

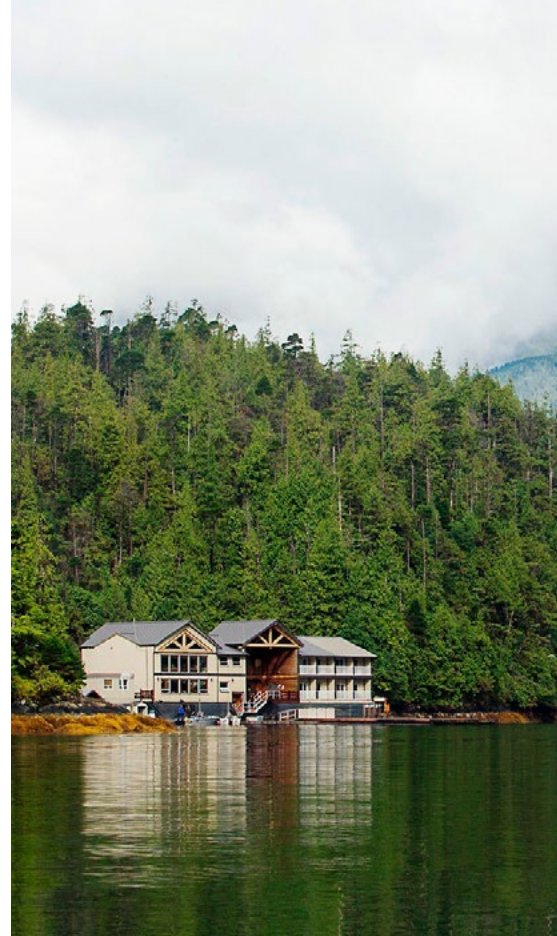
2018 NATIONAL GUIDELINES

**Developing Authentic Indigenous
Experiences in Canada**



INDIGENOUS
TOURISM ASSOCIATION OF CANADA

ASSOCIATION TOURISTIQUE
AUTOCHTONE
DU CANADA



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Photos clockwise from top left

Yukon First Nations Cultural & Tourism Association, YK
 Ocean House at Stads K'uns GawGa, BC
 Tundra North Tours, NT
 Quebec Aboriginal Tourism, QC
 Aurora Village, NT
 Squamish Lil'wat Cultural Centre, BC

Welcome

I would like to welcome you to the Indigenous Tourism Association of Canada's National Guidelines for authentic Indigenous tourism experience development. This is an exciting time for the Indigenous tourism industry in Canada, our sector grows stronger as our influence spreads wider, and as the leading national organization supporting and developing Indigenous tourism businesses, we are evolving to reflect those changes. These guidelines have been updated in 2018, and were created in consultation with Elders, industry and the community to give guidance and act as a path finder for all within the Indigenous tourism industry.

Authentic Indigenous tourism experiences will tell the true story of Canada to visitors from around the world. By working together to support Indigenous peoples to tell our own stories in our own voices, the entire tourism industry will benefit from a better visitor experience. We, at ITAC, wish you all the success in your tourism ventures of today and tomorrow.

Merci, thank you, ekosi.

- Keith Henry, President and CEO, Indigenous Tourism Association of Canada



How do I use this guide?

We want you to become familiar with all the information and advice this guide has to offer. However, you may wish to concentrate on just one or two sections so we've colour coded the pages to help you navigate faster.

- ▶ *If you are in the planning stages of starting an Indigenous tourism business, you should read the **green** sections of the guide.*
- ▶ *If you already have an Indigenous tourism business and wish to improve or expand, you should read the **blue** sections of the guide.*
- ▶ *If you have a market-ready Indigenous tourism business and want to work with the travel trade to help sell your experiences and partner with other tourism businesses, you should read the **orange** sections of the guide.*
- ▶ *If you want to know more about Indigenous tourism and the tourism industry, you should read the **yellow** sections of the guide.*

Read this section if you are:

- ▶ **planning**
- ▶ **visitor-ready**
- ▶ **market-ready**
- ▶ **export-ready**



◀ Eeyou Istchee Tourism, QC
Opposite page
 Kluskap Ridge RV & Campground, NS

How can this guide help your business?

These national guidelines are tools to guide you towards success in your business: from the planning and development stages through to becoming business-, visitor- and market-ready, and finally through the steps you need to follow to work with the travel trade to become an export-ready business. You'll also find valuable advice from a successful Indigenous tourism company with a case study interview with the Great Spirit Circle Trail, and a checklist section which you can use to plan ahead as you work through each stage.

Read this section if you are:

- **planning**
- **visitor-ready**
- **market-ready**
- **export-ready**

“Indigenous communities have shared their culture with visitors to their traditional territories since time immemorial closely guided by community values of respect, honour and integrity. Those same values are the building blocks for a sustainable success for quality Indigenous tourism experiences both now, and for future generations.”

Visitors today are looking for high quality authentic Indigenous experiences, and this guide is designed to inspire excellence in Indigenous cultural tourism (ICT) experiences across Canada, and act as a step-by-step guide for businesses to explore what is needed to grow and build on success, both nationally and internationally working with travel trade.

Indigenous cultural tourism provides visitors with a unique experience that they cannot have anywhere else in the world, however, just offering that experience is not enough to succeed. Your visitors and industry partners will expect your business to meet industry standards and deliver a consistent high-quality tourism experience each and every time. Similar versions of these standards are used by almost all Provinces and Territories to help identify which experiences they promote within international markets. Within our industry of Indigenous cultural tourism, it is equally important to protect the authenticity of the experience along with its quality and consistency.

Authenticity is at the heart of Indigenous tourism

A Culture belongs to the community and its people, it is essential to ensure the Culture is protected for future generations. All tourism products that share our culture should be developed and delivered in a way that **supports the community it represents**.

With the diversity of Indigenous cultures across Canada, it is impossible to define universally what is “appropriate” to share, as something may be appropriate in one community and not in another. ITAC supports the authority of each community to determine their own cultural protocols and boundaries, and recognizes all of the diverse values and beliefs of our First Nations, Métis and Inuit peoples. This guide will help you to ensure that Cultural Protocols are followed so that everyone can be comfortable that the experience you offer is not just authentic but also supported by the “Keepers of the Culture... the Nation and its People”.

Read this section if you are:

- ▶ **planning**
- ▶ **visitor-ready**
- ▶ **market-ready**
- ▶ **export-ready**

▼ Adäka Cultural Festival, YT



What are the different forms of Indigenous tourism?

Read this section if you are:

- ▶ **planning**
- ▶ **visitor-ready**
- ▶ **market-ready**
- ▶ **export-ready**

The Indigenous Tourism Association of Canada (ITAC) launched a national consultation with industry members, Elders and community to create and endorse the following definitions of Indigenous Tourism. ITAC recognizes that each nation, culture or community can choose to adopt or adapt these definitions to best suit their needs:

Indigenous Tourism is defined as a tourism business majority owned, operated and/or controlled by First Nations, Métis or Inuit peoples which demonstrates a connection and responsibility to the local Indigenous community and traditional territory where the operation is based.

Indigenous Cultural Tourism not only meets the Indigenous tourism criteria (above) but in addition a significant portion of the experience incorporates a distinct Indigenous culture in a manner that is appropriate, respectful and true. Authenticity lies in the active involvement of Indigenous people in the development and delivery of the experience.

There are tourism businesses which are neither majority owned nor operated by Indigenous People who offer 'Indigenous tourism experiences'. Authentic Indigenous Cultural Tourism is by Indigenous peoples, not about Indigenous peoples.

There are several key things to consider when it comes to defining a culturally authentic tourism experience:

“Indigenous cultural tourism experiences need to find a balance between offering an experience that has wide tourism appeal, while still remaining true to the past and present culture of their community.”

- ▶ Does your experience offer meaningful benefit to the Indigenous people and community where the operation is based?
- ▶ Is the community involved in the delivery of the cultural programming to the visitor?
- ▶ Is all of the Indigenous cultural content portrayed in an appropriate, respectful manner that follows all local protocols?
- ▶ Does the Indigenous community being portrayed have control over the content of the cultural programming?
- ▶ Can you demonstrate a connection to the community portrayed that reflects a responsibility to that community?

Why authenticity matters and how you can reap its rewards

ITAC partnered with Destination Canada in 2017 on a research study to understand how and what USA travellers think about Indigenous tourism experiences in Canada. We discovered that when it comes to Indigenous tourism experiences authenticity is the key. These findings may be about American visitors, but the general themes can be applied to any tourists and you can use this information to your benefit when it comes to designing or expanding on your Indigenous tourism business.

- ▶ They prefer one-on-one interaction with Indigenous people, in small, intimate groups.
- ▶ They want to be actively involved in learning about cultures, traditions, arts, food, storytelling, and history.
- ▶ They would like to learn about your connection to your land, nature and the environment.
- ▶ They are interested in participating in adventure, both physical and mental.
- ▶ They are looking for unique experiences.
- ▶ Their awareness and understanding of Indigenous tourism in Canada is low.
- ▶ There is a lot of confusion over wording and definitions.
- ▶ US travellers believe that Indigenous cultural experiences stand out from more typical travel experiences. They imagine that it could transform a vacation from ordinary to extraordinary.
- ▶ This type of travel is highly experiential and emotional, and is seen as providing the traveller with a different perspective on a destination as well as a way of life.
- ▶ It is a personal experience rather than a mass-produced experience.
- ▶ Impressions of Indigenous tourism in the US are often negative. American travellers feel guilty about how the US has historically treated Indigenous peoples in the past and continues to treat them today. For some, this contributes to a perception that Indigenous people in the US may not truly be interested in interacting with tourists or sharing their culture with them.
- ▶ Americans sense that an Indigenous experience in Canada could be more authentic than in the US.

Read this section if you are:

- ▶ **planning**
- ▶ **visitor-ready**
- ▶ **market-ready**
- ▶ **export-ready**

- ▶ US travellers do not have a good understanding of Canadian geography, however they are vaguely aware of Canada's size and regionality, and this typically works in Canada's favour in terms of differentiation. However, there is also a related impression that authentic Indigenous tourism experiences can only be found in rural areas, and do not exist in cities.

Make the most of it... showcase what only you can do best:

- ▶ Be yourself, be authentic, and avoid 'staged' experiences.
- ▶ Find multiple ways your guests can interact with your staff, performance groups and knowledge keepers.
- ▶ Include land acknowledgments in your business and experience descriptions.
- ▶ When talking about your business, focus on what makes it unique and different.
- ▶ Host visitors with the understanding that they are interested in Indigenous cultures, but do not necessarily understand us or have ever learned anything about our history and relationship with Canada.
- ▶ Clearly name your community or nation within your marketing descriptions – share your language if you like. Your visitors are interested in learning!
- ▶ Visitors are seeking what is unique, what stands out, and what is 'new' in a destination – keep it authentic, engaging, and extraordinary.
- ▶ Do not be afraid to share your community's story and historic relationships with Canada.
- ▶ Acknowledge that there are locations, information and stories which your community has decided are not to be shared; tell your visitors why.
- ▶ Authentic Indigenous tourism experiences do not live in the past. Indigenous People in Canada are old and young, modern and traditional, vibrant and diverse across the country.
- ▶ Use marketing photography which includes people taking part in your experiences.
- ▶ Highlight your knowledge keepers and storytellers by name – tell their story too!
- ▶ Embrace how Indigenous culture is alive and well, and part of a modern society – the experiences are not 'stuck in the past'.
- ▶ Position experiences through marketing by suggesting that travellers will have an authentic experience like no other through being guided by Indigenous people. A unique experience they couldn't find anywhere else.
- ▶ Show experiences as more interaction-focused by suggesting a personal and authentic connection between the traveller and the Indigenous host to get closer to the culture and nature.





◀ Haida Enterprises, BC
Top Photo
Sidney Whale Watching, BC

Authenticity and recommended protocols

Read this section if you are:

- ▶ **planning**
- ▶ **visitor-ready**
- ▶ **market-ready**
- ▶ **export-ready**

Authentic Indigenous tourism is BY Indigenous Peoples, not ABOUT Indigenous Peoples.

ITAC supports each community in determining their own specific cultural protocols and boundaries, and recognises the diverse values and beliefs of our First Nations, Métis and Inuit peoples. The following are recommended protocols for your tourism experience to be considered an authentic Indigenous experience.

- ▶ At least 51% owned by Indigenous individuals OR majority owned Indigenous companies OR Indigenous controlled organizations such as Bands and Tribal Councils.
- ▶ Use cultural content approved by Keepers of the Culture and developed under the direction of the Indigenous people who are from the culture being interpreted.
- ▶ Offer cultural activities for guests led by Indigenous people (an exception may be when foreign languages are required when the interpreter should still have access to an Indigenous host for questions related to the culture and community).
- ▶ Provide opportunities for visitors to interact face-to-face with Indigenous people such as artisans, craftspeople, Elders, storytellers, hosts or entertainers who originate from the culture being shared.
- ▶ Ensure that heritage interpreters and presenters have suitable experience, knowledge or formal training related to the Indigenous culture that they are sharing.

Protecting cultural authenticity while supporting your community

Read this section if you are:

- ▶ **planning**
- ▶ **visitor-ready**
- ▶ **market-ready**
- ▶ **export-ready**

A culture is a living thing which belongs to the community and its people. Authentic Indigenous cultural tourism protects the culture and community that it represents. Here are our recommended protocols to support your community.

- ▶ Work with the local Indigenous community and its Elders to ensure that they are aware of (and generally supportive of) your tourism initiative.
- ▶ Ensure that your tourism experience impacts the community's culture and economy in a positive way. Think about how the community can benefit from sharing its culture with visitors: i.e. jobs, suppliers, support other business in the region, etc.
- ▶ Invite or welcome Indigenous community input and feedback on your cultural programming.
- ▶ Consider how to reduce negative impacts on daily life for the community and environment i.e. visitor codes of conduct, clear signage, environmentally friendly practices etc.
- ▶ Take steps to protect and preserve sensitive cultural activities and sites from visitors, such as through guest orientation, fencing off sensitive areas, erecting signs, staff training, etc.
- ▶ Ensure front-line staff and interpreters understand which sites and activities are deemed inappropriate for tourism purposes by the community.
- ▶ Do your part to protect Mother Earth, i.e. recycle, use recyclable and biodegradable products, package items in reusable bags etc.

Introducing visitors to your culture: bridging the gap

Read this section if you are:

- ▶ **planning**
- ▶ **visitor-ready**
- ▶ **market-ready**
- ▶ **export-ready**

Our research with visitors from the USA suggests that it's essential to host guests with the understanding that they are interested in Indigenous cultures, but do not necessarily understand us or have ever learned anything about our history and relationship with Canada. It's reasonable to draw similar conclusions about visitors from other countries, and to a certain extent, even visitors from Canada. So, to bridge the culture gap, we suggest following these protocols:

- ▶ Provide guests with an outline of what to expect from their Indigenous experience and what is considered acceptable behaviour while on site and in the community. This could be on your website as a FAQ, or form part of a welcoming talk.
- ▶ Give visitors access to materials that give information on the host Indigenous culture and community. These materials may be guidebooks, pamphlets, brochures, videos, website copy, digital downloads, compact discs, books or other materials.
- ▶ Include your traditional language on items such as greetings, signage, printed materials, and other means of communication. Consider including phonetic spelling too, EG Nk'Mip: in-KA-meep so visitors feel confident saying words which will likely be unfamiliar to them.
- ▶ Whenever possible, have elements of Indigenous décor, architecture, arts and design incorporated into the guest experience.
- ▶ If you chose to have staff wear traditional Indigenous-themed apparel, it should be clear to visitors that this is not how your community dresses in today's society.
- ▶ Offer traditional Indigenous foods on site.
- ▶ Have displays, signs or exhibits that share about Indigenous people and their cultures.
- ▶ Aim for the majority (over 51%) of all your front-line staff who greet and serve the visitors to be of Indigenous descent.

Are you 'business-ready'?

Read this section if you are:

► **planning**

► **visitor-ready**

All businesses in the tourism sector, Indigenous or otherwise, must meet industry-wide standards to be seen as 'market-ready'. We've broken down these industry standards into three categories of 'readiness' so that you can easily understand the market you are currently able to attract and serve, and what steps you need to take to move to the next level.

01 Visitor-ready business or experience:

- Business exists and is open (year-round or seasonally).
- Has all its licenses, permits and insurance in place in order to operate legally.
- Basic website or Facebook listing with limited information.
- No active marketing efforts.
- Unclear about what visitors will see or do.
- Lack of consistent hours or response to questions.

02 Market-ready business or experience meets all of the above criteria plus:

- Open consistently for at least two years.
- Good website with contact info, reachable 24/7.
- Promotional materials and explanation of what visitors will see or do.
- Meets or exceeds industry expectations for their sector.
- Communicates with and responds to potential visitors year-round.
- Is ready to accept advanced reservations.

03 Export-ready business or experience meets all of the above criteria plus:

- Involvement with industry partners, works with partners, DMOs, media, welcoming international visitors.
- Is prepared to market and partner with travel trade distribution sales channels.
- Understands commission and net rate pricing, has commissionable pricing structures, accepting vouchers, tested by industry associations.

- ▶ Will agree to guaranteed trade bookings and pricing 18 months in advance with cancellation policies.
- ▶ Detailed domestic and overseas marketing plan, editorial quality images.
- ▶ Experience can be adapted to the interests, language and expectations of whichever international market is targeted.

IMPORTANT - By claiming you are, for example, market-ready you are stating that the quality and consistency of your experience is of a high standard AND will be delivered at the same level each and every time.

▼ Membertou Heritage Park, NS



Visitor-readiness

Read this section if you are:

► **planning**

Business-readiness is all about how ready your business is to operate. This is measured in various ways such as how long the business has been open, the amount of marketing and planning a business does, if the business responds to customer questions by phone/email, if the business has all the permits and licences it needs and so on.

Business-readiness is typically divided into three major categories:

- Visitor-ready
- Market-ready
- Export-ready

Visitor-ready criteria: To be classified as 'Visitor-ready' a business needs to meet the following criteria:

- Have all required business licenses, insurance, and legislative permits in place in order to operate legally in its location.
- Maintain a staffed business location with a set schedule of operating hours.
- Provide a contact telephone number or email contact year-round.
- If closed for season, provide automated response through voicemail and email.
- Have branded on-site signage.
- **From dream to reality: what are the steps in starting a 'visitor-ready' tourism business?**

Entrepreneurs are excited to start a business when they have an idea they are passionate about. However, there are many steps to bring that business to life.

Here are some of the most important to consider:

01 Review and evaluate your idea

Is it feasible? Could you make money from this venture?

02 Do some market research

Test your business idea by researching the market, industry and competition.

03 Develop a business plan

This is a crucial step and is reviewed in detail below.

04 Financing

How will you finance your business?

05 Business structure

What is the most appropriate business structure to operate your business: Sole Proprietorship, Partnership or Corporation?

06 Business name

Consider name options and submit your name for approval.

07 Register business

Register the business with your chosen structure using your name approval.

08 Bank account

Open a business bank account – you will need your Business Registration Certificate.

09 Website & social media channels

Plan ahead by reserving the domain name and social media channels for your company.

10 Payroll, trade and taxes

Open accounts under your Business Number as required (e.g. GST/PST, payroll, import/export).

11 Business licence

Contact your municipality for a business licence. This is not the same as registering your business name.

12 Laws & regulations

Find out if any industry specific licences and/or regulations are needed for your business.

13 Insurance

Ensure your business and your customers are protected.

14 Hiring employees?

Get up to speed with your requirements as an employer under the Employment Standards Act.

15 Keep business records

If you're operating a business or have self-employment income, you need records and an accounting system.

Why do I need a business plan?

Creating a business plan is an important process to help you map out the start-up, growth and progress of your business. The success of your business depends on your clear understanding of the marketplace, your ability to provide a tourism experience and your vision of the future. A business plan forces the entrepreneur to ask important questions including:

- ▶ How will you generate positive cash flow?

- ▶ How will you sustain your business in the 'lean times'?
- ▶ Who is your competition, and how will you co-exist?
- ▶ Who is your target market?

Read this section if you are:

▶ **planning**

Finding interested partners/supporters and getting financial assistance to help get your business up and running is also directly tied to your business plan. To be considered a viable candidate to receive funds from financial institutions or investors, you must be able to clearly show that you understand and planned for every part of your business, especially its ability to generate profit.

What are some common guidelines when preparing a good business plan?

Explain your goals, your business objectives: Think about who is going to read the plan: investors and partners. The objectives show what is important to you and what you hope to accomplish, including goals not only related to being profitable.

Research your business plan: A business plan is only as good as the research that went into producing it. For example, you will have to do research in order to find out more about your sector of tourism, potential customers, pricing comparisons, competitors, sales and costs of doing business.

Show drafts of your plan to others: It can be very useful to get suggestions and feedback on your draft business plan from various people; even people who might be negative or critical can also provide useful information but don't be discouraged by doubters.

Write your own business plan: Don't just copy most of the business plan information from a sample business plan. Your plan should be about your objectives and should be written like a good story, with the sections working together to show why the business will be successful. Business plans that borrow too much information from other business plans tend to be disorganized with key sections or topics being missed.

Make sure your plan predicts the future: It is important that you look at and predict as many key factors early in the process, so that you are not taken by surprise later by issues with staffing, location, licences, insurance, cash flow etc.

Use your business plan: Don't put away your business plan after you start your business. Your business plan needs to be an on-going 'living' document that should be used to help make decisions and should be updated regularly.

Make sure your financial projections are believable: For many people reading your plan the financial section is the most important parts because it shows your financing needs and the profit potential of your business. A good financial plan will also give the reader confidence that you really understand your business.

Write the executive summary last: The executive summary is usually the most important section of your business plan, because people will read it first and it may be the only section that is read. The keys to a good summary are:

- ▶ It should be short—two pages at most.
- ▶ It should highlight what is important in your plan.
- ▶ It should get the reader excited about your business.

How to create a successful business plan

Your business plan will guide you, as well as others, as to what your business can be expected to achieve. It should contain these elements:

- 01** A summary of your proposal, the intended product/service and target market group(s), a description of industry trends, your competitive positioning, management highlights and the financing request at hand.
- 02** A description of the organizational form of the business that highlights the skills, experience and responsibilities of the owner and management team. This section should contain an overview of the developer's background – and who else is involved, what other business ventures he/she is involved in and what is his/her track record in business.
- 03** A description of your business and its goals/objectives, including resources it will need, anticipated sales volume, market share estimates, visitor satisfaction goals, and repeat visitation and/or other similar targets relevant to a tourism business.
- 04** A marketing plan based on a description of the products (or services) that you will market with an overview of trends, competition, and identification of your target markets and how you plan to market your product.
- 05** A financial plan, that includes projected income statements, cash flow statements and pro-forma balance sheets that provide detailed monthly operating forecasts for the first year of operation and annual forecasts for the next two to three years. (Includes opening balance sheet and statement of construction/start-up costs and sources of financing.)
- 06** A discussion of operations, including location, travel and supply logistics, times of operation, insurance, risk management practices, cash/credit handling, hiring and training of staff.

- 07** A discussion of regulatory requirements, covering government and financial approvals, construction period and preparation time before the business begins operations.

Read this section if you are:

► **planning**

Some additional resources to consider:

- Government of Canada – Business Planning Guide:
<https://canadabusiness.ca/business-planning/>
- Business Development Bank of Canada (BDC):
www.bdc.ca and click on “Articles and Tools”
- National Aboriginal Capital Corporations Association (NACCA):
www.nacca.ca
- Canadian Council for Aboriginal Business (CCAB):
www.ccab.com/programs/
- Community Futures Network of Canada:
www.communityfuturescanada.ca

▼ Lennox Island, PEI







Market-readiness

Indigenous cultural tourism offers guests unique experiences that they cannot get anywhere else. However, visitors also have the expectation that these experiences will meet or exceed basic industry standards for that sector.

It's important that Indigenous tourism businesses and experiences offer a quality tourism product that meets market expectations, with or without the cultural element.

Market-ready businesses need to have these things in place as mandatory basics:

- ▶ Operate for a minimum of two years and able to be reached 24-hours a day, 365 days a year by website, phone, fax or e-mail (not to directly speak to someone but to have access to information and able to leave messages, send bookings, etc.).
- ▶ Return phone and email messages within 24 hours during standard business hours.
- ▶ Has a working website where visitors can obtain key information on operating hours, location and how to get there (i.e. Google Maps links)
- ▶ If offering an outdoor, adventure or winter-based experience, then have alternate plans if there is bad weather.
- ▶ If the experience requires special equipment or training these are provided, such as life jackets, safety equipment, camping equipment, etc.

Market-ready businesses also need their paperwork and health and safety documents in order.

- ▶ Confirm with the government if you need to register with HST.
- ▶ Comply with the health and safety regulating agency in your region and industry sector to cover Canadian Occupational Health & Safety, food and safety councils, Workplace Hazardous Material Information System (WHMIS), Workman's Safety Insurance Board (WSIB), etc.
- ▶ Ensure all other operating licenses and permits required to operate your tourism experience are in place.
- ▶ Working with the public means you need to be prepared for accidents, with a well-stocked first aid kit and staff trained in first aid.
- ▶ Liability insurance is a mandatory requirement of most travel trade partners. A minimum of \$2 million liability is standard, with some sectors, like adventure tourism, requiring \$3 million.

Read this section if you are:

▶ **planning**

▶ **visitor-ready**

Previous page
Nunavik Parks, QC

Export-readiness

The term “Travel Trade” means many things to many people in the tourism industry, but a simple definition is: **‘people and companies that sell travel products to visitors which they have bought from other parties’.**

The travel trade is the distribution network for tourism products for large groups (as well as smaller group or individual travel. These are often called FIT and GIT markets:

FIT stands for **Free Independent Travellers (or Tourists)**. It means a small number of visitors (usually fewer than 5 persons or couples) who take packaged tours at a time of their own choice.

GIT stands for **Group Inclusive Tour**. This is a travel program with a special fare and specific requirements (usually a minimum number of persons often more than 5 persons traveling as a group throughout the tour).

Selling through the travel trade adds a new dimension to any tourism business as you will sign contractual agreements with partners governed by strict laws that protect travelers in many countries – so you need to feel confident you are able to deliver what you are promising.

The travel trade can be a very cost-effective sales and distribution channel for your business because they have greater access to national and international markets and will sell on your behalf. For this reason, it’s important to recognize that their commission structure covers the cost of their sales efforts that you, as the supplier, will not have to incur. To meet the standard industry expectations as an export-ready tourism experience you must demonstrate a commitment to supporting the efforts of your potential trade partners through commissions.

Here are some features that travel trade tour operators will be looking for from different tourism sectors, these are standard requirements for both Indigenous and non-Indigenous businesses.

Read this section if you are:

- ▶ **planning**
- ▶ **visitor-ready**
- ▶ **market-ready**
- ▶ **export-ready**



◀ Torngat Mountains National Park, NL

Accommodation: hotel/motel/tipi camping

- ▶ Location is central to shopping/attractions/on the way to other sites
- ▶ Breakfast provided or available on site
- ▶ Food and beverage available or provided
- ▶ Greeting and farewell service
- ▶ Luggage and porter service (for hotels)
- ▶ Accessible rooms
- ▶ Comfortable basics provided/available for tipi camps, etc.
- ▶ Willingness to work with rooming lists*
- ▶ Minimum of 25 rooms to accommodate one group*
- ▶ Lobby space to accommodate group arrivals*
- ▶ Separate check-in areas for groups*
- ▶ Driver room rate*
- ▶ One complimentary room for every 15 rooms sold* (or another comp. policy)

** Features that are only applicable to group business.*

Attractions (includes cultural and heritage attractions)

- ▶ Good washroom facilities which must be clean and preferably large
- ▶ Food service and/or areas on site for coffee break/light lunch
- ▶ Attraction visit to last between 1½ to 2 hours
- ▶ Attraction is accessible for visitors with disabilities
- ▶ Offer a range of activities or programs, such as guided tours
- ▶ Group meeting place with seats available*
- ▶ Separate group entrance*
- ▶ Complimentary policy for driver and escort*
- ▶ Sufficient washroom capacity to accommodate groups*
- ▶ Parking for motor coach*

Retail

- ▶ Refreshments and washrooms available in order to make the stop a combined coffee/shopping break
- ▶ Offer a group discount/coupon*
- ▶ Gift and/or commission available for driver/escort*
- ▶ Ability to issue separate bills for individual visitors*

Read this section if you are:

- ▶ **planning**
- ▶ **visitor-ready**
- ▶ **market-ready**
- ▶ **export-ready**

* Features that are only applicable to group business.

Food and beverages

- ▶ Offer either a set menu or choice of meal to suit the needs of the visitor, i.e. a choice of beef or chicken or other special needs/requests
- ▶ Offer meal options that can accommodate allergies and dietary restrictions
- ▶ Prompt service (i.e. serving lunch in less than one hour)
- ▶ Attractive setting – view/decor
- ▶ Close to highway and other attractions
- ▶ Offer enough seating for groups up to 48*
- ▶ Able to seat the group together or in a separate dining area*
- ▶ Sufficient washroom capacity to accommodate groups*
- ▶ Parking for motor coach*
- ▶ Complimentary policy for driver and escort*

Transportation

- ▶ Air conditioned if being used in summer season
- ▶ Well maintained/new equipment with no mechanical problems
- ▶ Fleet size to accommodate range of needs
- ▶ Transportation can accommodate visitors with disabilities

- ▶ Working public address system or microphone available*
- ▶ Motor coach with washrooms onboard*
- ▶ Flexible, patient, friendly drivers*

** Features that are only applicable to group business.*

Outdoor adventure

- ▶ Up-to-date government licenses and appropriate liability insurance
- ▶ Canoe/guide training (i.e. ORCA Training - Ontario Canoe Recreational Association)
- ▶ Appropriate lifesaving, water and first aid skills/training
- ▶ Clean, up-to-date equipment and supplies
- ▶ Boats and motors in good working order
- ▶ Appropriate food and sanitation practices for location
- ▶ Outfitting and camping equipment required is outlined in advance and/or provided
- ▶ Packaged with appropriate transportation, accommodations and food service
- ▶ Emergency plan has been developed

Pow wows and events

- ▶ Guaranteed event dates, one year prior
- ▶ Year-round contact for event
- ▶ Carry appropriate liability and event insurance
- ▶ Visitor guidelines/etiquette available
- ▶ Location with accessibility for all visitors
- ▶ Appropriate food and washrooms available
- ▶ Greeted by host with introduction and information
- ▶ Motor coach parking*
- ▶ Group packages, pricing and programs*

▶ Moose Cree First Nation, ON





◀ Great Spirit Circle Trail, ON

▶ Spirit Island Adventures, ON

Read this section if you are:▶ **planning**▶ **visitor-ready**▶ **market-ready**▶ **export-ready**

CASE STUDY

The Great Spirit Circle Trail

The Great Spirit Circle Trail is a successful Indigenous cultural tourism business in Manitoulin, Ontario. We spoke with Kevin Eshkawkogan, now part of Indigenous Tourism Ontario, who was their Chief Executive Officer to learn more about experiential travel, partnering with non-Indigenous businesses, and the benefits of being part of Destination Canada's Signature Experience Collection.

Tell us about your business:

We specialize in authentic Indigenous experiences that exhibit the culture and traditions of the Anishinaabe people on the Manitoulin Island, Sagamok Region. The Great Spirit Circle Trail was established in 1997 when the elders and economic development officers in the LaCloche-Manitoulin region of Ontario realized that motor coaches were bringing guests to Manitoulin Island and non-native guides were giving 'their' interpretation of the history and culture of the local First Nations people. We quickly recognized that the best people to tell our stories were our own people, and that there was a business

opportunity for us to engage visitors in the Indigenous history and culture of the island.

Everything we do is anchored to our four pillars:

- ▶ Cultural authenticity;
- ▶ Product development;
- ▶ Human resource development
- ▶ Marketing and branding.

What makes a "memorable travel experience"?

At Great Spirit Circle Trail, this means sharing our simple ways of living and teaching guests about our culture in ways that are interactive

and educational that engage all five senses, focusing on creating memories and connecting with visitors on an emotional level.

Cultural authenticity is at the heart of our memorable First Nations experiences. We will not compromise our culture to make a dollar. Our goal is to make a spiritual connection with our visitors and we love hearing that we've changed some peoples' lives and transformed them for the better.

How has your business model changed over the years?

In the beginning, our tourism products weren't really experiential, our products and packages were originally just about going into a First Nations

community. Once we realized what our guests were really seeking, we switched our business model to focus on the experience and the memories we want them to take away. Everything is now structured into one to three-hour program blocks that can be purchased individually by travellers, sold to the travel trade, or packaged to meet special needs and interests.

Our company is also very active in providing educational programs and services to industry, delivering training to help others learn how to work with First Nations tourism businesses, building the capacity of our colleagues, and contributing to provincial and regional initiatives.

Every few months our team brainstorms new ideas, then we go through a minute-by-minute, step-by-step planning session to design every detail. We have a checklist of elements that must be completed before, during and after each experience to ensure consistency, yet allow space for the individual storyteller to connect in their own special way with guests. The content and stories are the anchors of each program. They are an inexpensive way to invest in developing travel experiences and allow our unique history to be shared.

Initially our focus was to build capacity within our First Nations community. Once we achieved a strong experiential product base, we branched out and began to work with more external partners to design experiences and package travel for the mutual benefit of our customers and our partners. For example, we added a new Horse and Teepee Overnight Adventure to our offerings, and partnered with the Honora Bay Riding Stables, a non-Indigenous business to offer this experience together.

When it comes to partnering with a non-Indigenous business what advice would you give?

When it came to partnerships with non-Indigenous businesses, we didn't look for gaps in what we offered, we wanted mutually beneficial relationships with products that would enhance what we were doing.

You need to work with someone who has a similar philosophy and who is willing to be collaborative and looking for a mutually beneficial partnership. In my experience, if you're just focussing on business it won't work; partnering with another business needs to be a relationship, because if your values don't align, it's going to be a challenge. I think it's important to be open-minded, for instance if you're sharing your culture and people have questions which perhaps seem ignorant or rude, it's worth understanding where they're coming from and likely they don't mean to be that way. It's mostly just people skills which count, the best way is just to have a conversation and understand their knowledge levels, it's that simple. When I attended international travel shows in regalia people would ask all kinds of questions, often they'd read a book or something online and would buy into stereotypes. The biggest problem when partnering with non-Indigenous businesses is probably overcoming Indigenous stereotypes. It's true – sometimes the guy is late! But that happens in every culture.

Great Spirit Circle Trail, ON





We need to break down what people's perceptions of Indigenous tourism are. Nowadays Indigenous tour operators

“Don’t include an Indigenous tourism element because it’s the hot trend, include us because we make beneficial partners.”

are not beginners, just learning how the industry works; we are striving to be the best that there is—not just in the Indigenous market—the best in the world. We are becoming leaders and we need to help the mainstream industry understand that Indigenous tourism has come a long way in the past 15 years. Don’t include an Indigenous tourism element because it’s the hot trend, include us because we make beneficial partners.

Manitoulin Island, ON ▼

What are your main sales channels?

We sell directly to travellers, as well as through tour operators for group and packaged independent travel. Fully independent travel (FIT) represents the majority of our business. We have worked with many receptive tour operators and domestic tour operators over the years. The primary companies we work with are: Jonview, JAC Travel, and Audley Travel.

In the past few years we’ve seen the demand shift from a 70:30 travel trade vs. FIT ratio to more of a 50:50 balance for volume. As a result, we are increasing the number and types of travel packages we are selling directly to guests. And, with the opening of our new hotel, our capability to package and sell direct to market without an intermediary packager is likely to grow.

Tell us about your marketing.

We have a very thorough marketing plan, operate on a lean budget and always attempt to align with our local DMO, regional tourism organization, provincial marketing organization and the Destination Canada’s international markets.

Ontarians represent our greatest market for domestic travellers. Internationally we target Germany, the USA, Australia and the United Kingdom. China and India represent two strong emerging markets for us. As a small company we cannot afford to buy into \$2,000 to \$3,000 ads, campaigns and in-market activities, so we invest in our website, ensure we have high-definition images of our visitor experiences, and maintain a bilingual reservations system. Nurturing relationships with our trade partners and guests is critical. We focus



on making personal connections to create the desire to visit, revisit and spread the word about our company. We joined TripAdvisor to allow our guests to share their stories, which we believe further validates and adds credibility to our company.

What are the benefits of being part of Destination Canada's Signature Experience Collection?

I remember my first overseas show at ITB in 2003, I was told that it would take around three to five years to break down stereotypes that Indigenous product is inferior. Being part of Destination Canada's Signature Experience Collection has broken down barriers; when you get recognised for being one of premier experiences in Canada it shows the world that you're able to excel in the mainstream. Being part of the SEC shines a light on any business. Everyone benefits from the international marketing, support and exposure that comes from this program, and as Indigenous operators being part of it brings legitimacy to your business.

How do you sell your Signature Experience?

The majority of our sales are direct to consumers. Our building block approach allows us to be creative in how we work with the travel trade. We can arrange two or three nights' accommodation and allow our trade partner to select the experiences most appealing to their guests.

All the experiences celebrate some aspect of First Nations' life and they are all set at the same net rate, which is an attractive sales feature. We started this approach a few years ago with group travel and packaged

independent tours, and it has really proved to be a tremendously flexible way to respond to the needs of the travel trade and their customers. Once a tour operator is familiar with our company, we can talk through the options with them, find out what their guests are interested in, and customize a package for them while they are on the phone.

Any marketing challenges?

Limited resources are always a challenge when it comes to buying into campaigns. Social media represents an ideal way for us to connect with our markets, but there is a staff cost to this and a training component to keep up with the speed of change with online and mobile marketing.

Any tips for others?

First, do your research! Second, "Put yourself in the moccasins of the traveller" and third, really think hard about how to take an experience from good to great and then market the WOW factor.

Any final words of wisdom?

- ▶ Ensure your experience is authentic and focuses on your culture.
- ▶ Engage as many senses as possible.
- ▶ Make it as memorable and genuine as you can.

Read this section if you are:

- ▶ **planning**
- ▶ **visitor-ready**
- ▶ **market-ready**
- ▶ **export-ready**

Story contributed by: Kevin Eshkawkogan, Chief Executive Officer. Researcher: Dr. Nancy Arsenault, Tourism Cafe Canada, additional research: Nikki Bayley.

INDIGENOUS TOURISM SELF-ASSESSMENT GUIDE

How to use this guide

This section can be used as a workbook, guiding you through the necessary steps to develop your business. A thorough self-assessment using this section of the guide will help you to develop, deliver and price an authentic Indigenous tourism experience - making you more competitive and successful. It will also help you improve the quality of the visitor experience - which will result in more visitors and growth for your company.

These checklists cover everything from ITAC recommendations on maintaining authenticity to industry standards and expectations on health and safety, marketing and working with larger groups and the travel trade.

Completing an honest self-assessment can identify areas of strength and weakness as well as areas of growth and improvement if you do not yet meet these industry expectations.

Cultural authenticity and best practices

Read this section if you are:

► **planning**

► **visitor-ready**

► **market-ready**

Recommended protocols

Our ancestors have shared our culture with visitors to our traditional territories since time immemorial, closely guided by their community values of respect, honour and integrity. The only way for our industry to succeed is to continue following those guiding principles when we develop and deliver Indigenous cultural tourism experiences. It not only makes for an authentic experience for our visitors but also helps to ensure that our future generations have that same opportunity.

The below are considered “recommended protocols” for your tourism experience to be considered an AUTHENTIC Indigenous experience. ITAC supports the authority of each community, to determine their own cultural protocols and boundaries and recognizes all of the diverse values and beliefs of our First Nations, Métis and Inuit members.

If your experience is an Indigenous tourism business or Indigenous cultural tourism business, is it at least 51% owned by Indigenous individuals OR majority owned Indigenous companies OR Indigenously controlled organizations such as Bands and Tribal Councils?

☐ Yes ☐ No ☐ N/A

Is the cultural content of all interpretation tools (spoken and written materials) developed under the direction of Indigenous people who are from the culture being interpreted?

☐ Yes ☐ No ☐ N/A

Is the cultural content approved by the appropriate “keepers of the culture”? (i.e. Elders, hereditary Chiefs, families, etc.) Who are they? How was it approved?

☐ Yes ☐ No ☐ N/A

Are all of the cultural activities shared by Indigenous people? An exception may be when foreign languages are required, when the interpreter should still have access to an Indigenous host for questions related to the culture and community.

☐ Yes ☐ No ☐ N/A

Does your tourism experience provide opportunities for visitors to interact face-to-face with Indigenous people such as artisans, craftspeople, Elders, storytellers, hosts or entertainers who originate from the culture being shared?

☐ Yes ☐ No ☐ N/A

Can your heritage interpreters and presenters demonstrate suitable experience, knowledge or formal training related to the local Indigenous culture that they are sharing?

☐ Yes ☐ No ☐ N/A

Are your front line staff and heritage interpreters aware of what sites and activities are deemed inappropriate for tourism purposes by the community? Do they know what to do to ensure that guests are not exposed to these sites or activities?

☐ Yes ☐ No ☐ N/A

Have you taken steps to protect and preserve the sensitive cultural activities and sites from visitors? This may be through a guest orientation program, fencing off sensitive areas, erecting signs, staff training, etc.

☐ Yes ☐ No ☐ N/A

Is the local Indigenous community aware of and generally supportive of the tourism initiative?

☐ Yes ☐ No ☐ N/A

Do you invite or welcome Indigenous community input and feedback on your cultural programming?

☐ Yes ☐ No ☐ N/A

Does your tourism experience impact the community's culture and economy in a positive way? How does the community benefit? (i.e. jobs, suppliers, support other business in the region, etc.)

☐ Yes ☐ No ☐ N/A

How do you reduce negative impacts on daily life for the community and environment? (i.e. visitor codes of conduct, clear signage, environmentally friendly practices etc.)

Do you do your part to protect Mother Earth? (i.e. recycle, use recyclable and biodegradable products, package items in reusable bags etc.)

☐ Yes ☐ No ☐ N/A

If the tourism experience is an event (such as a seasonal event, pow wow, etc.) for the event to be marketable, it needs to be held consistently on scheduled dates each year. Is it possible to release your event dates 12 to 18 months in advance?

☐ Yes ☐ No ☐ N/A

Community support

Are the guests provided with an outline of what to expect from their Indigenous experience and what is considered acceptable behavior while on site and in the community?

☐ Yes ☐ No ☐ N/A

Do visitors have access to materials that give information on the host Indigenous culture and community? These materials may be guidebooks, pamphlets, brochures, videos, website, compact discs, books or other materials.

☐ Yes ☐ No ☐ N/A

For an Indigenous tourism business, what percentage of the management positions are held by Indigenous people? Do they represent the majority (over 51%) of the management team?

☐ Yes ☐ No ☐ N/A

Program delivery

Are the majority (over 51%) of all your front line staff who greet and serve the visitors of Indigenous descent?

☐ Yes ☐ No ☐ N/A

Are visitors exposed to local Indigenous languages? Is the Indigenous language included on items such as greetings, signage, printed materials, and other means of communication?

☐ Yes ☐ No ☐ N/A

Whenever possible, have elements of Indigenous décor, architecture, arts and design been incorporated into the guest experience?

☐ Yes ☐ No ☐ N/A

Do your front line workers have Indigenous themed apparel? It can be either contemporary reflection of culture or traditional apparel. If you chose to have staff wear traditional, it should be clear to visitors that this is not how your community dresses in today's society.

☐ Yes ☐ No ☐ N/A

Authenticity checklist

Do you offer traditional Indigenous foods on site?

☐ Yes ☐ No ☐ N/A

Are there displays, signs or exhibits that share about Indigenous people and their cultures?

☐ Yes ☐ No ☐ N/A

Is the cultural content approved by the appropriate “keepers of the culture”? (i.e. Elders, hereditary Chiefs, families, etc.) Who are they? How was it approved?

☐ Yes ☐ No ☐ N/A

What have you included to share Indigenous culture with your visitor that will create a memorable experience?

Cultural displays or exhibits

☐ Yes ☐ No ☐ N/A

Informational signage

☐ Yes ☐ No ☐ N/A

Guided tours

☐ Yes ☐ No ☐ N/A

Self guided tours (with audio or written support)

☐ Yes ☐ No ☐ N/A

Storytelling

☐ Yes ☐ No ☐ N/A

Audio/visual presentations

☐ Yes ☐ No ☐ N/A

Pre-tour briefings

☐ Yes ☐ No ☐ N/A

Lectures

☐ Yes ☐ No ☐ N/A

Teaching circles

☐ Yes ☐ No ☐ N/A

Printed documents

☐ Yes ☐ No ☐ N/A

Cultural performances

☐ Yes ☐ No ☐ N/A

Arts/crafts workshops

☐ Yes ☐ No ☐ N/A

Interactive opportunities with hosts (discussions/Q & A)

☐ Yes ☐ No ☐ N/A

Cultural demonstrations

☐ Yes ☐ No ☐ N/A

Sampling of traditional foods

☐ Yes ☐ No ☐ N/A

Sampling of traditional foods

☐ Yes ☐ No ☐ N/A

Cultural themed accommodations

☐ Yes ☐ No ☐ N/A

Opportunity to visit contemporary community

☐ Yes ☐ No ☐ N/A

Others (list):

It is very important to engage your visitor with all of their senses.
Have you considered...

What will the visitor see?

☐ Yes ☐ No ☐ N/A

How can scent or smell be included?

☐ Yes ☐ No ☐ N/A

Are they able to taste any food or drink?

☐ Yes ☐ No ☐ N/A

Will they be able to touch & interact with this activity?

☐ Yes ☐ No ☐ N/A

How will they feel?

☐ Yes ☐ No ☐ N/A

Do you support your community by...

Buying Indigenous?

☐ Yes ☐ No ☐ N/A

Hiring Indigenous?

☐ Yes ☐ No ☐ N/A

Market readiness and best practices

Read this section if you are:

► **planning**

► **visitor-ready**

Industry expectations

Our ancestors have shared our culture with visitors to our traditional territories since time immemorial, closely guided by their community values of respect, honour and integrity. The only way for our industry to succeed is to continue following those guiding principles when we develop and deliver Indigenous cultural tourism experiences. It not only makes for an authentic experience for our visitors but also helps to ensure that our future generations have that same opportunity.

While you do not necessarily need to answer all questions below positively to be considered “market-ready” you should at least consider each of the points to determine if that is something that your potential trade partners and visitors will be expecting. This Best Practices checklist will help to create a realistic picture for your trade partners.

Business operations

Have you been in business/operation for a minimum of two years?

☐ Yes ☐ No ☐ N/A

Can your business/operation be reached 24-hours a day, 365 days a year by website, phone, fax or e-mail? (Not to directly speak to someone but to have access to information and able to leave messages, send bookings, etc.)

☐ Yes ☐ No ☐ N/A

Do you return messages within 24 hours during standard business hours?

☐ Yes ☐ No ☐ N/A

Do you have a website where visitors can obtain information? This website should have all key information on operating hours, location and how to get there (i.e. Google Maps links)

☐ Yes ☐ No ☐ N/A

Do you offer a quality experience to visitors?

☐ Yes ☐ No ☐ N/A

How do you know that you offer a quality experience?

Increase in visitors

☐ Yes ☐ No ☐ N/A

High repeat visitation

☐ Yes ☐ No ☐ N/A

Direct feedback (calls, emails, etc.)

☐ Yes ☐ No ☐ N/A

Guestbook (comments)

☐ Yes ☐ No ☐ N/A

Visitor feedback forms

☐ Yes ☐ No ☐ N/A

Visitor/customer surveys

☐ Yes ☐ No ☐ N/A

External/independent review

☐ Yes ☐ No ☐ N/A

Industry accreditation and standards

☐ Yes ☐ No ☐ N/A

Industry support and partnerships Industry awards and recognition

☐ Yes ☐ No ☐ N/A

Other:

Do you have alternate plans if there is bad weather? Or a community emergency? This is very important for outdoor, adventure and winter-based experiences. What are those plans?

☐ Yes ☐ No ☐ N/A

If your tourism experience requires special equipment or training do you provide it? (i.e. safety equipment, life jackets, camping equipment, hats, gloves, etc.)

☐ Yes ☐ No ☐ N/A

Have you confirmed with government sources if HST does or does not apply to your operation? If it does, you must register to qualify as a market-ready operation.

☐ Yes ☐ No ☐ N/A

Are you in good standing/compliance with the health and safety regulating agency in your region and industry sector? This includes Canadian Occupational Health & Safety, food and safety councils, Workplace Hazardous Material Information System (WHMIS), Workman's Safety Insurance Board (WSIB), etc?

☐ Yes ☐ No ☐ N/A

Please list the licenses and permits you hold:

Have you ensured that you have all other operating licenses and permits required to operate this type of tourism experience?

Please list the licenses and permits you hold:

Are you prepared for accidents? A well stocked first aid kit and staff trained in first aid at minimum.

☐ Yes ☐ No ☐ N/A

Liability Insurance is a must in this industry and is a mandatory requirement of most travel trade partners. A minimum of \$2 million liability is standard, with some sectors, like adventure tourism requiring \$3 million. Do you carry adequate liability and related insurance?

☐ Yes ☐ No ☐ N/A

Are your operating hours clearly posted for visitors on site and for trade on your website and materials? Do you follow those operating hours consistently?

☐ Yes ☐ No ☐ N/A

Are there directional signs that help visitors to easily find your location?

☐ Yes ☐ No ☐ N/A

Are you tracking, measuring and evaluating results to ensure a consistent level of customer satisfaction? Tracking & evaluation can help identify who your visitors are, their level of satisfaction and the economic impact in the community.

☐ Yes ☐ No ☐ N/A

Pricing

Are the majority (over 51%) of all your front line staff who greet and serve the visitors of Indigenous descent?

☐ Yes

☐ No

☐ N/A

Export-readiness and best practices

Read this section if you are:

► **market-ready**

Ready for group tours

Indigenous cultural tourism experiences are in great demand. It can be tempting to export your tourism experience before you are fully prepared to meet the demand, but if international visitors are a long term or current goal, it's important to understand how the travel trade works when first creating and pricing your tourism product.

This self-assessment will help prepare you for what lies ahead when you work with the travel trade as an export-ready business.

Do you have the capacity to host group tours? If so, what size of group?

☐ Yes

☐ No

☐ N/A

Groups up to 15 people (pax)

☐ Yes

☐ No

☐ N/A

Groups of 15 to 30 people (pax)

☐ Yes

☐ No

☐ N/A

Groups of 30 to 50 people (pax)

☐ Yes

☐ No

☐ N/A

Groups larger than 50 people (pax)

☐ Yes

☐ No

☐ N/A

Is the site/product easily accessible for visitors?

☐ Yes

☐ No

☐ N/A

Is there enough parking for coaches? (with turnaround room?)

☐ Yes

☐ No

☐ N/A

Are there enough washrooms for groups (47 people - if pursuing motor coach?) You should find out capacity requirements for your sector based on the length of their stay. A short visit of 2 hours may only require two to three washrooms.

☐ Yes

☐ No

☐ N/A

Products and pricing

Do you have a pricing structure with published rates that leaves room for commissions, net rates and other discounts that support industry partners at the various levels? (a minimum of 10% to 30%)

☐ Yes ☐ No ☐ N/A

Can you guarantee both price and capacity 12 to 18 months ahead of arrival? Note that once established, prices must be consistent for the time outlined.

☐ Yes ☐ No ☐ N/A

Do you have high-resolution photos available for editorial and promotional use that are copyright free?

☐ Yes ☐ No ☐ N/A

Health and safety

Are Government/public health and sanitation standards continually satisfied?

☐ Yes ☐ No ☐ N/A

Do you have an up-to-date Government license, if required? Although some businesses may be operating in a territory where federal, provincial, or territorial licensing does not apply, it is a good idea to ensure that your business at least meets these standards, giving visitors a level of security and comfort.

☐ Yes ☐ No ☐ N/A

Are facilities frequently and regularly cleaned?

☐ Yes ☐ No ☐ N/A

Are you set up to generate invoices on a regular basis? Are you able to cover operating costs until paid by trade? You must be willing to accept vouchers on site as confirmation of payment upon arrival, and then bill your clients.

☐ Yes ☐ No ☐ N/A

Has your tourism product been successfully test-marketed by a similar group and/or industry association that understands the needs of your potential visitor?

☐ Yes ☐ No ☐ N/A

Do you have a detailed marketing plan dedicated to the overseas markets? Does this plan support your region, province and CTC marketing efforts? (You cannot attract a new market to your destination alone!)

☐ Yes ☐ No ☐ N/A

Is there a person in your organization responsible for marketing and promotions?

☐ Yes ☐ No ☐ N/A

Do you understand your current and potential target markets? Can you offer experiences that meet their expectations? (i.e. Understanding what their cultural likes and dislikes are, types of foods, etc.)

☐ Yes ☐ No ☐ N/A

Do you support and encourage site/operation inspections by trade partners?

☐ Yes ☐ No ☐ N/A

Are your management able to make business decisions as required to work with trade partners? (i.e. Negotiate rates, travel trade contracts, etc.)

☐ Yes ☐ No ☐ N/A

Travel trade assumes the risk for delivering what is advertised. Are you prepared to provide exactly what was promised – lakeside rooms, four-course meal, live performances etc?

☐ Yes ☐ No ☐ N/A

Program delivery

Do the seasons and hours of your operation match the demand from visitors?

☐ Yes ☐ No ☐ N/A

Do you encourage feedback to evaluate visitor satisfaction?

☐ Yes ☐ No ☐ N/A

Is there a way for employees to share the feedback received from visitors with management on a timely basis?

☐ Yes ☐ No ☐ N/A

Is there a system for handling visitor comments and concerns? (i.e. Comment cards, suggestion boxes and website feedback forms, etc.)

☐ Yes ☐ No ☐ N/A

Human resources

Are ALL front line staff trained in basic hospitality and tourism skills?
Ideally, from a certified training program (i.e. CTHRC, Superhost, First Host)

☐ Yes ☐ No ☐ N/A

Do you have enough trained staff to continue offering the same level of
quality if your numbers increase?

☐ Yes ☐ No ☐ N/A

Are staff trained on any of the following? The more training they have in
these fields, the better equipped they will be to respond to your guest and
business needs.

☐ Yes ☐ No ☐ N/A

Handling visitor concerns

☐ Yes ☐ No ☐ N/A

Telephone/reservation etiquette

☐ Yes ☐ No ☐ N/A

Meeting and greeting visitors

☐ Yes ☐ No ☐ N/A

Visitor safety

☐ Yes ☐ No ☐ N/A

Indigenous arts, culture

☐ Yes ☐ No ☐ N/A

First Aid

☐ Yes ☐ No ☐ N/A

First Host! Superhost or Frontline Cultural sensitivity for visitors

☐ Yes ☐ No ☐ N/A

Others (list):

Is management actively involved in the tourism industry? (Involvement
may be through membership in regional tourism organizations, attending
tourism industry functions, sponsoring industry activities, or participating in
volunteer initiatives)

☐ Yes ☐ No ☐ N/A

Are all of your employees encouraged to obtain training and certifications
in tourism careers? (through CTHRC emerit programs)

☐ Yes ☐ No ☐ N/A

Which languages are you able to provide services in?

Is interpretation and programming regularly available in foreign languages?
(Reflective of current visitors and those markets you wish to attract)

☐ Yes ☐ No ☐ N/A

Please check the languages that you can provide services in:

<input type="checkbox"/> Yes <input type="checkbox"/> No <input type="checkbox"/> N/A	French
<input type="checkbox"/> Yes <input type="checkbox"/> No <input type="checkbox"/> N/A	Italian
<input type="checkbox"/> Yes <input type="checkbox"/> No <input type="checkbox"/> N/A	Spanish
<input type="checkbox"/> Yes <input type="checkbox"/> No <input type="checkbox"/> N/A	Dutch
<input type="checkbox"/> Yes <input type="checkbox"/> No <input type="checkbox"/> N/A	Arabic
<input type="checkbox"/> Yes <input type="checkbox"/> No <input type="checkbox"/> N/A	Portuguese
<input type="checkbox"/> Yes <input type="checkbox"/> No <input type="checkbox"/> N/A	Hindi
<input type="checkbox"/> Yes <input type="checkbox"/> No <input type="checkbox"/> N/A	German
<input type="checkbox"/> Yes <input type="checkbox"/> No <input type="checkbox"/> N/A	Japanese
<input type="checkbox"/> Yes <input type="checkbox"/> No <input type="checkbox"/> N/A	Mandarin
<input type="checkbox"/> Yes <input type="checkbox"/> No <input type="checkbox"/> N/A	Cantonese
<input type="checkbox"/> Yes <input type="checkbox"/> No <input type="checkbox"/> N/A	Polish
<input type="checkbox"/> Yes <input type="checkbox"/> No <input type="checkbox"/> N/A	Russian
<input type="checkbox"/> Yes <input type="checkbox"/> No <input type="checkbox"/> N/A	Thai
<input type="checkbox"/> Yes <input type="checkbox"/> No <input type="checkbox"/> N/A	None

Other:

Making travel trade industry partnerships

Do you have experience hosting familiarization (FAM) tours in the past two years for:

Travel writers?

☐ Yes ☐ No ☐ N/A

Tour operators?

☐ Yes ☐ No ☐ N/A

Tour wholesalers?

☐ Yes ☐ No ☐ N/A

Do you know who coordinates FAM tours for your region and are you willing to be involved? Note that the costs of the program are most often a business/marketing expense.

☐ Yes ☐ No ☐ N/A

Do you encourage and collect feedback from travel trade partners?

☐ Yes ☐ No ☐ N/A

Can you provide marketing and sales materials? (i.e. High-resolution photos in JPEG or TIFF format, detailed descriptions, lure brochures, video content, DVDs, etc.)

☐ Yes ☐ No ☐ N/A

Please list.

Have you already partnered at a local level... by joining efforts of your local Destination Marketing Organization (DMO) or industry association (like RATAS or mainstream)?

☐ Yes ☐ No ☐ N/A

What industry organizations is your business/operation a member of?

☐ Yes ☐ No ☐ N/A

Are you able to accept tickets/vouchers directly from the visitor and bill your client?

☐ Yes ☐ No ☐ N/A

Are you willing to share customer surveys and evaluations with your partners?

☐ Yes ☐ No ☐ N/A

Can you be flexible to accommodate tour operator requests?

☐ Yes ☐ No ☐ N/A

Are you willing to provide travel trade with space/services in peak (busy) season in order to gain their support when needed in the shoulder (quiet) season?

☐ Yes ☐ No ☐ N/A

Travel trade may take two to three years or more to bring new clients to your business/operation. Are you willing to invest in a relationship with travel trade for the long run?

☐ Yes ☐ No ☐ N/A

Travel trade may bring their clients (travel agents and other partners) on site for a tour. Are you willing to showcase the experience whenever your travel trade partners make a request, during both peak and shoulder seasons?

☐ Yes ☐ No ☐ N/A

Working with FIT and group tours

Read this section if you are:

► **market-ready**

Accommodations

* Features that are only applicable to group business.

Location is central to shopping/attractions/on the way to other sites	<input type="checkbox"/> Yes	<input type="checkbox"/> No	<input type="checkbox"/> N/A
Breakfast provided or available on site	<input type="checkbox"/> Yes	<input type="checkbox"/> No	<input type="checkbox"/> N/A
Food and beverage available or provided	<input type="checkbox"/> Yes	<input type="checkbox"/> No	<input type="checkbox"/> N/A
Greeting and farewell service	<input type="checkbox"/> Yes	<input type="checkbox"/> No	<input type="checkbox"/> N/A
Luggage and porter service (for hotels)	<input type="checkbox"/> Yes	<input type="checkbox"/> No	<input type="checkbox"/> N/A
Comfortable basics provided/available for tipi camps, etc.	<input type="checkbox"/> Yes	<input type="checkbox"/> No	<input type="checkbox"/> N/A
Willingness to work with rooming lists*	<input type="checkbox"/> Yes	<input type="checkbox"/> No	<input type="checkbox"/> N/A
Minimum of 25 rooms to accommodate one group*	<input type="checkbox"/> Yes	<input type="checkbox"/> No	<input type="checkbox"/> N/A
Lobby space to accommodate group arrivals*	<input type="checkbox"/> Yes	<input type="checkbox"/> No	<input type="checkbox"/> N/A
Separate check-in areas for groups*	<input type="checkbox"/> Yes	<input type="checkbox"/> No	<input type="checkbox"/> N/A
Driver room rate*	<input type="checkbox"/> Yes	<input type="checkbox"/> No	<input type="checkbox"/> N/A
Accessible rooms	<input type="checkbox"/> Yes	<input type="checkbox"/> No	<input type="checkbox"/> N/A
One complimentary room for every 15 rooms sold* (or another comp. policy)	<input type="checkbox"/> Yes	<input type="checkbox"/> No	<input type="checkbox"/> N/A

Retail

* Features that are only applicable to group business.

Gift and/or commission available for driver/escort*	<input type="checkbox"/> Yes	<input type="checkbox"/> No	<input type="checkbox"/> N/A
Ability to issue separate bills for individual visitors*	<input type="checkbox"/> Yes	<input type="checkbox"/> No	<input type="checkbox"/> N/A
Refreshments and washrooms available in order to make the stop a combined coffee/shopping break	<input type="checkbox"/> Yes	<input type="checkbox"/> No	<input type="checkbox"/> N/A
Offering a group discount/coupon*	<input type="checkbox"/> Yes	<input type="checkbox"/> No	<input type="checkbox"/> N/A

Attractions

* Features that are only applicable to group business.

Good washroom facilities - clean, large

☐ Yes ☐ No ☐ N/A

Food Service and/or areas on site for coffee break/light lunch

☐ Yes ☐ No ☐ N/A

Attraction visit between 1½ to 2 hours

☐ Yes ☐ No ☐ N/A

Attraction is accessible for visitors with disabilities

☐ Yes ☐ No ☐ N/A

Offer a range of activities or programs? Guided tours?

☐ Yes ☐ No ☐ N/A

Group meeting place with seats available*

☐ Yes ☐ No ☐ N/A

Separate group entrance*

☐ Yes ☐ No ☐ N/A

Complimentary policy for driver and escort*

☐ Yes ☐ No ☐ N/A

Sufficient washroom capacity

☐ Yes ☐ No ☐ N/A

Food and beverage

* Features that are only applicable to group business.

Offer either a set menu or choice of meal to suit the needs of the visitor?
(i.e. a choice of beef or chicken or other special needs/requests)

☐ Yes ☐ No ☐ N/A

Offer meal options that can accommodate allergies

☐ Yes ☐ No ☐ N/A

Offer enough seating for groups up to 48*

☐ Yes ☐ No ☐ N/A

Able to seat the group together or in a separate dining area*

☐ Yes ☐ No ☐ N/A

Prompt service (i.e. serving lunch in less than one hour)

☐ Yes ☐ No ☐ N/A

Sufficient washroom capacity to accommodate groups*

☐ Yes ☐ No ☐ N/A

Parking for motor coach*

☐ Yes ☐ No ☐ N/A

Attractive setting – view/decor

☐ Yes ☐ No ☐ N/A

Close to highway and other attractions

☐ Yes ☐ No ☐ N/A

Complimentary policy for driver and escort*

☐ Yes ☐ No ☐ N/A

Transportation

* Features that are only applicable to group business.

Air conditioned if being used in summer season

☐ Yes ☐ No ☐ N/A

Well maintained/new equipment with no mechanical problems

☐ Yes ☐ No ☐ N/A

Public address system or microphone available*

☐ Yes ☐ No ☐ N/A

Fleet size to accommodate range of needs

☐ Yes ☐ No ☐ N/A

Motor coach with washrooms onboard*

☐ Yes ☐ No ☐ N/A

Flexible, patient, friendly drivers*

☐ Yes ☐ No ☐ N/A

Transportation can accommodate visitors with disabilities

☐ Yes ☐ No ☐ N/A

Outdoor adventure

* Features that are only applicable to group business.

Up-to-date government licenses and appropriate liability insurance, canoe/
guide training (i.e. ORCA Training - Ontario Canoe Recreational Association)

☐ Yes ☐ No ☐ N/A

Appropriate lifesaving, water and first aid skills/training

☐ Yes ☐ No ☐ N/A

Clean, recent equipment and supplies

☐ Yes ☐ No ☐ N/A

Boats and motors in good working order

☐ Yes ☐ No ☐ N/A

Appropriate food and sanitation practices for location

☐ Yes ☐ No ☐ N/A

Outfitting and camping equipment required is outlined and/or provided

☐ Yes ☐ No ☐ N/A

Packaged with appropriate transportation, accommodations and food service

☐ Yes ☐ No ☐ N/A

Emergency plan has been developed

☐ Yes ☐ No ☐ N/A

Pow wows and events

* Features that are only applicable to group business.

Guaranteed event dates, one year prior

☐ Yes ☐ No ☐ N/A

Year round contact for event

☐ Yes ☐ No ☐ N/A

Carry appropriate liability and event insurance

☐ Yes ☐ No ☐ N/A

Visitor guidelines/etiquette available

☐ Yes ☐ No ☐ N/A

Appropriate food and washrooms available

☐ Yes ☐ No ☐ N/A

Greeted by host with introduction and information

☐ Yes ☐ No ☐ N/A

Motor coach parking*

☐ Yes ☐ No ☐ N/A

Group packages, pricing and programs*

☐ Yes ☐ No ☐ N/A

Location with accessibility for all visitors

☐ Yes ☐ No ☐ N/A



Tundra North Tours, NT

Acknowledgments

This guide was originally released as the “Draft National Authenticity and Market-Ready Standards for Indigenous Cultural Tourism” was created through extensive National consultation by the Aboriginal Tourism marketing Circle (ATMC) in 2008. This guide was released in 2013. Since then the ATMC transitioned into what is now the Indigenous Tourism Association of Canada (ITAC).

ITAC is proud to release the revised version of the Guide in 2018, reflecting the more experience-driven visitor of today and of the growing demand for Indigenous cultural tourism experiences across Canada.

ITAC does not intend to “re-invent the wheel”. Many tremendous resources have been developed to support the development and expansion of Indigenous cultural tourism experiences, that we have incorporated the vast knowledge and resources from the following:

- ▶ “Aboriginal Cultural Tourism Checklist for Success” by Aboriginal Tourism Team Canada, (ATTC) created by Beverley O’Neil, O’Neil Marketing and Consulting.
- ▶ “Aboriginal Tourism Business Planning Guide, Checklist for Success” ATTC and Canadian Tourism Human Resource Council created by Indigenous Tourism BC (ITBC) and Pacific Rim Institute.
- ▶ ITBC’s “Aboriginal Cultural Tourism Blueprint Strategy for BC” created in 2005.
- ▶ “Canadian National Aboriginal Cultural Tourism Accreditation DRAFT Workbook” developed in 1998 by ATTC and created by ITBC.
- ▶ “Market-Ready” The NWT Tourism Handbook created by Northwest Territories Tourism.
- ▶ Ontario Tourism’s “Packaging Handbook” created by the Tourism Company in 2000.
- ▶ Ontario Tourism’s “Selling through the Travel Trade” A handbook for tourism suppliers created by the Tourism Company in 2001.
- ▶ Regional Aboriginal Tourism Associations Bylaws (ITBC, NONTA, ATASO, STAQ)
- ▶ Cree Outfitting and Tourism Association Bylaws, Membership and Industry Standards. Yukon First Nations Tourism Guiding Principals.
- ▶ Canadian Tourism Commission: Eligibility and Selection Criteria for CTC Signature Experience Collection.

Read this section if you are:

- ▶ **planning**
- ▶ **visitor-ready**
- ▶ **market-ready**
- ▶ **export-ready**

- ▶ Canadian Tourism Commission: Experiences. A toolkit for Partners.
- ▶ Aboriginal Tourism Engagement Strategy; Final Report. Prepared by Northways Consulting.
- ▶ ITBC: Aboriginal Cultural Tourism Authenticity Program.
- ▶ Aboriginal Tourism Planning Tool Kit; Community Tourism Development for First Nations in New Brunswick.
- ▶ Alberta Aboriginal Tourism Product Opportunity Analysis. Industry Canada with the support from Alberta Economic Development.
- ▶ Working with the Canadian Travel Trade. A guide for Northern Ontario Tourism Suppliers.
- ▶ Visit Niagara Canada. Market-ready Criteria. Self Assessment Checklist.
- ▶ Tourism British Columbia. Market-ready Standards.
- ▶ Travel Manitoba. Market-ready Checklist.
- ▶ Heritage Tourism Alliance British Columbia. Market-ready Standards.
- ▶ Cultural Human Resources Council. Export marketing of cultural products and services. Chart of competencies.
- ▶ Tourism Inc. Market-Readiness Self Assessment Tool.

Glossary

Read this section if you are:

► **planning**

► **visitor-ready**

► **market-ready**

► **export-ready**

Indigenous – A person of Indigenous origin including status and non-status, First Nations, Métis and Inuit

Indigenous business – A business that is majority owned by First Nation, Métis and Inuit people

Indigenous organization – A group, business, or association with a significant Indigenous involvement, usually by majority

Accessibility – Availability or approachable for all people

Assessment – A process of determining the ability of an entity to meet the predetermined standard or level

Authentic – Real or genuine

Booking – A term used to refer to the completed sale by destination, attraction, convention centre or facility

Capital investment – Investment in enterprise for the use of its trademark in the selling of a product or service

Channels of distribution – Method by which goods & services are delivered to client/ customer to certain markets (i.e. International)

Community – People living in one place, district, and country considered as a whole

Community analysis – Evaluation of community and region surrounding event to identify opportunities to promote events

Companion program – Services to accommodate special needs participants and companions

Consumer – A buyer and user of goods and services

Consumer demand – Demand from public for a service or product

Culture – The sum total of ways of living built up by a group of human beings which is passed on from one generation to another

Eco-tourism – A tourism experience which incorporates or demonstrates elements of relationships between a community and its environment. Generally this is nature-based, it may or may not include a cultural component

End user – Final user of product or service

Etiquette or protocol – Culturally sensitive guidelines that govern behaviour regarded as correct or acceptable, unwritten code of practice followed by members of a certain professional or cultural group (i.e. What happens when an eagle feather is dropped during dancing)

FAM tour – Familiarization trip for travel professionals to inspect hotels and restaurants, sample attractions and experience local culture

First Nation – Can refer to a single Band or group of Bands affiliated with a Tribal Council or cultural group

Front-line staff – A person or persons coming in direct contact with consumer of the product and service, including hotel front desk staff, restaurant wait staff, guides and outfitters

Fully Independent Traveller (FIT) – An FIT is an individual (or small group of < 10) traveling and vacationing with a self-booked itinerary

Heritage – Includes both the cultural and natural history of a people, region etc

In-kind – Non-financial support

Integrity – The adherence to a standard of conduct or value; personal honesty and independence

Interpretation – Front line staff that interacts to provide interest, promote understanding & encourage positive experiences of a natural, historical or cultural theme (i.e. Guided tour of a nature walk)

Keepers of the Culture – Defined by community, Elders and community leaders that keep the oral traditions and cultures for the people alive

Management – The act, practice or process of managing

Marketing – Activities involved in developing product, price, distribution and promotional mixes that meet and satisfy the needs of the customer

Market niche/market share – Small section of market most likely to be persuaded to buy product or service.

Net rate – A basic rate charged by a supplier that is later marked up for eventual resale by travel agent or tour operator. The rate offered to a travel agent or tour operator – this rate is lower than what the consumer would pay, allowing the travel agent or tour operator room to increase the price for resale

Operator – An individual or organization that conducts a tourism activity (i.e. Guided tour, special event, facility) which results in a monetary return

Product – A good or service or a package of goods and services

Seasonal travel – Travel industry business cycles such as high peak/low peak, low/high season, off season or shoulder season

Standard – Something widely accepted as a basis for comparison

Sustainable – A course of action which aims to avoid disadvantaging future generations

Additional online resources

Tourism development guides

Read this section if you are:

► **planning**

► **visitor-ready**

► **market-ready**

► **export-ready**

- **Guide to Cultural and Heritage Tourism Development (2014)**
Destination British Columbia
<https://heritagebc.ca/wp-content/uploads/2017/10/TBE-Guide-Cultural-and-Heritage-Tourism-Jan2014.pdf>
- **Alberta Tourism Development Guide (2015)**
Government of Alberta
<https://open.alberta.ca/dataset/a8b26e30-ae5a-4320-aeff-d7265d44bdd2/resource/12538b0a-8e1b-4dfb-9ab0-6a820c69147a/download/ct-tourism-dev-guide-2015-07.pdf>
- **Tourism Development Handbook for the Northwest Territories**
Government of the Northwest Territories
<https://www.itn.gov.nt.ca/sites/itn/files/TourismDevelopmentHandbook.pdf>
- **Nova Scotia Tourism Business Resources**
Multiple development guides include marketing, community planning and running festivals and restaurants
<https://tourismns.ca/development/business-development/business-resources>
- **Tourism Development Handbook for Nunavut (2016)**
Government of Nunavut
<https://gov.nu.ca/sites/default/files/2016-nunavut-tourism-handbook-en-web.pdf>
- **New Brunswick Tourism Development Guidelines (2010)**
<https://www2.gnb.ca/content/dam/gnb/Departments/thc-tpc/pdf/TIF-IIT/2010-March-Guidelines.pdf>

Market research

- **National Indigenous Tourism Research 2015**
Indigenous Tourism Canada
<https://indigenoustourism.ca/corporate/national-aboriginal-tourism-research-project-2015/>
- **Destination Canada & Indigenous Tourism Canada Research on USA Traveller Perceptions (2017)**
<https://www.destinationcanada.com/en/news/indigenous-tourism>

- ▶ **Aboriginal Tourism Team Canada and Canadian Tourism Commission (2000)**
Demand for Aboriginal Cultural Products in Key European Markets. Canada:
Canadian Tourism Commission
<http://tpr.alberta.ca/tourism/tourismdevelopment/aboriginaltourism/docs/aboriginalCultureProductsCTC.pdf>
- ▶ **Canadian Tourism Commission. (2008)**
Aboriginal Tourism Opportunities for Canada- UK, Germany, France. Canada.
Canadian Tourism Commission
http://en-corporate.canada.travel/sites/default/files/pdf/Research/Product-knowledge/Aboriginal-tourism/Aboriginal_Tourism_Opportunities_eng.pdf
- ▶ **Destination Canada: Experiences Toolkit**
https://www.destinationcanada.com/sites/default/files/2016-11/Programs_SignatureExperiences_Toolkit_Experiences_2011_EN.pdf
- ▶ **Destination Canada: Explorer Quotient Toolkit**
<https://www.destinationcanada.com/sites/default/files/archive/206-Explorer%20Quotient%20Toolkit/toolsexplorerquotienttoolkitjul2018en.pdf>

Cultural Authenticity

- ▶ **Authenticity in Tourism Program: Indigenous Tourism Ontario**
<https://indigenoustourismontario.ca/cultural-authenticity/authenticity-in-tourism/>
- ▶ **Authentic Indigenous Cultural Tourism Program: Indigenous Tourism BC**
https://www.indigenoussbc.com/assets/corporate/GUIDE-How%20to%20apply%20Authenticity%20Program_FNL2014.pdf

International Resources

- ▶ **Adventure Travel Trade Association**
<https://www.adventuretravel.biz/>
- ▶ **American Indian Alaska Native Tourism Association (USA)**
<https://www.aianta.org/>
- ▶ **World Indigenous Tourism Alliance**
<http://www.winta.org/>
- ▶ **World Tourism Organization - United Nations**
www2.unwto.org/
- ▶ **World Travel and Tourism Council**
www.wttc.org/

Front cover photos from left to right and top down:

Rapid Lake Lodge, QC
Great Spirit Circle Trail, ON
Spirit Bear Lodge, BC
Wanuskewin Heritage Park, SK
IATC 2017, AB
Kluskap Ridge RV & Campground, NS
Tundra North Tours, NT

Back cover photos from top to bottom:

Moosonee Moose Factory, ON
Ocean House at Stads K'uns GawGa, BC



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