

**UNCLASSIFIED**

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Jami Savage
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Adventure Awaits
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Dear Jami Savage:

Thank you for your correspondence addressed to the Honourable Rechie Valdez, Minister of Women and Gender Equality and Secretary of State (Small Business and Tourism), sharing your support for the Indigenous Tourism Association of Canada (ITAC) and the broader Indigenous tourism sector.

I appreciate you taking the time to share your views and to advocate for the organization and the communities it serves. The Department of Innovation, Science and Economic Development Canada (ISED) is aware of the operational and financial challenges faced by ITAC over the last few months and we have been in touch with the organization. However, recent reports have raised serious concerns relating to ITAC's delivery of the Micro and Small Business Stream of the Indigenous Tourism Fund, including concerns that ITAC appears to have failed to deliver resources and funds intended for Indigenous tourism operators and SMEs. The Department is taking the situation very seriously and has initiated an audit.

I recognize the broad impacts this situation may have across the Indigenous tourism industry. Over the past three years, the Government of Canada has invested more than \$50 million to support Indigenous tourism initiatives and businesses across the country. While certain time-limited investments have concluded, a range of federal programs and services remain available to support Indigenous entrepreneurs and organizations, with guidance available through the [Indigenous Business Navigator Service](#).



I wish to reaffirm the government's commitment to working collaboratively with Indigenous partners to support the sector, advance reconciliation, and uphold Indigenous self-determination. Indigenous tourism plays a vital role as an important economic driver and is a powerful means of sharing Indigenous cultures, histories, and traditions with visitors from Canada and around the world.

Thank you again for taking the time to share your views and for your continued interest in the success of Indigenous tourism in Canada.

Sincerely,

Etienne-René Massie

Assistant Deputy Minister, Small Business, Tourism and Marketplace Services
Innovation, Science and Economic Development Canada