



INDIGENOUS
TOURISM ASSOCIATION OF CANADA

2024-25 ACTION PLAN

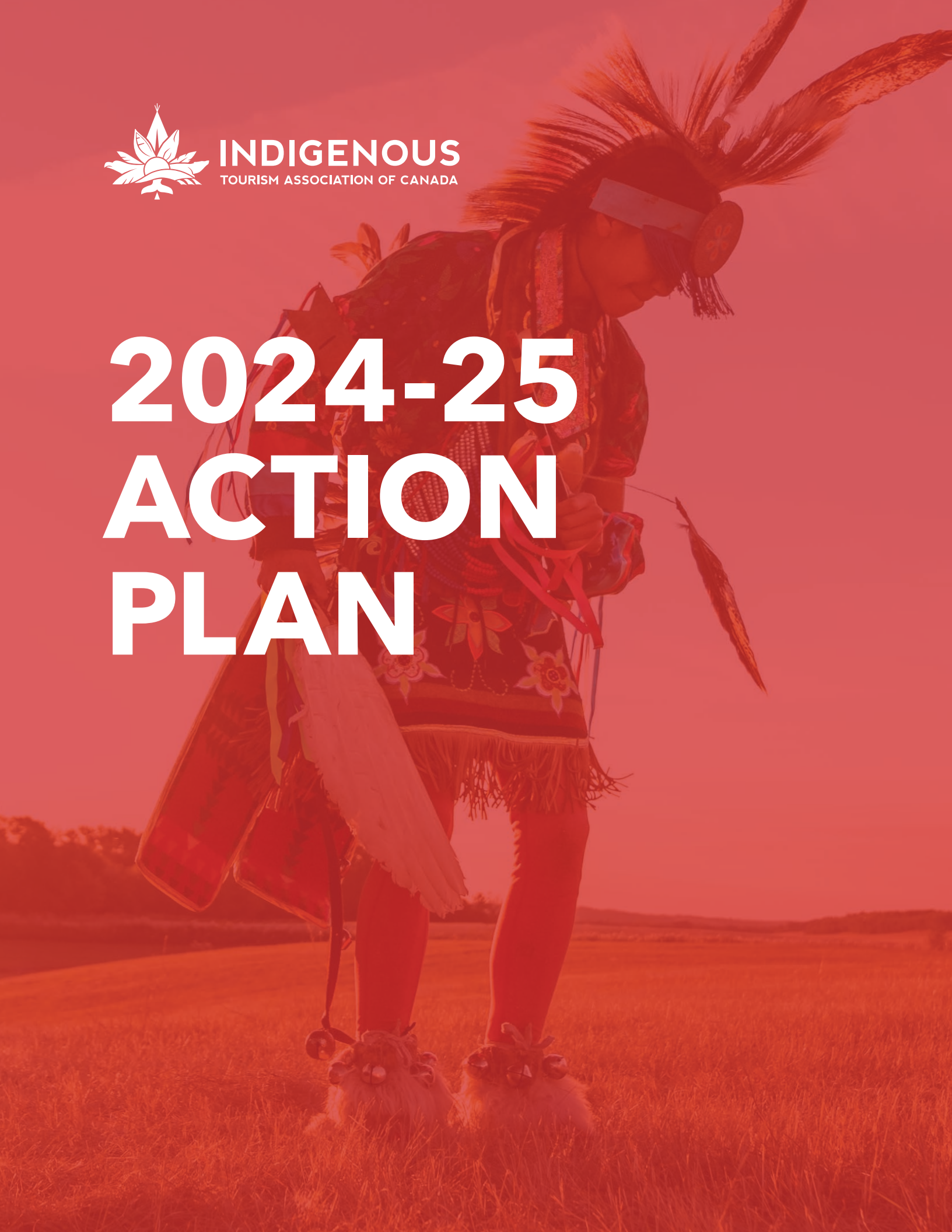


TABLE OF CONTENTS

| | |
|---|----|
| A Message from ITAC's CEO | 4 |
| A Message from ITAC's Board Chair | 6 |
| About ITAC | 10 |
| Becoming the Global Leader by 2030 | 12 |
| Innovative Revenue Generation | 16 |
| ITAC's 2024-25 Priorities | 18 |
| 2024-25 Activities and Deliverables | 22 |
| Leadership | 24 |
| Partnerships | 26 |
| Development..... | 28 |
| Marketing..... | 30 |
| 2024-25 Budget | 32 |

In this Action Plan, ITAC is proud to feature images of our members from across the country. To learn more about our members and to see more images, please visit DestinationIndigenous.ca.



PHOTO: OCEAN HOUSE, BC; FRONT COVER: WANUSKEWIN HERITAGE PARK, SK; BACK COVER: RESTAURANT LA TRAITE, QC

A MESSAGE FROM ITAC'S CEO



On behalf of the Indigenous Tourism Association of Canada (ITAC), I'm proud to present our 2024-25 Action Plan. It contains the tangible and exciting steps that we are taking to advance our mission of promoting and supporting Indigenous tourism in Canada.

It's an auspicious time for making good on promises of reconciliation. All across the country, and indeed the world, people are hearing the call to "walk the talk" by supporting Indigenous tourism – and ITAC is ready to deliver.

Even though our overarching vision—becoming the global leader of Indigenous tourism by 2030—is ambitious, our 2024-25 Action Plan puts us on a good path towards achieving it. Within this plan, we lay out our commitment to several key initiatives that have been, and will continue to be, instrumental in delivering on the growth and success of Indigenous tourism:

- » Our Indigenous Tourism Fund Micro and Small Business Stream funding program will continue to provide crucial assistance to Indigenous tourism providers, empowering them to thrive and contribute to their local economies
- » The Indigenous Tourism Destination Fund will be a primary focus, and we will continue to onboard Reconciliation Partners ready who want to work with ITAC to grow Indigenous tourism in Canada
- » Our Truth2Action Indigenous Tourism Reconciliation Training will be expanded, with invitations being extended to a greater number of DMOs and other tourism industry organisations

I'd like to thank the ITAC team for the efficiency, diligence and passion they bring to each and every endeavour. I'd also like to thank our hard-working Board of Directors, hailing from each province and territory, for their invaluable guidance and unwavering commitment. I'd also like to express my gratitude to the Federal Government of Canada for their collaboration and investment, which helps us drive transformative change and make a lasting impact in the Indigenous tourism sector.

Furthermore, I would like to extend our heartfelt thanks to the provincial and territorial Indigenous tourism organisations for their ongoing support and their dedication to growing the industry. These partnerships are central to the prosperity we're all working towards. Last but certainly not least, I want to thank our 1,100+ members. Your unwavering commitment to showcasing the richness of Indigenous cultures makes our ambitious vision possible.

In the fast-paced tourism industry, it's often hard to find a moment to celebrate the important milestones we've achieved. Building on the successes of the past, the 2024-25 Action Plan leads us towards a bright future for not just Indigenous tourism in Canada, but for Indigenous communities across the country as well. I am so excited for this coming year and I hope that you will join with ITAC and work to grow Indigenous tourism in Canada.

Sincerely,



Keith Henry

President & CEO

Indigenous Tourism Association of Canada

A MESSAGE FROM ITAC'S BOARD CHAIR



In 2023, ITAC focused on several key initiatives to lay the groundwork for future success. In this 2024-25 Action Plan, ITAC is laying out the next steps for building those programs in order to accelerate the growth of Indigenous tourism across the country. From sustainable development practices to innovative international marketing, ITAC will continue to be at the forefront as we strive to become the global leader in Indigenous tourism by 2030.

I want to emphasise the importance of partnerships. At the federal, provincial and territorial levels, with Indigenous communities, with the wider tourism industry—partnerships are our greatest strength. In the coming year, I look forward to expanding and solidifying our existing partnerships as well as creating opportunities for new partnerships to form. I am particularly excited to welcome new Reconciliation Partners as part of the Indigenous Tourism Destination Fund program.

I want to recognise the leadership of our CEO, Keith Henry, and the dedication, expertise, and tireless efforts of the entire ITAC team. The energy and dedication they bring to their work is outstanding. It is through their commitment, as well as through the alliances ITAC has forged with our partners, that I am left feeling so confident that we will be able to put COVID-19 in the rear view mirror and achieve our Vision for 2030.

I am proud to serve as the Board Chair of ITAC. It is an honour to be able to stand with everyone who is striving to build a brighter future for Indigenous tourism in Canada. Together, we demonstrate that Indigenous tourism truly is reconciliation in action.

Sincerely,



Marilyn Jensen

Board Chair

Indigenous Tourism Association of Canada





ABOUT ITAC

The Indigenous Tourism Association of Canada's (ITAC) members are Indigenous-owned and controlled businesses from every province and territory in Canada. ITAC is now widely recognized as a global leader in Indigenous tourism development and marketing. This reputation is built upon not only ITAC's successes, but also the strength of its partnerships.

Over the past seven years, the Indigenous tourism sector has seen unprecedented growth in new job creation and an increased contribution to GDP—up from \$1.4 billion to nearly \$2 billion. Additionally, from 2016 to 2019, ITAC supported a 100% increase in the number of market-ready Indigenous tourism businesses in Canada.

ITAC has forged important partnerships at the federal level with Destination Canada, Tourism HR Canada, and the Tourism Industry Association of Canada. At the provincial and territorial levels, ITAC has built strong partnerships with Indigenous tourism organisations as well as with Destination Marketing Organisations. Most importantly, ITAC continues to win the trust of the Indigenous communities across the country who have chosen to welcome visitors to their lands and waters.

ITAC continues to be the national voice for Indigenous tourism in Canada, providing Indigenous-led solutions to continue the recovery of the industry in a post-pandemic world. ITAC's strategic recovery plan supports the sustainable restoration of Indigenous tourism in Canada as the sector leader in annual growth in jobs, GDP contributions and the creation of new tourism businesses.



PHOTO: ARCTIC BAY ADVENTURES, NU

BECOMING THE GLOBAL LEADER BY 2030

Today, Indigenous tourism is more popular than ever. Consumer research continues to show that experiencing Indigenous tourism is high on the list for most travellers, and that demand will continue to grow. ITAC is well positioned to capitalize on this momentum and is set to transform the Indigenous tourism industry in Canada into *the* global leader by 2030.

2030 VISION

ITAC's vision for 2030 is for the Indigenous tourism industry to contribute \$6 billion annually to Canada's gross domestic product (GDP) – making Canada the world leader in Indigenous tourism. To make that vision a reality, the Indigenous tourism industry needs to grow substantially in both the number of businesses and the number of industry employees.

- » 2,700 Indigenous owned and operated tourism businesses
(up from 1,900 in 2019)
- » 60,000 jobs in Indigenous tourism
(up from 39,000 in 2019)
- » \$6 billion in contributions to Canada's GDP
(up from \$1.9 billion in 2019)

INVESTMENT PLAN

To achieve the 2030 Vision of establishing ITAC as the global leader in Indigenous tourism, ITAC has laid out an investment plan that supports the required industry growth through investments in three priority areas:

- » Infrastructure and Destination Development
- » Building a Sustainable Tourism Workforce
- » Business Development and Promotion

Infrastructure & Destination Development

To meet the 2030 industry targets, visitor volume in Indigenous tourism must be increased significantly. The current inventory of Indigenous destinations in Canada must be enhanced and expanded to grow its capacity. To make this happen, ITAC will invest the following over six years:

- » \$1.6B - Infrastructure Development
- » \$300M - Indigenous Destination Development
- » \$500M - Airport Indigenization

These investments will increase access to rural and remote destinations and will allow Indigenous communities to create cultural facilities to support tourism as well as the needs of their residents.

Building a Sustainable Tourism Workforce

Indigenous tourism in Canada currently employs more than 39,000 people, and ITAC's goal is to grow that to 60,000 by 2030. In partnership with Tourism HR Canada, ITAC plans to implement innovative recruitment, training and retention programs to ensure that the industry has the workers it needs.

- » \$30M - Recruitment, Training & Retention
- » \$1.5M - North American Indigenous Games Sponsorship

Business Development & Promotion

The number of Indigenous tourism businesses operating in Canada needs to grow by 800 by 2030. ITAC will cultivate the growth of these new businesses, as well as the expansion of existing businesses, through significant investments to increase participation in The Original Original Accreditation Program. Promotion of these businesses, both domestically and abroad, will also see significant investment, including new marketing partnerships.

- » \$117M - Business Development and Promotion
- » \$2M - 2026 FIFA World Cup Sponsorship

THE INDIGENOUS TOURISM DESTINATION FUND

Last year, ITAC launched the Indigenous Tourism Destination Fund (ITDF) – an innovative way for Indigenous and non-Indigenous businesses to partner with ITAC to grow the Indigenous tourism industry from coast to coast to coast.

Through the ITDF, partner businesses pass a 25 cent fee per transaction on to their customers. Those contributions are then passed to ITAC and used to fund investments that support the growth of Indigenous tourism in Canada. As the list of partners grows, the ITDF will play a vital role in funding the investments required to achieve the 2030 targets as well as the ambitious goals set forth in the Federal Tourism Growth Strategy.

Supporting the Truth and Reconciliation Commission's Call to Action #92, ITDF contributions will provide direct support to Indigenous communities through investments to develop and enhance Indigenous tourism experiences. These investments not only stimulate economic growth, but also foster cultural preservation and revitalization. By partnering with ITAC, businesses can support reconciliation and help to create meaningful and sustainable economic opportunities for Indigenous communities.



INNOVATIVE REVENUE GENERATION

While ITAC appreciates and recognises the ongoing importance of its partnership with the Government of Canada, ITAC has launched several innovative initiatives designed to generate own-source revenue for ITAC. These revenues will be used to support ITAC's operations, to support ITAC's network of provincial and territorial Indigenous tourism partners, and to fund the investments required to achieve the 2030 Vision.



INDIGENOUS TOURISM DESTINATION FUND

The Indigenous Tourism Destination Fund (ITDF) has been established to allow businesses and individuals to take real action towards reconciliation in Canada through their support for the growth of the Indigenous tourism industry. Administered by ITAC, the ITDF is used to invest in infrastructure, human resources and development and marketing projects benefiting communities across the country.

ITDF.IndigenousTourism.ca



CONGRÈS INTERNATIONAL
DU TOURISME AUTOCHTONE

MTL 2025

INTERNATIONAL INDIGENOUS
TOURISM CONFERENCE

The largest Indigenous tourism conference in the world, ITAC's International Indigenous Tourism Conference (IITC) continues to stand out as the #1 event where industry leaders connect to network and share best practices. Over 1,000 attendees gather each year to celebrate their achievements and to gain awareness of new trends and tactics that will become important to their future success.

IndigenousTourismConference.com

Truth2Action Reconciliation Training for the Tourism Industry

ITAC, in partnership with Legacy Bowes, is pleased to offer a reconciliation training program for non-Indigenous businesses and organizations in the tourism industry. The Certificate in Reconciliation for the Tourism Industry is a hybrid virtual and in-person program that provides a safe space for staff and board members to learn more about Indigenous perspectives and explore their role in furthering reconciliation.

bit.ly/truth2action

ITAC'S 2024-25 PRIORITIES

Inspiring ITAC member businesses across the country to rebuild or refocus their business offering through targeted business support, education and training.

Leveraging partnership opportunities and investments with the Provincial and Territorial Indigenous Tourism Organisations to maintain their membership and infrastructure.

Strengthening ITAC as the national leader and advocate for Indigenous tourism operators and stabilising funding through the federal government, partners and members.



PHOTO: BEYOND BOREAL EXPEDITIONS, MB





PHOTO: FIRST NATIONS STORYTELLERS, NB

The background of the page is a solid, vibrant red color. Overlaid on this background is a photograph of several bundles of sticks and fabric. The bundles are arranged diagonally across the frame, from the bottom left towards the top right. Each bundle consists of a long, light-colored wooden stick with a piece of light-colored fabric or cloth wrapped around it and secured with white string. The lighting is soft, highlighting the textures of the wood and fabric. The overall aesthetic is clean and modern, with a strong color palette.

2024-25 ACTIVITIES AND DELIVERABLES

LEADERSHIP

Advocating for members across the country, ITAC will continue to be the national voice of the Indigenous tourism industry, maintaining funder confidence and investing \$1.5M to build support for ITAC and its provincial and territorial Indigenous tourism partners.

Advocate for the industry at the national level to ensure continued, easy, and fair access to federal support

- » Secure ongoing funding for ITAC from the Government of Canada

Expand ITAC participation and representation in national-level tourism organizations

- » Destination Canada
- » Tourism HR Canada
- » Tourism Industry Association of Canada
- » Parks Canada
- » Hotel Association of Canada
- » Restaurants Canada

Expand ITAC participation and representation in national-level Indigenous economic development organizations

- » National Aboriginal Capital Corporation Association
- » Canadian Council for Aboriginal Business
- » Council for the Advancement of Native Development Officers

Host ITAC Annual General Meeting

- » Host ITAC's Annual General Meeting in Charlottetown, PEI on October 7, 2024

Host ITAC Board of Directors meetings across Canada

- » June 25-26, 2024 in Iqaluit, NU
- » October 6-7, 2024 in Charlottetown, PEI in conjunction with ITAC's annual general meeting
- » December 10-11, 2024 in Montreal, QC
- » February 23, 2025 in Montreal, QC in conjunction with the 2025 International Indigenous Tourism Conference

Research the current economic impact of the Indigenous tourism industry

- » Obtain a new Economic Impact Assessment for the Indigenous tourism industry from the Conference Board of Canada
- » Update the inventory of Indigenous tourism businesses in Canada by province and territory

Research the social impacts of Indigenous tourism on Indigenous people and communities

- » Obtain a social impact study qualifying the benefits of Indigenous tourism to Indigenous communities

Enhance ITAC's global brand reputation

- » Expand ITAC's range of international services
- » Launch an international services website
- » Host two international services best practice missions at locations in Canada
- » Host one Latin American Indigenous tourism meeting at a location in Canada
- » Develop an international franchising system for The Original Original brand
- » Trademark The Original Original brand
- » Present internationally at five Indigenous tourism industry events

PARTNERSHIPS

ITAC will invest \$2.8M to bring Indigenous and non-Indigenous partners together to support the growth of Indigenous tourism in Canada and will work with provincial and territorial partners to ensure the long-term sustainability of ITAC's member businesses.

Strengthen and expand federal, provincial, territorial and sector partnerships that are aligned with ITAC's 2030 Vision

- » Partnerships have a greater, measurable impact on ITAC's success and the prosperity of its members
- » Present ITAC activations at five events hosted by national partners

Host the 2025 International Indigenous Tourism Conference in Montreal, QC

- » Work with co-host Quebec Indigenous Tourism to deliver the International Indigenous Tourism Conference in Montreal from February 24-26, 2025.
- » Sell 1,000+ delegate tickets
- » Cover 25% of event costs through sponsorships

Improve coordination and tracking of ITAC data

- » Integrate existing software tools to more efficiently manage data and reporting



Enhance corporate communications to better inform members, industry and partners

- » Develop and implement a corporate communication strategy
- » 52 email newsletters delivered to members

Grow participation in the Indigenous Tourism Destination Fund

- » Generate \$11M in funding through partner contributions to the Indigenous Tourism Destination Fund

Grow tourism industry participation in Truth2Action reconciliation training

- » Register 240 participants in the Certificate in Reconciliation for the Tourism Industry training program

Grow ITAC membership

- » Increase ITAC membership by 5%

DEVELOPMENT

ITAC will invest \$8.8M to deliver Indigenous-led solutions to support the market-readiness of its members and address labour market challenges while also strengthening provincial and territorial Indigenous tourism associations and laying the groundwork for further industry growth.

Grow participation in The Original Original Accreditation Program

- » Assess an additional 100 businesses
- » Maintain a 90% renewal rate for currently accredited businesses
- » Reach a total of 300 accredited businesses

Support businesses in meeting the market readiness standards of The Original Original Accreditation Program

- » Provide direct funding to 150 businesses through the Indigenous Tourism Fund Micro and Small Business Stream program

Collaborate with educational institutions to raise awareness of Indigenous tourism

- » Deliver presentations on Indigenous tourism to students and faculty at a minimum of two educational institutions

Increase visibility and utilisation of the Discover Indigenous Tourism employment opportunities website

- » Launch marketing campaign promoting the DiscoverIndigenousTourism.ca website
- » Highlight at least 75 job opportunities from members and industry partners



Provide financial support to ITAC's provincial and territorial Indigenous tourism partners

- » \$2.2M to be allotted to provincial and territorial Indigenous tourism associations to support operations and program delivery

Engage and collaborate with provincial and territorial Indigenous tourism associations

- » Host quarterly group meetings with provincial and territorial partners, two virtually and two in-person
- » Host quarterly one-on-one meetings with each provincial and territorial partner
- » ITAC to attend at least one outreach event in partnership with each provincial and territorial partner (virtually or in-person)

Support destination development in Indigenous communities

- » Develop a community-level Indigenous tourism destination development toolkit
- » Pilot the toolkit in three communities in partnership with their provincial or territorial Indigenous tourism association

MARKETING

Through advertising campaigns, partnerships and travel trade and media relations, ITAC will invest \$3.1M to promote The Original Original accredited business while ensuring that First Nations, Inuit, and Métis tourism operators are represented accurately and respectfully.

Deliver consumer marketing campaigns highlighting The Original Original accredited businesses

- » Run a domestic social media and digital out-of-home advertising campaign
- » Run advertising campaigns in three international airports in Canada
- » Run bus wrap campaigns in three major Canadian cities
- » Provide quarterly campaign performance reporting

Build and maintain relationships with top-tier media representatives

- » Create five successful media pitches
- » Host a minimum of eight media on familiarisation tours
- » Attend two media shows
- » Distribute quarterly media newsletters

Increase opportunities for ITAC members with key travel trade accounts

- » Host two travel trade familiarisation tours
- » Organize a minimum of two presentations to receptive tour operators
- » Collaborate with a minimum of three tour operators to create Indigenous tourism landing pages
- » Participate in one key account tariff ad
- » Collect first-party consumer data
- » Distribute quarterly travel trade newsletters

Raise awareness of Indigenous tourism with the travel trade in key markets

- » Participate in two key market webinars with Destination Canada
- » Attend a minimum of two travel trade events in key markets
- » Distribute turnkey Indigenous tourism content to travel trade in key markets

Increase Indigenous representation at Rendez-vous Canada 2024 in Edmonton, AB

- » Increase the number of ITAC members meeting with travel trade buyers
- » Host the Indigenous pavilion activation

Establish relationships with notable brands, sports leagues, and events

- » FIFA
- » The Juno Awards
- » Canadian Football League
- » Pow Wow Pitch

Educate members and industry partners on the power of storytelling

- » Host one virtual webinar for members
- » Host one in-person webinar at the 2025 International Indigenous Tourism Conference
- » Host one educational opportunity for industry

Increase the quality and diversity of ITAC's digital asset library

- » Produce visual and editorial content that accurately represents First Nations, Inuit and Métis
- » Produce visual and editorial content that represents each of ITAC's provincial and territorial Indigenous tourism partners
- » Create turnkey Indigenous tourism content to share with industry partners
- » Organize three content generation familiarisation tours in the prairie and Atlantic regions

2024-25 BUDGET

REVENUES

| | |
|---|---------------------|
| Indigenous Services Canada | \$2,500,000 |
| Innovation, Science, and Economic Development | \$2,000,000 |
| Destination Canada | \$2,200,000 |
| Indigenous Tourism Destination Fund | \$11,000,000 |
| Sponsorships | \$750,000 |
| Parks Canada | \$150,000 |
| Registrations, Trade Shows, Marketplace | \$2,000,000 |
| Misc (International Projects, etc.) | \$1,000,000 |
| Total | \$21,600,000 |

EXPENSES

| | |
|----------------|---------------------|
| Administration | \$5,299,629 |
| Leadership | \$1,467,000 |
| Partnerships | \$2,772,000 |
| Development | \$8,806,000 |
| Marketing | \$3,133,700 |
| Total | \$21,478,329 |



PHOTO: SITE D'INTERPRÉTATION MICMAC DE GESPEG, QC





PHOTO: MAHIKAN TRAILS, AB



INDIGENOUS
TOURISM ASSOCIATION OF CANADA



ASSOCIATION TOURISTIQUE
AUTOCHTONE
DU CANADA

IndigenousTourism.ca DestinationIndigenous.ca

1-888-803-4822 | Info@IndigenousTourism.ca | 8th Floor, 333 Seymour Street, Vancouver, BC, V6B 5A7