

# ACTION PLAN

**2020/2021**  
REVISED



# INTRODUCTION

Today, we find ourselves in an unprecedented situation due to COVID-19. We recognize that Indigenous tourism businesses throughout Alberta are in dire straits as we have seen our revenues dry up overnight as travel restrictions continue to mount.

Indigenous Tourism Alberta (ITA) has strived and continues to support and strengthen Indigenous tourism experiences throughout the province. We have witnessed demand for Indigenous tourism product far outweighing our current capacity within Alberta and our sector has seen an unprecedented growth rate of 45% in all Indigenous tourism offerings across the province, resulting in new job creation, increased GDP contribution to \$166.2 M, and increased market and export readiness within our 70 Indigenous owned ITA members.

Since January of 2020, the impacts of COVID-19 have continued to be felt by everyone. The global health crisis will continue to affect the Indigenous tourism sector from one corner of the province to the other, with the economic and social fallout being extremely harmful to our businesses, our employees, our personal well-being, our livelihoods and our ability to keep our businesses open.

The consequences to the Indigenous tourism industry due to closed international borders, grounded airlines, limitations on domestic travel, and loss of consumer confidence require ITA to rethink our 2020-21 strategic direction to ensure support, recovery planning and a rebuilding strategy for Alberta's Indigenous tourism sector to ensure we thrive well into the future. Given the far-reaching impacts of the pandemic across Canada and around the world, ITA has revised our 2020-21 strategic plan and budget to address the crisis at hand.



Shae Bird

Executive Director  
Indigenous Tourism Alberta



# COVID-19 RESPONSE

Indigenous Tourism is a significant economic opportunity for the Indigenous groups and the province of Alberta.

Extensive research has been completed measuring the economic impact of Indigenous tourism in Canada. The national research showed that the Indigenous tourism industry in Canada employs more than 35,000 people and produces \$1.9 billion of Canada's GDP.

Extrapolating the Canadian data, Indigenous Tourism in Alberta is worth \$166.2 million of GDP today with tremendous upside potential. COVID-19 has a direct negative impact on this sector, and we feel that the \$166.2 million GDP has the possibility of losing 62% of its value within 2020. Sustaining Indigenous Tourism in Alberta is the Key priority for ITA for April 1, 2020, FY.

## COVID-19 IMPACT SNAPSHOT

### Alberta's Indigenous Tourism Annual GDP Contribution

2017 STATUS	GOAL FOR 2024	2020 COVID-19 IMPACT	REVISED 2020 GOAL
166.2M	201.2M	-103M	63.2M

### Alberta Indigenous Tourism Export and Market-ready Businesses

2017 STATUS	GOAL FOR 2024	2020 COVID-19 IMPACT	REVISED 2020 GOAL
31	52	-11	20

### Alberta Indigenous Tourism Businesses

2017 STATUS	2020 COVID-19 IMPACT	REVISED 2020 BUSINESSES
125	-46	79

### Alberta Indigenous Tourism Jobs

2017 STATUS	2020 COVID-19 IMPACT	REVISED 2020 JOBS
2939	-1763	1176

Source: The Impacts of COVID-19 on Canada's Indigenous Tourism Sector: Insights from Operators. Conference Board of Canada, June 15th, 2020.

The ITA Key Activities have been based on the Indigenous Tourism Alberta Strategy: 2019-2024 and designed to respond to the increased demand for Indigenous tourism experiences.

Through Leadership & Partnership, Development, and the Marketing of Indigenous Experiences that are market and export-ready, ITA can successfully support the delivery of a meaningful and memorable experience to travelers to Alberta.

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## KEY OPPORTUNITIES AMIDST UNCERTAIN TIMES

- Strengthen the quality of Alberta's Indigenous tourism experiences to be competitive with other Canadian travel destinations once domestic and international travel re-open;
- Increase awareness and demand for Indigenous tourism in Alberta;
- Change the common traveler perception that all Indigenous tourism experiences are the same;
- Align the efforts and interests of Alberta's tourism industry under a common Indigenous tourism strategy by partnering with the Government of Alberta and Tourism Alberta.

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## ECONOMIC SUSTAINABILITY TARGETS 2020- 2021 COVID-19

- Sustain Alberta Indigenous Tourism membership at 69-members
- Stimulate Indigenous Tourism Alberta members via Development Stimulus

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## KEY PRIORITIES

- Maintain and sustain ITA membership base of 69-Members
- Re-build sustainable market-ready and export-ready Indigenous tourism products.
- Lead the future development of Alberta's Indigenous tourism industry.
- Increase demand for Alberta's Indigenous tourism experiences through domestic travel marketing campaigns

# 1. PARTNERSHIP

**OVERALL GOAL:** Establish relationships with industry leaders to develop mutually beneficial long-term industry partnerships.

## KEY PRIORITIES, PROJECTS & PROGRAMS

## 2020/2021 KEY PERFORMANCE INDICATORS

Develop and strengthen mutually beneficial long-term industry partnerships	Establish and strengthen partnerships with: <ul style="list-style-type: none"><li>• Tourism Associations</li><li>• Government Ministries and Agencies</li><li>• Non-indigenous tourism entities</li></ul>
Continue collaborative opportunities and board representation	Whenever possible, continue collaborative opportunities for both staff and board members with agencies and organizations beneficial to ITA's mandate.
Support networking opportunities and regional participation in industry meetings	Participate in partnership meetings with a minimum of five potential industry partners.
Maintain ITA membership numbers	Maintain ITA Membership of: <ul style="list-style-type: none"><li>• 40 Voting Members</li><li>• 30 Non-voting Members</li></ul>
Increase email subscribers with regular and meaningful content	Produce a minimum of 12 email newsletters of ITA activities and a minimum of 24 new updates to the website and social channels.

## 2. LEADERSHIP

**OVERALL GOAL:** Build support for Indigenous tourism within the leadership.

### KEY PRIORITIES, PROJECTS & PROGRAMS

### 2020/2021 KEY PERFORMANCE INDICATORS

Further establish business operations, staff, and contracted support to fulfill key priorities	Hire full-time staff: <ul style="list-style-type: none"><li>• Project Manager</li><li>• Coordinator</li><li>• Project-specific consultants</li></ul>
Continue to demonstrate value to Indigenous tourism operators, provincial and municipal governments, partners, and funding providers	Advocacy through meetings with tourism operators, presentations to industry partners, and stakeholders on key activities.
Ensure effective financial processes and financial stability for ITA	<ul style="list-style-type: none"><li>• Monthly financial reporting to the treasurer</li><li>• Quarterly reporting provided to the board</li><li>• Strengthen organizational policies and procedural structures</li><li>• Explore new funding opportunities with new and existing funding partners</li></ul>
Ensure measurements of tourism expenditures remain consistent with ITAC and Government of Alberta	Maintain consistent measurement tools agreed upon with ITA and Government of Alberta to actively collect data.

# 3. DEVELOPMENT

**OVERALL GOAL:** Provide support for the development of Indigenous tourism through education and training targeted at community and industry.

## KEY PRIORITIES, PROJECTS & PROGRAMS

## 2020/2021 KEY PERFORMANCE INDICATORS

Expand support for Indigenous tourism within the leadership of local communities to grow their commitment to training or development	Expand Indigenous Community Readiness workshop to 5 online or in-person sessions with a minimum of 75 participants total.
Establish partnership with Indigenous communities, government, destination development and marketing partners to implement Indigenous Product Development Plan	Create a work plan with key partners to identify components and timelines for the formulation of long-term Indigenous Product Development Plan.
Expand delivery of the Indigenous Tourism Readiness workshops	Continue delivery of Indigenous Tourism Readiness Guide and workshop to 60 participants over five online or in-person sessions.
Support the development and longevity of the Indigenous tourism industry during the COVID-19 crisis	<ul style="list-style-type: none"><li>• Produce and share 15 educational development and marketing webinars online for membership</li><li>• Create a designated resource page on the ITA website</li><li>• Create and distribute Tourism Stimulus Grant to membership based on a defined evaluation process</li></ul>
Host Annual Indigenous Tourism Summit	Deliver Indigenous Tourism summit to share best practices and provide educational opportunities for existing and potential Indigenous tourism stakeholders and industry partners.

# 4. MARKETING

**OVERALL GOAL:** Develop and deliver marketing communications with messaging relating to a positive community and cultural impacts of Indigenous Tourism. Align and partner with key industry partners.

## KEY PRIORITIES, PROJECTS & PROGRAMS

## 2020/2021 KEY PERFORMANCE INDICATORS

Develop effective and targeted marketing through website, social media, and travel trade channels	Market an Indigenous Tourism Consumer Website with the purpose of: <ul style="list-style-type: none"><li>• Showcasing Alberta's Indigenous Cultural Heritage</li><li>• Showcasing the distinct Indigenous areas throughout Alberta</li><li>• Showcase various travel experiences and suggested itineraries</li><li>• Drive traffic to membership businesses</li></ul>
Promote cultural awareness and understanding of Indigenous tourism in the tourism industry	Develop and deliver a cultural awareness program to ensure destination marketing partner's tourism development and marketing activities are delivered in a culturally sensitive manner. Deliver to a minimum of 50 participants.
Integrating Indigenous tourism as a key pillar in destination marketing partners' domestic and international marketing programs	Develop marketing and sales assets, adding a minimum of 50 photos and five stories to share with partners.  Create an agreement with one destination marketing organization to prioritize Indigenous tourism as a key focus point with objectives for implementation.
Include Indigenous tourism experiences in Alberta's destination marketing partners' media and travel trade familiarization trips	Include a minimum of 5 Indigenous tourism operators in travel trade or media familiarization trips if available.  Host online interviews with 12 ITA members to post online to talk about their business and experiences available.
Assist export-ready Indigenous tourism experiences to be included in Alberta's international trade marketing opportunities	Provide opportunities for export-ready businesses to participate in travel trade marketing opportunities and sales missions if available. If unavailable, connect export-ready businesses to receptive operators via online communication to establish relationships for future business.



