

STRENGTHENING
OUR ROOTS & BRANCHES
CORPORATE STRATEGY
2023-2027 | 5 YEAR PLAN



CELEBRATING 25 YEARS
**INDIGENOUS
TOURISM BC**
CORPORATE



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MESSAGE FROM THE HOUSE OF TYEE AND TYEE CLAN CHIEFS

It is said the best time to plant a tree is 20 years ago. The second best time to plant the seed is today.

Fortunately, the seed of what has become Indigenous Tourism BC was planted many moons ago, and our organizational roots and branches have been growing stronger and for over 30 years. Now, this tree is established, solid and nurturing. The roots hold soil, the trunk sustains life and the branches extend in many directions.

Together, we are moving closer to a system of support and connection that upholds Indigenous-led plans for thriving communities, cultures, and lands. We work to create a responsible and respectful tourism industry that encourages interest in Indigenous-led transformational and experiential travel in British Columbia.

But, there is more work to be done. There is more growth ahead of us.

To maximize opportunities for Indigenous tourism and the wellbeing of Indigenous people, our tree needs to be even stronger and capable of supporting and sustaining more.

The pandemic was a challenging time, and yet, like many things in life, it provided opportunities, too. It provided an opportunity to come together, to share our challenges and to help each other through them. It increased people's interest in Indigenous experiences. It increased interest in tourism from Indigenous communities and provided increased investment from federal and provincial governments to support us all. And, it increased investment in building Indigenous Tourism BC's capacity to support Indigenous communities, businesses and entrepreneurs.

So, while we no longer need to plant a seed today, we do need to strengthen our roots and branches to support Indigenous Stakeholders and our partners to take bigger steps forward along the best path, including important steps in building reconciliation and stewardship.

Together, we can grow a forest. Together, we can elevate a better way of life through tourism.

We commit to a renewed ITBC organization, with renewed funding and renewed partnerships that together will create more wellbeing for Indigenous people and a stronger community of Indigenous and non-Indigenous peoples who respect the waters, lands, plants, animals, trees and others.

We raise our hands to the ITBC team and partners who make this work happen.

EXECUTIVE SUMMARY

Over the three years of our last corporate strategy, opportunities for Indigenous tourism were earned and resources have and continue to be delivered to support recovery from the pandemic and a stronger industry ahead. Significant funding has been provided to strengthen Indigenous tourism in this province and strengthen our ability as an organization to deliver what is needed.

We are now ready to build supporting capacity for tourism as an organization and as an industry. Our roots are growing deeper and stronger, and our branches can support more life and activity. We can strengthen Indigenous voices and values.

Our VISION is Indigenous well-being improves through a prosperous Indigenous tourism industry connecting visitors to exceptional, authentic experiences.

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.

This 5-year plan will bring us to and beyond the precipice of full recovery from the pandemic. This plan will 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.

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

LEADERSHIP AND ORGANIZATIONAL INNOVATION	PARTNERSHIPS AND SPECIAL PROJECTS	EXPERIENCE DEVELOPMENT	MARKETING
<p>Strengthen ITBC's position as a global leader in Indigenous Tourism Development</p> <p>Strengthen relationships with Indigenous communities to generate stronger local tourism outcomes</p>	<p>Deliver with excellence on the strengthened partnerships and projects established to build capacity and resiliency</p> <p>Support reconciliation and stewardship efforts</p>	<p>Support Indigenous communities, businesses and entrepreneurs in building, enhancing, and enriching Indigenous tourism experiences</p>	<p>Strengthen Indigenous voices, values and presence in marketing efforts throughout BC's tourism industry</p>

If we look back over the last five years, we can predict that there will be more uncertainty and change coming in the next five years. As events transpire, we will revisit this strategy. We will remain flexible to support our Stakeholders and partners where they need support, when they need support and how they need support.



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 the identity for British Columbia's.



OUR VALUES

Our new corporate strategy has been developed with strong intention.

And it is intentional that we begin by sharing Our Values. Before you can know who we are, or what we will do, or how we will do it, you must know Our Values.

Our Values guide us. They shape us. They hold us accountable.

As tourism and travel has evolved over time, and most recently from the pandemic, we know things need to change for the better...we all need to be accountable to the values, the peoples, the land, the water, the community that we hold dear. Our Values begin with Mother Tree.

For many Indigenous people, Tree is an all-giving Mother: she draws nourishment from the Earth and transforms it into oxygen, warmth, food, shelter, and clothing for her people. Mother Tree is the biggest plant, gives us oxygen, stores carbon, stabilizes the soil, and supports wildlife. At her core are the culture and people; here the tree rings tell their history. The Secwepemc people have an oral story that tells of the transformer Coyote taking Tree for his wife.

Mother Tree symbolizes ITBC's core values in our new, more impactful organization. We are authentic to the core. We move forward together with our partners. We are passionate about what we do. And, we are making a bigger impact for our Stakeholders.

We are intentionally stronger.



AUTHENTIC

We are true to ourselves, our communities and traditions. It's what empowers us to showcase our connection to the land, people and culture.



TOGETHER

Stronger together. We are respectful and supportive of our people, our partners, and our communities.



PASSION

We are emotionally invested and courageous. We deeply care about who we respect and take pride in what we do.



IMPACTFUL

As an industry leader, we achieve meaningful and tangible results for our Indigenous communities.

ABOUT ITBC

Indigenous Tourism British Columbia (ITBC) is a non-profit, Stakeholder-based organization that is committed to growing and promoting a sustainable, culturally rich Indigenous tourism industry.

Indigenous Tourism BC is regarded as a world leader in the development and promotion of authentic Indigenous cultural tourism products and experiences and is actively supporting the province in becoming a leading global destination for Indigenous tourism.

Through training, information resources, networking opportunities, experience development and marketing programs, ITBC is a resource for Indigenous entrepreneurs and communities in British Columbia who are operating or looking to start a tourism business. ITBC works closely with tourism, business, education, and government organizations to help Indigenous tourism businesses in BC offer quality experiences and actively promotes these experiences to visitors and local residents.





STRATEGIC CONTEXT AND FORESIGHT

In 2019, prior to the outbreak of the pandemic, tourism was one of the largest and fastest-growing economic sectors in the world. Indigenous tourism was an active contributor to the national economy, with tremendous growth potential and the ability to create socio-economic balance for Indigenous communities.

In fact, the Indigenous tourism sector was outpacing the overall tourism sector growth both in BC and throughout Canada.¹ BC offered over 400 Indigenous-owned tourism businesses. In 2017, BC Indigenous tourism businesses generated total economic impacts (direct, indirect, induced) exceeding \$1,271 million in output (equivalent to GDP of \$970 million). This resulted in 7,428 full-time equivalent jobs, nearly \$387 million in wages and salaries, and over \$39 million in tax revenue.²

The number of overnight visits to British Columbia, which included some form of Indigenous cultural tourism, increased by an estimated 27% between 2013 and 2016 to approximately 3.6 million visits, almost double the 2006 level. Visitors who participate in Indigenous cultural tourism generally spend more per trip than other visitors and tend to stay longer. Visitors will often travel a longer distance if the experience is unique and attractive, which supports rural tourism development and international market growth.

In 2020, the pandemic changed the trajectory of the tourism industry and Indigenous tourism along with it. The following context informed our 2023-2027 strategic direction and intentions:

Pandemic Recovery: Tourism recovery has not only begun, but it's also well on its way to achieving and surpassing 2019 levels. However, recovery is not consistent throughout the province and Indigenous tourism is projected for economic recovery by 2024/2025. There is desire for a full recovery that includes wellbeing as a focus and building back better overall. While short term focus is still on domestic markets, over the medium-term international markets are projected to rebound, although this is dependent on air capacity, emergence of variants, consumer travel hesitancy and strategic decisions by Destination BC, Indigenous Tourism Association of Canada, and Destination Canada in terms of their market investment and support.

Workforce challenges: Severe labour shortages in BC remain a top challenge for tourism businesses due to the pandemic, lack of affordable housing, transportation and competitiveness to other industries. These challenges will have a lasting impact, despite significant recruitment, retention and training efforts by organizations such as go2HR, ITBC, the Government of BC and others. Labour challenges can be more acutely felt within the Indigenous tourism industry.

1 ITBC Indigenous Tourism Labour Market Research Literature Review, 2020

2 "The Next Phase" Tourism Performance Audit Report 2012-2017

Digitization: The pandemic has accelerated the digital transformation of the tourism sector as both businesses and consumer shifted more online. Digital marketing is expected to take on even greater importance. Data analytics are being looked at to better understand tourism impacts to support destination management, including land stewardship and visitor management.

Social Change: Indigenous tourism is very aligned to the social shifts that have been felt over the last few years, including a stronger emphasis on the UN Sustainable Development Goals, Diversity, Equity, Inclusion and Accessibility (DEIA) and support for lasting and meaningful reconciliation. There is also a greater human need for connection with nature and one another, as well as our desire to feel grounded while experiencing new things. These changes will affect businesses and communities of all kinds and create new avenues for tourism industry to support.

Travel Preferences: Consumer behaviours and values have shifted, creating a new playing field for travel preferences. According to Destination Canada's Big Shifts, travel trends include frictionless travel, domestic travel, responsible travel, nature-based travel, health and wellbeing and remote work lifestyles that enables exploration.

Interest in Indigenous Experiences: While Indigenous tourism experiences have been in demand by international travellers for many years, domestic markets have now increased their interest, in part to the awareness of the Truth and Reconciliation Calls to Action, the United Nations Declaration on the Rights of Indigenous Peoples, the British Columbia Declaration on the Rights of Indigenous Peoples Act, and the discovery of unmarked graves at the sites of residential schools. Research conducted by Indigenous Tourism Association of Canada and Destination Canada shows that one in three Canadians are now interested in Indigenous experiences; historically, international visitors have an even higher level of interest (37%).

Tourism Impacts on Rights and Titles: As more First Nations assert their rights and titles, and more commitments from governments are negotiated, there will be greater impacts to how tourism may transpire within communities and territories.

Visitor Welcoming and Resident Sentiment: Globally, it is being recognized that tourism can only happen when residents realize and recognize the net benefits of tourism to their communities and choose to welcome visitors. Tourism is now realized through a lens of resident quality of life and wellbeing – environmentally, socially, culturally and economically. Visitors that are not responsible and respectful while travelling can degrade the value of tourism

Climate Change and Stewardship: Throughout BC, the impacts of climate change have been felt, as floods, wildfires, extreme weather, rising coastlines and more have impacted communities and businesses. Land and water stewardship has taken on greater importance as has tourism's role in supporting climate change goals and efforts.

Capacity: ITBC received funding to support recovery and boost the capacity of Indigenous Tourism BC as well as our Stakeholders. Funds will be used to support the Labour Market Strategy (\$2.4 million to March 2023) and Capacity Building & Resiliency (\$3.7 million to March 2024).

Global Forces: Daily news reminds us that many global forces are at play that impact tourism, such as inflation and increasing operating costs for our Stakeholders, Russian invasion of Ukraine and other global tensions, supply challenges, and affordability of travel, among others.

Competition and Collaboration: For many years, tourism competition has increased as destinations around the world recognize the value of the industry. The pandemic has heightened this competitiveness as the impacts of no tourism were more clearly felt. Further, recovery from the pandemic requires increased collaboration, with all players pulling together, aligning efforts and working in partnership as the increased competition for tourism dollars accelerates globally.

Alignment: With all ITBC efforts, we look to align with our foundational partners, guiding strategies and important declarations, including DRIPA, the Indigenous Tourism Accord for BC, the Government of BC Strategic Framework for Tourism, Destination BC's corporate strategies (including the Invest in Iconics Strategy and Destination Stewardship efforts), the Regional Destination Management Organizations, Indigenous Tourism Association of Canada's corporate strategies, Destination Canada's corporate strategies, the Federal Government tourism strategy and the Indigenous Alignment Strategy 2021-2024.



Nationally, we are seeing a more significant public commitment to Reconciliation and increased recognition of how Indigenous innovation and industry can create socio-economic balance for Indigenous people and lead as a contributor to the overall BC economy.



HIGHLIGHTS - THE LAST FIVE YEARS

We honour these accomplishments and acknowledge that they are only a sample of ongoing and extensive collaborative and creative work we share with our ever-expanding network of partners:

- Secured over \$15 million in COVID-19 recovery funds to support Indigenous tourism in British Columbia, including a partnership with Indigenous Services Canada and the Aboriginal Financial Institutions in BC that has delivered \$5 million of the Tourism and Hospitality Fund through the Indigenous Community Business Fund
- Released \$300,000 in COVID-19 recovery financial support that was distributed to tourism businesses through the Emergency Relief Fund, a program that offers immediate finances to Indigenous businesses impacted by the global pandemic
- Partnership with Ministry of Tourism, Culture, Arts and Sports, Indigenous Tourism BC for distribution of \$5 million through the BC Indigenous Tourism Recovery Fund (over 140 Indigenous businesses received non-repayable grant)
- Supported Stakeholders with funding from PacificCan to navigate the challenges to run their day-to-day operations including buying personal protective equipment
- Secured \$3.7 million from the Province of BC to support Capacity Building & Resiliency for Indigenous tourism and ITBC
- Release and implementation of three-year Indigenous Alignment Strategy
- Launch of the Indigenous Tourism BC Road Map, a resource for Indigenous tourism entrepreneurs, cultural keepers and Indigenous community leaders to navigate the path to launch a tourism idea or strengthen an existing business
- Hosting of three virtual workshops for National Indigenous Peoples Day with over 1,000 attendees from across the world
- Launch and delivery of \$2.89 million Indigenous Community Business Fund
- Release of *Labour Market Research*, the *Indigenous Tourism Labour Strategy*, and a *Guide to Wise HR Practices*
- Delivery of Indigenous cultural training session for Destination BC staff
- Launch of multiple marketing campaigns, including the BC Effect campaign, Corporate Retreats, Meetings and Team Building campaign, and Everything is Connected campaign
- Launch and delivery of Co-op Marketing Program, assisting 20 businesses with marketing dollars and tailored initiatives
- *Placeholder for marketing achievements (to come from Dana)*
- Co-development of Invest in Iconics Strategy, a long-term strategy whose goal is to increase tourism revenue and visitation to British Columbia responsibly

- Signing of MOU with Destination Vancouver to develop a coordinated, sustainable, and socially conscious Indigenous tourism industry
- Signing of MOU with YVR to develop a coordinated and culturally informed approach to growing Indigenous tourism in Metro Vancouver
- Launch of ITBC information kiosk at Vancouver International Airport
- Launch of Spark Program with partners Destination BC and Tourism Innovation Lab to spark new Indigenous tourism ideas and experiences which authentically represent, celebrate, and promote Indigenous culture, heritage, language, cuisine, and communities in British Columbia
- Formed a partnership with the sustainable apparel brand ecoglyst to engage in activities that educate consumers on a better way of life that includes a commitment to slow fashion and slow travel



In 2021, ITBC Chair Brenda Baptiste was awarded the prestigious Order of BC for her dedication and commitment to the growth of Indigenous tourism in British Columbia. The Order of British Columbia recognizes those persons who have served with the greatest distinction and excelled in any field of endeavor benefiting the people of British Columbia and beyond. The Order represents the highest form of recognition the Province can extend to its citizens.



STRATEGY - THE NEXT FIVE YEARS

VISION AND MISSION

Our VISION is Indigenous well-being improves through a prosperous Indigenous tourism industry connecting visitors to exceptional, authentic experiences.

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.

STRATEGIC PERFORMANCE AREAS

For the next five years, we will make strategic choices to execute the best role for ITBC with proficiency and excellence. We will make choices that are driven by bringing benefits to Stakeholders, First Nation communities and the organization.

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

LEADERSHIP AND ORGANIZATIONAL INNOVATION	PARTNERSHIPS AND SPECIAL PROJECTS	EXPERIENCE DEVELOPMENT	MARKETING
<p>Strengthen ITBC's position as a global leader in Indigenous Tourism Development</p> <p>Strengthen relationships with Indigenous communities to generate stronger local tourism outcomes</p>	<p>Deliver with excellence on the strengthened partnerships and projects established to build capacity and resiliency</p> <p>Support reconciliation and stewardship efforts</p>	<p>Support Indigenous communities, businesses and entrepreneurs in building, enhancing, and enriching Indigenous tourism experiences</p>	<p>Strengthen Indigenous voices, values and presence in marketing efforts throughout BC's tourism industry</p>

GOALS

Our Organizational Goals

- Leverage collaborative partnerships at the local, provincial and national level
- Lead by being an engaging, innovative and results focused team
- Deliver and execute a focused and insightful marketing strategy
- Accelerate experience development
- Establish a strong Indigenous tourism story to exhibit leadership within the sector
- Support the growth of Indigenous economies
- Increase capacity and competitiveness of Indigenous businesses

This plan outlines the way forward to meet the common goals we share with our partners:

- Grow sustainable social, cultural, environmental, and economic benefits for all Indigenous British Columbians
- Build industry capacity through relevant programs and collaboration
- Work with partners within BC and nationally to reimagine, reinvent and create the post COVID-19 tourism industry
- Lead the Indigenous tourism industry in returning to the 2017/18 level by 2024
- Achieve annual growth in BC Indigenous tourism revenues to 2027/28
- Achieve annual growth in jobs at Indigenous tourism businesses to 2027/28

In addition to the above goals, we will work with Aboriginal Funding Institutions, BC government (Service BC and BC Stats), and National Indigenous Economic Development Board to develop better measures that will help ITBC improve its efforts to ultimately improve local Indigenous community well-being.

TARGETS

	2017/18 BASELINE	2024/25 TARGET	2025/26 TARGET	2026/27 TARGET	2027/28 TARGET
Annual growth in BC Indigenous tourism industry revenues	\$705 million (annual GDP)	Growth rate equal to or exceeding provincial rate	Growth rate equal to or exceeding provincial rate	Growth rate equal to or exceeding provincial rate	Growth rate equal to or exceeding provincial rate
Annual growth in jobs at Indigenous tourism businesses	7,428 jobs	7,428	8,599 (+15.7%)	9,029 (+5%)	9,408 (+4.2%)
Visitors who had an Indigenous experience	1,915,715	1,915,715	2,123,988	2,198,127	2,417,939

	2017/18 BASELINE	2024/25 TARGET	2025/26 TARGET	2026/27 TARGET	2027/28 TARGET
Visitor spending that included an Indigenous experience (000's)	\$1,269,034	\$1,269,034	\$1,456,509	\$1,524,965	\$1,677,461
Total Indigenous businesses	401	401	533	587	645
Market ready Indigenous businesses	101	160	170	180	190
Industry participation in ITBC programs and collaboration	60%	70%	75%	80%	Maintain or Improve
Stakeholders value ITBC's expertise and programs	70%	75%	80%	90%	Maintain or Improve
BC resident perceptions of tourism's contribution	n/a	Baseline to be determined	Maintain or Improve	Maintain or Improve	Maintain or Improve

Notes:

- Annual growth in BC Indigenous tourism industry revenues will be measured against Destination BC performance measure for "B.C. tourism industry revenue".
- Indigenous tourism jobs baseline from "The Next Phase" Tourism Performance Audit Report 2012-2017, with 5% increases annually, similar to the ITAC strategy increases.
- Visitors who had an Indigenous experience 2024/25 targets are based on ITBC Corporate Strategy 2017/18 baselines, with a 10% increase for 2027/28.
- Visitor spending 2024/25 targets are based on ITBC Corporate Strategy 2017/18 baselines, with a 10% increase for 2027/28.
- Total Indigenous businesses baseline from "The Next Phase" Tourism Performance Audit Report 2012-2017, with a 10% increase annually. 2012 to 2022 forecast from ITBC Corporate Strategy was for a 7.9% average annual increase; with incremental focus this strategy targets higher than average growth rates.
- Market ready Indigenous businesses 2024/25 targets are based on ITBC Corporate Strategy 2017/18 baselines, with a 10% increase for 2027/28.
- Information on methodology used in "The Next Phase" Tourism Performance Audit Report 2012-2017 can be found within the document, [linked here](#).
- The Conference Board of Canada states the number of Indigenous tourism businesses in BC is 341 in the Canada's Indigenous Tourism Sector – Insights and Economic Impacts report, May 2019. These numbers were originally sourced from ITAC Business Inventory. The report also states there are 524 million in revenues, 6,957 direct jobs from employment in the Indigenous tourism sector in BC, 167 in labour income, and 260 million in GDP (basic prices). ITBC has chosen to continue to use the same methodology that was established in BC and has been used since the Blueprint Strategy, working with the same researchers.
- BC resident perceptions of tourism's contribution is a shared target with Destination BC, working in partnership to increase the benefits of tourism for all.

* Targets have not been established for 23/24, the first year of this strategy, as the target is to achieve pre-pandemic levels by 2024/25.

TARGET MARKETS



For this corporate strategy, we are tapping into the human need for connection with nature and one another, as well as our desire to feel grounded while experiencing new things. Our target markets reflect an approach to attracting respectful and responsible visitors for our Stakeholders.

CONNECTED TRAVELLERS

We are targeting and attracting:

- Conscious travellers: those couples and families that are interested in learning, connecting with each other, and giving back
- Indigenous people: those that are interested in supporting their own community, businesses and economies
- Corporations/organizations: those that are looking to implement Truth and Reconciliation Calls to Action and applying First Nation learning principles

GEOGRAPHIC-BASED

While Indigenous cultural tourism experiences have been desired by visitors from outside Canada, the pandemic identified the opportunity to focus on the British Columbian audience – we have 5 million neighbours in BC who have been inspired to learn more, connect more, give back more and be more.

Each year, we will balance the market mix for domestic and international markets to ensure all ITBC Stakeholders are represented and benefit from the most effective marketing efforts.

- Short term, we will focus on BC, ON, AB and WA. We will work with our partners on their activities in international markets (UK, Germany, Australia, other US), such as Travel Trade and Media activities.
- Longer term, we will align with our marketing partners, including Destination BC, Destination Canada and Indigenous Tourism Association of Canada, to shift resources by market as opportunities and challenges arise. While the world changes rapidly, so too may our target markets.





ACTIVITIES

LEADERSHIP AND ORGANIZATIONAL INNOVATION

OUR ROLE IS TO:

- Be the official designated representative for Indigenous cultural tourism in BC.
- Improve Indigenous community well-being through tourism.
- Advocate on behalf of the Indigenous tourism industry to ensure that the right economic, social and environmental conditions are in place to sustainably grow Indigenous tourism.
- Where we need to focus in the next few years:
- Strengthen ITBC's position as a global leader in Indigenous Tourism Development.
- Strengthen relationships with Indigenous communities to generate stronger local tourism outcomes.
- Demonstrate and promote thought leadership on tourism-related issues important to Indigenous communities and tourism operators.
- Energize and support Indigenous communities to create and carry-out better tourism plans.
- Create a climate where Indigenous people choose tourism as a career.
- Support Indigenous entrepreneurs in starting a tourism business.
- Build-up ITBC digital competencies and operational capabilities to bring more corporate communications functions in-house.
- Build-up ITBC staff capacity to advance Indigenous tourism and support Indigenous communities, businesses and entrepreneurs.
- Communicate valuable content regularly to stakeholders in their preferred format(s) including meetings and events.

THIS MEANS WE WILL:

- Build and staff a *Corporate Services* division that will oversee ITBC corporate resources and direct them at inspiring Indigenous communities, champions and entrepreneurs to trust and look to ITBC for leadership, new ideas, and support as they make Indigenous tourism a greater focus.
- Promote ITBC thought leadership and programs through the BC and national network of Indigenous anchor organizations and institutions who serve and champion Indigenous economic development and economic reconciliation.
- Better leverage DRIPA and TRC Calls to Action so that economic reconciliation becomes the foundation of every partnership with BC and Canada's tourism network.
- Improve ITBC's capacity to proactively respond to market shocks, issues and crises that have a direct impact on Indigenous tourism businesses and the Indigenous tourism workforce.

- Build and staff a team of ITBC Regional Indigenous Tourism Specialists for providing Pathfinding Assistance to 'meet people where they are at' and provide one-on-one assistance to tailored support services and access to mainstream program services.
- Increase the use of research, data and insights to provide our current and future Stakeholders and partners with the planning support and best information.
- Influence key economic opportunities for BC's Indigenous communities, including funding, grant programs, tourism planning and economic development resources.
- Develop a program that provides funds and resources that lets First Nations communities to make informed decisions and plan for consent-based tourism within their territory, as well as develop meaningful community-based tourism economic strategies.
- Develop tools and resources and provide funding to support tourism businesses and entrepreneurs in their aspirations and recovery from pandemic, such as business planning and mentoring program for operational adaptation, digital innovation, experience development, visitor experience.
- Offer resources to advance digitization and innovation and push for digital readiness for tourism businesses, and share opportunities from other organizations.
- Implement the Labour Market Recovery project, which delivers sector labour training programs to assist businesses and communities in meeting tourism staffing needs. This offers a variety of training programs: FirstHost, Storytelling, Value of Tourism, Firsthand experience through Indigenous Cultural activities and field trips, SuperHost, FoodSafe, Workplace Safety, BSafe (covid), First Aid, Serving it Right.
- Increase awareness and use of the Roadmap program to help Indigenous tourism operators find and access support for recovery and ongoing success.
- Advocate for long term, committed, sustainable funding for ITBC.
- Work with Aboriginal Funding Institutions, BC government (Service BC and BC Stats), and National Indigenous Economic Development Board to develop better measures that will help ITBC improve its efforts to ultimately improve local Indigenous community well-being.
- Offer leadership training programs to ITBC staff and Stakeholders with a focus on cross-collaboration and creating a climate for success.



Our work ensures that Indigenous values inform tourism solutions that directly and equitably benefit Indigenous communities and businesses invested in tourism.





PARTNERSHIPS AND SPECIAL PROJECTS

OUR ROLE:

- 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.
- Where we need to focus in the next few years:
- Deliver on the strengthened partnerships and projects established to build capacity and resiliency.
- Support reconciliation and stewardship efforts.
- Leverage collaborative partnerships at the local, provincial and national level.
- Lead together in the creation of opportunities for Indigenous success in the tourism industry.
- Increase the Indigenous presence in the long-term strategy for re-branding of BC and increase the profile of First Nations and Indigenous tourism experiences through partnering in the Destination BC Invest in Iconics Project.

THIS MEANS WE WILL:

- Follow direction provided by our guiding partners – British Columbia Assembly of First Nations, Union of British Columbia Indian Chiefs, First Nations Summit.
- Continue to strengthen partnerships, work to support the provincial and federal tourism strategies, and deliver value to our program and funding partners – Indigenous Services Canada, PacificCan, Indigenous Tourism Association of Canada, the Ministry of Tourism, Arts, Culture and Sport, and Destination BC.
- Support ITAC implementation of their Building Back Better strategy to leverage strong domestic and global demand, continue our leadership in supporting the development of exceptional, export-ready Indigenous tourism experiences and invest in a strategy to recover Indigenous tourism jobs.
- Successfully complete the implementation of the major projects entrusted to ITBC, including the Recovery Fund projects (Province of BC), Strategic Partnerships Initiative (Indigenous Services Canada), Labour Market Strategy (Province of BC), Capacity Building & Resilience Project (Province of BC).
- Work with Destination BC as a true partner to execute the Iconics Place Branding and Destination Development - Iconics efforts.

- Create and evolve new ways of working in partnership with our regional and community partners to enhance the long term ability for Indigenous Tourism Specialists and Indigenous Stewardship Specialist to provide pathfinding assistance – direct, one-on-one assistance to increase availability of tailored support services and access to mainstream program services.
- Finalize six Indigenous Regional DMO MOUs created to outline key areas of alignment with ITBC Strategic Performance Areas: TOTA, NBCTA, CCCTA, TAVI, KR and VCM.
- Strengthen partnerships with economic development agencies and other entities to maximize opportunities for Indigenous tourism and wellbeing.



We will work together to ensure Indigenous voices set a strong foundation and weave Indigenous culture and tourism experiences throughout the Invest in Iconics Strategy, a long-term, dispersion strategy.





EXPERIENCE DEVELOPMENT

OUR ROLE IS TO:

- Help Indigenous entrepreneurs start a tourism business, supporting local well-being improvement and economic reconciliation.
- Support Indigenous community destination development initiatives on reserve that improve local well-being and economic reconciliation.
- Link ITBC stakeholders with training, tools and coaching that will improve the quality of their business plans, current operations and increase their access to capital.
- Increase the number of market-ready tourism businesses that ITBC can promote in key markets.

WHERE WE NEED TO FOCUS IN THE NEXT FEW YEARS:

- Support Indigenous communities, businesses and entrepreneurs in building, enhancing, and enriching Indigenous tourism experiences.
- Better leverage DRIPA, TRC Calls to Action and Economic Reconciliation principles to negotiate stronger partnerships with governments and the tourism industry network.
- Work more closely with the BC and national network of Indigenous anchor institutions committed to economic development and reconciliation.
- Monitor, measure and support the tourism progress of Indigenous communities best suited and most willing to invest in tourism.
- Provide Indigenous tourism entrepreneurs with end-to-end support along their business startup journey.
- Make sure Indigenous communities who make tourism a focus have access to capital and expertise to build infrastructure projects that benefit tourism and local well-being.

THIS MEANS WE WILL:

- Support Indigenous tourism businesses and their efforts to return to profitability and full employment levels by providing temporary grant funding, when needed.
- Build and staff a Corporate Services division that will oversee ITBC experience development resources and direct them at providing end-to-end support to Indigenous entrepreneurs and communities looking to start a tourism business or make tourism infrastructure investments on their traditional territory.
- Develop innovative programs, tools and services that will support BC Indigenous communities and entrepreneurs as they move through the process of starting a tourism business, improving resiliency of current operations, increasing profitability, and/or generating local well-being.
- Explore the development of a provincial ITBC-led visitor experience training program for staff of market-ready businesses.
- Support destination marketer efforts to encourage geographic and seasonal dispersion, so that Indigenous communities and experiences along less travelled tourism corridors can benefit more fully from visitor volumes and expenditures, and so to support efforts that protect the land from the negative impacts of over-tourism.

- Initiate a province-wide community economic development initiative that focuses on destination and experience development, food sovereignty and community powered solutions so that tourism development fits with Indigenous values and supports Indigenous communities reclaim and preserve their culture, language, practices, and sacred sites.
- Partner with DBC Invest in Iconics Strategy to ensure Destination Development - Iconics projects benefits Indigenous peoples and advance Indigenous tourism.



Indigenous tourism matters to us all. Many Indigenous communities are choosing tourism as a path to social and economic development, cultural sharing and reconciliation. As the original inhabitants of this land, Indigenous hosts have been prepared since time immemorial to welcome visitors to this beautiful land in ways that respect and sustain natural abundance for all life. When we come together to learn from each other, we succeed.





MARKETING

OUR ROLE:

- 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.

WHERE WE NEED TO FOCUS IN THE NEXT FEW YEARS:

- Strengthen Indigenous voices, values and presence in marketing efforts throughout BC's tourism industry.
- Deliver the right Indigenous content to the right audience at the right time.
- Create interest in Indigenous tourism and drive consumer bookings and business directly to ITBC's Market-Ready and Export-Ready Stakeholders.
- Attract responsible visitors for our Stakeholders.
- Continue to work with Indigenous Tourism Association of Canada, Destination BC, Stakeholders and partners to leverage marketing opportunities.

THIS MEANS WE WILL:

- Develop marketing campaigns that showcase the Indigenous voice and perspective in an authentic way.
- Work with Destination BC to ensure Indigenous voices and perspectives are woven into the refreshed BC destination brand.
- Continue to work in partnership with Destination BC to capture Indigenous opportunities through the Invest in Iconics Strategy, including strengthening Indigenous voices and values in place branding and strengthening Indigenous themes in Destination Development – Iconics.
- Activate our audience through the creation, curation and distribution of inspiring content and stories that celebrate authentic Indigenous cultures and experiences.
- Provide content support to Stakeholders through training and content creation.
- Maintain marketing information technology and online infrastructure, including consumer website, CRM, Crowdriff, Online Services, DAMs, App Maintenance.
- Continue to participate in content partnerships with Destination BC, Indigenous Tourism Association of Canada, regional DMOs, community DMOs, sectors, YVR, Destination Vancouver and non-tourism partners.
- Develop and implement nimble marketing programs that connect visitors with Indigenous tourism businesses and create industry revenue generation.
- Support the increase in Indigenous businesses that participate in and leverage cooperative marketing campaigns.
- Inspire media and influencers to develop key stories that feature Indigenous businesses and values.

- Inspire travel trade to develop itineraries and that include authentic Indigenous businesses.
- Improve the ITBC marketing technology and online infrastructure systems.
- Outreach to major tourism platforms to explore a pilot project for them to further support Indigenous tourism businesses in BC increasing participation on their platforms as part of their reconciliation efforts.
- Increase the messaging focus on visitor education that leads to understanding of Indigenous culture and values, stewardship and territory, and creates responsible travellers throughout BC and for our Stakeholders.
- Work closely with Destination BC and Indigenous Tourism Association of Canada as powerful partners to leverage each other's channels, reach and global marketing opportunities.



Investing in Indigenous tourism is investing in BC'S competitive advantage.





ORGANIZATION

We will deliver on our strategic intention, vision, mission and goals through our four Strategic Performance Areas:

- Leadership and Organizational Innovation
- Partnerships and Special Projects
- Experience Development
- Marketing

To execute on our work and strengthen our roots and branches, we are creating a climate for success. This includes building-up ITBC staff capacity and emphasising leadership development, results-based planning frameworks, and employee performance management.

We have increased the staff team in two areas:

OUR NEW CORPORATE SERVICES DEPARTMENT

A new Corporate Services department bridges two Strategic Areas: Leadership and Organizational Innovation and Experience Development.

Indigenous Tourism BC is focused on improving the well-being of Indigenous communities in BC. Generating stronger tourism outcomes for Indigenous communities and entrepreneurs requires embracing Indigenous values and supporting local community powered solutions. The only way forward is for ITBC to continue earning the trust of Indigenous people so that they look to our organization for leadership, programs and expert support. This requires a department and staff who can work daily with any number of the hundreds of Indigenous communities in BC, as well as a growing network of specialized Indigenous anchor institutions dedicated to rebuilding the Indigenous economy, and through them, encourage more Indigenous communities and entrepreneurs to focus on and invest in tourism.

The Corporate Services Department is focused on building relationships with Indigenous communities, understanding their values and developing local economy solutions that will generate stronger local tourism outcomes. Serving an entirely different 'customer' and faced with an entirely unique network of partners and communications channels, the team roles and responsibilities require full-time experts in corporate communications, advocacy and issues management, Indigenous business training and coaching, experience development, and destination development.

OUR NEW REGIONAL INDIGENOUS TOURISM SPECIALISTS

ITBC is expanding the network of Regional Indigenous Tourism Specialists (ITS) to provide direct, one-on-one assistance to increase availability of tailored support services and access to mainstream program services.

While these additional ITS positions will be 100% staff of ITBC, they will work collaboratively with Regional DMO staff and go2HR Human Resource Consultants so that all are working together to manage and develop tourism together.

These positions will be trained as Indigenous economic development officers to support Indigenous businesses, entrepreneurs and communities. Their focus will be to offer guidance and mentorship to direct businesses to the existing resources that are available for start-ups (Tier 1 and Tier 2), and provide support for development specific to meeting market-ready status (Tier 3).



We believe that traditional Indigenous values and governance models are essential to uphold and guide Indigenous tourism in British Columbia. ITBC supports the Indigenous innovators and entrepreneurs leading the way in cultural revitalization, experience development, and the creation of improved social and economic outcomes for the living and future generations of Indigenous people in BC.



CORE SERVICES AND MAJOR PROJECTS GRID

The following chart show the core services and major projects we are focused on within the first year of this strategy, which will be reviewed annually. As many support multiple pillars, we've identified their primary and support pillars.

	LEADERSHIP AND ORGANIZATIONAL INNOVATION	PARTNERSHIPS AND SPECIAL PROJECTS	EXPERIENCE DEVELOPMENT	MARKETING
CORE SERVICES				
Research, data and insights	Primary	Support	Support	Support
Build and staff a Corporate Services division – Corporate Communications and Engagement	Primary		Primary	
Funding and grant programs	Primary	Support		
Roadmap program	Primary		Support	Support
Experience development programs, tools and services		Support	Primary	
Marketing campaigns		Support		Primary
Content and stories		Support		Primary
Travel trade and travel media		Support		Primary
Cooperative marketing		Support	Support	Primary
Responsible traveller visitor education	Support	Support	Support	Primary
MAJOR PROJECTS				
ITBC Regional Indigenous Tourism Specialists	Primary	Support	Support	Support
Recovery Fund projects (Province of BC)	Support	Primary	Support	Support
Strategic Partnerships Initiative (Indigenous Services Canada)	Support	Primary	Support	
Labour Market Strategy (Province of BC)	Support	Primary	Support	
Capacity Building & Resilience Project (Province of BC)	Support	Primary		
Destination BC Invest in Iconics Project	Support	Primary	Support	Support
Advance digitization and push for digital readiness	Primary		Support	Support
Pilot project with major tourism platforms				Primary

BUDGET

To achieve our 2023-2027 targets for the Indigenous tourism industry in BC, our plan requires a \$XX million investment over five years. The following budget outlines the funded focus of effort priorities.

Due to the nature of the organization, ITBC relies on multiple partner agreements for funding, and does not have full funding certainty beyond a short annual window. To successfully implement COVID-19 recovery and resilience, ITBC has secured significant funds to implement projects identified within the Alignment Strategy 2021-2024. However, as shown in the chart below, these funds are projected to significantly reduce in 2024-25, which will reduce the capacity within the organization to support Indigenous communities, business and entrepreneurs, as well as tourism partners.

A tree that does not have water flowing through it's roots will lose it's leaves and branches. To ensure that Indigenous tourism in BC is able to reach its potential, ITBC will continue to look for and secure funding opportunities to solidify long term financial security.

Currently, unfunded core budget and priority project activities include:

- \$250,000/year: Core funding for ITBC activities from 2023-2024 and beyond (Leadership and Organizational Innovation)
- \$350,000/year: Funding to support Invest in Iconics Strategy implementation from 2023-24 and beyond (Partnerships and Special Projects)
- \$1,200,000/year: Funding to support Regional Indigenous Tourism Specialist roles for years 2024-25 to 2027-28 (Experience Development)
- \$250,000/year: Digital Strategy for support Indigenous Stakeholders (Marketing)

Flexibility in budgeting is required to ensure the organization can operate within ongoing budget uncertainty.

Strategies	2023-2024	2024-2025	2025-2026	2026-2027	2027-2028
FUNDED CORE BUDGET FOCUS OF EFFORT					
1 Leadership and Organizational Innovation	\$750,000	\$750,000	\$750,000	\$750,000	\$750,000
2 Partnerships and Special Projects	\$350,000	\$0	\$0	\$0	\$0
3 Experience Development	\$3,875,000	\$2,000,000	\$2,000,000	\$0	\$0
4 Marketing	\$750,000	\$750,000	\$750,000	\$750,000	\$750,000
TOTAL	\$5,725,000	\$3,500,000	\$3,500,000	\$1,500,000	\$150,000
UNFUNDED CORE BUDGET AND PRIORITY PROJECTS					
1 Leadership and Organizational Innovation	\$0	\$250,000	\$250,000	\$250,000	\$250,000
2 Partnerships and Special Projects	\$0	\$350,000	\$350,000	\$350,000	\$350,000
3 Experience Development	\$0	\$1,250,000	\$1,250,000	\$3,250,000	\$3,250,000
4 Marketing	\$0	\$250,000	\$250,000	\$250,000	\$250,000
TOTAL	\$0	\$2,100,000	\$2,100,000	\$4,100,000	\$4,100,000
GRAND TOTAL	\$5,725,000	\$5,600,000	\$5,600,000	\$5,600,000	\$5,600,000

