



DRAFT
**DRAFT YUKON TOURISM
DEVELOPMENT STRATEGY**

Sustainable Tourism. Our Path. Our Future.
2018 - 2028

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At the request of the Government of Yukon, tourism industry representatives, Yukon First Nations stakeholders, municipalities and cultural organizations were brought together to form a steering committee to provide strategic advice to the Minister of Tourism and Culture on the development of a multi-year, goal oriented tourism development strategy. Our direction was to develop a strategy for Yukon, a vision for tourism in which all Yukoners could see themselves.

Together, we oversaw the Department of Tourism and Culture's largest ever public engagement. Through a series of community engagements and an online platform, tourism stakeholders, Yukon First Nation governments and citizens, municipalities, development corporations, the arts and culture communities and the public shared their thoughts on how to sustainably grow tourism. This transparent process ensured that the wealth of feedback we received informed the results of our work and that the strategy is accountable to Yukoners.

Tourism provides Yukon with sustainable, diversified growth that balances economic development with environmental, community and cultural values. Our tourism industry is strong, stable and mature. We have the opportunity to work together to take it to a higher level. The time is right to align our efforts, and work together to create a bold new vision for the future of Yukon tourism.

Working together, we will embrace sustainability and align ourselves with leaders in the field who are shepherding a new and better way forward around the globe. Gone are the days where jurisdictions chase increased visitation at all cost – we will provide visitors with reasons to stay longer and spend more, and give Yukoners more reasons to vacation right here at home.

We will strive to find the balance between welcoming tourism development and supporting economic growth, while also enjoying and protecting our natural environment, and celebrating Yukon's authentic cultures, heritage and identity, and our Klondike Gold Rush legacy. Sustainability will be our guiding principle as we chart this new path forward, and the value we return to when the path becomes unclear.

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Yukon First Nations' knowledge, values and cultures are the foundation of Yukon's identity. Sustainable tourism development will support reconciliation and Chapter 22 of the Umbrella Final Agreement by providing Yukon First Nations opportunities to participate in the economy. Together, we will work to share and celebrate Yukon's rich and diverse heritage in a meaningful and authentic way.

Building strong, healthy communities will be at the heart of our work. We will ensure the benefits of tourism exist beyond our capital city and include any community that wishes to pursue tourism development.

Inclusivity will be the cornerstone of our shared journey forward, because none of us can succeed alone. Now is the time to encourage and welcome all stakeholders to join us on this journey. Together we will nurture our longstanding partnerships, build and strengthen new relationships, and explore innovative approaches that support this essential and vibrant industry.

Yukoners will join together and lead the way forward with a new vision for sustainable tourism in the territory. Our journey will be uniquely Yukon – a distinct vision for our future that recognizes the challenges and triumphs of the past, and more importantly, the promise of a stronger future. A future that can only be achieved by working together.

Sincerely,

The Yukon Tourism Development Strategy Steering Committee

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Vision

Our vision is for tourism to be a vibrant, sustainable component of Yukon's economy and society for the benefit of future generations.

This ten-year adaptive strategy lays out the goals, values and strategic actions to realize this vision. To become a leading sustainable tourism destination, we must foster the conditions for a thriving tourism economy, sustainably develop tourism in a manner that balances economic, social and environmental values, and bolster support for the industry by aligning our efforts with the core values of Yukoners. Four connected pillars outline the strategic actions that will be developed and implemented to bring this vision to life. While each goal, value and pillar is important in and of itself, the strength of this strategy and the success by which it will be measured, is in the ability to ensure they are interconnected and pursued in balance.

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Goals

Thriving tourism economy: A thriving tourism economy provides opportunities for Yukon businesses to succeed and grow, which benefits Yukoners through stable, year-round employment.

- **Double revenue to Yukon businesses attributable to tourism to \$525 million.** Prioritizing revenues will foster the conditions to advance Yukon as a year-round tourism destination. Leveraging and expanding existing seasonal and community capacity, while also developing new visitor experiences will support increased revenues, lead to higher employment, and strengthen the sector.

Sustainable tourism development: Sustainable tourism development ensures the balance between economic, social and environmental values.

- **Establish a sustainable tourism development framework.** Becoming a leader in sustainable tourism development will ensure that tourism growth supports healthy communities and ensures tourism benefits Yukoners for generations to come.

Support for tourism: Resident support for tourism is an essential element of a strong and successful sector.

- **Ensure at least 80% of Yukoners have a positive attitude about tourism.** Measuring Yukoner support for the industry will ensure that sustainable tourism growth aligns with Yukoners' core values. Strong support for the industry will lead to outstanding visitor experiences.

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Core values

Loving Yukon – Yukoners are proud to call the territory home. We are proud of what makes us unique and are eager to share it with the world. We value the wilderness, our vibrant communities and our way of life, and want to ensure that it is preserved for generations to come.

Encouraging a thriving tourism sector – Yukoners recognize that tourism plays an important role in growing and strengthening our economy. Businesses and organizations of all sizes support our communities, and provide benefits that extend well beyond employment.

Preserving and enjoying our natural environment – Yukoners love being in the outdoors and value the vast expanses of the pristine wilderness. Our natural environment must be appropriately managed so that visitors and residents can explore our wild and dynamic landscapes without detracting from them. Our wilderness is our strength and a fundamental part of who we are.

Honouring our heritage – Yukoners are proud of our living culture that honours Indigenous knowledge, traditions and values, commemorates our mining and Klondike Gold Rush legacy and celebrates our rich and diverse culture and natural environment. Our heritage forms a part of what draws visitors to Yukon, and we will be respectful in how heritage is integrated into the tourism industry.

Celebrating our cultural diversity – People from all over the world have chosen to call Yukon home. This cultural diversity strengthens our territory and makes Yukon a warm and welcoming place.

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Building healthy communities – Yukoners appreciate that our communities are truly unique and believe they should be celebrated. Tourism can play an important role in developing our communities through job creation, strengthening community services and supporting infrastructure that benefits everyone. We want to ensure this is done in a way that allows our communities to retain their authentic identity and character while benefiting from tourism development.

Developing partnerships – Tourism touches us all, so we must work together to harness the opportunities and benefits that tourism provides. Every tourism operator, stakeholder, government, community, citizen and resident brings their own unique viewpoint to the discussion and that must be encouraged and valued for our mutual success.

Fostering innovation – Yukoners value creative solutions and action. There is excitement in the industry and across the territory about the opportunities tourism can provide, and Yukoners want to see a bold vision for the future supported by the innovative and creative solutions that will help get us there.

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Four pillars for success

1

Creating the foundation for generational change: For Yukon to realize its true potential as a sustainable year-round tourism destination, a number of actions must be taken. With a stronger governance model, infrastructure to improve access to and around Yukon, and decision-making frameworks to enable the industry to move forward, Yukon will create a foundation for success that will be felt for generations to come.

Action plans:

1. Governance

- **Destination Management Organization – a public/private partnership:** The Government of Yukon should get out of the business of doing business and change its governance structure. Through engagement, a Crown Corporation will be established to ensure the new Destination Management Organization is more adaptable to the dynamic nature of the tourism business environment, and fosters greater alignment and partnerships with industry.
- **One Government approach to tourism:** The Government of Yukon should develop a whole of government approach to tourism and create one window for tourism industry partners to access government services in a streamlined and efficient manner. This client-focused model will support a thriving tourism industry and make it easier to do business in Yukon.

2. Infrastructure

- **Roads and communities:** Safe, reliable roads and community infrastructure are extremely important to visitors navigating Yukon. Maintain current assets while exploring opportunities for new and improved infrastructure such as pull outs, viewpoints, waste management, wireless technology and connectivity.

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- **Signage:** Improve signage to better support businesses, communities and visitor experiences across the territory. Work in partnership to incorporate Traditional Territories, languages and local artistry into signage.
- **Airport facilities:** Convenient and affordable air access is critical to the success of any destination. While leveraging Air North, Yukon's Airline, as a competitive advantage and working with other local, national and international carriers, ensure airport facilities support air access from key markets to Yukon, and provide access to remote experiences.
- **Wilderness and heritage assets:** Better manage access and improve infrastructure to Yukon's trails, lakes, rivers, historic sites and heritage resources in a way that is respectful, sustainable and safe.

3. Decision-making frameworks

- **Establish a sustainable tourism development framework:** Work with global leaders to identify metrics that measure the link between tourism growth and healthy communities. This will better quantify the impact tourism has on Yukon and identify opportunities to strengthen its benefits to Yukoners.
- **Improve regulatory framework:** Review legislation, regulations and policies to ensure they are clear and fair, and provide better tools to enable the sustainable growth and development of the industry (ex: availability of land for development).
- **Evidence-based data for decision making:** Establish a solid foundation for research and timely, accurate, reliable, relevant, transparent and accessible data to develop baseline metrics and performance measures to inform decision making for business and industry development.

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2

Outstanding visitor experiences: The development of outstanding visitor experiences, coupled with leveraging and expanding existing seasonal and community capacity, will create the conditions for Yukon to become a premier year-round destination. These customer-centric experiences will attract tomorrow's visitor, while maintaining and celebrating Yukon's authentic cultures, identity, and communities.

Action plans:

1. Making it easier to do business

- **Align and leverage financing opportunities to support tourism development:** Review financial programs, incentives and supports to ensure they align with, and support, the strategy.
- **Recruitment, retention and training:** Support industry access to a skilled and experienced workforce by ensuring there are programs for training and development, as well as attraction and retention, and to infrastructure that supports the labour market such as transportation and housing.
- **Support the development and implementation of industry standards:** Support industry led-service and accommodation sector standards that will improve the quality of visitor experiences.

2. Experience development

- **Wilderness tourism:** Pursue opportunities for new and enhanced wilderness experiences that discover Yukon's wild and dynamic landscapes.
- **Arts, culture and heritage experiences:** Pursue opportunities for new and enhanced, authentic arts, culture and heritage experiences that deepen visitor experience, including the Klondike Gold Rush, francophone culture and diverse communities of new Canadians.

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- **Sport tourism:** Encourage hosting more sporting events in Yukon, focusing on the shoulder and winter seasons and communities where capacity exists.
- **Meetings and conferences:** Promote Yukon as a destination for meetings and conferences, focusing on the shoulder and winter seasons.
- **Events and festivals:** Support the development of shoulder and winter season festivals and events that enhance visitor experience.
- **Culinary tourism:** Pursue opportunities for culinary tourism to support outstanding visitor experiences.
- **Niche and emerging markets:** Support the development of niche and emerging markets to strengthen the role they play in bolstering the shoulder and winter seasons.
- **Community visitor experiences:** Support the development of visitor experiences in communities that want to sustainably grow tourism in their region.

3

Vibrant First Nations history and culture: Yukon is home to fourteen First Nations, each with their own rich history, culture and traditions. Supporting the development of Indigenous tourism can provide opportunities for Yukon First Nations to share and celebrate their stories in a meaningful and authentic way.

Action plans:

1. **Yukon First Nations tourism summit:** Host an event to bring together Yukon First Nations, development corporations, Yukon First Nation Culture and Tourism Association and the Indigenous Tourism Association of Canada to discuss how to work together to support First Nations tourism development in Yukon.
2. **Establish Yukon as a premier destination for Indigenous tourism experiences:** Support new and enhanced visitor experiences and awareness for Yukon First Nations tourism, including the opportunity for better alignment of cultural and visitor information centres.

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Sharing Yukon's story: Promote authentic experiences in a market-driven, consumer-centric manner that aligns with the values of Yukoners.

Action plans:

1. **Market Yukon as a year-round tourism destination:** Promote Yukon as a year-round tourism destination by highlighting the unique assets that differentiate the destination from others and maximizes available capacity in the shoulder and winter season.
2. **Explore opportunities for in-destination marketing:** Develop and leverage opportunities to encourage resident travel within the territory.

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Next steps

The strategy is a living document and will be reviewed regularly to ensure that it remains relevant and takes into account the evolving nature of the industry. Implementation and review of the strategy will require ongoing engagement with stakeholders.

Over the life of this strategy, all action plans will be developed and implemented to support the vision, goals and values laid out in this document. The Government of Yukon will act as a convener and bring together partners to advance priority actions that support the vision. Partners will work together to establish the objectives, deliverables, financing mechanisms and performance metrics to achieve the goals of the action plan.

The steering committee has identified six priority action plans in the short term, as follows. However, this does not preclude work from beginning on other action plans.

- Destination Management Organization – a public/private partnership
- One Government approach to tourism
- Establish Yukon as a premier destination for Indigenous tourism experiences
- Signage
- Market Yukon as a year-round destination
- Recruitment, retention and training

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Appendix A – Action plans

Action plan Template	
Action plan	Describe the objective
Goal	Describe how this will support the goals of the strategy
Core Value	Describe how this aligns with the core values of Yukoners
Definable actions	Identify objectives and deliverables
Lead Partner	Identify the lead
Partnerships	Identify partners and define their roles and responsibilities
Timeline	Provide a timeline for milestones and deliverables
Resources	Identify human and financial resources required Define roles and responsibilities
Performance metrics	Identify data and targets to measure success
Definitions	Define key terms

