



destinationnorthernontario.ca

NORTHERN ONTARIO

Workforce Development & Industry Training Strategy

Ontario 



Photo: Destination Northern Ontario

NORTHERN ONTARIO

Workforce Development & Training Strategy

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Prepared by Destination Northern Ontario Staff / 2020

Vision

Northern Ontario is a unique, distinctive and sought-after tourism destination wherein high-quality products and experiences resonate with consumers, entrepreneurship is valued, and tourism provides economic benefits and local, regional and global connections for the entire region.

Mission Statement

Destination Northern Ontario will take a leadership role to strategically guide and champion growth in Northern Ontario's tourism industry, through strong communication, collaboration and partnerships with industry.

Values

Destination Northern Ontario's Board is committed to focusing on the vision in an "innovative, results-based, effective and fiscally responsible manner, with a foundation of strong governance and management leadership." Destination Northern Ontario's Board also recognizes the following values as important aspects of the strategic plan:

- **Accountability**
- **Leadership**
- **Collaboration**
- **Integrity**
- **Transparency**
- **Innovation**
- **Teamwork**

Goals for Northern Ontario Tourism Sector

- Innovation and entrepreneurship are supported by research/educational tools
- Critical mass of high-quality products/ experiences are brought to market
- Realistic/sustainable tourism development (i.e., product-market match) is underway
- Streamlined services for operators are available

Destination Northern Ontario's Roles in achieving Sector Goals

- Leadership
- Communication
- Strategy
- Relationship-building
- Champion for industry growth (bringing the operator perspective to government)
- Professionalism (setting a standard of high quality for the industry)

Objective

Destination Northern Ontario's Workforce Development and Industry Training activities align with the Ministry of Heritage, Sport, Tourism, and Culture Industries.

Facilitate and support the attraction, development and retention of a workforce to enhance the customer experience.

Destination Northern Ontario continues to take a leadership role in proactively guiding workforce development and industry training for tourism operators and destinations, their employees, educators, and others who support the tourism industry in Northern Ontario. This leadership role is being achieved through a wide variety of programs, ultimately focused on enhancing the visitor experience and appeal of the region, to grow visitation and yield, from a "Visitor First" perspective.



Photo: Destination Northern Ontario



Strategic action steps for this pillar area include:

- 01 **Develop** and implement the Northern Ontario Workforce Development and Industry Training Strategy;
- 02 **Consolidate** training across all pillar areas with delivery of training under the Tourism Excellence North (TEN) banner;
- 03 **Provide** logistical support for training and report on outcomes of TEN and other training initiatives;
- 04 **Coordinate**, partner, monitor and promote other relevant training programs and opportunities for tourism industry stakeholders in line with Destination Northern Ontario initiatives (i.e., training for accommodation performance monitoring, wayfinding at Travel Information Centers, food and beverage interpretation training etc.);
- 05 **Leverage** funding in support of Destination Northern Ontario training-related initiatives;
- 06 **Provide** on-going mentorship and support after training;
- 07 **Collect**, track and utilize resulting data and findings to define the state of the industry and to guide development of programs and initiatives to further support and grow Northern Ontario's tourism industry.

Tourism Priorities in Northern Ontario

Destination Northern Ontario has made research a priority and, through its research, has focused its efforts by defining evidence-based strategic priorities. This strategic approach has led Destination Northern Ontario to focus on creating tourism experiences that resonate with visitors through three streams of shifts - Defend and Maintain; Inspire and Grow; and Rise and Shine.

01 Defend & Maintain Shift

The *Defend and Maintain Shift* ensures that Destination Northern Ontario will continue to focus on existing tourism products and experiences in which Northern Ontario's tourism industry excels. These priority products and experiences are:

Angling

Hunting

02 Inspire & Grow Shift

The *Inspire and Grow Shift* is about working with industry to enhance existing products and develop new products and experiences that will lead growth in Northern Ontario's tourism industry.

Culture & Heritage

- i. Attractions
- ii. Festivals and Events
- iii. Meetings, Incentive and Sports
- iv. Wayfinding

Gateway & Destination Communities

- i. Culinary
- ii. Francophone
- iii. Group of Seven
- iv. Indigenous
- v. LGBTQ

Nature & Adventure

- i. Paddling
- ii. Parks
- iii. Trails

Touring

- i. ATV
- ii. Auto and RV
- iii. Boating
- iv. Cycling
- v. Motorcycle
- vi. Snowmobile

Overseas Markets

Products for these markets are included in the above categories. Not all are a fit.

03 Rise & Shine Shift

The *Rise and Shine Shift* is about ensuring that all of Northern Ontario's tourism products and experiences are best in class in every aspect. This means we will aim to not only meet our visitors' expectations but also exceed them in both customer service and overall experience. Working with our Northern Ontario industry operators, we will provide the tools that are required to ensure that this goal is achieved.

Internally, the Defend and Maintain/Inspire and Grow/Rise and Shine Shift focus has led to a reallocation of resources, placing more effort on non-marketing initiatives by moving resources from traditional marketing practices with the forethought goal of creating a stronger, more powerful and successful tourism region in the long run. Destination Northern Ontario has achieved balance and now invests 50% of its budget into tourism product development, partnership initiatives and training development initiatives. The Defend and Maintain; Inspire and Grow; and Rise and Shine Shifts also align to Destination Ontario's marketing streams also named Defend and Maintain; Inspire and Grow; and Rise and Shine.

Destination Northern Ontario used its body of research as a basis, along with industry consultation, to develop strategies for each mandated pillar of product development,

investment attraction, workforce development and industry training and marketing (this latter pillar is in partnership with Destination Ontario). In addition, through product teams, Destination Northern Ontario has been able to complete unique product plans for each priority tourism sector. These strategies have guided Destination Northern Ontario in programming and initiatives related to each pillar and were a cornerstone in developing its overall Strategic Implementation Plan.

Recommendations in the *2014 Northern Ontario Product Development Strategy* not only focused on current tourism products and experiences but also where Northern Ontario should focus its product development efforts in the future, encouraging a stronger focus and the provision of more resources on product development and increasing the quality of available experiences.



Photo: Tiina Keranen

Northern Ontario Tourism Workforce and Industry Training Strategy Findings:

Central to this 2020 training strategy are the findings of the *Northern Ontario Tourism Workforce and Industry Training Strategy*, also developed in 2014, that evaluated “the extent to which skills required by the tourism industry are being acquired by workers, assessing the availability of programs and resources designed to improve or facilitate skills development, and understanding where gaps in skills development and training

exist between those that require them, and are essential to industry competitiveness. The research culminated with the identification of the core skill gaps and training requirements of the tourism industry in Northern Ontario.”¹ The 2020 training strategy will use this past evaluation, as the basis of its recommended goals and action plan to be implemented.

¹ *Northern Ontario Tourism Workforce & Industry Training Strategy*, April 2014

Core skill gaps and training requirements for the tourism workforce and industry training in Northern Ontario as identified by the 2014 Northern Ontario Tourism Workforce and Industry Training Strategy also reinforced through work to date are:

Employment Fundamentals

- › Employability skills and soft skills including communication skills, personality and enthusiasm, and appearance/first impressions*
- › Literacy and numeracy training

Basic Employee Tourism Training

- › “Service Excellence” with emphasis on customer service training (currently offered to Northern Ontario Travel Information Centres by DNO)
- › “In Good Hands” Health, food and safety
- › WHIMIS – Workplace Hazardous Materials Information System
- › Smart Serve

Advance Employee Tourism Training

- › Customer service training*
- › Regional awareness training*
- › Cross-sector promotional training*

Management/Business Owner Training

- › Business planning / small business management
- › Succession planning and mentoring training*
- › “Good Boss” and mentoring training*
- › Product development / product quality assurance / renewing product offerings
- › Website development / Social media training

*NOTE: Those followed by an * are identified as areas deserving of immediate attention as they have been identified as areas with core skill gaps and training requirements.*

With these core skill gaps and training requirements in mind, the 2014 tourism workforce training strategy identified goals and associated recommended actions. The strategy’s goals are:

GOAL #1: Foster awareness and knowledge of available resources, programs, and training opportunities;

GOAL #2: Foster partnerships among educational organizations, community employment training programs, and industry;

GOAL #3: Increase training capacity to meet the needs of operators;

GOAL #4: Advance skills development and training to meet the needs of tourism operators and their staff;

GOAL #5: Support operators to address human resource needs and future planning; and

GOAL #6: Promote employer investment in on-the-job training and skills development in employees.

The 2014 strategy acknowledged that there are many organizations across Northern Ontario already delivering or positioned to deliver support to Destination Northern Ontario to operationalize the strategy goals and associated actions.

The strategy recommended that it would be best to pursue a collaborative approach to identify the most effective ways to meet our industry's tourism training and education goals.

Following the publication of the strategy, Destination Northern Ontario partnered with the Labour Market Group and other supporting partners in Northern Ontario on a labour market initiative to “understand the needs of the labour market within the tourism sector in order to develop a new approach to support future growth.”² This research, combined with the recommendations of the Northern Ontario Workforce and Industry Training Strategy, resulted in an implementation guidebook being created by Destination Northern Ontario in partnership with the Labour Market Group to serve “as a roadmap for potential new initiatives to deal with the labour shortages, workforce challenges and skills gaps.”³

Also with the Labour Market Group and other partners in 2016, DNO created a toolkit promoting awareness of the opportunities for a career in tourism in Northern Ontario. This toolkit was distributed to all guidance counselling offices in post secondary institutions in Northern Ontario. The kits were well received and it has been suggested that they be updated and printed in greater quantities for more widespread distribution to students perhaps utilizing other media.

Also central to this 2020 training strategy are the insights, trends and lessons learned from the TEN pilot program. These have been integrated and applied directly to curriculum revisions. Moving forward we will use them to inform the curriculum and its delivery, operations and focus. The following is an outline of the TEN pilot program and a summary of its successes and findings.

² *Tourism Labour Market Initiative – Northeastern Ontario p. 69; Algoma/North Central & Northwest Ontario p. 74*

³ *Tourism Labour Market Initiative – Northeastern Ontario p. 69; Algoma/North Central & Northwest Ontario p. 74*



tourism excellence north
tourisme d'excellence Nord



TRAINING SOLUTIONS TO
Strengthen
TOURISM IN NORTHERN ONTARIO

Photo: Destination Ontario



tourism excellence north
tourisme d'excellence Nord

The 2014 *Tourism Development Program for Northern Ontario: Foundations Report* led to the creation of an implementation plan in 2015 for the Tourism Excellence North (TEN) program.

The TEN program was approved in March 2015 and is Destination Northern Ontario's tourism workforce development and industry training program for Northern Ontario.

It addresses the three critical shifts that the industry must make: 1) experience, 2) quality and 3) culture shifts identified in the product development strategy. The TEN program is inspired in part by the success and impact of a similar program led by the Atlantic Canada Opportunities Agency (ACOA) in Atlantic Canada.

TEN offers a suite of 10 training solutions designed to strengthen the ability of tourism operations to respond to changes in the marketplace, adapt to visitor expectations of quality, develop innovative experiences that raise the bar on visitor value and deliver increased returns for operations and the destination as a whole. TEN strategically guides investment into tourism development over the long term. During its three-year pilot phase, TEN was aligned to support priorities for tourism development in Northern Ontario, specifically those of Destination Northern Ontario (Regional Tourism Organization 13) and Explorers' Edge (Regional

Tourism Organization 12), which in turn supported the strategy goals of the Northern Ontario Tourism Workforce and Industry Training Strategy.

The TEN program has focused its efforts on the following product areas as identified in the 2014 Northern Ontario Product Development Strategy: angling, nature and adventure, auto/RV touring, gateways and urban communities, international markets, snowmobiling, and ATV. Going forward, product priorities also include motorcycle touring, boating, Francophone, Indigenous and culinary. Product development is supported through experiential workshops, best practices missions, assessment tools and case studies. (These areas were selected because they are the priority markets recommended in the product development strategy commissioned by Destination Northern Ontario in 2014.)

TEN also supports and aligns with the service quality enhancement and visitor experience priorities of *Canada's Federal Tourism Strategy: Welcoming the World* and *Ontario's Growth Plan for Northern Ontario*.

Launched in 2015 and completed in March 2018, the three-year TEN program pilot project has strengthened products, experiences and regional relationships, helping to contribute to increased economic activity amongst operators and communities/destinations throughout Northern Ontario. TEN fulfilled its mandate of raising the bar on visitor experiences and increasing operators' bottom line by focusing on the following objectives:

- **Improving and enhancing operator quality:** supporting operators as they strive for excellence in every interface with visitors.
- **Igniting innovation:** as operators reposition and invest to attract new types of visitors and strengthen their competitiveness.
- **Building great visitor experiences:** to support operators as they develop and deliver higher-yield offers, increasing the number of higher value experiences.
- **Creating vibrant tourism communities:** to provide guidance, inspiration and a roadmap for destinations to strengthen their visitor economies.
- **Investing in tourism:** to link the broad range of brokers and stakeholders who interact with and support tourism development to the TEN program (similar to Atlantic Canada Opportunities Agency program).



tourism excellence north
tourisme d'excellence Nord

TEN Programming for Operators, Communities/ Destinations:



Tourism Excellence North Training Solutions

In line with the original program plan for Tourism Excellence North (*Tourism Excellence North: A Tourism Development Program for Northern Ontario, March 2015*) to respond to the changes in the marketplace, adapt to quality visitor expectations, develop innovative experiences that raise the bar on visitor value and increase the bottom line, programming was developed and implemented for operators and communities/destinations and included self-assessment tools, group learning, personalized coaching, orientation sessions for brokers and training for TEN Specialists. TEN programming is packaged as 'TEN Training Solutions'.

An evaluation survey completed in January 2018 demonstrated positive impact, appeal and value of the training solutions to the industry. Results of this survey and performance measures of the pilot are outlined below.

01 SELF-ASSESSMENT TOOLS

Downloadable Tools

These are downloadable self-assessment tools available in English and French, free and accessible online. The first four tools were developed as part of the three-year pilot. They have been well-used by the operators and communities with a total of 1048 downloads, exceeding the pilot's overall target benchmark of 950. Feedback was received from the industry and TEN Brokers about the format and use of the self-assessment tools. TEN Brokers are the people who connect TEN's tools and solutions to

operators, communities and destinations. They are provincial and federal tourism advisors, municipal staff, economic development officers, destination marketing organization staff, sector organizations and others who are on the ground and in the field supporting tourism operators, destinations and communities as a regular part of their everyday job. Based on this feedback, the content and design of the tools were revised to clarify, simplify and to encourage regular use.

The four tools include the following:

- 10 Essentials of Successful Travel Products/Experiences
- Visitor Appeal Assessment Tool
- 10 Essentials of Successful Touring Routes
- Community Tourism Assessment Index

For Operators, **78%** said the tools assisted with business improvements and customer service improvements and **92%** were interested in participating in other TEN training solutions. For communities, a total of **75%** said they worked with their community partners to complete the self-assessment tools and **62%** responded they were interested in participating in another TEN training solution.

Four (4) 'All About TEN' videos in support of the down-loadable self-assessment tools, above, were also developed. This video series provides a progression of information for operator and community streams, moving from a general overview of the tools to help participants identify which one meets their needs to a more detailed 'how to' for each tool (**see Appendix II**).

An additional **ten (10)** downloadable self-assessment tools have been created to reflect the product development priorities of Destination Northern Ontario (**see Appendix II**).

02 CASE STUDIES

Case Studies are visual examples of excellence from Northern Ontario tourism operators, communities and destinations. A highlight of these videos includes testimonials from nine participants who took part in TEN's training solutions including workshops, Best Practices Missions and the Fast Track to Success program (**see Appendix II**). The case studies

surpassed the benchmark of **300** downloads for all Case Studies developed during the pilot with **2,192** plays of the fifteen Case Studies via Vimeo, Facebook and the website. TEN also surpassed the total number of Case Studies to be produced during the three-year pilot from 10 to 15 which included the 'All About TEN' series and 'How To' guides.

03 Group Learning

TEN's group learning training solutions include experiential and international readiness workshops for operators and communities, Best Practices Missions, Experience Fishing and the Northern Ontario Tourism Summit (**see Appendix II**). The TEN solutions support long-term, strategic tourism development priorities in Northern Ontario, enabling a process of continuous hands-on learning tailored to the needs of diverse stakeholders.

Participants attending the operator workshops during the pilot indicated the following:

- 50%** developed a new or enhanced an existing product since participating in the workshop
- 56%** of respondents experienced increased visitation/sales since attending the workshop
- 75%** of respondents plan to develop a new product or collaborate with others on product development
- 62%** responded that the workshop assisted with customer service improvements in their business while **61%** said it assisted with business improvements
- 100%** of respondents indicated they would be interested in participating in other TEN training solutions

Testimonials include:

- *"Lots of relevant information, great exercises, celebrating local resources and people. Best practice examples worthwhile, valuable, thought provoking but with structure behind the ideas generated."*
- *"...It helps to take what you know and move you forward to the next step!!"*

While the two community workshops with only **23 participants** missed the pilot benchmark of **48 participants**, the workshop does continue to grow in its attendance. For example, a workshop held in Cochrane in May 2018 had a total of **23 participants** and most recently, one held in Sioux Narrows had a total of **27 participants**.

Of those attending the pilot program community workshops participants indicated the following:

50% have developed new products or enhanced an existing product since participating in the workshop

60% are planning to develop new products or collaborate with others on product development

60% of respondents experienced increased visitation/sales since attending the workshop

75% of respondents said the workshop assisted with business improvements in their community, organization or business

Of those participating in the Best Practices Missions, **100%** said they would recommend the program to others and **100%** agreed that the program provided value for their investment of time and money to travel to and participate in the mission.

Testimonials include:

- *"I cannot identify one part as most valuable, since all the parts of the itinerary created a perfect learning experience. From the first day of the mission to the very last day, every part was a valuable experience."*
- *"Having a variety of sites to visit... This instilled confidence in the strategy that high quality standards and attention to design detail makes for a more polished product."*
- *"...hearing from the owners, their success and struggles – showed size didn't matter, same struggles for all operators."*

The two additional Best Practices Missions planned for Fall 2017 were rescheduled to Spring 2018, therefore not reported in the results table. The number of participants in Spring 2018 totaled **22** for an overall participation of **38 people** in three Best Practices Missions.

04 Personalized Coaching / Mentorship

TEN's personalized coaching and mentorship includes Fast Track to Success, TEN Orientation Program and TEN Specialist Training (see Appendix II).

The Fast Track to Success (FTS) program delivers 1:1 coaching to tourism operators, customized to their unique operational and market context. TEN saw **60 operators** participate in the program during the pilot, from a full range of public and private sector and not-for-profit operations including retail and festivals and events. Input from operators who have responded to surveys about the value and impact of the FTS program is a resounding 'yes' that FTS visits are having a positive impact. Close to **95%** of survey respondents noted that the 'mentoring session and walk-about was relevant and useful'. Just over **90%** agreed that the *'follow-up contained useful suggestions/feedback to improve my organization.'*

TEN Specialists provide a Mentor Report to Operators with recommendations for improvement as part of Fast Track to Success. Five areas emerged as recommendation areas by TEN Specialists:

- › Upgrade and refresh facilities
- › Add new products
- › Pursue new markets
- › Update, enhance and refresh website
- › Invest in first impressions

It is clear that Fast Track to Success visits are filling a gap and a need on the ground. A majority of operators noted that they had undertaken implementation of many of the recommendations they received. Additional feedback from operators included:

- › Time is a limiting factor to implementing recommendations and, for some, is more of a factor than financing
- › Having an external, very practical perspective is a big value-added aspect. It is a great help to get a long list of action items or to receive confirmation that plans are 'on track'
- › FTS has acted as a gateway into TEN with some operations participating in other TEN solutions as a direct result of the visit and recommendations by TEN Coordinator and TEN Specialist
- › The FTS visits have been catalysts for change and improvement. Some operations would benefit from 'expanded/next stage' support to advance specific ideas, access other expertise or financing or to receive additional mentoring that is beyond the current intent of FTS

The TEN Broker Orientation Program was developed with three workshops hosted in June 2016 and one workshop hosted in November 2016, with a total of 103 participants in attendance. In addition, a number of one-on-one training sessions for Brokers have been held with interested stakeholders. These numbers surpassed the benchmarks of two workshops hosted with 32 participants in attendance.

The strong Broker network developed through the program enables TEN to market tools and training opportunities to tourism operators throughout Northern Ontario. This has been critical in providing an introduction of TEN to Operators and Communities/ Destinations. As self-assessment registrations, FTS recommendations and group learning workshops are being successfully completed, it is evident that the TEN Broker initiative has been effective, however some refining of this network and additional communication is required. Key Brokers have been advocates for the

TEN tools and training opportunities, contributing to overall success. Additionally, some key Brokers have attended workshops and Best Practices Missions, adding value for participants and further engaging with TEN.

TEN Specialists are qualified specialists who bring knowledge and appreciation of the unique characteristics of tourism across Northern Ontario as well as knowledge from other jurisdictions in order to deliver one or more of TEN's group learning and/or personalized coaching solutions. These TEN Specialists were trained by TEN's Master Trainer as a group, with additional one-on-one sessions for specific training solutions, as well as debriefing sessions. The Master Trainer, a qualified independent tourism specialist designed and delivered training for Brokers and TEN Specialists as well as led development and evaluation of training solutions.

The following table demonstrates the results of the TEN three-year pilot program:

TRAINING SOLUTION	BENCHMARKS	PILOT RESULTS
Ten Essentials of Successful Travel Products/Experiences	450 Downloads	411 Downloads
Ten Essentials of Successful Tourism Routes	225 Downloads	142 Downloads
Visitor Appeal Assessment Tool	225 Downloads	313 Downloads
Community Tourism Assessment Index	50 Downloads	182 Downloads
Case Studies	10 Case Studies / 300 Downloads	15 Case Studies / 589 Downloads
Fast Track to Success	60 Operations visited	60 Operations visited
Experiential Travel Training for Operators	48 Operators/ 4 Workshops	45 Operators / 4 Workshops
Moving Tourism in Your Community from Ideas to Action	48 Participants / 2 Workshops	23 Participants / 2 Workshops
Best Practices Missions	36 Participants / 3 BPM's	16 Participants / 1 BPM
TEN Orientation Program	32 Participants / 2 Workshops	103 Participants / 4 Workshops

**Additional team members may use these tools, increasing reach and outcomes.*

TEN received the provincial **Tourism Innovator of the Year Award**, at the 2018 Tourism Industry Association of Ontario Tourism Awards of Excellence.

Moving forward post-pilot phase, the TEN program will renew its focus on workforce development for employees/employers and address the skills gap and labour shortage challenge while continuing to focus on industry training to bolster the vitality of the tourism sector through the delivery of TEN training solutions.

Workforce Development and Industry Training – Current Context and Research Findings

Each of the following studies point to the need for workforce training and development and/or technology where appropriate, to support the already large and growing tourism industry.

CASE STUDY #1

Gros Morne Institute for Sustainable Tourism

The Gros Morne Institute for Sustainable Tourism (GMIST) delivers a suite of proactive tools and solutions that were designed to address challenges and enhance the Atlantic region's tourism competitiveness. The GMIST is situated on Newfoundland and Labrador's west coast. It was established in 2003 to advance quality tourism experiences by providing training in sustainable tourism practices, experiential tourism and eco-adventure tourism capabilities. Examples of the Institute's programs include Edge of the Wedge, Beacons for Effective Sustainable Tourism and Partnering and Packaging.

Clients and other stakeholders consider the GMIST a valuable training program. Between 2009 and 2014, 374 tourism small and medium enterprises (SMEs) across Atlantic Canada have attended GMIST training in Newfoundland and Labrador and almost 1,000 individuals have attended GMIST outreach sessions. According to a 2011 independent client survey, 87% of interviewees indicated that the GMIST experience provided learning opportunities that led to meaningful skills development applicable to their business operations and practices. Similarly, 87% of participants also said that the experience increased their market readiness.

A majority of clients surveyed indicated being satisfied with the GMIST program and would recommend it to others. Similar results were noted in the 2014 client survey, with 95% indicating that the GMIST was a valuable resource for the industry.⁴

In October 2019, three Destination Northern Ontario staff and Heather Gropp participated in a GMIST workshop focused on experiential tourism travel product development. This workshop provided food for thought for future training within the TEN program.

⁴ Evaluation of the Atlantic Canada Opportunities Agency's Tourism Programming FINAL REPORT, Section 5.3

CASE STUDY #2

Fishing Tourism is connecting the land and the people of Ontario

Brent, Avalonne and Brendan each shared their passion for fishing and connecting with the land. As graduates of the inaugural Ontario Tourism Education Corporation's Freshwater Fishing Guide (FFG) Certification program held June 2019 in Elliot Lake, they shared their Ojibwe way of life during this two-week program and are now ambassadors for their communities and Northern Ontario's tourism industry. Each has a long history of bringing visitors to the lakes and rivers of Northern Ontario. By building on the program's heritage interpreter component and applying their knowledge of the land and their experience of the outdoors, they help visitors connect with and respect nature.

OTEC's FFG program includes a blend of in-class and on-the-job applied training and offers a nationally recognized certification and has elevated their knowledge and skills as guides to deliver high-quality tourism experiences while furthering their careers as tourism ambassadors. Some highlights of the program include understanding industry required training and certification, small engine repair, fundamentals of heritage interpretation and elements of planning and conducting the trip.

Brent is now employed as a guide with Mukwa Adventures, a backcountry and fishing operator in the Sagamok region. Brendan operates his own guiding and outfitting business called Blackfox Fishing, which recently launched an ice fishing product called "The Trigger". Avalonne is furthering her studies as an environmental keeper while also

volunteering with Waterlution, the Great Canoe Journey through which she teaches Indigenous culture to youth.

Fishing tourism in Northern Ontario creates an opportunity for Indigenous communities and economic development while maintaining social values and cultural traditions. One in three international visitors to Canada are interested in Indigenous tourism experiences and fishing is a key tourism driver with 1,600 resource-based tourism sites generating 41,000 person-years of employment and contributing \$2.2 billion annually to Ontario's economy. "Always being prepared is a must", says Brent and "feeling reassured that the knowledge and teachings obtained through the program" says Brendan are what helps graduates share their culture with the world as tourism ambassadors.



EN COLLABORATION AVEC  LOTO QUÉBEC

CASE STUDY #3

Photo: Regis Hari Bouchard on Unplash

From Concierge to Account Executive⁵

Mitemo Chevalier has made a career as a tourism ambassador. He started his journey as tour guide in 2006, proudly sharing his pride for his hometown of Quebec City with others. While undertaking international studies, which grew his understanding for the guests that he welcomed, he continued to guide. At that point, Mitemo also undertook a job as hotel concierge, deepening his skills and appreciation for the power of tourism. His education and formal

experience collided when he joined the team at Tourisme Charlevoix, as a project lead for international marketing, offering a new platform to connect with travelers through stories. He is now a proud member of le Carnaval de Quebec, where he works as an account executive. He describes his current role, and a common thread throughout his career, as a privilege – as he says: “We bring happiness into the lives of others”.

⁵ *Unlocking the Potential of Canada's Visitor Economy, December 2018, p. 3*

Current Provincial & National Context

CANADA | Current National Context



**CANADA'S TOURISM
SECTOR GENERATES
\$98 BILLION+
ANNUALLY**

Today, the tourism sector is one of the world's fastest growing industries. In Canada, it is one of the nation's largest economic sectors, generating total revenues in excess of **\$98 billion annually** and is also one of Canada's most geographically diverse sectors.⁶ As an economic driver, it often outpaces more traditional industries and is a significant contributor to the economy and jobs in Canada, Ontario and Northern Ontario with a significant potential for growth.

According to Canada's Growth Strategy for Tourism, tourism generates **\$102 billion** in annual economic activity, **1.8 million jobs** and accounts for over **2% GDP**.⁷ If we are to include spending by both tourists and locals, spending at Canadian businesses indicates that demand could rise from **\$167 billion** in 2010 to over **\$287 billion** in 2035.⁸ Based on this, the projected labour demand is about **2.29 million** in 2035 or potentially an additional **110,000 to 180,000** more jobs across the country.⁹ Canada's Indigenous tourism sector is contributing significantly to this

growth in which these businesses grew **23%** from 2014 to 2017 compared to **14.5%** GDP growth during the same period for the tourism sector overall.¹⁰ According to Tourism HR Canada, "projections show that the main source of new job creation will continue to be the service industries".

However, while Canada has met or exceeded global growth in recent years, other countries have done even better¹¹, and Canada has fallen behind as an international tourism destination. The challenges are significant, including concentrated demand, limited transportation options, labour shortages, and lack of attractive investments.¹² Skills and labour force shortages are among the most significant challenges facing the Canadian economy in the near future.¹³ In addition, tourism employment is outpacing the general labour market. The number of people employed in tourism grew **11%** from 2011 to 2016, while the total employed labour force in Canada grew by just **3.8%**.¹⁴

⁶ *Unlocking the Potential of Canada's Visitor Economy*, December 2018, p.3

⁷ *Creating Middle Class Jobs: A Federal Tourism Growth Strategy*, May 2019, p. 10

⁸ *Bottom Line: Labour Challenges Threaten Tourism's Growth*, June 2016, p. 3

⁹ *Unlocking the Potential of Canada's Visitor Economy*, December 2018, p.6

¹⁰ *Creating Middle Class Jobs: A Federal Tourism Growth Strategy*, May 2019, p. 10

¹¹ *Unlocking the Potential of Canada's Visitor Economy*, December 2018, p.5

¹² *Unlocking the Potential of Canada's Visitor Economy*, December 2018, p.2

¹³ 2012 Canadian Chamber of Commerce "Top 10 Barriers to Competitiveness" report Ontario Tourism Education Corporation

¹⁴ *Tourism HR Canada 2017-2018 Annual Report*, 2018, p. 7



**CANADA'S TOURISM
SECTOR ACCOUNTS FOR
1.8 MILLION JOBS**



**IT ALSO ACCOUNTS FOR
OVER 2% GDP**

According to Tourism HR Canada's Bottom Line, projections for labour supply indicate that tourism employment opportunities could rise from **1.64 million** in 2010 to **2.05 million** in 2035. The resulting labour gap between demand and supply between 2010 and 2035 suggests that there will be almost **240,000** tourism jobs that go unfilled and this will significantly constrain the sector's growth. The Federal Government recognizes that this will require a collaborative effort by both public and private sectors.

The Federal Budget 2019 therefore recognized tourism as a high-priority, high-growth industry and provided renewed focus to support the visitor economy with 36 initiatives to empower communities to develop tourism attractions; attract deeper investment; improve enabling infrastructure for better access, convenience and visitor mobility; support the sector's businesses; and build the workforce.¹⁵

Following is a list of initiatives to support the sector's businesses and build the workforce:

- › Tourism Industry Economic Strategy Table
- › Global Skills Strategy
- › Destination Employment Program
- › Student Work Placement Program
- › Sectoral Initiatives Program
- › New Horizons for Seniors Program
- › Enhancing the Guaranteed Income Supplement Earnings Exemption for Low-Income Seniors Who Work
- › Canada Training Benefit
- › Futurpreneur Canada
- › LGBTQ2 Workshops with Tourism HR
- › Tourism Market and Export-Ready Program for Chinese Visitors
- › Temporary Foreign Worker (TFW) Program Service Delivery Improvements to Reduce Backlogs

¹⁵ *Creating Middle Class Jobs: A Federal Tourism Growth Strategy, May 2019, p. 26*

ONTARIO & THE NORTHERN CONTEXT | Current Provincial Context

Tourism is an important driver of economic activity in Ontario. The industry is a key source of employment and international exports, and it is also unique in its diversity of impact by region and sector. Ontario's tourism sector is strong with **391,000** full-year jobs and contributes **\$32.7 billion** or **4.3%** to the provincial GDP. It is greater than forestry, mining and agriculture combined. As the country's largest tourism market, Ontario represents nearly **40%** of Canada's tourism employment. Of this, Indigenous tourism in Ontario contributes **\$622 million** to the GDP and **10,750** full-year tourism jobs to the economy.¹⁹

As Baby Boomers age and retire, modest migrant numbers are achieved and the number of people aged 15 to 24 is decreasing, constraints in the labour market are becoming increasingly apparent. Not only does this limit the economy's productive capacity, but it also generates other undesirable trends such as higher inflation. Also, the skills mismatch between existing talent pools and available jobs poses a significant threat to Ontario's economic growth and business success.²⁰ Businesses across the province and in nearly all industry sectors report that finding, recruiting, and retaining talent with the right skills is one of their top challenges and a significant

barrier to their growth. **62%** of employers would provide the technical training needed for the job, as long as the candidate was the right fit and had soft skills.²¹

Labour shortages were identified as an important issue in the 2009 Sorbara Report which stated that labour is a critical factor to the success and vitality of the industry within Ontario. Within the tourism sector specifically, labour and skills challenges have long been identified as a concern and, moreover, as a factor impacting the industry's performance. As such, Workforce Development and Industry Training emerged as one of the four pillars critical to tourism throughout Ontario in the Sorbara plan.²²

Tourism HR Canada's *Bottom Line: Bridging the Labour Gap* reports that Ontario will be the most affected by labour shortages with an approximate **60,000** worker shortfall in labour demand by 2035, while rural and remote areas are expected to be most affected due to weaker labour supply growth. Clearly, there exists a significant need for workforce development and industry training within Northern Ontario's tourism sector.

¹⁶ Ontario Chamber of Commerce, *Closing the Tourism Gap: Creating a Long-Term Advantage for Ontario*, 2016, p. 10

¹⁷ http://www.mtc.gov.on.ca/en/research/econ_impact/econ_impact.shtml

¹⁸ Ontario Tourism Workforce Development Strategy 2012-2017, 2012, p.5

¹⁹ The Conference Board of Canada *Canada's Indigenous Tourism Sector*, May 2019

²⁰ *Help Wanted: Modernizing Employment and Skills Training Services in Ontario*, 2019, p. 3

²¹ *Ibid*, p. 6

²² *Tourism Labour Market Initiative – Northeastern Ontario*, p. 30; *Algoma/North Central & Northwest Ontario*, p. 34

The Case for Workforce Development & Industry Training – in Northern Ontario

To build upon the previous exploration of research already completed and in support of workforce development and industry training in Northern Ontario, below are points that demonstrate how workforce development and industry training fits within the current or near-future mandate of Destination Northern Ontario:

- **Workforce Development and Industry Training** is one of five pillars outlined in *Destination Northern Ontario's Three-Year Strategic Plan 2017/18 - 2019-20* that is expected to grow visitor spending in Northern Ontario in line with the MTCS Regional Tourism Organization Guide, published October 13, 2017.
- **Workforce Development and Industry Training** is in alignment with *Canada's Growth Strategy for Tourism* which recognizes tourism as a high-priority, high-growth industry, providing renewed focus to grow the visitor economy and build the workforce to meet demand.
- **The Northern Ontario Tourism Workforce and Industry Training Strategy** completed for Destination Northern Ontario in 2014 states that tourism-related occupations account for 40% of the total labour force in Northern Ontario²³. Considered a key employment sector for Northern Ontario, it is essential to have workforce strategies in place to ensure sustainable growth for the industry.
- **Creating** a Workforce Development and Industry Training strategy for 2020-25 will allow for consolidation of all training across DNO's pillar areas and ensure that training needs associated with DNO's Product Development strategies are met through Tourism Excellence North and other DNO initiatives.
- **Workforce Development and Industry Training** is in alignment with Destination Northern Ontario's *Product Development Strategy* to provide the training and development needed to build capacity by providing the skills, knowledge and tools to better serve visitors and grow tourism businesses. The focus will be on creating visitor experiences that resonate through the three streams of shifts identified earlier – Defend and Maintain; Inspire and Grow; and Rise and Shine.

²³ Northern Ontario Tourism Workforce and Training Strategy, April 2014, p. 7

Workforce Development and Industry Training Strategy for Northern Ontario – 2020-2025

The 2020-2025 Workforce Development and Industry Training Strategy builds upon experience to date, integrating research, input from a broad range of stakeholders, partners in the TEN program and the Workforce Development and Industry Training Advisory Team.

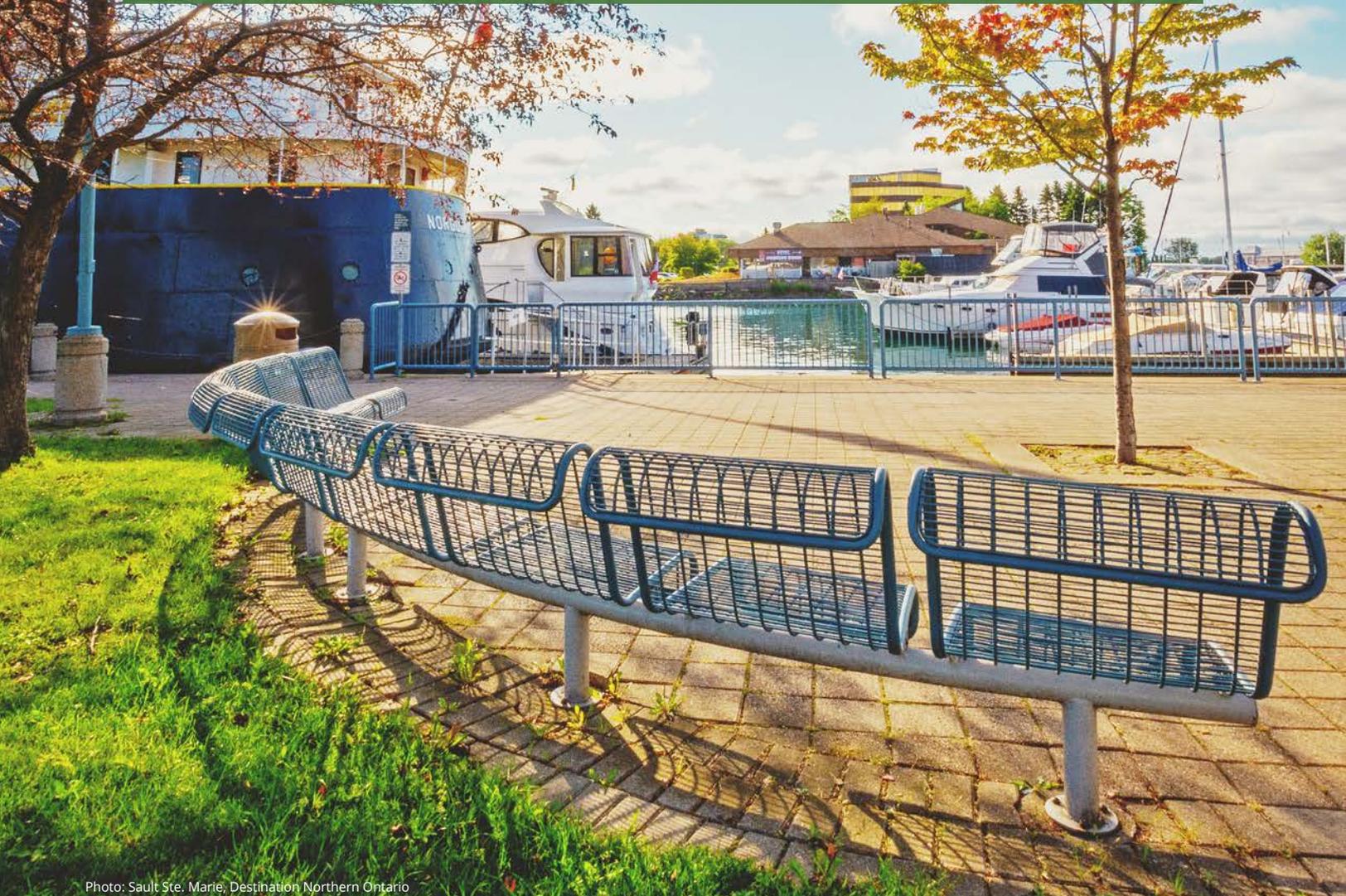


Photo: Sault Ste. Marie, Destination Northern Ontario

Eight Steps to support Workforce Development & Industry Training in Northern Ontario

Considerable progress has been made since workforce and product related research were completed in 2014-15. The marketplace is evolving, and industry operators are more attuned to shifting consumer interests and new opportunities. Going forward, it is therefore appropriate to implement the following steps, to meet the needs of Northern Ontario's tourism industry:

- 01 **Research**, assess and identify/update priorities
- 02 **Review** and update training program inventory
- 03 **Identify** current gaps (what is the need)
- 04 **Address** gaps through TEN; develop, deliver and partner
- 05 **Merchandize**, market and communicate training programs
- 06 **Report** on performance; measure effectiveness
- 07 **Engage** training network
- 08 **Post** training opportunities



STEP 01: Research, Assess and Identify/Update Priorities

In an effort to consolidate workforce development and industry training efforts undertaken by Destination Northern Ontario, a dedicated Senior Coordinator, Workforce Development and Industry Training is in place.

Although there has been ample research completed on skills gaps, labour shortages in the workforce, and other tourism training-focused programs both in Ontario, Canada and across the world, it is important that more research is completed on other programs across Canada, how they have updated training programs since 2014, engaged staff/consultants, the impacts, product development and challenges to product development, they have faced. This will serve to strengthen the training strategy to meet the above priorities.

A comprehensive review of diverse input and progress to date, confirms that Tourism Excellence North should focus its efforts on the following priorities for workforce development and industry training:

- **Facilitate** and support the attraction, development and retention of a tourism workforce to enhance the customer experience;
- **Increase** capacity of operators, destinations and communities within Northern Ontario's tourism industry;
- **Capitalize** on internal staff and other resources including peer-to-peer training opportunities;
- **Capitalize** on experience from both within and outside the region;
- **Adopt** a collaborative approach in partnership with industry and continue to address specific tourism industry needs, challenges and gaps through training;
- **Explore** alternative learning channels and environments such as online learning, etc.; and
- **Aggregate** data for planning purposes.

In addition, TEN will assess the Action Plan and Implementation Strategy of the *2015 Northern Ontario Tourism Training Strategy* and Implementation Guide from the 2014 Labour Market Initiative, identifying which action items should be implemented and in what order.



STEP 02: Review and Update Training Program Inventory

An inventory of all the available training programs/courses related to the tourism sector and training organizations in Northern Ontario was created in Excel. This inventory provides an easily updated and searchable tool for Destination Northern Ontario within the *Northern Ontario Tourism Training Strategy*. This inventory will be reviewed and updated.



Photo: Destination Northern Ontario



STEP 03: Identify Current Gaps; What is the need?

Although much has been accomplished under the Tourism Excellence North program for industry training needs, there is still more to do with respect to Destination Northern Ontario's *Product Development Strategy* and addressing the skills gap and training requirements identified in the *Northern Ontario Tourism Training Strategy* and Labour Market Initiatives.

The next step will be to enhance or develop curriculum around the three shifts – **defend and maintain** (support, enhance and improve existing tourism products and experiences), **inspire and grow** (develop new tourism products for new markets that will lead in tourism growth) and **rise and shine** (build capacity at all levels achieving overall excellence), incorporating technology where appropriate, under the TEN banner and focused on the following:

1. **Employability** skills and soft skills
2. **Customer** service training
3. **Regional** awareness training
4. **Cross-sector** promotional training
5. **Succession** planning and mentoring training
6. **"Good Boss"** and mentoring training
7. **Self-assessments** and/or training solutions focused on:
 - Boating
 - Culinary
 - Culture (Group of Seven)
 - Francophone (for both Anglophone and Francophone operators)
 - Indigenous
 - Motorcycling
 - Crisis communication
 - Green tourism
 - Basic hospitality skills such as 'how to make a bed'
8. **Computer** and technology skills especially for more mature owner operators
9. **Marketing** and social media.



STEP 04: Address Gaps through the TEN Program; Develop, Deliver and Partner

The only tourism industry training program of its kind in Ontario, Tourism Excellence North is ideally positioned to address critical gaps building upon the current foundation of training solutions:

- **Providing** logistical support for training and reporting on program outcomes
- **Partnering**, coordinating, monitoring and promoting other relevant training programs for tourism industry stakeholders in line with Destination Northern Ontario initiatives (i.e., training for accommodation performance monitoring, wayfinding at Travel Information Centers, training for fresh water fishing guides, etc.); and
- **Leveraging** funding in support of Destination Northern Ontario training-related initiatives.

The extent to which TEN addresses the gaps in workforce development and industry training will rely heavily on the development and delivery skills and expertise of the individuals developing or leading the training solutions. It is recommended therefore, that a staffing plan (to include TEN Specialists, Brokers, staff and community champions) be developed. This will include:

- **Provide** training for DNO staff, brokers and designated community champions to be scaled up as Training Specialists;
- **Review** TEN Specialist Standing Agreements and call for expressions of interest once staffing plan is complete. TEN Specialists to be referred to as Training Specialists moving forward
- **Consider** possible third-party providers such as Universities and Colleges

In the development/revision and delivery of curriculum, Tourism Excellence North will engage and partner with the following:

- **Training Specialists**
- **Other** training providers and tourism entities such as OTEC and Northern Ontario Workforce Planning Boards to support their training opportunities
- **DNO** staff as Training Specialists, should they meet the required criteria to be defined in the staffing plan

In addition, a Workforce Development and Industry Training Advisory Team will be developed (**see Appendix III**).

	PRIORITY	ACTION STEPS
1	New Curriculum or Content	Where relevant, develop and deliver new curriculum/content for online learning, self learning, group learning, personalized and/or mentorship training solutions based on the priorities and gaps identified in Workforce and Industry Training Strategy
2	Annual Training Calendar	Tied to the inventory noted in Step 2, create and publish an annual calendar of training opportunities across Northern Ontario, including those offered by other organizations, accessible online for the public (monthly or quarterly updates)
3	TEN Website	Enhance and further develop the TEN website to provide a blended learning experience and “learner first” focused environment
4	Northern Ontario Workforce Planning Boards	Work in collaboration with Northern Ontario Workforce Planning Boards to deliver on the actionable initiatives as identified in the implementation guidebook and in alignment to DNO’s Northern Ontario <i>Workforce Development and Industry Training Strategy</i>
5	Partner – Educational Institutions	Foster partnerships among educational organizations, community employment training programs and industry to expand delivery and reach
6	New Training Approaches	Research and identify new approaches to assessment, peer-to-peer training, online learning, self-directed training and the use of technology to enhance learning and skill development including the use of course badges and/or digital certificates awarded based on a set of criteria and displayed in the user’s profile. The course badge/certificate will be awarded for completing a course by TEN
7	Expand Online Training Resources	Research, identify and participate in peer-to-peer training on the development and incorporation of online courses, web-based workshops and self-directed training Implement action items from the Northern Ontario Tourism Training Strategy and Labour Market Initiative Implementation Guide such as foster awareness and knowledge of available resources, programs and training opportunities and increase training capacity to meet the needs of operators
8	Build a Workforce Development and Industry Training Network	Create a network of workforce development and industry training professionals from across Canada to serve as a convener and forum to engage in frank and open discussion of the opportunities, trends, issues, and challenges in training and development within the tourism sector. Note: TEN to host the first meeting in person. Subsequent meetings to be held annually

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STEP 05: Merchandise/Market, Communicate

There is the opportunity to deliver the TEN program in other parts of the province as well as respond to demand from communities within Northern Ontario seeking training solutions.

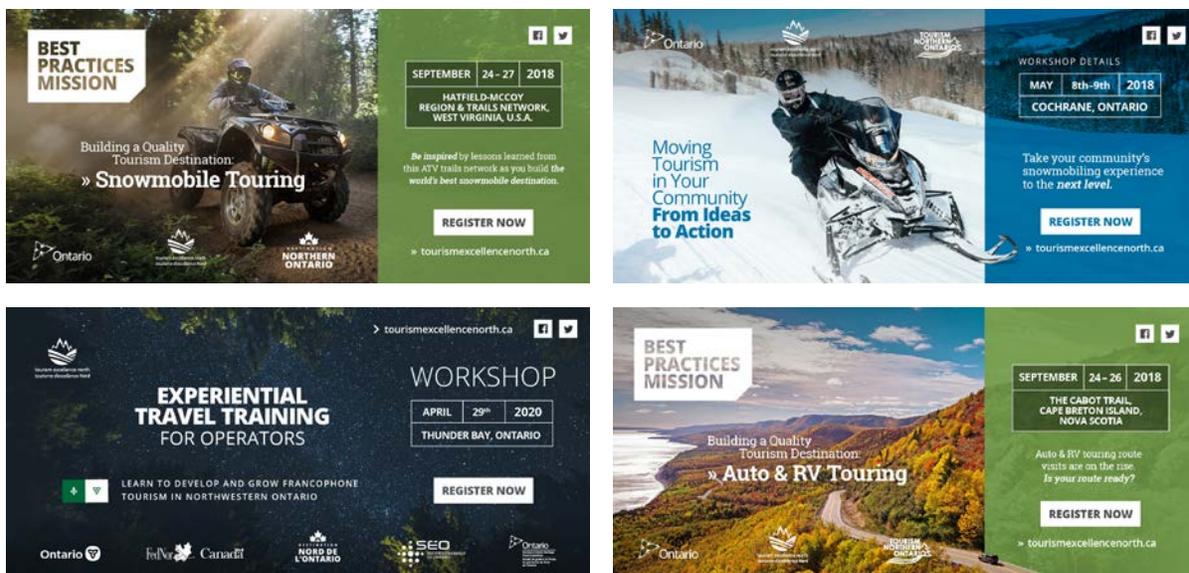
Determination of how best to merchandise and/or cost out the training packages needs to be made, including development costs (one-time investments to create the curriculum); fixed costs (per delivery); and variable costs (per participant delivery) of each training module with the intent to package and sell them individually.

Once a training calendar is developed, TEN will communicate its workforce development and industry training programming and those provided by its partners/community. In addition to communicating TEN/industry programming, it is recommended that communications also aim to address the lack of industry awareness and understanding of training and its associated benefits.

Communication will be led by the Assistant Training Coordinator utilizing the following methods:

- › Industry Outreach
- › Digital
- › Print
- › Other

DIGITAL MARKETING SAMPLES:





STEP 06: Reporting and Performance

Key performance indicators will be developed and measured through data tracking, surveys and follow-ups with operators, employees, and industry. It is recommended that the following list identifies key performance indicators/measures that can be used by TEN to evaluate progress in support of key pillar objectives:

- › **Number** of courses, workshops, sessions offered and enrollment into these programs (existing and new)
- › **Number** of operators who have implemented business and/or customer enhancements as a result of training activities
- › **Training** calendar use, frequency of updates
- › **Number** of stakeholders participating in training activities
- › **Number** of FTS graduates taking part in co-op marketing partnership(s)
- › **Marketing** exposure
- › **Satisfaction** of stakeholders with training activities
- › **Increase** in scope of operator communication channels
- › **Partnerships** developed defined in the staffing plan



STEP 07: Engage Training Network

Critical to TEN's ongoing success is the training network with which the workforce development and industry training pillar is engaged. We will continue to engage Brokers, DNO Product Teams and Training Specialists in an ongoing collaborative process to advise and assist in developing/enhancing the training solutions offered. We will also continue to engage with industry stakeholders such as Tourism Industry Association of Ontario, Ontario Tourism Education Corporation, other RTOs, Northern Ontario Workforce Planning Boards, FedNor, Northern Ontario Heritage Foundation Corporation and those others who are engaged in the development and delivery of online learning.



STEP 08: Post Training Opportunities

Following participation in a workshop, best practices mission or personalized coaching, a mentor will be provided by TEN to assist participants in successfully completing their identified goals and plans, reflecting on what was learned, ultimately increasing visitor appeal and the bottom line.

Mentors will provide advice, as well as support and encouragement and potentially enhance community connections to help businesses and communities stay focused on what is important for their success. Mentorship will be delivered by a Training Specialist with the opportunity to engage other organizations, for example Enterprise Centres and Reseau M (an entrepreneur mentoring program) when appropriate, with the possibility of support for one to two months, six months to a year and up to two years following their training, depending on the type of training engaged in.

Mentors will also connect business and/or communities/destinations where appropriate with:

- › **Capital** infrastructure funds and other internal programming funding
- › **Cooperative** marketing partnership opportunities
- › **Resource** directory (digital and print)
- › **Training** calendar

The extent to which mentors will provide aftercare to clients to support subsequent phases of development will rely on training, knowledge and awareness of current resources. It is recommended therefore, that a mentor plan be developed. This will include:

- › **Providing** training for Training Specialists to be scaled up as mentors
- › **Update** and revise annually the partnerships and resource information available



Proposed Budget

Provide an annual dedicated training budget including training partnership budget (anticipated to be 20–25 per cent of the MHSTCI).



Implementation Timeline

TEN will develop and implement a phased five-year workplan to achieve key priorities and steps as outlined in this document.



SWOTT Analysis

As the vehicle to deliver the workforce development and industry training pillar, it is essential to evaluate the Tourism Excellence North pilot program to determine its potential for future success.

Tourism Excellence North training and development program was piloted from 2015 to 2018 and has continued as a bona fide training program post-pilot. The following strengths, weaknesses, opportunities, threats and trends as assessed after the completion of the pilot are a culmination of input, surveys and follow ups with participants, TEN Specialists, Brokers and industry and are as follows:

Strengths

- › **Quality** bilingual training and development program developed specifically for Northern Ontario
- › **Dedicated** and skilled TEN Specialists, Brokers and staff
- › **Training** and development opportunities responsive to the product development priorities of RTO 12 and 13
- › **Able** to identify needs and trends of industry, responding with training and development relevant to those needs and trends
- › **Increased** awareness of importance of high-quality product development
- › **Operators** want to learn and champion program
- › **More** sustainable as Destination Northern Ontario workforce and industry training pillar
- › **Relationships** with key stakeholders (including funders, other tourism programs, cultural organizations)
- › **Provincially** recognized program (won the 2018 TIAO Innovation Award)
- › **Input** received from Industry (operators/communities) via surveys
- › **Networking** of operators/community within the frameworks of group workshops and Best Practices Missions
- › **Training** is affordable for operators and communities

Weaknesses

- › **Limited** opportunity for coaching/mentoring post-training for operator or community
- › **Lack** of communication and marketing. Need to create more of a “buzz” among brokers, communities and operators. Although some awareness of program has been achieved, more is needed
- › **Brokers** are not engaged at the level hoped for
- › **Challenge** to fill training spots in a timely manner leaving less lead time for TEN Specialists to prepare and is stressful for staff to organize and mitigate costs
- › **Registration** for group learning and FTS challenging
- › **Brand integrity** – TEN Specialists/Brokers need standardized TEN messaging about certain opportunities
- › **Limited** staff capacity
- › **Lack** of standardized reports and templates
- › **Limited** vision / delivery model
- › **Lack** of communication and networking with Canadian counterparts to determine shared challenges and strengths to build upon or from, together
- › **No mechanism** in place to share successes and outcomes (would facilitate marketing and recruitment)

Opportunities

- › **Develop** of new curricula, including Francophone and Indigenous programs with input from industry leaders
- › **Improve** the awareness and attractiveness of careers in tourism and availability of relevant training to address labour and skills shortages in tourism
- › **Explore** development of e-learning/on-line training materials in partnership with others
- › **Ability** to assist operators with capital infrastructure needs
- › **Capacity** for Brokers to advance economic development goals
- › **Advocate/promote** TEN and contribute to its ongoing development through evaluations and surveys
- › **Build** brand awareness and participation in program at both community and operator levels
- › **One-on-one** coaching/mentorship with operators to take product to market for those identified as being able to do so
- › **Deepen** awareness and delivery through better use of Brokers, community champions, and participants
- › **Encourage** training and information sharing opportunities related to product quality for Northern Ontario operators
- › **Communicate** successes to date via operators, communities, and general public through Destination Northern Ontario messaging (newsletters, social media)
- › **Build** staff capacity (training, hiring intern to fill gaps, build on staff ideas)

Threats

- › **Perception** amongst operators that their business is 'high-quality' and therefore they do not require training
- › **Government** priorities and change
- › **Gaps** in funding programs to meet the need of operators
- › **Lack** of community support for tourism and for tourism operating businesses

Trends

- › **Online/E-learning** is becoming an alternate and accepted method of professional development, training and education
- › **Growing** interest in environmental and sustainable tourism management practices



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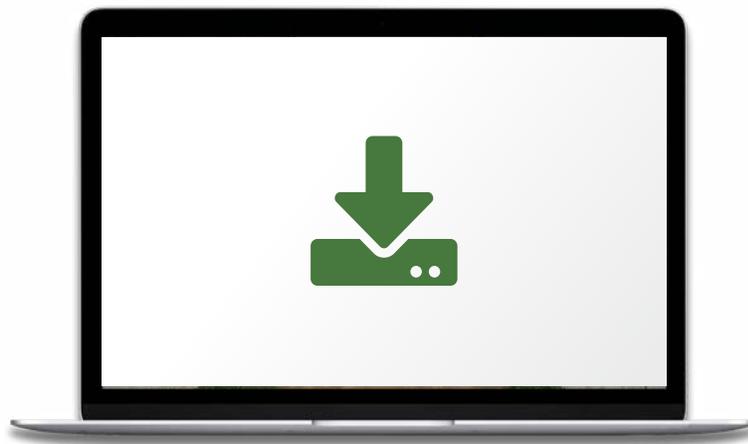
Tourism Excellence North Training Solutions

The 2020-2025 Workforce Development and Industry Training Strategy builds upon experience to date, integrating research, input from a broad range on stakeholders, partners in the TEN program and the Workforce Development and Industry Training Advisory Team.

Self-Assessment Tools

DOWNLOADABLE TOOLS

1	Angling Tourism Self-Assessment Tool
2	Auto & RV Touring Self-Assessment Tool for Communities
3	Auto & RV Touring Self-Assessment Tool for Operators
4	Cycling Tourism Self-Assessment Tool for Communities
5	Cycling Tourism Self-Assessment Tool for Operators
6	Festivals & Events Self-Assessment Tool
7	Tourism Operator Preliminary Self-Assessment for International Markets
8	Nature & Adventure Tourism Self-Assessment Tool
9	Snowmobile Tourism Self-Assessment for Communities
10	Snowmobile Tourism Self-Assessment for Operators





CASE STUDIES

1	Innovation: Differentiating Yourself	The creative approach to product development and innovation by Presidents' Suites Resort in Temiskaming, provides inspiration to others.
2	Quality: Standing Out	Tells the story of an urban hotel, Quattro Hotels and Conference Centre in Sault Ste. Marie, that completed significant upgrades both visitor-facing and back of house to improve and enhance visitor experience. The lessons are easily transferable to any tourism operation.
3	Using Technology: Online Booking Systems	The long-time owners of Bruce Bay Cottages had many questions and concerns about adopting online booking systems. This is a great video to refer to operators who have questions or concerns about adopting online booking.
4	Are You Ready for Today's Traveller? Focus on Technology	Aric Fishman, owner of Outdoors Skills and Thrills, a climbing company in Thunder Bay, tells a story on engaging visitors at every step of their journey using both traditional and online tools.
5	Are You Ready for Today's Traveller? Focus on Accommodation	Branch's Seine River Lodge outside Atikokan, is a second-generation fishing camp that has embraced the needs of today's travellers by updating and adding new amenities. The lessons are easily transferable to any accommodation provider or tourism operation.
6	Using Your Hidden Assets	Cranberry Marsh and Muskoka Lakes Winery in Muskoka, tells the story of how they used their existing infrastructure to create new activities and experiences year-round for visitors and the resulting benefits. It provides inspiration for operations to look at what assets they could use to extend their season.
7	Changing with the Seasons	The introduction of ice trails in the Huntsville area of Muskoka, particularly at Arrowhead Provincial Park, attracted more and different visitors in the traditionally slow season. Restaurant owner Jeff Suddaby (3 Guys and A Stove) tells the story of how he embraced the opportunities to enhance his bottom line. This video is a good example of a community approach to embracing new opportunities.

CASE STUDIES

The 'All About TEN' bilingual video series have been produced using testimonials from TEN participants and community stakeholders. They walk the viewer through the 'why' and the 'how' TEN can help, as well as build awareness and endorsement of TEN, through the words of industry. These include:

1	The Value of TEN	Provides a generic introduction to the changing needs of the tourism sector, what TEN provides, why it is needed and how it helps.
2	Tourism Excellence North for Operators	A range of operators explain how TEN tools helped them; provides credibility peer-to-peer.
3	Communities and Destinations - Pulling Together	A range of community stakeholders explain how TEN tools helped them; provides credibility peer-to-peer.

Five 'How To' bilingual guides form part of the case studies series and have been created to provide step-by-step instructions for each of the operator and community/destination self-assessment tools. They include:

1	Tourism Excellence North Programs for Operators
2	Tourism Excellence North Programs for Communities and Destinations
3	How to Use the 10 Essentials of Successful Travel Products & Experiences & Visitor Appeal Assessment Tool
4	How to Use the 10 Essentials of Successful Touring Routes
5	How to Use the Community Tourism Assessment Index

Group Learning

➤ OPPORTUNITIES

1	Experiential Travel Training for Operators Workshop	In this two-day workshop, operators learn how to design and deliver immersive experiential tourism offers.
2	Moving Tourism in Your Community from Ideas to Action Workshop	A one-and-a-half-day workshop, designed for small groups of community members to attend together and learn the fundamentals of experiential tourism and create a detailed action plan.
3	International Travel Trade Workshop	A full day workshop, incorporating interactive learning through an in-depth discussion of all aspects of working with the international travel trade (ITT).
4	Best Practices Missions (BPM)	These working trips of three to five days focus on product development priorities of Northern Ontario showcasing success stories from leading travel destinations. BPM themes have included cycling, destination development, accommodations, auto/RV touring, snowmobiling and international visitors.
5	Experience Fishing	A program focusing on attracting women, families and new Canadians to the fun of fishing and the amenities offered at participating lodges and resorts throughout Northern Ontario.
6	Northern Ontario Tourism Summit	An annual three-day tourism conference to find solutions to challenges facing the industry today.

Personalized Coaching / Mentorship

OPPORTUNITIES

1	Fast Track to Success	1:1 personalized coaching program for operators.
2	TEN Orientation Program	In-person training for Brokers providing hands-on experience with TEN's priority training solutions.
3	TEN Specialist Program	Group and 1:1 training provided to TEN Specialists who lead the various training solutions.



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Workforce & Industry Training Advisory Team

Photo: Michelle Henderson on Unplash

Workforce Development and Industry Training Advisory Team

For the Workforce Development and Industry Training pillar, an advisory team will also be formed, and the terms of reference are as follows:

The Destination Northern Ontario Workforce Development and Industry Training Advisory Team will provide assistance and advice to Destination Northern Ontario's staff as they develop annual business plans and implement initiatives for workforce development and industry training. Destination Northern Ontario recognizes the developments currently happening in tourism and the labour market and intend to provide appropriate support to industry training and skills development, access, and enhancement of training opportunities across all three sub-regions.

Purpose of the Workforce Development and Industry Training Advisory Team

The purpose of the Workforce Development and Industry Training Advisory Team is to aid and advise Destination Northern Ontario on the enhancement and development of training and ongoing development offered by Destination Northern Ontario (Tourism Excellence North) through a process of discussion and analysis of the available research and ongoing development to facilitate and support the attraction, development and retention of a tourism workforce to enhance visitor appeal and customer experience. DNO will capitalize on members' knowledge of training and development programs, labour market and the current skills gap in Northern Ontario and utilize the feedback and advice to action the objective of the workforce development and industry training pillar. The team will focus on how to:

- Monitor the ongoing development and enhancement of training solutions for tourism operators and communities with the perspective that quality product and experiences will be increased and current product improved based on product development priorities by community stakeholders and operators.
- Use the current opportunities available and address the gaps to support the attraction, development and retention of a tourism workforce.

Role of the Workforce Development and Industry Training Advisory Team

- The team members will share their collective wisdom on how to best approach workforce development and industry training in the context outlined in the purpose above.
- They will also encourage activities that support development and training that is complimentary and coordinates well with product niches in a sustainable way.
- Input will flow from the working group to the DNO staff in the form of information, feedback, and recommendations which will be used to map the implementation of initiatives.
- Additionally, the Workforce Development and Industry Training Advisory Team will be instrumental in advising the DNO staff on the best avenues for focused community engagement and communication of critical information.
- Final decision-making authority rests with the DNO Board of Directors.

Skills & Attributes

In the interest of putting together the best possible team of individuals, identification, selection and appointment of team members will center on the following attributes:

- Extensive experience in the tourism industry, specifically in training/education and skills development, tourism product development and marketing.
- Demonstrated understanding of the tourism landscape of Northern Ontario.
- Knowledge of and in good standing with tourism operators and government funders.
- Track record of being involved in innovative and sustainable training programs.

Resources:

Evaluation of the Atlantic Canada Opportunities Agency's Tourism Programming FINAL REPORT:
http://www.acoa-apeca.gc.ca/eng/Accountability/AuditsAndEvaluations/Pages/ACOA_TOURISM_EVAL_2015.aspx

Canada's Federal Tourism Strategy: Welcoming the World: ic.gc.ca/eic/site/095.nsf/eng/00002.html

Canada's Tourism Vision: ic.gc.ca/eic/site/095.nsf/eng/00002.html

Canada's Tourism Vision: One Year of Progress:
[ic.gc.ca/eic/site/095.nsf/vwapj/Tourism_Vision_Progress_Report_EN.pdf/\\$file/Tourism_Vision_Progress_Report_EN.pdf](http://ic.gc.ca/eic/site/095.nsf/vwapj/Tourism_Vision_Progress_Report_EN.pdf/$file/Tourism_Vision_Progress_Report_EN.pdf)

2012 Canadian Chamber of Commerce "Top 10 Barriers to Competitiveness" report Ontario Tourism Education Corporation

Creating Middle Class Jobs: A Federal Tourism Growth Strategy: [ic.gc.ca/eic/site/134.nsf/vwapj/Tourism_Strategy_eng_v8.pdf/\\$file/Tourism_Strategy_eng_v8.pdf](http://ic.gc.ca/eic/site/134.nsf/vwapj/Tourism_Strategy_eng_v8.pdf/$file/Tourism_Strategy_eng_v8.pdf)

Closing the Tourism Gap: Creating a Long-Term Advantage for Ontario: Ontario Chamber of Commerce: occ.ca/wp-content/uploads/Report_Closing-the-Tourism-Gap.pdf

Conference Board of Canada, The. Canada's Indigenous Tourism Sector. Insights and Economic Impacts: Report February 14, 2019.
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Database of Training Opportunities

An inventory of all the available training programs/courses related to the tourism sector in Northern Ontario was created by Miller Dickinson Blais for the 2014 Northern Ontario Product Development Strategy in Excel to provide an easily updated and searchable tool for DNO.

The information collected in the inventory was the name of the institution and program, program description, training level, program duration, and delivery method. In order to create the inventory, all the university and college programs were examined, and if the program helped to train workers in the tourism sector, they were included in the inventory. The same approach was used for training organizations; if they held any seminars or courses that trained tourism workers, those courses/ seminars were included in the inventory.

Glossary

Broker

Brokers are the people who connect TEN's tools and solutions to operators, communities and destinations. They work for any organization with a mandate to support operators in order to foster growth in the tourism industry.

Eco-Tourism

Responsible travel to natural areas that conserves the environment and improves the well-being of local people, as defined by the International Ecotourism Society.

Experiential Learning

The process of learning or developing skills and abilities by placing students in workplaces, or in environments that simulate workplaces, so that they can learn while doing. In partnership with employers, this may include apprenticeship training, co-op placements, mentorship, and internships.

Experiential Tourism

Engages visitors in a series of memorable, participatory activities, revealed over a period of time, that are inherently personal, engage the senses, and make connections on an emotional, physical, spiritual and/or intellectual level.

Flexible/Fully or Free Independent Travel (FIT)

An individual (or small group of less than 10) travelling and vacationing with a self-booked itinerary.

Labour market

The supply of available workers relative to available work or employment opportunities.

Local / Community champion

A respected and often well-known person in the community who promotes, nurtures, and advocates on behalf of a particular project or initiative.

Sustainable Tourism

Tourism that takes full account of its current and future economic, social and environmental impacts, addressing the needs of visitors, industry, the environment and host communities.

Travel Trade

A term describing the full range of organizations operating as intermediaries in the travel and tourism industry. These typically include tour operators, wholesalers, receptive operators, group leaders and travel agents.

Training Specialist (TEN Specialist)

Qualified professionals who facilitate and deliver each TEN training solution (formerly referred to as TEN Specialist).

What is a 'destination'

A destination can be a distinct community (e.g.: Timmins, Terrace Bay or Kenora) or an area or region composed of several communities that come together around a theme, interest or natural asset.



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