

MAKING CANADA THE WORLD LEADER IN INDIGENOUS TOURISM



INDIGENOUS
TOURISM ASSOCIATION OF CANADA

ASSOCIATION TOURISTIQUE
AUTOCHTONE
DU CANADA

Making Canada the World Leader in Indigenous Tourism

As Canada moves out from the shadow of the pandemic, it has the opportunity to build on the momentum that existed pre-COVID to grow to become the global leader in Indigenous tourism with direct contributions to GDP of \$6 billion annually.

To achieve this ambitious but achievable goal, the Indigenous tourism industry will require significant investment to build destination and experience capacity. This will require:

- No less than 800 new Indigenous tourism businesses (up from 1,900 to a total of 2,700)
- No less than 21,000 new Indigenous tourism jobs (up from 39,000 to a total of 60,000)

This investment will not only benefit the Canadian economy, it will be one of the greatest supports for the cause of reconciliation in Canada. It will lead to quality of life improvements in Indigenous communities across Canada.

To achieve this vision, ITAC will devote its energy to the following five themes:

- Infrastructure and Destination Enhancement Funds
- Attract and Retain a Sustainable Tourism Workforce
- Develop and Promote Tourism Assets
- A Sustainable Tourism Industry for Communities, the Economy and the Planet
- Facilitate Access for Visitors to and within Canada

Infrastructure and Destination Enhancement Funds

The current inventory of Indigenous destinations in Canada cannot support the volume of visitors that is required to meet the \$6 billion GDP goal for 2030. This target can only be achieved through significant, nationwide investment in Indigenous tourism infrastructure planning and development. As well, given that many Indigenous communities are located in rural and remote areas, access for visitors to these communities needs to be improved to reduce costs and the complexity of access logistics.

ITAC will kick start this process by offering an Indigenous Tourism Destination Planning Fund to support Indigenous communities to conduct destination planning to better facilitate tourism to their community—both rural and remote areas as well as urban centres. This will be followed by a significant Indigenous Tourism Destination Development Fund that will give communities the resources to build the required infrastructure in their community. This will include cultural centres and other places of welcoming that will serve not only as the tourism hub in their community, but will also act as a cultural hub.

ITAC will follow the planning and development phases with an Indigenous Tourism Experience Development Program that will create and refine tourism products for both the domestic, US and international markets. Culture will be a focus of these experiences and through this celebration of culture, pride will grow within communities.

Collaborative marketing partnerships will be developed with Canada's international airports to educate foreign visitors about Indigenous cultures in Canada. Through these and other

partnerships within Canada's transportation sector, ITAC will enhance access to rural and remote Indigenous communities.

All of these programs working in combination will trigger the largest ever revitalization of Indigenous communities. Tourism's celebration of culture will grow Indigenous pride in Indigenous culture. Improved access, infrastructure and economic opportunities will lead to safe, accessible, and livable Indigenous communities throughout the North, in rural and remote areas, and in urban centres. Education of those who travel to Indigenous communities will grow understanding and will bolster reconciliation efforts within Canada.

Attract and Retain a Sustainable Tourism Workforce

To achieve the \$6 billion GDP goal for 2030, the Indigenous tourism workforce will have to grow significantly. This will require implementation of an Indigenous Tourism Workforce Strategy. ITAC will develop and implement training programs in collaboration with provincial and territorial partners, Indigenous and non-Indigenous tourism operators, and tourism training institutions. These programs grow the Indigenous workforce as well as employers' understanding of Indigenous values and how to work with Indigenous employees.

The end result of this work will be increased Indigenous workers in all sectors of tourism. This will enhance the visitor experience and will support reconciliation and Indigenous economic self-reliance.



Develop and Promote Tourism Assets

COVID-19 massively impacted Indigenous tourism. The industry that was leading the growth of the tourism sector in Canada has been left diminished by lack of revenues over the last two years. The industry is still struggling to rebuild, currently unable to meet the growing demand for Indigenous tourism in Canada. ITAC will launch a three-pronged catalyst to not only recover to pre-COVID levels but to soar past them and achieve the \$6 billion GDP by 2030 goal.

- Annual investment in experience development and enhancement
- Annual investment in provincial and territorial Indigenous tourism association support
- Annual investment destination and experience marketing

Through stable, multi-year funding, ITAC will be able to match demand with supply. These federal investments will truly demonstrate reconciliation in action. They will lead to the growth of Indigenous tourism products in each province and territory (including rural and remote areas) and will see Indigenous culture showcased at FIFA 2026, the North American Indigenous Games, and the 2030 Olympic and Paralympic Games.



Facilitate Access for Visitors to and within Canada

As pandemic travel restrictions eased at land border crossings with the United States as well as internationally, travellers are once again flowing into Canada, hungry for Indigenous tourism experiences. By removing barriers to travel into Canada as well as by improving access within Canada to rural and remote areas, Indigenous tourism can achieve the goal of \$6 billion by 2030.

Recent studies through the Conference Board of Canada indicate that 1 out of 3 international visitors want to participate in Indigenous experiences while visiting Canada.

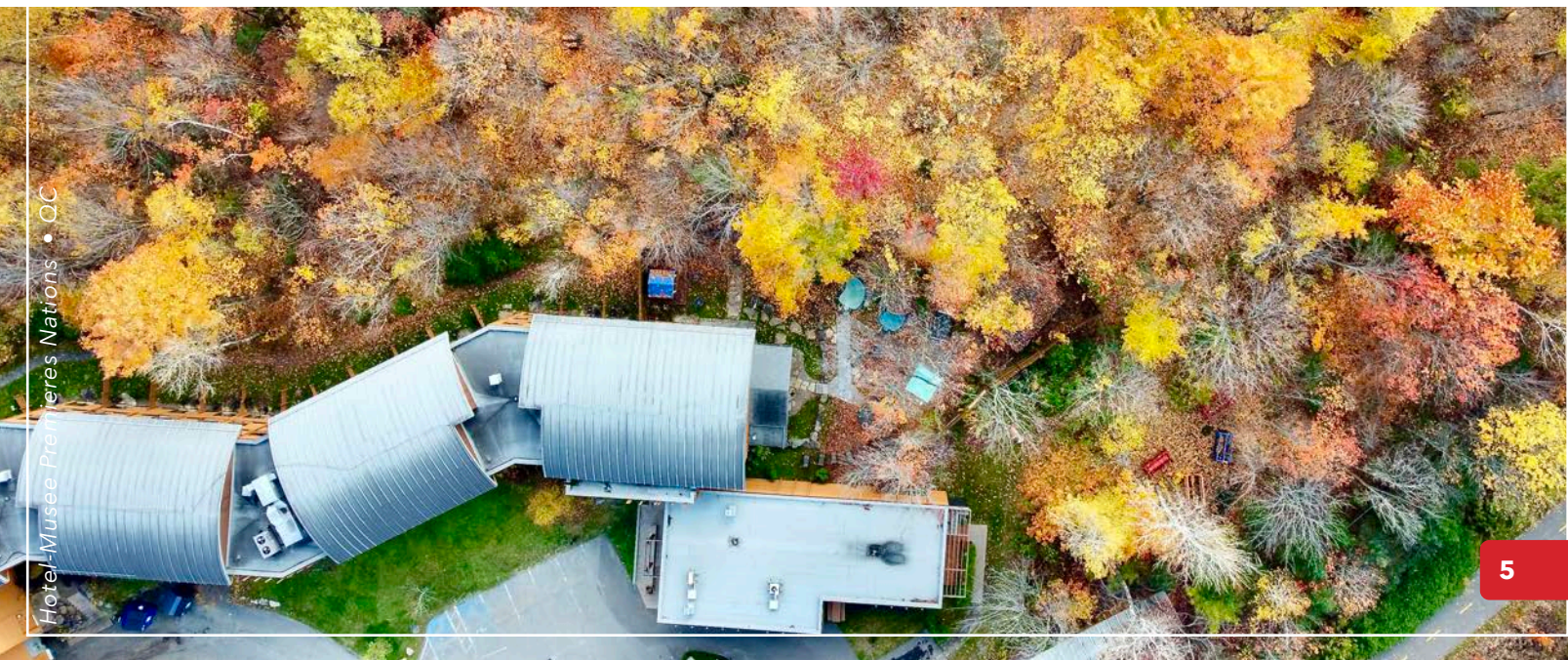
With 62% of Indigenous tourism businesses being rural and remote, improved access to these communities will support businesses and Indigenous people to thrive. By improving access into Canada for visitors and travel between Indigenous communities and urban city centers, the ease of access will result in increased Indigenous jobs and Indigenous business ownership.

A Sustainable Tourism Industry for Communities, the Economy and the Planet

Now more than ever, sustainability needs to be the focus of all tourism development and promotion. All of ITAC's efforts will be conducted with the UNWTO Sustainable Development Goals (SDGs) top of mind.

- SDG 8: Decent Work and Economic Growth
- SDG 9: Industry, Innovation and Infrastructure
- SDG 11: Sustainable Cities and Communities
- SDG 12: Responsible Consumption and Production
- SDG 17: Partnerships for the Goals

Through education work and the growth of the Indigenous workforce, Indigenous tourism will support reconciliation and the fulfillment of the Truth and Reconciliation Committee's 94 Calls to Action.

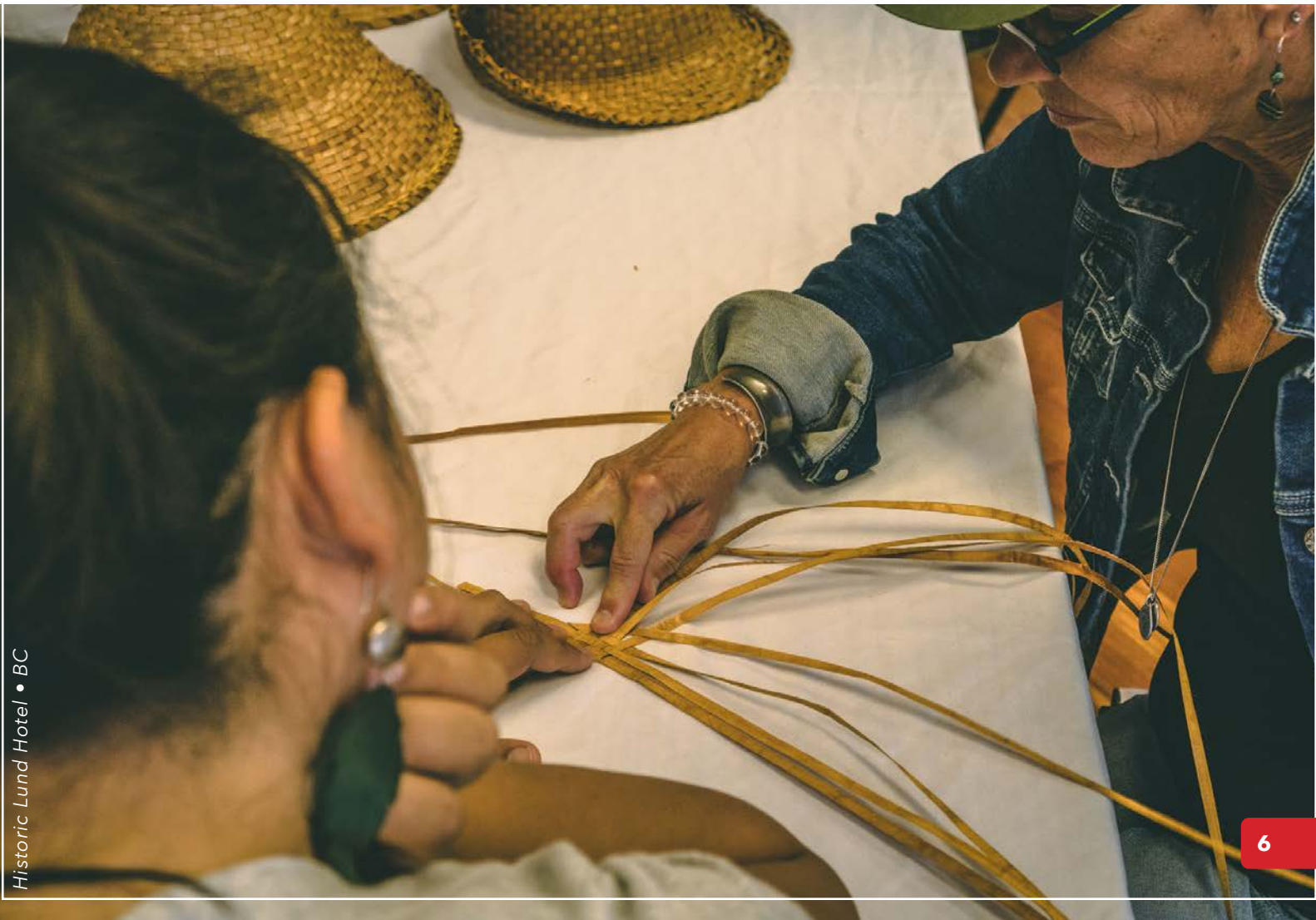


Recommended Investments

To achieve the \$6 billion by 2030 goal for Indigenous tourism in Canada, ITAC recommends the following investments:

- Infrastructure and Destination Development Fund
 - » *\$2.4 billion one-time investment*
- Attract and Retain a Sustainable Tourism Workforce
 - » *\$5 million annually*
- Develop and Promote Tourism Assets
 - » *\$19.5 million annually*
- Develop and Promote Tourism Assets
 - » *\$5 million one time investment for Olympics*

Through these strategic investments ITAC will grow the Indigenous tourism industry in Canada to become the global leader in Indigenous tourism.



About the Indigenous Tourism Association of Canada

The Indigenous tourism sector is quite diverse, including co-operatives and community-owned ventures, incorporated businesses, and a range of sole proprietors, from independent artists to wilderness guides. The variety of participants also includes not-for-profit organizations such as museums owned and operated by Indigenous communities, cultural festivals, theatre groups, and natural heritage sites. With this diversity, the Indigenous tourism sector presents a unique constellation of values and tourism experiences.

ITAC is a membership-based organization, representing more than 1,000 Indigenous owned businesses nationally. The purpose of the Indigenous Tourism Association of Canada (ITAC) is to improve the socio-economic situation of Indigenous people within the 10 provinces and 3 territories of Canada. ITAC does this through strategic investment towards Indigenous tourism entrepreneurs, communities who are engaged in the tourism economy, and those looking to invest in Indigenous tourism businesses.

ITAC's Mission is to provide leadership in the development and marketing of authentic Indigenous tourism experiences through innovative partnerships.

ITAC's Vision is a thriving Indigenous tourism economy sharing authentic, memorable and enriching experiences.





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