

Frequently Asked Questions



**INDIGENOUS TOURISM
DESTINATION FUND**

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About the Indigenous Tourism Association of Canada

What is the Indigenous Tourism Association of Canada (ITAC), and what is its mandate?

ITAC is a national Indigenous tourism organization dedicated to fostering the growth of Indigenous tourism across Canada. Its mandate encompasses marketing leadership and the development of experiences, partnerships, and leadership within the Indigenous tourism sector.

Is ITAC Indigenous-led?

Yes, ITAC is Indigenous-led, with its **Board of Directors** comprised of Indigenous individuals representing each province and territory in Canada. The Directors represent Indigenous-owned and controlled organizations and are nominated and elected by members in each province and territory. Additionally, 75% of the ITAC staff is Indigenous.

About the Indigenous Tourism Destination Fund

What is the Indigenous Tourism Destination Fund (ITDF), and how does it work?

The ITDF is an initiative by ITAC aimed at supporting Indigenous tourism growth through contributions from partner businesses. Contributions can be made through various flexible models and are invested in development, marketing, partnerships and leadership. It aims to enhance the economic and sociocultural well-being of Indigenous Peoples, including community and entrepreneurship for First Nations, Métis and Inuit-owned businesses.

ITAC is working towards its strategy to make Canada the global leader in Indigenous tourism. To make that strategy a reality, ITAC has laid out an investment path that supports the required industry growth through investments in three priority areas:

- Infrastructure & Destination Development
- Building a Sustainable Tourism Workforce
- Business Development and Promotion

Why is ITAC advancing the ITDF?

ITAC's research has identified an investment need of more than \$2.6B to meet the demand for Indigenous experiences for both domestic and international travellers to Canada.

To meet this demand, ITAC has proposed an investment strategy across its four pillars (development, marketing, partnerships and leadership). ITAC also recognizes that the Indigenous tourism industry must find its own source of revenue to meet this goal and to stop relying exclusively on government funding.

Indigenous tourism is also an effective way for Indigenous communities to diversify their economies for present and future generations. It is also a key component of the Canadian government's new **Federal Tourism Growth Strategy**, which is designed to grow tourism in Canada by 40%.

Moreover, tourism in Canada is driven in large part by destination marketing fees, which Indigenous communities are not eligible to access. This is one of several systemic barriers to address within the tourism industry. The ITDF was created to attract investments through a similar design process and as the first of its kind in the world.

Is the ITDF a tax or mandatory fee?

No, the ITDF is not a tax; it is a voluntary opt-in program. It offers flexibility in contribution models, allowing partners to choose a mechanism that aligns with their business. Regardless of whether it's based on a percentage or flat fee, the contribution expense is ultimately passed to the end consumer. Consumers are provided information about the fund and how they are supporting Indigenous tourism in Canada through their contribution.

Transparency and Reporting

How does ITAC ensure transparency and accountability when managing the ITDF?

ITAC regularly reports to partners on the allocation of contributions, conducts yearly audits of the ITDF, and ensures transparency in fund administration through reports that are produced twice yearly and shared publicly to maintain accountability.

Partnering for Change

How can individuals and businesses support reconciliation through the ITDF?

By contributing to the ITDF, partners support progress toward reconciliation, as outlined in the **Truth and Reconciliation Commission's Call to Action #92**. Participation in Indigenous tourism experiences also fosters reconciliation by promoting understanding and appreciation of Indigenous cultures. This fund supports reconciliation by helping advance economic and sociocultural benefits for Indigenous-owned businesses and their respective communities.

Who can participate in the ITDF?

Indigenous and non-Indigenous businesses are encouraged to participate in the ITDF. Individuals can also contribute to the fund through an ITDF partner or direct contributions.

How do businesses become involved with the ITDF?

Businesses can complete this **online form to get started**. ITAC will then contact the business to get started on the process.

Here is what you can expect after that:

- An ITAC staff member will contact the business to review the ITDF and answer any questions about the fund.
- A contract will be sent for review, which outlines how to collect the fees and what payment schedules and reporting will be shared.
- Once executed, ITAC will share and celebrate! ITAC will develop a plan to share the exciting news of the new partnership.
- Reporting of funds collected and their allocations will be shared with partners in July and December annually.

Where can I find more information about Indigenous tourism experiences in Canada?

For more information about Indigenous tourism experiences individuals can visit **DestinationIndigenous.ca**, which features Indigenous-owned tourism operators from across Canada, offering a variety of authentic cultural experiences. Additionally, **ITAC** and **each of the provincial and territorial associations** provide resources and information on their respective websites.

Investment Plan

How does the ITDF investment align with ITAC's vision for Indigenous tourism?

ITAC's vision is to create program self-sufficiency for members and partners over time as we implement ITDF partners. The ITDF prioritizes infrastructure, human resources, development and marketing to support Indigenous tourism growth, aligning with ITAC's strategy for Canada to become a global leader in Indigenous tourism by 2030.

This is the first time I have heard about the ITDF; where has this information been shared publicly?

ITAC has communicated publicly to members through the following channels:

- ITDF Website
- Twitter
- LinkedIn
- Newsletter Inclusions
- Members Webinar: Indigenous Tourism Destination Fund (October 26, 2023)
- Annual General Meeting Update (December 14, 2023)
- Corporate Presentations since August 2023

For future updates, please consider signing up for ITAC's newsletter and follow corporate social media channels.

Will this money stay in my province or territory?

ITAC's Board of Directors developed a formula to equitably target each province and territory based on the size of their Indigenous tourism economy. This formula is updated over time and is aligned with the Conference Board of Canada's economic impact studies. The current funding model is based on **ITAC's 2021 Economic Update**.

How can I access the resources collected through the ITDF?

ITAC members may access funding through ITAC programming as available.

This depends on the success of the ITDF and its resulting funding allocations, which may be delivered in partnership with their local provincial and territorial Indigenous tourism association. Program updates are shared weekly in ITAC's newsletter.

If I am a partner in my province, how can I ensure that the money remains in the province I am from?

ITDF partners can rely on regular reporting from ITAC that will indicate both the partner's contributions and overall contributions to the fund. Reports will be produced twice yearly, in July and December, sharing where and how the contributions were invested.

Why can ITAC not currently access resources collected by hotels?

Tourism funding in Canada is driven in large part by destination marketing fees.

Indigenous communities are not eligible to access these fees due to Indigenous reserve lands being (most often) outside the jurisdiction of the municipalities.

When does ITAC start distributing the funding?

ITAC's 2024-25 Action Plan provides a roadmap for investing over \$21M to support leadership partnership, development, and marketing. The ITAC budget included revenues from the ITDF of approximately \$11M to enhance several tactics. Funds achieved outside of government funding will supplement ITAC programming with spending outlined in the ITDF spending allocations.

Does ITAC support provincial and territorial Indigenous tourism associations with this funding?

One of the key ITDF investments in 2024-2025 is \$2.2M to increase support for provincial and territorial Indigenous tourism partners. This is more than double the contributions made in previous years to the provinces and territories.

To learn more about investments by province and territory, click [here](#).

How does ITAC measure where the money is coming from and how it gets allocated?

There are partner contracts signed with financial tracking for contributions. This fund is designed to support each of the provincial and territorial Indigenous tourism associations and the membership across the country. This supports and improves development of experiences, partnerships, and leadership within the Indigenous tourism sector.

I'm interested in learning more about ITAC's action plan and budget, where can I get more information?

Learn more about ITAC's 2024-25 Action plan including the budget [here](#).

The ITDF sounds like a great idea, but how does ITAC plan to return those funds to Indigenous businesses/entrepreneurs?

ITAC's Board of Directors developed a formula to equitably target each province and territory based on the size of their Indigenous tourism economy. This formula is updated over time and is aligned with the Conference Board of Canada's economic impact studies. The current funding model is based on **ITAC's 2021 Economic Update**.

Additionally, businesses can complete this **online form** to get started. ITAC will then contact the business to get started on the process.

To learn more about investment by province and territory, click **here**.

Why is only roughly \$2.2M divided by 13 provinces? Why is there a significant portion going back to ITAC?

Allocations for these funds are outlined on our website here.

ITAC represents the Indigenous tourism industry nationally and has ambitious plans to grow it nationwide. There must be a unified strategy and investment nationwide to succeed. All Indigenous businesses will benefit from this strategy.

ITAC is a national non-profit that relies on funding to support program delivery and continuation of existing programs. In its overall investment strategy, ITAC estimates that less than 4% of the overall budget will go to administration.

How was the ITDF developed?

The ITDF was developed by the ITAC Board of Directors and Leadership Team as a means to generate stable revenue to support the needs of the Indigenous tourism industry. It is an Indigenous-led approach with a goal of making Canada the world leader in Indigenous tourism by 2030, which requires investments of \$2.6B. Being practical that federal investments will not endure an ask of this size, this is a way for the tourism industry at large to rally behind the strategy and engage their visitors in this program as an act of reconciliation.

The fund was developed in collaboration with the ITAC Board of Directors, which represents majority-owned and controlled Indigenous tourism businesses and provincial and territorial Indigenous tourism associations. Members have been presented information about the fund at presentations across the country at key industry events, association annual general meetings and ITAC's Annual General Meeting. ITAC also hosted a webinar in fall 2023.