

Growing Tourism. Our Future. Our Path

The situation

The Department of Tourism and Culture has a mandate to market and help grow Yukon tourism while protecting and promoting Yukon's rich cultural heritage, its history, and diverse forms of artistic expression enjoyed by visitors and residents alike.

The Government of Yukon *priorities* emphasize meaningful engagement with Yukoners through a collaborative process. We believe Yukoners will benefit from a stronger economy, healthier communities and people, and environmental stewardship.

Tourism can help fulfill Yukon government's vision and priorities:

Yukon government's 5-year vision...	...how tourism can help:
<i>Our people-centred approach to wellness helps Yukoners thrive.</i>	There are many determinants of wellness, including what tourism promotes: pride in our stories, cultures and the land we all love and share.
<i>Our strategic investments build healthy, vibrant, sustainable communities.</i>	Strategic investments can be made that enhance both community well-being and the visitor-experience.
<i>Our strong government-to-government relationships with First Nations foster reconciliation.</i>	Tourism can directly and indirectly bring people together by learning about and sharing our cultures.
<i>Our diverse, growing economy provides good jobs for Yukoners in an environmentally-responsible way.</i>	A robust tourism sector supports economic diversification, provides revenues to Yukon businesses and jobs for Yukoners, and can be done in a way that supports Yukoners' environmental values.

The benefits of tourism in Yukon

Tourism is a strong, stable and sustainable contributor to Yukon's economy. Tourism contributes 4% of Yukon's GDP (second highest in Canada), employs 3,000 people and generates approximately \$250 million in business revenue annually. The sector enables economic diversity and provides opportunities for capacity development, education and employment in all communities.

In addition to contributing to the economy, tourism can leverage Yukon's diverse cultural community and help foster engagement, appreciation and pride in our culture by facilitating important social exchanges between residents and visitors where the two can share with and learn from each other.

Enhancements to services, facilities and infrastructure for visitors also benefit Yukon's residents. Visitors appreciate the scenic beauty, natural phenomena, heritage and culture of Yukon communities, which has inspired locals to become stewards and preserve, develop, share and take pride in their surroundings.

With an aligned and coordinated approach to growing tourism, Yukon can maximize its potential as a competitive travel destination.

Tourism is complex

Within Canada, many federal government departments, Destination Canada and national tourism organizations like Aboriginal Tourism Association of Canada and the Tourism Industry Association of Canada lead the nation in the development, enhancement and promotion of Canada as a destination.

Similarly, the territorial government, First Nations governments, municipal and local governments throughout Yukon work towards building strong and healthy communities by investing in economic growth which includes tourism.

Support for tourism development in Yukon is spread across many government departments. For example:

- Tourism and Culture develops and markets Yukon as a year round travel destination and fosters cultural development by promoting, preserving and celebrating our diverse, heritage, arts and historic sites sectors;
- Both Tourism and Culture and Economic Development work directly with individual tourism companies through a number of programs and services;
- Highways and Public Works is responsible for road and air infrastructure;
- Energy, Mines, and Resources manages land and resource development;
- Environment manages parks and campgrounds and regulates wilderness tourism businesses; and
- Community Services is responsible for operational permits, zoning and services required by businesses.

In addition to organized governments, tourism development and promotion in Yukon is also supported by a myriad of organizations like the Tourism Industry Association of Yukon, Sport Yukon, the Wilderness Tourism Association of Yukon, Yukon First Nation Culture and Tourism Association, Chambers of Commerce and more.

Businesses providing air and road transportation, accommodation, food and beverage, tours and other travel services for Yukon's visitors are also key to the development and enhancement of tourism in the territory.

Nationally and locally, the diversity of the players and stakeholders contributing to Yukon's tourism economy is wide-ranging. Governments, communities, organizations, businesses and the public have different roles, responsibilities, resources and perspectives; however, they share a common vision of enhancing and growing tourism sustainably.

Currently, many tourism organizations within Canada and within Yukon are reviewing, revising or developing their strategies. Some of these include:

- The federal government has established a national tourism strategy;
- The Aboriginal Tourism Association of Canada has released a five year plan;
- Destination Canada is set to release *North Star 22*, a consideration paper outlining joint approach to driving Canada's competitiveness;
- The Wilderness Tourism Association of Yukon has issued a five year strategic plan;
- Yukon First Nations Culture and Tourism Association will be developing a marketing plan and regional planning strategy;
- Some Yukon's First Nations and communities are establishing economic development strategies that include tourism, or stand-alone tourism strategies for their governments.

Tourism is highly competitive:

Tourism is a highly competitive sector where, on a global scale, countries, regions, cities, attractions and businesses are all promoting themselves and vying for visitation. Destinations, businesses and other partners have to work together and align their efforts and resources to make an impact and attract visitors. Efforts and decisions need to be based on research and focused on the consumer, and destinations have to differentiate themselves to remain competitive.

For travelers, “the world is their oyster” – the buying power lies with consumers who have hundreds if not thousands of destinations to choose from. Yukon’s tourism sector has to be informed of what the territory has to offer, who to target, what visitors need and want and how to provide them the information they need to make a decision in an ever changing and increasingly complex decision making process.

Travel behaviours and tourism-related technologies evolve rapidly. Gone are the days of traditional advertising mediums like print and radio and here are the days of viral videos, geo-locating smartphones and user generated content. Knowing the latest trends and tools that travelers use to make their decisions allows us to make better investment decisions but also adds another layer of complexity to the tourism sector.

The opportunity

In 2000, the department conducted an extensive consultation process that identified guiding principles for tourism development in Yukon. For the past 17 years, the department has embraced those guiding principles and has integrated them into annual plans for the Tourism Branch.

Today, tourism provides Yukon with sustainable, diversified growth that balances economic development with environmental and community values. A key role of government is to provide the climate that stimulates and adds value to the efforts of private and public sector initiatives.

Driven by the government’s vision and priorities, the opportunity to effectively grow the tourism sector and socio-economic benefit to Yukoners begins with greater **alignment and collaboration** amongst stakeholders.

The approach

Greater alignment requires meaningful engagement and collaboration with stakeholders that include tourism industry businesses, non-governmental organizations, governments (other YG departments, Yukon First Nations, municipal governments) and the public.

Through engagement, we will learn more about stakeholders’ priorities, challenges and opportunities which in turn will lead to role clarity and understanding of responsibilities and foster closer working relationships amongst all stakeholders.

It is also important to learn from others. Through research we will examine the approaches of leading destinations to better understand best practices and key initiatives that lead to their success. This will include a detailed look at how governments have supported the enhanced growth and development of tourism within their specific regions including the types of approaches, policies or initiatives that have been implemented to move the sector forward. Destinations like New Zealand, Iceland and Australia are viewed as leaders in the world of tourism and much can be learned from understanding how they achieved success.

The **outcome** of this engagement and research will be the **development of a multi-year, goal oriented strategy for growing tourism in Yukon** that aligns our priorities so we can collectively make better investment decisions that sustainably balances tourism growth and the socioeconomic benefits the industry provides Yukoners.

The time is right to take tourism to the next level in Yukon. With the Yukon government as the lead, we will engage, align and collaborate with our stakeholders, learn from the success of other destinations and develop a path forward to grow tourism, together.