



# **MINISTRY OF TOURISM, CULTURE and SPORT**

## **PROGRAMS UPDATE and INVESTMENT ATTRACTION ACTIVITES**

**EDCO Conference: Thursday February 8, 2024**

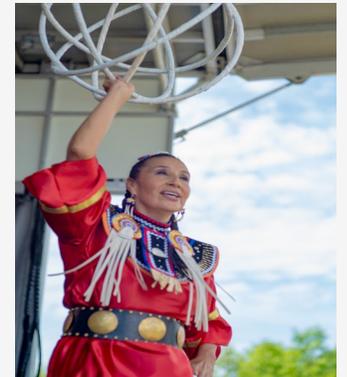
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# TOURISM, CULTURE and SPORT OVERVIEW

Ontario's Tourism, Culture and Sport sectors are interconnected and contribute to a significant double bottom line – economic growth and support for the cultural fabric of the province.

- **Tourism**-related industries include businesses that sell products and services to travelers' (domestic and international), including accommodation, hospitality, entertainment, recreation, transportation, travel services and food and beverage services.
- **Culture** includes heritage, archaeology, museums and public libraries, the cultural media industries (film & TV, music, book and magazine publishing, interactive digital media) and the arts.
- **Sport** includes the amateur sport system from playground to podium with programs for active recreation, sport and athlete development, partnerships with professional sport organizations and policy, regulatory and administrative oversight of the Athletics Control Act, Rowan's Law (Concussion Safety), 2018, and Ontario Trails Act, 2016.

The Tourism and Culture Division works with stakeholders, the ministry's agencies (e.g., Ontario Trillium Foundation, Ontario Creates, Ontario Arts Council, Parks Commissions in Niagara and along the St. Lawrence River and attractions, e.g., ROM, AGO, Science North, etc.), municipalities, Indigenous partners, provincial ministries and the federal government.



# ONTARIO'S TOURISM INDUSTRY

- Ontario's tourism industry is an important economic contributor. In 2019, tourism generated \$35.5 billion of the total GDP, accounting for 4.3%.
- In 2019, tourism generated 395,000 jobs in Ontario, accounting for 5.2% of the total provincial employment.
- In 2019, tourism generated \$13.4 billion of taxes for all levels of government, of which \$5.8 billion went to the provincial government.
- In 2020, tourism-related businesses accounted for 6% of all businesses in Ontario. 90% of tourism-related businesses employed less than 20 employees.
- There were over 88,000 tourism-related businesses in Ontario in 2019.
- Compared to other industries in Ontario, the tourism-related industries employ a higher than average proportions of females, young people, and students.





# ONTARIO HAS A PROVEN MARKET

- Canada's Wonderland is continually rated North America's most popular and attended seasonal park. In 2018, it received nearly 3.8M visitors.
- Ripley's Aquarium of Canada in Toronto welcomed its 10 millionth guest in August 2019 after only six years in operation.
- Ontario has a history of successfully attracting private sector tourism related businesses that have lasted longer than many Fortune 500 companies, such as: RMS Segwun (1887), Deerhurst Resort (1896), Royal York Hotel (1927), Blue Mountain Resort (1948), Bingemans (1960), CN Tower (1976), Canada's Wonderland (1981), Ripley's Aquarium (2013).
- Leisure Development Partners conducted a study in 2016 indicating Ontario's market is underserved and can support more attraction products.
- In the Q3 2023 Hotel Construction Pipeline Trend Report for Canada by Lodging Econometrics, Ontario continues to lead Canada's hotel construction pipeline with 160 projects and a record high of 22,294 rooms, accounting for 58% of the projects and 59% of the rooms in the country's total pipeline.

# TOURISM INDUSTRY PROGRAMS and SERVICES

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## **Festivals and Events**

The Experience Ontario 2023 program provides support to festivals and events with a tourism economic impact to motivate visitors to discover Ontario, connect with local experiences and generate increased tourism spending.

For 2023-2024, the Experience Ontario program supported 282 festivals and events across the province and is part of a total investment of \$19.5 million in the sector. Through the opening of Experience Ontario 2024, the government continues to support festivals and events that have the greatest tourism economic impact to attract visitors and celebrate diverse cultures and identities across the province.

## **Tourism Development**

Since 2020, the Tourism Development Fund (TDF) has supported 82 projects across Ontario. The program is an application-based, cost-sharing program designed to provide non-capital funding to projects that encourage the development of innovative new tourism products, support tourism investment or build the capacity of Ontario's tourism industry to foster new tourism investments. The Tourism Development Fund 2024 is expected to launch in spring 2024.

## **Investment Attraction**

The ministry works across government and with tourism partners to attract investors to Ontario and promote the province as a place to invest in tourism through a range of programs and services. Investment activities include working with MEDJCT and Invest Ontario on large-scale tourism attractions, site selection for investor groups, business expansion and retention activities for existing operators and working with Ontario tourism sector associations to promote the importance of tourism planning and new product development in communities.

## **Tourism Research**

<sup>5</sup> The ministry develops and provides key tourism sector statistics and indicators that are used by the sector, businesses and municipalities in supporting tourism.

# REGIONAL TOURISM

The ministry supports 13 Regional Tourism Organizations (RTOs) to advance the competitiveness of Ontario's tourism sectors.

RTOs are not-for-profit and industry-led organizations responsible for working with industry partners to grow tourism through activities such as:

- Strategic planning
- Research
- Product and workforce development
- Investment attraction
- Marketing

These organizations provide support to the tourism industry in five areas:

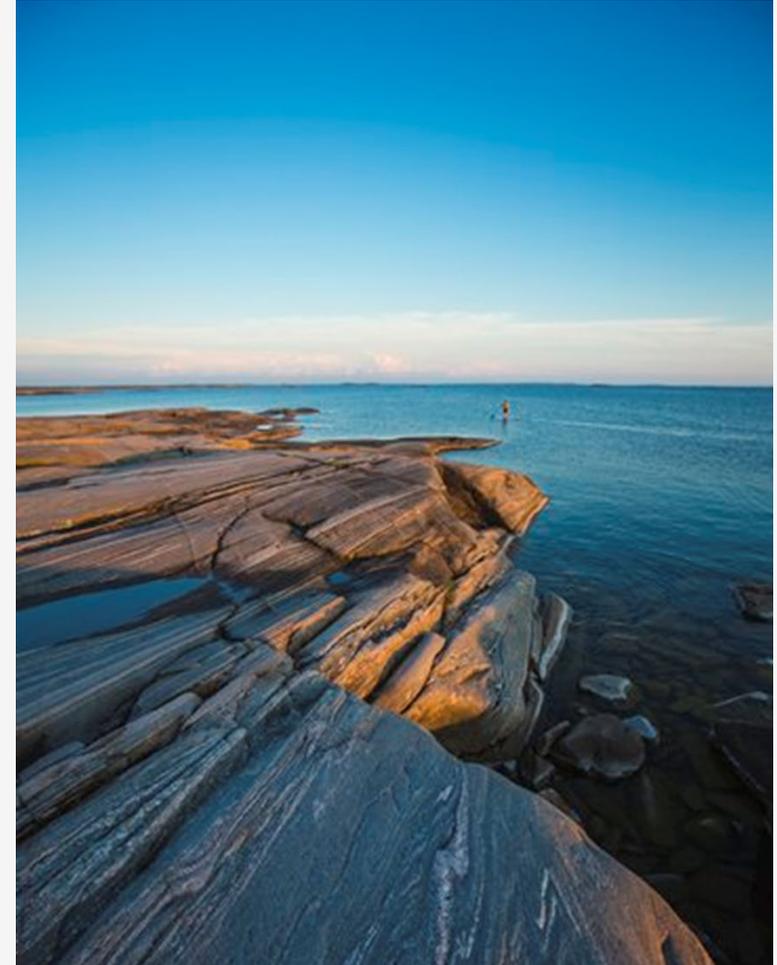
- Marketing
- Product development
- Workforce development
- Investment attraction
- Partnerships

RTOs are important ministry partners in responding to the challenges faced by the tourism industry through coordinated, targeted and timely program delivery across the province.



# IMPORTANCE OF TOURISM INVESTMENT

- Global competition for tourists and tourism investment continues to increase as the industry recovers from the pandemic and as emerging jurisdictions recognize the sector as an economic driver.
- New tourism attractions and experiences will fill gaps left by the pandemic and will meet the increased demand for innovative new domestic product.
- Increased private sector tourism investment will support Ontario's GDP growth, create jobs, support communities and increase visitation and taxation revenues.
- Ontario has an abundance of natural and cultural resources and there is potential to build a stronger, more robust four-season tourism industry.
- Several regions require new accommodation and transportation investments to establish sustainable tourist destinations.
- Despite the pandemic, tourism is a strong economic driver for the province. It accounts for 13% of all businesses in Ontario.



# HOW WE SUPPORT INVESTMENT

The ministry works with the private sector, all three levels of government and tourism stakeholders to support tourism investment and business development.

Assistance provided:



**TIMELY INFORMATION AND INTELLIGENCE** to inform investment decisions – including key business costs in comparison to competing jurisdictions, research on tourism investment opportunities, how to do business in Ontario, available talent pools and more.



**INVESTMENT SPECIFIC FUNDING OPPORTUNITIES** for federal, provincial and municipal incentives available to offset expected business costs.



**PROVINCIAL PARTNERSHIPS** access to investment attraction specialists in other ministries such as MEDJCT and Invest Ontario who can provide critical information on workforce availability, immigration programs and talent partnerships with colleges and universities.



**MUNICIPAL PARTNERSHIPS** with introductions to local civic economic development officials to understand relevant local policies, programs and requirements and destination marketing organizations for community support.



**EASY ACCESS TO LOCAL PROFESSIONAL SERVICES** to meet corporate needs – contacts with legal, banking and financing, real estate, tax and financial planning, marketing and public relations.



**INVESTMENT ATTRACTION PROGRAMS AND SERVICES** include Tourism Development Fund to support new products and experiences and the “Meet the Investment Dragons” event to match investors with Ontario municipal investment opportunities.

# INVESTOR CONFIDENCE IN ONTARIO

Our investment team has worked with leading global companies in providing expertise to support new expansions into Ontario.



# MEET THE TOURISM INVESTMENT DRAGONS EVENT

- The ministry in cooperation with EDCO relaunched the Meet the Tourism Investor Dragons” which occurred on October 5, 2023. From 2014 - 2019, the ministry partnered with EDCO to host the event in Toronto.
- In a timed “speed dating” format, municipal representatives used 15 minutes to “pitch” their tourism-related investment opportunities to an investor table.
- This year, 10 investors and municipalities were selected for the event. The investors included Sunray Hotels and Resorts, Wyndham Hotels, Manga Hotels, LJM Developments, Realstar Hospitality, Choice Hotels, Knightstone Hotel Group, Monte Carlo Inns, Freed Developments and FORREC.
- Participating municipalities included Amherstburg, Bancroft, Gananoque, Hamilton, Huron-Kinloss, Innisfil, Lake of Bays, South Dundas, Stratford, Wasaga Beach and Whitby.
- Following the event, the ministry received the following feedback.
  - *“I found the process to be very effective and we are now deeply involved with a few towns and projects coming directly out of your event, I am very pleased with it.”* Amir Fatemi, Director of Real Estate Development from Sunray Group
  - *“Our City is grateful for your partnership and the opportunities you bring forward to help us move projects ahead. The quality of the investors was excellent, and the day overall was well planned and organized. We look forward to working together over the coming months/years ahead.”* Joani Gerber, Chief Executive Officer, Stratford Economic Enterprise Development Corporation



# WORKING WITH INVEST ONTARIO



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## TOURISM



“ When I first saw the site—nine acres on the waterfront in downtown Toronto waiting to be developed—I was blown away. It was so special. I couldn’t resist it. I don’t think there is anything like it in the world. Within the next three years I’m hoping to build another hotel on the site, similar in size to Hotel X Toronto.

Henry Kallen  
President and Founder of Hotel X



### SUCCESS STORIES

#### Ontario: where culinary tourism opportunities abound

Ontario’s cultural diversity and wide range of agriculture have made it a world-renowned culinary hotspot, recently drawing the MICHELIN Guide to Toronto....

[Read more](#)



### SUCCESS STORIES

#### Lake Superior North Shore Inside Passage: calling expedition cruise lines

The world’s largest freshwater lake is in Ontario, drawing expedition cruise lines from across the globe to wow tourists with its jaw-dropping sights....

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### SUCCESS STORIES

#### LEGOLAND Discovery Centre Toronto: building its brand, brick by brick

The first and only LEGOLAND in Canada is strategically situated in the densely populated, highly diverse, leading tourism destination of Toronto, Ontario....

[Read more](#)

# OUR INVESTMENT TEAM



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