



Tourism Investment Attraction Guide



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StrongerBC
for everyone

Executive Summary

Tourism is one of British Columbia's most powerful economic drivers and a strong catalyst for job creation, community vitality, and resilience. This guide is designed to help communities throughout B.C. – especially economic development officers, tourism professionals and local leaders - attract tourism investment that supports long-term community prosperity, cultural vibrancy and sustainability. It outlines a structured framework—from assessing community readiness through a self-assessment tool to developing robust assets, partnerships, and marketing initiatives—that equips communities to identify opportunities, streamline investor engagement, and build long-term economic resilience through tourism. Note that this is not meant to replace existing economic development plans or strategies, but rather to supplement them with tourism specific information.

The guide provides a practical roadmap to build an effective tourism investment attraction plan:

1

Get Ready for Investors: Tourism Investment Readiness Self-Assessment

This provides a checklist to evaluate:

- **Community Tourism Profile:** Systematically gather essential data, including community maps, demographics, employers and workforce, wages, local infrastructure and transportation, housing, taxation, tourism assets and key brand identity.
- **Land Inventory:** Site identification and availability.
- **Infrastructure Readiness:** Ability to service new visitor demands.
- **Destination Branding:** Understand your competitive advantage and key branding promise.
- **Tourism/Economic Development Capacity:** Roles and responsibilities of key organizations.
- **Partnerships:** Economic development professionals, tourism experts, regional organizations, Indigenous communities and local knowledge keepers.
- **Priority Projects List:** Immediate investment opportunities.

2

Selling Your Destination: Strategies for Investment Attraction

Once the groundwork is set, key strategies to attract tourism investments include:

- **Investor Package:** Includes community tourism profile, brand promise, data, tourism regional partnerships (business supports), link to key strategies, key contacts, success stories.
- **Tourism Data:** Key markets, growth projections, economic impact metrics, seasonal visitation.
- **Marketing Initiatives:** Pitch deck, lead generation, trade shows.
- **Priority Projects List:** Immediate investment opportunities.

3

Account Management and Monitoring Success

To secure lasting benefits from tourism investments, ongoing work includes:

- **Investment Tracking:** Monitor progress, track follow ups, and assist investors with key contacts.
- **Impact Modeling:** Measure economic and community benefits of tourism projects.
- **Post-Investment Engagement:** Build long-term relationships and track successes.

By applying the tools and strategies in this guide, communities can position themselves as investment-ready destinations—equipped to attract capital, create jobs, and enhance quality of life for residents and visitors alike.

Introduction to Tourism Investment Attraction

Tourism is one of the largest and most important sectors in British Columbia's economy. In 2024, tourism generated \$23 billion in revenue and contributed \$8 billion to the province's gross domestic product (GDP), greater than all other primary resource sectors, including oil and gas (\$5.2 billion), mining (\$4.9 billion), agriculture & fish (\$3.0 billion), and forestry (\$1.6 billion). Other than during the COVID-19 pandemic, the tourism sector has consistently grown faster than the overall economy and is projected to continue to grow steadily. More information about the Value of Tourism in B.C. can be found on the [Destination BC website](#).

For communities of all sizes - urban, rural, and Indigenous - tourism offers a sustainable path to economic growth, cultural exchange, and community resilience. Tourism investment in British Columbia generates significant economic returns beyond visitor spending. In addition to its direct contribution to provincial GDP, tourism supports substantial indirect and induced economic activity through robust supply chains, hiring locally, developing infrastructure and increased trade and household spending, amplifying its total impact across the provincial economy.

As communities shift from traditional resource-based industries to tourism as a cornerstone of long-term prosperity, it is crucial to understand how to attract tourism investment and strategically position themselves to stand out in an increasingly competitive landscape.



Vancouver
Cycle City Vancouver/Joel Schat

What is Tourism Investment Attraction?

Tourism investment attraction is the process of developing a strategy to attract new business investment in the visitor economy. It's about more than just marketing—it's about building the right conditions for investment to succeed. This includes:

- Developing an inventory of existing tourism assets (i.e. hotels, event venues, etc.) and experiences (i.e. culinary, recreational, etc.), plus the supporting retail environment.
- Identifying tourism gaps and highlighting the community's competitive advantage. What experiences or services are needed to fulfil the brand promise? (e.g., eco accommodation, farm stay, gondola, historic village, Indigenous wilderness tour, etc.)
- Understanding and communicating the business opportunities, partnerships and long-term tourism development strategies.
- Creating a supportive environment through zoning, infrastructure, and partnerships.
- Telling a compelling story that aligns with investor interests and community values.

This strategy can help a community determine what projects are viable and competitive and provide guidance on how to present and promote an investment opportunity.

Why is Tourism Investment Important?

Tourism investment is good for communities, as it:

- Creates local jobs and supports small businesses
- Enhances infrastructure and public amenities
- Preserves cultural identity and natural assets
- Attracts new residents, talent, and entrepreneurs
- Strengthens community pride and visibility

Unlike most sectors, tourism investment uniquely strengthens cultural identity, preserves natural assets, and enhances community well-being, alongside economic growth. It also improves infrastructure, services, and recreational opportunities for both residents and visitors. Without such investment, communities risk stagnation and declining quality of life. In contrast, robust tourism development builds economic resilience, enriches social and cultural fabric, and helps ensure long-term prosperity.

In essence, tourism investment is not just an economic lever—it is a comprehensive strategy that enhances the overall quality of life for both residents and visitors. By filling the critical gap that traditional economic development strategies often overlook, tourism investment lays the foundation for long-term prosperity, cultural vibrancy, and sustainable growth.



How Tourism Investment Attraction Differs from Other Sectors

On the surface, tourism investment attraction may appear to be similar to general economic development efforts and investment attraction for other sectors, as it also aims to bring new business opportunities, jobs, residents, and tax revenues to a community. However, tourism investment attraction does have unique considerations.

- **It's About Visitors, Not Just Residents:** Tourism investment targets assets and opportunities that draw visitors, which demands an understanding of visitor behaviours, destination branding, cultural preservation, authenticity, seasonal trends and sustainability.
- **It's Rooted in Storytelling and Sense of Place:** Investors are drawn to communities with a clear identity and compelling narrative. Tourism investment relies on storytelling—about culture, history, nature, and people—to create emotional connections and market appeal.
- **It Enhances Community Life:** Tourism infrastructure—like trails, signage, public spaces, and broadband—often benefits both visitors and residents. A well-planned tourism investment strategy has long-term benefits to quality of life while supporting economic goals.
- **It Requires Collaboration:** Tourism investment attraction involves collaborating with local businesses, neighbouring communities, cultural and heritage organizations and governments to ensure alignment with strategic tourism development priorities and destination branding. It thrives through a partnership between Economic Development Officers (EDOs), who understand the investment and regulatory environment, and Destination Management Organizations (DMOs), who understand the tourism industry and long-term strategy. NOTE: We recognize that not all communities have dedicated EDOs, so throughout this document, references to EDOs include all organizations or staff responsible for economic development functions.



North Vancouver
Grouse Mountain Resort

Partnership: The Role of Economic Development and Destination Management Organizations

Tourism investment attraction works best when EDOs and DMOs collaborate intentionally. While these groups often operate separately, their goals are deeply connected—and communities benefit most when they work in sync. Tourism investment requires both economic development expertise, to guide investment processes, zoning and infrastructure, and tourism insight to understand visitor behaviour, brand identity, experience design and the long-term business opportunity.

Five ways to strengthen collaboration include:

1 Work Toward Shared Goals

Both EDOs and DMOs serve their local communities or regions, so start with where your efforts overlap. Where is the synergy? Are there gaps in your strategies? Regular check-ins or joint planning sessions can help align priorities and avoid duplication.

2 Brand the Destination

DMOs brand a destination for visitors, and EDOs brand it for investors. It is important that these brands complement – not compete with – each other. A cohesive message helps position your community as a place to visit, live, and invest.

3 Focus on Infrastructure

Tourism and economic development both rely on infrastructure to succeed. Remember, if visitors complain about a community's roads and dated infrastructure, this may impact the likelihood of repeat visitation and generate negative word of mouth about the community, making resident and labour attraction or retention much harder. Whether it's roads, airports, broadband, or signage, shared advocacy for improvements at all levels of government benefits residents, visitors and businesses.

4 Leverage Events

Big events bring big ideas, prospective talent and big dollars to business and tourism communities, which can have a significant economic impact. From sports tournaments to cultural festivals to business conferences, events can drive tourism and attract future investment. EDOs and DMOs should work together to maximize these opportunities.

5 Using Storytelling to Promote Place

Storytelling is central to attracting both visitors and investors. Collaborate to share stories that reflect your community's identity, values and vision. Include Indigenous voices and perspectives to ensure authenticity and inclusivity.

An aerial photograph of a river with three kayakers. The kayakers are in a blue, yellow, and white kayak. The river is surrounded by rocky banks. A large blue circular overlay is positioned in the upper left quadrant of the image, partially covering the text.

Tourism Investment Attraction Toolkit

Tourism Investment Attraction Toolkit

This section provides practical tools and guidance to help communities assess and improve their readiness to attract tourism investment. Recognizing that some communities are just beginning to plan for tourism development, we have also compiled a short list of suggestions to get you started (see [Appendix A](#)).

NOTE: The following is specific to enhancing your tools when it comes to attracting investment in the tourism sector - For a full set of resources to help build out your suite of investment attraction tools, visit <https://www2.gov.bc.ca/gov/content/employment-business/economic-development>.

1



Get Ready for Investors: Tourism Investment Readiness Self-Assessment Tool

This self-assessment helps communities evaluate their preparedness to attract tourism investment. It's not a test — it's a roadmap to:

- Identify strengths and gaps in your tourism investment system.
- Prioritize actions that build investor confidence.
- Align community assets with investor expectations.

The Tourism Investment Readiness Self-Assessment is a practical tool that is best completed in partnership with EDOs and DMOs to gain a fulsome picture of the current state. The tool is organized into seven key readiness areas:

- A. Community tourism profile with asset identification
- B. Land inventory for tourism development
- C. Infrastructure readiness for tourism development
- D. Branding your destination
- E. Tourism/economic development capacity
- F. Tourism partnerships: regional and Indigenous
- G. Priority project list

The Self-Assessment can be found in [Appendix B](#) and includes instructions on how to use the assessment, including how to score the assessment and rank your current readiness.

This assessment and your scoring are more than a checklist— they are a detailed snapshot of your community's current position that will help you prioritize actions, allocate resources, and develop strategies to improve tourism investment readiness over time.



Now that you have completed the assessment and determined where gaps may exist, how can you tangibly improve your tourism investment readiness?

A. Community Tourism Profile with Asset Identification

A community profile is an essential tool for economic development professionals that provides information that potential investors need to evaluate your community's opportunities – community maps, demographics, key employers, workforce data, wages, housing, taxation and access, as well as a link to the Official Community Plan. A tourism-specific profile adds key information about the visitor economy, tourism assets, partnership networks, development strategies and brand identity. When developing your profile, be sure to consider tourism-specific assets located outside of your community boundaries. Highlighting these resources can give investors a more comprehensive understanding of both the local and regional market potential. Remember to review and update regularly!

Key Components:

- Community Overview:** Provide a brief summary of your community's unique characteristics, including its history, culture, and notable attractions. Highlight what makes your community a desirable tourism destination. Be sure to build this in partnership with your local First Nations. Again, think regionally.
- Brand Identity:** Highlight your destination's unique selling proposition and competitive advantage that differentiates it from competitors. Include the core values, personality, and promises that your destination offers, shaping how it is perceived by potential tourists and other stakeholders. The core narrative should tell a compelling story that showcases your community's unique strengths and creates an emotional connection with potential investors.
- Tourism-Specific Assets:** Include detailed information about key tourism attractions, such as natural landmarks, cultural sites, anchor attractions, events, and recreational opportunities. This showcases current demand generators and the potential for visitor engagement.
- Demographics and Labour Force Data:** Present population trends, workforce characteristics (age, mobility, etc.), and data from educational institutions. This helps investors understand the community's capacity to support new tourism projects.
- Infrastructure and Accessibility:** Outline the available infrastructure, including transportation options, utilities, and digital connectivity. Investors need to know how visitors are getting to the destination and whether the community can support increased visitor traffic and the operational needs of tourism businesses.
- Maps and Visuals:** Use maps to highlight your community's location, key attractions, and proximity to major transportation routes. Visual aids make your profile more engaging and accessible to investors unfamiliar with your area. Remember to think regionally.
- Quality of Life:** Showcase amenities such as healthcare, housing, schools and recreational assets that contribute to an attractive living environment for those working in or visiting your community. This is essential for the tourism workforce, who often are attracted to work in communities based on tourism-related assets.
- Visitor Economy Data:** Include up-to-date information on visitor economic impact and market demographics that highlight economic trends, future projections and market characteristics to investors. This helps to build the business case and describe market potential to investors (see [Appendix C](#) for a list of essential visitor data to include).

- **Supporting Tourism Development Strategies:** Include links to relevant tourism development strategies – locally, regionally and provincially – that are guiding public sector and destination management organizations in their coordinated development efforts. These strategies are grassroots developed, research-based, and brand driven. For more information on B.C.'s tourism development strategies, visit [Destination BC](#).
- **Contact Information:** In addition to the designated contact person or office for all tourism-related investment inquiries, you may wish to include contact information for key organizations in the tourism sector, namely local, regional and provincial destination management organizations. These organizations can provide information about marketing and demand generating activities that will support the attraction of customers for the investor's new business.



SilverStar Mountain Resort
Destination Silver Star/Abby Cooper

Best Practice:

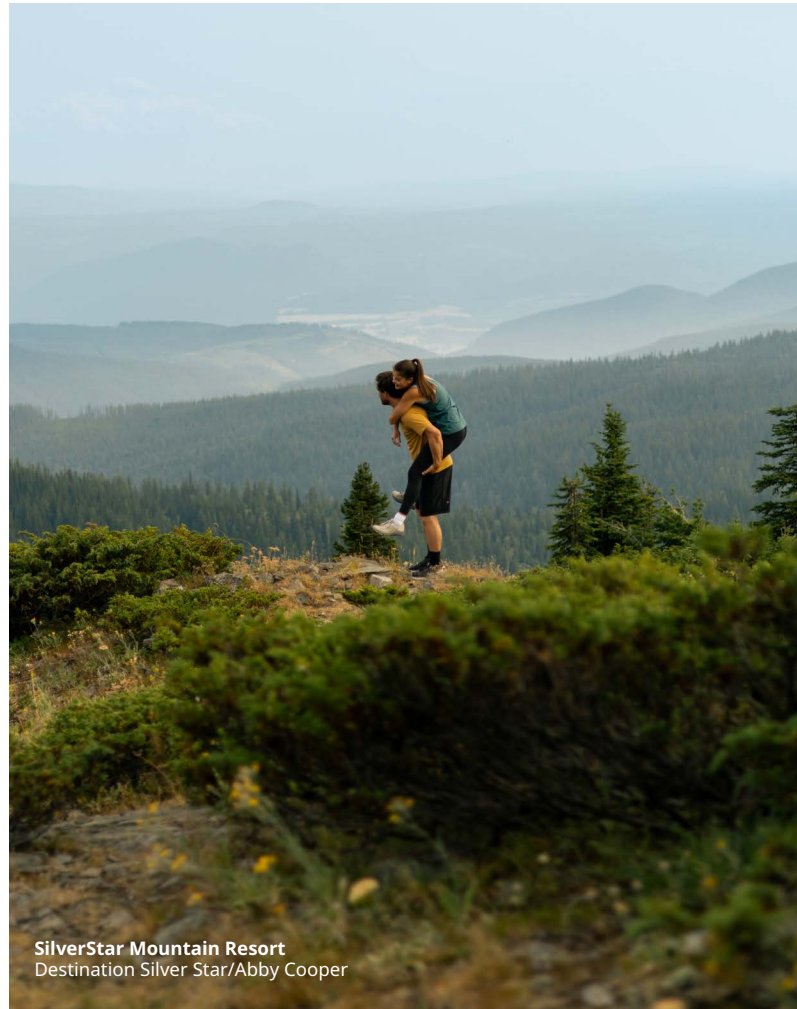
Good	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> • Contact information for an EDO is publicly available. • Basic labour force and demographic data are included. • List of major attractions, events, and amenities are integrated. • Website includes a tourism-focused page with key attractions listed.
Better	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> • EDO is familiar with tourism development and has robust relationship with DMO. • Community Tourism Profile includes brand identify, visitor specific data, economic impact of tourism and links to key tourism contacts and strategies. • Regularly update news or events on the website. • GIS mapping of tourism assets integrated into online resources.
Best	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> • Downloadable, customizable profiles tailored to investor needs. • Sub-municipal demographic data available with interactive maps. • Sector-specific information (i.e. accommodation, eco-tourism, cultural tourism) readily accessible online.

B. Land Inventory for Tourism Development

A well-prepared land inventory is a critical tool for attracting tourism investments. It provides potential investors with clear, comprehensive information about available properties that are ready for development. A detailed and organized inventory demonstrates a community's preparedness and builds investor confidence by streamlining the decision-making process.

Key Components:

- **List of Available Sites:** Include basic property information like lot size, legal description, zoning, and ownership details, plus describe the benefits for specific development options. Ensure sites are properly zoned for tourism development and align with community plans.
- **Utilities and Infrastructure:** Describe the availability of water, electricity, sanitary sewer systems, natural gas, and high-speed telecommunications.
- **Accessibility:** Detail proximity to major roads, airports, or public transportation. Consider how both visitors and workforce will access the site.
- **Environmental and Planning Information:** Outline any site-specific environmental considerations, such as contamination or seismic activity assessments.



Best Practice:

Good	<ul style="list-style-type: none">• Basic electronic listings of available land and properties.• Key details provided: location, zoning, size, and pricing.• Summary of existing utilities and infrastructure.
Better	<ul style="list-style-type: none">• Online, searchable database with advanced filtering options.• Detailed property descriptions, including utility availability, past sales data, year of construction, contamination status or remediation needs.• Estimated development cost charges.
Best	<ul style="list-style-type: none">• GIS-enabled inventory showing property locations and demographics.• Interactive tools allowing users to define buffer zones and analyze surrounding amenities.• Regular updates and real-time data for property availability and pricing.• Development cost charges relevant to specific project types.

C. Infrastructure Readiness and Sustainability

Infrastructure is a key foundation of tourism investment attraction as potential investors will want to ensure that communities can support visitor needs and the operational requirements of tourism businesses. This includes visitor services, transportation, and utilities, plus proactive planning to meet future demands. Investors are also looking to communities that prioritize sustainability and practices that ensure long-term viability and resilience, like eco-friendly practices, cultural preservation and responsible visitor practices.

Key Components:

- **Visitor Services:** Inventory your public tourism related infrastructure – washrooms, parking, parks, public transportation, visitor information service – to ensure that visitor needs are well supported. Keep up to date with changing needs and monitor visitor sentiment for success.
- **Transportation Accessibility:** Evaluate availability of well-maintained roads, public transit, active transportation infrastructure (such as bike lanes), and airport proximity.
- **Utilities and Services:** Confirm reliable access to water, electricity, internet, and sewage systems that are able to service increased capacity due to visitors. Highlight sustainable practices like efficiency investments, waste reduction and renewable energy projects.
- **Future-Ready Infrastructure:** Develop and share plans to address gaps like road improvements, connectivity, and capacity for increased demand, as well as improve regenerative practices like environmental conservation and cultural preservation that will ensure the long-term strength of the destination.
- **Education and Collaboration:** Highlight efforts to educate visitors on responsible travel, respectful practices and conservation efforts to protect the environment, cultural assets and community.

Best Practice:

Good

- Basic infrastructure and visitor services audit completed.
- Sufficient zoned land available for tourism development.
- Sustainable practices and priorities incorporated into local development.

Better

- Strategic development plans identify and address infrastructure gaps (road improvements, water/sewer capacity).
- Visitor services are up to date and modernized to align with changing needs.
- Comprehensive sustainability plan outlines eco-friendly development and mitigates visitor impacts, in partnership with tourism and environmental organizations.

Best

- Strategic planning ensures infrastructure is future-ready and scalable.
- Visitor feedback on services and community experience is tracked.
- Community partners engage in regenerative practices with metrics to track environmental and social impacts.
- Certification as a sustainable tourism destination by third-party organizations



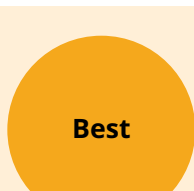
D. Branding and Marketing Your Destination

Tourism really shines when it comes to telling the story of your destination and showcasing unique tourism assets and experiences, which helps sell your community to investors. Potential investors will want to understand your unique competitive advantage and key brand promise so they can evaluate existing and potential markets. Given that tourism does not happen in isolation, they will also want to understand key demand generating activities that will attract their customers – marketing strategies, regional and provincial partnerships, and long-term plans for a resilient market.

Key Components:

- **Tourism Investment Marketing Plan:** Develop a comprehensive marketing plan targeted specifically to attracting tourism investments. This includes identifying target investor markets, developing sector-specific collateral, outlining plans for new builds and succession planning, and coordinating brand messaging.
- **Destination Branding:** Align key messages that articulate the benefits of investing in your community with the brand messaging and unique competitive advantage that attracts visitors – and potential customers – to your destination. Focus on telling a compelling story that aligns destination branding, investor interests and community values.
- **Collaborative Marketing Initiatives:** Work with neighbouring communities and regional partners to create joint marketing campaigns that support investment attraction. Collaboration amplifies reach, showcases the area's broader appeal, and can help position your community within a wider visitor economy for investors. Use external marketing supports, such as provincial, regional or community-level destination marketing organizations, trade and investment branches, or trade commissioners, to expand the reach of your investment attraction efforts.
- **Participation in Trade Events:** Attend tourism-focused trade and investment events to promote your community actively and engage directly with investors and industry leaders.
- **Tailored Promotional Materials:** Create professional, investor-focused promotional materials highlighting tourism-specific assets and opportunities. Consider brochures, presentations, and videos showcasing key projects.
- **Showcase Success Stories:** Highlight examples of successful tourism investments in your community and include testimonials from past investors in your investment promotions. These provide credibility and demonstrate the potential for success.

Best Practice:

	<ul style="list-style-type: none">• Community profile available for download from the website.• Basic marketing materials, such as brochures or overview documents.• EDO contact information included in all materials.
	<ul style="list-style-type: none">• Marketing plan specific to tourism sector with target investor profiles and audiences.• Clear alignment with destination branding and marketing initiatives – local, regional and provincial – highlights destination unique selling proposition and competitive advantage.• Local business/tourism ambassadors available to meet with investors.
	<ul style="list-style-type: none">• Comprehensive suite of branded marketing materials, sector-specific sell sheet, videos and presentations, and deal book.• Active participation in trade shows and regular engagement with site selectors.• Marketing campaigns integrated with regional and national tourism efforts.• Host tourism-specific investor events/tours.

E. Tourism/Economic Development Capacity

Tourism investment readiness depends on a community's ability to provide expert guidance and support for investors. Creating strong partnerships between economic development organizations – who are knowledgeable about official community plans, potential sites, development needs and the regulatory environment – and destination management organizations – who know the market potential, tourism partnership network, strategic frameworks for development and key tourism data – ensures smooth processes and builds investor confidence.

Key Components:

- **Dedicated Contact(s):** Identify a designated economic development contact for tourism investment inquiries, either in local government, economic development agency or the DMO.
- **Knowledge of Tourism Investment Processes:** Build capacity in local government, EDOs and DMOs with tourism-specific market and opportunity updates, such as market performance, strategy development, current site availability, suggested priority projects and regulatory needs.

- **Partner Collaboration:** Consider formalized representation on governing boards for EDOs and DMOs to facilitate real-time information sharing and decision making that aligns with current strategies for development.
- **Planning and Permitting:** Streamline the development process by having a clear picture of investor responsibilities, such as required assessments and development cost charges, to provide accurate information on processes and timelines.
- **Resource Awareness:** Familiarize both EDOs and DMOs with federal and provincial resources, programs and key contacts that support tourism investments attraction and facilitation, as well as data sources and industry trends to inform decision making. This includes both economic development and destination management resources.

Best Practice:

Good

- Dedicated contact for tourism investment inquiries.
- Economic development staff and DMO familiar with local tourism assets and basic investment processes.
- Clear documentation on planning and permitting processes.

Better

- EDO and DMO staff trained in tourism-specific investment opportunities, processes, value proposition and regulatory environment.
- Partnerships established between EDOs and DMOs for ongoing collaboration.
- Flowchart outlining approval timelines and fee structures.
- Online access to zoning and permitting information.
- Resource developed that outlines provincial and federal programs and services to support investment attraction.

Best

- Regular professional development in tourism sector to keep both EDO and DMO team expertise aligned with industry trends.
- Formal representation in the governance model between EDO and DMO.
- Expedited planning and permitting approvals for key projects.
- Advanced GIS tools analyze infrastructure in relation to tourism assets.

F. Tourism Partnerships: Regional and Indigenous

Visitors rarely explore just one community when travelling; rather, they are drawn to experiences throughout a region or along a corridor that align with their travel preferences. Collaboration with neighbouring communities and First Nations helps create a cohesive destination story that enhances the appeal of tourism opportunities to investors. With the rising demand for Indigenous tourism experiences, engagement between First Nations and neighbouring communities in tourism development promotes cultural authenticity and provides mutual benefits.

Key Components:

- **Regional Collaboration:** Determine the availability of regional and corridor development strategies and actively participate in regional tourism initiatives, planning committees and corridor development implementation actions. Engage with neighbouring communities, Indigenous communities and tourism boards to identify opportunities.

- **Indigenous Relationships and Protocols:** Build long-term partnerships with First Nations and Indigenous Peoples through strong engagement, relationship building, and collaborative projects to honour traditions, build trust, create inclusive investment opportunities and ensure tourism opportunities provide mutual benefits to all communities.
- **Memorandums of Understanding (MOUs):** Consider formalizing relationships between communities, strengthen collaborations and establish deliverables for regional initiatives.
- **Coordinated Tourism Business Engagement:** Make space for regular and ongoing engagement and communication with the local and regional tourism business network to share information and collaborate on development priorities that support a resilient visitor economy. This could include hosting investment attraction events with key stakeholders.

Best Practice:

Good

- Informal partnerships established with neighbouring communities and First Nations.
- Basic agreements in place for regional marketing, resource sharing and event coordination.

Better

- Formal MOUs outline shared development goals and responsibilities.
- Collaborative itineraries or experiences developed to showcase multiple communities.
- Regular communication and joint planning meetings.

Best

- Regional committees formalized to develop tourism corridors with shared branding and marketing, with integration of Indigenous-led tourism initiatives into broader strategies.
- Ongoing partner meetings to evaluate outcomes and align strategies.
- Secured funding supports cross-community tourism initiatives.



G. Priority Projects List

To grow your local visitor economy, communities can be more investor ready by identifying what types of businesses they would like to attract that would encourage visitation, create economic spin-off for existing tourism businesses, and support infrastructure needs for the city through sustainable investment. While providing great material for investor marketing efforts, it also helps communities refine where they would like to prioritize development resources for infrastructure.

Key Components:

- **Priority Projects List:** Include key large-scale iconic projects, businesses that may be looking for new ownership or expansion opportunities, and small to medium size accommodation or experience providers that serve the evolving target market of visitors. This list is best built in partnership with key community partners: EDOs, DMOs, local government, First Nations and residents.
- **Strategic Alignment:** Highlighted projects are chosen to align with long-term regional and corridor tourism development strategies that aim to increase the benefits of tourism through coordinated place branding and experience development.
- **Project Feasibility:** Include as much detail as possible regarding any feasibility work completed, market potential explored, and sites identified for possible development.



Best Practice:

Good

- Projects identified with basic description and approximate size of investment.
- Strategies identified that support development alignment and market potential of project.

Better

- Project description includes business model, market segmentation, site identification and key performance indicators (KPIs).
- Project is identified in tourism development strategies as a key gap in current offerings.

Best

- Full feasibility study conducted on projects with infrastructure needs, zoning and regulation details, financial projections to profitability, and comparable projects.
- Potential sites described with ownership details, potential purchase price, development cost charges and infrastructure needs.

Now that you have assessed your preparedness for tourism investment attraction and developed tools to reach these investors, it's time to begin marketing your destination for tourism development. For examples of best practices, [Appendix D](#) showcases global success stories in tourism investment, offering practical insights and inspiration on how diverse communities have overcome challenges, embraced innovation, and fostered sustainable development through strategic collaboration.

While your community likely already has a plan to reach potential investors, consider the following specifically for the tourism sector:

A. Investor Package for the Tourism Sector

In addition to selling the values of establishing a business in your community, you need to sell the market potential of your community as a travel destination.

Key Components:

- **Community Tourism Profile:** See section 1a for details on what to include specific to tourism.
- **Brand Promise and Vision Statement:** Be clear on your destination's unique selling proposition and competitive advantage that sets it apart from other potential locations.
- **Market Potential:** Create a compelling data picture of potential customer base, with visitor profiles, traveller trends, demand generation initiatives, and product gaps.
- **Tourism Partnerships and Business Supports:** Map out the tourism sector at the local, regional, provincial and national levels with key contacts, so potential investors understand market and development supports available to them.
- **Link to Key Strategies:** Include links to relevant tourism development strategies, the official community plan, and marketing initiatives.
- **Success Stories:** Highlight past tourism development initiatives with success metrics.



Bugaboo Provincial Park
Destination BC/Reuben Krabbe

B. Tourism Data

Potential investors will be keenly interested in metrics that describe market potential, visitor behaviour, economic impact, and growth opportunities in the visitor economy. [Appendix C](#) outlines potential tourism data points that EDOs and DMOs should prepare and keep up-to-date. You can also include data that highlights the overall strength of tourism in British Columbia. Tourism research and data for B.C. are available on the Province's tourism research webpage linked [here](#).

C. Marketing Initiatives

Now that you have the right information packages built out for potential investors, how do you reach them? Remember to think regionally and co-develop outreach efforts in partnership with other similar communities. Once you get investors interested, you can compete locally.

Key Components:

- **Pitch Deck:** Create a high level visual/video presentation that creates a compelling and engaging reason to consider tourism as an investment sector and your community specifically. Enable it on community and DMO websites with links from key partner sites.
- **Lead Generation:** Partner with other EDOs and DMOs to attend trade shows, investor forums and tourism events to meet with potential investors and develop contact lists.
- **Priority Project List:** Share this list with development and investment attraction agencies throughout the province – your project might be exactly what an investor is looking for!



Bowron Lake Provincial Park
Destination BC/Adam Wells



Monitoring Tourism Investment and Economic Impact

Tracking tourism investment is essential for communities to evaluate success, identify trends, and strategically plan for future growth. Monitoring tools enhance transparency and support continuous improvement, though smaller communities may face challenges in collecting and managing the necessary data. Cooperation between EDOs, local government and DMOs is critical.

Key Components:

- **Investment Tracking:** Invest in a Customer Relations Management system that can be coordinated between EDO and DMO that logs inquiries, assigns follow-ups, and tracks successful investments. Be sure to keep an up-to-date list of key contacts for approvals and business implementation.
- **Impact Modeling:** Track both community and visitor metrics for a full picture of economic impact of the project: job creation, taxes, revenue growth, occupancy and visitor spending. Also, evaluate completed projects for benefits to the wider community, as tourism projects usually add assets for the use and enjoyment of local residents.
- **Post-Investment Engagement:** Establish a structured post-investment engagement approach to maintain regular contact with tourism investors after project completion, including check-ins, issue resolution, and opportunities for expansion or reinvestment. This is critical to evaluating long-term success, fostering reinvestment, and strengthening investor relationships. It also supports data collection and collaboration with marketing partners to enhance future investment attraction efforts.



Tatlayoko Lake
Destination BC/Kari Medig

Conclusion

Building a strong foundation for tourism investment goes beyond identifying assets and opportunities —it requires a strategic, proactive approach where local government, economic development agencies and destination management organizations bring their unique knowledge to prepare communities to attract investment and support visitor economy growth.

By assessing readiness, updating community profiles, and ensuring the availability of investment-ready land, communities can position themselves as competitive destinations that drive economic growth, job creation and long-term sustainability.

A clear investment strategy, supported by best practices in marketing and success tracking, helps reach investors that will build opportunities for your community.

While collaboration at the local level is critical, there are many organizations that can help with this work – see [Appendix E](#) for a list of provincial and national resources that can aid in tourism investment attraction.

Ultimately, tourism investment is about creating vibrant, thriving communities that benefit both residents and visitors – for generations to come.



North Vancouver
Destination BC/Hubert Kang

Appendices



Mount Robson
Destination BC/Stephen Shelesky

Appendix A: Tourism Development Starting Points

Communities benefit from coordinated strategic planning for tourism. Not all communities have formal Economic Development Officers (EDOs) or Destination Management Organizations (DMOs), and while some may have DMOs, they may be solely focused on marketing activities. These organizations often lack the flexibility or capacity to engage in broader destination development, strategic management or tourism investment attraction.

Communities could consider alternative structures to support investment readiness and strategic development beyond marketing. For example:

- Planning departments can field investment inquiries and coordinate with regional services.
- Non-profits can lead tourism initiatives and community engagement.
- Volunteer boards can support marketing and destination branding.

Here are seven practical tips for communities with limited capacity or informal structures to begin engaging in tourism investment attraction:

1

Identify Local Champions: Find individuals or organizations (e.g., Chamber of Commerce, local non-profits, planning departments) who are passionate about tourism and economic development.

3

Leverage Regional Partnerships: Connect with nearby communities, Indigenous partners, and regional organizations to share resources and align on tourism goals. Connect with your [Regional Economic Officer](#) and your [regional tourism destination management organization](#).

5

Use Existing Planning Tools: Even if you don't have a dedicated EDO, planning departments can use Official Community Plans (OCPs) to support tourism investment goals.

2

Build a Basic Community Profile: Start with publicly available data - demographics, key attractions, infrastructure, and visitor services. Use free tools from Destination BC or your regional DMO.

4

Focus on One or Two Priority Projects: Choose small, achievable initiatives that align with your community's strengths (e.g., trail development, signage, cultural events).

6

Seek External Support: Reach out to provincial trusts (e.g., ICET, ETSI-BC, NDIT, CBT) or Destination BC for funding, data, and technical assistance.

7

Celebrate Progress: Document and share small wins to build momentum and attract interest from investors and partners.

Appendix B: Tourism Investment Readiness Self-Assessment Tool

How to Use the Self-Assessment

The self-assessment is structured into focused sections, each addressing a critical component of tourism investment readiness, such as community assets, infrastructure, marketing, partnerships, and sustainability. For each question, you can evaluate your community's status by selecting one of the following options:

Yes: This area is well-developed and functioning effectively. **Score 2 points**

Yes, but needs improvement: This area is established but requires updates or enhancements. **Score 1 point**

No, but in progress: This area is being addressed but is incomplete. **Score 1 point**

No: This area has not been developed or implemented. **Score 0 points**

The goal is to provide a clear and honest snapshot of your community's current position. This will help you to prioritize actions, allocate resources, and develop strategies to improve tourism investment readiness over time.



Oliver
Destination BC/Kari Medig



Naramata
Destination BC/Kari Medig

A	Community Tourism Profile and Assets	Yes 2	Yes, but needs improvement 1	No, but in progress 1	No 0
1	Does your community have a designated economic development officer or other staff responsible for attracting investment?				
2	If yes, does this person understand the tourism investment attraction process (i.e., responding to inquiries, data collection and trends, familiarization tours, etc.)?				
3	Does your community have a Community Profile for Investors?				
4	Does your community have a community tourism profile? If not, please move to Section B.				
5	If yes, is your community tourism profile up-to-date (i.e., completed within the last year) and reviewed regularly (i.e., every 3-6 months)?				
6	Is your community tourism profile available on your website?				
7	Does your community tourism profile include key tourism attractions, including cultural, natural, and recreational assets?				
8	Is the community tourism profile up-to-date with current tourism economic indicators, projections and visitation data?				
9	Does your community tourism profile include visitor demographics (e.g., market of origin, visitation trends, visitor profile)?				
10	Does your community tourism profile provide information on community tourism-related assets and amenities (e.g., hotels, restaurants, events)?				
11	Does your community tourism profile highlight transportation accessibility (e.g., proximity to airports, highways, and public transit)?				
12	Does your community tourism profile list the relevant tourism development strategies that outline the direction and focus for the visitor economy?				
Total (/24 Points)					

B Land Inventory for Tourism Development		Yes	Yes, but needs improvement	No, but in progress	No
		2	1	1	0
1	Does your community maintain an inventory of land or properties available for tourism investment (e.g., hotels, resorts, adventure tourism)?				
2	Are tourism-related sites properly zoned and prepared for development?				
3	Is information regarding property size, location, and services readily available for potential tourism investors?				
4	Does the land inventory include heritage sites or locations that could be used for potential tourism investment?				
5	Are maps, site photos, and contact information for local planning officials easily accessible to investors?				
6	Does the inventory include Crown, municipal, Indigenous, and privately owned property for sale or lease?				
Total (/12 Points)					

C Infrastructure Readiness and Sustainability		Yes	Yes, but needs improvement	No, but in progress	No
		2	1	1	0
1	Does your community have adequate public infrastructure to serve and improve the visitor experience (i.e., restrooms, visitor information centres, parking, public transport etc. options)?				
2	Does your community have the necessary transportation infrastructure (e.g., roads, public transport, airports) to support increased tourist numbers?				
3	Does your community have a plan for addressing infrastructure gaps (i.e., visitor services, access improvements, internet connectivity, utilities) in key tourism areas?				
4	Are utilities (water, electricity, internet) readily available in areas designated for tourism development?				
5	Does your community have a plan for increased sewage, water, and power demands from tourism-focused developments?				
6	Are you aware of the environmental regulations that may affect tourism investments in your community?				
7	Does local government and DMO collaborate to provide programs or support to tourism businesses looking to undertake more sustainable or regenerative business practices?				
8	Does your community provide public transportation options or alternative methods to help tourists access key attractions?				
9	Does your community collaborate to offer information to visitors about sustainable practices and responsible tourism?				

Total (/18 Points)

D Branding of Your Destination		Yes	Yes, but needs improvement	No, but in progress	No
		2	1	1	0
1	Does your community have an investment attraction marketing plan?				
2	Does your community have an investment attraction marketing plan focused specifically on the tourism sector?				
3	Does your community's unique selling proposition and competitive advantage align with the tourism marketing brand?				
4	Are there collaborative marketing initiatives with neighbouring communities or regional partners (i.e., joint marketing campaigns)?				
5	Does your community participate in tourism-focused trade shows or investment events to promote local or regional-based opportunities?				
6	Are there marketing materials tailored to potential investors, highlighting tourism-specific assets and development opportunities?				
7	Does your community highlight successful tourism investment success stories or provide testimonials from past investors?				
Total (/14 Points)					

E Tourism/Economic Development Capacity		Yes	Yes, but needs improvement	No, but in progress	No
		2	1	1	0
1	Does your community have a dedicated economic development contact for tourism investment inquiries?				
2	Is your economic development team and DMO familiar with tourism investment processes (e.g., key contacts, site selection, investment requirements)?				
3	Does your tourism organization and your economic development organization have formal representation on each other's board?				
4	Does your economic development team have a clear picture of process and timelines for project approvals?				
5	Does your community have an up-to-date list of existing provincial and federal development policies, programs, and services?				
Total (/10 Points)					

F Tourism Partnerships: Regional and Indigenous		Yes	Yes, but needs improvement	No, but in progress	No
		2	1	1	0
1	Is your community actively participating in or preparing to join a regional tourism initiative or tourism corridor?				
2	Is there a relationship established between area First Nations and surrounding communities to explore and establish agreements or partnerships that enhance tourism opportunities?				
3	Are partnerships or MOUs established with neighbouring communities and First Nations to develop and promote regional tourism or a tourism corridor?				
4	Does your community engage with partners and tourism businesses to align goals with the broader regional or corridor strategy?				
Total (/8 Points)					

G Priority Projects List		Yes	Yes, but needs improvement	No, but in progress	No
		2	1	1	0
1	Has your community identified opportunities for potential projects that will enhance your destination's competitiveness?				
2	Has your community vetted and validated this project list with key partners – EDOs or staff responsible for economic development, DMOs, local government, First Nations and residents?				
3	Does your priority projects list align with existing tourism and corridor development strategies for your region?				
4	Do the priority projects have any feasibility studies to support their viability as business opportunities?				
5	Have potential sites been identified for the priority projects?				
Total (/10 Points)					

Now that you have completed the self-assessment, add your total scores from each category based on the scoring rubric.

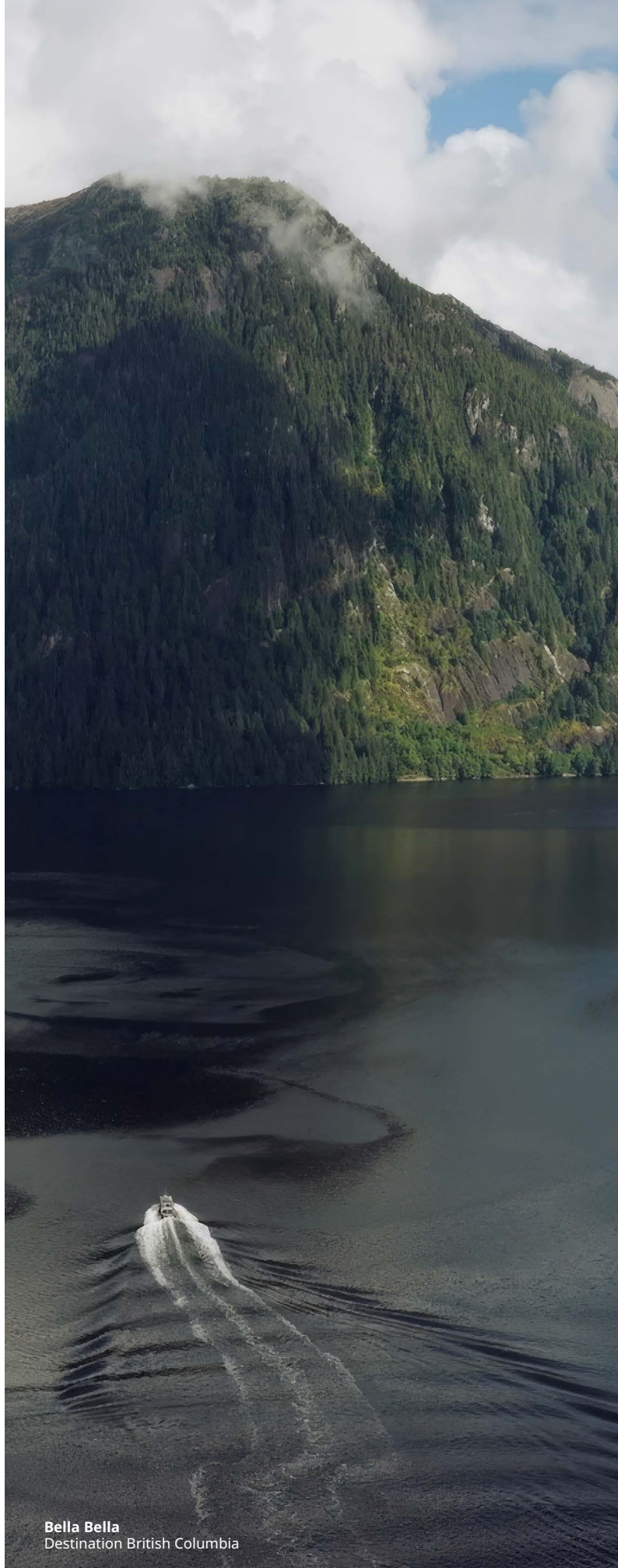
If you scored 86 or more: Congratulations, you are **VERY READY** for tourism investment.

If you scored between 71 and 85: You are **READY** for tourism investment but can still improve.

If you scored between 41 and 70: You are **ALMOST READY** for tourism investment but there are opportunities for you to make improvements.

If you scored less than 40: You are in the **FOUNDATIONAL STAGE** – there are still many opportunities for you to consider as you work towards tourism investment readiness.

This assessment and your scoring are more than a checklist—they're an opportunity to reflect on your community's vision and potential. The results can empower you to take targeted steps toward creating a thriving tourism destination that attracts investment, stimulates growth and delivers long-term benefits for residents and visitors. Every community can take steps toward investment readiness - it's not an all-or-nothing approach.



Bella Bella
Destination British Columbia

Appendix C: Tourism Data for Potential Investors

When presenting tourism data to potential investors, it's important to highlight metrics that demonstrate market potential, visitor behaviour, economic impact, and growth opportunities. Note that access to data points will vary by community, and the local and regional destination management organizations can support with sourcing information. Here are key tourism data points that would be of interest:

- 1 Visitor Volume and Demographics**
 - Total number of visitors (domestic and international)
 - Year-over-year growth rates
 - Visitor origin (top countries or regions)
 - Demographics: age, gender, income level, travel party composition, visitor profile
- 2 Visitor Spending**
 - Average spending per visitor (daily and total trip)
 - Spending breakdown: accommodation, food & beverage, transportation, attractions, retail
 - Revenue generated by tourism sector
- 3 Length of Stay and Seasonality**
 - Average length of stay
 - Peak vs. off-peak seasons
 - Occupancy rates for accommodations
- 4 Economic Impact**
 - Tourism's contribution to GDP
 - Employment supported by tourism
 - Tax revenue generated from tourism-related activities
- 5 Market Trends and Preferences**
 - Popular activities and experiences
 - Emerging travel trends (e.g., eco-tourism, cultural tourism, wellness travel)
 - Visitor satisfaction and return rates
- 6 Infrastructure and Investment Opportunities**
 - Current accommodation capacity
 - Transportation access and connectivity
 - Planned or ongoing tourism infrastructure projects
 - Public-private partnership opportunities
- 7 Competitive Positioning**
 - Benchmarking against similar destinations
 - Unique selling points (USPs) of the region
 - Brand awareness and marketing reach

Some of this data can be obtained via the following Tourism Data Platforms:

- [Destination BC](#)
- [Statistics Canada Travel and Tourism Statistics](#)
- [Canadian Tourism Data Collective](#)

Your regional DMO will also be able to support with data resources – contact information can be found [here](#).

If you are unsure which region your location falls within, use [Destination BC's Planning Area Look Up Tool](#).

Appendix D: Success Stories

This section highlights examples of successful tourism investment initiatives from various regions worldwide. Each story illustrates how communities, organizations, and partners have navigated challenges, leveraged opportunities, and implemented innovative strategies to attract and sustain tourism investment.

Small Rural Communities (Population: <10,000)

Fogo Island, Newfoundland and Labrador, Canada

Population: 2,100

Focus: Regenerative tourism and community reinvestment

Overview

Fogo Island, a small community off the coast of Newfoundland and Labrador, faced economic challenges following the collapse of the cod fishing industry. To combat depopulation and economic decline, the Shorefast Foundation spearheaded the development of the Fogo Island Inn, a luxury, eco-friendly hotel designed to celebrate the island's culture and environment while providing jobs and economic opportunities for residents. This iconic property integrates social enterprise with high-end hospitality, positioning Fogo Island as a world-renowned destination while reinvesting profits back into the community.



Key Components

- 1. Social and Economic Impact:** Shorefast reinvests profits from the inn into local initiatives, which include microloans for local entrepreneurs, education scholarships and cultural programs.
- 2. Sustainable Development:** The inn uses local materials, energy-efficient practices and traditional building techniques. Shorefast also established the Fogo Island Fish Cooperative to support sustainable fisheries, directly benefiting the community.
- 3. Community Engagement:** The foundation engages residents through programs emphasizing local history and cultural preservation, including hosting artist residencies and training locals as cultural ambassadors.

Lessons for Economic Development

- Regenerative Tourism:** This example highlights how regenerative tourism goes beyond sustainability by actively improving a destination's environment, culture and economy. It focuses on restorative actions like habitat restoration, cultural revitalization and community-driven initiatives, leaving destinations better than they were for both residents and visitors.
- Economic Resilience:** By reinvesting profits and providing educational opportunities, Shorefast empowers Fogo Island's community to build local capacity and attract sustainable investments.

Lessons for Tourism Investment Readiness

- **Regenerative Investment Model:** Fogo Island Inn exemplifies how investment in regenerative tourism can yield sustainable returns while positively impacting local communities. This model appeals to investors seeking long-term social and economic returns, with profits directly benefiting local development.
- **Self-Sustaining Investment Framework:** The Shorefast Foundation's reinvestment of profits into community projects underscores Fogo Island's readiness for impact-focused investments. The established reinvestment model offers investors a low-risk opportunity to fund community-centered initiatives that bolster long-term resilience.

References and Additional Information

- [Shorefast Foundation](#)
- [Fogo Island Inn](#)



Rappahannock County, Virginia, USA

Population: 7,400

Focus: Agri-tourism and preserving rural character

Overview

Rappahannock County, Virginia, a small rural area known for its natural landscapes and historic charm, has invested in agri-tourism to attract visitors while preserving its rural character. Local government and partners encouraged the growth of wineries, bed & breakfasts (B&Bs), and farm-to-table restaurants, turning Rappahannock into a destination for those seeking scenic and agricultural experiences. Strict zoning laws exist, including preventing large-scale commercial or industrial development, restricting building heights, density and permissible land use.



How They Did It

- **Partnerships & Community Engagement:** Local government collaborated with community leaders, farmers, and local entrepreneurs to create a vision that celebrated the county's rural character. They focused on building a network that supported small businesses and local artisans.
- **Targeted Incentives:** The county provided support and incentives for ventures like wineries, B&Bs, and farm-to-table restaurants. These initiatives helped diversify the local economy while highlighting regional products and traditions.
- **Strategic Marketing:** Efforts were made to brand Rappahannock as an agri-tourism destination. Marketing campaigns emphasized the area's scenic landscapes, historic charm and authentic rural experiences, drawing visitors who valued a slower, more sustainable pace of life.

How the Zoning Bylaws Were Strategically Designed

- **Controlled Development:** The zoning regulations are designed to prevent large-scale commercial or industrial development that could undermine the rural landscape. They typically restrict building heights, density, and the types of permissible land use.
- **Protection of Agricultural Land:** A significant part of the zoning laws focuses on preserving agricultural and open spaces. New developments, even those related to tourism, must maintain a balance between economic growth and the preservation of farmland and natural beauty.
- **Design & Aesthetic Guidelines:** To ensure that new structures blend with the county's historic and rural character, the bylaws often include architectural guidelines. This means that any new buildings must conform to specific design standards, reinforcing the community's identity and preserving the visual landscape.

Key Components

- 1. Agri-tourism Development:** The county promotes local vineyards, farms and artisanal food businesses, creating a cohesive visitor experience that aligns with the area's agricultural heritage.
- 2. Zoning and Planning:** Rappahannock adjusted zoning policies to support small tourism businesses, balancing growth with preserving the county's rural landscape.
- 3. Community-Led Initiatives:** Local residents and business owners actively shape tourism strategies through community meetings, workshops and collaborative planning, ensuring growth aligns with local sustainability and cultural preservation values.

Lessons for Economic Development

- **Community Engagement as a Catalyst:** Involving residents and business owners in planning ensures that economic development strategies reflect community values, leading to locally supported and sustainable initiatives.
- **Leveraging Unique Local Assets:** Capitalizing on the county's agricultural heritage and natural landscapes creates a distinctive niche, attracting investments in agri-tourism and related sectors such as wineries, B&Bs and farm-to-table dining.
- **Strategic Zoning and Policy Tools:** Adjustments to zoning laws demonstrate how targeted policy interventions can encourage small-scale tourism businesses while preserving the rural character and preventing overdevelopment.
- **Economic Diversification:** Focusing on agri-tourism helps diversify the local economy, reducing reliance on traditional sectors and building resilience against economic downturns.
- **Public-Private Collaboration:** Partnerships between local government, residents and private enterprises facilitate a cohesive approach to economic development, aligning investment strategies with long-term community goals.
- **Sustainable Investment Readiness:** The region's emphasis on sustainability and preservation of cultural heritage makes it attractive to investors seeking ventures that balance profitability with environmental and social responsibility.

Lessons for Tourism Investment Readiness

- **Readiness in Zoning and Land Use:** Rappahannock County's adjustments to zoning policies demonstrate investment readiness by creating regulations to control building density, preserve agricultural land, and require new structures to adhere to design guidelines that reflect the area's historic and scenic charm, ensuring that economic growth aligns with community values.
- **Sustainable Agri-tourism Focus:** Investors are drawn to opportunities that align with sustainable tourism goals, such as supporting small-scale wineries and preserving agricultural traditions. The integration of agriculture and tourism provides a clear path to profitability through diversified revenue streams, including wine sales, events and partnerships with farm-to-table establishments.

References and Additional Information

- [Virginia Tourism Corporation](#)

Follina, Veneto, Italy

Population: 3,800

Focus: Heritage tourism centred on historical landmarks

Overview

Follina, a small town in the Veneto region of Italy, revitalized its local economy by emphasizing its historical heritage and promoting slow tourism. This initiative emerged as part of Italy's broader strategy to diversify rural economies through cultural and nature-based tourism, benefiting small, historic towns like Follina. Known for its 12th-century Abbey and scenic setting, Follina has attracted visitors looking for authentic cultural experiences, helping to sustain local businesses.



Key Components

- 1. Historic and Cultural Tourism:** Follina's central attraction is its Abbey, where many cultural events and historical tours are organized. By leveraging this historical asset, the town successfully attracts tourists interested in Italy's strong heritage.
- 2. Slow Tourism Approach:** Rather than focusing on high visitor numbers, Follina promotes a slower tourism experience, encouraging longer stays and deeper engagement with local culture, crafts, and gastronomy.
- 3. Community Involvement:** Residents are encouraged to contribute to local tourism offerings by developing guided tours, artisanal workshops, and regional culinary experiences, cultivating a strong sense of ownership and benefiting directly from tourism efforts.

Lessons for Economic Development

- **Cultural Capital Utilization:** Follina demonstrates how small towns can use unique cultural assets to create appealing tourism products.
- **Sustainable Tourism Practices:** Follina promotes slower tourism, reducing the strain on local resources while maximizing visitor spending.

Lessons for Tourism Investment Readiness

- **Cultural Asset Readiness:** Follina shows the importance of identifying and maintaining cultural assets that make a location attractive to investors. Having a clear inventory of cultural sites, alongside a plan for their preservation, enhances investment appeal.
- **Tourism Strategy for Small Markets:** A slow tourism approach signals to investors that Follina effectively manages tourist impacts, which can make small-scale, sustainable projects more feasible and attractive to investors focused on low-density, high-quality visitor experiences.

References and Additional Information

- [UNESCO World Heritage](#)
- [Veneto Tourism](#)

Mid-Sized Communities (Population: 10,000–100,000)

Malahat, British Columbia, Canada

Population: 15,000 (Malahat and surrounding area)

Focus: Eco-tourism and First Nations partnerships

Overview

The Malahat SkyWalk, which opened in July 2021, is an outdoor attraction about 35 minutes north of Victoria, B.C. The attraction, which is fully accessible, features a 600-metre long TreeWalk, offering beautiful forest views on an elevated walkway that is 20 metres above the forest floor. The TreeWalk takes visitors to a 32 metre, 10-storey tall wooden spiral tower, which offers a 360° scenic lookout over Finlayson Arm, Mount Baker, and the Saanich Peninsula. Investors were drawn to the Malahat SkyWalk project due to its innovative approach, which combined unique attractions with a comprehensive corridor strategy that aligned with broader Destination Development (DD) goals, along with the active involvement of the Malahat Nation in establishing this new tourism attraction while highlighting the unique art, culture and history of local First Nations.

The separate development of the South Island Spirit Loop co-operative marketing campaign, during a similar time frame as the Malahat SkyWalk's development, allowed both initiatives to collaboratively increase visitation to the region. The South Island Spirit Loop emerged from a visionary collaboration among the City of Langford, the Sooke to Port Renfrew Regional Tourism Association, the Malahat Nation, and Destination BC, all recognizing the untapped potential of southern Vancouver Island's scenic and cultural assets. This partnership came together as local organizations and government agencies sought to drive tourism growth and develop economic resilience by linking key sites along the Pacific Marine Circle Route. By integrating cultural heritage, natural landscapes, and recreational opportunities, these initiatives promised not only to elevate visitor experiences but also to catalyze long-term economic investment and sustainable growth throughout the region.



Key Components

1. **Malahat SkyWalk:** Opened in 2021, the Malahat SkyWalk offers a 600-metre treetop walkway leading to a 10-storey spiral tower that provides panoramic views of Finlayson Arm, the Saanich Peninsula, and distant coastal mountains. It was developed in partnership with the Malahat Nation, incorporating sustainable tourism principles and a design that respects and integrates the natural landscape.
2. **Indigenous Partnerships:** The Malahat Nation played a significant role in the project, contributing to the design and ensuring cultural elements were embedded in the visitor experience. This partnership exemplifies a commitment to economic reconciliation, benefiting the Indigenous community and delivering an authentic cultural experience for visitors.
3. **Tourism and Economic Impact:** Since opening, the Malahat SkyWalk has exceeded visitor expectations, drawing roughly 250,000 guests in its first year alone. This has had a positive economic impact on local businesses, from retail to hospitality, as it encourages visitors to explore the entire Spirit Loop route. The project also created numerous local jobs and provided economic stability for businesses affected by the COVID-19 pandemic.
4. **Innovation and Sustainability:** The SkyWalk received the BC Tourism & Hospitality Award for innovation in 2022, reflecting its unique design and emphasis on sustainability. It was built with 90% of its budget spent within British Columbia, supporting the local economy. The structure is fully accessible, making it a welcoming destination for visitors of all ages and abilities, further enhancing its appeal as a sustainable and inclusive tourism site.

Lessons for Economic Development

- **Collaborative Marketing:** The Spirit Loop's coordinated marketing approach highlights how regional partnerships can boost visibility and visitor numbers throughout multiple communities. The collective's short film and curated visitor itineraries effectively market the region as a comprehensive destination.

- **Indigenous-Led Initiatives:** Including Indigenous communities in project development ensures cultural authenticity and promotes reconciliation. The Malahat SkyWalk's approach demonstrates the importance of respectful partnerships that honour the Malahat Nation's traditional territories and benefit Indigenous partners economically.
- **Sustainability Focus:** The SkyWalk's design encourages low-impact tourism, and its local economic investment showcases how sustainable tourism infrastructure can provide long-term regional benefits while protecting natural landscapes.

Lessons for Tourism Investment Readiness

- **Cultural Partnerships:** Collaborating with Indigenous communities improves the visitor experience, adding authenticity that appeals to both tourists and investors.
- **Sustainability as an Investment Magnet:** The use of eco-friendly materials and low-impact design attracts investors interested in sustainable tourism development.
- **Innovative Attractions:** Unique offerings like the treetop walkway and spiral tower generate strong visitor demand, creating a compelling case for future investment.
- **Public-Private Collaboration:** Blending private capital with public and Indigenous partnerships ensured the financial and cultural success of the project.

References and Additional Information

- [Malahat SkyWalk](#)
- [Spirit Loop](#)
- [Malahat Nation](#)
- [Pacific Marine Circle Route](#)

Gros Morne, Newfoundland and Labrador, Canada

Population: 30,000

Focus: Nature-based tourism within a UNESCO World Heritage Site

Overview

The Gros Morne Tourism Regional Implementation Project (GMTRIP) is a partnership that connects six communities surrounding Gros Morne National Park in Newfoundland and Labrador. Established from a foundational project led by the Gros Morne Cooperating Association (GMCA), the initiative focuses on regenerative tourism, aiming to preserve natural and cultural resources while attracting sustainable tourism investments.

The GMTRIP was born out of a deep, multi-level collaboration that brought together six local communities and the GMCA. Each partner played a distinct role: local communities contributed invaluable insights into the region's cultural and natural assets, helping to shape tourism offerings that were both authentic and sustainable, while the GMCA acted as a facilitator, ensuring community interests were represented and resources managed effectively. The investment attraction strategy focused on regenerative tourism—emphasizing projects that preserve and enhance the natural environment and cultural heritage—which appealed to investors looking for sustainable, long-term growth opportunities that balanced economic development with environmental stewardship.

Key Components

- 1. Community-Led Tourism:** The GMCA worked with local governments and residents to identify and promote tourism opportunities that align with community values, including preserving natural and human history.
- 2. Sustainability and Cultural Heritage:** GMTRIP prioritizes sustainable tourism by managing tourism impacts on housing, seasonal employment and cultural sites, thus promoting a resilient local economy.
- 3. Partnership and Governance:** An evaluation committee, including Memorial University researchers, was established to survey residents and ensure that tourism development meets community needs, achieving a high level of local engagement and transparency.

Lessons for Economic Development

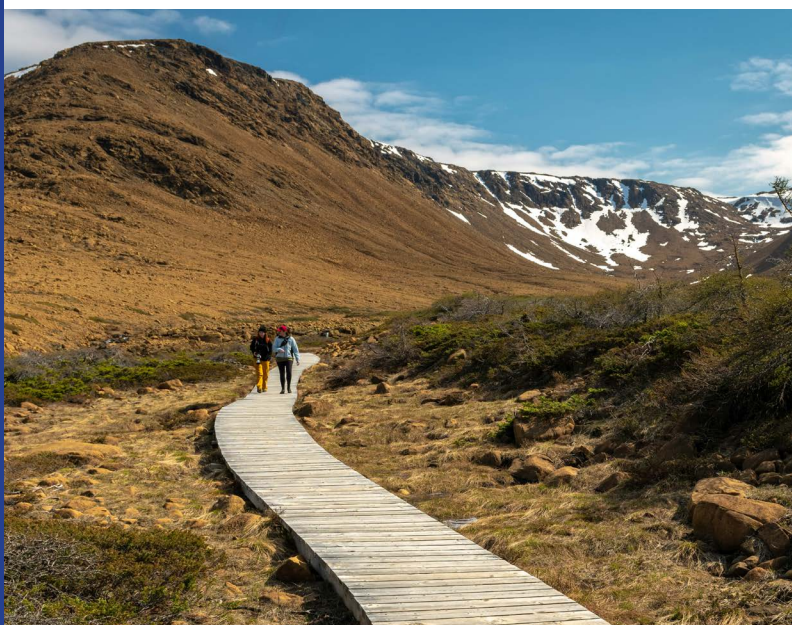
- **Partner Collaboration:** The GMTRIP demonstrates the value of working across municipalities to support sustainable economic growth through tourism, especially in areas with shared environmental resources.
- **Tourism Impact Management:** With local residents involved in the planning process, GMTRIP is a model of balancing tourism with the needs of host communities to prevent issues like housing shortages and seasonal instability.

Lessons for Tourism Investment Readiness

- **Community-Inclusive Investment Readiness:** GMTRIP's collaborative approach indicates that the region is prepared for investments that respect community values. Investors can leverage the strong relationships already established between local residents and governments to garner support for the smooth integration of their projects.
- **Impact-Managed Investments:** The program's focus on managing tourism impact positions Gros Morne as investment-ready for sustainable tourism initiatives. Investors interested in environmentally and socially responsible tourism can rely on existing community frameworks that prioritize balanced growth.

References and Additional Information

- [Parks Canada](#)



Gamcheon Culture Village, Busan, South Korea

Population: 10,000

Focus: Cultural Tourism through Urban Revitalization

Overview

Gamcheon Culture Village, located in Busan, South Korea, transformed from a modest hillside community into a vibrant cultural hub. Originally a settlement for Korean War refugees, the village faced economic challenges and declining infrastructure. In 2010, a collaborative urban revitalization project was initiated, focusing on art and culture to rejuvenate the area. The numerous colours and tones of the homes, the more than 40 works of art exhibited in the village, the craft shops, the art galleries and cafes, together with the programming of different cultural festivals and the participation of the residents in the revitalization, care and promotion of the village, give it a unique appeal. More than 1.4 million people visit the area each year, changing it from a poor, marginalized area into a cultural, dynamic village full of life.



Key Components

- 1. Art Installations and Murals:** Local artists and residents collaborated to create colourful murals and sculptures throughout the village, turning them into open-air galleries.
- 2. Cultural Spaces:** Abandoned houses were repurposed into galleries, workshops, and cafes, providing spaces for artists and entrepreneurs.
- 3. Community Engagement:** Residents actively participated in the transformation, contributing ideas and maintaining the installations, instilling a sense of ownership and pride.

Lessons for Economic Development

- **Community-Led Revitalization:** Empowering residents to participate in development projects ensures sustainability and preserves local identity.
- **Cultural Tourism Attraction:** Investing in unique cultural assets can attract tourists, increasing revenue for local businesses and creating jobs.

Lessons for Tourism Investment Readiness

- **Adaptive Reuse of Infrastructure:** Transforming existing structures into tourist attractions minimizes costs and preserves historical value.
- **Public-Private Partnerships:** Collaborations between government entities, artists and the community can pool resources and expertise, enhancing project success.

References and Additional Information

- [Gamcheon Culture Village](#)
- [Gamcheon, Asia's Artsiest Town](#)
- [Visit Korea - Gamcheon](#)

Urban Communities (Population: >100,000)

Kelowna, British Columbia, Canada

Population: 150,000

Focus: Shoulder season and sector-specific strategy for economic growth

Overview

Kelowna, known for its thriving tourism and agricultural industries, has leveraged its natural beauty and strong community partnerships to establish itself as a premier destination in British Columbia. The Kelowna Beer Institute plays a key role in the city's tourism strategy, particularly by hosting seasonal events like Oktoberfest, which attracts local residents and visitors from across the region. The Oktoberfest event emphasizes collaboration with breweries, food producers, and artists from the Okanagan Valley working together to create a unique and memorable visitor experience.



Key Components

- 1. Regional Collaboration:** The Kelowna Beer Institute forged strong partnerships with local breweries, tourism boards, and community organizations, pooling their resources and expertise to expand the event's reach. By coordinating shared marketing efforts; aligning event programming with local interests; and leveraging community insights, the Institute ensured that Oktoberfest showcased the region's brewing culture and resonated with a broad audience, thereby amplifying the event's regional impact.
- 2. Visitor Experience:** The Oktoberfest event focuses on creating an immersive atmosphere with authentic décor reminiscent of Munich's Oktoberfest celebrations, engaging activities and exclusive offerings like limited-edition seasonal brews, local farm-to-table dishes, VIP brewery experiences and custom festival merchandise from local artisans and companies.
- 3. Seasonal Tourism:** Oktoberfest extends Kelowna's busy summer tourism season into the fall, contributing to a more balanced year-round tourism economy and reducing seasonality.

Lessons for Economic Development

- **Extending the Tourism Season:** Kelowna's Oktoberfest demonstrates how strategic, seasonal events can boost economic activity during shoulder seasons, reducing the impact of seasonality and creating more stable, year-round revenue streams.
- **Strengthening Public-Private Partnerships:** The collaboration between the Kelowna Beer Institute, local breweries, tourism boards, and community organizations shows how coordinated partnerships can amplify marketing efforts and encourage robust economic growth.
- **Enhancing Visitor Engagement:** Unique experiences such as VIP brewery tours, master classes, and exclusive merchandise not only enrich the visitor experience but also stimulate local spending, supporting small businesses and artisans.
- **Generating Sustainable Growth:** The integration of authentic experiences into the event model provides a replicable strategy for sustainable economic development, ensuring that growth benefits the broader community while preserving local character.

Lessons for Tourism Investment Readiness

- **Event-Based Tourism:** Leveraging unique seasonal events can attract visitors during shoulder seasons, enhancing economic impact.
- **Partnerships:** Collaborating with local businesses and tourism organizations strengthens marketing efforts and enriches the visitor experience.
- **Cultural Appeal:** By replicating the traditions of Munich's Oktoberfest, including German food, music, and décor, the event offers a festive and immersive experience that attracts a diverse audience and introduces these traditions to new audiences.

References and Additional Information

- [Tourism Kelowna](#)
- [Kelowna Beer Institute](#)



Kelowna
Danika Lee Photography

Pittsburgh, Pennsylvania, USA

Population: 300,000

Focus: Revitalization through public-private partnerships

Overview

Pittsburgh transformed its riverfront into a vibrant, accessible public space through a series of investments, turning previously underused industrial areas into parks, promenades, and cultural attractions. The “Three Rivers Park” project, led by the non-profit organization Riverlife, revitalized a 20-block stretch along the Allegheny, Monongahela, and Ohio rivers, catalyzing significant private investment.

Key Components

- 1. Public-Private Partnerships:** Pittsburgh partnered with local businesses, non-profits, and government agencies to secure funding and develop a comprehensive master plan for riverfront improvements.
- 2. Mixed-Use Development:** The initiative created space for recreational, commercial, and cultural activities, enhancing property values and drawing both residents and tourists to the area.
- 3. Economic Impact:** The \$130 million public investment in riverfront development generated an estimated \$2.6 billion in private riverfront projects, demonstrating a strong ROI.

Lessons for Economic Development

- **Improved Quality of Life as a Driver of Growth:** Enhanced public spaces, trails, and parks have made Pittsburgh a more desirable place to live and work, attracting skilled professionals and supporting business relocation and expansion.
- **Public-Private Partnerships:** Collaborations between local governments, private developers, and non-profit organizations have successfully leveraged resources to fund large-scale infrastructure and beautification projects.
- **Diverse Economic Opportunities:** The revitalization has created jobs in construction, operations, and tourism-related industries, diversifying Pittsburgh's economic base beyond its industrial roots.



- **Sustainable Urban Development:** Riverfront projects prioritize sustainability, such as flood control measures and eco-friendly building designs, reducing long-term maintenance costs and enhancing environmental resilience.

Lessons for Tourism Investment Readiness

- **Leveraging Public Infrastructure for Private Investment:** Pittsburgh's ability to attract private investment by first improving public spaces underscores the city's readiness for tourism investment. The public-private model provides a reliable structure for investors looking for a balanced risk-return ratio.
- **Diverse Tourism Appeal:** The riverfront's multi-use design (recreational, cultural, and commercial) appeals to a broad spectrum of investors, offering opportunities in various sectors such as hospitality, retail and events.

References and Additional Information

- [Riverlife Pittsburgh](#)

Lyon, France

Population: 500,000

Focus: Gastronomy and cultural tourism as economic drivers

Overview

Lyon, which is home to historic districts that were designated a UNESCO World Heritage Site in 1998, is renowned for its culinary excellence and cultural festivals. By focusing on gastronomy, cultural festivals, and historical architecture, Lyon has transformed itself into a vibrant mid-sized tourism destination. The city's tourism strategy combines cultural heritage with modern amenities, making it a prime example of how mid-sized cities can sustainably boost tourism while catering to diverse visitors.



Key Components

- 1. Gastronomy and Culinary Tourism:** Known as the culinary capital of France, Lyon capitalizes on its gastronomic reputation through food tours, cooking classes, and its annual food festival, which attracts thousands of tourists from around the world.
- 2. Cultural Festivals:** The city hosts events like the Festival of Lights, which draws large crowds and promotes local art and culture, reinforcing Lyon's brand as a cultural destination.
- 3. Heritage and Digital Innovation:** The city has invested in digital tourism tools, such as interactive walking tours and virtual experiences, to engage visitors with Lyon's historic architecture and cultural landmarks.

Lessons for Economic Development

- **Thematic Tourism:** Lyon's focus on culinary and festival tourism demonstrates the effectiveness of creating thematic attractions to position a city within a competitive tourism market.
- **Digitalization in Tourism:** Lyon enhances visitor experiences through digital tools like the ONLYLYON Experience, a CRM system providing personalized assistance by integrating data from hotels and museums. The city also offers immersive virtual tours of venues and a multilingual digital guide with offline access, catering to travellers' needs for convenience and interactivity.

Lessons for Tourism Investment Readiness

- **Sector-Specific Investment Readiness:** Lyon's strong thematic focus (i.e., gastronomy and festivals) provides investors with a clear investment direction and potential growth sectors. Readiness in specific sectors, like culinary tourism, enables targeted investment and specialized infrastructure support.
- **Digital Tourism Infrastructure:** Lyon's integration of digital tools indicates a readiness for smart tourism investments. Investors in digital tourism solutions will find a digitally advanced city with opportunities for further innovation, such as interactive services or enhanced visitor analytics.

References and Additional Information

- [Lyon Tourism Office](#)
- [ONLYLYON Experience](#)
- [Virtual tours of Lyon](#)
- [Lyon Digital Guide](#)

Appendix E: Resources

Provincial Resources

Many provincial organizations and government departments offer resources to support investment attraction. For provincial funding specifically, see: <https://www2.gov.bc.ca/gov/content/employment-business/economic-development/funding-and-grants>

Government of British Columbia:

- **Ministry of Jobs and Economic Growth (JEG)**

JEG manages government services that help support and maintain the strong and diverse economy that British Columbians need for long-term prosperity. This includes nurturing small businesses, supporting economic development throughout the province, and promoting B.C. internationally as a preferred place to invest and do business.

Resources for economic development include:

- Economic Development Strategic Planning Toolkit
- Business Attraction Toolkit
- Land Development Toolkit
- Performance Measurement Toolkit
- BC Assembly of First Nation Economic Development Toolkit
- Regional Economic Operations contacts – free support for communities
- Economic Development Funding and Grant Search Tool
- Trade and Invest BC resources to reach the international market\

<https://www2.gov.bc.ca/gov/content/employment-business/economic-development>

- **Ministry of Tourism, Arts, Culture and Sport (TACS)**

TACS leads the strategic direction for tourism in B.C., providing policy leadership, coordinating cross-government activity for tourism, and overseeing grant programs and Crown corporations to support a sustainable and growing visitor economy.

<https://www2.gov.bc.ca/gov/content/governments/organizational-structure/ministries-organizations/ministries/tourism-arts-culture>

- **Destination BC (DBC)**

DBC is the Crown corporation that leads the marketing of British Columbia as a tourist destination and supports the growth of the provincial tourism industry through various destination management programs and resources. DBC can help with industry specific data and resources for development.

<https://www.destinationbc.ca/>

Provincial Trusts:

- **Columbia Basin Trust**

Columbia Basin Trust is a regional Crown corporation that was established in 1995 by the Government of British Columbia to support social, economic, and environmental well-being in the Columbia River Basin. The region supported by Columbia Basin Trust includes all of the watersheds that flow into the Columbia River in Canada, encompassing most of the Kootenay region and reaching as far north as Valemount.

<https://ourtrust.org/>

- **Economic Trust of the Southern Interior (ETSI-BC)**

ETSI-BC is an economic trust that provides grant funding, resources, and training to support local governments, First Nations, economic developers, business support organizations, and more. ETSI-BC supports most of the Thompson-Okanagan and Kootenay regions, spanning from Hope to the Alberta border in the south, and reaching as far north as Clearwater and Blue River.

<https://www.etsi-bc.ca/>

- **Island Coastal Economic Trust (ICET)**

ICET was established in 2006 by the Government of British Columbia through the North Island-Coast Development Initiative Trust Act. The organization focuses on supporting economic growth and diversification throughout Vancouver Island, the Sunshine Coast, and islands and inlets from the Salish Sea to Cape Caution through funding, resources, and investment support.

<https://islandcoastaltrust.ca/>

- **Northern Development Initiative Trust**

Northern Development is an independent, non-profit organization that supports economic growth throughout the Cariboo-Chilcotin region and all of northern British Columbia. On top of providing funding and resources to spur economic development, Northern Development's work touches many areas, including economic development capacity building, infrastructure improvements, grant writing support, Main Street revitalization, and more.

<https://www.northerndevelopment.bc.ca/>

- **New Relationship Trust (NRT)**

NRT is an organization dedicated to building capacity for First Nations throughout British Columbia. NRT provides resources, funding, and other supports to enhance First Nations' governance, advance nation-building efforts, and address socio-economic gaps faced by First Nations communities. The organization has funded over 9,000 projects since its founding in 2006, amounting to over \$250 million in grant funding.

<https://newrelationshiptrust.ca/>

Economic Development Organizations:

- **BC Economic Development Association (BCEDA)**

The BCEDA provides economic development resources, tools, and information to support communities in British Columbia, including those focusing on tourism development. The organization also hosts professional development events and the annual BC Economic Summit.

<https://www.bceda.ca/>

- **Société de développement économique de la Colombie-Britannique (SDÉCB)**

SDÉCB is a non-profit organization that has been leading economic development initiatives and supports for the Francophone community of British Columbia since 1998. The organization supports entrepreneurs, employers, job seekers, and associations with programming and resources to support economic immigration, community development, tourism, and business services.

<https://www.sdecb.com/>

Tourism Organizations:

- **Regional Destination Management Organizations (RDMOs)**

B.C.'s six tourism regions are represented by RDMOs, five of which are independent non-profits and the sixth managed through Destination BC. The organizations coordinate tourism development efforts regionally and liaise between tourism operators, local government and the Province. RDMOs can help navigate the supports and resources and connect you with key organizations.

- 4TVI - <https://forvi.ca/>
- Thompson Okanagan Tourism Association (TOTA) - <https://www.totabc.org/>
- Kootenay Rockies Tourism Association (KRTA) - <https://www.krtourism.ca/>
- Cariboo Chilcotin Coast Tourism Association (CCCTA) - <https://landwithoutlimits.com/>
- Northern British Columbia Tourism Association (NBCTA) - <https://www.travelnbc.com/>
- Vancouver, Coast & Mountains (VCM) - <https://www.destinationbc.ca/who-we-are/regional-community-industry-partners/vancouver-coast-mountains>

- **Indigenous Tourism BC (ITBC)**

ITBC is a non-profit that has the mandate from the First People's Leadership Council to represent tourism interests on behalf of First Nations in B.C. They work with Indigenous communities and entrepreneurs to help develop and promote authentic Indigenous tourism experiences in B.C.

<https://www.indigenousbc.com/corporate/>

- **Tourism Industry Association of BC (TIABC)**

TIABC advocates for the interests of British Columbia's visitor economy, providing a unified voice for the tourism industry and offering resources to support tourism businesses.

<https://tiabc.ca/>

- **British Columbia Destination Management Organization Association (BCDMOA)**

BCDMOA is a non-profit society that advocates for more than 50 member community Destination Management Organizations (CDMOs) throughout B.C. <https://bcdmoa.ca/>

Federal Resources

Many federal organizations and government departments offer resources to support investment attraction. Use the federal Business Benefits Finder to find specific programs, services and funding:

https://innovation.ised-isde.canada.ca/innovation/s/?language=en_CA

Government of Canada:

- **Innovation, Science and Economic Development Canada (ISED)**

ISED is a department of the Government of Canada that oversees a number of functions, including economic development and tourism. In 2023, ISED launched a new Federal Tourism Growth Strategy to more clearly envision tourism's role in economic growth across Canada. They provide a variety of resources, programs, and funding to Canadian businesses, communities, and non-profit organizations, as well as oversee the RDAs leading economic development efforts for Canada's regions.

<https://ised-isde.canada.ca/site/canadian-tourism-sector>

- **Pacific Economic Development Canada (PacifiCan)**

PacifiCan is the dedicated federal economic development agency for British Columbians, providing resource and funding to support Indigenous and non-Indigenous communities, businesses and organizations with economic development.

<https://www.canada.ca/en/pacific-economic-development.html>

- **Destination Canada**

A federal Crown corporation responsible for promoting Canada as a premier tourism destination. In September 2024, Destination Canada published a resource about attracting sustainable private investment for Canada's tourism sector. They are also the leader behind the Canadian Tourism Data Collective, a centralized national platform that enables industry, communities, and governments to share and access tourism data. They also have produced a high level guide for communities: How to Attract Sustainable Private Investment in Canada's Tourism Sector.

<https://www.destinationcanada.com/en-ca>

Economic Development Organizations:

- **Economic Developers Association of Canada (EDAC)**

EDAC is a national organization that has championed excellence in economic development since 1968.

As a member-driven non-profit organization, EDAC offers a variety of tools, resources and professional development opportunities for economic developers, including managing the Ec. D. designation, which is a Canada-wide accreditation for economic development professionals.

<https://edac.ca/>

Tourism Organizations:

- **Tourism Industry Association of Canada (TIAC)**

TIAC is a national, member-driven organization that acts as the voice of Canada's tourism industry. TIAC advocates for tourism interests at the national level, actively promoting and supporting policies, programs, and other activities that will support tourism growth and development across Canada. On top of their advocacy work, events, and resources, TIAC hosts an annual Investor Forum to connect tourism operators and destinations with potential investors.

<https://tiac-aitc.ca/index.html>

- **Indigenous Tourism Association of Canada (ITAC)**

ITAC is a non-profit whose members are Indigenous-owned and controlled businesses from every province and territory in the country. ITAC supports the marketing and development of Indigenous tourism experiences.

<https://indigenoustourism.ca>