

News Release

For Immediate Release

Indigenous Tourism Ontario announces support for tourism recovery in Ontario

Indigenous Tourism Ontario delivers \$3 million for 34 Ontario-based Indigenous tourism businesses and organizations, with support from the Government of Canada's Tourism Relief Fund

October 19th, 2022 - Aundeck Omni Kaning, Ontario

Today, Indigenous Tourism Ontario (ITO) announced support for 34 Indigenous tourism businesses and organizations in Ontario to recover from the pandemic, attract visitors and prepare for future growth.

ITO received a [\\$3.5-million non-repayable contribution](#) from the Federal Economic Development Agency for Southern Ontario ([FedDev Ontario](#)). As part of this investment, ITO delivered \$2 million to 23 Indigenous tourism businesses and organizations in the region.

The Federal Economic Development Agency for Northern Ontario ([FedNor](#)) also provided ITO a \$1-million non-repayable contribution, which is supporting 11 tourism-related projects in communities in Northern Ontario.

Understanding the important role that Indigenous Tourism plays in the region, ITO also played a pathfinding role connecting an additional 11 Indigenous tourism operators through its partnerships with Regional Tourism Organizations (RTOs) across Ontario valuing at \$970, 584.

Projects were chosen based on a fair and inclusive assessment process in which the recipients were selected through an external review panel. They were tasked with evaluating project applications by assessing their eligibility criteria and project alignment. The panel included members from across Ontario and one from British Columbia with expertise in tourism, Indigenous tourism, and economic development. The following organizations participated in the external review panel:

- **Industry Partners**
 - Tourism Industry Association of Ontario
 - Indigenous Tourism Association of British Columbia

- **Aboriginal Financial Institutions (AFIs)**
 - Two Rivers Community Development Centre
 - Tecumseh Community Development Corporation
 - Nishnawbe Aski Development Fund

Note: All Ontario AFIs were engaged in the overall process.

Recipients include Métis and First Nation tourism operators, attractions, and accommodations. In addition, five First Nation community tourism initiatives were supported.

Common projects include:

- Develop tourism programming for Indigenous businesses and communities.
- Enhance and improve current infrastructure with advancements such as winterization and expanding in shoulder tourism seasons.
- Increase physical capacity, workforce expansions and workforce development.
- Digital enhancements in the areas of website development, content development and marketing initiatives.

To review additional details on the 34 projects, visit our [Tourism Relief Fund Website](#).

Quotes

“The Government of Canada’s \$3.5-million investment through the Tourism Relief Fund is helping Indigenous Tourism Ontario provide Indigenous tourism businesses and organizations with important and timely support. This funding is supporting Indigenous tourism operators attract more visitors, create jobs, grow their businesses, and strengthen local communities. We are grateful for the work and dedication of the Indigenous businesses and organizations.”

- *The Honourable Filomena Tassi, Minister responsible for the Federal Economic Development Agency of Southern Ontario*

“The economy of Northern Ontario is stronger because of the value of the incredible Indigenous tourism in our region. Indigenous tourism operators and organizations are job creators, drive economic development, and attract visitors from all corners of the world. Our federal investment of \$1 million to Indigenous Tourism Ontario through the Tourism Relief Fund will help ensure their success as the tourism sector rebounds.”

- *The Honourable Patty Hajdu, Minister of Indigenous Services and Minister responsible for FedNor*

“ITO received a high demand in applications under this fund, proving that there is a vast need for tourism support across Ontario. No one knows the Ontario Indigenous tourism industry better than ITO. We are well positioned to provide ongoing support to operators and remain a consistent resource for them with pandemic recovery initiatives. The support we provide helps businesses to extend their reach, improve their business practices and provides industry specific training that is necessary for their growth and recovery but is essentially unattainable without the proper financial resources.”

- *Kevin Eshkawkogan, President & Chief Executive Officer, ITO*

Associated Links

- [Indigenous Tourism Ontario](#)
- [Tourism Relief Fund Website](#)
- [FedDev Ontario](#)
- [FedNor](#)
- [Tourism Relief Fund \(TRF\)](#)

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About Indigenous Tourism Ontario

Indigenous Tourism Ontario is the province’s first and only dedicated Indigenous tourism organization that focuses on uniting communities, Indigenous organizations, and industry leaders to support the growth of Indigenous tourism in Ontario.

By focusing on Cultural Authenticity, Workforce Development, Product Development, and Marketing & Branding of Indigenous owned and controlled tourism businesses, ITO establishes a platform for Indigenous cultural expression and preservation through tourism.

Our mandate is to improve the socio-economic conditions of Indigenous people through tourism. We do this by assisting Indigenous communities and entrepreneurs with programs that build capacity to produce high quality products and services. Our success is guided by the positive impact on the people, the environment, and the economy. For our welcomed visitors and tourists, we will ensure that our products and services provide a meaningful and memorable Indigenous experience.

Learn more about Indigenous Tourism Ontario [here](#).

About FedDev Ontario

For 13 years, the Government of Canada, through [FedDev Ontario](#), has worked to advance and diversify the southern Ontario economy through funding opportunities and business services that support innovation, growth and job creation in Canada's most populous region. The Agency has delivered impressive results, which can be seen in southern Ontario businesses that are creating innovative technologies, improving productivity, growing revenues, creating jobs, and in the economic advancement of communities across the region. Learn more about the impacts the Agency is having in southern Ontario by exploring our [pivotal projects](#), our [Southern Ontario Spotlight](#), and FedDev Ontario's [Twitter](#), [Facebook](#), [Instagram](#) and [LinkedIn](#).

About FedNor

Now a standalone regional development agency (RDA), the Federal Economic Development Agency for Northern Ontario ([FedNor](#)) is building on its decades-long legacy by working to strengthen the resilience of communities across the region, and by promoting job creation and an inclusive, innovative and sustainable economy with pathways of economic opportunity for all. Through its various offerings, FedNor works with stakeholders including businesses, community development partners, the province and municipalities to foster growth in key sectors of Northern Ontario's economy. Learn more about FedNor and its [investments](#) in businesses, communities and organizations across Northern Ontario and follow it on [Twitter](#).