



## ***New Manitoba Indigenous Tourism Strategy aims to generate \$10 million in increased tourism revenues***

**April 24, 2019 (Opaskwayak Cree Nation)** – Travel Manitoba and the Indigenous Tourism Association of Canada (ITAC) unveiled the [Manitoba Indigenous Tourism Strategy 2019-2022](#) today, signalling a commitment across the province to significantly grow the scope and diversity of Manitoba's Indigenous tourism experiences.

Manitoba is home to 63 First Nation communities from five different linguistic groups (Cree, Ojibway, Dakota, Ojibway-Cree and Dene) and, according to 2011 figures, one in seven Indigenous people in Canada live in Manitoba. Created in response to the increasing global demand for authentic, meaningful experiences which are market and export-ready (meeting internationally recognized industry standards), the strategy sets out a number of ambitious yet attainable goals:

- Increase the number of market and export-ready Indigenous-owned tourism businesses from 28-38 by 2021;
- Have 85 authentic Indigenous tourism businesses in Manitoba by 2023/24;
- Increase Indigenous tourism jobs from 1, 350 full time, year-round jobs by 4 percent per year;
- Increase Indigenous tourism revenues by 4 percent annually.

“The Manitoba Indigenous Tourism strategy aims to increase Indigenous tourism spending from \$61 million in 2018 to \$71 million by 2022”, said the Honourable Blaine Pedersen, Minister of Growth, Enterprise and Trade. “The strategy is built on respecting culture and nature, and will help create new business opportunities generating jobs and revenues in our communities.”

Last year, Destination Canada reported that one in every three international visitors (37 percent) to Canada say they are interested in Indigenous tourism experiences. Also, according to a Conference Board of Canada research report commissioned by ITAC, Indigenous tourism growth is outpacing Canadian tourism activity overall, with direct economic benefits (GDP) rising 23.2 percent from 2012-2017 (from \$1.4 billion to \$1.7 billion). Based on this research, ITAC released new targets of its own for 2024 including an increase in Indigenous tourism revenues contributing \$2.2 billion to the annual Canadian GDP, over 49,000 jobs nationally in Indigenous tourism and 200 export-ready Indigenous tourism experiences across Canada.

“To achieve our own ambitious goals at ITAC, we need committed partners like Travel Manitoba to grow their provincial Indigenous tourism industry,” said Keith Henry, ITAC president and CEO. “There's a tremendously strong Indigenous culture in Manitoba and there's a strong desire for economic development among communities and entrepreneurs, so we see the potential for Indigenous tourism growing substantially in Manitoba and becoming a leader in Indigenous tourism for Canada.”

In 2017, Travel Manitoba established a Memorandum of Understanding (MOU) with ITAC to foster the growth of the Indigenous tourism sector in the province. It set the stage for collaboration and the development of the three-year strategy. As well, the team at Travel Manitoba identified that the diversity of the province's Indigenous cultures, historical events, stories and landscapes were unique and cannot be replicated by competitive destinations. To help lead the strategy, a vision for Indigenous tourism in Manitoba was then developed with guidance from ITAC, Travel Manitoba, the Manitoba Indigenous Tourism Advisory Committee, among others: "A prosperous Indigenous tourism industry across Manitoba, providing authentic, unique, engaging experiences."

"As the inventory of Indigenous experiences continues to grow in Manitoba, fostered by the partnership between ITAC and Travel Manitoba, our province will boast even more iconic Canadian experiences to attract international visitors", said Colin Ferguson, president & CEO of Travel Manitoba. "We're looking forward to hosting the International Indigenous Conference in 2020 to showcase these experiences."

For more information, visit [www.IndigenousTourism.ca](http://www.IndigenousTourism.ca).

#### **About Travel Manitoba**

Travel Manitoba is a Crown Corporation under provincial legislation that leads and stimulates sustainable tourism growth in Manitoba's \$1.6 billion tourism industry. In partnership with the tourism industry, the agency is responsible for tourism marketing, visitor information services, research and public information.

#### **About the Indigenous Tourism Association of Canada**

The Indigenous Tourism Association of Canada (ITAC) is the lead organization tasked with growing the Indigenous tourism industry across the country. Inspired by a vision for a thriving Indigenous tourism economy sharing authentic, memorable and enriching experiences, ITAC develops relationships with other groups and regions with similar mandates. By uniting the Indigenous tourism industry in Canada, ITAC works to enable collective support, product development, promotion and marketing of authentic Indigenous cultural tourism businesses in a respectful protocol. With Indigenous tourism outpacing Canadian tourism activity overall and international demand for Indigenous experiences at an all-time high, ITAC recently updated its [five year plan](#). To view packages and experiences available visit [www.indigenouscanada.travel](http://www.indigenouscanada.travel). For more information on ITAC visit [www.indigenoustourism.ca](http://www.indigenoustourism.ca)

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