



Come Walk With Us.

INDIGENOUS TOURISM ALBERTA
ACTION PLAN 2024-'25

GIRTH HITCH GUIDING

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A MESSAGE FROM ITA'S CEO



Dear ITA Members and Partners,

I am pleased to present the annual plan for Indigenous Tourism Alberta (ITA) for the fiscal year 2024-2025. This year marks an exciting milestone for our association as we continue to build upon the significant investments made to our 170+ members since our establishment in 2018.

In the coming year, ITA will adopt a more focused approach towards supporting market-ready businesses to become export-ready. Our aim is to ensure that Alberta is fully prepared to welcome provincial, national and international visitors to our Indigenous tourism operators and experiences.

By aligning our efforts with the national guidelines set by the Indigenous Tourism Association of Canada, we are poised to offer unique and authentic Indigenous tourism experiences that showcase the rich cultures of our communities.

Advocacy remains a fundamental aspect of ITA's mandate, and we will continue to passionately champion the interests of our members at both the provincial and federal levels. This will involve active participation in trade shows, engaging with policymakers, and collaborating with other stakeholders who share our vision for advancing Indigenous tourism in Alberta.

In the spirit of collaboration, ITA is thrilled to re-launch Pathways 1.0, which will offer invaluable training opportunities for our members. Furthermore, to foster greater inclusion and understanding, we will be extending our Community Awareness Training to over 300 non-Indigenous corporate partners in the coming year. By nurturing these relationships, we aim to promote cultural sensitivity and mutual respect between all parties involved.

Another significant initiative on our agenda is the Six Senses program, which will serve as a transformative platform for 10 Indigenous tourism businesses. This program will facilitate their transition from market-ready to export-ready, equipping them with the necessary skills and resources to seize opportunities on both national and international stages.

We are excited to witness the growth and success of these businesses as they expand their reach and impact.

To ensure maximum visibility for our export-ready members, our marketing team will prioritise the promotion of ITA's offerings. With a focus on strengthening our presence at trade shows such as Rendezvous Canada, scheduled to be hosted in Edmonton in the spring of 2024, we will showcase the richness and diversity of Alberta's Indigenous tourism experiences.

Through these targeted marketing efforts, we aim to position ITA's export-ready businesses at the forefront of travellers' minds.

I am also pleased to announce that ITA has secured stable funding through strategic multi-year partnerships with PrairiesCanada, Indigenous Services Canada, ITAC, and Travel Alberta. This financial stability will enable us to execute our annual plan effectively and propel our association forward with confidence.

As I reflect upon the journey of ITA since its inception, I am filled with great optimism about the future of our sector. The year 2024-2025 promises to be one of our strongest yet, as we continue to create positive change and economic opportunities for Indigenous tourism in Alberta.

I extend my sincere gratitude to our members, partners, and board of directors for their unwavering support. Together, we will continue to build a thriving Indigenous tourism industry that elevates our communities, empowers our people, and honours our vibrant cultures.

Sincerely,

A handwritten signature in blue ink, appearing to read 'Shae Bird'. The signature is fluid and stylized, with a long horizontal stroke at the end.

Shae Bird
CEO
Indigenous Tourism Alberta

A MESSAGE FROM ITA'S BOARD CHAIR



Dear ITA Board Members, Partners, and Supporters,

I write to you with a profound sense of gratitude and appreciation for the incredible achievements we have witnessed during the 2023-2024 fiscal year. As the Board Chair of Indigenous Tourism Alberta (ITA), I am filled with pride for the dedication and unwavering commitment displayed by our exceptional team in advancing Indigenous tourism in Alberta.

Throughout the year, ITA embraced a four-pillar approach: Partnership, Leadership, Development, and Marketing. This comprehensive strategy allowed us to holistically support our 175+ members and effectively promote the cultural richness of Indigenous tourism in our province.

The results speak for themselves, and I am sincerely grateful to each and every member of the ITA team for their tireless efforts.

I would also like to express my deep appreciation to our partners who have demonstrated a genuine commitment to Indigenous reconciliation.

It is through their financial and fundamental support that we have been able to make such significant strides in advancing Indigenous tourism in Alberta. Your belief in our

vision and willingness to take action has had a tangible impact on our success, and we are immensely grateful for your partnership.

Lastly, I extend my heartfelt gratitude to my fellow board members. Your steadfast dedication to ITA and your support of our shared vision have been instrumental in propelling our organisation forward.

Your consistent presence at meetings across the province, active participation in gatherings, and resolute commitment to guiding ITA through the proven strategy have earned my utmost respect and admiration. It is in part because of your unwavering support that we have been able to achieve such remarkable results.

As we reflect on the accomplishments of the past year, let us also recognize that our journey is far from over. Together, let us continue to lead the way in amplifying Indigenous tourism in Alberta, promoting cultural understanding and economic growth for Indigenous communities. With each milestone we achieve, we create a brighter future for generations to come.

Once again, thank you to each and every one of you for your invaluable contributions, passion, and unwavering dedication.

I am honoured to serve as the Board Chair of Indigenous Tourism Alberta, and I look forward to the continued success and growth of our association.

In culture and appreciation,

A handwritten signature in black ink, appearing to read 'B Holder'.

Brenda Holder
Board Chair
Indigenous Tourism Alberta



THE WOODS EXPERIENCE

STATE OF THE INDUSTRY

The growth of Indigenous tourism in recent years has touched all parts of the industry. We're seeing more travellers having transformative Indigenous experiences. We're seeing non-Indigenous industry partners advocating and supporting Indigenous entrepreneurs. And we're seeing Indigenous tourism becoming an inseparable part of the tourism identity of Alberta and of Canada. Funders in Canada have stepped up and, for the first time, Indigenous Tourism Alberta has multi-year funding commitments from both the provincial and federal governments, that better enable the organization to support the industry.

Yet despite all that growth, we're still only scratching the surface of the potential of the industry. According to the Conference Board of Canada, this is the year when the industry will finally top the pre-Covid highs of 2019. While that's welcome news, for ITA and its members, that's not the end goal. It's just the beginning. The Indigenous Tourism Association of Canada has set a goal of reaching \$6 billion in GDP contributions by 2030. While this goal is ambitious, national and international interest keeps growing, meaning one of the industry's challenges is to meet the current consumer demand.

Several of ITA's organizational priorities for the forthcoming year are in support of that goal, including a focus on enabling more market- and export-ready businesses to pursue work with international travellers, the creation of a broad development strategy for the industry and ongoing expansion of entrepreneur mentorship programs.

Other barriers remain, including the systemic marginalization of Indigenous Peoples, access to capital and acute labour shortages – the latter of which is an industry-wide problem that is exacerbated in the Indigenous tourism sector because of the special care required to authentically share Indigenous knowledge in a culturally appropriate way in adherence with protocol.

Despite those challenges, the industry remains one on the rise, and the potential for growth – economically, culturally and socially – remains. ITA is positioning itself to tackle the challenges ahead so that this moment of opportunity doesn't pass us by.

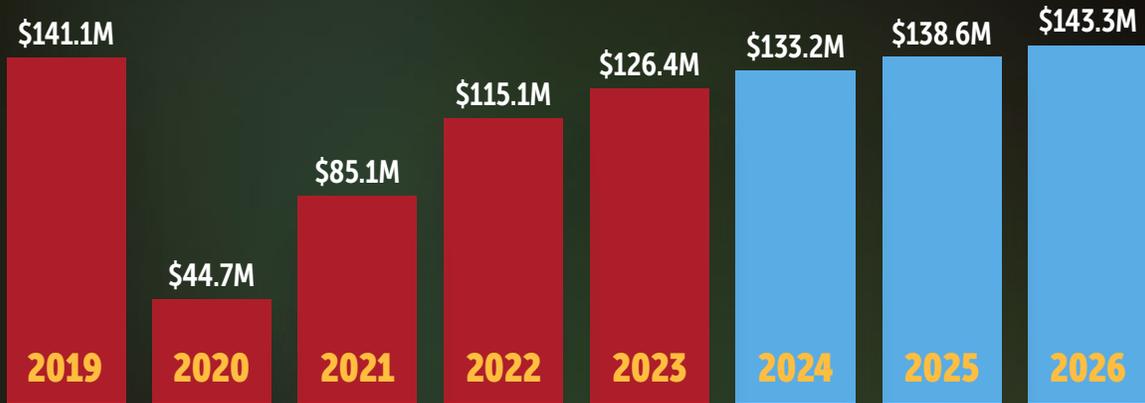
Revenue Growth



Revenue of Indigenous tourism sector in Alberta

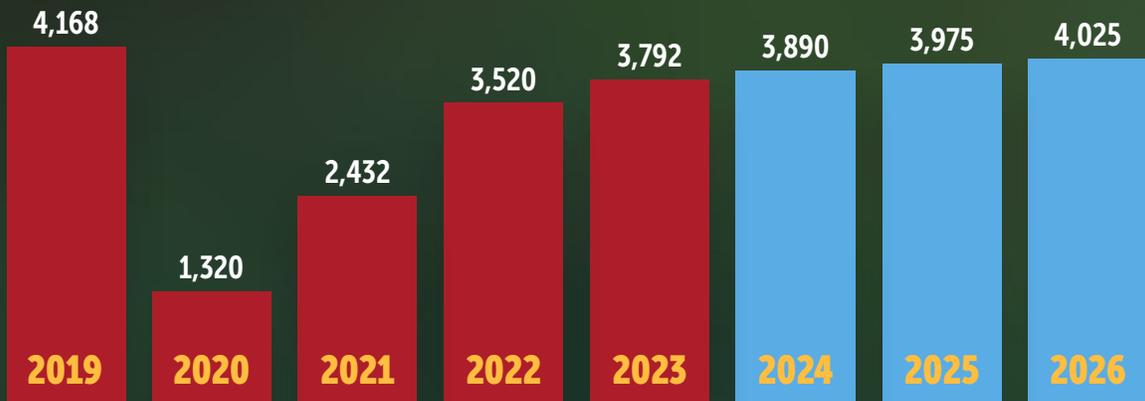
Source: Conference Board of Canada

GDP Contributions



Revenue of Indigenous tourism sector in Alberta

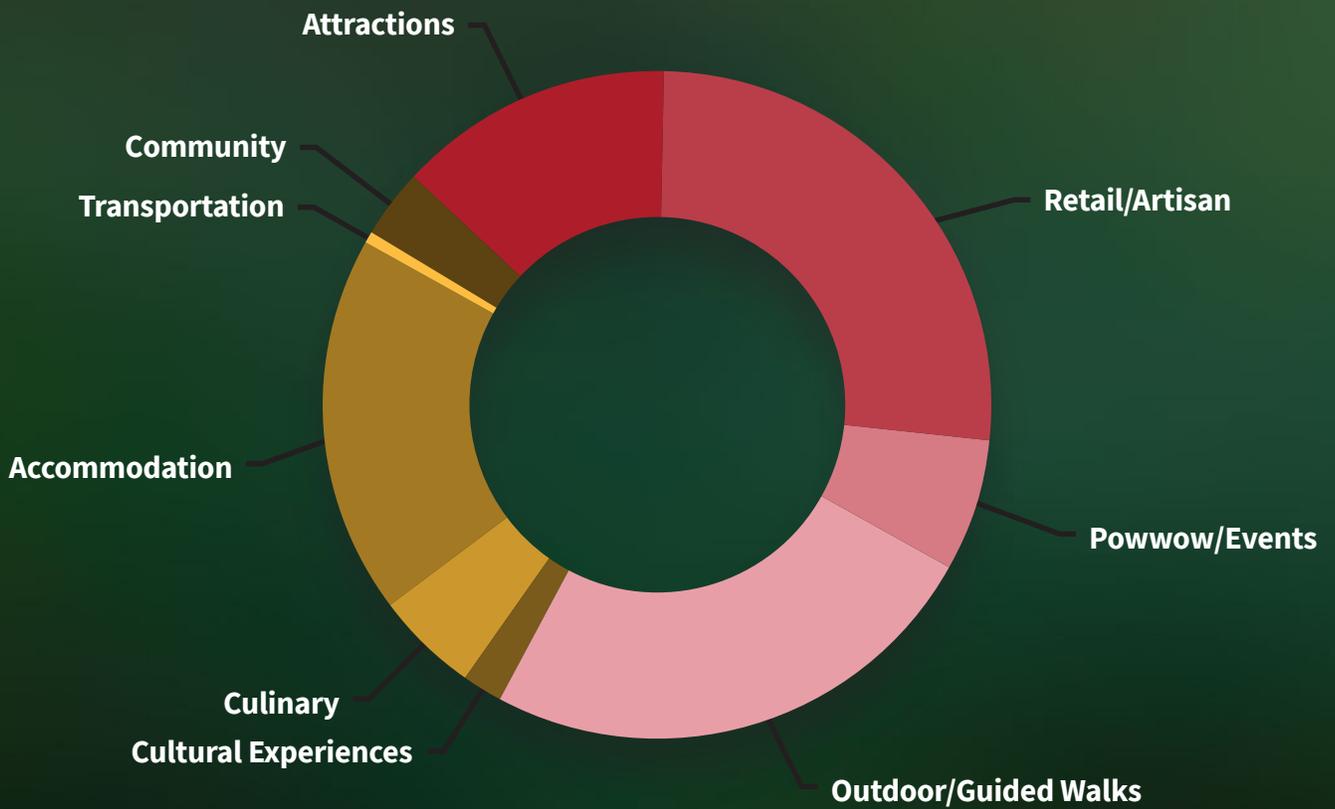
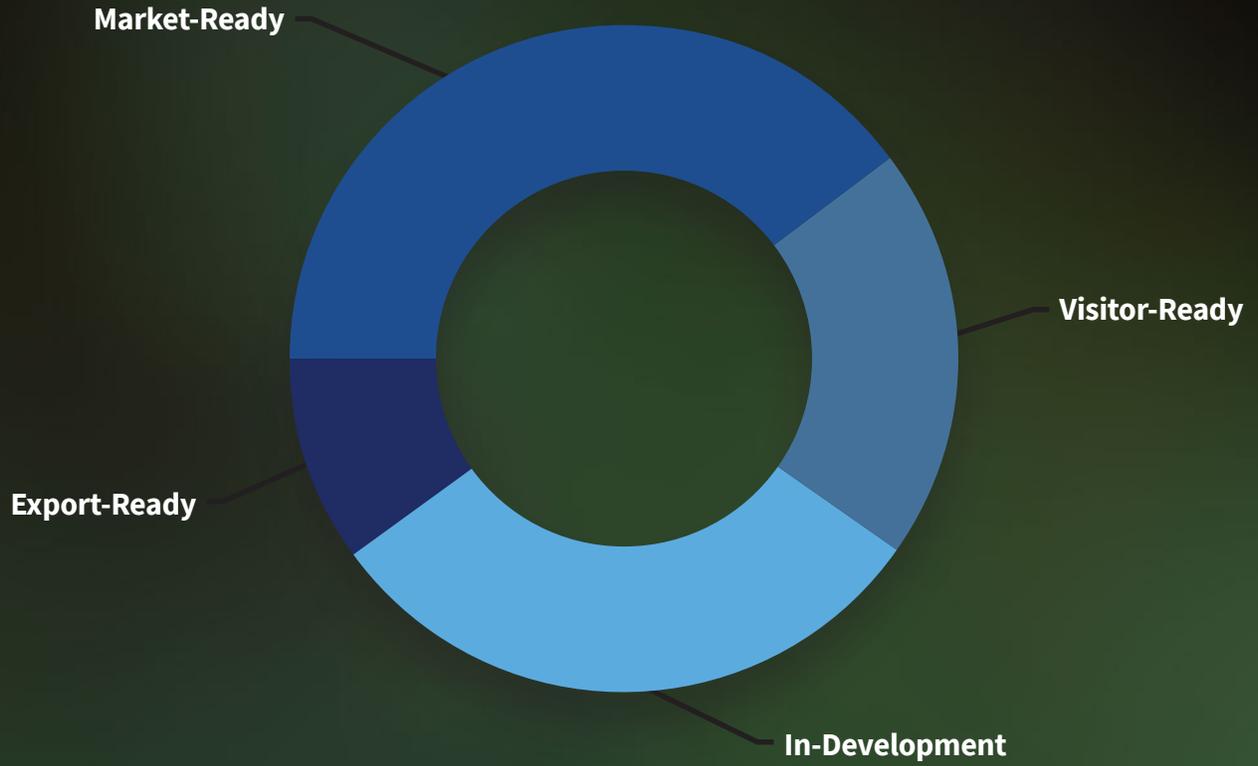
Jobs



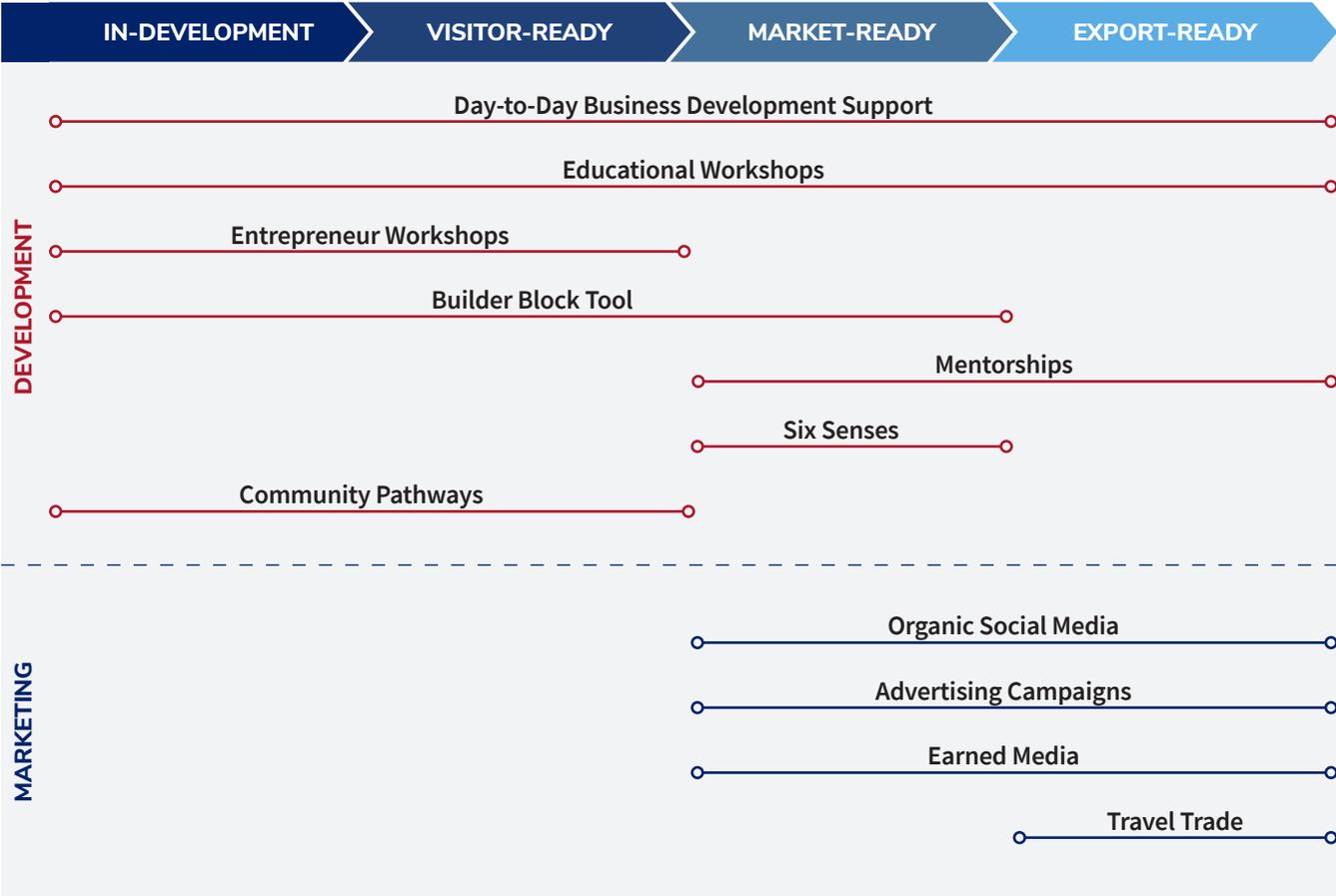
Employment in Indigenous tourism sector in Alberta

Source: Conference Board of Canada

ITA Membership



EXPERIENCE DEVELOPMENT PROCESS



Development Highlights | New Experiences



Mahikan Trails Winter Snowshoe Experience

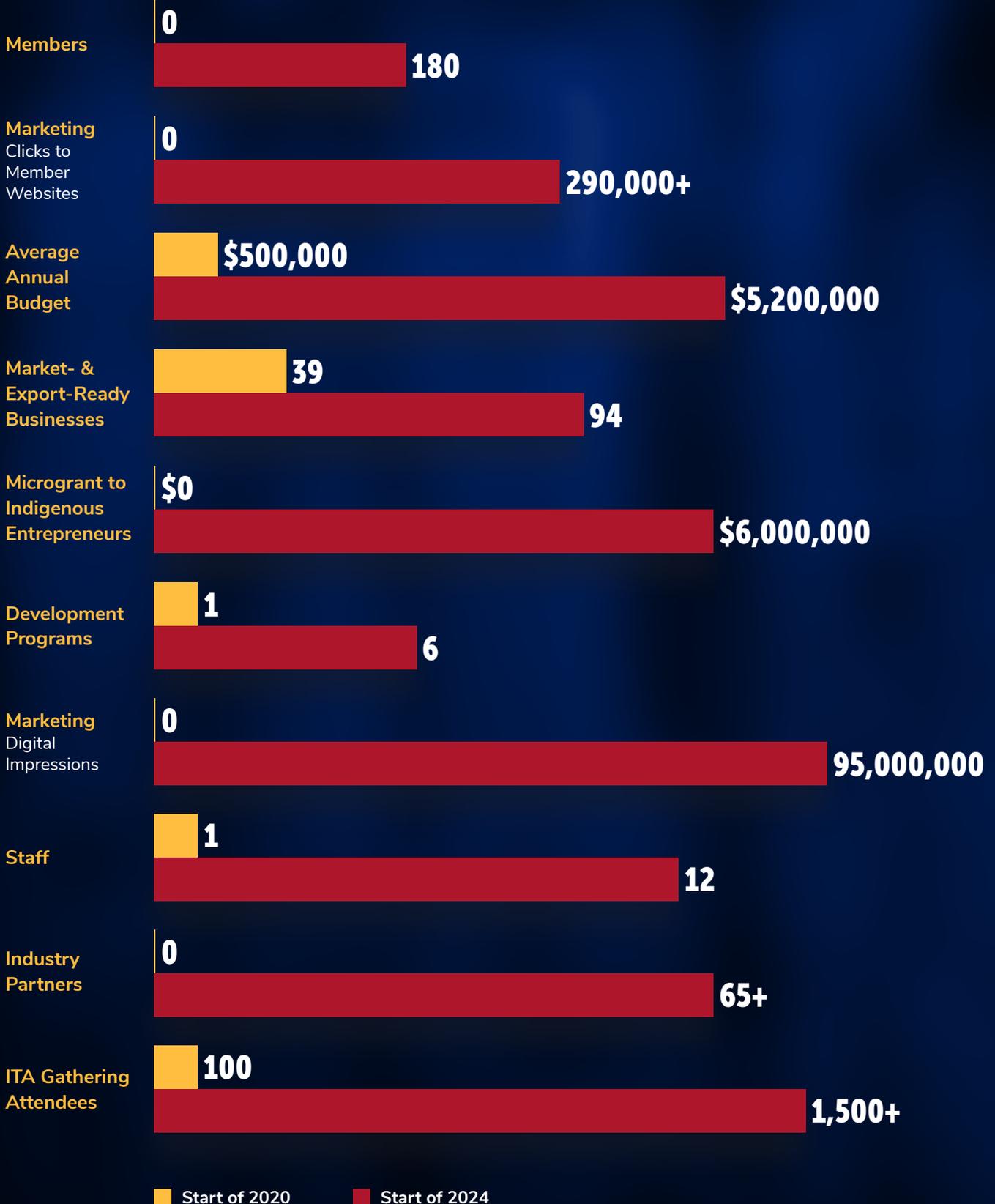


The Woods Experience

Experience Métis opening of Urban Experience

Warrior Women Nihty Tea Experiences

THE GROWTH OF ITA 2020 - 2024





GOALS &
ACTIVITIES

ONESPOT CROSSING

LEADERSHIP ACTIVITIES

Support the supply of leadership and business skills and labour to enhance visitor experiences through quality service, hospitality, and cultural protocols.

- Support ITAC's national standards
 - Explore industry research projects for further provincial insight
 - Support National The Original Original Accreditation programs
 - Ensure alignment with economic measurement tools with Government of Alberta
-

Host annual general meeting for members

- Host annual general meeting
-

Have quarterly meetings for board and team

- April 2024, July 2024, October 2024, January 2025
 - Maintaining organizational effectiveness
 - Annual board governance training
-

Industry Development and Data Analysis

- Produce a five-year industry development and data gathering strategy
-

Establish Partnerships with Private and Public sector organisations to further Alberta Indigenous

- Maintain strategic partnerships with clear deliverables
-

Create and maintain a consistent funding model to ensure organisational sustainability and success

- Maintain multi-year funding agreements
-

ITA is a trusted partner

- Partnerships are mutually beneficial for ITA and partners
-

Grow Association Capacity

- Produce annual action plan, midterm report and annual report
 - Produce annual audited financial statements
 - Qualify and quantify social impacts from work completed by ITA departments
-



PARTNERSHIP ACTIVITIES

Establish guidelines to beneficial partnerships

- Ensure that all partnerships are adhering to partnership guidelines

HIDEAWAY ADVENTURES



DEVELOPMENT ACTIVITIES

Host Indigenous Tourism Alberta Gatherings

- Host four gatherings located across Alberta with 400 attendees in total
- Ensure 25 per cent of costs are covered by sponsorship
- Create and implement a regional awards system
- Collect survey results for sentiment scoring of the Gatherings

ITA Members value their membership

- Support five per cent of market-ready members growing to export-ready status
- Complete an annual membership sentiment survey
- Create a structured membership pricing structure for industry partners
- Grow industry partners by five per cent

Grow the sustainability of membership

- 10 ITA members will complete Good Relations mentorship program
- Deliver cultural awareness program for 300 people
- Host six “Tea Time” virtual events with members
- Continue relationships with a third-party business to support Indigenous tourism entrepreneurs with training programs
- Accept three nation, settlement or community intakes for cohort program
- Implement Six Senses program with eight members

Department capacity

- Ensure 70 per cent of member communications are targeted at market- and export-ready businesses
- Quarterly reporting for leadership and funding partners

EXPERIENCE MÉTIS



MARKETING ACTIVITIES

Member Support and Engagement

- Create a “Good Trade Partner” index for ITA export ready membership to be ready for signing agreements with trade partners
 - Distribute monthly marketing educational content to members
 - Develop a member co-op marketing program
-

Digital and Social Communities

- Thirty per cent growth in following year-over-year on Instagram, Facebook and LinkedIn
 - Thirty per cent growth in engagements (likes, comments, shares) on those platforms
-

Earned media and influencer marketing

- Earn 20 media mentions that rank above 12/15 on Media Quality Score Index
-

Integrated Marketing Campaigns

- Develop and integrate two digital campaigns that align to the integrated marketing strategy
 - Increase efficiency of marketing campaigns by lowering cost-per-click compared to 2023/24
 - Increased visual awareness in Airports promoting member businesses
 - Implement brand lift study
-

Travel Trade and Media

- Create a “Good Trade Partner” index for ITA export ready membership to be ready for signing agreements with trade partners
-

Partnership

- Leverage marketing funding from partners through three marketing tactics
-

Industry Communications and PR

- Three earned media placements in publications that target stakeholders that position Alberta as a leader in Indigenous tourism and/or members as entrepreneurial leaders in their sector
 - Monthly newsletter content that highlights ITA successes
-

Member Communications and PR

- Monthly content that highlights member successes
 - Share all earned media placements with relevant members that score higher than 10/15 on media-quality score.
 - Share successes on LinkedIn
-

Sponsorships

- Evaluate five sponsorships based on Sponsorship Evaluation Matrix
-

Innovations

- Earmark funds for an innovation project that ITA has never tried before with a goal of raising awareness of Indigenous tourism
-



THANK YOU TO OUR PARTNERS



Indigenous Services
Canada

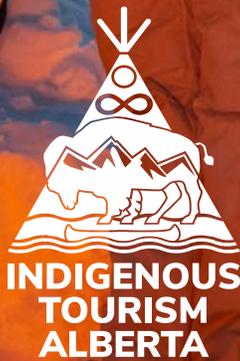
Services aux
Autochtones Canada



Prairies Economic
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Développement économique
Canada pour les Prairies

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