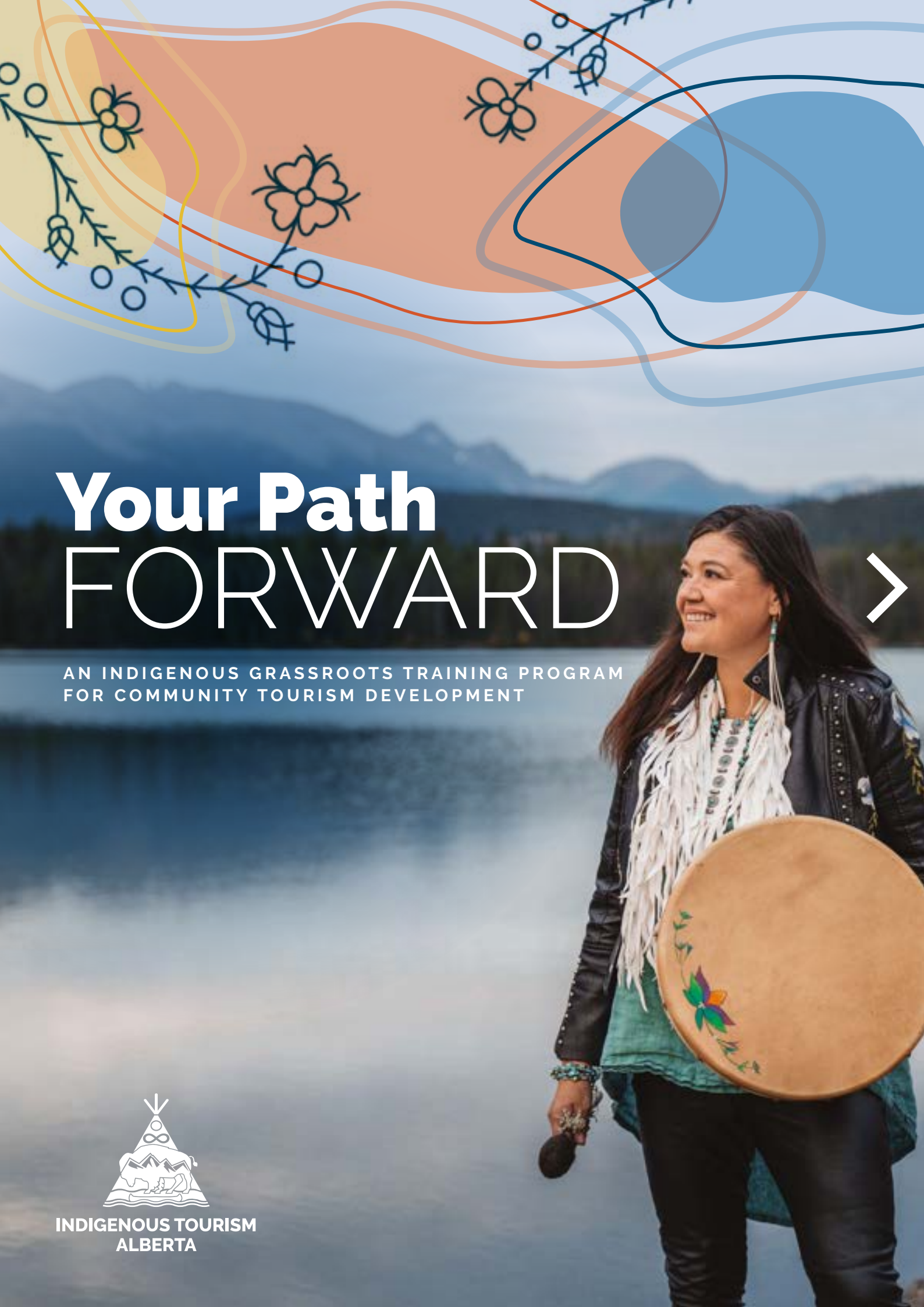
Your Path FORWARD

AN INDIGENOUS GRASSROOTS TRAINING PROGRAM
FOR COMMUNITY TOURISM DEVELOPMENT



INDIGENOUS TOURISM
ALBERTA

MENU
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SETTING DIRECTION

YOUR PATH FORWARD

INDIGENOUS CULTURAL TOURISM PATHWAY:

An Indigenous Grassroots Training Program for Community Tourism Development

This training program has been uniquely crafted for First Nation and Métis communities in Alberta, leading you on a journey that will provide you with the knowledge, tools, and inspiration to move forward with grassroots tourism. The main goal of the program is to empower your community to set up your own Tourism Office, which will serve as a strong starting point for a flourishing local tourism industry that helps your community thrive through sharing your culture.

Your Path Forward consists of **7 Trails** that will ultimately lead you to kick-start grassroots tourism in your community with confidence. Each Trail consists of **4 Viewpoints** that will present the topic from different perspectives, covering multiple aspects of the topic in a clear and concise way. Within each of these 4 Viewpoints, you will come across:

Guidance
In defining your goals, navigating an evolving industry, and creating a plan for grassroots tourism.

Inspiration
From successful individuals and organizations across Canada and around the world.

Groundwork
To get you moving forward in bringing your tourism vision to life.

The program is designed to be collaborative and you will have the opportunity to explore the concepts presented with your community's Sharing Circle. You will work together to complete the Groundwork elements each week, allowing for open conversations, idea sharing, and ownership of your community's tourism vision. Your efforts with the Groundwork will contribute directly to your community's Path Forward, which will be generated at the end of the program and given to you as a clearly outlined plan for moving forward with grassroots tourism in your community.

As you move through the Trails you will notice a 'Contact Your Coach' button appearing regularly. The 'Contact Your Coach' button can be used to reach out to your Pathway Coach by email any time you have a question or need guidance.

CONTACT **YOUR COACH**

SETTING DIRECTION

YOUR PATH FORWARD

Celebrating Our Diverse Communities

At the heart of Your Path Forward is a grassroots approach that empowers communities to define, discover, and achieve their cultural tourism vision, whatever it may look like. Of Alberta's 8 Métis Settlements and 48 First Nations, there is an immense diversity of cultural practices, traditions, stories, and similarly, aspirations for the future of their communities.

Each Nation and Settlement will have their own cultural tourism journey and this program aims to support the variety of experiences that are unique to each community.

Indigenous cultural tourism is about sharing, educating, and creating meaningful moments between peoples of different cultures. Let's celebrate Alberta's diverse First Nations and Métis Settlements, support one another, and grow this industry together for the future of our communities.



- Treaty 4
- Treaty 6
- Treaty 7
- Treaty 8
- Treaty 10
- ∞ Métis Settlements
- — — Regional Zones of Métis Nation of Alberta (MNA) Association
- ● First Nations

The Pathway Program recognizes that there are many Inuit who reside in Alberta and ITA fully supports product and experience development centred upon Inuit culture. Since the Pathway Program is geared towards communities as a whole, a focus has been placed on Métis Settlements and First Nations in Alberta.

TRAIL 1

UNDERSTANDING GRASSROOTS TOURISM

VIEWPOINTS

- Grassroots Tourism Philosophy
- Industry Opportunities for Your Community
- Benefits for Your Community
- Mitigating Challenges

Clearing the Trail for Grassroots Tourism

Grassroots tourism is a form of ecotourism that is rooted in the inclusion of local people at the fundamental level, including community involvement in planning and management, local control of development, equitable flow of benefits, and the incorporation of community values. Grassroots tourism fosters sustainable use and collective responsibility while embracing individual initiatives within communities. Grassroots tourism has been increasingly implemented across the world as an alternative approach to harmful forms of mass tourism, dispelling the long-held perception of tourism as exploitation by putting community empowerment first.

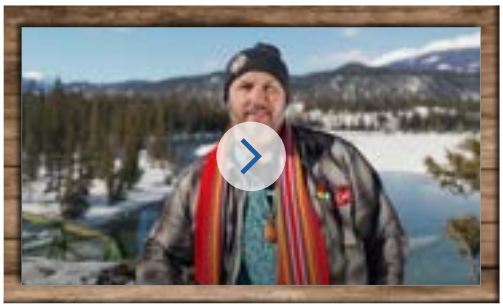
The goal of this Trail is to provide a general overview of grassroots tourism, including underlying philosophies, opportunities within the industry, and potential benefits and challenges that can result from developing grassroots tourism in your community. This will lay the groundwork for the following Trails which will dive deeper into various aspects of grassroots tourism and prepare you to bring your tourism ideas to life!

LISTEN TO **YOUR COACH**



INSPIRATION

Become inspired by watching this promotional video from Indigenous Tourism Alberta and get a glimpse of what grassroots tourism could look like in your community.



Indigenous Tourism Alberta

TRAIL 1.1

GRASSROOTS TOURISM PHILOSOPHY

GUIDANCE – Underpinned by a grassroots philosophy, this form of tourism is effectively driven by passionate community members who have the desire to create positive changes in their community. From developing your initial tourism vision, all the way to accepting your first visitor and beyond, the community should remain the central priority of your grassroots tourism journey.

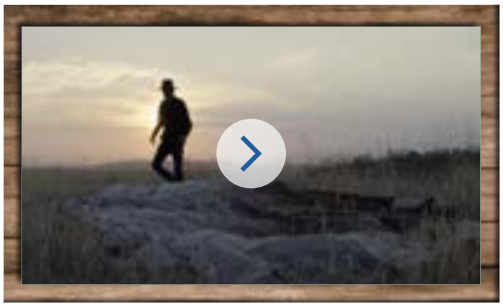
The following key elements are important considerations for successfully developing grassroots tourism:

1. **Community Ownership:** Taking initiative to remove barriers and bring positive benefits to your community by investing in your community's local economy and promoting opportunities that support your community's needs and aspirations.
2. **Community Empowerment & Integration:** Empowering your community to make informed decisions through recognizing, valuing, and integrating the voices of community members throughout all stages of tourism development.
3. **Community Pride:** Providing a sense of pride through sharing and celebrating your community's culture while ensuring tourism development is aligned with your community's values and is built upon mutual respect.
4. **Relationships:** Enhancing opportunities, engaging with the industry, and gaining support through building and maintaining reciprocal relationships with both internal community partners, external tourism organizations, and other relevant partners.

These four key factors contribute to organic tourism growth by building off of the region's strengths and assets and supporting the local community. These concepts can provide a strong starting point from which you can define your community's vision for tourism. It is important to have a clear vision to serve as a reminder of the purpose or the "why" of what you are doing, and to set the direction for achieving your community's goals. Your community's tourism vision should outline what your community would ultimately like to achieve through grassroots tourism development. It should be a short, simple statement that is specific to your community's ambitions and future aspirations as they relate to tourism and community development.

INSPIRATION

Watch this inspirational video that captures the essence of grassroots tourism. Meet Indigenous photographer, Blaire Russell who welcomes visitors to visit his homeland, the Blood-Kainai First Nation. *"I want to invite people in, to learn about us, and to break barriers,"* says Blaire Russell.



[Indigenous Voices - Blaire Russell (Blood Tribe, Alberta, Canada)]



GROUNDWORK – Growing Tourism Organically

1. Use this diagram to brainstorm your community's ambitions for tourism. Think about what these concepts mean to you and how you would like to see them applied in your community. Write down anything that comes to mind for each topic.

COMMUNITY OWNERSHIP	COMMUNITY EMPOWERMENT & INTEGRATION
COMMUNITY PRIDE	RELATIONSHIPS

2. Based on the ideas brought out in the diagram above, describe your community's tourism vision in 1-3 sentences. This can be considered a draft Vision Statement, which will be improved upon with the input of a wider range of your community's members in the future (more information to be provided on engaging your community in Trail 2). Remember that your community's tourism vision should outline what your community would ultimately like to achieve through grassroots tourism development.

CLICK HERE for examples of tourism Vision Statements

TRAIL 1.2

INDUSTRY OPPORTUNITIES

GUIDANCE – Prior to COVID-19, the Indigenous tourism sector in Canada was continually growing at an exceptional rate as more domestic and international visitors sought authentic Indigenous experiences. While the pandemic has certainly caused a disruption in the industry, a shift in visitor attitudes and behaviours has created an unprecedented, industry-wide opportunity for Indigenous tourism and demand for Métis and First Nation experiences.

Travellers are becoming more aware of responsible tourism practices. They want to take more ethical trips while being more mindful of their impact on a destination. Travellers are increasingly seeking meaningful experiences that provide an opportunity for learning, cultural enrichment, self-realization, and embracing a slower, more mindful pace while appreciating nature and simplicity. Authentic Indigenous cultural tourism experiences are aligned with this trend and will only become more desirable due to this industry transformation, meaning it is an opportune time to leverage this shift by developing Indigenous cultural tourism in your community.

For more information on new industry opportunities for Indigenous tourism post COVID-19, read ITAC's COVID-19 Driven Interest Assessment of Canada's Domestic Market here.

There are many areas of opportunity for communities to get involved in grassroots tourism and capitalize on the changes happening within the industry. The list below provides examples of different types of tourism experiences that are aligned with industry trends and are often well suited for First Nation and Métis communities to offer to visitors.

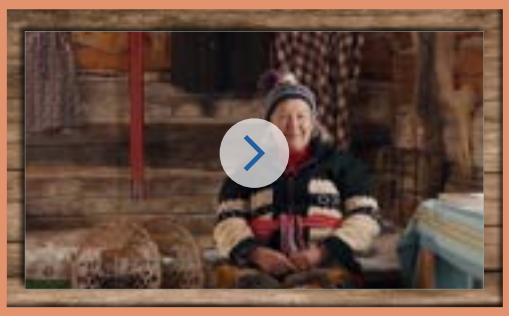
- Nature-based & Adventure Experiences: hiking, guided tours of the land, water-based activities, horse riding, ecolodge accommodations, overnight stays in traditional-inspired dwellings
- Culture & Heritage Experiences: cultural workshops, festivals, traditional games or activities, heritage site visits, museums, markets
- Culinary Experiences: cooking classes, traditional food tasting, hunting and gathering, farm visits, food and beverage tours
- Educational Experiences: school exchanges, longer-term cultural immersion, volunteering trips

It is important for Métis and First Nation communities to draw upon their strengths and already existing assets when considering grassroots tourism development, while also keeping in mind how these strengths fit into the larger context of the tourism industry. Knowing what types of tourism products and experiences are currently in demand and being able to respond to that demand are essential factors in successful and sustainable grassroots tourism development.

INSPIRATION

Sharing Your Community's Strengths

"To walk in the footsteps of their ancestors..." every place and community has their own story and unique history to share. Métis Crossing is the first major Métis Cultural Centre in Alberta, Canada. As you watch this video, think about your community's strengths and how you see your community contributing to Canada's Indigenous tourism industry.

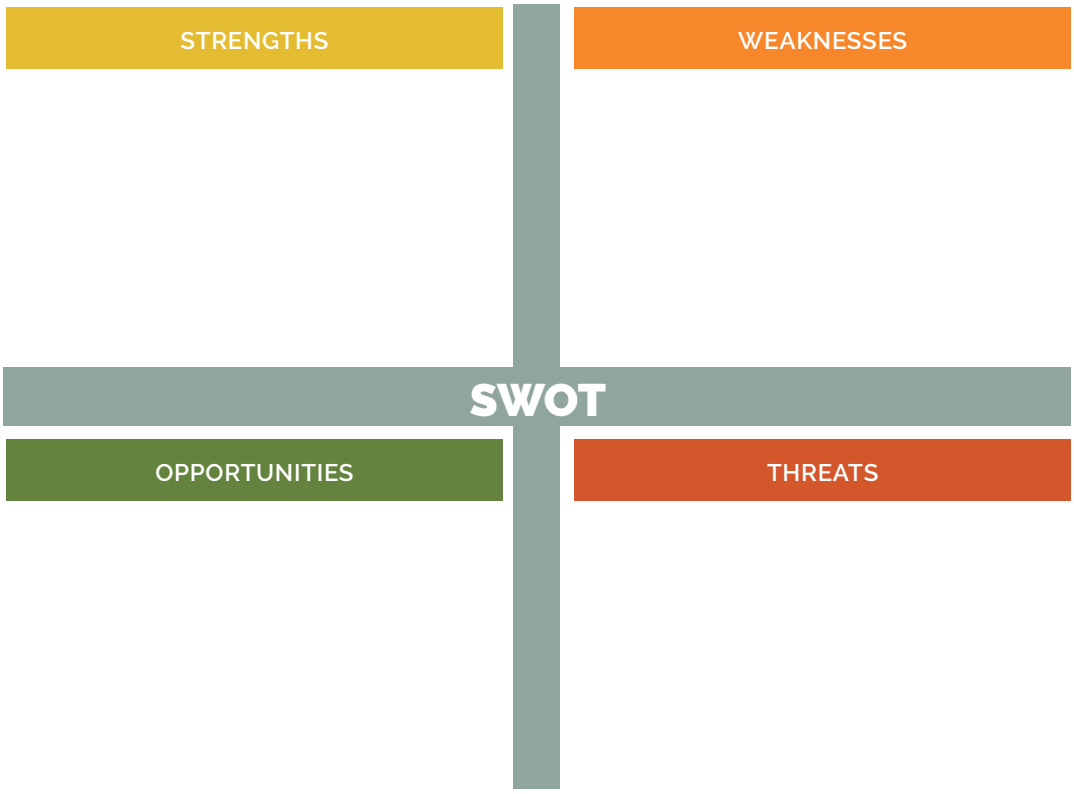


Stories Through Our Eyes - Métis Crossing



GROUNDWORK – Finding Your Community's Place in the Indigenous Tourism Industry

1. 1. Fill out the SWOT diagram below, noting your community's strengths, weaknesses, opportunities, and threats as they relate to grassroots tourism development. When thinking about strengths and opportunities, consider how your community can align with visitor desires for ethical trips, learning, cultural enrichment, self-realization, and a slower pace.



CLICK HERE for an example of a SWOT Analysis

TRAIL 1.3

BENEFITS FOR YOUR COMMUNITY

GUIDANCE – When the grassroots tourism philosophy is put into practice, Indigenous cultural tourism has the potential to result in a range of tangible benefits for Métis and First Nation communities. As shown below, the SEEC Model takes into account the Social, Environmental, Economic, and Cultural benefits of tourism.

Summary of Potential Benefits (SEEC Model)

SOCIAL	ENVIRONMENTAL	ECONOMIC	CULTURAL
Enhances your community's sense of pride, identity, and unity Creates opportunities for healthy relationships and partnerships both within and beyond your community Provides opportunities for youth such as education, training, and employment Contributes to reconciliation through facilitating learning, growth, and the revitalization of Indigenous culture Attracts the attention of the government to support social issues	Contributes to a culture of protection and preservation Encourages community beautification Increases visitors' awareness of the area and its environmental significance Encourages both residents and visitors to consider their impact on their surrounding environment Potential changes in land use by generating financial and political support for conservation	Diversifies the economy through creating new business opportunities, jobs, and income streams for community members Improves the local living standard and livelihood Supports existing businesses and provides opportunities for expansion Generates tax revenues Helps develop and maintain new and existing community amenities	Encourages the preservation and celebration of your community's local culture, heritage, and language Ensures the continuity of traditional knowledge into future generations by creating a demand and assigning value to it Provides opportunities for intergenerational learning and bridging the gap between Elders and youth Contributes to intercultural understanding and tolerance through mutual relationships grounded in respect

INSPIRATION

Watch this inspirational video about Writing-on-Stone Provincial Park / Áísínai'pi and what this special place means to the community. Think about how opening your doors to welcome visitors and sharing your culture with them can benefit your community's social, environmental, economic, and cultural wellbeing.



Explore Writing-on-Stone Provincial Park's Sacred Roots

GROUNDWORK – Envisioning Success

1. Order the four different types of benefits (Social, Environmental, Economic, and Cultural) from highest (1) to lowest (4) in relation to your priorities and motivations for developing grassroots tourism.

1 2

3 4

2. For each of the four types of benefits, write a few sentences about what it would look like for your community to be successful in that area based on your Sharing Circle's aspirations for your community.

1

2

3

4

TRAIL 1.4

MITIGATING CHALLENGES

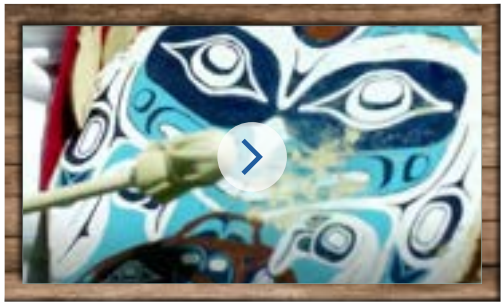
GUIDANCE – While tourism has the potential to create numerous positive benefits, communities may also face risks and challenges to sustainable grassroots tourism development. These can sometimes include the following:

- **Environmental pollution and disturbance of the natural environment**
- **Risk of overtourism and loss of access to local facilities for local people**
- **Increased competition for resources**
- **Commodification or misrepresentation of culture**
- **Unstable political, economic, and environmental climates creating uncertainty in the industry**
- **Higher costs of living and inflation of property prices**

As with any industry, those who work in the Indigenous tourism industry must be aware of the potential negative impacts of tourism development and be prepared to adapt. This is also where the importance of planning ahead should not be understated, as a good plan can enable you to anticipate challenges you may face and prepare yourself and your community to deal with them. As you continue your journey through the Trails you will learn strategies for mitigating or avoiding various challenges that may result from grassroots tourism.

INSPIRATION

Watch this video for an example of how increased demand for tourism can lead to challenges around representation and authenticity.



Indigenous tourism still reaping benefits of 2010 Olympics 10 years later

GROUNDWORK – Crossing the Hurdles

1. Are there any areas of concern for your community that you feel may cause challenges when developing tourism? (i.e. sensitive or fragile ecosystems, COVID-19 considerations, tension or disagreement amongst community members regarding tourism, etc.)

2. List any systems or protocols your community currently has in place to address these issues.

3. List any systems or protocols your community may need to implement to address the concerns identified in question one.

Your Community's Path Forward & Next Steps

Fill in the table below to define your community's next steps.

UNDERSTANDING GRASSROOTS TOURISM: MAJOR MILESTONES			
Action Item What needs to be done?	**Roles** Who is responsible for achieving this milestone?	**Resources Required** What does your community need in order to achieve this milestone?	**Timeline** When will you achieve this milestone?
Develop a Vision Statement for your community's grassroots tourism journey			

Any other notes or ideas about moving forward:

Questions about Understanding Grassroots Tourism?

CONTACT **YOUR COACH**

TRAIL 2

ENGAGING YOUR COMMUNITY

VIEWPOINTS

- Methodologies for Community Engagement
- Creating Excitement in Your Community
- Measuring and Evaluating Your Efforts
- Continuing the Conversation & Building a Strong Following

Clearing the Trail for Community Engagement

The most important step in developing grassroots tourism is to involve your community members and invite them to share their insights, ideas, and opinions. This includes Elders, Youth, and everyone in between. Having open, transparent dialogue from the beginning will instill community pride and ownership and assist with creating a collective voice for tourism in your community. The information gathered from engaging your community will form the foundation for growing your local tourism industry.

This Trail will take you on a journey that encourages support, feedback, and participation from your community to create your tourism organization!



LISTEN TO **YOUR COACH**



INSPIRATION

Learn how the community members in Campbell River, BC inspire their city's Waterfront Task Force by sharing their ideas for a vacant waterfront development project.



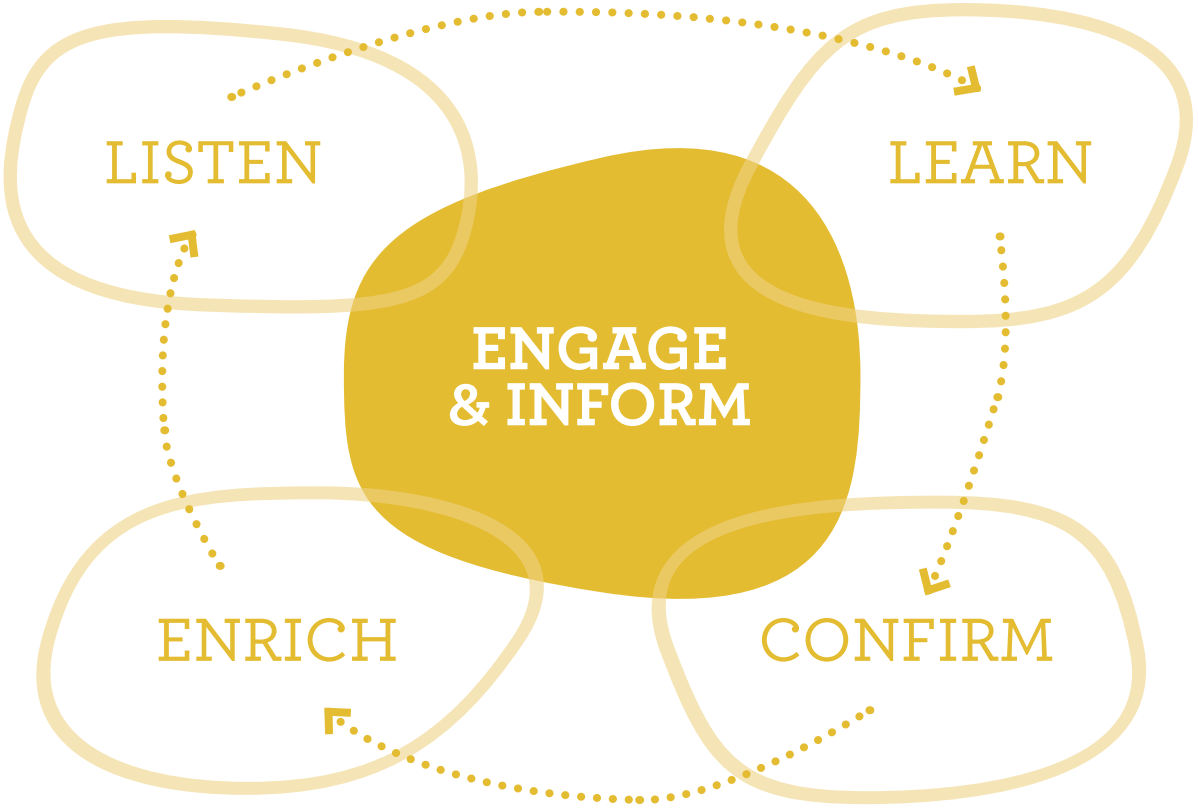
[Ideas for the City of Campbell River's 3.5-acre Waterfront Site]

TRAIL 2.1

METHODOLOGIES FOR COMMUNITY ENGAGEMENT

GUIDANCE – How do you engage your community?

Below is a diagram that demonstrates an inclusive engagement process that uses the methodology of listen, learn, confirm, and enrich with the appropriate stakeholders. Note that the methods, tools, and data contain special elements that use technology and innovative ideas to ensure voices are heard.



METHODS

- One-on-One Interviews
- Workshops
- Working with leadership
- Seek guidance from community advisors
- Open Houses

TOOLS

- Online Idea Wall
- Surveys
- Digital Sharing Circle
- Questionnaires
- Web / Social Media

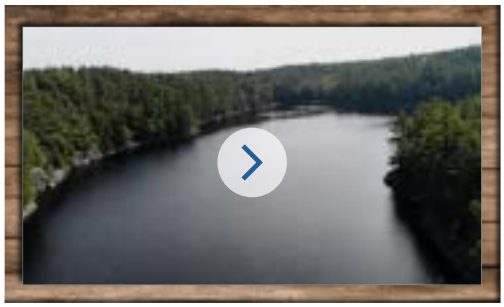
DATA

- Long answer questions
- Multiple choice questions
- Notes and comments from public events, workshops, and meetings

CLICK HERE for an example of a community engagement process

INSPIRATION

For the development of Shawanaga First Nation's Land Use Plan they chose to use video to get the message about their land use and environmental planning out to their community members and beyond.



Shawanaga First Nation Land Use Plan: Our Community, Our Way

GROUNDWORK – Listening to your Community

1. What is your overall goal for engaging your community?

2. What is the best way to engage your community members?

3. Who will lead the process?

4. When is a good time to start your engagement strategy?

TRAIL 2.2

CREATING EXCITEMENT IN YOUR COMMUNITY

GUIDANCE – A first and important step to engaging your community is to educate them about the opportunities surrounding grassroots tourism. This entails developing and facilitating an internal awareness campaign. Virtually all tourism activities – especially the cultural ones – require people to lead, maintain, and promote them; without having the community actively engaged in the process, your tourism products and services will be slower to come to fruition.

Your internal awareness campaign will have the goal of:

- Educating your community about grassroots tourism
- Listening to their hopes, ideas, and opinions on tourism in your community
- Gaining insight on who would like to be involved with tourism in your community
- Creating community support for tourism development

A great tool to use when engaging your community and creating awareness is to develop a Communications Plan that defines actions, roles, and how you will reach your members.

CLICK HERE for an example of a Communications Plan

INSPIRATION

Here is a video that Mistissini Tourism used to create excitement in the community about being involved with a grassroots tourism initiative.



Join Mistissini Moments in the Cree Nation of Mistissini

GROUNDWORK – Spreading the Word

1. Complete a Draft Communications Plan for your Internal Awareness Campaign.

GRASSROOTS TOURISM COMMUNICATIONS PLAN					
Activity	**Target Audience**	**Message**	**Results**	**Date**	**Status**
EMAIL CAMPAIGN					
COMMUNITY NEWSLETTER					
SOCIAL MEDIA CAMPAIGN					
COMMUNITY POSTER					
COMMUNITY OPEN HOUSE					

TRAIL 2.3

MEASURING & EVALUATING THE RESULTS

GUIDANCE – All community engagement strategies must be properly documented and evaluated. Whether you choose a survey, open house, one-on-one interviews, digital sharing circles, or workshops, it is important to record and analyze your findings. A great way to measure and evaluate the results is to use the SEEC Model which was introduced in Trail 1.

By evaluating the Social, Environmental, Economic, and Cultural impacts that tourism may have on your community, you will begin to discover the opportunities and challenges in moving forward.

INSPIRATION

Learn how the SEEC Model can be used as a tool to evaluate the opportunities and challenges for grassroots tourism in your community.



GROUNDWORK – Guided by your Community's Values

1. Complete a general survey about moving forward with tourism in your community.

GO TO SURVEY

2. Work with your sharing circle to analyze the results based on the SEEC Model:

SOCIAL	ENVIRONMENTAL
Opportunities:	**Opportunities:**
Challenges:	**Challenges:**

ECONOMIC	CULTURAL
Opportunities:	**Opportunities:**
Challenges:	**Challenges:**

TRAIL 2.4

CONTINUING THE CONVERSATION & BUILDING A STRONG FOLLOWING

GUIDANCE – Where a lot of engagement strategies fall short is when there is no follow-up. After creating excitement, listening to the community, and sharing results, members may be left with no updates and the excitement soon fades. That said, an important aspect of engaging your community is to keep the conversation open, continue to share updates on moving forward, and continue to try to recruit people to join in growing your local tourism industry.

There is the risk that you may have a few community members who are resistant to opening up for tourism. In these cases, it is important to listen to their thoughts and concerns and educate them on the opportunities. Create an open and transparent dialogue amongst your community.

TIP: Social media tools such as a Facebook Group or Community Facebook Page can be a great way to share updates and continue to engage the community throughout the process.



INDIGENOUS TOURISM ALBERTA

INSPIRATION

Learn how the City of Campbell River used their social media platform throughout the engagement process.



GROUNDWORK – Keeping the Conversation Going

1. How will you continue to engage your community?

2. Who will lead the process?

3. What is the main goal to continue to engage your community?

4. How will you address negative feedback and resistance amongst community members?

Your Community's Path Forward & Next Steps

Fill in the table below to define your community's next steps.

ENGAGING YOUR COMMUNITY: MAJOR MILESTONES			
Action Item What needs to be done?	**Roles** Who is responsible for achieving this milestone?	**Resources Required** What does your community need in order to achieve this milestone?	**Timeline** When will you achieve this milestone?
Develop and deliver an Engagement Strategy for your community			
Implement an Internal Awareness Campaign			
Measure and evaluate the results of your Engagement Strategy			
Manage ongoing community awareness			

Any other notes or ideas about moving forward:

Questions about Engaging Your Community?

CONTACT **YOUR COACH**

TRAIL 3

CULTURAL AUTHENTICITY

VIEWPOINTS

- Defining Authenticity
- Characteristics & Key Players of Authentic Experiences
- Involving Your Community
- Cultural Awareness

Clearing the Trail for Cultural Authenticity

Authentic Indigenous cultural tourism is an industry sector that a growing number of travellers are taking interest in. Travellers are increasingly wanting to have transformative experiences and to feel inspired by a destination and the people they meet there. To capitalize on this shift from activity-based to experience-based tourism, it is important to ensure that authentic cultural experiences are being developed, recognized, and promoted in your community. Each of Alberta's First Nations and Métis Settlements have their own distinct culture, history, and story to share and each community's uniqueness should be highlighted while educating visitors. There are many considerations to take into account when developing authentic experiences, and it is essential to engage your community and reflect on how you will approach the concept of authenticity early on in the planning process.

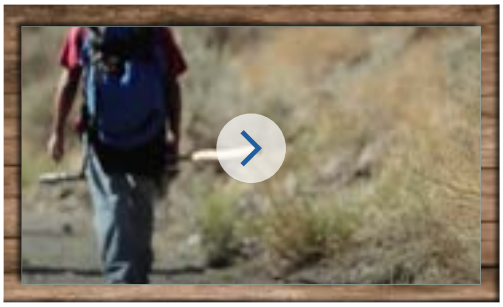
This Trail will guide you through what cultural authenticity is, some characteristics of authentic experiences, and the importance of involving the wider community in deciding what to share and how to share it. You will also learn how grassroots tourism can work as an educational tool to increase cultural awareness amongst visitors. The purpose of this Trail is to get you thinking about what kinds of unique experiences your community can offer and how to deliver them in a way that is authentic and respectful of your local culture!

LISTEN TO **YOUR COACH**



INSPIRATION

This video demonstrates the importance of preserving cultural traditions and teachings regarding cultural authenticity.



Living Legends:
The Teachings of the Salmon

TRAIL 3.1

DEFINING AUTHENTICITY

GUIDANCE – Determining whether a cultural experience is authentic is not always a straightforward task, as cultures are complex, diverse, and continually evolving. In general terms, culturally authentic tourism can be described as:

A tourism product, service, and/or experience that offers a visitor a cultural experience in a manner that is appropriate, respectful, and true to the Indigenous culture being portrayed.

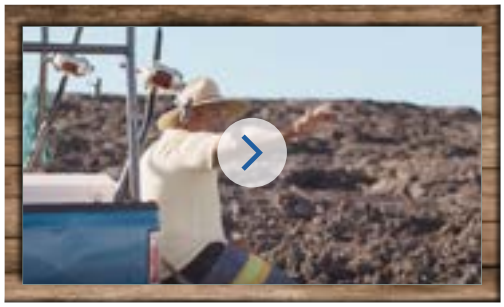
Accordingly, culturally authentic tourism must strike a balance between offering an experience that has wide visitor appeal while also maintaining the integrity of your community's culture and values. In addition, visitors who desire an authentic Indigenous experience are often seeking the following:

- One-on-one interaction with Indigenous people in small, intimate groups
- To be actively involved in learning about cultures, traditions, arts, food, storytelling, and history
- To learn about Indigenous peoples' connection to the land and nature
- Participation in adventure, both physical and mental
- Unique experiences
- A personal experience rather than a mass-produced experience

Authentic Indigenous tourism experiences are therefore highly experiential and emotional, and are seen as providing the visitor with a different perspective on a destination and the ways of life of the people who live there. While cultural authenticity cannot be objectively measured or assessed, the following Guiding Principles should be adhered to ensure the authenticity and integrity of tourism products and experiences:

1. **Guidance** on cultural protocols is sought from Indigenous Elders or Knowledge Keepers.
2. **Products** and experiences provide positive impacts for the Indigenous community and their land while minimizing negative impacts.
3. **Communication** and dialogue are respectful of the culture being shared.
4. **Provides** visitor engagement including personal and non-personal interpretation that accurately presents Indigenous cultural knowledge, traditions, and/or languages of the past and present.

INSPIRATION



Sharing Authentic Experiences in Hawaii

GROUNDWORK – Envisioning Authentic Experiences

Brainstorm ideas for tourism experiences your community could potentially offer that may align with the Guiding Principles for cultural authenticity.



TRAIL 3.2

CHARACTERISTICS & KEY PLAYERS OF AUTHENTIC EXPERIENCES

GUIDANCE – There are a number of things to keep in mind when striving to create tourism products and experiences that are culturally authentic. The best practices presented below will help your community to design your grassroots tourism pathway on your own terms, and to portray your community's narrative and Métis or First Nations culture in your own voice.

ACCURATE	• Content is verified by multiple Elders or Knowledge Keepers as an accurate representation of the local culture, beliefs, practices, and languages • Content is not 'generic' or borrowed from other Indigenous groups • Content reflects the evolving nature of culture and highlights both traditional and modern cultural practices
APPROPRIATE	• Content is approved by the larger community and it is agreed to be acceptable to share with visitors • Products and experiences are delivered at an appropriate time of year consistent with traditional practices • Products and experiences are not mass produced or commodified (no exploitation for the visitor's benefit)
ENGAGING	• Visitors interact and share the experience with their local host • Visitors learn something about the community's local Indigenous culture • Products and experiences evoke the visitors' senses and inspire them to reflect
INDIGENOUS OWNED	• Products and experiences being offered are owned and operated by Indigenous people • Stories are shared from the local community's perspective and in their own words • The economic benefits of tourism stay within the local community

In addition to these four characteristics, it is also important to recognize the key players involved in providing visitors with culturally authentic experiences. These players can be categorized into the Four P's of Cultural Authenticity:

Preserver - Indigenous entrepreneurs and businesses who offer culturally authentic activities based on their traditions, skills, and knowledge. These people represent the core of grassroots tourism. This can be an individual in the community or a tourism related business. For example, a guided excursion on the land with a local Indigenous person where they share aspects of their culture.

Packager - Businesses that provide a tourism experience, service, or product that includes an authentic Indigenous component. This can be a restaurant, a tour company, an attraction/destination, and/or tourism-related service that integrates some aspect of Indigenous awareness and sharing of culture. For example, a restaurant that serves traditional Cree inspired cuisine, a community cultural heritage museum, or a hotel offering tours to a Métis Historical Site.

Partner - Organizations, corporations, and government bodies that support and/or sponsor authentic Indigenous tourism products and services. For example, Indigenous Tourism Alberta.

Promoter - Tour operators, Regional Tourism Organizations (RTO's), travel agencies, tourism associations, Destination Management Organizations (DMO's), etc., that promote Indigenous tourism products and services. For example, Travel Alberta.

INSPIRATION

Meet Jerry Evans, a Mi'kmaq artist who shares stories through his artwork. Watch this video and think about how he shares his culture in his own voice. Which of the 4 P's does Jerry represent?



Msit No'kmaq (All My Relations), Newfoundland and Labrador



GROUNDWORK – Finding the Key Players for Cultural Authenticity

1. Fill in the table below based on the Four P's of Cultural Authenticity. Think about individuals or organizations you are aware of in your community or region who fit into these categories. You may also wish to do an internet search to discover relevant Preservers, Packagers, Partners, or Promoters on a regional, provincial, and national scale.

PRESERVERS	PACKAGERS

PARTNERS	PROMOTERS

TRAIL 3.3

INVOLVING YOUR COMMUNITY

GUIDANCE – In supporting true grassroots tourism, the people and the land are the roots of cultural tourism and should be seen as a guiding light for authentic tourism development. Developing culturally authentic tourism experiences therefore requires communities to intentionally seek out their members of all ages, genders, and positions to ensure their voices are heard when it comes to sharing your community's culture. The topics of engagement may vary between communities as different cultures have different factors to consider, but it should always include the following questions at minimum:

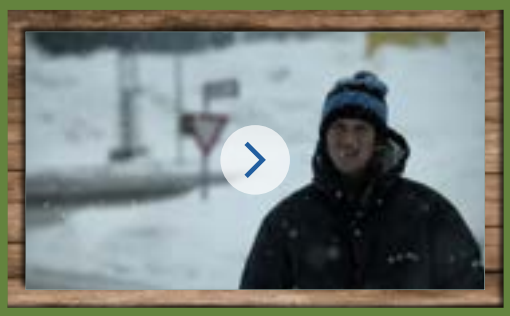
1. **What** aspects of your community's culture are appropriate to share with visitors?
2. **How** should these aspects be shared?
3. **When** should these aspects be shared?
4. **Who** should these aspects be shared with?

The results of your community engagement may be used to create cultural authenticity guidelines and protocols that can be followed to ensure the respectful representation of your community's cultural features and traditions.

As your culture truly belongs to your community and its people, it is important to make sure that your culture is protected for future generations. Securing approval from traditional leadership and inviting members of your community to speak for themselves will allow you to develop tourism within a framework of authenticity that meets the needs and aspirations of your community while avoiding cultural misrepresentation and exploitation.

INSPIRATION

Watch this video from Visit Greenland that showcases real, authentic local life in the community in a playful way. As you watch the video, think about how you want to showcase your culture and its people in an authentic and respectful way.



Urban Arctic

GROUNDWORK – Community Engagement for Cultural Authenticity

1. Revisit the sample Communications Plan you developed in Trail 2 and determine which platforms you will use to engage your community around the topic of cultural authenticity.
   Note: Consideration should be made towards involving your community's Elders.

2. Write at least 4 sample questions for your community that address the What, How, When, and Who aspects of sharing culturally authentic experiences. These questions may be general and/or specific to certain aspects of your community's culture.

1	**2**
3	**4**

TRAIL 3.4
CULTURAL AWARENESS

GUIDANCE – In many cases, visitors may be unfamiliar with the Métis for First Nations history, culture, heritage, and current environment of the community they are visiting. This can be especially common for international visitors who may have little or no knowledge about the community's local reality, as they do not necessarily understand or have ever learned about Indigenous history and Indigenous peoples' relationship with Canada.

In anticipating this potential lack of cultural awareness, communities can prepare by creating and promoting visitor guidelines. This may include providing visitors with pre-trip guidelines that outline what to expect from their Indigenous experience, and describe aspects of local customs, acceptable behaviour, and any other relevant information specific to your community that would be helpful to ensure a respectful cultural exchange during their visit. This can be in the form of a cultural "do's and don'ts" list that is specific to your community's cultural protocols, which will be further defined after engaging with members of your community. These guidelines can be provided to visitors in a variety of forms, such as:

- **FAQ on your community's website**
- **Presented in a welcoming talk**
- **Guidebooks, pamphlets, or brochures**
- **Digital downloads**
- **Videos**



INDIGENOUS TOURISM ALBERTA

Grassroots tourism can also be viewed as an opportunity to educate visitors on your community's First Nation or Métis culture and offer a new or deeper understanding. This can be done through interpretive elements that present the living culture, history, customs, and language in a way that is accurate, appropriate, and engaging. The goal here is to create opportunities for meaningful cultural exchange based on mutual respect. By sharing your community's pride and showing the world what your region has to offer, visitors can go home with an increased sense of awareness and understanding.

For more information about ensuring your community's grassroots tourism experiences are authentic, click here to refer to the Indigenous Tourism Association of Canada (ITAC)'s Cultural Authenticity Guidelines.

INSPIRATION

Educating Visitors About Your History

The Métis communities of Wood Buffalo National Park have overcome many obstacles to have a voice and a presence in the Park. When the Park was first formed, all the Métis communities were kicked out of the Park and lost their hunting and trapping rights. In 2003, the Métis communities have gained back their rights through a cooperative management approach with Parks Canada. Now they have a voice and say in how the Park is managed and can use tourism as a form of reconciliation to help reclaim their land, traditions, and culture that is connected to the Park and as a way to share their story and educate visitors.

As you watch this video think about how grassroots tourism can contribute to cultural awareness in your community?



GROUNDWORK – Raising Awareness

1. Brainstorm any cultural protocols or cultural "do's and don'ts" for your community that you would want visitors to be aware of and compile them in a list.

DO's	DON'Ts

2. List 2-3 aspects of your culture that you feel would be important for visitors to learn about.

1	2	3

GROUNDWORK – Raising Awareness (continued)

3. Pick one example you came up with in question 2 and consider how this aspect of your culture could be shared in a way that educates visitors (i.e., a hands-on activity, storytelling, interpretive signage, etc.).

4. Determine which form(s) make the most sense for your community to provide visitors with pre-trip guidelines (i.e., on your website, pamphlets, videos, etc.).

Your Community's Path Forward & Next Steps

Fill in the table below to define your community's next steps.

CULTURAL AUTHENTICITY: MAJOR MILESTONES			
Action Item What needs to be done?	**Roles** Who is responsible for achieving this milestone?	**Resources Required** What does your community need in order to achieve this milestone?	**Timeline** When will you achieve this milestone?
Incorporate cultural authenticity considerations into your community's Engagement Strategy			
Develop Cultural Authenticity Guidelines for your community based on engagement results			
Develop pre-trip Visitor Guidelines for your community and determine how they will be shared			

Any other notes or ideas about moving forward:

Questions about Cultural Authenticity?

CONTACT
YOUR COACH

TRAIL 4

RESOURCE INVENTORY

VIEWPOINTS

- Recognizing your Community's Cultural Entrepreneurs
- Determining the Cultural and Natural Features of Your Community
- Local Businesses and Connectivity with Regional Assets
- Community Sustainability Matrix

Clearing the Trail for Developing a Resource Inventory for your Community

A resource inventory determines the key areas to highlight from a visitor perspective which will allow you to create a sustainable grassroots tourism destination. A resource inventory will detail all of your community's cultural and natural assets, connectivity to neighbouring destinations, and will help to ensure that visitors have access to things they may need during their visit.

This Trail will take you on a journey that will define the building blocks to turn your community into a tourist destination and develop your tourism organization!

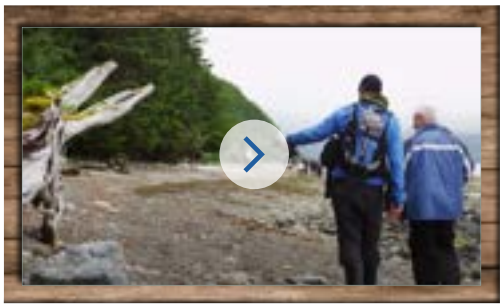


LISTEN TO **YOUR COACH**



INSPIRATION

What makes a destination special? Watch this inspiring video by Indigenous Tourism BC titled Land of our Ancestors.



Land of Our Ancestors

TRAIL 4.1

RECOGNIZING YOUR COMMUNITY'S CULTURAL ENTREPRENEURS

GUIDANCE – One of the most important resources in your community is your people! Your community is home to many individuals with unique knowledge, skills, access, and the passion to create engaging cultural experiences to share with visitors. These community members can be storytellers, guides, fishermen, artists, musicians, dancers, wood carvers, artisans, cooks, and more. These individuals are known as Cultural Entrepreneurs.

Supporting local entrepreneurs will encourage collaboration among individual community members, communities as a whole, and at a regional level. It is recommended to explore the community itself and seek out these individuals who first of all have the passion to be involved in the tourism industry and secondly have a unique experience and/or skill that they would like to share with visitors.

TIP: An important aspect of growing the local tourism industry is to remove barriers that prevent local Cultural Entrepreneurs who are passionate and wanting to share their culture to visitors, from succeeding. Grassroots tourism development will not happen without the support of local Cultural Entrepreneurs.



INSPIRATION

Meet Tracey Klettl, a Métis Cultural Entrepreneur that built a business around the traditional and modern day lifestyle of the Cree and Saulteaux people in Alberta.



[Stories Through Our Eyes – Painted Warriors]

GROUNDWORK – Seek Out the Cultural Entrepreneurs in your Community

1. Who are the Cultural Entrepreneurs in your community?

2. What are their skills, passions, and special knowledge?

3. What do they enjoy doing and sharing with others the most?

TRAIL 4.2

DETERMINING THE CULTURAL & NATURAL FEATURES OF YOUR COMMUNITY

GUIDANCE – Each community is home to their own unique cultural and natural features.

Your cultural features that make your community special may include:

- Language
- History
- Stories from your Elders
- Myths and legends
- Community activities and events
- Arts and Crafts
- Culinary specialties and methods to prepare food
- Traditional breaks - such as spring and fall traditional hunting breaks
- Hunting, fishing, gathering, and foraging
- Music and dance

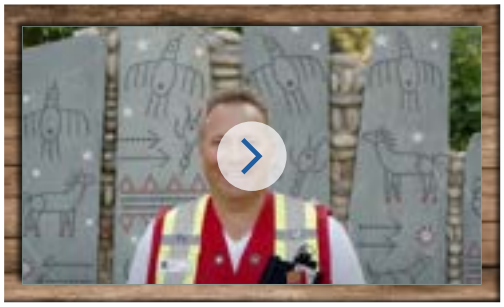
The natural features that make your community/region unique may include:

- Distinct land/ecological features such as mountains, tundra, forests, grasslands, wetlands, marine coasts, islands, waterfalls, lakes, and rivers
- Flora and fauna
- Medicinal plants
- Access to remote wilderness
- Access to urban areas

TIP: GIS mapping is a great tool that can be used to map out culturally significant historical sites and the main ecological features of your community and surrounding region.

INSPIRATION

Meet Keith Diakiw, owner/operator of Talking Rock Tours. Keith is a proud Métis residing in Edmonton, but takes his guests on adventures throughout the province sharing his knowledge of the cultural and natural features of the land. As you watch this video, think about the cultural and natural features that your community has.



Talking Rock Tours

GROUNDWORK – Your Community's Cultural & Natural Features

Complete the following tables:

CULTURAL FEATURES IN YOUR COMMUNITY AND SURROUNDING AREA	POTENTIAL TOURISM ACTIVITIES RELATED TO THE CULTURAL FEATURES

NATURAL FEATURES IN YOUR COMMUNITY AND SURROUNDING AREA	POTENTIAL TOURISM ACTIVITIES RELATED TO THE NATURAL FEATURES

TRAIL 4.3

VISITOR EXPERIENCE ASSETS & CONNECTIVITY TO REGIONAL ASSETS

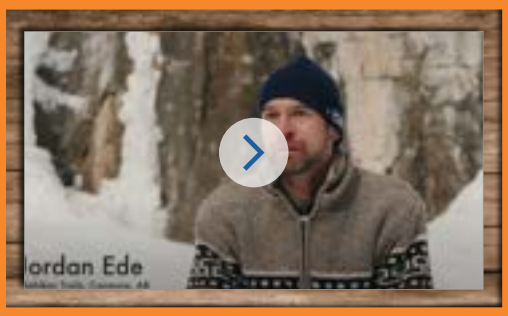
GUIDANCE – In order for your community to grow a sustainable local tourism industry, there needs to be various services in place to be able to accept visitors safely, and to ensure that they have access to things they may need while visiting. This process includes listing all local businesses that are related to accommodations, food services, safety, transportation, tour operators, visitor information, and regional assets.

In addition to gathering your visitor experience assets it is important to take note of assets in the region which may lead to connectivity and thematic routes. The Trails of 1885 is a great example of a route linking historical sites involved in the 1885 Northwest Resistance. Look at tourism development opportunities in your region and take into account that visitors may want to visit more than one destination during their trip. For example, an iconic natural or cultural attraction en route to your destination would be a nice feature to mention when listing your Visitor Experience Assets.



INSPIRATION

Learn about Mahikan Trails, a Métis-owned and operated business that prides themselves on teaching people about Métis culture in Alberta's premier tourism destination; the Rocky Mountains.



Stories Through Our Eyes – Mahikan Trails

GROUNDWORK – Building off Your Strengths

Complete the Visitor Experience Asset table below. Please ensure you include the following aspects:

- **Local businesses which includes any food services, accommodations, gas stations, convenience stores, etc.**
- **Local events including sports and recreational events, cultural events, fishing derbies, and business-related events / meetings.**
- **Partnerships with other communities that you rely on for shared services.**
- **Regional assets and draws that are located near or en route to your community. This may include parks, nature reserves, casinos, tourist attractions, etc.**

Organization / Business Name	Sector i.e. Accommodations, Food Service, Event, Local Business	Brief Description of Product or Service

TRAIL 4.4

COMMUNITY SUSTAINABILITY MATRIX

GUIDANCE – The Community Sustainability Matrix provides a baseline for a community's current state of tourism resources. It is called a Sustainability Matrix due to the fact that it addresses what resources, infrastructure, and safety requirements are needed to open your community's doors for tourism development sustainably.

'Sustainability' includes market readiness but goes a step further. An operation may be market ready in the traditional sense – they have the tools and resources in place to host visitors; but if they have not planned for sustainability they may soon falter and find themselves in a position where they are no longer market ready. Therefore, sustainability is a more meaningful way to measure an operation or community's ability to accept visitors.

INSPIRATION

An inspiring video of the Cree Nation of Mistissini sharing their community through dynamic drone footage. Do you think that this community has the resources in place to welcome visitors?



Mistissini, QC

GROUNDWORK – Creating a Sustainable Destination

Some guidance: Before you begin your Groundwork, click on the button to your right and watch this instructional video about how to complete a Sustainability Matrix for your community.



GUIDANCE VIDEO

When you are ready to start, refer to the Sustainability Matrix Criteria here. The Sustainability Matrix Criteria provides a numeric value from 0 to 3 for each measurable element detailed in the Sustainability Matrix. Your job is to work with your sharing circle to determine which stage your community is at for each of the elements on the following page and place the most relevant numeric value. The results of your Tourism Sustainability Matrix create an action plan for your community as it allows you to identify which elements are critical to address first ('required' for sustainability) and what steps are required to become sustainable in tourism.

GROUNDWORK – Creating a Sustainable Destination (continued)

Complete a Sustainability Matrix for your community.

TOURISM SUSTAINABILITY MATRIX – COMMUNITY LEVEL		Your Community
LOCATION		
Accessible	●	
INFRASTRUCTURE		
Food Services	●	
Accommodations	●	
Support Services (gas stations, retail, taxi)	●	
Signs	▨	
Banks	▨	
FINANCIALS		
Start-up Funds	●	
MARKETING		
Print Material (brochures/pamphlets)	●	
Website	●	
Marketing Plan	▨	
PRODUCT		
Established Tourism Products/Packages	●	
OPERATIONAL		
Tourism Office	●	
Tracking/Evaluating Guest Satisfaction	▨	
RISK MANAGEMENT		
First Aid Trained Staff	●	
Liability Insurance	●	
HUMAN RESOURCES		
Training Programs	▨	
COMMUNITY BENEFITS		
Environmental Mitigation Policy	●	
Protection of Culturally Sensitive Areas	●	

LEGEND ● *Required for sustainability* ▨ *Enhances sustainability*

Your Community's Path Forward & Next Steps

Fill in the table below to define your community's next steps.

RESOURCE INVENTORY: MAJOR MILESTONES			
Action Item What needs to be done?	**Roles** Who is responsible for achieving this milestone?	**Resources Required** What does your community need in order to achieve this milestone?	**Timeline** When will you achieve this milestone?
Seek out the Cultural Entrepreneurs in your community			
Complete Resource Inventory of cultural and natural features in your community			
Develop GIS Map of your community's assets			
Complete Sustainability Matrix			

Any other notes or ideas about moving forward:

Questions about Engaging Your Community?

CONTACT **YOUR COACH**

TRAIL 5

PRODUCT & EXPERIENCE DEVELOPMENT

VIEWPOINTS

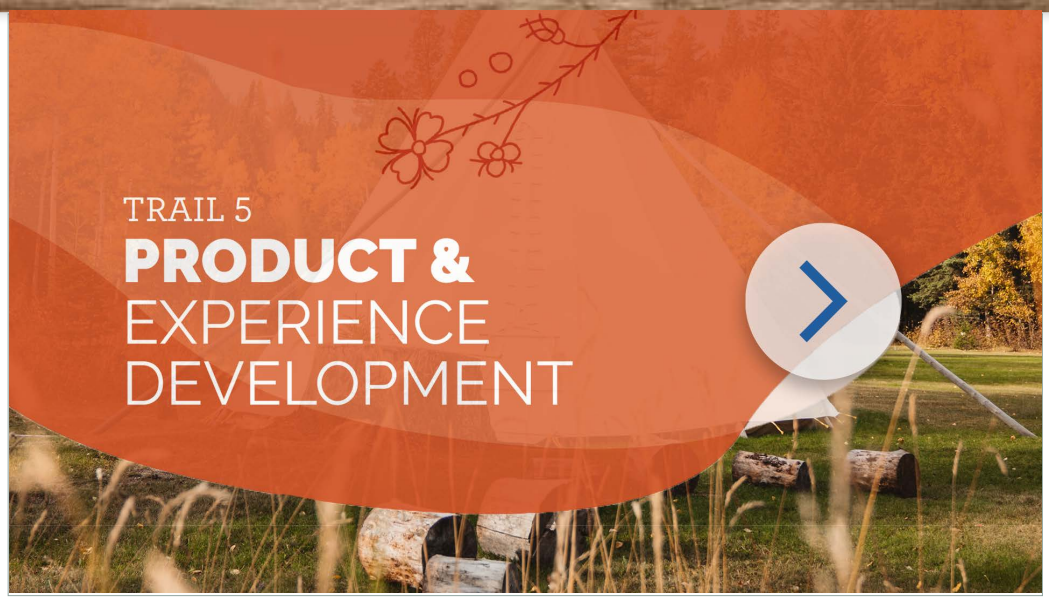
- Designing Meaningful Experiences in Your Community
- Regulations & Operational Requirements
- Creating Engaging Itineraries
- Experience Pricing, Packaging, & Partnerships

Clearing the Trail for Product & Experience Development

Your community's success in implementing grassroots tourism will depend strongly on your ability to offer unique, high-quality visitor experiences and tourism products that meet the expectations of visitors. As you move along this Trail, you will be guided through the process of designing and developing meaningful tourism products and experiences. You will learn about how to create engaging itineraries, how to price and package tourism experiences, the benefits of product development partnerships, and what kinds of regulations and requirements to look out for!

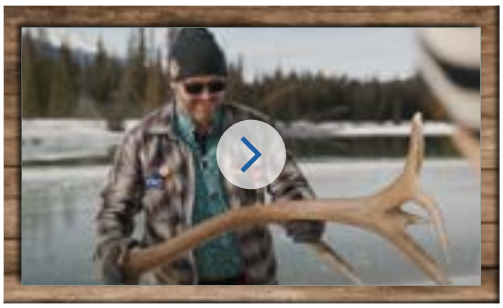


LISTEN TO **YOUR COACH**



INSPIRATION

Become inspired by hearing from Métis-owned, Jasper Tour Company and how they create experiences for visitors that connect them to the land.



Stories Through Our Eyes – Jasper Tour Company

TRAIL 5.1

DESIGNING MEANINGFUL EXPERIENCES IN YOUR COMMUNITY

GUIDANCE – When thinking about what types of tourism products and experiences your community will offer to visitors, one of the most important things is to focus on building off of your community's existing strengths and assets. The following questions were laid out in Trail 4: Do you already have cultural entrepreneurs in your community? What are their skills, passions, and special knowledge? What do they enjoy doing and sharing with others the most? This is an ideal place to start as your community will be both the greatest resource and the greatest beneficiary of grassroots tourism development.

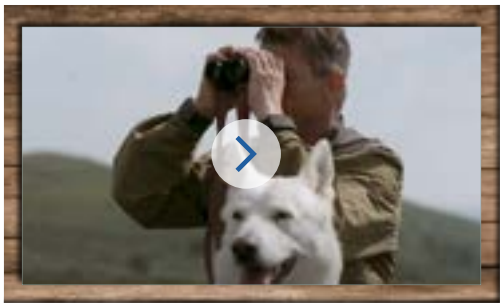
Additionally, for grassroots tourism products and experiences to be meaningful, feasible, and sustainable, they require a combination of three essential qualities:

1. **Cultural Authenticity:** They are appropriate, respectful, and true to the culture being represented
2. **Demand:** There is a strong base of customers who create demand for the products and experiences
3. **Profitability:** They can be sold at a price that the market is willing to pay while creating a profit

Ensuring these 3 qualities are present will help your community to design meaningful grassroots tourism products and experiences, while making your community well-positioned to achieve success and sustainability.

INSPIRATION

In the highlands of Swedish Lapland, Mikael and Anki Vinka live the old way of life as a homage to the people who have roamed this place for thousands of years. Some claim that Geunja is one of the best-kept secrets of Swedish Lapland.



Swedish Lapland stories:
Ep.2 – Geunja, The Sámi Eco-Lodge



GROUNDWORK – Sample Experience Concept

1. Work with your Sharing Circle to develop a sample visitor experience concept. Refer back to your community's Visitor Experience Asset table and Sustainability Matrix as completed in Trail 4 for inspiration. You may also wish to refer back to your work in Trail 3, Cultural Authenticity, to refresh your understanding of what types of experiences your community feels are appropriate to share and how they should be shared.

EXPERIENCE TITLE:	
What is the main theme or story of the experience?	
How will the experience share one or more aspects of your community's culture?	
How will the experience benefit your community?	
What types of visitors will you aim to attract? Consider: • How old are they? • Where do they come from? • What is their income level?	
Who will deliver the experience? (i.e., local guides, interpreters, storytellers, performers, etc.)	
Where will visitors be the most immersed/involved in the experience? These moments can be referred to as the peak or memorable moments.	
How will the experience be immersive using the five senses and hands-on learning activities?	
What will the minimum and maximum group sizes be? (If applicable).	
What resources do you need to deliver the experience? This may include: • Interpreter scripts • Supplies & equipment • Take-away gifts/souvenirs	

CLICK HERE
for an example of a Sample Visitor Experience Concept

TRAIL 5.2

REGULATIONS & OPERATIONAL REQUIREMENTS

GUIDANCE – When designing meaningful tourism products and experiences, it is extremely important to consider any industry requirements or regulations that you may need to follow. Bearing these things in mind in the early stages of development will help your community to avoid problems down the road which may slow down the process of offering authentic grassroots tourism experiences to visitors. Listed below are some key things to consider.

Regulations – Are all applicable business licenses, permits, and regulatory or legislative requirements in place to operate legally and sustainably?

Training – What areas of training are required by the industry and by the specific sector?

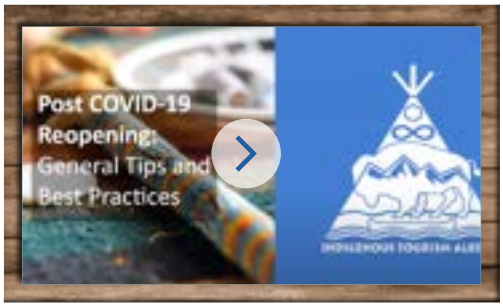
Health & Safety – Do you have all of the necessary safety equipment, first aid trained staff, and emergency preparedness plans? Don't forget to consider how you will comply with any relevant provincial health and safety guidelines relating to COVID-19.

CLICK HERE for more resources and support from the Government of Alberta on navigating regulatory approvals and other areas of tourism entrepreneurship



INSPIRATION

Indigenous Tourism Alberta is happy to provide assistance in helping your community's tourism organization with determining what regulations, training programs, and health and safety issues are required. Here is a webinar that provides guidance for tourism business operators who are re-opening through health and safety best practices. The information provided is based on the recommendations from Alberta Health Services.



Indigenous Tourism Alberta Webinar – Health and Safety

GROUNDWORK – Considerations for Developing Grassroots Tourism Experiences in Your Community

1. Will you need to comply with any regulations or operational requirements to develop your Sample Experience Concept?

2. Will you need to secure any licenses or permits in order to offer your Sample Experience Concept to visitors?

3. How can you adjust your Sample Experience Concept to comply with provincial COVID-19 guidelines such as physical distancing, cleanliness, etc. (if required)?

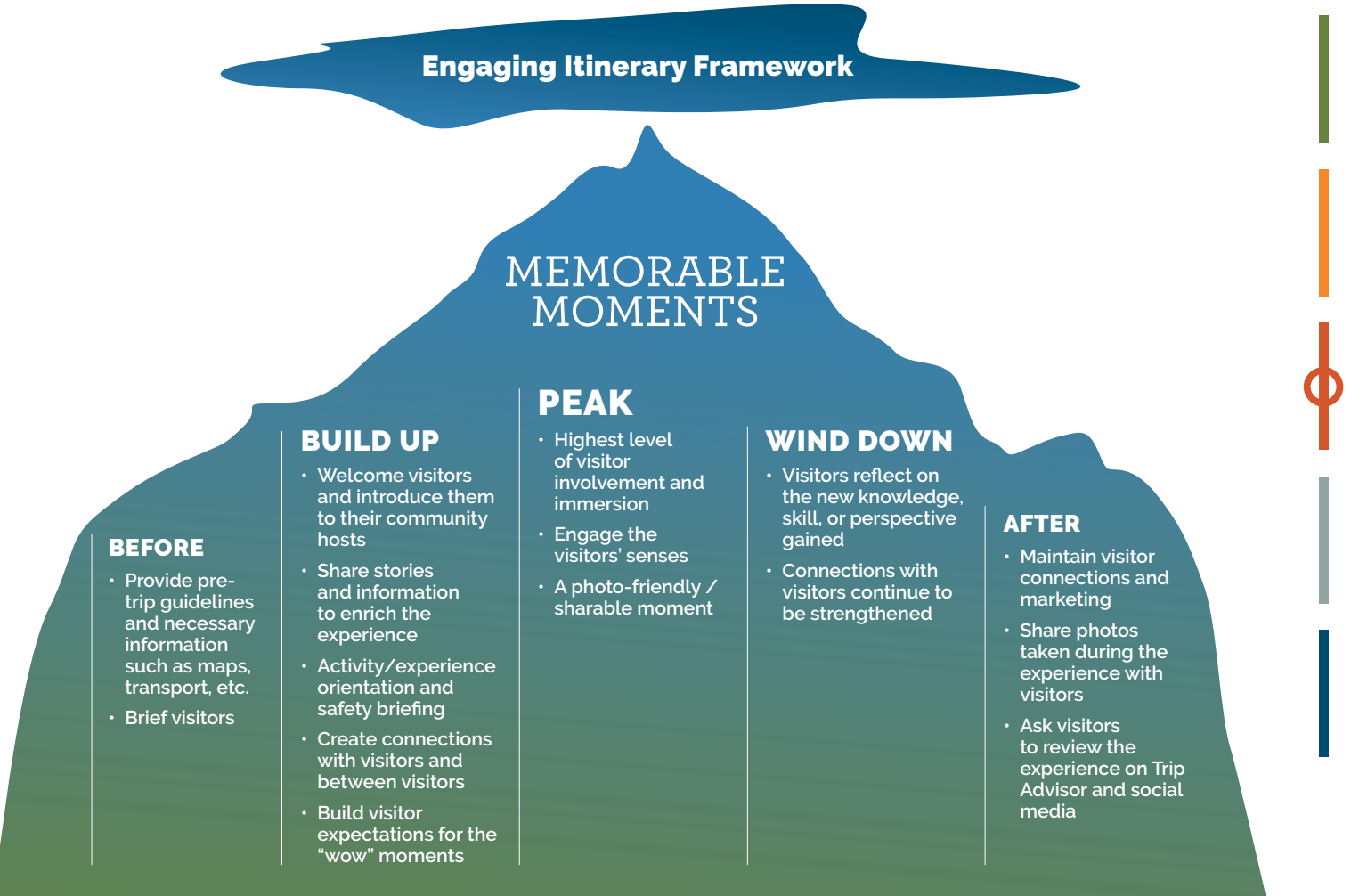
4. Who could you reach out to for more information and insight on regulations for this type of experience? I.e., similar businesses, tourism organizations, consultants, etc.

TRAIL 5.3

CREATING ENGAGING ITINERARIES

GUIDANCE – The next step after preparing a comprehensive visitor experience concept is to create a detailed itinerary for the experience. The itinerary should work to maximize the visitor's engagement throughout the duration of the experience. An effective way to do this is to utilize a storytelling framework in your itinerary design. Focusing the narrative on the people, culture, and places of your community will help you to envision how your grassroots tourism experience will connect with visitors on a deeper level and will ensure they have a meaningful and memorable experience.

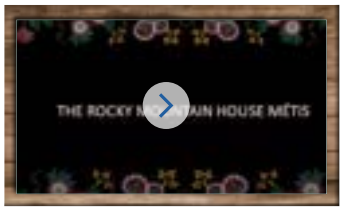
TIP: Once you have developed a grassroots tourism experience, it is a good idea to test it out with people. Ideally this would be with someone who has experience in tourism, such as a tour operator, and also some trusted first guests. Receiving their input will help to make sure the experience is top notch before putting it on the market.



INSPIRATION

The Rocky Mountain House National Historic Site invites its guests to partake in a variety of activities and workshops that allow them to become immersed in learning about Métis trapping, furs, skinning hides, and a variety of other cultural activities such as heritage camping.

Become inspired by learning more about their approach to experience development.



Rocky Mountain House National Historic Site

GROUNDWORK – Sample Experience Itinerary

1. Brainstorm the following itinerary elements based on the sample experience concept you outlined at the beginning of this Trail.

EXPERIENCE TITLE:	
Time & Duration – What time of day will the experience take place and for how long?	
Stages – How will the experience unfold from beginning, middle, to end?	
Location – Where will the experience take place? (If more than one location, note at which stage).	
Peak or memorable moment(s) – When and where will these happen?	
Storytelling – What inside knowledge will visitors learn or discover about your community's culture, history, or environment?	
Engagement – How will visitors be actively involved in the experience and which of their senses will be engaged?	

CLICK HERE for an example of a Sample Experience Itinerary

TRAIL 5.4

EXPERIENCE
PRICING, PACKAGING, & PARTNERSHIPS

GUIDANCE – A crucial part of being successful with product and experience development is setting the right price. You want to ensure that your tourism experiences are priced where the market is willing to pay, while also creating a profit. To do this you will need to factor in all costs relevant to delivering the experience, such as:

- All required resources
- Insurance and permits
- Equitable wages for guides/staff
- Competitive analysis
- Logistics

You will also need to think about the minimum number of visitors required to make an experience profitable, as well as the maximum number of visitors allowed to ensure the experience is delivered sustainably. Additionally, you will add 10% to your determined price in order to set the experience up in a way where travel agencies and other operators will be able to sell the experience in the future without seeing a price change.

Once your community has clearly defined or developed several grassroots tourism experience concepts and itineraries that are priced appropriately, you may choose to think about packaging your community's tourism products and experiences to create one experience for one price. This is an effective way to add value to your community's grassroots tourism experiences, while improving the overall visitor experience and encouraging visitors to stay longer and spend more money in your community.

Packages can be created through partnerships with local businesses to create spin-off benefits for the community. This can include packaging multiple types of products and services such as accommodations, transportation, food and beverage, land-based activities, festivals, cultural workshops, and more. Packages can be offered in different lengths such as a half or full day, a weekend getaway, or an extended trip with multiple locations and activities. Packaging your community's grassroots tourism experiences and working with partners can lead to multiple benefits such as expanding market opportunities, cost savings through shared marketing costs, and increased profitability.

TIP: It is important to ensure that all partners involved are operating at the same quality levels and have the same visitor target markets in order to create a better experience for your community's visitors.

INSPIRATION

Events and celebrations are great ways that showcase a variety of different cultural products and experiences under one large platform. Become inspired for ideas from Alberta's 3rd Annual Métis Fest organized by the Métis Nation of Alberta.

Check out the Government of Alberta's Business Case Assessments for inspiration on exciting product and experience development opportunities such as glamping, guiding, and boutique hotels.

GROUNDWORK – Sample Experience Package

1. Fill in the table below with any individuals, businesses, organizations, or neighbouring communities that your community could potentially partner with to create packages around the Sample Experience Concept you created at the beginning of this Trail. Include a brief description of how the partner will fit into the experience package.

PRODUCT/SERVICE /EXPERIENCE OFFERING	PARTNER	DESCRIPTION
Accommodations		
Attractions		
Food & Beverage		
Transportation Suppliers		
Festivals		
Artisans		
Entertainers		
Other		

CLICK HERE to view Destination Indigenous' Package Directory for inspiration

Your Community's Path Forward & Next Steps

PRODUCT & EXPERIENCE DEVELOPMENT: MAJOR MILESTONES			
Action Item What needs to be done?	**Roles** Who is responsible for achieving this milestone?	**Resources Required** What does your community need in order to achieve this milestone?	**Timeline** When will you achieve this milestone?
Develop one or more Visitor Experience Concepts based on your community's strengths, market demand, and profitability			
Determine how the experience will meet any regulations or operational requirements			
Develop an Experience Itinerary			
Work with partners to develop an Experience Package			



Any other notes or ideas about moving forward:

Questions about Product & Experience Development?

CONTACT
YOUR COACH

TRAIL 6

MARKETING & PARTNERSHIPS

VIEWPOINTS

- Understanding Your Target Markets and Tourism Trends
- Defining Your Brand
- Marketing Content and Channels
- An Introduction to Developing Your Marketing Plan

Clearing the Trail for Marketing & Partnerships in your Community

Marketing is the process in which you determine who your potential visitors will be, what their needs and expectations are, how to reach them, and how to convince them that your community as a destination is the one they should visit. Effective marketing and branding allows potential visitors to feel a connection to a place and its products and services, which is one of the most important elements to developing grassroots tourism experiences.

This Trail will take you on a journey to understand how to create the foundation for a strong community brand which will lead to an increase in visitorship, build awareness, and develop your local tourism industry into a world-class destination. Your community's brand identity will assist in creating a positive image that reflects the people in your community and the land, with a focus on branding the human experience. Having a strong brand identity and creating partnerships with like-minded organizations and businesses are important aspects for starting your tourism organization!

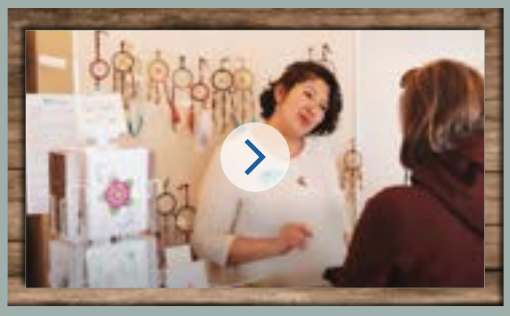


LISTEN TO **YOUR COACH**



INSPIRATION

Meet Moonstone Creation Native Gallery & Giftshop in a video produced by Indigenous Tourism Alberta. They share their story in a beautiful and personable way while educating people about their products and what makes them special.



Meet Moonstone Creation Native Gallery & Giftshop

TRAIL 6.1

UNDERSTANDING YOUR TARGET MARKETS AND TOURISM TRENDS

GUIDANCE – In today's extremely competitive tourism marketplace, understanding the characteristics of the actual and potential target markets is very important, especially for unique and remote destinations. The goal is to design and develop experiences that are aligned with your potential visitors' expectations and appeal to their desires whiles staying true to your community's cultural values.

The tourism industry is constantly evolving, especially when there are global events and changing demands. In addition, new target markets such as the Generation Z segment present a whole set of values and shifts in the industry to consider when creating your community's brand. As mentioned in the first Trail, people are now wanting to understand more about Indigenous cultures and philosophies through experiential learning activities which presents a great opportunity for Indigenous grassroots tourism.

Tips: It is recommended to stay informed about new and emerging trends and adapt your marketing efforts and experiences accordingly.

The Canadian Tourism Commission (CTC)'s Explorer Quotient (EQ) Profiles provide useful insight to understand your potential visitors which will assist with your marketing efforts and product development.

Travel Alberta's Industry Hub also provides up to date information on visitor data for the entire province which can be found here.

Learn more about the opportunities for Indigenous Tourism Businesses in Canada through this Market Snapshot developed by Indigenous Tourism Association of Canada (ITAC) and Destination Canada.

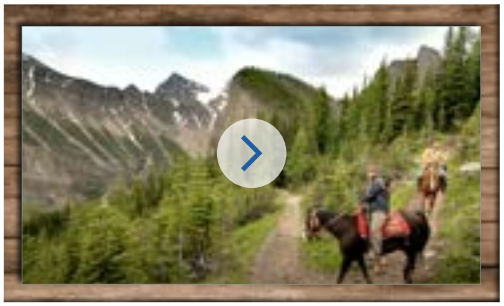
Stay on top of new and emerging market trends by reviewing the Expedia Media Group's study on Family Travel Trends and their study on Generation Z and how they are shaping the travel industry.

INSPIRATION

Learn about Alberta's Ultimate Travellers to help you get a feel for what visitors are looking for:



[The Ultimate Traveller – Who are hotspot hunters?]



[The Ultimate Traveller – Who are curious adventurers?]



CLICK HERE to view a sample of a completed Target Market Persona

GROUNDWORK – Attracting the Right Crowd

1. Determine what type of visitor you would like to attract into your community.

YOUR COMMUNITY'S IDEAL TOURISM TARGET MARKET

Demographics

Age Range:

Income Level:

Low

Family Status:

Single

Location:

City

Visitor Desires

-
-
-
-

Frustrations

-
-
-

Visitor Bio

Personality

Use the radio buttons below to measure these personality traits. Please select only one radio button per row.

Structured	Spontaneous
Thinking	Feeling
Indecisive	Decisive
Introvert	Extrovert

Motivation

Use the check boxes below to rate motivations, 1 being low and 5 being high.

Cultural Immersion & Learning

1 2 3 4 5

Risk & Adventure

1 2 3 4 5

Personal Growth & Transformation

1 2 3 4 5

Responsible/Ethical Travel

1 2 3 4 5

Preferred Channels

Use the check boxes below to rate preferred channels, 1 being low and 5 being high.

Traditional Ads

1 2 3 4 5

Website

1 2 3 4 5

Social Media

1 2 3 4 5

Word of Mouth/Referrals

1 2 3 4 5

2. How will you adjust your marketing efforts to changing demands and major game changers such as global pandemics?

TRAIL 6.2

DEFINING YOUR BRAND

GUIDANCE – Your community's brand will showcase the spirit and identity of your people, its reason for being, the 'why' people should visit, and what makes your place unique and special. This messaging will represent your community and its people and become the main driver to attract visitors. Be personable, real, and represent the collective voice of your community. Your goal is to create a brand that touches the hearts of your potential visitors and entices them to want more.

INSPIRATION

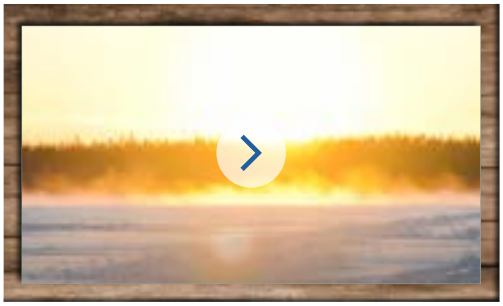
Showcasing your Brand through Dynamic Videos and Imagery

As you watch the following videos think about the following:

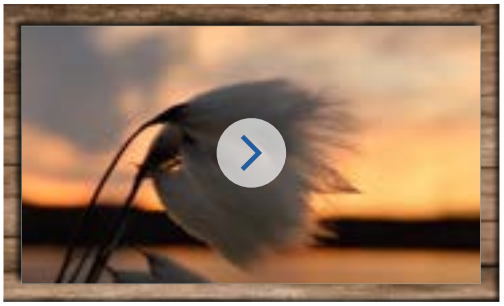
What emotions are triggered?

What stands out in the videos?

What destinations are you drawn to and why?



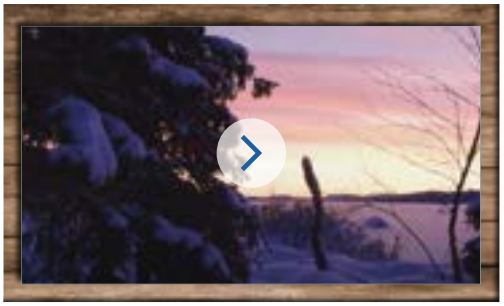
Mistissini Tourism Short Promo



Chesterfield Inlet: Community



Greenland – Rough. Real. Remote.



Swedish Lapland Stories: Arctic Indigenous

GROUNDWORK – Sharing your Community with the World

1. What are the unique qualities of your land?

2. What is special about your community and its people?

3. How will your community allow potential visitors to feel an emotional connection?

4. In 1-2 sentences describe why people should visit your community.
   Note: This message will become the basis for the brand of your community.

TRAIL 6.3

MARKETING CONTENT AND CHANNELS

GUIDANCE – Marketing Channels: How will you entice people to visit your community?

A marketing channel is the way information about your tourism products and services will reach your potential visitors. Defining which marketing channels you would like to use is critical to creating a well-planned marketing strategy for your community.

In today's world, a focus on your community's digital marketing strategy is critical. From research to booking to executing their travel plans, the vast majority of travellers rely on online resources. It is important to embrace today's digital world and seek opportunities to share your community using technology, which can be in the form of images, videos, a website, apps, social media, and influencers.

Another important marketing channel is partnerships. Partnerships in marketing are important when it comes to creating awareness and cost-effective solutions for promoting your community. By aligning yourself with local, regional, provincial, and national Indigenous tourism partners you will expand your market reach exponentially.



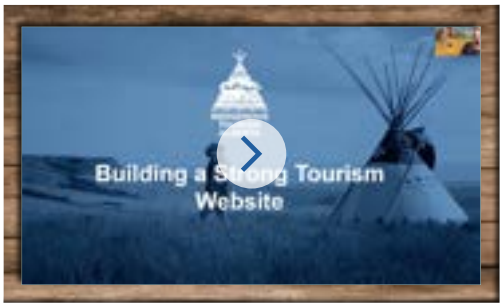
TIP: Once you have selected your marketing channels, you should evaluate their results to determine how effective they are and if they are worth the time and investment.

Here is an example of how you can evaluate the Return on Investment (ROI) for your tourism marketing channels:

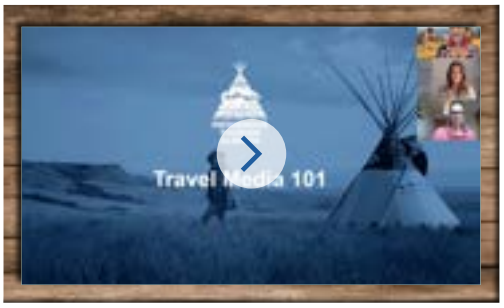
MARKETING CHANNEL	REVENUE GENERATED	INVESTMENT	ROI
Facebook Page	$ 5,000	$ 500	10
Influencer	$ 50,000	$ 2,500	20
Print Media	$ 250,000	$ 40,000	6.25

INSPIRATION

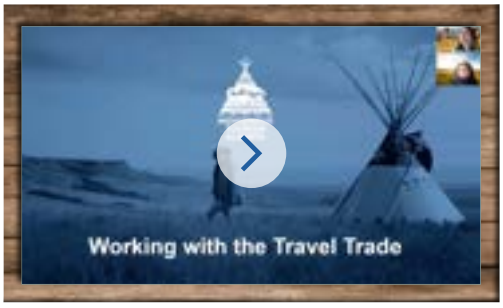
Indigenous Tourism Alberta has developed a webinar series that provides a wealth of information on marketing and promoting Indigenous tourism. Here are some that may inspire you for determining what marketing channels to use for your community.



ITA Webinar – Creating a Strong Tourism Website



ITA Webinar – Working with Travel Media



ITA Webinar – Working with Travel Trade



Indigenous Tourism Alberta Webinar – Creating Engaging Content

GROUNDWORK – Spreading the Word

1. Do you have an online presence that currently promotes your community? If yes, what online marketing tools do you currently use?

2. Create a list of additional marketing channels you would like to invest in to reach your potential audience.

3. Create a list of all of your current travel-trade partnerships and potential new partners.

   Note: An example of a partnership could be with Indigenous Tourism Alberta, Indigenous Tourism Association of Canada, Travel Alberta, and a Regional Tourism Association. An example of a travel trade partnership is with a travel agency and/or tour operator.

TRAIL 6.4

INTRODUCTION TO DEVELOPING YOUR MARKETING PLAN

GUIDANCE – A Marketing Plan sets direction for promoting your community as a tourism destination. It will provide recommendations for promoting your tourism attractions and activities as well as inviting travellers to explore your community as a whole.

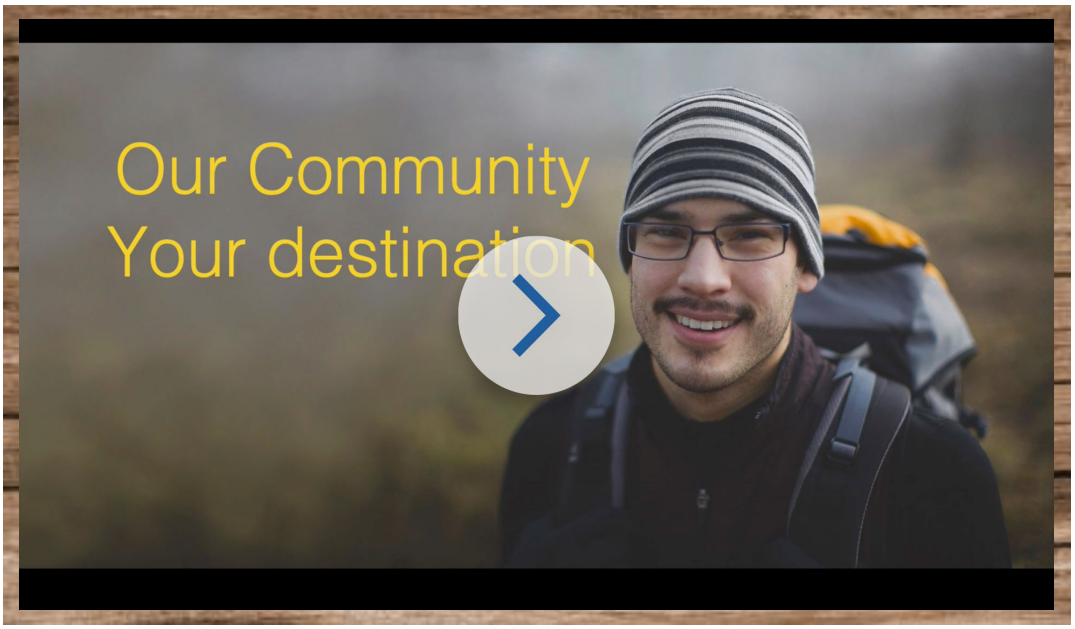
A Marketing Plan will include the following:

- Define strategic partnerships
- Competitive analysis
- Brand identity which may include logo, tagline, and messaging
- Target markets
- Trends in the industry
- Define what marketing channels are best suited for your community
- Connectivity with partners and thematic routes
- Implementation Plan and Awareness Campaign
- Financials and budget information



INSPIRATION

Learn how a Marketing Plan will help guide you towards implementing grassroots tourism initiatives in your community.



GROUNDWORK – Developing a Bold Brand for your Community

1. What are the opportunities for marketing and partnerships for your community?

2. What are some of the challenges related to marketing and partnerships for your community?

Your Community's Path Forward & Next Steps

Fill in the table below to define your community's next steps.

MARKETING & PARTNERSHIPS: MAJOR MILESTONES			
Action Item What needs to be done?	**Roles** Who is responsible for achieving this milestone?	**Resources Required** What does your community need in order to achieve this milestone?	**Timeline** When will you achieve this milestone?
Develop your logo, tagline, and marketing messages			
Enhance or develop an online presence (e.g. website)			
Create partnerships to expand your market reach			
Develop a Marketing Plan			

Any other notes or ideas about moving forward:

Questions about Marketing & Partnerships?

CONTACT **YOUR COACH**

TRAIL 7

PLANNING & ORGANIZATION

VIEWPOINTS

- Goal Setting – Creating your Long-Term Vision
- Operational Management
- Financials and Budgeting
- Evaluating your Progress

Clearing the Trail for Planning and Organization – Putting Your Community First

When creating your community's vision for developing tourism it is important to move forward with a unified vision. Your path forward should strive towards supporting and developing initiatives that respect your values, preserve your culture, and protect your way of life for the benefit of your Settlement or Nation's people, environment, and economy. You will find that your plan for grassroots tourism needs to be flexible and adapt to the local and global realities of building a responsible and sustainable tourism industry; however, your community's values should not be compromised.

Your planning and organizational structure for grassroots tourism will ensure that all decisions are made with the best interests of your community members in mind. This approach will involve community members, Elders, and Youth in the decision-making process, and will be centered around local entrepreneurship and community capacity. By being rooted in the local community, supporting local entrepreneurs, and inspiring organic growth, tourism in your community will be developed responsibly and sustainably.

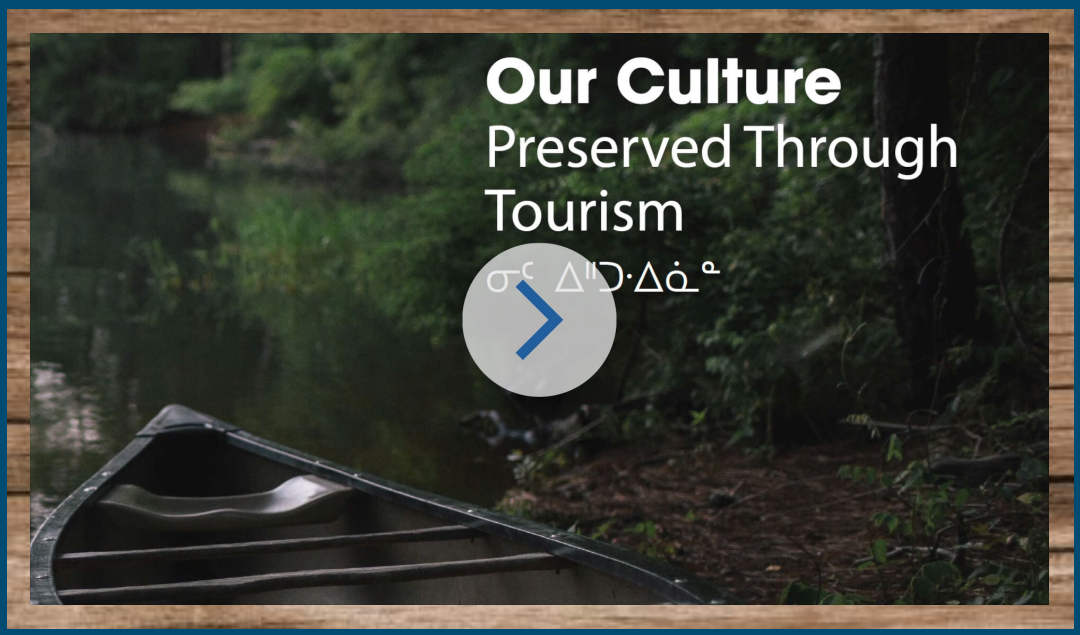
This Trail will take you on a journey that will help create a realistic long-term vision for your local tourism industry and provide recommendations on how to start your own tourism organization!

LISTEN TO **YOUR COACH**



INSPIRATION

Learn how the Cree Nation of Mistissini took the initiative to develop a 20-year Tourism Strategy that mapped out their long-term vision for grassroots tourism development.



TRAIL 7.1

GOAL SETTING – CREATING YOUR LONG-TERM VISION

GUIDANCE – When moving forward with tourism development in your community, it is essential to map out the concepts, key initiatives, and action plans required to provide guidance and set direction for tourism planning for the immediate time and well into the future.

An innovative planning tool that provides an organic approach to implementing sustainable tourism development is CES's Pando Terra™ methodology. Pando Terra™ - loosely translated from Latin – means to 'spread earth', it represents the roots of sustainable development by way of community initiatives and projects, encouraging community advancement, and allowing for true grassroots growth to take place.

Pando Terra™ focuses on seven holistic elements that link to one common goal for sustainable development:

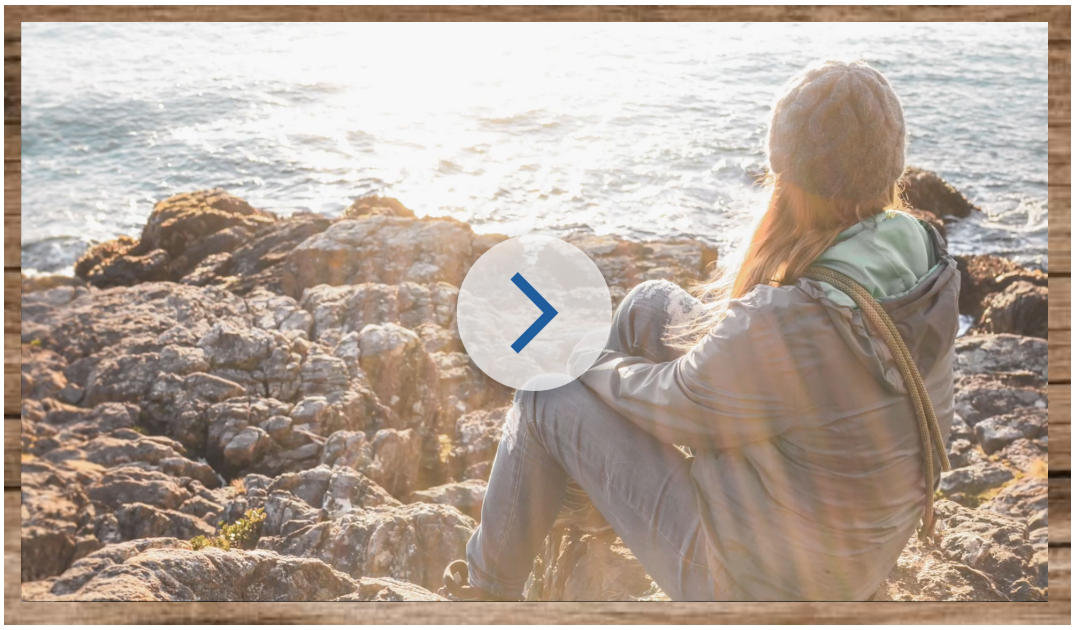
Each element can be addressed independently, though the interconnectedness of each will quickly become clear. It is designed for integrated community development, where the success of one element will enable success in others.

The Pando Terra™ model can be used as a planning tool and an organizational management tool for moving forward with starting your tourism organization and growing your local tourism industry.



INSPIRATION

Learn about a holistic approach to Planning and Organizational development that uses Indigenous ways to implement grassroots community development initiatives.





GROUNDWORK – Mapping out your Vision for Tourism

1. Project Visioning exercise – Share your ideas for how tourism will evolve in your community using the 7 Pando Terra™ elements.



TRAIL 7.2

OPERATIONAL MANAGEMENT

GUIDANCE – There are many different types of operational management models that support sustainable grassroots tourism. The goal is to ensure a sense of inclusivity, pride, and ownership amongst your community members while creating positive social, environmental, economic, and cultural results (SEEC Model). It is important to define clear roles, responsibilities, and accountability amongst your community's leadership, and other community members such as Elders, Cultural Coordinators, and Youth Leaders.

Some examples of grassroots tourism operational management approaches:

- **Community Tourism Committee** – a volunteer-based committee selected by the community members comprised of individuals with diverse backgrounds which may include Elders, Youth, Cultural Coordinators, Artists, local business owners, and leadership.
- **Internal Leadership** such as Economic Development Officer, Tourism Coordinator / Officer, and relevant departments taking a leading role on tourism development initiatives.
- **Social Enterprise** – A community-owned business entity that manages tourism initiatives in which the profits gained are invested back into community programming.
- **AIM™ Model** – The Authentic Indigenous Moments Model™ (AIM) is a digital platform, managed by the community, that highlights the region's Cultural Entrepreneurs and connects visitors directly with local guides. Local Cultural Entrepreneurs' tourism products will be featured under one centralized system.
- **Spontaneous Tourism Model™** – An innovative approach to managing tourism experiences through a community Receptive Tour Operator. For example, a visitor calls the Tourism Coordinator, expresses an interest in various activities in the community, and the Tourism Coordinator then recruits Guides to deliver the request. This model becomes an incubator for new products, entrepreneurs, and inspiration for new and existing businesses.

INSPIRATION

A Social Enterprise is a great Management Model to implement when moving forward with starting your grassroots tourism organization. Here is a video about Skwachàys Lodge, a boutique Vancouver hotel with a social mission that made Time Magazine's 2018 World's Greatest Places list and successfully enhanced business sustainability and built community pride.



Social EnterPrize Recipient 2019: Skwachàys Lodge



GROUNDWORK – Using an Inclusive Model for Management



TRAIL 7.3

FINANCIALS AND BUDGETING

GUIDANCE – When moving forward in growing your local tourism industry it is important to set realistic goals which will help determine the total budget required to implement your desired tourism initiatives. It is recommended to develop a budget that addresses the immediate investment required to kick-start your local tourism industry as well as a budget that addresses your long-term vision.

The budget could capture various aspects of tourism development, such as:

- Capital Development Projects
- Community Engagement
- Support for Education, Training & Recognition Programs
- Product Development Support
- Protection and Promotion of Cultural Resources
- Awareness, Branding & Marketing
- Planning, Partnerships, and Investment

Each aspect will lay out the short, medium, and long-term budgets and determine if the investment will come from your community or an outside partner/funding source.

As an example, you may want to pursue hiring a Tourism Coordinator in your community. So you will need to define a timeline and subsequent budget for this initiative.



INSPIRATION

Learn about the importance of mapping out a budget that addresses your short-term goals for kickstarting grassroots tourism development.





GROUNDWORK – Investing in Your Community

1. Think back to the results of your community's Sustainability Matrix in Trail 4. What kinds of developments does your community require to support a sustainable local tourism industry?

2. What new Indigenous tourism product or experience will your community pursue?

3. Click here to complete your Tourism Planning Budget. Once you've completed your Budget, transfer the information to the table below.

CLICK HERE to view a sample of a Summary Budget

ESTIMATED TOURISM DEVELOPMENT BUDGET SUMMARY

5 Year Estimated Tourism Development Budget	Short Term Year 1	Med Term Year 2 - 3	Long Term Year 4 - 5
Planning and Organization	$	$	$
Capital Development	$	$	$
Product Development	$	$	$
Awareness, Branding & Marketing	$	$	$
Planning, Partnerships, and Investment	$	$	$
TOTAL	$	$	$

TRAIL 7.4

EVALUATING YOUR PROGRESS – GROWING SUSTAINABLY

GUIDANCE – It is recommended to employ a 'grow as you go' model. This will help to ensure that tourism development moves forward gradually with the proper research and financial planning, and that it is warranted by market demand This approach to growth will be conservative and mindful of the impact on the community members socially and financially. The development of your community's tourism experiences will be executed using stages of growth and milestones that are attainable, manageable, and adaptable to local and global realities. When implemented correctly, the 'grow as you go' approach to tourism development, has great potential to preserve First Nations and Métis culture and heritage while resulting in socio-economic growth in your community.

Five Strategic Objectives for sustainable growth are as follows:

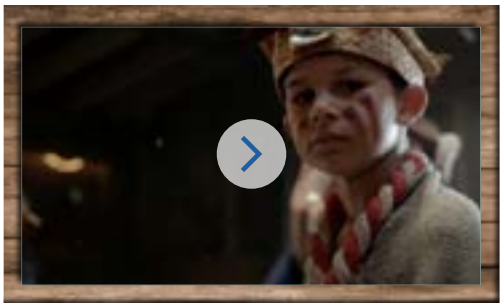
1. **Ensure** a common understanding of the cultural, historical, and natural value of your community
2. **Ensure** all tourism-related development strengthens the culture of your people and minimizes negative environmental impacts through collaborative and participatory efforts
3. **Empower** your community to improve their welfare by engaging in sustainable tourism opportunities
4. **Develop** a visitor management system that enhances your tourism offerings while minimizing negative impacts
5. **Encourage** the development of sustainable tourism products and services that respect the cultural values of your community

These Strategic Objectives should be followed to ensure sustainable economic growth, social benefits, and cultural preservation are at the forefront of tourism development initiatives in your community.

When setting goals for moving forward it is important to reflect and evaluate the progress on a yearly basis. By doing this, you will be able to adapt to local realities and unforeseen circumstances that may arise such as a global pandemic.

INSPIRATION

Here's a video from Indigenous Tourism BC that demonstrates how they adapted their marketing approach based on dealing with a global pandemic.



Everything is Connected

GROUNDWORK – Nurturing Growth with Sustainability

1. Envision what you would like to see happen over the next 5 years with grassroots tourism development in your community.

2. How will you evaluate the progress to reach these goals?

3. What are potential roadblocks?

4. How will you mitigate the potential roadblocks?

Your Community's Path Forward & Next Steps

Fill in the table below to define your community's next steps.

PLANNING & ORGANIZATION: MAJOR MILESTONES			
Action Item What needs to be done?	**Roles** Who is responsible for achieving this milestone?	**Resources Required** What does your community need in order to achieve this milestone?	**Timeline** When will you achieve this milestone?
Establish a Tourism Committee in your community			
Facilitate a Tourism Visioning Session with your community's leadership			
Present Vision to community leadership			
Obtain approval from leadership to move forward with tourism			
Hire a Tourism Coordinator			
Develop an Operational Management Plan for tourism in your community			
Secure funding and investment for tourism development			

Any other notes or ideas about moving forward:

Questions about Planning & Organization?

CONTACT **YOUR COACH**

Congratulations – you have reached the end of ITA's Indigenous Cultural Tourism Pathway!

CLICK HERE to view a Go Forward worksheet

On behalf of ITA, we want to thank you for being a leader in your community and for the time and effort you put into taking the next steps in growing grassroots tourism in your community. This is just the beginning, and we are so excited to see you put your community's tourism vision into action!

Now that you have completed the 7 Trails, explored your aspirations, and worked through the groundwork elements, you can now take your new knowledge and apply it to your local reality with a detailed Go Forward Strategy (below). This tool summarizes all of the critical action items that were outlined at the end of each Trail and can be used as a master reference to track your community's progress in developing grassroots tourism.

STARTING YOUR TOURISM ORGANIZATION: MAJOR MILESTONES			
Action Item What needs to be done?	**Status** Incomplete, In Progress, Complete.	**Resources Required** Who and what your community needs in order to achieve this milestone?	**Timeline** When will you achieve this milestone?
Develop a Vision Statement for your community's grassroots tourism journey			
Develop and deliver an Engagement Strategy for your community			
Implement an Internal Awareness Campaign			
Measure and evaluate the results of your Engagement Strategy			
Manage ongoing Community Awareness			
Incorporate cultural authenticity considerations into your community's Engagement Strategy			
Develop Cultural Authenticity Guidelines for your community based on engagement results			
Develop pre-trip Visitor Guidelines for your community and determine how they will be shared			
Seek out the Cultural Entrepreneurs in your community			

STARTING YOUR TOURISM ORGANIZATION: MAJOR MILESTONES (CONT.)			
Action Item What needs to be done?	**Status** Incomplete, In Progress, Complete.	**Resources Required** Who and what your community needs in order to achieve this milestone?	**Timeline** When will you achieve this milestone?
Complete Resource Inventory of cultural and natural features in your community			
Develop GIS Map of your community's assets			
Complete Sustainability Matrix			
Develop one or more Visitor Experience Concepts			
Determine how the experience will meet any regulations or operational requirements			
Develop an Experience Itinerary			
Work with partners to develop an Experience Package			
Develop your logo, tagline, and marketing messages			
Enhance or develop an online presence (e.g. website)			
Create partnerships to expand your market reach			

STARTING YOUR TOURISM ORGANIZATION: MAJOR MILESTONES (CONT.)			
Action Item What needs to be done?	**Status** Incomplete, In Progress, Complete.	**Resources Required** Who and what your community needs in order to achieve this milestone?	**Timeline** When will you achieve this milestone?
Develop a Marketing Plan			
Establish a Tourism Committee in your community			
Facilitate a Tourism Visioning Session with your community's leadership			
Present vision to community leadership			
Obtain community leadership approval to move forward with tourism.			
Hire a Tourism Coordinator			
Develop an Operational Management Plan for tourism in your community			
Secure funding and investment for tourism development			

Remember to reach out to ITA for guidance and support when needed throughout your tourism journey, including asking for assistance for action items that require funding.

Your Path Forward workbook is complete – great work!

Keep On Track

The table below can be used to track your community's efforts and progress towards fulfilling your grassroots tourism aspirations, the financial resources required and the funding that has been approved for your initiatives. Reflecting on the work you've completed throughout the Pathway and in consideration of your community's tourism aspirations, complete the following table indicating the actual budget of each activity and the funding that has been approved for that activity and lastly the shortfall of what is still required.

CLICK HERE to view a sample of a Funding Table

REQUIRED START-UP FUNDING - SHORT TERM BUDGET			
Action Items	**Actual Budget**	**Funding Approved**	**Shortfall**
Planning & Organization			
Human Resources			
Committee Budget			
Tourism Coordinator Position			
Capacity Building - Training & Coaching (Tourism Coordinator)			
Hire Administrative Assistant			
Product Development Coordinator			
Operational			
Develop an Operational Management Plan for Tourism in your Community			
Create Organizational Legal Structure & Governance			
Board Governance & Training			
Facilitate a Tourism Visioning Session with your community's Leadership			
Secure Office Space			
Operating & Maintenance Expenses			
Elder Honorariums			
Capital Development			
Product Development			
Develop an Operational Management Plan for Tourism in your Community			
Develop GIS Map of your community's assets			
Protection and promotion of Cultural Resources			
Develop Interpretive Master Plan			
Awareness, Branding & Marketing			
Develop Marketing Plan			
Website Development			
Develop your logo, tagline, and marketing messages			
Planning, Partnerships, and Investment			
TOTAL			

INDIGENOUS TOURISM ALBERTA

Indigenous Tourism Alberta (ITA) is a non-profit organization devoted to help grow and promote authentic, sustainable, and culturally rich Indigenous tourism experiences we want to share with the world.

Indigenous Tourism Alberta acknowledges that we are on traditional territories in Alberta, home to many First Nations, Métis, and Inuit who have called these territories home for time immemorial. We acknowledge with respect the traditional territories of Treaty 6, 7, 8, 4, and 10. We also acknowledge the homelands of the Métis, the 8 Métis Settlements, the 6 Métis Regions of the Métis Nation of Alberta, and the diverse histories and cultures of all the Indigenous Peoples of this province.

The content and information including all models, processes, tools, methodologies, and templates as well as terminology and products such as SEEC, Authentic Indigenous Moments (AIM™), Pando Terra, Four Ps of Cultural Authenticity, Sustainability Matrix, Bold Brand and the Spontaneous Tourism Model contained within this Pathway Guide are proprietary of Canadian Ecotourism Services (CES) and may not be reproduced without the written permission of author Clinton Belcher.

*Some concepts within the Pathway Guide may have been adapted from certain sources such as CTO CBT Handbook and other sources mentioned throughout. Videos used give recognition to their original sources. *Image credit: Indigenous Tourism Alberta, worldwide web & CES.*

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