

FOR IMMEDIATE RELEASE

Indigenous Tourism Association of Canada Successfully Delivers Industry-saving Funding to Indigenous Tourism Businesses

678 tourism businesses have received grants from ITAC's COVID-19 Stimulus Development Fund since the onset of the pandemic

COAST SALISH TERRITORY (Vancouver, BC) – November 3, 2020 – Last week, the Indigenous Tourism Association of Canada (ITAC) awarded the final phase of the COVID-19 Stimulus Development Fund grants as part of their ongoing efforts to help Indigenous tourism operators recover and build resiliency from the devastating impacts of COVID-19. Since the inception of the fund in March, ITAC has awarded 678 non-repayable contributions of up to \$25,000 per applicant, totalling \$16.21 million. These grants, which have reached a mix of export-, market- and visitor-ready Indigenous tourism businesses in Canada, were made possible with the support of the Federal Government via Indigenous Services Canada.

Since COVID-19 began to severely impact the Canadian tourism and hospitality industry in March, ITAC has been working to develop solutions for recovery and resilience for its members. Recognizing the immediate need of the community, ITAC deferred its annual development grant money along with a large amount of savings from other programs to establish the [COVID-19 Stimulus Development Fund](#) at the beginning of the travel restrictions. Additionally, in June the Federal Government announced \$133 million to help Indigenous businesses suffering the economic impacts of the COVID-19 pandemic, of which \$16 million was to be allocated in support of Indigenous tourism businesses and delivered by ITAC. This was a direct response to ITAC's strategic advocacy campaign that emphasized the impacts of COVID-19 on the once-thriving Indigenous tourism industry.

"The impacts of COVID-19 on our Indigenous tourism sector cannot be understated," says Keith Henry, ITAC's President and CEO. "Prior to 2020, Indigenous tourism was industry-leading and outpacing Canadian tourism activity overall but this came to an almost complete standstill. The ability to advocate and step up alongside Indigenous Services Canada to provide financial support to struggling businesses is exactly what ITAC is here for."

"This funding will help Indigenous tourism businesses to protect jobs and support their recovery from the pandemic. Our message to those whose jobs depend on Indigenous tourism is clear: we've been here for you with immediate measures to help you survive this pandemic, and we'll get through this, together." – The Honourable Mélanie Joly, Minister of Economic Development and Official Languages.

“The Indigenous tourism industry is a driving force of many local economies across Canada. As the industry has been particularly hard hit economically by the COVID-19 pandemic, our government has contributed \$16 million to support Indigenous tourism businesses in need, through the Indigenous Tourism Association of Canada. This funding is helping Indigenous tourism businesses weather COVID-19 by supporting businesses as they seek out new ways of operating in a changed world.” –The Honourable Marc Miller, Minister of Indigenous Services

“We thank the Honourable Minister Joly and the Honourable Minister Miller and their respective teams for continuing to listen and respond to the unique needs of the Indigenous tourism industry in Canada,” says Henry. “We are grateful for their continued support and trust through these difficult times and their support reflects an understanding of how important our sector is to the Canadian tourism economy.”

Now, as Canada faces a second wave of the pandemic, ITAC’s ongoing advocacy campaign continues to be relentless in petitioning for much-needed financial support from federal and provincial governments for the Indigenous tourism industry. ITAC will continue to pursue increased support for the stimulus grant program and remains united in facing the impacts of the COVID-19 pandemic.

To view frequently asked questions, click [here](#).

To view Phase Six successful applicants, click [here](#).

To view Phase Five successful applicants, click [here](#).

To view Phase Four successful applicants, click [here](#).

To view Phase Two and Three successful applicants, click [here](#).

To view Phase One successful applicants, click [here](#).

To view our frequently asked questions, click [here](#).

For more information on the ITAC’s COVID-19 Development Stimulus Fund, click [here](#).

To view all of ITAC’s communications around COVID-19 and the resources available, click [here](#).

-30-

About the Indigenous Tourism Association of Canada

The Indigenous Tourism Association of Canada (ITAC) is the lead organization tasked with growing the Indigenous tourism industry across the country. Inspired by a vision for a thriving Indigenous tourism economy sharing authentic, memorable and enriching experiences, ITAC develops relationships with other groups and regions with similar mandates. By uniting the Indigenous tourism industry in Canada, ITAC works to enable collective support, product development, promotion and marketing of authentic Indigenous cultural tourism businesses in a respectful protocol. Due to COVID-19, ITAC recently released [a report](#) on the financial challenges facing Indigenous tourism operators and recommended stimulus solutions. As well, a 2020-2021 revised [action plan](#) focused on sustaining Indigenous tourism in the face of COVID-19 was released in March.

Media Contacts

Nicole Amiel, Beattie Tartan

416-436-5185

Nicole.Amiel@BeattieGroup.com

Keith Henry, CEO

Indigenous Tourism Association of Canada

778-388-5013

Keith@IndigenousTourism.ca

French media requests

Sebastien Desnoyers-Picard, Chief Marketing Officer

Indigenous Tourism Association of Canada

418-655-0210

Sebastien@IndigenousTourism.ca