



This month's newsletter, in timing with National Indigenous Peoples Day in Canada (June 21), is about **the power of Indigenous Tourism and how tourism benefits from communities sharing their values and culture**, and the role that Indigenous and non-Indigenous tourism partners can play to further the industry's efforts.

## What's Inside

- [Grant Writing 101: For Tourism Organizations](#)
- [Getting to Know Indigenous Peoples in Canada Through Tourism](#)
- [Applications Open for Indigenous Entrepreneur Awards and Pow Wow Pitch Competition](#)

## Growing Indigenous tourism in Canada

The Indigenous tourism sector in Canada has evolved significantly over the last few decades. Initially, many Indigenous exhibits were developed without consultation with Indigenous communities, often leading to cultural misrepresentation. However, the creation of the Yukon First Nations Arts Brand in 2020 represents a shift towards authentic representation of Indigenous cultures.

The growth of Indigenous tourism businesses in the 80s and 90s led to the creation of national organizations such as the Indigenous Tourism Association of Canada (ITAC) to provide a unified voice and set cultural tourism standards. In 2020, approximately 1,900 Indigenous tourism businesses employed 40,000 workers and contributed \$1.9 billion to the Canadian GDP. ITAC defines Indigenous Tourism as a business majority-owned, operated and/or controlled by Indigenous peoples demonstrating a connection to local communities and traditional territories.

Indigenous tourism offers considerable benefits including cultural revival, intercultural awareness, and economic growth. The Aboriginal Cultural Tourism Business Planning Guide outlines important elements for successful Indigenous tourism businesses, including authenticity, community involvement, environmental sustainability, and an effective online presence. The role of Indigenous tourism in land stewardship is also being recognized. There's an increasing emphasis on the relationship between tourism, conservation, and Indigenous cultural resurgence. Several initiatives, such as co-management

agreements of protected areas and Indigenous-led guardian initiatives, have been developed to address ecological threats to Indigenous lands.

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## **Building Relationships with Indigenous Communities**

Tourism plays a vital role in promoting reconciliation between Indigenous communities and the rest of Canada. Indigenous organizations and community groups have aided this development at the regional and local levels, with support from destination marketing organizations.

Indigenous tourism contributes to the economy, and offers an authentic, culturally driven experience for visitors. Moreover, it creates a cycle of support among Indigenous businesses. The development of Indigenous tourism requires a respectful and thoughtful approach, adhering to the motto of the Indigenous Tourism Association of Canada, 'nothing about us without us.' Ottawa Tourism emphasizes the importance of forming trust-based relationships, taking time to understand the needs of each party, and fostering economic growth in Indigenous communities. However, this process also involves visitor engagement and respect for Indigenous cultures and ecosystems. Asking questions and active participation to learn about and appreciate Indigenous culture without fear of cultural appropriation is essential.

The future of Indigenous tourism in Canada seems promising as demand for Indigenous experiences continues to grow. However, it is important for

destination developers, the government, and visitors to respect and engage appropriately with these experiences to ensure the sector's continued success. Insights provided by industry leaders are essential, but first-hand relationships and respectful collaboration with local Indigenous communities are equally vital.

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## **Getting to Know Indigenous Peoples in Canada Through Tourism**

The term "Canada" originates from the Huron-Iroquois word "kanata," meaning "village." Today, Indigenous tourism provides a unique opportunity for visitors to connect with Canada's Indigenous peoples - the First Nations, Inuit, and Métis, who make up 5% of Canada's population.

The Indigenous Tourism Association of Canada (ITAC) promotes around 1,700 unique Indigenous tourism experiences throughout the country. These experiences offer a deep understanding of the land and its Indigenous inhabitants, providing visitors with a unique perspective that cannot be found elsewhere. They also contribute positively to Indigenous communities.

While the cultures of Indigenous peoples are diverse, with distinct heritages, governance structures, and languages, commonalities exist such as deep respect for elders, emphasis on oral traditions, and a profound connection to nature and land.

Indigenous cultures are currently experiencing a renaissance as they are being reclaimed and revitalized by Indigenous communities themselves. As part of a broader process of reconciliation, tourism plays a vital role in this renaissance, supporting the revitalization and global understanding of Indigenous culture. Tourism provides Indigenous communities a platform to narrate their stories, reclaim their cultures, languages, and history, take pride in their identity, and share their unique heritage with the world.

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## **Indigenous Tourism Ontario (ITO) Dedicated to Promote Indigenous Tourism**

Indigenous Tourism Ontario's (ITO) primary mission is to unite communities, Indigenous organizations, and industry leaders to facilitate the growth of Indigenous tourism in Ontario. ITO provides critical marketing, sales, and business development programs to aid in building capacity for the delivery of high-quality tourism products and services. It's uniquely positioned to support Indigenous communities and entrepreneurs at all stages of business development, with success measured by the positive impact on the Indigenous community, the environment, and the economy. ITO membership is open to any person or organization interested in advancing Indigenous tourism in Ontario.

Click [here](#) to learn more about becoming a member.

## RTO 9 News

Lindsay - "I'm thrilled to announce that I've accepted a position at [Visit The County](#) as their Marketing and Special Projects Coordinator. I wanted to express my gratitude for the incredible professional growth I've experienced while working alongside such a talented bunch of individuals in SEO. It's been an absolute privilege to be part of this journey, and I'm beyond excited to embark on the next chapter of my career in Tourism."

*"We at RTO 9 wish Lindsay Medeiros all the best as her career evolves in the Tourism Industry. Lindsay joined RTO 9 in 2017. A graduate of St. Lawrence College, she has flourished in her role here at RTO 9. Please join us in wishing Lindsay all the best in this new chapter", Bonnie.*



## **RTO 9 Annual General Meeting**

**Date: June 9th, 2023 9:00 AM - 10:00 AM**

**Location: Online**

Join the board and staff of RTO 9 for the 2023 Annual General Meeting!

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## Grant Writing 101: For Tourism Organizations

June 13th 10 AM - 11:30 AM | Online, [Not-for-Profit Tourism Organization](#)

June 20th 10 AM - 11:30 AM | Online, [For-Profit Tourism Organization](#)

Join RTO 9 and Adrienne Carter, as we unwrap the basics to writing a grant submission for your for-profit and not-for profit businesses. These webinars will help you navigate the grant writing process with the basics of a strong grant submission, specifically catered to either for-profit eligibility or not-for-profit eligibility. These tools will prepare you for a variety of grant submissions, whether it be for event planning, training opportunities, student grants, or facility improvements.

These sessions will include an extended Q&A period where Adrienne will walk participants through different grant applications, including the RTO 9 Partnership Fund application.

Participants are asked to plan ahead with example grant applications and contact me at the RTO 9 with your suggestions prior to the date of the webinar.

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## Here's How To Connect With Us on Social Media

Our consumer regional brand, [South Eastern Ontario](#), gives a sense of place and the content found on our social channels, website, and newsletter, targets future visitors from outside of the region and locals that live within the region.

We encourage our tourism partners and operators to share with us their stories, products, experiences, and packages [with our South Eastern Ontario social media channels](#). Keeping us in the loop with your offerings can lead to opportunities in features on our channels or pitched to our PR Agency. Read our blog post below on what our channels are and how to connect with us.

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## Market Insights

## **Strong signs of recovery for Travel & Tourism in Canada according to WTTC**

The World Travel & Tourism Council's (WTTC) 2023 Economic Impact Research (EIR) presents a promising outlook for the Canadian Travel & Tourism sector as it continues to recover from the COVID-19 pandemic. Here are the key points:

- The Travel & Tourism sector is projected to contribute \$162.6 billion to the Canadian economy in 2023, marking an increase of 17.2% from 2022 and approaching the peak of \$173.9 billion seen in 2019.
- It is predicted that the sector will generate 90,000 jobs in 2023, nearly restoring all employment lost during the pandemic and reaching a total of 1.64 million jobs, close to the 2019 peak.
- The Travel & Tourism sector's GDP contribution grew by 41.4% in 2022 to over \$138 billion, equating to 5% of the Canadian economy. In addition, the sector created 169,000 jobs in 2022, elevating the total to 1.55 million. As such, the sector regained 124,000 of the 283,500 jobs lost during the pandemic. International travellers also started to return to Canada in 2022, with their spending rising 64% to nearly \$23 billion, although still 47% below the 2019 peak of \$42.9 billion.
- The WTTC forecasts the Travel & Tourism sector will further increase its GDP contribution to over \$238 billion by 2033, making up 7% of the Canadian economy. It is also expected to employ nearly 2.1 million people by then, meaning one in 11 Canadians will be working in the sector.
- In 2022, the North American Travel & Tourism sector contributed \$3.05 trillion to the regional economy, which is only 7% lower than the 2019 peak. The WTTC predicts that the sector's GDP contribution will fully recover in 2023 to reach \$3.7 trillion. The sector also employed 24.7 million people across the region in 2022, an increase of 3.6 million from 2021 but still 1.5 million behind the 2019 peak. The WTTC expects the sector to regain all jobs lost during the pandemic by the end of 2023.

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**Business Travel Outlook for Canada and future trends**

The Global Business Travel Association (GBTA) Canada Conference 2023 highlighted a strong and evolving future for business travel in Canada. This event brought together over 685 registered business travel professionals and 58 exhibiting companies to discuss key issues in the industry and share insights.

According to forecasts from GBTA's Business Travel Index (BTI) Outlook report, global business travel is rebounding post-pandemic. Specifically, Canada was projected to have year-on-year growth of 47% in 2022, making it one of the top 15 markets worldwide for business travel spending at \$15.2 billion USD. The spending growth is expected to continue in 2023 at a rate of 32%, or a total of \$20.1 billion USD. The forecasts suggest that by 2025, Canada will return to pre-pandemic levels with an annual business travel spend of \$26.1 billion USD, or over \$35 billion CAD.

Key conference topics included the future needs of travel managers, the evolution of travellers, the roll-out of New Distribution Capability (NDC), sustainability in business travel, and rebuilding the industry workforce. The event also presented networking opportunities, sessions for buyers and suppliers, and a special event for new and returning industry professionals.

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## Mastercard Travel Industry Trends 2023

The Mastercard Travel Industry Trends 2023 report presents a comprehensive analysis of the travel industry with a specific focus on the impact of mainland China's reopening. Here are the key points:

- **China's Outbound Tourism:** China's reopening is already significantly influencing the global travel industry. By March 2023, China's outbound tourism expenditure was nearing pre-pandemic levels. This trend is expected to boost the global travel industry, especially in the Asia Pacific region.
- **Global Leisure and Business Travel:** Global leisure travel has remained robust, up approximately 31% in March 2023 compared to the same period in 2019. Similarly, global commercial flight bookings have grown significantly, driven by regions with a strong return to office culture. Both leisure and business travel are now growing at the same rate.
- **Spending on Experiences vs. Things:** Spending on travel experiences is outpacing spending on things. Travellers' spending on unique



experiences in different destinations has increased by 65%, compared to a 12% increase in spending on things as of March 2023.

- **Hotspot Predictions:** The report predicts popular travel destinations by region of origin. For instance, travellers from North America are predicted to visit Italy, Germany, and France, while those from Europe are expected to head to the UK, Spain, Italy, and the U.S.
- **Economic Impact on Travel Choices:** Despite uncertainty in the global economy due to factors like inflation and interest rates, discretionary spending remains resilient, particularly on travel and experiences. High-income consumers, backed by wage growth and excess savings, are driving robust consumer spending.
- **Mainland China's Impact:** The reopening of mainland China holds enormous implications for the travel industry due to its substantial travel market. Chinese travellers traditionally spend more on retail and groceries over accommodations or dining out, but this could shift towards more travel-related goods and services as the country opens.
- **Potential Challenges:** Rising mortgage payments, declining asset prices, and tightening of credit lending worldwide could impact spending and employment, potentially altering travel preferences and spending habits through the rest of 2023.

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## **U.S. Sentiment for Travel to Canada**

Destination Canada's latest U.S. Sentiment Report reveals how U.S. residents feel about travelling to Canada (March 17-23, 2023). Here are the highlights:

- Approximately one in three (30%) American tourists believe that it's an opportune moment to allocate funds towards leisure travel. This reflects an increase from the 22% low recorded in December 2022, though it's an 8-point decrease compared to the same period last year.
- While the current economic climate might limit Americans' propensity for lavish spending on travel as compared to the previous year, their enthusiasm for leisure trips remains at a record high. In March, 85% expressed eagerness for leisure travel in the upcoming year, a sentiment consistent since the start of 2023.

- Over two-fifths (42%) of Americans indicate that they're likely to travel to Canada in the nine months spanning April to December. The interest is highest for the months of July and August, each garnering 13% of the prospective visitors, followed by June and September, each attracting 10%.
- Since the removal of the last Canadian border restrictions in October 2022, March saw the first significant drop in the percentage of Americans who perceive that border-related hassles or restrictions could hinder their travel to Canada (from 27% in February to 24%). Persistent communication about Canada's open borders can help ensure those unaware are informed that no such entry barriers exist.

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## **Canadian Tourism Labour Market Snapshot: April 2023**

Tourism HR Canada's latest Canadian Tourism Labour Market Snapshot for April 2023 reflects a moderate overall improvement for the tourism sector, with employment up by 1.1%. However, the sector remains below its pre-pandemic baseline of April 2019. Key takeaways include:

- While the accommodations and transportation industries showed strong growth compared to last month, with a growing labour force and decreasing unemployment, the travel services industry suffered significant drops in its labour force and employment. The food and beverage services and recreation and entertainment industries saw moderate growth.
- Comparing to April 2022, all industry groups showed improvement across labour force and employment numbers. The tourism labour force saw an increase of 5.8% compared to the previous year, which equates to over 111,000 people.
- Despite year-on-year improvements, the sector as a whole and all industries except recreation and entertainment remained below pre-pandemic levels. Travel services and accommodations were the most affected, with labour forces only at 65.5% and 83.7% respectively of their 2019 levels.
- Part-time employment has slightly increased since 2019, staying at around 40%. The proportions vary between industries, with food and

beverage services and recreation and entertainment tending towards higher rates of part-time employment.

- Unemployment in the tourism sector was 5.7%, which is slightly above the national economy-wide average of 5.2%.
- Industry Concerns: The sharp decline in travel services is a significant concern, particularly as the sector begins to gear up for the peak summer season.
- The data indicates considerable volatility within industry groups, despite overall modest growth. The gains and losses in employment and labor force within these groups demonstrate the ongoing instability in the tourism sector.

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## Media Spotlight

### **Hospitality Action Series by Tourism HR Canada to Address Industry Issues**

Tourism HR Canada recently partnered with the Ontario Restaurant Hotel & Motel Association (ORHMA) to launch the Hospitality Action Series, a three-stop roadshow addressing urgent industry concerns. This initiative offered tourism operators a free chance to learn about programs and resources to assist them in managing workforce challenges, reducing high operating costs, and providing networking opportunities before the high summer tourist season.

Despite the public perception that the tourism sector has recovered, businesses are still facing difficulties. There's a high demand for employees, but job stability is uncertain, and there's a rising number of part-time workers even though full-time positions need to be filled. While wages have risen, retention and attraction rates have declined. Maxwell emphasized that despite increasing demand and appearances of recovery, the tourism sector is still struggling, and the lack of workers will continue to hinder the sector's progress.

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## **Air Canada Launching Year-Round Toronto-Yellowknife Service**

Air Canada has announced plans to initiate a non-stop, year-round flight service between Toronto and Yellowknife, the capital of Canada's Northwest Territories, starting in December. The flight will operate three times weekly, enhancing connections between eastern Canada and the Northwest Territories.

This service will not only benefit tourists wishing to witness phenomena like the Northern Lights, but it will also prove valuable for business travellers and the economy by creating a direct link between Yellowknife and Canada's financial capital, Toronto. Caroline Wawzonek, the Minister of Industry, Tourism, and Investment for the Northwest Territories, has expressed optimism about the increased opportunities for tourism and better connections into Canada's financial hub. Air Canada will operate this service using a Canadian-made Airbus A220 aircraft configured with 137 seats in a Business and Economy cabin. The new service will supplement Air Canada's existing services to Yellowknife from Vancouver and Edmonton.

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## **Workforce Development**



## **TIAO Advancing Sustainable Tourism in Ontario: Take the Sustainable Tourism 2030 Pledge**

**Date:** Wed, 21 June 2023, 12:00pm - 1:00pm EDT

**Location:** Online

Attend TIAO's session with the GreenStep team to learn about the Sustainable Tourism 2030 Pledge, which aims to make Ontario a leader in sustainable tourism. By attending you will learn about how to measure your sustainability performance, an overview of the criteria used to assess your business or destination and be part of a community of industry businesses and destinations making a commitment to improve their results by 2030.

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## **Featured Operators/ Destinations**



## **Destination St. John's Launches "It's Wildly Different Here" Campaign**

Destination St. John's, the tourism board for St. John's in Newfoundland and Labrador, has launched its 2023 marketing campaign titled "It's Wildly Different Here". The campaign aims to showcase the unique combination of urban vibrancy and natural beauty found in the city.

At the heart of the campaign is a captivating video that features stunning visuals of the city's oceanic and wilderness environments, paired with original music and lyrics crafted by local artist Kellie Loder. Designed to attract tourists from within Canada, the digital campaign is scheduled to run until mid-June in various provinces, including Ontario, Alberta, Quebec, and the Maritimes. The overall goal is to emphasize and promote St. John's as a distinct and appealing tourist destination.

# Opportunities

## Destination Canada Launches Canadian Visionaries Network

Destination Canada has announced the establishment of the Canadian Visionaries Network (CVN), a national platform uniting Canada's academic, industry, and association leaders across six priority economic sectors. These sectors are life sciences, agribusiness, advanced manufacturing, finance and insurance, technology, and natural resources, with 28 founding members currently part of the CVN.

The CVN is conceived as a support to enhance local conference ambassador programs across Canada, focusing on securing international events for the country and showcasing Canada's significant intellectual resources on a global scale. The CVN operates on the principle that thought leaders in Canada are not only critical to improving the country's global reputation as a top-tier innovation ecosystem and leading host of business events, but also to strengthening local conference ambassador programs and bid activity.

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## Applications Open for Indigenous Entrepreneur Awards and Pow Wow Pitch Competition

The Indigenous Entrepreneur Awards, an event by Pow Wow Pitch, is now accepting applications and nominations for Indigenous entrepreneurs and businesses in Canada who have demonstrated perseverance, growth, and impact in their fields. The deadline for applications and nominations is June 21.

In addition, the Pow Wow Pitch Competition, an initiative to support and uplift Indigenous entrepreneurs, is also open for registration. This competition provides Indigenous entrepreneurs with a platform to pitch their businesses or business ideas, with a chance to win a portion of the \$200,000 in prizes. Just like the Indigenous Entrepreneur Awards, the deadline for submissions for the Pow Wow Pitch Competition is also June 21.

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Every month, we'll be sending you the latest insights, research and thoughtful perspectives on the issues that matter most to tourism businesses and operators in RTO 9.

If there are any topics you want to read about in a future newsletter, please email [imedeiros@region9tourism.com](mailto:imedeiros@region9tourism.com) with your ideas.

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