership mentorship and coaching *

This business demonstrates leadership excellence by continually lifting up community members, championing success from within and celebrating Tla-o-qui-aht culture.

“We’re using Tin Wis like a learning campus. So bringing opportunities for learning to our community... We want to see an all-indigenous catering team, we want to see young carvers being able to interpret their stories not only through their carving but storytelling, we want to see guided tours by all indigenous teams.”

– Maria Clark, *Tin Wis*, Assistant General Manager



STRATEGY:

Amplify Indigenous Tourism Story

STRATEGIC PARTNERSHIP INITIATIVE (SPI)

In 2022, Indigenous Services Canada entered into a funding agreement with Indigenous Tourism BC for \$1.7 million over three years. This funding, in partnership with the Province of BC, supports the BC Indigenous Tourism Strategy.

This funding supports First Nations communities and Indigenous businesses to prepare for participation in and benefit from post-pandemic tourism opportunities. The SPI project provides support to Indigenous businesses through the creation of an Indigenous Tourism Business Marketing Support Fund, which entrepreneurs and community-owned businesses can apply for to help fund professional services tailored to their needs such as marketing and digital support to aid the development and growth of Indigenous tourism businesses.

This fund supports businesses in marketing their services and products, whereas the activities funded by the province are intended to market Indigenous Tourism in general.

This program rolled into 2023/24, with ITBC reviewing the ongoing needs of communities and Indigenous tourism business to determine future programs and grants that will aid the success of ITBC Stakeholders.

BC INDIGENOUS TOURISM INITIATIVE

Background

The BC Indigenous Tourism Initiative was funded for three years, 2022-23 to 2024-25. This funding allowed ITBC, in partnership with Pacifican and ISC to support First Nation communities and existing Indigenous tourism operators to implement new tourism strategies or to enhance their tourism market.

In 2024, ITBC completed this support for First Nations communities and Indigenous tourism operators to plan, strategize, and strengthen their operations to be ready to participate in and benefit from post-pandemic tourism opportunities.

“As an Indigenous business, ITBC can amplify brand unlike DBC, as its is specific to Indigenous business”

– Chris Tait, *Klahoose Wilderness Resort*

“The team at ITBC does a good job to support Knight Inlet Lodge. As a legacy tourism provider with over 30+ years of business, our brand does market itself. Being 100% Indigenous since 2017, we are very proud to be associated with ITBC”

– Jason Drale, *Knight Inlet Lodge*

Initiative

As ITBC promotes and markets Indigenous experiences, communities need tools and resources to plan for increased visitors. This consent-based tourism support fund gives communities easier access to resources and funding when they are ready to explore tourism planning and destination management within their traditional territories.

SPI supports communities in developing protocols for sharing cultural experiences and engaging or partnering with outside suppliers operating in their territories.

SPI funding supports the growth of Indigenous tourism by strengthening the supply side through strategic planning for First Nations communities and business development for communities and entrepreneurs.

This SPI initiative supports the following federal priorities:

- Advancing Indigenous economic prosperity
- Supporting capacity-building of First Nations communities
- Working in partnership with Indigenous peoples to support progressive and successful devolution of services to Indigenous peoples.
- Advancing Reconciliation through implementation of the United Nations Declaration on the Rights of Indigenous Peoples and support for self-determination of First Nations communities

Results Achieved

ACTIVITY 1: Workshops, Tools, Resources

Support for First Nations to participate in tourism

- Outreach to First Nation communities to develop and deliver workshops or other capacity initiatives
- Develop online tools and resources

16 Workshops delivered

ACTIVITY 2: Consent-based Tourism Strategies (Tourism Planning Initiative)

Tourism Planning Initiative (TPI) enables First Nations communities throughout BC to plan for consent-based tourism within their respective territories and is intended to support communities to understand opportunities and to plan for culturally appropriate uses of land for tourism.

In support of these goals, ITBC distributes TPI funds to:

- Provide resources for planning for First Nations tourism-based stewardship of the land
- Support creation of plans and protocols that guide responsible recovery of tourism within First Nation communities
- Build capacity for First Nations to determine and advance tourism interests
- Lead to longterm jobs and economic revenues in communities

9 Tourism Strategies implemented

The following examples highlight how TPI funding helps advance Indigenous-led tourism planning and cultural revitalization.

Secwépemc Landmarks Project

The Secwépemc Landmarks Project is a Secwépemc led project that supports Secwepemctsin learning and creates awareness of Secwépemc oral histories and presence in Secwepemcúlcw. The project is led by Skwlāx te Secwepemcúlcw, Adams Lake Band, Neskonlith Band, and Splotsín te Secwépemc communities, with administrative support from the Shuswap Trail Alliance. The project is guided by the Secwépemc Landmarks Elders Advisory Committee, made up of Elders from Adams Lake Band, Neskonlith Band, Splotsín, and Skwlāx te Secwepemcúlcw.

Simpcw First Nation

Enhancing tourism and fostering reconciliation through the creation of a Territorial Acknowledgment sign in Secwepemctsin and English is a meaningful initiative. This project aims to raise awareness of Simpcw presence, culture, and language along the Highway 5 corridor while supporting Indigenous

tourism initiatives. By designing clear, cohesive signage, this effort seeks to guide tourists, celebrate the Simpcw's legacy, and promote respectful engagement with the region's cultural and historical landscape.

Tsawwassen First Nation

sməq' wəʔ xel, the Great Blue Heron Way, is the vision of scəwəθən məsteyəx^w (Tsawwassen First Nation) Elder x^wasteniya (Ruth Adams). sməq' wəʔ xel reconnects, protects, celebrates and heals the people, land and the interwoven waters of the Salish Sea and Stó:lō (Fraser River) through celebrations, Indigenous art and a network of new and existing pathways.

ACTIVITY 3: Tourism Business Fund (TBF)

Similar to the previous Push for Market Readiness Program, SPI-TBF is designed to support ITBC member Stakeholders in advancing their Tier 1 (Start Up Business/Experience), Tier 2 (Visitor Ready Business/Experience), Tier 3 (Market Ready Business/Experience) to the next level. These funds provide support to Stakeholders that plan to enhance or modernize marketing and promotional strategies to strengthen their market position.

21 Indigenous tourism businesses supported

The following projects demonstrate how TBF funding helps Indigenous tourism businesses strengthen their marketing, digital presence, and operational capacity to enhance visitor experiences and business resilience.

Talking Rock Golf Resort

Talking Rock Golf Resort used TBF to support the production of high-resolution images and video footage for promotional and training purposes, as well as online advertising through tourism partners. Following the devastation of the 2023 Bush Creek East wildfire, Talking Rock needed new marketing and media assets to accurately portray its current operation and highlight the beauty that remains, as well as the continued story of the resort and its golf experience.

Jags Coffee and Guest House

Jags Coffee and Guest House received TBF for a comprehensive optimization and redesign of their website to improve usability, responsiveness, and branding. The funds also enabled the Haida Gwaii cafe and guest house to create and implement a digital marketing strategy and a targeted print advertising campaign in Haida Gwaii News, attracting both local customers and tourists.

Gwaii Naay Island House

Gwaii Naay Island House used their TBF to invest in updated, high-quality copywriting and images to showcase their current offerings and maximize the impact of a new website.



Xwisten Experience Tours

Xwisten Experience Tours project included the development and implementation of an online booking and reservation portal for their website. This enhancement will streamline the booking process for Xwisten Experience Tours and Bearfoot Grill, ensuring timely responses, efficient contact management, and improved reservation/payment tracking. The new system will include a user-friendly front-end interface for customers and a simple back-end database for their team to manage bookings and maintain records.

ACTIVITY 4: Digital Content, Data Collections and Analysis

- Digital content developed
- Develop report to track the progress of rebuilding Indigenous tourism in BC

14 Stakeholder Engagements

STRATEGY:

Facilitate Indigenous Community and Destination Management

PRESENTING THE VALUE OF INDIGENOUS TOURISM

ITBC Corporate Services shares a one-day presentation and workshop for First Nations communities and entrepreneurs that offers information about the value of Indigenous tourism, and shares the benefits beyond economic impact—including cultural revitalization and community connection.

The presentation, tailored to reflect the feedback and interests of Indigenous audiences in BC, was shared to great success this year with Destination Vancouver, Vancouver Coast and Mountain Industry Forum, Impact Conference, Tsawout First Nation, and Tourism Tofino.

BC TOURISM CLIMATE RESILIENCY INITIATIVE (BCTCRI)

The BC Tourism Climate Resiliency Initiative (BCTCRI) is a provincial project that focuses on building a foundational program to support a resilient tourism sector that is prepared to adapt to climate change. Starting in the 2023/2024 fiscal year and spanning over two years, an investment of \$3 million from the BC Ministry of Tourism, Arts, Culture and Sport (MTACS) will be allocated to this initiative through the Destination Development Fund.

The goals and intention of the BCTCRI are to ensure:

- BC’s tourism industry is better prepared to adapt to climate change.
- BC’s tourism industry is using a standard set of tools to track, measure and improve sustainable practices and climate adaptation initiatives.
- Foundation is set for a long-term sustainability and climate adaptation approach for the tourism sector in BC.

ITBC was actively involved in three of the project groups:

- **Project 1: 18 Indigenous tourism businesses participated in Sustainable Tourism Planning workshops**
- **Project 2: 12 Indigenous-owned businesses received micro-grants, totaling over \$100,000 in support**
- **Project 4: Co-developed climate resiliency workshops and led Indigenous knowledge integration**

Locality Brewing received a BCTCRI micro-grant to support sustainability upgrades, including CO₂ capture, LED lighting installation, closed-loop cooling, and wastewater recycling initiatives.

The Climate Resilience & Indigenous Knowledge workshop featured guest speaker **James Cowpar of Haida-Style Expeditions** and a video case study showcasing the **Nk’Mip Desert Cultural Centre**, presented by manager **Jenna Bower**.

COMMUNITY-BASED DESTINATION DEVELOPMENT

Huu-ay-aht First Nation (HFN)

Collaborated on FAM tour in support of HFN’s proposed Three Stars Dark Sky Festival, a festival-in-the-making focused on astro-tourism and cultural storytelling in Bamfield.

Vancouver Indigenous Fashion Week (VIFW)

Vancouver Indigenous Fashion Week (VIFW) showcased 33 vendors from across BC. The vendor market nearly sold out, with the event promoting Indigenous fashion, art, and design in the province.



STRATEGY:

Stakeholder Engagement Strategy

Shaping the Future Together: ITBC Regional Roundtables

The **ITBC Regional Roundtable** initiative is designed to promote collaboration and dialogue within the Indigenous tourism sector. By bringing together Indigenous communities, tourism leaders, and industry stakeholders, these roundtables create a space for sharing experiences, discussing challenges, and exploring opportunities for growth.

The discussions aim to empower communities to contribute their insights and strategies for sustainable tourism development. The agenda for each roundtable was unique to the region, often including presentations on the Value of Indigenous Tourism and long-term strategies such as destination development and Invest in Iconics.

The remainder of the agenda was community-driven, with some roundtable featuring local tourism partners, tourism champions, and discussions on upcoming projects in the region.

ITBC facilitated five roundtable sessions in 2024:

SKWLAX TE SECWPEMC | PRINCE GEORGE | TK'EMLÚPS TE SECWPEMC | ALERT BAY | WILLAMS LAKE

Corporate Communications

In 2024, corporate communications were central to ITBC's efforts to connect with Stakeholders, communities, and industry partners across British Columbia, sharing timely updates, success stories, and opportunities.

Building on this foundation, ITBC's digital communications, particularly through its corporate email newsletters and LinkedIn presence, continued to deliver impactful, consistent outreach and measurable results.

Corporate Email and Newsletter Success

Over the past fiscal year, ITBC's corporate email campaigns achieved an average Campaign Monitor score of 81.8%, reflecting strong performance across open rates, click-throughs, and engagement. With an average open rate of 47.97% and a click rate of 5.61%, both well above industry benchmarks, ITBC's newsletters continue to capture and sustain audience interest.

To further enhance clarity and engagement, ITBC introduced new newsletter segments such as Stakeholder Spotlight, Employee Spotlight, Tourism News, ITBC Updates, and Community Connections. These sections improve readability, build familiarity, and strengthen alignment with ITBC's broader communications strategy.

In total, 24 newsletters were sent, reaching 1,442 recipients, a 45% increase from the previous year.

Corporate LinkedIn Performance

ITBC's LinkedIn presence continues to drive awareness and engagement within the Indigenous tourism sector and broader tourism community. Strategic use of visuals, employee highlights, and event coverage resulted in exceptional performance:

- **Strong Follower Growth:**
A net gain of 1,262 followers, reflecting rising visibility and trust.
- **Engagement Rate:**
9.2%, significantly exceeding LinkedIn's 2–3% average.
- **Content Output:**
149 posts published, averaging nearly three per week.
- **Audience Interaction:**
Over 8,200 post clicks and 1,500 video views, showing active audience participation.

By integrating community stories, showcasing Stakeholders, and highlighting leadership events such as Rendezvous Canada and regional tourism workshops, ITBC continued to amplify Indigenous voices and build meaningful connections across digital platforms.





Marketing

STRENGTHEN INDIGENOUS
VOICES, VALUES AND
PRESENCE IN MARKETING
EFFORTS THROUGHOUT
BC'S TOURISM INDUSTRY.

Welcome to a journey where you are invited to hear the rich and diverse stories of Indigenous Peoples firsthand. Experience the present-day realities and perspectives of Indigenous communities in British Columbia.

With over 377 Indigenous-owned and Authentic Indigenous businesses open to visitors, including hotels, campsites, museums, cultural centres, wineries, golf courses, guided wildlife tours, and more, there are countless stories waiting to be shared and experienced.

ITBC's role in **MARKETING** is to:

- Raise awareness of the diverse and enriching Indigenous tourism experiences available in British Columbia.
- Ensure all our Stakeholders benefit from our marketing work and value our expertise.
- Leverage the ecosystem of marketing partners across our industry to maximize the effectiveness of our combined resources.

STRATEGY:

Collaborate with Stakeholders as the Cornerstone of Indigenous BC

In 2024, ITBC prioritized strong engagement with Indigenous tourism businesses across the province to ensure they were supported, visible, and included in broader marketing efforts. This strategy focused on providing training, facilitating marketing opportunities with the travel trade, and nurturing progression across the Stakeholder readiness tiers. This collaborative model reinforced ITBC's role as a trusted partner and positioned Stakeholders to engage confidently with domestic and international markets.

"ITBC continues to amplify brand to trade and media"

– Chris Tait, *Klahoose Wilderness Resort*

KEY TACTICS IMPLEMENTED

- Relationship-building with Visitor-, Market-, and Export-Ready Stakeholders through direct outreach and onboarding.
- Delivery of training workshops on social media, travel trade, and digital marketing.
- Hosted peer-to-peer learning sessions to promote shared growth and community support.
- Progressed Stakeholders from Tier 3 to Tier 4 with targeted engagement and resource support, including:
 - Supported Stakeholders with Travel Trade initiatives at Rendez-vous Canada, Showcase Europe, and Sales Mission to London, UK
 - Developed and implemented the Indigenous-owned and Authentic Indigenous designation
 - Training and peer-to-peer learning sessions online and in-person

161 Market-ready Businesses

40 Export-ready Businesses

KEY HIGHLIGHTS

RENDEZ-VOUS CANADA IN EDMONTON - May 2024

To support the promotion of the first two Destination BC Iconics, ITBC actively engaged in the Rendez-vous Canada (RVC) tradeshow planning process. Recognizing the increasing interest from global buyers in authentic Indigenous tourism, ITBC extended invitations to Stakeholders to participate in the BC section of RVC. This approach balanced feedback from Stakeholders who preferred alignment with the destination of British Columbia while still providing a cohesive presence for Indigenous tourism in the BC section at RVC.

To make participation more accessible, ITBC offered registration support to reduce cost barriers for Stakeholders. This initiative reflected ITBC's commitment to equitable market access and positioned Indigenous tourism businesses to take full advantage of the visibility and business development opportunities available at RVC. 12 Indigenous tourism experiences participated in the BC section at RVC.

SHOWCASE EUROPE IN PARIS - November 2024

The Showcase Europe tradeshow in Paris provided an opportunity to connect with 52 European tour operator businesses. The discussions centered on promoting Indigenous-owned tourism experiences, market trends, and marketing opportunities. These conversations revealed a strong interest in Indigenous tourism and export-ready businesses, reflecting the growing demand for authentic and meaningful travel.

The event was highly productive, given the target markets and quality of operators in attendance. Every discussion presented valuable opportunities for ITBC's Stakeholders.



INDIGENOUS SALES DELEGATION VISITING UK TOUR OPERATORS IN LONDON - March 2025

The Indigenous Tourism BC Sales Delegation to the UK aimed to introduce and expand Indigenous tourism offerings in international tour operator programs. Through targeted meetings, media engagements, and travel advisor training, the mission strengthened market awareness and built strategic relationships to grow global demand for Indigenous experiences in British Columbia.

UK tour operators we met with:

- Canadian Affair
- Canadian Affair
- Discover the World
- Audley
- Canadian Sky
- Journeyscape
- Trailfinders
- Frontiers

Indigenous tourism operators that joined us on the sales mission:

- Big Bar Guest Ranch
- Spirit Bear Lodge
- Klahoose Wilderness Resort
- Sea Wolf Adventures
- Homalco Wildlife and Cultural Tours
- Coastal Rainforest Safaris
- Nemiah Valley Lodge
- Knight Inlet Lodge

ITBC hosted a media luncheon in London with 16 journalists from leading British publications eager to engage with Indigenous tourism operators.

A key highlight of the trip was the production of a *Wanderlust* podcast episode titled: *Off the Page podcast: Discovering Indigenous-Led Tourism in British Columbia*. The episode reached an audience of over 1,000 listeners upon launch and has since been featured as part of Singapore Airlines' inflight entertainment, expanding ITBC's global reach and visibility.

SURVEY RESULTS:

High Satisfaction Among Participants

All delegates reported being satisfied or very satisfied with the UK sales mission, with an average recommendation score of **9.9/10**—underscoring the value of ITBC's coordinated efforts to promote Indigenous tourism in the UK market.

Productive Meetings with Long-Term ROI

Participants engaged in high-quality meetings with tour operators and media. While the schedule was intensive, the volume and quality of interactions were seen as highly beneficial for long-term business development.

Stronger Unity and Cultural Representation

Delegates highlighted the sense of unity and collaboration among Indigenous businesses. The group format enhanced professionalism and cultural storytelling, while sightseeing opportunities deepened cross-cultural understanding.

Commitment to Future Participation

All respondents expressed interest in future sales delegations, emphasizing the importance of market fit and strategic alignment.





INDIGENOUS-OWNED AND AUTHENTIC INDIGENOUS PROGRAM

In February 2025, ITBC introduced the enhanced Authentic Indigenous Program and the new Indigenous-owned Designation.

We announced the enhancement of the Authentic Indigenous designation and the introduction of the Indigenous-Owned designation. These significant markers of quality and authenticity support and promote Indigenous tourism businesses across British Columbia. Visitors can now easily identify and engage with Indigenous-owned businesses and experiences that contribute to Indigenous wellness through participation in the tourism industry in BC.

Indigenous-Owned Designation: Awarded to businesses that are at least 51% Indigenous-owned and operated, this designation ensures direct contributions to Indigenous communities' economic and cultural sustainability. Businesses automatically qualify when they become visitor, market or export-ready ITBC Stakeholders.

Authentic Indigenous Designation: This designation is awarded to market- and/or export-ready Indigenous-Owned businesses that offer strong cultural Indigenous tourism experiences and go above and beyond to share Indigenous culture to travellers. These businesses demonstrate exemplary cultural preservation and prioritize community empowerment and sustainable practices.

18 Authentic Indigenous Businesses
365 Indigenous-owned Businesses



STRATEGY:

Drive Responsible Visitors to Book Market-Ready and Export-Ready Stakeholder Experiences

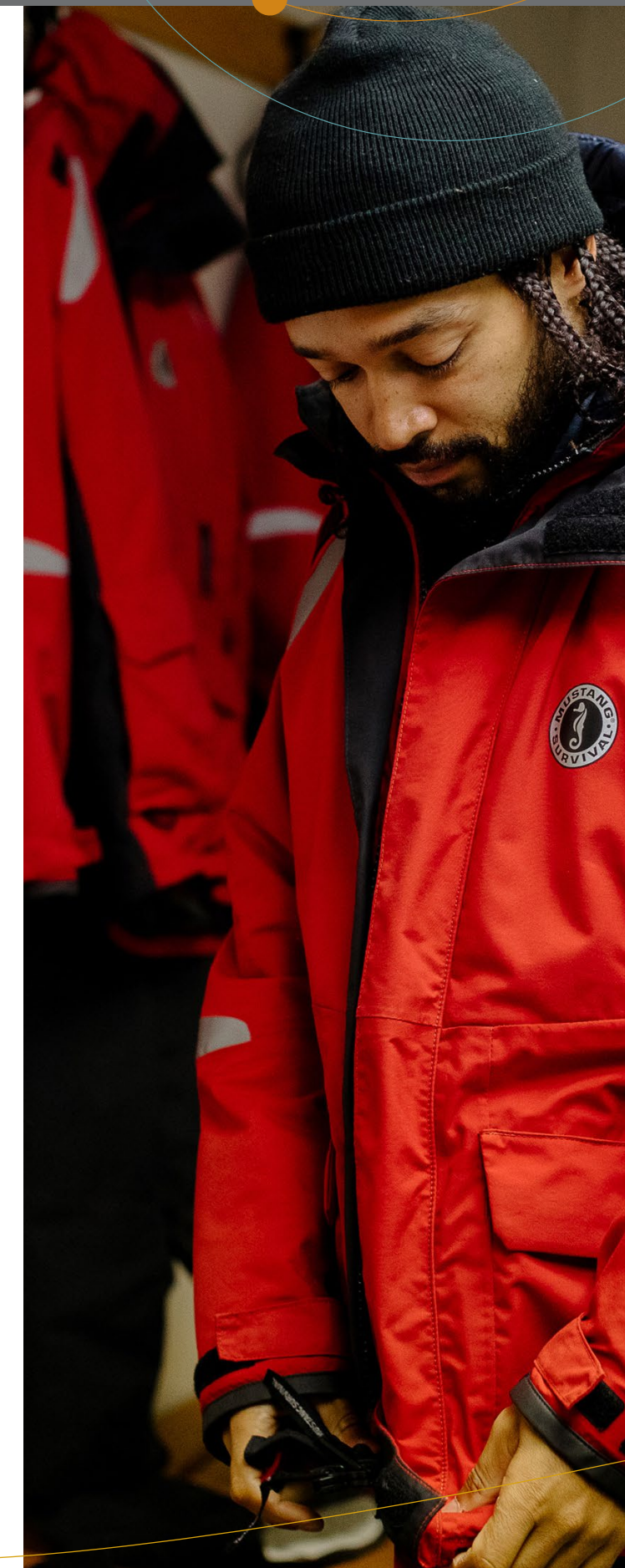
This strategy focused on converting awareness into bookings by engaging responsible travellers across digital platforms and industry networks. Marketing tactics emphasized storytelling, awareness campaigns, and supporting tools like the IndigenousBC app.

SOCIAL

Targeted paid and organic campaigns across Google, Meta, and TikTok were executed to boost visibility and engagement, resulting in strong cross-platform performance. TikTok video views tripled year-over-year, reaching **365,126**, with likes increasing to **27,167** and shares to **2,810**. On Meta platforms, Facebook post link clicks totalled **32,125**, while Instagram (paid + organic) saw a **54% increase** in total interactions, reaching **46,646**.

Instagram Reels views nearly doubled TO 1.32 million, highlighting the success of short-form video content. These results reflect the impact of ITBC's targeted digital strategies in engaging conscious travellers and amplifying Indigenous tourism experiences.

Meta Lead Ads were leveraged to drive newsletter subscriptions, resulting in **15,003** subscribers. Implemented video ads to drive follower growth across platforms, adding **3,488** new Instagram followers, **1,209** on Facebook, and **2,200** on TikTok.



ONLINE AD AND CONNECTED TV

ITBC deployed display, native, contextual, and Connected TV ads to reinforce messaging, generating **over 39.7 million impressions and 68,000 clicks across BC, Ontario, and Washington**. Video content performed exceptionally well, with a **93% average completion rate** and more than **6.6 million video completions**, surpassing tourism industry benchmarks. Connected TV ads on platforms like Hulu and Nexxen achieved a **97% completion rate**, effectively building top-of-funnel awareness.

Native contextual ads via Taboola delivered over **17.6 million impressions** and **549 partner referrals**, while display banner ads produced **416 referrals** and **12 app downloads**. These combined efforts played a central role in guiding audiences from awareness through to action.

WEBSITE STATS

- We successfully executed paid and organic distribution strategies to increase awareness and drive traffic to our Stakeholders' online platforms.
- Paid online and search tactics using *Our Story. Your Experience*. Campaign assets generated **270,528 sessions** to the IndigenousBC website which is an increase of **63% YOY**, with **64,932 clicks** to our Stakeholders' websites.

EARNED MEDIA

Strong relationships with media were developed to elevate Indigenous voices, resulting in **208 earned media stories** and over **262 million impressions** across international and regional outlets. Through targeted pitching, and Familiarization Tours, ITBC secured features in *National Geographic*, *CBC*, *Conde Nast Traveller*, *AFAR*, *CNN Travel*, and *The Weather Network*, spotlighting **53 Stakeholders**. Stories focused on culturally relevant themes such as Indigenous History Month and sustainable travel, with top-performing narratives centered on water-based adventures, wellness, and community-led tourism. This approach expanded awareness globally and deepened recognition of Indigenous tourism experiences across British Columbia.

Top-performing media stories featured a diverse range of Indigenous tourism businesses:

- | | |
|----------------------------------|-------------------|
| Talaysay Tours | Salmon n' Bannock |
| Klahoose Wilderness Resort | Spirit Bear Lodge |
| Squamish Lil'wat Cultural Centre | Tin Wis Resort |

These businesses were regularly featured in high-profile outlets such as **National Geographic**, **CBC**, **Conde Nast Traveler**, and **AFAR**.

In addition, many other Indigenous-owned and operated experiences received meaningful exposure through targeted media outreach and storytelling campaigns. These included:

- Bill Reid Gallery
 - Ahous Adventures
 - Tsawaak RV Resort and Campground
 - naa?uu
 - St. Eugene Golf Resort
 - Nk'Mip Winery, Liberty Wilderness Lodge
 - Sea Wolf Adventures
 - Coastal Rainforest Safaris
 - Kekuli Café
 - Hat Creek Ranch
 - McAbee Fossil Beds
 - Moccasin Trails.
- Further coverage extended to:
- RavenSong Soap
 - The Raven's Nest Resort and Campground
 - Shearwater Resort
 - Fraser River Lodge
 - Big Bar Guest Ranch
 - Tofino Wilderness Resort
 - Wickaninnish Inn
 - Thunderbird Café
 - Spirit Bear Coffee
 - Gulf Island Seaplanes
 - Skwachàys Lodge
 - Haida Heritage Centre at Kay Lnagaay
 - House of Himwitsa Native Art Gallery
 - I-HOS Gallery
 - 'Ksan Historical Village and Museum
 - U'mista Cultural Centre
 - Ainsworth Hot Springs Resort



7 of the best places to stay in Canada

Klahoose Wilderness Resort, British Columbia



Klahoose Wilderness Resort



Recognition, healing, and legacy: How have Canada's First Nations shaped the first winter Invictus Games 2025?



Squamish Lil'wat Cultural Centre, Salmon n' Bannock



A Sea-to-Sky Highway Road Trip for Indigenous Culture in Whistler and Beyond



Talaysay Tours, SLCC, Thunderbird Cafe, Spirit Bear Coffee, Bill Reid Gallery, Wickninnish Gallery, Salmon n' Bannock, Takaya Tours, Gulf Island Seaplanes



Observing whales and other mesmerizing sea creatures on this unique B.C. tour boat



Ahous Adventures



STRATEGY:

Refine ITBC's Brand

This strategy aimed to ensure ITBC's outward-facing brand maintained clarity, authenticity, and consistency across all platforms and campaigns. A significant milestone was the development of a refreshed ITBC Brand and consumer website

REFRESHED CONSUMER WEBSITE

In February 2025, ITBC launched an updated consumer website focused on delivering a more engaging, visual-first experience that centers Indigenous voices and tourism businesses.

The redesign prioritized intuitive navigation, reduced cognitive load, and improved accessibility. Key enhancements included an interactive map to help users explore Indigenous-owned businesses by location, elevated visibility for Authentic Indigenous Experiences and the people behind them, and interactive design elements like micro-animations for a more dynamic interface. The update also improved filtering tools, especially on high-traffic pages.

REFINED ITBC'S BRAND TO REFLECT OUR VALUES

In 2024, ITBC refined its overall brand to better reflect its purpose, values, and the audiences it serves. This included a refreshed consumer-facing identity designed to deepen connection with travellers who seek meaningful, respectful, and culturally rich experiences.

Grounded in the essence "Everything is Connected," the updated brand emphasizes relationships—to land, people, and story—while using a voice that is welcoming, genuine, grounded, and spirited. Visually, the brand incorporates natural colours, textures, and imagery that reflect Indigenous worldviews and storytelling.

This refinement brings greater clarity to how ITBC communicates across channels, ensuring consistency, cultural integrity, and a strong sense of place in all interactions.

OUR IDENTITY IS WHAT MAKES US UNIQUE.

Our identity makes Indigenous Tourism BC stand out as a respectful leader and advocate for Indigenous tourism interests in BC. It shows in everything we do - from our values and mission to our brand voice and essence. It speaks through the way we uplift Indigenous entrepreneurs, collaborate with communities, and build bridges with allies. It is woven into every program, every partnership, and every story we share with the world.

We are connected to our communities and our traditions. And through this connection, we are reframing perceptions, strengthening sovereignty, and ensuring that Indigenous tourism thrives for generations to come. This is Indigenous Tourism BC. This is our identity. This is our brand.

Everything is connected.



STRATEGY:

Build Content Highlighting Indigenous Voices, Values, and Presence

A key pillar of ITBC's work in 2024 was content development that meaningfully amplified Indigenous voices and lived experiences. The focus was not only on visual appeal but on story integrity and emotional resonance.

DIGITAL CONTENT PROJECT:

In 2024, ITBC started the Digital Content Project, which captures and provides high-quality digital content, photography, short-form video, and B-roll, to Indigenous tourism Stakeholders across BC.

Created in collaboration with each business, the content is designed to enhance visibility, reflect authentic stories, and support long-term marketing across platforms.

In addition to business-specific assets, general visuals showcasing Indigenous cultures, traditions, and landscapes are being developed to enrich ITBC's content library. While tailored to Stakeholders, all assets are owned by ITBC, ensuring they support both individual businesses and broader Indigenous tourism promotion in British Columbia.

In 2024, ITBC worked with **38 businesses** in **5** of the **6 regions** in British Columbia to capture a variety of content.

SOCIAL MEDIA CONTENT

- Created and shared stories based on four content pillars: Educational, Inspirational, Personal/Face-first, and Tactical.
- Developed video content and repurposed it into short-form assets for platforms like TikTok and YouTube Shorts.
- Collaborated with DBC and RDMOs for coordinated storytelling and Creator Content support.

WRITTEN CONTENT

- Published 10 new blog stories featuring Stakeholders and themes of land, culture, and community.

"I would rate ITBC's marketing expertise a 10 because their strategies and support have been invaluable in helping us grow and refine our marketing efforts. Their approach to collaboration has been especially impactful, allowing us to align our messaging with their broader vision for Indigenous tourism.

By working together, we've been able to effectively amplify our cultural offerings, share our story, and connect with travellers who truly appreciate our values. ITBC's expertise in marketing Indigenous experiences has enhanced our credibility, broadened our reach, and fostered a deeper connection with our target audience. I would highly recommend their services to other Indigenous tourism businesses looking to elevate their marketing efforts."

– Rachel Leghissa, *Tin Wis Resort*

STRATEGY:

Co-Creation and Co-Implementation of Destination BC’s 7 Iconics Brands

ITBC actively participated in Destination BC’s “Invest in Iconics” strategy, which aims to drive visitation to high-potential destinations and distribute tourism benefits more equitably across the province.

WHAT WAS IMPLEMENTED:

- Participated in branding workshops and Iconics planning sessions.
- Contributed to the refinement of brand identity, messaging pillars, and Indigenous language use.
- Reviewed scripts, visuals, and campaign content to ensure the inclusion of Indigenous voices.
- Worked closely with DBC, RDMO’s, and creative agencies (e.g., Alpha Zulu Kilo) to prepare for the 2025 launch of all 7 Iconics.

ITBC’s involvement ensured Indigenous tourism experiences were not only included but meaningfully integrated into BC’s major tourism narratives.

“For me it (marketing) has been the most important service that ITBC has provided aside from grant funding which is also been crucial.”

– Erin Brillon, *Totem Design House*

KEY HIGHLIGHTS

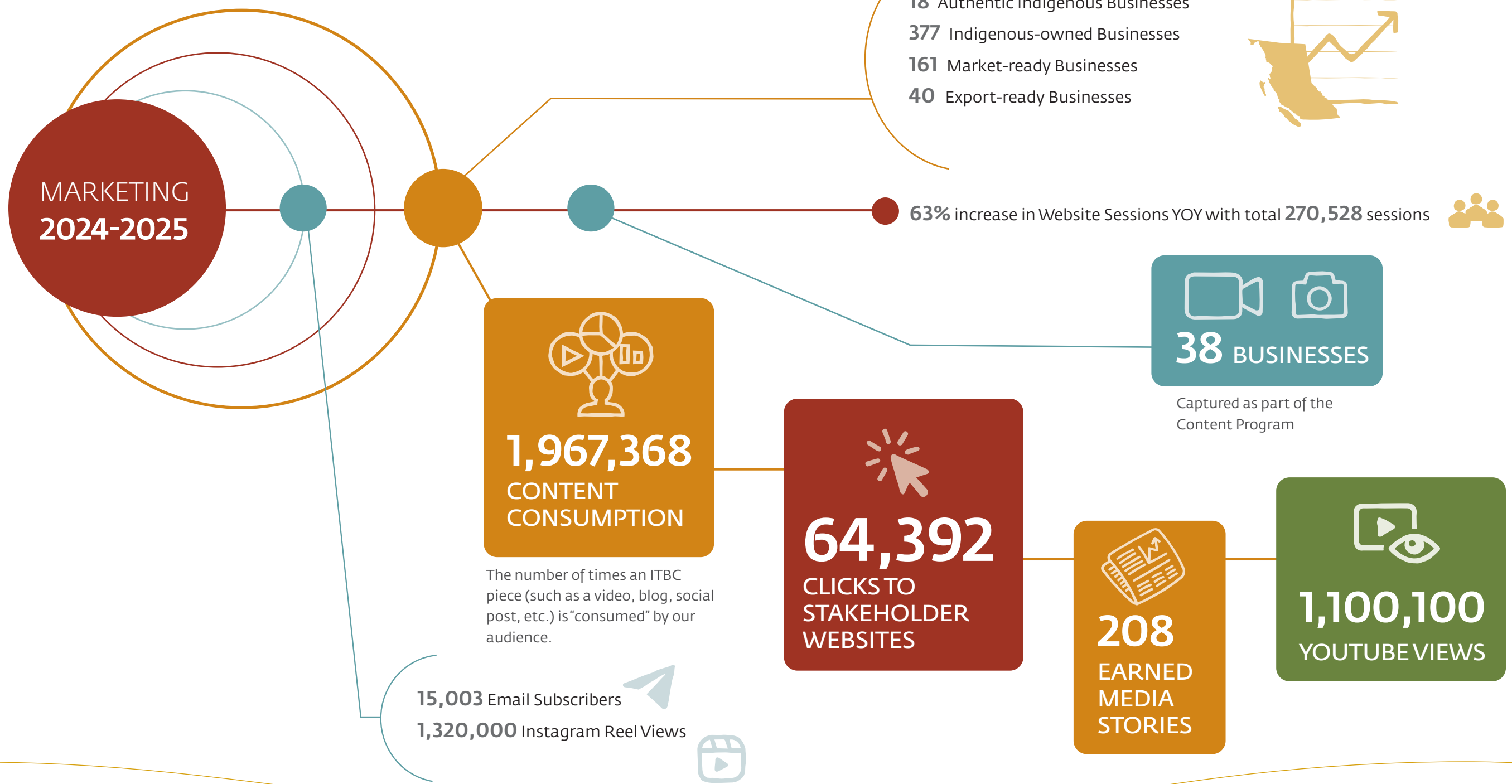
DESTINATION BC AND ITBC LAUNCHED THE GREAT WILDERNESS ICONIC BRAND IN HAMBURG, GERMANY - September 2024

In September 2024, Indigenous Tourism BC (ITBC) ensured Indigenous stories and businesses were meaningfully represented in Hamburg, Germany as part of Destination BC’s Lunch of the Great Wilderness brand. The brand showcases BC’s rugged landscapes and deep Indigenous cultural connections. ITBC’s participation included experiential storytelling and partner training sessions, reinforcing the message that Indigenous tourism offers transformative experiences rooted in culture, connection, and reconciliation.





2024/2025 Marketing Results at a Glance



Schedule of Expenditures

For the year ended March 31, 2025

| GENERAL AND ADMINISTRATION | 2025 | 2024 |
|---|------------------|------------------|
| Bank charges | 5,041 | 5,459 |
| Office and administration | 205,322 | 1,563 |
| Professional fees | 14,682 | 14,046 |
| Rent | 143,677 | 139,887 |
| Telecommunications | 16,128 | 18,980 |
| | 384,850 | 179,935 |
| MARKETING AND SALES | | |
| Content themes and sourcing | 203,459 | 108,667 |
| Marketing campaigns | 360,173 | 349,676 |
| Marketing management | -- | 139,343 |
| | 563,632 | 597,686 |
| EXPERIENCE DEVELOPMENT | | |
| Capacity Building & Resilience | -- | 2,778,130 |
| Destination Development | 600,000 | 600,000 |
| Indigenous Tourism Training Initiative | 3,000,000 | -- |
| Training and development | -- | 1,584,033 |
| | 3,600,000 | 4,962,163 |
| PARTNERSHIPS & SPECIAL PROJECTS | | |
| Invest in Iconics | 400,628 | 353,976 |
| PacifiCan | 278,305 | -- |
| Partnerships | 12,889 | 55,288 |
| Conferences & AGM | 168,396 | 38,529 |
| | 860,218 | 447,793 |
| LEADERSHIP & ORGANIZATIONAL EXCELLENCE | | |
| Board Engagement | 80,482 | 56,753 |
| Inspire Corporate Culture | 59,817 | 8,459 |
| Leadership & Organizational Excellence | 159,439 | 62,705 |
| | 299,737 | 127,917 |

Visit us online to learn how we are supporting Indigenous tourism businesses in BC. Sign up as a Stakeholder and become part of a community of enthusiastic, supportive, innovative, skilled, and caring supporters of an Indigenous-led, culturally rich, sustainable tourism industry in British Columbia.

[Indigenoustourismbc.com/corporate](https://indigenoustourismbc.com/corporate)

