**Canada’s contribution to the Call for Inputs of the**

**Special Rapporteur on the Rights of Indigenous Peoples**

**Report to the 78th Session of the UN General Assembly on “Tourism and the Rights of Indigenous Peoples”**

**About Tourism Branch, Innovation, Science and Economic Development**

The Tourism Branch of Innovation, Science and Economic Development (ISED) Canada is responsible for federal tourism policy development and policy integration. It provides advice to the Minister of Tourism and Associate Minister of Finance on how the federal government can support the growth and competitiveness of Canada’s tourism sector.

To accomplish this, Tourism Branch maintains a collaborative working relationship with approximately 20 federal departments and agencies whose responsibilities have an impact on tourism, including Indigenous Services Canada and Crown-Indigenous Relations and Northern Affairs Canada. The Branch also collaborates with provincial and territorial governments through the Canadian Council of Tourism Ministers (CCTM) forum, as well as with stakeholders, inclusive of national and provincial/territorial Indigenous tourism organizations, to enhance its knowledge of current and emerging tourism issues and opportunities. The Branch works on research, economic analysis, policy and programs to support the tourism sector, including the Budget 2022 programming for the Indigenous tourism fund and National Priorities Stream, a program to support national gaps and priorities of the tourism sector. Finally, we work with international organizations to optimize Canada’s influence on tourism policies.

**References cited throughout survey:**

1[ITAC-Building-Back-Better-2022-2025.pdf (indigenoustourism.ca)](https://indigenoustourism.ca/wp-content/uploads/2022/01/ITAC-Building-Back-Better-2022-2025.pdf)

2[Making-Canada-the-World-Leader-in-Indigenous-Tourism.pdf (indigenoustourism.ca)](https://indigenoustourism.ca/wp-content/uploads/2022/08/Making-Canada-the-World-Leader-in-Indigenous-Tourism.pdf)

3[Canada has reopened: Here’s why visitors should book an Indigenous experience - The Washington Post](https://www.washingtonpost.com/lifestyle/travel/indigenous-tribes-tourism-initiative-canada/2021/08/26/18b99d7a-0307-11ec-ba7e-2cf966e88e93_story.html)

4[Canada’s Indigenous Tourism Sector: Insights and Economic Impacts (conferenceboard.ca)](https://www.conferenceboard.ca/wp-content/uploads/woocommerce_uploads/reports/10266_IndigenousTourismSector_RPT.pdf)

5[About ITAC - Indigenous Tourism Association of Canada](https://indigenoustourism.ca/about-itac/)

6 COVID-19 Indigenous [Business](https://www.ccab.com/research/publications/community-development/covid-phase-iii/) Survey: Phase III

7[NIEDB-2019-Indigenous-Economic-Progress-Report.pdf (naedb-cndea.com)](http://www.naedb-cndea.com/wp-content/uploads/2019/06/NIEDB-2019-Indigenous-Economic-Progress-Report.pdf)

8[Backgrounder: United Nations Declaration on the Rights of Indigenous Peoples Act (justice.gc.ca)](https://www.justice.gc.ca/eng/declaration/about-apropos.html#:~:text=On%20June%2021%2C%202021%2C%20the,Canada%27s%20relationship%20with%20Indigenous%20peoples.)

**1. What are the *positive and negative* impacts of tourism on Indigenous Peoples’ rights? Please illustrate with concrete examples.**

* Indigenous tourism is a key segment of Canada’s tourism economy, driving employment and economic growth for Indigenous communities. Indigenous tourism spans every region in Canada, employs more Indigenous workers than any other industry (57%)1, and reflects a diversity of cultural backgrounds, experiences, and business structures across Canada. The Indigenous Tourism Association of Canada (ITAC) reports that, uniquely, 62% of Indigenous tourism businesses are rural and remote2, and that 33% of Indigenous tourism businesses are owned by women entrepreneurs, which is more than double the percentage of non-Indigenous tourism businesses1.
* Indigenous tourism differentiates tourism offerings in Canada on the world stage. Research by ITAC and Destination Canada shows that one in three Canadians are interested in Indigenous tourism experiences and, historically, international visitors have an even higher level of interest (37%). Prior to the COVID-19 pandemic, Indigenous tourism in Canada was growing faster than the tourism sector as a whole, increasing by 23.2% between 2024 and 207, compared with a 14.5% increase in overall tourism in Canada3.
* Please also refer to the Indigenous Tourism Association of Canada’s (ITAC) response to questionnaire annexed to this response.

**2. Are Indigenous Peoples participating in the development, implementation and management of tourism projects? Please provide recent concrete examples. If not, what are the barriers to participation and to obtaining their free, prior and informed consent?**

* Yes, Indigenous Peoples participate in the development, management and implementation of tourism projects. As per Canada’s Indigenous Tourism Sector Insights and Economic Impacts by the Conference Board of Canada (May 2019)4, at least 1,875 Indigenous businesses participate in Canada’s Indigenous tourism sector, and more than 39,000 people work in the sector’s associated industries. Indigenous businesses combined direct economic footprint in 2017 is estimated to exceed $1.7 billion in gross domestic product. The Indigenous tourism industry in Canada appears to have substantially increased between 2014 and 2017 and appears to have outpaced similar measures of Canadian tourism activity overall.
* Indigenous Peoples are also leading and participating in Indigenous and non-Indigenous tourism associations:
  + The Indigenous-led organization, ITAC, works to improve the socio-economic situation of Indigenous people within provinces and territories in Canada, through the provision of services to Indigenous tourism operators and communities, or those looking to start a cultural tourism business5. Support to businesses includes economic development advisory services; conferences; professional development training and workshops; and, industry statistics and information5. ITAC works with a network of Indigenous-led provincial-territorial Indigenous tourism organizations in 10 of Canada’s 13 provinces and territories. Please also see attached responses from ITAC.
  + ITAC’s Director of Partnerships, Teresa Ryder, was elected as Vice Chair of the Tourism Industry Association of Canada (TIAC) in January 2023, and previously served a two-year term on TIAC’s Board of Directors. TIAC is the national private-sector advocate responsible for representing tourism interests at the national level in Canada, and its advocacy work involves promoting and supporting policies, programs and activities that will benefit the sector’s growth and development.
  + Ms. Brenda Holder, Vice Chair of the Indigenous Tourism Association of Canada and a tourism business operator was appointed as a Director of Destination Canada, the federally-owned Crown corporation responsible for marketing Canada as a premier tourism destination.
* Indigenous tourism organizations and businesses are engaged in the development of federal tourism policies and programs.
  + For example, in 2022, the Minister of Tourism held roundtables with four national Indigenous organizations in the Indigenous economic development space, with national, provincial and territorial Indigenous tourism organizations, and several Indigenous tourism businesses for their input to an Indigenous Tourism Fund, and a new Federal Tourism Growth Strategy, both announced in the 2022 Federal Budget. Tourism branch officials have continued to engage bilaterally with Indigenous organizations to develop parameters for the Indigenous Tourism Fund.
* Barriers to Indigenous participation in tourism have surfaced in government engagements with Indigenous organizations and/or in research reports, studies and surveys6 conducted by Indigenous organizations, and include, for example:
  + For individual businesses applying for funding/financial assistance:
    - Smaller size of Indigenous businesses with fewer employees; capacity and financial literacy challenges with program application, with limited information and administrative burdens being key hurdles;
    - Lack of awareness of funding programs, restrictive eligibility requirements (e.g., exclusion of sole-proprietors, unincorporated, community-owned, and non-taxable businesses);
    - Difficulty meeting financial requirements (e.g., repayability of loans) interest-free loans and non-repayable contributions.
  + At an industry level,
    - insufficient marketing activities to promote awareness, and by short-term funding arrangements that make it challenging to engage in long-term planning and investment.
  + With respect to government programming:
    - Indigenous organizations have underscored the need to develop Indigenous-led solutions to provide Indigenous communities with easier access to government programs outside of the federal bureaucratic system and for Indigenous co-development of funding program criteria with Indigenous organizations, and Indigenous-led delivery of funding.
    - Ensuring adequate time for Indigenous engagement is essential to the success of program development, which can prolong program design and implementation.

**3. What is the role of UN specialized agencies and of international financial institutions in ensuring that tourism development respects Indigenous Peoples’ rights? Examples include but are not limited to the UN World Tourism Organization, and the World Bank Group**

* Nil

**4. Please describe any measures taken by States to adopt legislation or other measures to ensure the protection of Indigenous Peoples’ rights in regulating the tourism industry including rights to equality; culture; lands, territories and resources; participation in decision-making and meaningful consultation/consent; intellectual property; and labour rights.**

* The following measures and legislation relating to Indigenous Peoples’ rights inform tourism policy and program development and implementation:
* Truth and Reconciliation Commission Calls to Action:
  + Indigenous economic development is an integral piece of reconciliation, as well as Canadian economic growth7. The Truth and Reconciliation Commission’s Call to Action (#92) identify respectful relationships, equitable access to opportunities, and education of non-Indigenous management in intercultural competency, conflict resolution, human rights and anti-racism as key components of economic reconciliation7. Indigenous tourism provides and opportunity for Indigenous communities/businesses/organizations to educate visitors through authentic Indigenous tourism attractions. The Government of Canada is committed to work closely with provinces, territories, First Nations, the Métis Nation, Inuit groups and church entities to implement recommendations of the TRC and further reconciliation to the benefit of all Canadians.
* The United Nations Declaration on the Rights of Indigenous Peoples Act:
  + The *United Nations Declaration on the Rights of Indigenous Peoples Act* received Royal Assent and came into force in Canada on June 21, 2021. This legislation advances the implementation of the Declaration as a key step in renewing the Government of Canada’s relationship with Indigenous peoples8. This Act will provide a shared road map for Indigenous peoples, industry, communities and government to work together8. It will hep strengthen relations between the Government of Canada and Indigenous Peoples. Among the main goals of the Declaration is to support Indigenous people’s exercise of the right to self-determination8.
  + Article 11(1) of the *UNDRIP* states “*Indigenous peoples have the right to practise and revitalize their cultural traditions and customs. This includes the right to maintain, protect and develop the past, present and future manifestations of their cultures, such as archaeological and historical sites, artefacts, designs, ceremonies, technologies and visual and performing arts and literature.”*
* Inuit Nunangat Policy:
  + On April 21, 2022 the Government of Canada endorsed the Inuit Nunangat Policy (INP); the first over-arching policy co-developed with Inuit leaders. The INP outlines an approach for the design and renewal of all federal policies, programs, services, and initiatives that apply in Inuit Nunangat or benefit Inuit. This approach will improve coordination across Inuit Nunangat and ensure engagement with Inuit in these processes.

**5. What has been the role of corporations in the context of tourism? Please, provide examples, if any, of the private sector consulting with Indigenous Peoples and encouraging their participation in the creation, implementation and management of tourism projects. Do sustainable tourism certifications incorporate the rights of Indigenous Peoples?**

* Nil

**6. Please identify specific examples of good practices led by States or international organizations to promote, protect, and fulfil the rights of Indigenous Peoples in the sustainable development of tourism, including management or co-management of tourism projects, incorporation of indigenous scientific knowledge, benefit sharing, funding of Indigenous-led tourism projects etc.**

* Promoting Indigenous reconciliation through economic self-determination, Canada has targeted funding specific for Indigenous tourism businesses to support their recovery from the Covid-19 pandemic:
  + Tourism Relief Fund (TRF): Supports tourism businesses and organizations to adapt their operations to meet public health requirements while investing in products and services to facilitate their future growth. TRF has allocated a minimum of $50M federally to support Indigenous initiatives, representing at least 10% of the program’s overall funding.
  + National Priorities Stream: The ITAC is being funded $3.6 million by ISED under the National Priorities Stream to support the Indigenous tourism industry’s recovery from the impact of COVID-19, and better position it to take advantage of the expected growth in domestic and international demand for tourism offerings, and for sustainable and cultural tourism offerings in particular. ITAC also received $4.8 million to support their operations in Budget 2022.
  + Indigenous tourism funding: Budget 2022 proposed to provide $20 million in support of a new Indigenous tourism fund. Engagement on approaches for the Indigenous tourism funding has been ongoing since April 2022, including round tables, bilateral discussions, and correspondence with Indigenous organizations, to hear the needs of Indigenous tourism businesses. Bilateral engagements between ISED officials and Indigenous tourism organizations continue to shape their development.
* A new Federal Tourism Growth Strategy announced in Budget 2022, is being developed. The Minister is working with tourism businesses, provincial and territorial counterparts, and Indigenous tourism partners to develop this Strategy, which will plot a course for growth, investment and stability.
* In 2020, Indigenous Services Canada provided the Indigenous Tourism Association of Canada (ITAC) with $16M to deliver COVID-19 relief funding to support Indigenous tourism businesses. This funding supported 678 Indigenous tourism businesses recover and rebuild from the economic impacts of the pandemic. ITAC delivered this funding in a timely manner and distributed this funding to export-, market- and visitor-ready Indigenous tourism businesses in Canada.”

**7. Please identify specific examples of good practices by Indigenous Peoples who are developing and managing tourism projects on their lands. What factors have furthered these initiatives?**

* Examples of good practices by Indigenous Peoples can be found in the attached ITAC submission annexed.

**8. What social or economic benefits do Indigenous Peoples receive from tourism projects (e.g. royalties, employment, improvements to infrastructure, education and training opportunities, etc.)? Are these benefits culturally appropriate and gender inclusive, and do they take into account intergenerational impact? Please describe how measurable project results are being shared with Indigenous Peoples.**

* As per the ITAC’s website5, the Indigenous tourism industry is one of the strongest platforms for Canadians to rally support around Indigenous communities. Indigenous tourism plays a vital role in educating and sharing of Indigenous culture. Experiencing Indigenous tourism first hand is a way to gain perspective, connect to the lands, traditions and way of life, understand Indigenous history in Canada and have an impact on Indigenous economic growth. Funding also demonstrates reconciliation in action by creating and expanding tourism economic development projects with Indigenous communities while supporting self-determination for Indigenous businesses5.
* This video featuring ITAC’s CEO describes some of the benefits of Indigenous tourism: [How Indigenous tourism can help reconciliation | Watch News Videos Online (globalnews.ca)](https://globalnews.ca/video/8234160/how-indigenous-tourism-can-help-reconciliation/)