



# Tourism 2025:

## ROADMAP TO RECOVERY

APRIL 2021



# Tourism 2025: Roadmap to Recovery

## Message from the Minister of Industry, Tourism and Investment – Honourable Caroline Wawzonek

The importance of tourism has never been as clear as it has been through the COVID-19 pandemic.

Staycations made us tourists in our hometowns; and allowed us to experience the full wonder and adventure of the spectacular territory that we call home.

They reminded us of the value that exists in our territory's natural beauty, wide horizons, and wilderness landscapes. The lure of our Aurora-lit winter wonderland and rich, Indigenous cultural heritage; its outdoor adventures, pristine waterways and sun-lit summer nights mean visitors to our territory and revenue for our industry.

COVID-19 opened our eyes to how much tourism contributes to the businesses, services and people that add to our quality of life.

And, it emphasized how important visitors are to our territory and its economy.

It is into this environment of renewed awareness and appreciation that we are introducing a new investment strategy for our territory's tourism industry; a plan that looks beyond the immediate impacts of COVID-19 to consider how best to reposition our tourism industry for the future.

Within this strategy, you will discover the many ways we are investing in tourism, building on our past successes and introducing new initiatives. Working together, we will overcome the challenges from COVID-19 and will realize a stronger future for tourism in the NWT.

**Honourable Caroline Wawzonek**  
*Minister of Industry, Tourism and Investment*



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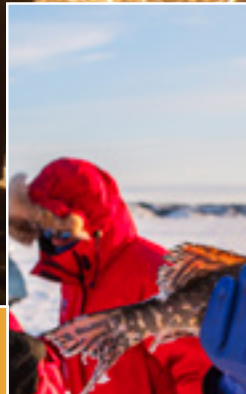


**COVID-19** opened our eyes to how much tourism contributes to the businesses, services and people that add to our quality of life.

A large photograph of a sunset over water. The sun is low on the horizon, creating a bright, shimmering path of light across the water's surface. In the middle ground, two people are silhouetted in a canoe. In the foreground, two Adirondack chairs are silhouetted against the bright light of the sunset. The overall mood is peaceful and scenic.

**What we learned may be surprising.** While the reasons behind their priorities may have changed, the fundamental needs of the industry had not.

NORTH SLAVE REGION | J. F. BERGERON ■ NWTTOURISM / GNWT ITI



## Executive Summary

This tourism strategy has been developed in an economic environment that differs vastly from previous iterations.

Instead of expanding and improving upon its growth and success, the Northwest Territories (NWT) tourism industry finds itself, with the support of the Government of the Northwest Territories, facing a significant period of recovery and rebuilding.

So much so, in fact, that engagement to inform this strategy occurred twice. When it became apparent just how significant the impacts of COVID-19 would be, an additional dialogue was opened with tourism operators and their representatives to reconsider the priorities that had been set.

What we learned may be surprising. While the reasons behind their priorities may have changed, the fundamental needs of the industry had not. The message from the tourism industry was clear, government investment is needed – more now than ever – in tourism infrastructure, industry and product development, communication and market research.

### **This strategy reflects these priorities.**

While its objectives include the recovery of the NWT's tourism industry from the COVID-19 pandemic, Tourism 2025 is, first and foremost, an investment plan designed to build on past successes and proven programs and initiatives.

Supported by an established commitment to destination marketing through NWT Tourism (NWTT), the strategy draws heavily on the lessons learned and experienced since the introduction of the GNWT's first five-year tourism strategy over 15 years ago.

Training, support and mentorship initiatives have generated strong interest and results – and have consistently exceeded available funding levels.

Annual grants and contribution programs have resulted in new and enhanced products and services across our territory and more is needed.

And, driven by research and innovation, new ideas and opportunities can and will continue to grow and strengthen the tourism industry and its potential to stimulate regional development and economic growth across the NWT.



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## Introduction

# A Changing Landscape

2020 was an extraordinary year that had a profound impact on the world and tourism. Early in the year, Coronavirus disease, or COVID-19, spread rapidly to become a worldwide pandemic. In response, the Government of Canada closed the border to international visitors on March 18, 2020; the NWT border closed to visitors and most non-resident Canadians on March 21, 2020. Visitation to the NWT essentially came to a standstill.

### **Tourism was one of the first industries to feel the impacts of the COVID-19 pandemic.**

At the end of March 2020, 92 per cent of tourism businesses in the NWT reported significant negative impacts from the COVID-19 pandemic. Over three-quarters of these businesses had already taken some type of action such as closing, reducing staff hours or services, and/or laying-off employees.<sup>1</sup>

### **International travel to Canada, including from the U.S., plunged to all-time lows.**

Travel from overseas countries to Canada fell 97.8% from June 2019, while travel from the United States was down 96.6%.<sup>2</sup> The number of international travellers who arrived at Canadian airports during the second quarter of 2020 (April to June) fell 95.7%, to 22,839 from 534,677 in the first quarter of 2020.<sup>3</sup>

### **Tourism was especially hit hard experiencing steep declines in revenues and jobs, compared to other sectors of the economy.**

NWT businesses experienced an average decrease in revenues of 63 per cent due to the COVID-19 pandemic while tourism and related industries experienced an additional 13 per cent more than the average decrease for all industries. Tourism and related industries also had to lay-off 22 per cent more employees on average compared to other industries.<sup>4</sup>

<sup>1</sup> Industry survey, Department of Industry, Tourism and Investment, GNWT

<sup>2</sup> Statistics Canada, Travel between Canada and other countries

<sup>3</sup> Statistics Canada, Leading indicator of international travel to Canada by air, airports equipped with Primary Inspection Kiosks

<sup>4</sup> Business survey, Department of Industry, Tourism and Investment, GNWT



A hiker wearing a bright blue jacket and a large grey backpack with orange accents is walking away on a rocky trail in a forest. The background is filled with green trees and foliage, slightly out of focus.

## An Exceptional Task

The changing landscape we face presents us with a set of tasks that no other GNWT tourism strategy has needed to accomplish. Tourism 2025: Roadmap to Recovery will need to:

- Reactivate tourism from a standstill
- Enable recovery
- Pave the way for growth, especially in the regions

Delivery on this ambitious agenda will require funding, commitment, and strategic investments.

Tourism 2025 will be our roadmap for tourism's recovery. With innovation, Tourism 2025 will build on our past successes, address the challenges we face in light of the pandemic, and most importantly pave the way for a strong future for tourism in the NWT.

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## Our Approach

Tourism 2025 is based on the collective input from industry, the public and governments. Developed with extensive feedback from tourism partners, stakeholders, and operators, Tourism 2025 is a roadmap for recovery and advancement towards our vision. It establishes our goals for the next five years and outlines strategic priorities and actions for achieving them.

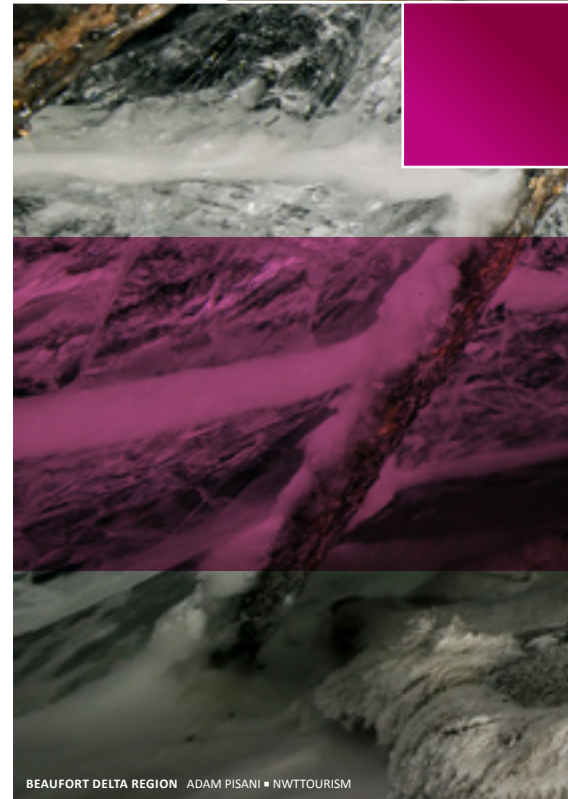
### Engagement served as the cornerstone of Tourism 2025.

Starting in the fall of 2019, we embarked on a variety of engagement activities that involved stakeholder meetings, phone interviews, community consultations, surveys, and ideation sessions at the NWT Tourism Conference. With a drastically changed landscape due to the pandemic, we re-engaged with many audiences in spring of 2020 to understand the impact and shift in needs, opportunities, and priorities.

We thank the many individuals and organizations that shared their feedback and ideas which served to inform Tourism 2025, which consisted of 439 people from:

- 44 tourism businesses
- 17 municipalities and Indigenous governments
- 3 industry associations and partner organizations
- 2 national funding partners
- 6 departments of the Government of the Northwest Territories (GNWT)

A detailed list of engagement activities is provided in Appendix A.



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Developed with extensive feedback from tourism partners, stakeholders, and operators, **Tourism 2025** is a roadmap for recovery and advancement towards our vision.

# Who Engaged with Us

## Tourism Businesses

2 Seasons Adventures; Alestine's Restaurant; Arctic Motorcycle Adventures; Aurora Village; B. Dene Adventures; Bill Braden Photo; Black Feather; Cabin Fever Tours; Canoe North Adventures; Capital Suites; Castaways Cottages; Dark Sky Festival; Destination NWT; Diavik Tourism; East Arm Pop-up Camp; Embleton House; Folk on the Rocks Festival; Gallery of the Midnight Sun; Gana River Outfitters; Great Northern Arts Festival; Jackpine Paddle; Lac La Martre Adventures; Nahanni River Adventures; Narwal Northern Adventures; Norman Wells Historical Society; North Star Adventures; North Star B&B; North-Wright Airways; Nova Hotels; NWT Brewing Company; NWT Diamond Centre; Peterson's Point Lake Lodge; Ptarmigan Inn; Sahtu Gardens; Strong Interpretation; Sundog Adventures; Tah-chay Adventures; The Explorer Hotel; Top of the World Travel/Touch the Arctic; Tundra North Tours; Yellowknife Historical Society; Yellowknife Online; Yellowknife Outdoor Adventures; Yellowknife Sport Fishing

## Municipalities and Indigenous Governments

City of Yellowknife; Town of Inuvik; Community Government of Whati; Community of Uluhaktok; Hamlet of Tuktoyaktuk; Tlicho Government; Sahtu Secretariat; Liidlii Kue First Nation; Akaitcho Territory Government; Town of Fort Smith; Hamlet of Enterprise; Yellowknives Dene First Nation; Katlodeeche First Nation; Tsiighetchic Charter Community; Gwich'in Tribal Council; Town of Norman Wells; Lutsel'Ke Dene First Nation

## Tourism Partner Organizations

NWT Tourism; NWT Chamber of Commerce; Conseil de développement économique des Territoires du Nord-Ouest (CDETNO)

## Tourism Funding Partners

Indigenous Tourism Association of Canada; Canadian Northern Economic Development Agency

## GNWT Departments

Industry, Tourism and Investment; Education, Culture and Employment; Environment; Lands; Infrastructure; Municipal and Community Affairs



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A woman wearing a blue jacket and a black cap is looking at an informational sign. The sign is titled "Flora and Fauna" and has sections for "Plants" and "Animals". It features several small images of plants and animals. The background shows a scenic view of a valley with a river and mountains under a cloudy sky.

**Tourism 2025 will directly support the mandate of the 19th Legislative Assembly.**

## Mandate of 19th Legislative Assembly

Tourism 2025 will directly support the mandate of the 19th Legislative Assembly to:

- Increase economic diversification by supporting growth in non-extractive sectors and setting regional diversification targets.
- Increase tourism in the NWT with a focus on increasing tourism outside of Yellowknife.





## Vision

**Our vision is for tourism to be an important contributor to the economy, providing the Northwest Territories with diversified and regional growth.**

Tourism is vital to the Northwest Territories (NWT). Tourism boosts the revenue of the economy, creates thousands of jobs, develops infrastructure, and generates entrepreneurial opportunities. Tourism has the potential to drive economic growth in every region of the territory and communities of all sizes. While tourism is experiencing unprecedented setbacks and challenges with the pandemic, it has proven itself to be an innovative and resilient industry.

**Tourism has the potential to drive economic growth** in every region of the territory and communities of all sizes.

# Goals and Objectives

## **TOURISM REBOUNDS AND RECOVERS**

The pandemic which prompted travel and border restrictions essentially brought tourism to a standstill in 2020. Through Tourism 2025 and its strategic investments, we aim to help the NWT reach pre-pandemic levels of number of visitors and spending<sup>5</sup> and set the stage for long-term growth for tourism. A key focus will be to ensure that the benefits of tourism are realized in every region. This strategy will support the development of new tourism businesses with targeted growth of 5% in the number of new tourism operators in regions outside of the capital city.

By the end of 2025-26, we aim to welcome 103,000 visitors who will generate \$170 million dollars in revenues.<sup>6</sup> Given the uncertainty facing the travel and tourism industry in the NWT and around the world, these targets may need to be revisited.

## **COMPELLING VISITOR EXPERIENCES**

The NWT has incredible tourism assets with its vast and unspoiled nature and beauty, rich Indigenous heritage and culture, and diverse people and experiences – just to name a few. We will strive to attain a positive overall average satisfaction rating from people visiting our NWT Parks and communities.

## **SUPPORTIVE COMMUNITIES**

The support of the people, including residents and leaders, of the Northwest Territories is integral to offering a positive and welcoming experience to visitors, and to growth and development of the industry. Through enhanced engagement and communications, we intend to restore community support for tourism and strengthen people's understanding of the value of tourism with the majority of NWT residents having positive attitudes towards visitors and tourism in general.

## **STRONG PARTNERSHIPS**

As the next five years of Tourism 2025 unfold, we are facing many unknowns as well as major challenges ahead. For tourism to revive and thrive, working together toward common goals has never been more important. Rebuilding the industry from recovery to resiliency will require a 'whole-of-community' approach. Through more involvement with those who have a vested interest in tourism – directly and indirectly – we intend to liaise with key tourism partners and businesses; GNWT departments; and, regions, municipalities and Indigenous governments to implement Tourism 2025 and advance work towards our vision.

To see how the engagement informed the goals for Tourism 2025, please see Appendix C.

<sup>5</sup> In 2018-19, tourism in the NWT achieved record levels of visitation with 120,000 visitors and reached \$210 million in visitor revenue.

<sup>6</sup> Estimates based on the border opening by April 1, 2021 and economic modelling completed by Tourism Economics in April 2020 (funded by Destination Canada) for scenario: virus is not contained

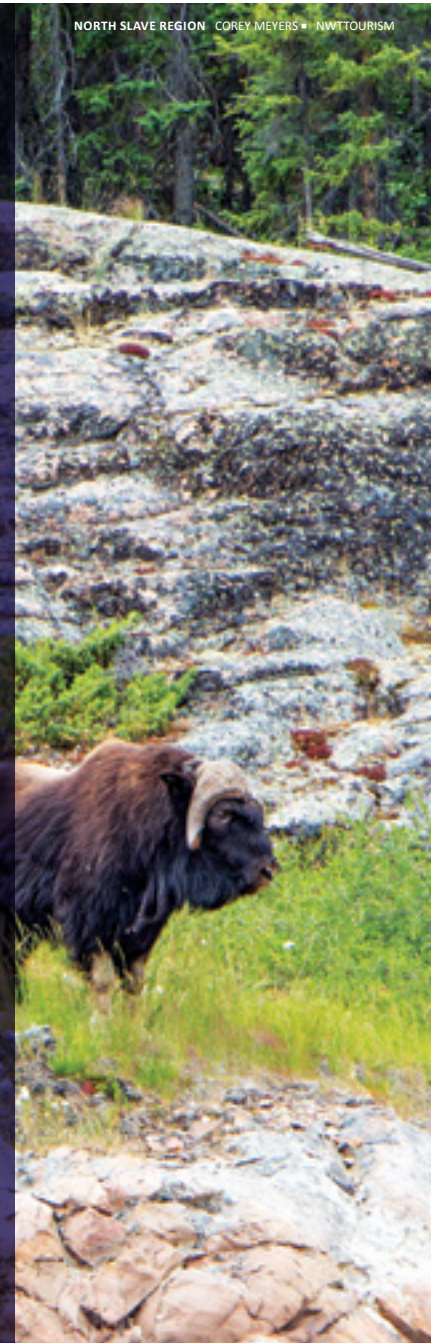


## MARKETING

NWT Tourism (NWTT) plays an essential role as the destination marketing organization for the Northwest Territories. Working closely with local, regional, national, and international partners NWTT promotes the NWT under the SpectacularNWT brand, upholds the reputation of the NWT as a destination, and strives to increase visitation and visitor spending in the NWT.

Tourism 2025 differentiates how the GNWT invests in tourism. Tourism 2025 guides industry-focused investments that build and strengthen tourism development throughout the territory. Tourism marketing to target audiences to promote our territory is a separate initiative funded by GNWT and implemented by NWTT. NWTT leverages core marketing funds from GNWT to grow the overall destination marketing budget for the territory through additional public and industry partnerships.

Maintaining destination awareness has become a critical ingredient in facilitating the recovery of the industry post-COVID-19. The GNWT will continue to make a significant investment in marketing, through NWTT. To rebuild the tourism industry in the NWT, strong and strategic marketing is essential in a highly competitive marketplace, where destinations across Canada and the globe will be competing to grow back their tourism economies. NWTT is well-positioned to provide this marketing leadership and innovation to support recovery and stimulate growth over the next five-years. A new marketing plan is prepared annually by NWTT in close collaboration with the GNWT and tourism industry representatives; the annual marketing plan is available online at [members.spectacularnwt.com/resources/marketing-plan](https://members.spectacularnwt.com/resources/marketing-plan).





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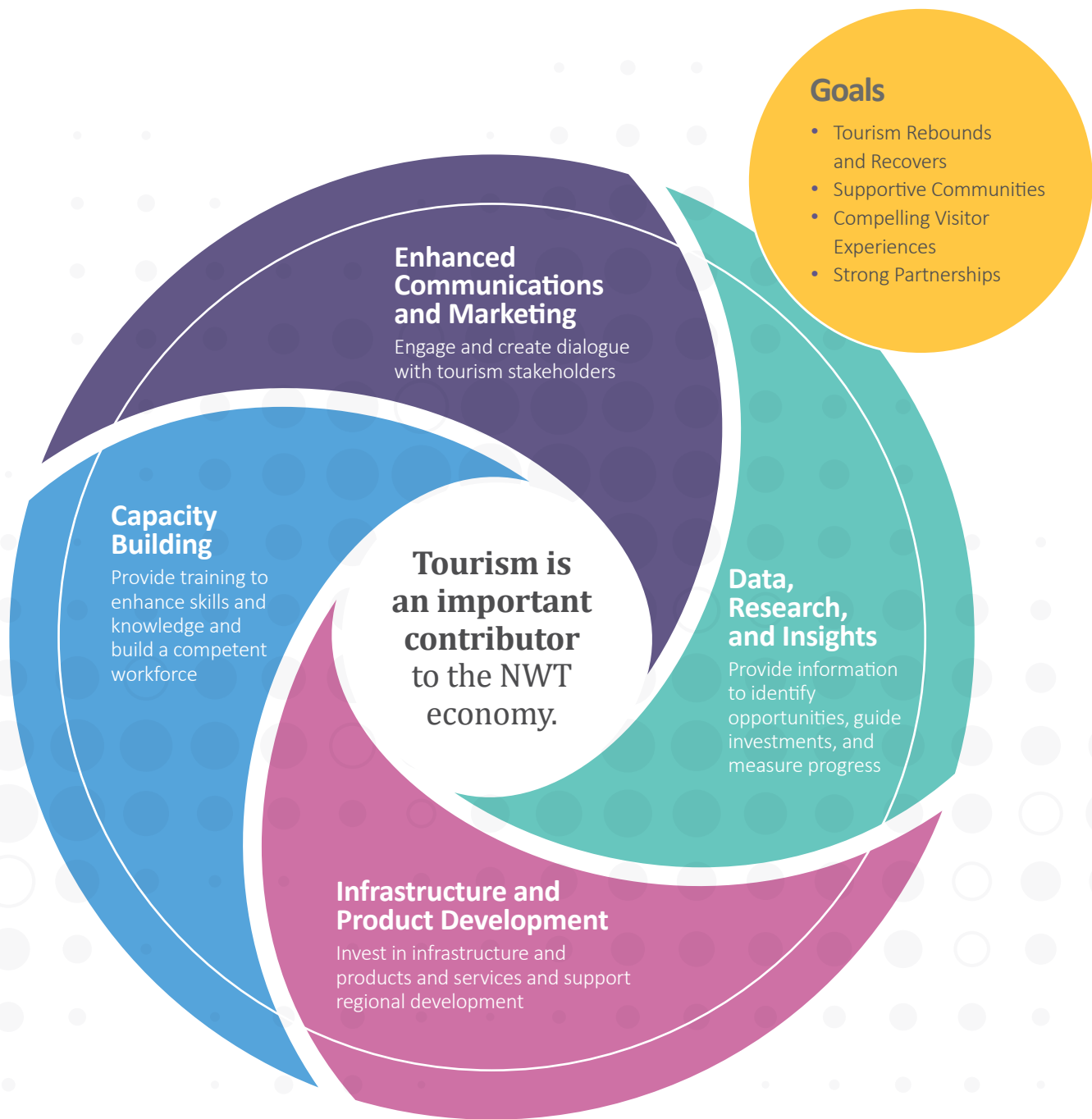
## Strategic Priorities and Actions

Tourism 2025 is an industry-focused investment strategy meant to stimulate economic benefits for tourism operators, tourism businesses and communities. Tourism development also offers advantages that enhance quality of life for residents and strengthen Indigenous culture and language. Our investments, guided by our priorities and actions, enable tourism operators and businesses, and communities to actively participate in the industry and realize these benefits.

We have outlined four strategic priorities for Tourism 2025 to:

1. Invest in infrastructure, enhancements to products and services, and development of new products and services
2. Build capacity among operators and tourism staff through training and mentorship
3. Engage with tourism stakeholders through enhanced communications and marketing efforts
4. Gather and report key data, information, and insights to guide and evaluate investments

These strategic priorities will guide and direct resources, programs, and activities for the next five years. They are interconnected and will build upon and support one another to maximize impact.



### **Enhanced Communications and Marketing**

Engage and create dialogue with tourism stakeholders

### **Capacity Building**

Provide training to enhance skills and knowledge and build a competent workforce

**Tourism is an important contributor to the NWT economy.**

### **Data, Research, and Insights**

Provide information to identify opportunities, guide investments, and measure progress

### **Infrastructure and Product Development**

Invest in infrastructure and products and services and support regional development

### **Goals**

- Tourism Rebounds and Recovers
- Supportive Communities
- Compelling Visitor Experiences
- Strong Partnerships

# 1

## Invest in infrastructure, enhancements to products and services, and development of new products and services

Building infrastructure and expanding and enhancing our products and services helps to increase access, create conditions for compelling visitor experiences, and position the NWT as a destination of choice. It can attract tomorrow's visitor and encourage growth of visitor expenditures. The opportunity exists to boost tourism product development in the regions while also more strongly leveraging existing tourism assets such as the NWT Parks. Product development will also support recovery in areas where significant private sector investments have been made in tourism infrastructure.

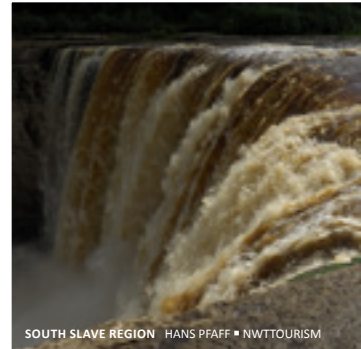
### PROGRAMS AND INITIATIVES

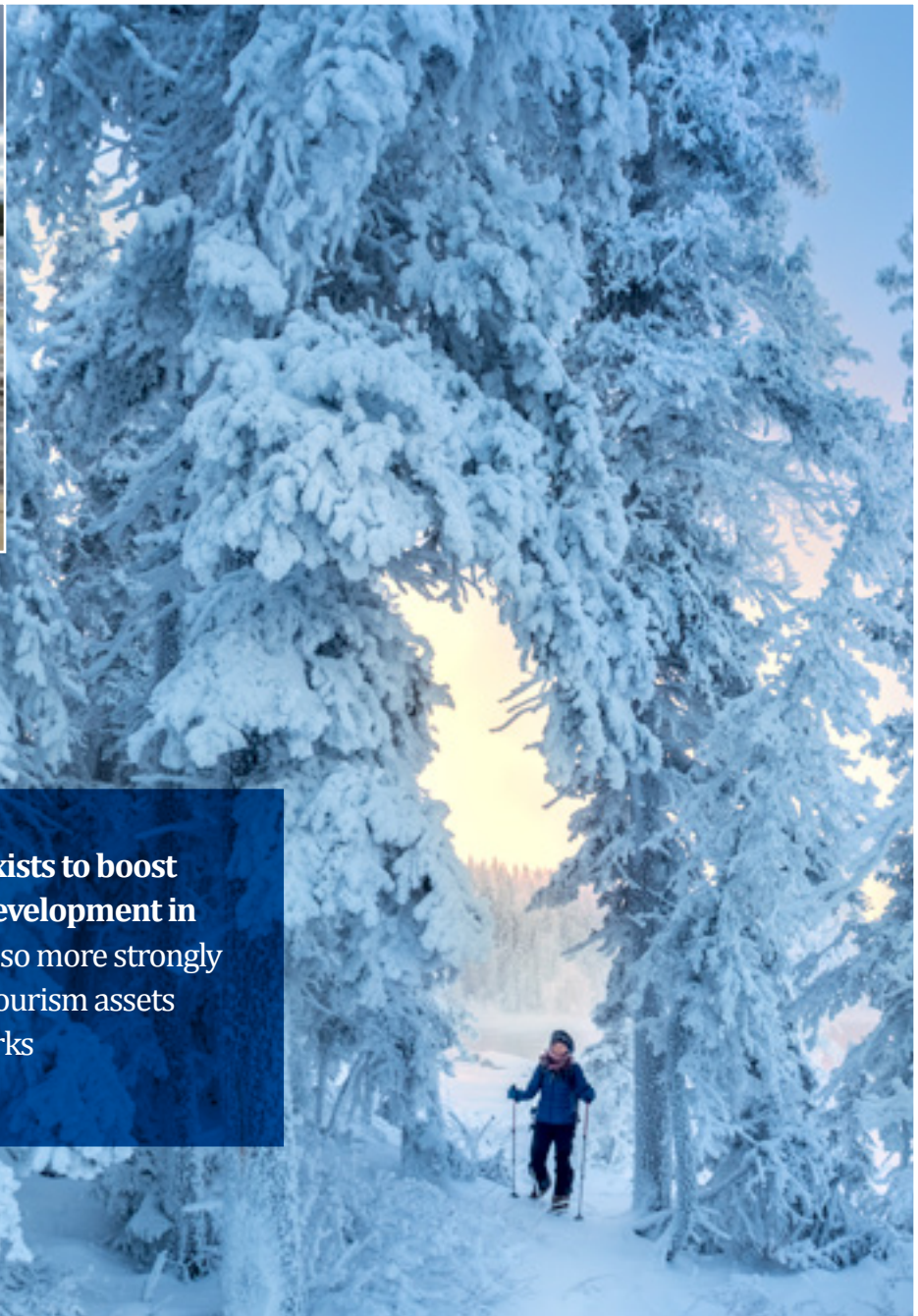
Tourism 2025 will maintain several flagship programs that are proven to generate significant economic investment and development activity in tourism across the regions. These programs will play a key role in enabling recovery. These include the following:

**Tourism Product Diversification and Marketing Program (TPDMP)** – this is one of our most important tools that assists the tourism industry in expanding, diversifying and marketing tourism products and services. It is designed to induce private sector investment and to leverage additional dollars from other funding partners such as federal agencies, Indigenous governments and lending institutions.

**Community Tourism Infrastructure Contribution (CTIC)** – this program funds infrastructure which benefits residents and attracts visitors to a community such as visitor centres, museums, municipal parks and campgrounds, trails and other attractions. Investment in tourism infrastructure in close partnership with communities will be a key factor in recovery, providing economic stimulus, enhancing destination readiness and increasing the local standard of living.

**Community Tourism Coordinators Program** – this program funds a dedicated position to develop tourism at a regional level. These individuals are focused on developing tourism packages and supporting the community and businesses in attracting more visitors to a specific region which helps to stimulate the economy.





**The opportunity exists to boost tourism product development in the regions** while also more strongly leveraging existing tourism assets such as the NWT Parks





**Interpretive programming in NWT Parks** – this new and innovative programming will be developed in close partnership with NWT Parks. It will provide an opportunity to further leverage our core tourism assets and build strong partnerships with communities and their resident experts. It will support development of new Indigenous tourism products and authentic experiences that also serve to build pride and increase engagement in Indigenous culture and knowledge within the communities.

**Major upgrades to visitor information centres**- in 2019, we welcomed over 74,000 visitors to our four “gateway” visitor information centres (VICs) – 60th Parallel, Dawson City, Western Arctic Region Visitor Centre, Yellowknife. These VICs are important hubs for our visitors and often create a first impression of our territory. Opportunity exists to better showcase the NWT through upgrades for displays and new technology to enable more interactive and timely information sharing as well as collection of visitor data.

WHAT WE’LL DO	WHEN WE’LL START
Review and revise policies for Tourism Product Diversification and Marketing Program and Community Tourism Infrastructure Contribution	<b>Year 1</b>
Deliver key programs: <ul style="list-style-type: none"> <li>• Tourism Product Diversification and Marketing Program</li> <li>• Community Tourism Infrastructure Contribution</li> <li>• Community Tourism Coordinators Program</li> </ul>	<b>Year 1 – 5</b>
Develop interpretive programs in the NWT Parks (including development of new Indigenous tourism products and services)	<b>Year 2</b>
Refresh gateway visitor information centres with display refurbishment and upgrades	<b>Year 2 – 5</b>
Monitor trends in tourism product development	<b>On-going</b>



## 2 Build capacity among operators and tourism staff through training and mentorship

A skilled tourism workforce is imperative to delivery of a compelling visitor experience and to supporting growth of the tourism industry. Given the pandemic, training and professional development will take on new importance as the tourism industry rebuilds and reshapes itself – as staff return, new staff come on board, new businesses and products are developed, and new safety measures are implemented.

### PROGRAMS AND INITIATIVES

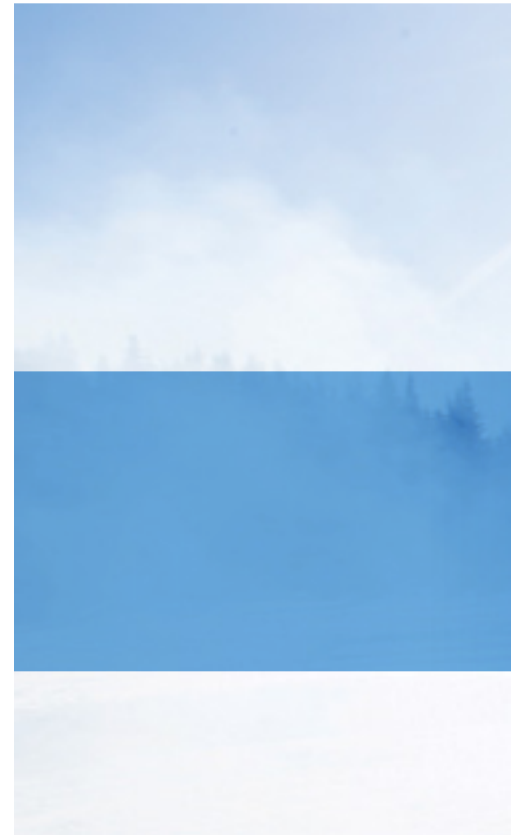
Tourism 2025 will continue offering the three funding programs that support skills development and encourage youth to pursue employment in the tourism industry as well as continue to support capacity building initiatives and introduce new training opportunities.


**Tourism Business Mentorship Program** – this program is delivered in partnership with the Canadian Executive Service Organization and facilitates one-on-one mentorships for tourism businesses with volunteer mentors who share their expertise and guidance on a topic that is chosen by the tourism business.

**Youth Mentorship for Tourism Program** – this program encourages youth to explore tourism as a career choice and helps to match youth with experienced tourism operators for an on-the-job learning experience.

**Tourism Training Fund** – this fund supports short-term training opportunities for tourism workers to gain new skills or to upgrade skills; it targets specialized training needs of tourism businesses and their staff such as activity-specific certifications, safety training, tourism-related workshops, and re-certifications.

**Indigenous tourism business development** – this is a new training initiative that will support the development of Indigenous tourism businesses and their products to move through the different stages of product and service readiness (e.g. market-ready, trade-ready). An Indigenous Tourism Development Officer will provide dedicated resources to this initiative, providing information and advice about Indigenous tourism development to the regions, and liaising with Indigenous organizations including the Indigenous Tourism Association of Canada (ITAC).



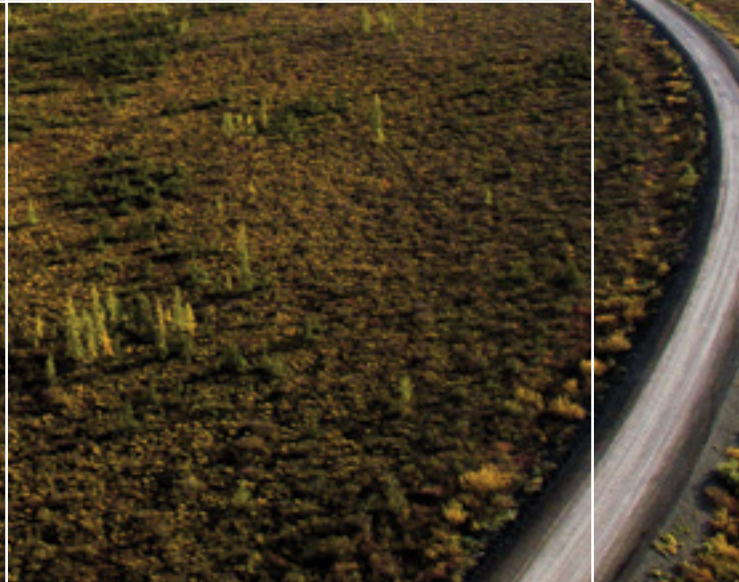


**A skilled tourism workforce** is imperative to delivery of a compelling visitor experience.



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**Training workshops and workbooks** – this activity will consist of the continued offering of two workshops that are focused on customer service and the visitor experience – NorthernMost Host and Business, Market and Trade Ready (BMT) standards. In addition, we will promote and distribute newly developed self-guided workbooks – Tourism Product Development, Tourism Product Packaging, and Marketing Your Tourism Products- that provide relevant and practical information for tourism businesses to support their marketing activities.

**On-the-Land Collaborative Program** – this is a youth-focused training program done in partnership with many other organizations such as MakeWay (formerly Tides Canada), the six Indigenous governments, the McConnell Foundation, NWT Recreation and Parks Association and the Royal Bank of Canada. Tourism 2025 will support Indigenous tourism-related projects that promote and share cultural knowledge and build on-the-land skills to benefit the future of Indigenous tourism.

WHAT WE'LL DO	WHEN WE'LL START
Support On-the-Land Collaborative Program	<b>Year 1</b>
Deliver skills development programs: <ul style="list-style-type: none"> <li>• Tourism Business Mentorship Program</li> <li>• Youth Mentorship for Tourism Program</li> <li>• Tourism Training Fund</li> <li>• Training Workshops and Workbooks</li> </ul>	<b>Year 1</b>
Introduce the Indigenous tourism business development initiative	<b>Year 2</b>

## 3 Engage with tourism stakeholders through enhanced communications and marketing efforts

Tourism 2025 will pursue opportunities in several promising areas to strengthen community and resident support and participation in tourism, to build strong partnerships with tourism stakeholders, and to more strongly market core tourism assets such as NWT parks and conference facilities to attract more visitors.

### PROGRAMS AND INITIATIVES

**Communications and outreach** – given the challenges and opportunities with the current environment, stronger communications and outreach will be needed. These activities will consist of sharing information about current research and the economic benefits of tourism, promoting tourism as a business development opportunity for communities, encouraging participation in our programs and services, and engaging in meaningful dialogue with our partners including tourism operators and businesses, funding partners, Indigenous governments, communities and NWT residents.

**NWT Parks marketing** – this new initiative will more strongly promote and market one of our most important tourism assets, our beautiful parks. With NWT Parks in every region, this activity can be a key driver of regional growth and development. It will include building a strong online presence and promoting regional attractions and activities such as the new interpretive programming in the NWT Parks.

**Conference Bureau** – this activity will support a position within NWT Tourism that is dedicated to attracting more meetings, conventions and incentive travel to the NWT. As business travel resumes, the Conference Bureau will seek to entice new events to consider the NWT as a conference destination.





WHAT WE'LL DO	WHEN WE'LL START
Develop a plan to enhance interdepartmental communications <ul style="list-style-type: none"><li>• Work within GNWT for more cohesive approach</li><li>• Lands, INF, ENR, MACA, ECE, Aurora College</li></ul>	<b>Year 1</b>
Continue strong collaboration with external partners <ul style="list-style-type: none"><li>• NWT Tourism</li><li>• Canadian Northern Economic Development Agency</li><li>• Indigenous Tourism Association of Canada</li><li>• Destination Canada</li></ul>	<b>Year 1</b>
Maintain the Conference Bureau within NWT Tourism	<b>Year 1</b>
Develop the NWT Parks marketing plan	<b>Year 2</b>
Develop and execute enhanced communications with industry and NWT residents <ul style="list-style-type: none"><li>• Program availability and purpose</li><li>• Training opportunities</li><li>• Value of tourism</li><li>• Tourism Week</li><li>• In-destination marketing to NWT residents PSAs (safety, licensing)</li></ul>	<b>Year 2</b>



# 4 Gather and report key data, information, and insights to guide and evaluate investments

The pandemic will have transformed people’s perceptions, attitudes, and behaviours in many areas, including research. This will prompt major changes in what and how we collect data and conduct research in tourism in the NWT. Timely and insightful information will help inform decisions about investments and marketing in tourism by all levels of government and industry, and will measure and report progress. This strategy aims to bolster and reinvent the research program for Tourism and Parks.

## PROGRAMS AND INITIATIVES

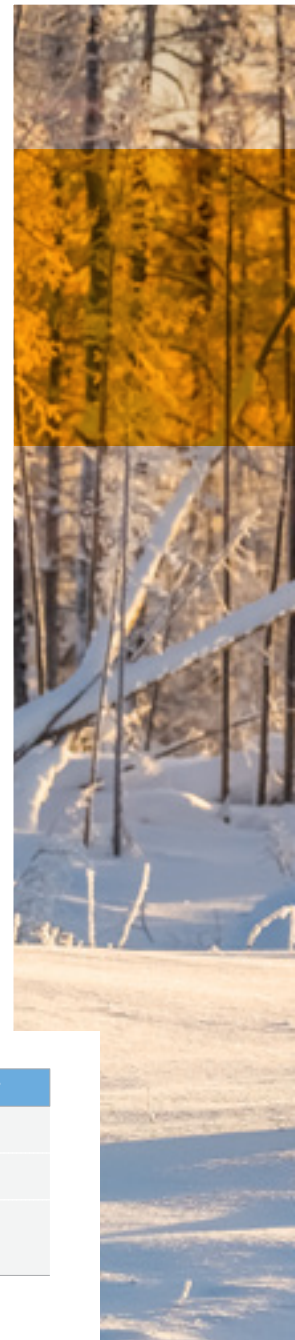
**Tourism 2025 evaluation** – this will consist of the development and implementation of a robust research program to measure progress and evaluate programs and initiatives based on three key streams:

1. visitor data and research;
2. industry research (including trend monitoring); and
3. resident data and research.

We will continue to collect visitor data but will enhance its relevance, reliability, and timeliness. In addition, we will introduce new research and explore new data sources to better understand issues and opportunities within the industry and to better understand resident sentiment and travel behaviours.

**Regional data and research** – this activity will aim to enhance the collection and reporting of data at a regional or community level. Tools will be developed to collect data at this level and greater support will be provided to the regions for special research projects and reports.

**Enhanced communications and reporting** – this activity will gather, analyze, and disseminate meaningful data with key audiences in a consumer-centric manner. The research team will provide timely and easy-to-understand metrics and reports such as quarterly dashboards and will prepare summary reports addressing relevant topics, issues, and opportunities. In addition, economic data will be gathered and highlighted to communicate the benefits of tourism.



WHAT WE’LL DO	WHEN WE’LL START
Develop quarterly dashboard and summary reports	Year 1
Explore alternative research approaches and data sources	Year 1
Implement research programming and build capabilities along three streams (visitor, industry, resident)	Year 2

A photograph of three bison standing in a snowy forest. The bison are in the foreground, with a large one on the left and two smaller ones to its right. The background is a dense forest of trees covered in snow, with sunlight filtering through, creating a warm, golden glow. The ground is covered in a layer of snow with some dry grass visible.

**This strategy aims to bolster and reinvent the research program for Tourism and Parks.**





## Moving Forward

Tourism 2025 provides a roadmap to recovery for the next five years. With strategic investments and a balance of proven and new, innovative programs and initiatives, we will realize a stronger future for tourism and the NWT. We will track our progress, monitoring and evaluating programs and activities, and measuring outcomes and impacts, using the key performance measures and indicators in Appendix B.

Finally, given the pandemic and its aftermath, governments and the industry are in uncharted territory. It will be important that Tourism 2025 be regularly reviewed and we remain open and flexible to changes in order to respond to evolving needs, opportunities, and developments in the industry.

With strategic investments and a balance of proven and new, innovative programs and initiatives, **we will realize a stronger future for tourism and the NWT.**

# Appendix A: Who We Spoke With and When

COMMUNITY/EVENT	GROUP	DATE	NUMBER OF ATTENDEES
GNWT	ITI, ECE, MACA, Infrastructure, Lands, ENR	September 9 – 30, 2019	39
NWT Tourism conference	Tourism sector-specific	November 5, 2019	70
Interviews	Key tourism partners	November 12 – December 20, 2019	16
Norman Wells	Tourism industry	November 20, 2019	9
	Community members	November 20, 2019	2
Inuvik	Community members	November 21, 2019	12
	Tourism industry	November 22, 2019	8
Hay River	Tourism industry	November 26, 2019	11
	Community members	November 26, 2019	13
Fort Smith	Tourism industry	November 27, 2019	10
	Community members	November 27, 2019	7
Fort Simpson	Tourism industry	December 3, 2019	6
	Community members	December 3, 2019	3
Yellowknife	Tourism industry	December 4, 2019	25
	Community members	December 4, 2019	9
Dettah	Tourism industry	December 5, 2019	8
	Community members	December 5, 2019	0
French teleconferences	Tourism industry and Community members	November 20, 2019	0
		December 11, 2019	2
Online survey	Members of the public	November 3 – December 20, 2019	81
Discussion forum	Members of the public	November 3 – December 20, 2019	49
Interviews	Tourism operators	May 8 – June 1, 2020	
	Tourism partners		
Online survey	Tourism operators Tourism partners	June 1 – 14, 2020	18
<b>TOTAL PARTICIPANTS</b>			<b>439</b>

# Appendix B: Intended Impacts

The chart opposite summarizes the key inputs, activities, and outputs of Tourism 2025 that will deliver the intended impacts.

CONTEXT	INPUTS (Resources)	ACTIVITIES (Strategic Priorities)	OUTPUTS (Participation, products, goods, services)	INTENDED IMPACT (Vision results)(5+ years)
WHAT DO WE WANT TO SOLVE	WHAT DO WE INVEST	WHAT DO WE DO	WHAT DO WE GET	
<b>Tourism to be an important contributor to the economy</b>  <b>Diversified and regional growth</b>  <b>Tourism rebounds and recovers</b>  <b>Supportive communities</b>  <b>Compelling visitor experiences</b>  <b>Strong partnerships</b>	Annual budget  Tourism and Parks staff  NWT Parks infrastructure  Partnerships	<b>Strategic Priority 1:</b>  Invest in infrastructure, enhancements to products and services, and development of new products and services	Tourism Product Development and Marketing Program (TPDMP)	Increased volume of visitors to the NWT and visitor spending  Tourism makes a increased economic contribution to the NWT
			Community Tourism Infrastructure Contribution (CTIC)	
			Community Tourism Coordinators Program	
			Interpretive programming in the NWT Parks	
		<b>Strategic Priority 2:</b>  Build capacity among operators and tourism staff through training and mentorship	Skills development and mentorship programs (Tourism Business Mentorship Program; Youth Mentorship for Tourism Program; Tourism Training Fund)	NWT has the workforce needed to offer tourism products, including Indigenous tourism products and services
			Training workshops and workbooks	
		<b>Strategic Priority 3:</b>  Engage with tourism stakeholders through enhanced communications and marketing efforts	Indigenous tourism business development and the On-the-Land Collaborative Program	Increased number of business travellers and NWT Parks visitors  Participation and investment in tourism is part of the operating environment in the NWT
			Conference Bureau (NWTT)	
		<b>Strategic Priority 4:</b>  Gather and report key data, information, and insights to guide and evaluate investments	NWT Parks marketing	Renewed growth in tourism is supported by evidence-based data and research
			Communications with GNWT departments	
Resident communications and public relations products and materials				
		Industry communications and public relations products and materials		
		Research and statistics repository		
		Performance measurement plan for Tourism 2025		
		Industry/consumer/market trends reports and highlights		

# Appendix C: What We Heard Summary

WHO WE HEARD FROM	GOAL: TOURISM REBOUNDS
<b>Tourism Partners</b> <b>Funding Partners</b> <b>Municipalities</b>	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> <li>• More diversified industry</li> <li>• More tourism success in communities outside of Yellowknife</li> <li>• Facilitate residents to take advantage of tourism opportunities</li> </ul>
<b>Sector-specific</b> (Accommodations, Airlines, Aurora, Culture, Fishing, General Touring, Hunting, Paddling, Parks)	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> <li>• Focused investment on research; better communication on statistics for region</li> <li>• Safety in the industry</li> <li>• Incentives to have NWT residents vacation in the NWT</li> <li>• More visitors outside of Yellowknife</li> </ul>
<b>Tourism Support Sector</b> (Accommodations, Cruise lines, Festivals)	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> <li>• Develop entrepreneurial skills in the communities; growth happening in the small centres</li> <li>• Capacity building goes hand-in-hand with product development</li> <li>• More infrastructure</li> <li>• Larger buy-in from Canadian residents to visit</li> </ul>
<b>Online Survey</b> <b>Discussion Forum</b>	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> <li>• More investment in training, infrastructure, all programs</li> <li>• Top five development priorities – product, infrastructure, Indigenous tourism, regional tourism, marketing</li> <li>• Strategy needs to be evolving so new ideas and relationships can be developed</li> </ul>
<b>Communities</b> (Norman Wells, Inuvik, Fort Simpson, Fort Smith, Hay River, Yellowknife, Dettah)	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> <li>• Economic opportunities for more locals</li> <li>• More products; more marketing; improved infrastructure</li> <li>• Developing both regional and territorial tourism plans to capture the variation in tourism opportunities</li> <li>• Good data to support good business decisions; best approach to maximizing existing assets</li> </ul>
<b>Tourism Stakeholders</b> (tourism partners, funding partners, municipalities, tourism operators and businesses)	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> <li>• Return of national and international visitors to NWT; re-establish the territory’s previously strong markets</li> <li>• Conducting research will be critical to rebuilding and rebooting the industry</li> <li>• Top five areas identified for effectively rebuilding tourism – grant programs, marketing campaigns (local, domestic), Indigenous tourism products, new products or services, building infrastructure</li> </ul>
<b>GNWT</b> (ITI, ECE, ENR, MACA, Lands, INF)	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> <li>• More activities for tourists to do; increased tourism diversification; more infrastructure for tourism</li> <li>• Strategic regional investments; informed decisions about funding allocations</li> </ul>

WHO WE HEARD FROM	GOAL: SUPPORTIVE RESIDENTS AND COMMUNITIES
<b>Tourism Partners</b> <b>Funding Partners</b> <b>Municipalities</b>	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> <li>• Resident support for, and involvement in, the hospitality industry and tourism</li> <li>• Strengthen tourism in the communities</li> <li>• Increase small business employment in small communities</li> </ul>
<b>Sector-specific</b> (Accommodations, Airlines, Aurora, Culture, Fishing, General Touring, Hunting, Paddling, Parks)	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> <li>• Programs should benefit regions and communities</li> <li>• Improve communications between parks and communities; create community program to involve locals and youth</li> <li>• Entice visit friends and relatives market; more visitors outside of Yellowknife</li> <li>• Residents interact with tourists in a positive way; locals recognize tourist attraction in community</li> <li>• Show statistics for what operators contribute to the local community or economy</li> </ul>
<b>Tourism Support Sector</b> (Accommodations, Cruise lines, Festivals)	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> <li>• Capable local workforce that the operators can rely on; develop entrepreneurial skills in communities</li> <li>• Need to promote tourism as an economic opportunity, and be more proactive in their promotions</li> <li>• Need to educate the public about the benefits of tourism</li> </ul>
<b>Online Survey</b> <b>Discussion Forum</b>	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> <li>• More investment in community tourism development</li> <li>• Community support for local tourism activities</li> <li>• Product development outside of Yellowknife</li> <li>• Employment in tourism</li> </ul>
<b>Communities</b> (Norman Wells, Inuvik, Fort Simpson, Fort Smith, Hay River, Yellowknife, Dettah)	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> <li>• Involve youth in the tourism industry</li> <li>• More opportunities for locals to interact with the visitors</li> <li>• Working with the community to determine what kind of vision it has for tourism; defining its identity</li> <li>• Respecting the level and kind of tourism experiences a community is prepared to support</li> </ul>
<b>Tourism Stakeholders</b> (tourism partners, funding partners, municipalities, tourism operators and businesses)	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> <li>• NWT residents are ready and willing to welcome tourists post-COVID-19</li> <li>• A call for sound, robust and timely data collection that is conducted uniformly across the NWT, on travel trends, resident sentiment, who is visiting and from where</li> <li>• Understanding community readiness to bring tourists back</li> <li>• Communicating with community residents to gain more support for tourism in the NWT</li> </ul>
<b>GNWT</b> (ITI, ECE, ENR, MACA, Lands, INF)	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> <li>• Seeing communities getting excited and wanting to offer tourism products</li> <li>• Youth education and employment in tourism</li> <li>• Cultural revitalization through research, learning and sharing opportunities in interpretation</li> <li>• Empowerment of Indigenous communities in leadership in tourism; generate pride in communities</li> </ul>

WHO WE HEARD FROM	GOAL: COMPELLING VISITOR EXPERIENCES
<b>Tourism Partners</b> <b>Funding Partners</b> <b>Municipalities</b>	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> <li>• Authentic Indigenous experiences available; culture and tradition- a big focus of tourism</li> <li>• Assisting and increasing the availability of tourism products for tourists so they will have more to do</li> <li>• Research – market/niche-specific research</li> <li>• Continue funding programs especially those focused on infrastructure</li> <li>• Capacity development – ensure that operators are providing the level of service that tourists expect</li> </ul>
<b>Sector-specific</b> (Accommodations, Airlines, Aurora, Culture, Fishing, General Touring, Hunting, Paddling, Parks)	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> <li>• Focused investment on research</li> <li>• How to attract tourism outside of Yellowknife; marketing the communities</li> <li>• Entice visit friends and relatives market</li> <li>• Parks are an asset</li> </ul>
<b>Tourism Support Sector</b> (Accommodations, Cruise lines, Festivals)	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> <li>• Develop entrepreneurial skills in the communities</li> <li>• Need more research to know what tourists want</li> <li>• More tourism packages with nearby communities</li> <li>• More returning tourists</li> </ul>
<b>Online Survey</b> <b>Discussion Forum</b>	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> <li>• More investment in Indigenous cultural tourism</li> <li>• More investment in parks; parks are world-class</li> <li>• NWT assets: natural assets (e.g. Aurora, nature, wildlife), Indigenous cultures, world class fishing</li> <li>• Product development outside of Yellowknife</li> </ul>
<b>Communities</b> (Norman Wells, Inuvik, Fort Simpson, Fort Smith, Hay River, Yellowknife, Dettah)	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> <li>• Obtaining better data to ensure marketing to the right audience; greater awareness of the NWT</li> <li>• Offering package tours; and better marketing of products</li> <li>• Indigenous and cultural tourism; sharing local stories</li> <li>• Increase parks activities and parks usage</li> </ul>
<b>Tourism Stakeholders</b> (tourism partners, funding partners, municipalities, tourism operators and businesses)	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> <li>• Promote staycations in an effort to build local tourism- regional and municipal attractions</li> <li>• Building consumer confidence and peace of mind when it is safe to travel in the NWT</li> <li>• More Indigenous tourism experiences; more infrastructure and support services</li> <li>• New partnerships that support domestic travel and NWT resident travel in the territory</li> </ul>
<b>GNWT</b> (ITI, ECE, ENR, MACA, Lands, INF)	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> <li>• More activities for tourists to do; increased number of tourism products available</li> <li>• More products that reflect Indigenous cultural values and at the same time meet the market demands</li> <li>• Interpretive programs and experiences</li> <li>• Marketing targeted to specific regional strengths and resident travellers; easily accessible information</li> </ul>

WHO WE HEARD FROM	GOAL: STRONG PARTNERSHIPS FOR TOURISM
<b>Tourism Partners</b> <b>Funding Partners</b> <b>Municipalities</b>	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> <li>• Business to business partnerships strengthened</li> <li>• Partnerships and working together with stakeholders</li> <li>• Align priorities among partners</li> </ul>
<b>Sector-specific</b> (Accommodations, Airlines, Aurora, Culture, Fishing, General Touring, Hunting, Paddling, Parks)	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> <li>• More communications around programs and services</li> <li>• More hands-on support to develop entrepreneurs</li> <li>• More partnerships (government, elders, community organizations)</li> <li>• Consultation with the local people</li> </ul>
<b>Tourism Support Sector</b> (Accommodations, Cruise lines, Festivals)	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> <li>• More communication about programs</li> <li>• Good dialogue and engagement between tourism industry, communities, and operators</li> </ul>
<b>Online Survey</b> <b>Discussion Forum</b>	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> <li>• More involvement of youth, seniors, elders</li> <li>• Partnerships for education (e.g. post-secondary, Aurora College, academic institutions)</li> <li>• In-depth research on what can be offered, outside of Yellowknife, how can it be developed through knowledge, education, partnerships; partnering to grow these opportunities</li> </ul>
<b>Communities</b> (Norman Wells, Inuvik, Fort Simpson, Fort Smith, Hay River, Yellowknife, Dettah)	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> <li>• Communities collaborating on a number of fronts (communities, operators, government entities)</li> <li>• Partnerships- a priority area to invest in</li> <li>• Good data to support good business decisions</li> <li>• Resources to support tourism business development are readily accessible and widely marketed</li> </ul>
<b>Tourism Stakeholders</b> (tourism partners, funding partners, municipalities, tourism operators and businesses)	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> <li>• Building consumer confidence and peace of mind when it is safe to travel in the NWT</li> <li>• Robust research and disseminating the results will be critical to rebuilding and rebooting the industry</li> <li>• Support the development and implementation of tourism programs (e.g. Aurora College)</li> <li>• New partnerships that support domestic travel and NWT resident travel in the territory</li> <li>• Developing and creating partnerships with communities and businesses</li> <li>• Tourism businesses have an opportunity to come together to share best practices</li> </ul>
<b>GNWT</b> (ITI, ECE, ENR, MACA, Lands, INF)	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> <li>• Engaging other GWNT partners to ensure they understand they are in compliance with legislation</li> <li>• Collaborating with GNWT departments to share expertise; better communication between departments</li> <li>• Collaborating with Indigenous governments and organizations</li> <li>• Multi-stakeholder partnerships at all levels with involvement dependent on the initiative under discussion; innovative partnerships (e.g. film, airlines, non-government organizations)</li> </ul>



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# Appendix D:

## Strategic Priorities: When We'll Start

This chart summarizes the key inputs, activities, and outputs of Tourism 2025 that will deliver the intended impacts.

WHAT WE'LL DO	WHEN WE'LL START
<b>1. Invest in infrastructure, enhancements to products and services, and development of new products and services</b>	
Review and revise policies for Tourism Product Diversification and Marketing Program and Community Tourism Infrastructure Contribution	Year 1
Deliver key programs: <ul style="list-style-type: none"> <li>• Tourism Product Diversification and Marketing Program</li> <li>• Community Tourism Infrastructure Contribution</li> <li>• Community Tourism Coordinators Program</li> </ul>	Year 1 – 5
Develop interpretive programs in the NWT Parks (including development of new Indigenous tourism products and services)	Year 2
Refresh gateway visitor information centres with display refurbishment and upgrades	Year 2 – 5
Monitor trends in tourism product development	On-going
<b>2. Build capacity among operators and tourism staff through training and mentorship</b>	
Support On-the-Land Collaborative Program	Year 1
Deliver skills development programs <ul style="list-style-type: none"> <li>• Tourism Business Mentorship Program</li> <li>• Youth Mentorship for Tourism Program</li> <li>• Tourism Training Fund</li> <li>• Training Workshops and Workbooks</li> </ul>	Year 1-5
Introduce the Indigenous tourism business development initiative	Year 2
<b>3. Engage with tourism stakeholders through enhanced communications and marketing efforts</b>	
Develop a plan to enhance interdepartmental communications <ul style="list-style-type: none"> <li>• Work within GNWT for more cohesive approach</li> <li>• Lands, INF, ENR, MACA, ECE, Aurora College</li> </ul>	Year 1
Continue strong collaboration with external partners <ul style="list-style-type: none"> <li>• NWT Tourism</li> <li>• Canadian Northern Economic Development Agency</li> <li>• Indigenous Tourism Association of Canada</li> <li>• Destination Canada</li> </ul>	Year 1
Maintain the Conference Bureau within NWT Tourism	Year 1
Develop the NWT Parks marketing plan	Year 2
Develop and execute enhanced communications with industry and NWT residents <ul style="list-style-type: none"> <li>• Program availability and purpose</li> <li>• Training opportunities</li> <li>• Value of tourism</li> <li>• Tourism Week</li> <li>• In-destination marketing to NWT residents PSAs (safety, licensing)</li> </ul>	Year 2
<b>4. Gather and report key data, information, and insights to guide and evaluate investments</b>	
Develop quarterly dashboard and summary reports	Year 1
Explore alternative research approaches and data sources	Year 1
Implement research programming and build capabilities along three streams (visitor, industry, resident)	Year 2

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