

June 05, 2026

The Honourable Rechie Valdez, Secretary of State (Small Business and Tourism)
House of Commons, Ottawa, Ontario, K1A 0A6
rechie.valdez@parl.gc.ca

Dear Honourable Minister,

I commend the Government of Canada for its continued efforts to build a stronger and more prosperous country through investments in infrastructure, economic development, and Indigenous equity and participation. Support for Indigenous tourism is an important part of this work; advancing reconciliation while enabling Indigenous entrepreneurs to start, grow, and sustain tourism businesses across Canada.

I am writing on behalf of iTOTEM to encourage the Department to continue its support of the Indigenous Tourism Association of Canada (ITAC).

iTOTEM is a Canadian data science and investment intelligence company that helps organizations measure, verify, and communicate the local economic and social impacts of investments. We transform complex information into clear, evidence-based reporting that supports decision-making and demonstrates outcomes for governments, communities, industries, and associations.

Over the years, iTOTEM has supported ITAC's funding and reporting initiatives through data collection, grant administration support, and impact measurement. Through this work, we've seen firsthand the scope and value of ITAC's role in strengthening the Indigenous tourism sector nationally.

ITAC works simultaneously with operators, regional partners, and governments to ensure programs are practical, coordinated, and effective. Through its governance structure and teams, ITAC delivers direct support to Indigenous tourism operators while coordinating across jurisdictions with provincial and territorial tourism organizations and other partners. ITAC consistently gathers input from operators, industry partners, and regional organizations to shape programs, market development initiatives, and sector priorities—ensuring national efforts are based in the realities, needs, and aspirations of Indigenous tourism businesses across the country.

Equally important is ITAC's practical, day-to-day support for operators, particularly small businesses with limited capacity as they focus on serving guests and growing their operations. ITAC helps remove barriers that can prevent businesses from accessing programs, funding, and

markets. From helping businesses identify funding opportunities and complete applications, to supporting certification and export readiness, to navigating reporting requirements and compliance obligations, ITAC provides the guidance and support needed for operators to participate and succeed.

This hands-on support is not always visible, but it helps ensure that more Indigenous tourism businesses can access opportunities and meet program requirements.

ITAC serves as a trusted bridge between government, provincial and territorial tourism organizations, industry partners, and Indigenous businesses. We respectfully encourage the Department to continue its support for ITAC so this important work can continue. Predictable, sustained funding will help maintain momentum, strengthen coordination, and deliver measurable outcomes for Indigenous tourism operators and their communities.

Sincerely,

Colleen Sweet

President and CEO
iTOTEM