COVID-19

ONTARIO INDIGENOUS TOURISM SECTOR

IMPACT ANALYSIS

MARCH 16, 2020
ABOUT ITO AND INDIGENOUS TOURISM IN ONTARIO

Ontario is home to the largest Indigenous tourism industry in Canada with $622M contributed to the GDP, 12,924 jobs, and 558 Indigenous tourism businesses (see 2019-20 Economic Impact Diagram below).

ITO is the voice for Indigenous tourism in Ontario and is Ontario’s first and only province wide Indigenous tourism organization. As a grassroots organization, ITO supports, markets and grows Indigenous tourism in Ontario by focusing on the "4 pillars" - Cultural Authenticity, Training, Product Development, and Marketing.

PRIOR TO COVID 19

Indigenous tourism has seen unprecedented growth year after year through commitment-based partnerships between ITO, the Government of Ontario (through the MHSTCI), the Indigenous Tourism Association of Canada (ITAC), the Government of Canada (through Fednor & Feddev) and our many partners and members; bolstering the growth of Indigenous tourism to where it is today.

Indigenous led financial support will further the work we have all created, supported and achieved for nearly a decade; our belief is that this entire network of Indigenous tourism products and programming is at further risk unless ITO is able to align and co-facilitate a stimulus injection for the Ontario Indigenous tourism businesses and events.
As we collectively identify solutions to respond to an unprecedented event that will cause major issues within the broader tourism industry; we at ITO know it will undoubtedly be catastrophic for the Indigenous tourism industry in Ontario.

From the National ITAC perspective communicated in the COVID-19 BUSINESS IMPACT ANALYSIS document; Key Performance Indicators, the estimated COVID-19 Impact (based on ITAC surveys) and revised targets are summarized in this diagram.

In addition, as mentioned in the same document, ITAC also expects the National Indigenous tourism sector to lose 468 businesses across the country.

Based on ITACs projected National losses of $900 M in direct revenues, 12,000 jobs, and 468 businesses, it is anticipated the following losses will occur in ONTARIO (at a minimum):

- **REVENUES**: Loss of $330 million in direct revenues. Ontario Indigenous tourism businesses contribute $622 million (33.11%) of the $1.7 B contributed to the National GDP.

- **JOBS**: Loss of 4,000 jobs in Indigenous tourism. Ontario is home to 12,924 (36.59%) Indigenous tourism jobs of the 39,038 in Canada.

- **BUSINESSES**: Loss of 140 businesses. 558 (29.76%) of Canada’s 1,875 Indigenous tourism businesses are located in Ontario.

As an already vulnerable and fragile sector in the tourism industry, we are looking at likely losing much more than the estimates previously mentioned. This will not only cripple the Ontario Indigenous tourism industry but will also severely damage the National Indigenous tourism industry as well. Ontario is the largest contributor to the sector nationally.

In order for ITO to help the sector get through this, alignment with strong industry leaders is critical. Thus, at this time, ITO will focus on 4 key areas on the path forward.

1. **ITO will support and align with direct Investment** into national partners such as ITAC, Destination Canada, TIAC, and Tourism HR Canada; and provincial partners such as the Tourism Industry Association of Ontario (TIAO) - to lead the collective industry through this in Ontario; the Ontario Regional Tourism organizations; the other Ontario Tourism Sector organizations; and the many provincial partner organizations.

2. **ITO will coordinate and administer direct investment** into ITO’s “4 pillars” for 3 years to offset long term issues facing Indigenous tourism businesses and events in Ontario.

3. **Coordinate amendments to current ITO agreements** for projects (I.E. Indigenous Food Tourism), project deliverables, allocation of funds, and adjustment of timelines with funders to meet the needs of the current times and the new reality for the Indigenous tourism industry.

4. **Further advocate for direct investment into** new marketing campaigns focused on Indigenous Tourism - to be coordinated and administered by ITO and leaders such as Destination Ontario and Destination Northern Ontario - all under current MOUs.