



## INDIGENOUS TOURISM FORUM

February 12-13, 2018

Happy Valley-Goose Bay, NL

Final Report

## Table of Contents

	Page
Overview of the Forum	1
The Agenda	3-4
The Gala	6
Evaluation and Feedback	7
Media Coverage	8
Partners and Funding Agencies	9
Next Steps	10



## The Forum

The idea of an provincial Indigenous Tourism Forum first came to light in early Fall of 2017 as a result of discussions between the Indigenous Tourism Association of Canada and the Atlantic representative for the association. The first step was to develop a steering committee comprised of representation from each Indigenous group in Newfoundland and Labrador. A call for interest was put out to Nunatsiavut, NunatuKavut, Innu Nation, Qalipu, and Conne River and was well received. The first meeting of the steering committee was November 30, 2017 and dates for the inaugural Provincial Indigenous Tourism Forum were set right away for February 12 and 13, 2018. The purpose of this forum was to bring together Indigenous tourism industry stakeholders, Indigenous government employees working with the tourism sector, and supporting organizations such as Indigenous Tourism Association of Canada (ITAC), Department of Tourism, Culture, Industry, and Innovation (TCII), ACOA, and the Destination Management Organizations (DMOs). to discuss what is needed to move forward as a collective provincial Indigenous tourism focused group. This forum was designed to be industry-led and focused on Indigenous operators.

Over the course of the next few months, the steering committee was productive in developing the plan and goals of the forum. An expression of interest was developed and sent out to Indigenous tourism operators identified by each representative, as well as key partners and supports mentioned above. We decided to cap the attendance at 65 to ensure we would create a comfortable and productive environment for delegates to speak and share their ideas and opinions openly. 30 delegates were fully funded to attend the forum and we distributed that equally amongst the 5 Indigenous groups in the province. We had approximately 80 people express interest in attending the forum, and the applications were screened to create a proportionate balance of representation from Indigenous groups, industry, and supporting organizations among the 65 delegates.



Photo 1: Opening remarks from Jillian Larkham

Delegates that travelled to the forum from outside of the Upper Lake Melville area were booked at the Royal Inn + Suites, which is just minutes away from the Royal Canadian Legion, where the forum took place. Catering was provided by the venue and included a delicious jiggs dinner on Monday that received rave reviews!

As you will see, the agenda was organized in a way to inform delegates of the national perspective, then to provincial, then closer to home with presentations from the 5 Indigenous groups of Newfoundland and Labrador.



NL Indigenous Tourism Forum  
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**Forum Schedule**

Monday, February 12, 2018		
8:00am	Breakfast	Royal Canadian Legion 172 Hamilton River Road
8:30am	Opening Prayer Welcome Address	
9:00am	Where Does Indigenous Tourism Fit? Presented by Keith Henry, ITAC	
10:15am	Nutritional Break	
10:30am	Product Development Strategy – Indigenous Tourism presented by Andrea Peddle, TCII	
11:45am	Networking Lunch	
12:45pm	Market Readiness presented by Andrea Peddle, TCII	
1:50pm	Nutritional Break	
2:05pm	Craft and Tourism: Offering a Craft-Based Experience presented by Rowena House, NL Craft Council	
3:10pm	Table Breakout Discussion: Programs and Supports led by Rob Greenwood Ph.D., The Harris Centre	
3:50pm	Table Breakout Reports: Programs and Supports led by Rob Greenwood Ph.D., The Harris Centre	
4:30pm	End of Day 1	

Photo 2: ITF Agenda, Day 1

Day 1 started off with a welcome address from steering committee representatives, Richard Lewis and Jillian Larkham, followed by an opening prayer in Inuttitut by Inuit Elder, Selma Jararuse, representing Nunatsiavut. We then moved into a presentation from Keith Henry with the Indigenous Tourism Association of Canada (ITAC). Keith provided an overview of ITAC, highlighting what they do and what their focused targets are for the next 5 years: including increasing Indigenous tourism revenues, increasing Indigenous tourism jobs and businesses.

Following Keith, we had two presentations from Andrea Peddle with the Department of Tourism, Culture, Industry, and Innovation (TCII). Andrea presented on the Provincial Tourism Strategy and Market Readiness.

Some highlights from the market readiness presentation include focusing on target marketing, brand positioning, and the benefits of being market ready. Three components of the market readiness guidelines are the Tourism Assurance Program (TAP), general market readiness, and ensuring you are prepared for export/travel trade.

Continuing the afternoon of Day 1 was a presentation by Rowena House with the Craft Council of NL, who gave us an overview on how craft and artisans work and promote tourism by offering craft-based tourism experiences.

Day 1 concluded with table breakout discussions on key questions provided by the facilitator:

1. Based on the presentations heard today, what are the programs/supports that you would like to learn more about to advance tourism plans?

## 2. What are the areas where there seem to be gaps in available supports?

Discussions that arose from those prompts focused around available funding programs, the potential for partnerships, training opportunities, and market readiness. A provincial Indigenous Tourism organization would benefit members and the Indigenous tourism industry by regionalizing available supports and create more of an ITAC presence in the province making it easier to liaison with the organization. There is a gap in getting information from the province and other organizations. We are still in the infancy stages of development, so we need the basics on how to create our Indigenous tourism products. Many of the things we take for granted can be sellable product that would draw tourists and guests to our areas.

Day 2 started with an opening prayer by Southern Inuit member of NunatuKavut, Lydia Penney, followed by presentations from Jenna Andersen and Jillian Larkham with Nunatsiavut, Roxanne Notley and Richard Lewis with NunatuKavut, and Jack Penashue with the Innu Nation. After each group presented, there was a Labrador tourism panel to provide the opportunity for questions from the forum delegates. The presentations and questions focused on what each group was currently doing and what the future plans were for Indigenous tourism. There are many great opportunities in Labrador with the Torngat National Park, the progress of Mealy Mountain National Park Reserve, and the improvements to the Tran-Labrador highway creating easier access to the mainland portion of the province.

INDIGENOUS TOURISM ASSOCIATION OF CANADA		Nunacor
Tuesday, February 13, 2018		
7:30am	Community Pancake Breakfast	College of the North Atlantic 219 Hamilton River Road
8:15am	<b>Opening Prayer</b>	Royal Canadian Legion 172 Hamilton River Road
8:30am	<b>Labrador Panel – Where we are in Indigenous Tourism</b> by representatives of NunatuKavut, Nunatsiavut, and Innu Nation	
9:50am	Nutritional Break	
10:05am	<b>Newfoundland Panel – Where we are in Indigenous Tourism</b> presented by representatives of Qalipu, and Conne River	
11:10am	<b>Table Breakout Discussions</b> led by Rob Greenwood Ph.D, The Harris Centre	
12:00pm	Networking Lunch	
1:00pm	<b>Table Breakout Reports</b> led by Rob Greenwood Ph.D, The Harris Centre	
1:40pm	<b>What's Happening with Indigenous Tourism in Canada</b> presented by Keith Henry, ITAC	
2:45pm	Nutritional Break	
3:00pm	<b>Next Steps for Newfoundland and Labrador</b> presented by Steering Committee	
3:30pm	<b>Closing Prayer</b>	
3:45pm	End of Day 2	
7:00-8:30pm – Social	<b>Closing Gala</b>	Lawrence O'Brien Arts Centre 15-21 Voisey Drive
8:30-10:00pm - Performances	Hot and cold appetizer buffet Cash bar Performances	

Photo 3: ITF Agenda, Day 2

Stan Hill and Caroline Swan presented on behalf of Conne River, and Tara Saunders with Qalipu presented on what they were currently doing regarding Indigenous tourism and what their future plans were. They highlighted the pow wows and festivals, as well as some community gems such as local storytellers that travel throughout the province. Presentations were followed by a question panel as well. The forum delegates were highly engaged during both panels.



Photo 4: Labrador Panelists Jenna Andersen, Jillian Larkham, Richard Lewis, Roxanne Notley, and Jack Penashue



Photo 5: Newfoundland Panelists Tara Saunders, Stan Hill, and Caroline Swan

After a nutritional break, Casey Vanden Heuval with ITAC presented on Product Development. Casey discussed the four strategic pillars that will be focused on over the next 5 years: product development, marketing, leadership, and partnership. ITAC is moving forward in supporting provincial/territorial associations with 3 long-term associations currently running in British Columbia, Quebec, and Yukon. They aim to have 8 new established associations in Alberta, Saskatchewan, Manitoba, Ontario, Nova Scotia, New Brunswick, Prince Edward Island, and Newfoundland and Labrador by the end of 2018. In developing these associations, the hopes are to build close relationships while building the Indigenous tourism industry. Other benefits include enhancing cultural awareness; revitalizing the traditions in the community and sharing those with travellers interested in learning about and engaging in them; ensuring that transfer of knowledge is passed down within the culture; and enhancing the livelihood for Indigenous tourism businesses.

We concluded the business of Day 2 with table breakout discussions focusing on top priorities for Newfoundland and Labrador Indigenous people to work on together to advance Indigenous tourism in the province. Delegates and groups were asked to list and discuss their top 5 priorities and report back to the group as a whole. Many of the top 5 overlapped between groups and individuals, which shows that industry leaders and stakeholders are on the same page when it comes to what we want to see and develop in the province. After all breakout groups presented their top 5, the forum facilitator listed the top 8 answers and using the dotmocracy voting method, identified the importance of completing each item according to forum delegates. The answers and their ranking are as follows:

1. Develop a strategic plan for priorities and common goals – 71 votes
2. Develop a provincial Indigenous tourism network/organization – 56 votes
3. Create new transparent partnerships; increase transparency between current partnerships – 33 votes

4. Use Indigenous stories/experiences in product development – 21 votes
5. Provide training, workshops, and best practices – 16 votes
6. Lobbying and advocacy – 15 votes
7. Implement province-wide insurance – 5 votes
8. Celebrate our milestones – 3 votes

The ITF steering committee will engage industry stakeholders to evolve into a provincial Indigenous tourism working group with a goal to identify the most realistic and progressive process to create a Provincial Indigenous Association, such as moving forward to develop a strategic plan.

Richard Lewis and Jillian Larkham provided closing remarks to the forum, thanking the facilitators, speakers and presenters, and the operators for all coming together for a productive and encouraging two days. The momentum from the forum will carry forward as the process towards a provincial association continues. After closing remarks, Elizabeth Penashue, a respected Innu Elder, closed the forum with a prayer in Innu-aimun.

## The Gala

The closing gala took place at the Lawrence O'Brien Arts Centre with a social catered by Voisey's Catering followed by the Indigenous Tourism Forum Showcase with talent representative of Indigenous cultures across the province. This evening provided delegates further opportunity to network in a comfortable environment while enjoying a buffet of local and cultural cuisine such as toutans with homemade jam, seafood, and bakeapple sweets to name a few. The concert was hosted by Mr. Joe Goudie and included performances by Ilaget, comprised of Gary and Jennifer Mitchell, Brandon Parady, and Paul Mitchell; songwriter James Nuna; Tara Saunders, Sara Leah Hindy, and Pete Barrett on hand drums; and Harry Martin with River to close out the evening. Forum delegates and invited guests were provided with complimentary evening tickets. Concert tickets were available to the public at \$10 each.



Photo 6: Indigenous Tourism Forum Showcase poster



Photo 8: Ilaget – Jennifer Mitchell, Gary Mitchell, Paul Mitchell, and Brandon Parry



Photo 9: Singer/songwriter James Nuna

## Evaluation and Feedback



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Evaluation

	Strongly disagree	Disagree	Neither disagree or agree	Agree	Strongly agree
The forum increased my awareness of how Indigenous groups in the province can work together.	<input type="radio"/>	<input type="radio"/>	<input type="radio"/>	<input type="radio"/>	<input type="radio"/>
The forum covered topics and themes which interest me.	<input type="radio"/>	<input type="radio"/>	<input type="radio"/>	<input type="radio"/>	<input type="radio"/>
There were good opportunities for dialogue throughout the forum.	<input type="radio"/>	<input type="radio"/>	<input type="radio"/>	<input type="radio"/>	<input type="radio"/>
A provincial Indigenous tourism association will play a key role in supporting Indigenous tourism operators.	<input type="radio"/>	<input type="radio"/>	<input type="radio"/>	<input type="radio"/>	<input type="radio"/>
A provincial Indigenous tourism association will benefit Indigenous people, communities, and supporting organizations such as DMOs, ACOA, TCII.	<input type="radio"/>	<input type="radio"/>	<input type="radio"/>	<input type="radio"/>	<input type="radio"/>
The facilitated workshop was a productive way to conduct the forum.	<input type="radio"/>	<input type="radio"/>	<input type="radio"/>	<input type="radio"/>	<input type="radio"/>

Additional comments:

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Photo 10: Evaluation form

Of the 62 total delegates, 38 filled out and returned the evaluation form given at the end of day 2. As you can see, the evaluation form used a Likert scale to measure delegates' opinions and attitudes about the forum.

Overall, feedback from the forum was extremely positive, with all responses being 'strongly agree' or 'agree'. We also received constructive feedback from the additional comments, as you will see below.

Of the 38 complete evaluations, 61% strongly agreed while 39% agreed that the forum increased their awareness of how Indigenous groups in the province can work together.

53% of delegates strongly agreed that the forum covered topics and themes which interested them, while 47% percent agreed with the statement.



When asked if there were good opportunities for dialogue throughout the forum, 68% strongly agreed with the remaining 32% in agreement.

All delegates thought that developing a provincial Indigenous tourism association would play a key role in supporting Indigenous tourism operators with 79% strongly agreeing and 21% agreeing. 63% strongly agreed while 37% agreed that such an association would benefit Indigenous people, communities, and supporting organizations such as DMOs, ACOA, TCII.

As for the structure of the forum and the use of third-party facilitators, 71% of delegates strongly agreed that the facilitated workshop was a productive way to conduct the forum, while 29% agreed.

Additional comments reflected that people were appreciative of the opportunity to come together to express issues and ideas, as well as being able to hear what other Indigenous identities are doing and planning for the future. The forum was seen as a way to increase transparency and reduce the division among Indigenous groups and many thought that it should be an annual event to maintain momentum and communication. It was also suggested to find a way to open future forums to include organizations with Indigenous members that can benefit from programs and tourism opportunities, and to involve people who self-identify without federal or band recognition. Feedback also showed that this forum was a great starting position to move forward collectively and collaboratively, safely and respectfully.

## **Media Coverage**

Media outlets were eager to do interviews and stories on the first Indigenous Tourism Forum for Newfoundland and Labrador as you will see in the following linked articles.

Evan Careen with the local newspaper, the Labradorian published an article on March 2, 2018 which you can read here: <http://www.thelabradorian.ca/news/indigenous-groups-come-together-in-labrador-to-discuss-tourism-opportunities-190344/>

CBC Labrador Morning's John Gaudi visited the forum over lunch to chat with Keith Henry, Jillian Larkham, and Richard Lewis. You can listen to that interview here: <http://www.cbc.ca/listen/shows/labrador-morning/episode/15520639>

The accompanying online article, published by John Gaudi on February 18, 2018 here: <http://www.cbc.ca/news/canada/newfoundland-labrador/boosting-indigenous-tourism-strategy-1.4537052>

The Indigenous Tourism Association of Canada (ITAC) also highlighted the forum on their website here: <https://indigenoustourism.ca/corporate/indigenous-tourism-forum-2018-newfoundland-labrador/>

## Partners and Funding Agencies

This forum would not be so successful without the funding and support of three key partners. We must extend sincere thanks to the Indigenous Tourism Association of Canada, ACOA, and the Department of TCII. We also wish to thank PAL Airlines and Air Borealis for providing a delegate rate for our delegates travelling from outside the Upper Lake Melville area. The Royal Inn + Suites provided comfortable quality accommodations and service close to the forum venue, as well as shuttle service to and from the airport. We also recognize the Royal Canadian Legion, the Lawrence O'Brien Arts Centre, Voisey's Catering, and Woodward's Aviation for their contribution to the forum.



Photo 12: Supporting businesses

## Next Steps

The ITF steering committee planned a follow-up face to face meeting that took place in Corner Brook on March 20, 2018. In keeping with the direction provided by forum delegates, the steering committee presented various approaches to accomplish the top two provincial objectives. It was agreed that other priorities identified will be addressed in a strategic plan and future workplan of a provincial Indigenous tourism body. The first step is to develop a strategic plan to ensure we move ahead at a realistic pace with reasonable goals and timelines. Our vision for a strategic plan is a two-phase approach. Early in the 2018-2019 fiscal year, we will apply for funds through ITAC to hire a consultant to do phase one, which will be composed of creating an inventory and market research. We estimate phase one to take approximately 6 months. Phase two will entail developing an implementation plan. We estimate phase two to take approximately 6 months as well. After the completion of both phases, the intent is to gather for a second provincial Indigenous tourism in late spring or early summer of 2019.

