

FOR IMMEDIATE RELEASE

## **The Indigenous Tourism Association of Canada announces Phase Four financial assistance of its COVID-19 stimulus development fund**

*235 tourism operators receive funding with grants up to \$25,000*

**COAST SALISH TERRITORY (Vancouver, BC) – September 22, 2020** – Earlier this summer, the Indigenous Tourism Association of Canada (ITAC) launched the COVID-19 Stimulus Development Fund to help Indigenous entrepreneurs and their businesses stay afloat during the shutdown of the global tourism industry as a result of COVID-19. Later paired with additional federal funding of \$16 million, ITAC will be able to support many Indigenous tourism businesses in the form of up to \$25,000 non-repayable grants.

Today, ITAC announces Phase Four funding from Intake One (April 2020) for the Stimulus Development Fund, allocating 235 businesses over \$4.9 million in grants. Remaining businesses who applied and have completed required documentation but have not yet been announced are still under review.

“We are thrilled to reach the next phase in our stimulus plan and have approval by Indigenous Services Canada to release funding for another 235 Indigenous tourism businesses,” says Keith Henry, President and CEO of ITAC. “We are proud to support those businesses struggling during the unexpected shutdown of the 2020 summer season and know this funding for Phase Four will support Indigenous entrepreneurs as they prepare for future tourism seasons.”

“The Indigenous tourism industry is a driving force of many local economies across Canada. As the industry has been particularly hard hit economically by the COVID-19 pandemic, our government is contributing \$16 million to support Indigenous tourism businesses in need, through the Indigenous Tourism Association of Canada,” said Honourable Marc Miller, Minister of Indigenous Services. “This funding will help Indigenous tourism businesses weather COVID-19 by supporting businesses as they seek out new ways of operating in a changed world.”

The grants are disbursed to Indigenous tourism businesses who are at various stages of their tourism development. The Phase Four recipients are defined as *Doors Open Businesses* - tourism-related services and experiences that are newly available, in start-up and that currently receive customers who are mostly locals and regionals. The next round of applications from Intake 2 are under review and will be announced in October and all applicants will be contacted before the end of October.

To view frequently asked questions, click [here](#).

To view Phase Four successful applicants, click [here](#).

To view Phase Two and Three successful applicants, click [here](#).

To view the initial successful applicants in Phase One, click [here](#).

For more information on the ITAC’s COVID-19 Development Stimulus Fund, click [here](#).

To view all of ITAC's communications around COVID-19 and the resources available, click [here](#).

### **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. Prior to 2020, Indigenous tourism was outpacing Canadian tourism activity overall, and international demand for Indigenous experiences was at an all-time high. Due to COVID-19, ITAC recently released [a report](#) on the financial challenges facing Indigenous tourism operators and recommended stimulus solutions. As well, a 2020-2021 revised [action plan](#) focused on sustaining Indigenous tourism in the face of COVID-19 was released in March.

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