Conversations on the Future of Tourism in B.C.

Report on What We Heard
2022-2023 Summary of Engagements Across British Columbia

Ministry of Tourism, Arts, Culture and Sport

February 2023

Cariboo Chilcotin Coast: Bella Coola/Jesaja Class

BRITISH COLUMBIA | Ministry of Tourism, Arts, Culture and Sport

Contents

Northern BC: Naikoon Provincial Park

Acknowledgement

To create this report, engagement sessions were conducted throughout British Columbia; it is acknowledged with respect and gratitude that they took place on a diverse array of Indigenous traditional territories.

Executive Summary

The purpose of this report is to reflect what we heard from over 170 tourism partners about the future of tourism in British Columbia (B.C.).

From September 2022 through January 2023, the Ministry of Tourism, Arts, Culture and Sport (the Ministry) undertook targeted engagements across the province as part of the Tourism Renewal Initiative (the Initiative). The engagement process, including regional engagement sessions, in-depth conversations, and one-on-one interviews, was designed to seek input from industry partners on the future of tourism and how we might reimagine tourism in B.C. to generate greater competitiveness and long-term resiliency.

This report reflects participants' feedback about the current challenges facing tourism in B.C., as well as the opportunities and ideas to bolster B.C.'s competitive and collaborative tourism ecosystem and improve the lives of British Columbians through tourism. Throughout the engagement, several key themes emerged (in no priority order):

Systemic barriers are limiting sustained recovery and success.
   - ❖ Labour, Skills, and Housing Shortage
   - ❖ Reduced Access and Transportation Connections
   - ❖ Complex Land Use Planning

Increasing complexities require evolution of current systems and roles.
   - ❖ Shift in Capacity and Role of Destination Marketing Organizations
   - ❖ Clarify Provincial and Regional Tourism Agency Roles
   - ❖ Indigenous Business Capacity and Relationship Building
   - ❖ Coordination and Communication

Supports and investments should reflect the needs of the evolving tourism ecosystem.
   - ❖ Funding for Destination Development
   - ❖ Flexibility and Expansion of the Municipal and Regional District Tax
   - ❖ Varied Needs of Rural and Urban Destinations
   - ❖ Funding Program Accessibility
   - ❖ Locally Driven Decisions
   - ❖ Support for Entrepreneurs

Appropriate mechanisms are in place to empower sector resilience.
   - ❖ Sustainability and Climate Action
   - ❖ Business Capacity and Resiliency
   - ❖ Data Insights at All Levels

Below is a summary of feedback heard in the targeted engagements; for further details please refer to the detailed theme areas throughout the report.

- Tourism as a sector intersects with many different ministries, such as those responsible for transportation, land use decisions, and others. Given current and recent challenges faced in the

province, it was shared by participants that several systemic barriers continue to present challenges to the tourism sector. These included available workforce, affordable housing, transportation, and multiple interests in Crown land use.

- There was widespread agreement on the importance of working to further Reconciliation through tourism and a desire to work with Indigenous peoples to build relationships and advance tourism initiatives.

- Common insights shared by participants included the evolving roles of destination marketing organizations into the realm of destination management. There is interest to formalize and support this evolution, as well as to examine overlap within areas to mitigate duplication. Recognizing the differing needs for rural and urban destinations and clarification of roles between the regions, the Province, and Destination BC was also raised consistently.

- There was widespread consensus on the importance of stable and predictable funding, and the expressed need for more flexibility within current funding application processes. Expanding, or modernizing, specific provincial programs such as the Resort Municipality Initiative (RMI) and Municipal Regional Destination Tax (MRDT) were discussed, with most participants supporting the expansion or update of both programs. Locally driven decision making that aligns with local needs, cooperative community planning, and the value of tourism were also raised as key factors to successfully informing tourism planning and investments.

- Participants commonly shared that coordination and communication, from the Province and within the tourism sector could be strengthened and formalized, to improve cross-government coordination for both businesses and visitors. Additionally, more reliable data, sharing research, developing key performance indicators, and standardizing metrics to track and tell the story of the value of B.C.'s visitor economy was also keenly desired.

- There was strong acknowledgement from participants of the need for supports to enable resiliency, sustainability, and climate goals. Tourism organizations articulated a strong duty of stewardship to protect B.C.'s natural environment, build positive resident sentiment, and implement strategies for business and sector resiliency. Participants also shared the need for more support for tourism entrepreneurs and small and medium-sized businesses by strengthening employment programs, publishing best practices, and sharing resources.

The insights and perspectives gathered will help the Province identify opportunities to support the sector's sustained recovery and ways it can support B.C.'s tourism ecosystem and maximize its immense potential.

Introduction – The Tourism Renewal Initiative

British Columbia's visitor economy continues to move through recovery from the COVID-19 pandemic and climate related events at a time when global inflation is driving up costs and the world's economic outlook is increasingly vulnerable. In addition, the global visitor economy is adapting to shifting travel preferences, accelerated digitization, and fierce global competition for visitors.

Collectively, these factors have imposed an unexpected stress test on B.C.'s visitor economy and created a desire among industry leaders, and the Province, to reflect and learn from these circumstances to reimagine and think strategically about the future of tourism. The Tourism Task Force report in December 2020, as well as Budget consultations in 2021 and 2022, highlighted that Government needs to take a thoughtful look at the policies and programs in place that support tourism in B.C.

To deliver on this recommendation and support the implementation of the *Strategic Framework for Tourism in B.C.* the Ministry established the Tourism Renewal Initiative to engage the sector in a conversation about the future of tourism and what is needed to support a more prosperous and sustainable sector over the long-term. Specifically, the Initiative has three key objectives to:

Understand the sector's evolving needs and roles considering the increased complexities.	Ensure supports and investments are reflective of the sector's evolving needs.	Identify mechanisms to help the sector build greater resilience to proactively adapt to future uncertainties

This Initiative is guided by an Advisory Committee comprised of representatives from B.C.'s leading tourism organizations including:

- Clint Fraser, Co-Chair, BC Regional Tourism Secretariat
- Ingrid Jarrett, CEO, BC Hotel Association
- Nancy Small, Chair, BC Destination Marketing Organization Association
- Paula Amos, CEO, Indigenous Tourism BC
- Richard Porges, President and CEO of Destination British Columbia
- Walt Judas, President and CEO, Tourism Industry Association of BC

This report summarizes and captures the themes and suggestions that were expressed during the engagement sessions and in-depth conversations. The Committee is in place to represent the interests of the tourism industry and will provide advice to the Ministry on options and ideas from the engagements as it relates to a future state of tourism in B.C.

As the sector builds for the future, the collective work to support B.C.'s visitor economy must continue to evolve and adapt to chart a new path towards economic, social, and environmental prosperity through tourism.

Engagement Process Overview

Between September 2022 and January 2023, the Ministry conducted several targeted regional engagement sessions to discuss the tourism sector in B.C., including its strengths, opportunities for improvement, and suggestions on how the sector can be more resilient. The Ministry also conducted engagement sessions with partner organizations and tourism representatives. These partner organizations included Indigenous Tourism BC (ITBC), municipal representatives from the 14 Resort Municipality Initiative communities and members of the British Columbia Destination Marketing Organization Association (BCDMOA). Additionally, the Tourism Renewal Initiative team conducted 14 one-on-one interviews with national and international tourism thought leaders.

The Ministry hired MNP LLP (MNP) to support and facilitate the engagement process.

In total, more than 175 individuals representing over 150 tourism partner organizations shared their views on the future of B.C.'s tourism sector throughout these engagement sessions.

Figure 1 Tourism regions of B.C.

For more information on the engagement scope and methodology, refer to Appendix A. For a full list of participating organizations, refer to Appendix D.

What We Heard: Key Themes

Systemic barriers are limiting sustained recovery and success.

Labour, Skills, and Housing Shortage

Participants in all regions highlighted significant labour shortages in the tourism sector as a key barrier to success. Insights from participants touched on the importance of promoting tourism as a career in secondary and post-secondary institutions, recruitment and retention, high cost of living and lack of affordable staff housing, recruiting seasonal workers from abroad, and the effects of homelessness on the sector.

- ❖ Participants shared that currently, there are insufficient workers to meet demand, which can lead to poor service, unsatisfied visitors and an unmet "destination promise".
- ❖ While much of the conversation focused on recruitment, comments were also shared on the importance of retention, engagement, and implementing strong human resource practices, including promoting tourism as a career in secondary and post-secondary institutions.

> *"We must shift the conversation from focusing solely on recruitment to discussing retention, engagement, and putting good human resource practices in place"*

- ❖ Participants affirmed that tourism needs to build capacity to better serve visitors by implementing B.C.-specific hospitality recruitment programs for international workers and expanding existing immigration programs.
- ❖ Through the engagement sessions, participants expressed concerns that the lack of affordable housing, high cost of living, insufficient transportation to and from work and low wages, create challenges in attracting the appropriate, skilled workforce.
- ❖ Participants also voiced concerns about the ramifications of increased homelessness. Many expressed concerns about the impact of homelessness on the tourism sector, which they said can compromise the visitor experience and perception of personal safety for visitors.

Reduced Access and Transportation Connections

Participants in most regions outside of Metro-Vancouver shared concerns that transportation is a significant limiting factor to the sustainable growth of B.C.'s tourism industry. Key insights from participants included the need for more publicly accessible transportation options (including bus routes, ride-hailing/sharing services, and EV charging stations), and the view that B.C. is primarily a "fly and drive" destination.

- ❖ Participants agreed that because B.C. is largely a car-dependent tourism destination, there are

> *"How can we be promoting B.C. as a climate friendly and carbon-neutral destination when you can't travel around the province without a vehicle?"*

limited options for transportation without a personal vehicle.

❖ Common transportation related challenges included: there no longer is an inter-city bus network, like the ones that existed in years past (e.g., Greyhound); flights into small communities are limited and costly; taxi services are expensive and often sparse; UBER and other ride-hailing services are not available in all municipalities; car rental companies are relatively expensive, overburdened or have closed during the pandemic, and are costly to resume; and extreme weather and rough terrain make it difficult to travel easily within and between regions.

> *"Visitors are always surprised by the lack of taxis, ride-hailing services, and rental cars, and the former aren't always accessible for people with disabilities or visitors with bikes or golf clubs"*

❖ Participants said that transportation limitations are experienced by visitors, as well as the tourism labour force. This creates a negative cycle for tourism businesses, whereby visitors are unable to travel freely throughout the destination, and hospitality workers are unable to commute to work without a personal vehicle or are limited to seasonal work opportunities, impacted by road conditions and public transit schedules and availability.

❖ Challenges related to air transportation were frequently discussed in regions outside of Metro Vancouver. Participants voiced that high costs, poor scheduling, limited flight availability, small numbers of airports, limited airport capacity, and inadequate ground travel options to connect communities to airports, can make for poor visitor experiences. Some participants expressed concerns that international entry points are largely limited to Vancouver (which often means that travel packages are limited to the Vancouver area) and efforts to advocate for change have been unsuccessful.

> *"We are starting to see visitors perceive B.C. as an expensive destination because everyone is going to Whistler and driving over to Banff; there are many other wonderful places to visit but transportation and access is a barrier, especially for visitors who do not have access to a vehicle"*

❖ Some participants emphasized the disconnect between regulatory bodies, the airlines and local efforts to build tourism demand. Limited air travel and the airline industry were identified by participants as hinderances to growth.

❖ The topic of climate change was also discussed by participants in relation to air travel – the point was made that goals of carbon neutrality conflict with growth in fossil fuel-based air travel.

Complex Land Use Planning

Participants shared concerns about the lack of certainty for and consideration of B.C.'s outdoor recreation economy, including adventure tourism in land use planning. Key insights from participants included the need for greater inter-ministerial communication, policy and regulation barriers and wait times related to permits and tenures.

❖ Although B.C. has significant potential for a stronger outdoor recreation economy, adventure tourism operators said they often face significant policy and regulation barriers. Participants discussed the challenges with acquiring permits and tenures, and the cumbersome application process for land tenure agreements. In addition, reconciliation efforts in land use planning were noted as another layer that needs to be actively considered.

❖ Participants noted the difficulty operators face when trying to secure long-term access to land to guarantee business loans or secure capital investments. It was stated that these factors introduce risk and uncertainty that might dissuade investment and potential entrepreneurs from starting in the first place.

❖ Participants also spoke about resource sector conflicts, noting the forestry sector, cattle ranching industry and tourism operators are competing for land tenure agreements. They said while the amount of investment and revenues created through ecotourism is thought to be relatively higher, Crown land use seems to be prioritized for cattle farming and forestry practices. Some speculated that this is because ecotourism is not perceived to be as valuable to the B.C. economy.

Increasing complexities require evolution of current systems and roles.

Shift in Capacity and Role of Destination Marketing Organizations

Over the past decade, the role of Destination Marketing Organizations (DMOs) has evolved from focusing solely on marketing to taking on additional responsibilities in destination management. Participants largely agreed this shift is positive and needed, but it is hampering DMO capacity and should be formalized and funded accordingly. Key insights from participants included clarifying roles and responsibilities, providing appropriate training for this expanded role, competition for the same resources and source markets, and the rapid growth of the number of DMOs in the past five years.

❖ Participants acknowledged regional and community DMO roles and responsibilities have increased from a traditional marketing role to taking on new responsibilities in destination management. Examples of destination management responsibilities participants cited included emergency management, tourism master planning, support for local businesses, local government education, liaising with Indigenous Peoples, coordinating local stakeholders, and organizing infrastructure projects such as building bike lanes and erecting signage. Participants explained these types of projects were previously the responsibility of municipalities, but DMOs are increasingly being asked to fund and lead these projects given their links to tourism. One DMO representative recounted their efforts during extreme weather events (such as the 2019 wildfires and flooding) in triaging displaced visitors and coordinating their lodging.

❖ DMO representatives voiced they are generally supportive of their shift from marketing to destination management. They recognize they are uniquely positioned between government

and businesses to facilitate regional conversations. Participants highlighted their roles are not formalized and there is a lack of clarity which leads to duplicating efforts between community and regional DMOs.

❖ Participants said while municipalities are focused on emergency management and evacuation plans that accommodate residents, visitors also need to be accounted for and reflected in these plans to be effective and reflect on-the-ground realities. Participants explained DMOs are not trained in providing emergency services but are often asked for input and support. While DMOs formed their own network to share best practices, participants said they do so without formal training.

❖ Although DMOs have largely embraced their expanded role, participants emphasized staff need training and resources to fulfill these new responsibilities successfully. Many DMO staff are still hired for their marketing skills, and many do not have training or expertise in destination management.

❖ DMO's rely on the Municipal Regional District Tax (MRDT) which is designed to support tourism marketing, programs, and projects. With the evolving roles of DMOs, they are now often involved in organizing infrastructure projects and other destination management activities. Participants expressed support for alternative funding sources or greater flexibility in the use of funds to lessen this limitation.

❖ With the growth in the number of DMOs, participants in several regions expressed concerns there may be too many DMOs and they are competing for the same visitor, leading to administrative and marketing inefficiencies.

Clarify Provincial and Regional Tourism Agency Roles

In addition to the evolving roles of DMOs, participants agreed the roles of government and other supporting tourism agencies should be clarified. Key insights from participants included coordination of efforts among major players, clarification between the role of the Province and Destination BC, and the suitability of the regional DMO model for urban and rural areas.

❖ From the participants' perspective, regional, municipal, and provincial players are currently working in silos and they note that more could be achieved with a unified approach. For example, although many visitors may visit a particular region for outdoor activities, there is little coordination between these agencies; visitors are left to make their own arrangements to research and access each activity leading to a missed opportunity for the region to highlight more opportunities to visitors and contribute more to a high-quality travel experience.

❖ Participants expressed the need to clarify the role of the Province and Destination BC in tourism. There were some conflicting views on what the provincial government's role in tourism management and planning should be. Some regions expressed the Province needs to take a stronger leadership role in defining areas of focus or themes for tourism across B.C. in order to create and enhance provincial cohesion. On the other hand, some regions thought the Province and Destination BC should play a smaller role and grant regions more freedom to define their

own strategy and areas of focus. Others thought the Ministry should work with relevant ministries to ensure tourism priorities are considered as part of their work and policies, while emphasizing the value of tourism to the B.C. economy.

❖ It was noted that there may be a larger role for regional DMOs in supporting rural areas and destinations depending on the level of development, and potentially less of a need to provide support in more mature urban areas.

❖ The perceived lack of cohesion, or the lack of an overall provincial "brand", was cited by some participants as a hindrance to wider prosperity in the tourism sector in B.C. Participants expressed an interest in further discussions on how to balance provincial cohesion with regional uniqueness.

Indigenous Business Capacity and Relationship Building

Participants agreed on the importance of working alongside Indigenous peoples to advance tourism initiatives. Key insights from participants included ideas on working with Indigenous peoples, barriers faced by Indigenous tourism businesses, cellular connectivity challenges faced by rural communities, housing options on reserve land, Reconciliation, and educating non-Indigenous partners.

❖ Participants agreed that working with First Nations, Indigenous peoples, and Indigenous Tourism British Columbia (ITBC) should be prioritized. They said more focus should be placed on Indigenous history, heritage, and culture in tourism offerings, and more should be done to include local nations and weave in Indigenous perspectives and context where possible.

❖ Some Indigenous participants said that Indigenous communities could play a role in the future for housing, hotels, and tourism infrastructure within their region, in part due to the relatively low regulatory barriers on reserve land.

❖ Most participants at the ITBC engagement session agreed that financing is a key barrier to business development. Participants noted grant writing and funding application paperwork is a particularly acute burden for Indigenous members and was stated it can be a deterrent from even applying.

❖ ITBC members explained that Indigenous-owned businesses face elevated scrutiny when applying for financing from traditional lending institutions. ITBC members said banks want to leverage the equity in assets to secure business loans, which means this traditional financing model does not work for many Indigenous entrepreneurs. If entrepreneurs approach an Aboriginal Financial Institution, they are subjected to a lengthy and personally invasive process. In addition, businesses often need to be incorporated to secure financing, which is difficult for sole proprietors.

❖ ITBC members agreed that more resources should be available to help entrepreneurs understand the business development process. ITBC offers support services, but membership benefits are not widely known.

❖ There is a desire by some Indigenous communities to be part of, or see benefits from, the MRDT program and view this as an acknowledgement of the legitimization and contributions of

Indigenous tourism to an area.

❖ Connectivity and limited access to technology hardware are also significant challenges to Indigenous business operations and marketing, especially in remote communities.

❖ ITBC members spoke of the importance of non-Indigenous partners educating themselves on Reconciliation, Indigenous culture, and values. Some shared the perspective that it is the responsibility of non-Indigenous people to change their own practices and educate themselves on how to incorporate Reconciliation practices into their businesses.

Coordination and Communication

Participants expressed support for more formalized coordination and communication within the tourism ecosystem, including between the tourism sector and the Province. Key insights from participants included clear channels for accessing information and data, improved inter-ministerial coordination on communications that affect tourism, connectivity, formation of ad-hoc support networks, and accessible information for visitors.

❖ Participants agreed there is a need for multi-ministry and multi-sectoral approaches to address systemic barriers faced by the tourism sector in B.C. Some DMOs, for example, have recognized stakeholders in their region can advocate for their priorities more effectively if they are more coordinated as opposed to working in silos.

❖ In addition, DMO staff explained that COVID-19 sparked increased cooperation and the formation of ad-hoc support networks which helped share information and best practices. Participants expressed that the connections and networks need to continue, be nurtured, and formalized, in some cases.

> *"Homelessness, labour, transportation, climate, emergency preparedness, worker availability are all interconnected; there needs to be a multi-ministerial and/or multi-sectoral lens for tourism."*

❖ Tourism operators noted communication from the Province during recent emergency events was sometimes too general and did not always reflect on-the-ground realities of safe and adjacent communities. It was felt this communication can deter potential visitors from visiting entire regions in the near and long term, hamper tourism in nearby, unaffected communities and damage B.C.'s reputation as a desirable tourism destination.

❖ Tourism operators said that during COVID-19, the Province frequently released public health updates that affected visitors yet did not release additional information to help answer visitors' questions or provide additional context.

❖ It was noted B.C.'s tourism sector has robust advocacy and because of the high number of sector associations it can be difficult to identify priorities. In addition, many voices in the ecosystem can lead to confusion, as often these voices are advocating for contradicting priorities.

❖ Support was expressed for improving interconnectedness between ministries, recognizing

tourism requires a cross-government approach to solve its biggest challenges.

> *"During COVID-19, operators didn't know where to go for information. Operators had too much information coming at them which impacted their resiliency as they didn't have the ability to verify its accuracy or have a handle on the entire picture."*

❖ Stakeholders said crisis management has become a more prominent role for tourism associations. As such, participants raised the importance of clarifying roles and responsibilities by developing additional processes and policies in the crisis management framework.

❖ Participants agreed that visitors should be better informed before they arrive and know what to expect in terms of road conditions, seasonal weather, and cellular connectivity. Similarly, they said information on how to interact with the natural environment and wildlife should be communicated clearly. This is, however, often tied to the availability and strength of cellular networks and connectivity around the province. As visitors often use smartphones to find information and navigate, the lack of connectivity has been a significant issue for the sector, especially in rural and remote communities.

Supports and investments should reflect the needs of the evolving tourism ecosystem.

Funding for Destination Development

Participants around the province noted that current tourism funding programs are focused on marketing and there is lack of ongoing funding to build as well as maintain existing tourism infrastructure. Key insights from participants included maintaining tourism infrastructure, public consultation and consideration of local needs and capacity. Other points raised involved meeting the Province's visitor dispersion goals, accessibility, the reliance on cellular connectivity, and the business events market.

❖ Through the engagement sessions, participants often expressed current funding mechanisms are predominantly promotional and marketing oriented, and that while important and needed, there are still not adequate funds for destination management.

> *"Marketing has a role in supporting tourism, but current infrastructure is a bottleneck to growth; you can't keep bringing more people in if infrastructure is not maintained or available to accommodate the growth."*

❖ Many participants noted tourism infrastructure in many communities and regions is inadequate to meet current demand and uphold the "destination promise". Failure to meet the destination promise, they said, leads to visitor frustration and negative travel experiences which can dissuade them from returning or recommending the location to others, further impacting the sector's economic opportunity. Participants suggested more funding should be directed into

maintaining and building infrastructure. The types of tourism infrastructure most frequently mentioned included sidewalks, washrooms, bike lanes, trails, signage, visitor centers, and other recreational infrastructure such as ski resorts.

> *"Volunteers that apply for grants can get funding to build trails, but it is hard for the volunteers to get funding for their organizations to maintain those trails."*

❖ Another perspective shared was that investments in economic development often lead to more tourism revenues, which can ultimately be reinvested into tourism.

❖ Some participants highlighted the need to link visitor dispersion goals and tourism infrastructure. It was expressed if visitor dispersion is a key priority of the Province, there needs to be more investment and planning in place to support tourism in smaller markets (e.g., promotion of accessibility, provision of Wi-Fi and high-speed mobile services, and increased airport capacity). The lack of cell phone coverage and connectivity was frequently raised as a barrier to growth in regions and communities outside of major metropolitan areas.

> *"We had stranded visitors last summer because of the lack of cell phone coverage. That is the experience visitors are going to remember and tell other people about. Communication and marketing is in large part word of mouth."*

❖ Several participants expressed concern their communities are marketed as accessible when this is, in fact, untrue – most of their infrastructure is not accessible to individuals with physical disabilities. Although there was a strong interest in creating accessible spaces, participants questioned where funds and internal capacity to make those changes would come from.

❖ Although the ecosystem is evolving towards a greater need of funding for destination management, the importance of marketing and destination promotion was still highlighted. Participants supported marketing that captures the uniqueness and individuality of destinations and regions. Participants also noted that each community and region have different marketing needs based on their unique goals, attractions and capacity.

❖ The effects of COVID-19 on the business events market were discussed at length: some participants stated the market has bounced back to pre-pandemic levels, while others were not convinced and thought the space would be permanently disrupted by a societal shift to virtual events and conferences. Still, some participants expressed strong support for the sector to continue hosting business events and conferences, perceived to be vital to the prosperity of their communities.

Flexibility and Expansion of the Municipal and Regional District Tax

The Municipal and Regional District Tax (MRDT) was a common theme discussed throughout the engagement sessions: though most expressed support for expanding the tax and becoming more flexible, some expressed support for leaving the MRDT tax as-is. Key insights from participants included options for

expanding the MRDT beyond hotels, expanding the eligible use of funds, and the types of tourism investments MRDT funds can support.

❖ The majority of participants were in favour of the MRDT guidelines evolving and becoming more flexible as long as it is focussed on tourism spending. Participants from several regions stated that in addition to marketing dollars, they require funds to invest in tourism infrastructure and community amenities, such as community stages, downtown revitalization projects, and trails. They suggested MRDT guidelines should evolve (mirroring DMO roles) to include destination management and provide the community with flexible funds to support their unique tourism-related needs. However, a smaller number of participants expressed a desire to leave the MRDT tax arrangement as-is and shared their fears of losing major, stable source of funding for tourism in B.C.

❖ Some participants in the Vancouver, Coast & Mountains session said the current MRDT funding structure can make hotels feel the tax is leveraged off them and would like to see the tax expanding beyond hotels to other tourism services as well as consider expanding eligible uses to allow communities to do more to support tourism in their region. For example, it was stated that MRDT funding is tied to "heads in beds", which is too restrictive.

❖ Participants suggested expanding the use of MRDT funds to support tourism-related activities and product development.

❖ The MRDT funding model was perceived by participants from smaller communities as challenging and restrictive, given the lengthy application and reporting requirements, in addition, some participants expressed concerns that the funding has to be re-negotiated every five years, which is a burdensome administrative process.

❖ Concerns were expressed about the voting threshold required to opt-in to the tax. Some participants stated that MRDT should not be voluntary, but instead, provincially mandated and apply to all businesses in the tourism sector. They suggested that this approach would streamline the process and reduce the administrative burden to obtain and maintain funding.

❖ In several regions, participants discussed the possibility of updating the redistributive mechanisms to increase funds allocated to small communities and regions that do not have the revenue generating capacity of large resorts and cities. Funding as it is now favours destinations that are well established, and is less impactful for destinations that would like to develop tourism in their communities. There was a lot of discussion on removing the opt-in requirement and making the MRDT a mandatory, province-wide program.

❖ Some participants felt greater efficiencies could be made by coordinating sub-sector marketing efforts through larger, well-known sites such as HelloBC instead of competing for the same pool of co-op marketing dollars, which are leveraged through the MRDT.

❖ One participant noted the importance of funds collected through a government-enabled tax system is a positive and effective model, as it allows it to represent the communities in which they are marketing and managing.

❖ Some participants noted affordable housing funds collected from online accommodation

platforms (OAP) is not substantive enough to initiate affordable housing projects on its own. OAP is collected through the MRDT and is an option for municipalities to access affordable housing projects.

Varied Needs of Rural and Urban Destinations

Participants in most regions, especially those outside of Metro-Vancouver, discussed the distinct differences of tourism needs between rural and urban destinations. Key insights from participants included the need for increased resources for rural tourism development, more balanced distribution of supports around the province, supports that are reflective of a destination's stage of development and concern about disproportionate funds going to well-established tourism destinations.

- ❖ In most regions outside of Metro-Vancouver, participants expressed concern about the disproportionate amount of focus on Vancouver, Victoria, and Whistler as tourism destinations in B.C. Some participants stated the belief that these mature destinations should not be the recipients of public funds; instead, more funding should be allocated to lesser-developed tourism destinations. Alternatively, urban destinations stressed their unique needs including significant costs associated with the upkeep of large, critical tourism infrastructure.
- ❖ Around the province, participants discussed the suitability of the regional funding model for urban and rural areas. Some questioned whether the allocation of resources based on a per capita basis leaves smaller communities behind. Some expressed approaching tourism marketing as a region may do a disservice to the smaller communities of that region, compared to the urban centres.
- ❖ Some participants noted an issue with geographical distribution of tourism agencies themselves. Provincial tourism agencies such as Ministry of Tourism, Arts, Culture and Sport, Destination British Columbia and others are located in large urban centres as opposed to smaller regions and towns. Furthermore, some felt that tourism industry meetings are too often held in large urban centres.
- ❖ Throughout the engagement sessions, participants stressed the importance of recognizing regional uniqueness and maintaining their regional identity. It was shared that each region has unique features, offerings, and circumstances, which should be capitalized on and marketed. For example, rural experiences are an important flavour of tourism offerings in B.C. and the tourism sector should create more experiences for those who seek out wilderness and outdoor experiences in remote settings, experiences true to the "Super, Natural BC" brand.
- ❖ Participants from rural areas noted that the hub and spoke model of major airlines results in funneling international visitors into Vancouver and Victoria, and travel beyond major centres is limited. There was support for more international points of entry throughout B.C. to enable visitor dispersion.

Funding Program Accessibility

In all engagement sessions, participants expressed concerns with current funding options and processes and that grants are overly prescriptive and time bound. Key insights from participants included the importance of flexible funding, multi-year funding options to plan strategically, enabling public-private partnerships, focusing investment on regional strengths, and expanding the Resort Municipality Initiative program.

❖ Concerns were raised about existing funding options and processes. Stakeholders and rightsholders affirmed that existing Provincial funding sources are appreciated and extremely helpful, but often do not provide sufficient flexibility, nor sufficient regional control or decision-making power to meet their unique needs. Some participants said that control and decision-making should be decentralized so that local businesses and industries can drive local investments and build the businesses they require.

❖ Many also expressed support for streamlining the funding application processes, ensuring a logical timeline that allows for stakeholder engagement and consultations, and lessening reporting requirements.

❖ Participants expressed support for less restrictive funding to meet regional needs.

> One participant described "Pueblos Magicos" (or "Magic Cities"), a Mexican program where government provides infrastructure funding to select communities. Applicant committees submit proposals to revitalize tourism in their community, which have people and trades prepared to do the work. Government recognizes that communities need funding to build tourism destinations and diversify the country's tourism offerings. The program highlights the benefits of coordinating resources to achieve a shared vision.

❖ Participants agreed there should be more consistent, predictable, longer-term funding options available, as grant timelines are especially challenging to meet for infrastructure projects. For example, they said multi-year funding opportunities would provide reliable, dependable funding for a few years would help recipients plan and complete tourism infrastructure projects. Additionally, they said grants to maintain existing infrastructure are also needed, as maintenance often falls by the wayside.

❖ Participants also supported programs that facilitated public-private partnerships, such as Sport Hosting Vancouver. Many participants agreed the Provincial Fairs, Festivals and Events Recovery Grant was fantastic, and created the case for future events.

> *"A 1-year budgeting cycle kills innovation."*

- The Resort Municipality Initiative (RMI) program is considered successful by those who have access to it, although it has been capped for a long time; participants would like to see opening RMI for all, as well as extending the program window from three to five years.
- A small group of participants also expressed concerns about the Iconics Strategy because, in their view, the alignment with regional goals, objectives and community benefits are not clear.
- It was noted by one participant that if tourism had more predictable funding, less time and effort would be spent on advocacy. This could free up time and resources to deliver on more tourism projects, leading to the inherent appreciation of the value of tourism in more communities.

Locally Driven Decisions

Around the province, participants spoke of the importance of locally driven decisions and a desire for more autonomy and flexibility in all areas, including funding, programs, and approaches. Key insights from participants included the unique nature of destinations, the importance of considering local needs, and supports that are proportionate to a destination's stage of development.

- An emergent theme throughout the engagement process was the importance of the unique nature of destinations, acknowledging that they do not all need the same investment mix, and the importance of considering local needs. To preserve a destination's unique qualities, participants talked about the importance of conducting public or municipal consultations and choosing tourism projects that are in alignment with local needs, strengths, and ethos.
- Some municipal representatives highlighted that resident sentiment should be considered more thoughtfully in tourism planning and that more should be done to reflect tourism development in Official Community Plans.
- It was also emphasized that, in conjunction with locally driven input, MRDT or tourism-generated funds should stay dedicated to tourism initiatives.
- Participants around the province spoke about the importance of considering the destination stage of development in funding allocation decisions. Some said there is a need to evaluate the maturity of tourism destinations to assess the type and magnitude of support required. Destinations in early stages of their lifecycle, some said, should be eligible for more public support than more developed areas.
- Participants stressed the importance of building tourism infrastructure that benefits residents as well as visitors. Investments in tourism events, trails and parks were perceived by local municipalities as having the most impact on the local tourism economy. This included a discussion on the importance of conducting public consultations and choosing tourism infrastructure projects that are in alignment with Official Community Plans and local needs, so that projects are beneficial for both residents and visitors. Furthermore, some emphasized the importance of funding infrastructure projects that are inclusive of different economic classes to ensure accessibility and inclusion.
- Participants shared their frustration that infrastructure planning, such as bike trails, is often done by the local government without consideration of the private sector's capacity to accommodate

an influx of users. For example, a participant highlighted that they're promoting their biking trails as a visitor attraction even though the local bike shop does not rent bikes. As a result, the destination promise is unmet.

Support for Entrepreneurs

Participants agreed more support should be provided to tourism entrepreneurs and small and medium-sized businesses by strengthening employment programs, publishing best practices, and sharing resources. Key insights from participants included simplifying funding applications, designating funding to support new enterprises, increasing funding to employment programs, supporting businesses' operational resiliency, and publishing resources that are easy to understand and find.

- ❖ Tourism operators agreed simplifying the application process for government programs would significantly help businesses and entrepreneurs, as they often do not have the time or resources to complete complex applications. Programs developed during the COVID-19 pandemic, for example, were highly regarded for their relatively quick applications and flexible funds; participants hope these practices will continue.
- ❖ Tourism operators described the difficulties they encountered in the early stages of their business to secure capital. They said that, especially for early and emerging tourism operators, obtaining investment from traditional lenders or obtaining long-term land tenures can be very difficult.
- ❖ For many Indigenous tourism partners, accessing provincial relief funding through ITBC helped Indigenous businesses feel part of the larger provincial tourism ecosystem and relief efforts for the sector.
- ❖ Additionally, participants said more could be done to support businesses' operational resiliency through, for example, helping them create Business Continuity Plans, publishing industry best practices, and collecting and publishing data relevant to the sector.
- ❖ Participants stressed that resources available to support the tourism sector are not well known or easy to find for business owners.

Appropriate mechanisms are in place to empower sector resilience

Sustainability and Climate Action

Participants around the province agreed that more resources and planning efforts should be directed to projects and initiatives that will increase the resiliency of the tourism sector and meet the Province's climate action goals. Key insights from participants included protecting the "Super, Natural BC" brand, visitor education, building positive resident sentiment, anticipating future tourism needs, building tourism infrastructure in anticipation of climate change and extreme weather events, and related incentives and policy levers.

❖ Concerns were expressed that B.C. markets its natural beauty as its greatest asset, but climate change could undermine B.C.'s brand's success. Participants agreed that efforts and investments in sector stewardship and sustainability are needed to protect the province's natural assets and help tourism stakeholders feel more positively about marketing the province.

❖ Participants also agreed tourism must give back to communities and tourism plans need to consider the carrying capacity of a destination, ensuring there is a balance between economics, community, and the environment.

> *"B.C. has a leadership role: to protect natural assets and provide opportunities to educate travelers"*

❖ Participants adamantly agreed visitors need to be respectful of the natural environment and travel safely; the backcountry is not always well managed and unprepared visitors can jeopardize their own safety and the safety of rescue crews. The interplay between visitors and the natural environment was perceived as a reason behind resident dissatisfaction with tourism in their communities.

❖ Some participants spoke of the need to identify the types of visitors to attract to an area and allocate resources accordingly. They were in favour of marketing and resourcing responsible travel. It was felt, these types of experiences would attract higher-spend visitors who stay in the community for longer.

❖ Environmental sustainability, reducing emissions, and lessening society's ecological footprint were consistent themes throughout the engagement sessions. Participants largely supported connecting the Province's environmental sustainability goals with the tourism sector, such as developing more outdoor recreation activities, electric vehicle charging stations, alternative modes of transportation and carbon neutral attractions, such as hiking and mountain bike trails. Some participants went a step further and said the Province should invest exclusively in tourism efforts that are in alignment with the Province's environmental sustainability goals.

❖ Participants agreed the tourism ecosystem and transportation infrastructure need to be built in anticipation of climate change and extreme weather events.

> *"The place to start is on our roads and how we use these roads – we should promote sustainable transportation such as e-bikes and public transportation."*

❖ It was mentioned that during the later stages of COVID-19 the industry successfully capitalized on the strengths of the domestic market to support the tourism sector. Some thought marketing B.C. to domestic travelers may also help reduce carbon emissions and draw more sustainable visitation year-round and thought these promotional efforts should continue.

Business Capacity and Resiliency

Given local climate disasters and global events of the recent past – including the wildfires and flooding in B.C., the COVID-19 pandemic, and market fluctuations – participants recognized the importance of supporting business capacity and bolstering their resiliency through risk mitigation planning, grant writing, and navigating government programs. Key insights from participants included the need for programs to support business assurance during crisis events, providing best practices, concerns over high insurance rates, access to funding and capital, as well as the potential of the domestic tourism market.

- ❖ Preparing and publishing best practices would help small and medium-sized businesses adapt to changing environments and capitalize on the collective knowledge of the sector. For example, some participants spoke about the value of Business Continuity Plans (BCPs) and risk mitigation planning but acknowledged that businesses may not have the time or resources to create them from scratch.
- ❖ Beyond programs to help recruit and retain workers, some participants said that government-funded programs to support business continuity during crisis events would help significantly.
- ❖ Participants said that high insurance rates for tourism operators located in areas susceptible to natural disasters can be a barrier to growth.

Data Insights at All Levels

Most participants agreed the ability to demonstrate the value of the tourism economy in B.C. would help the industry advocate for itself within government and with the public. Key insights from participants included improving access to data, sharing research, developing key performance indicators, and standardizing metrics to track the value of B.C.'s tourism economy.

- ❖ Tracking tourism data, providing access to data, developing mechanisms to share research, and providing support to offset the costs of data were identified as opportunities for new investments and a potential role for the Province. By centralizing and improving access to data, participants thought the Province could fill a substantial gap for tourism evidence and support tourism businesses around B.C., especially in smaller rural areas.
- ❖ Participants largely agreed standardizing the "value" that tourism brings to the provincial economy and developing key performance indicators would be helpful to enhance the industry's voice and demonstrate its benefits.
- ❖ It was highlighted that B.C. does not have definitive details on the value of British Columbia's outdoor recreation economy which leads to a lack of supports for this sector. This puts B.C. behind its competitors like Alberta and the nearby states of Montana, and Washington which have good data on this sector.
- ❖ Participants said that currently there is no standardized method of measuring the value of tourism at the local level. Metrics that show the value of the tourism sector are needed to demonstrate to local governments the potential to invest in tourism initiatives. For example, it

was shared that municipal elections complicate DMOs' work, as they need to justify their relevance to a new group of elected officials every four years; tracking and publishing the value of tourism would make this process easier.

❖ Participants also noted a need for a more substantive rural research model or program to support local level decision making. It was noted that current data (platforms and insights) are not accessible, and it is cost-prohibitive to rural communities.

What's Next?

The feedback, input, and ideas reflected in this report will help inform Government in working to ensure the B.C. tourism system will continue to enrich the quality of life for British Columbians and its host communities. This process has confirmed the industry is engaged and focused on generating ideas that support a more sustainable and resilient visitor economy. It is also clear that continued collaboration should be the foundation of the Province's approach to developing the policies, practices, and programming needed to achieve collective success, especially in a system as large and complex as the British Columbia visitor economy.

To ensure the conditions for businesses and people to thrive and prosper are in place, this work will help set the foundation of collaboration, and help design, guide, and implement further actions informed by what we heard.

Thank you, again, to Indigenous partners, tourism organizations, community representatives, business owners, and others who generously contributed their perspectives, insights, and aspirations for the future of tourism in British Columbia.

Appendix A: Engagement Methodology

The engagement process was informed by preliminary conversations with the Tourism Renewal Initiative Advisory Committee comprised of industry leaders from the Tourism Industry Association of BC, B.C. Hotel Association, Indigenous Tourism B.C., B.C. Destination Marketing Organization Association, the BC Regional Tourism Secretariat, as well as Destination BC.

The purpose of the engagement sessions was to listen to a cross-section of tourism partners regarding the three key objectives of the Initiative as well as to learn about current opportunities and challenges and what new ideas are needed for long-term success.

The engagement process included ten roundtable engagement sessions, a clinic at the Union of B.C. Municipalities Convention and several one-on-one interviews with industry thought leaders, both locally and globally (see below for a detailed list of sessions, dates and locations).

All roundtable engagement sessions were conducted in-person where possible; two sessions were conducted virtually (by Zoom) and one session was a hybrid in-person/virtual approach.

Ministry staff worked with regional destination management organizations (RDMO) to establish the participant lists to reflect a broad cross-section of businesses and organizations within each region. The RDMOs were asked to identify a selection of representatives from the following areas: Indigenous and non-Indigenous tourism businesses, hoteliers, tourism attractions, community destination marketing organizations, tourism post-secondary intuitions, sector associations, chamber of commerce, local governments, First Nations, economic development organizations, visitor centres, and regional destination management organizations. Each session was kept to approximately 20 participants to facilitate in-depth small group discussions.

Each session generally followed the same framework: Ministry staff presented an overview of the Tourism Renewal Initiative, then MNP facilitated breakout groups and a plenary discussion to seek input into the Initiative's three main objectives as well as what big shifts are needed for future success.

Throughout the session, facilitators recorded participants' ideas and recommendations and invited participants to reflect on these ideas and discuss them further. Ministry staff concluded the session with a brief discussion and an overview of the next steps, including that the participants' insights, ideas and suggestions would be used to inform the development of policy and program considerations for the BC Government.

Participant feedback was documented by MNP facilitators and Ministry staff. The sessions were not audio or video recorded and no private or identifying information was collected from participants. The notes from each session were analyzed for trends and synthesized into common themes. Where possible, verbatim information was documented; quotes are used in the report to reflect the voice of the participants without direct attribution. The analysis in this report is organized by common themes heard across all engagement sessions and one-on-one interviews.

In total, over 175 tourism sector representatives participated in these engagement sessions, representing 152 participating organizations.

List of engagement sessions:

Date	Engagement Session	Location
September 12	Meeting with Resort Municipality Initiative Community Representatives at UBCM 2022	Whistler
September 13	Future of Tourism Clinic at UBCM 2022	Whistler
October 12	Thompson Okanagan Regional Session	Kelowna
October 24	Kootenay Rockies Regional Session	Cranbrook
October 26	Northern BC Regional Session	Prince George (hybrid virtual)
November 17	Community Destination Marketing Organizations Session	New Westminster
November 30	Cariboo Chilcotin Coast Regional Session	Virtual
December 2	Indigenous Tourism BC Session	Vancouver
December 6	Vancouver, Coast and Mountains Regional Session	Harrison Hot Springs
January 10	Vancouver Island Regional Session	Nanaimo
January 11	All Regions Session*	Virtual

The "All Regions" session was conducted for individuals who were invited but unable to attend the session in their respective tourism region.

Appendix B: Ideas and Suggestions for Tourism Renewal

Throughout the engagement process, participants shared their aspirations for the future of tourism in British Columbia. They also provided ideas and suggestions on how the Province and the tourism sector can work together to build greater resilience and remain competitive globally. The ideas listed in this Appendix reflect the feedback the Ministry received in no priority order. These ideas and suggestions have been divided amongst topics within each of the four key themes, for reader's ease of reference.

Systemic barriers are limiting sustained recovery and success

Labour, Skills, and Housing Shortage

❖ Look at tapping into the senior workforce and forming partnerships with colleges that provide basic hospitality training for entry-level positions including certifications such as FOODSAFE, First Host and Serving It Right. This could also include highlighting tourism career paths in secondary and post-secondary institutions as well as easing restrictions on recruiting seasonal workers from abroad.

❖ Offer hospitality courses at local post-secondary institutions to provide opportunities to students to learn, live and work in their home communities.

❖ Form partnerships with BC Housing to improve housing availability and affordability for the tourism workforce, including working with municipalities and DMOs to develop housing policies to support affordable housing for tourism employees through zoning bylaws and identifying available housing.

Reduced Access and Transporation Connections

❖ Prioritize transportation improvements within communities and between regions and identify and support opportunities for public-private transportation partnerships to facilitate growth of the tourism sector.

❖ To meet B.C.'s ambition of carbon neutrality, some participants envisioned a future whereby electric planes may play a role in increasing accessibility of B.C.'s rural and remote regions, as currently fossil fuel-based air travel conflicts with progress in this area.

Complex Land Use Planning

❖ Work with the Ministry responsible for land use planning to rethink the current forestry and logging model such that they do not detract from tourism activities, infrastructure, and efforts.

❖ Loosen policies and regulations to address the difficulty tourism operators face when trying to secure long-term access to land, guaranteed business loans and capital investments.

Increasing complexities require evolution of current systems and roles

Shift in Capacity and Role of Destination Marketing Organizations

- ❖ Clarify DMOs' role in emergency management so expectations are clear and the inclusion of tourism in regional emergency plans reflect on the ground needs and realities.
- ❖ Train DMO staff to ensure they have the skills and expertise to embrace their expanding role in destination and emergency management.
- ❖ Consider and encourage the integration of smaller DMOs in geographic proximity to create greater financial and administrative efficiencies.
- ❖ Encourage DMOs to partner and work together to coordinate efforts and market regional tourism activities, rather than marketing individual activities while competing for the same customers in their respective regions.

Indigenous Business Capacity and Relationship Building

- ❖ Work to incorporate local nations in all projects. This could include integrating Indigenous language and translations into tourism signage, providing training and resources for business owners to incorporate cultural awareness and Reconciliation into their business practices, and dedicating art, mural and banner space for Indigenous artists.
- ❖ Encourage ITBC to work with Aboriginal Financial Institutions to create joint funding processes that are developed and designed in partnership with Indigenous businesses; for example, COVID-19 relief funds were considered to be easy to access and members felt the relief fund process should be mirrored for other AFI programs.

Coordination and Communication

- ❖ Ensure greater provincial cohesion when addressing transportation gaps and managing communications about recreational travel and road conditions during emergent events.
- ❖ Improve industry communications by leading regular roundtables with DMOs and DBC and create and maintain a provincial dashboard with real-time information and data that is relevant to the sector to help avoid communications problems in the future.
- ❖ Continue to collaborate on the development of emergency communication messages to reduce on-the-ground repercussions and reputational damage during and after emergency events.
- ❖ Create a business-oriented point of contact within Government to help businesses access the appropriate people and information in a simple, easy-to-understand way. For example, a participant shared that an operator running a ski tour business will engage with multiple ministries, which can create challenges in accessing the right people and information in a timely manner.
- ❖ Encourage Tourism Industry Association of BC to continue unifying voices of all tourism advocacy agencies across the Province to ensure consistent and clear priorities.
- ❖ Explore options to relocate Provincial tourism offices outside of Metro-Vancouver and Victoria and continue to encourage industry meetings being rotated around the province to distribute tourism benefits to all regions.

Supports and investments should reflect the needs of the evolving tourism ecosystem

Funding for Destination Development

- ❖ Create an outdoor recreation fund to support the maintenance of existing infrastructure, including enhancing accessibility and inclusivity.
- ❖ Re-evaluate how the Province could allocate more funding and resources to events. For example, although events draw in visitors, organizers often need substantial investment in infrastructure as well as day-of amenities, such as security, fencing and portable washroom facilities. Participants shared that recurring events have more opportunities to obtain stable funding, versus one-off ad hoc events for which funding can be difficult to secure. Some participants supported the idea of developing funding programs to support one-off and grassroots events.
- ❖ Increase the funding allocated to destination development planning and meeting the objectives and goals in the destination development plans, instead of investing in the Iconics branding and development strategy.

Flexibility and Expansion of the Municipal and Regional District Tax

- ❖ Expand MRDT beyond hotels, to include other tourism services such as campgrounds, parking, car rental companies, ferries, ticketed events etc.
- ❖ Remove MRDT opt-in and make the program mandatory across the province.
- ❖ Expand the eligible use of MRDT funding beyond marketing, programs, and projects, but ensure funding is kept within the intent of the program.

Funding Program Accessibility

- ❖ Shift towards more decentralized programs and approaches to give regions more autonomy to help communities and regions maintain their distinctiveness.
- ❖ Set a small fund aside for tourism innovation to encourage more risk taking to engage communities and visitors in new ways for destination management, beyond just traditional marketing.
- ❖ Set a clear priority for provincial investments (i.e., outdoor, sports, healthy living, sustainability, trails, etc.) and focus on investments which are a benefit for residents and visitors alike. User-pay models were recommended where visitors contribute directly to the investment.

Appropriate mechanisms are in place to empower sector resilience

Sustainability and Climate Action

- ❖ Develop more educational programs for visitors so they know what to expect and how to be respectful to the land, wildlife, and tourism infrastructure.
- ❖ Foster collaboration between small destinations to identify the source markets they want to target and ensure that those visitors are the right fit for their destination.
- ❖ Develop incentives and policy levers to encourage a shift to more environmental sustainability; one idea included reserving land tenures for businesses that are in alignment with the Province's environmental sustainability goals and regenerative tourism efforts.
- ❖ Offer more carbon neutral means of transportation such as e-bikes and accessible public transportation, so that visitors are not forced to rent a vehicle to travel between communities and around the province.

Business Capacity and Resiliency

- ❖ Help businesses adapt to the changing environment and capitalize on the collective knowledge of the sector by providing templates and best practices for business owners to create their own emergency management plans and improve resiliency.
- ❖ Change MRDT criteria for DMOs to ensure they are putting away reserve funds as a part of a future-proofing strategy, so the funds could be quickly available during times of adversity. This fund would have to have a cap in order to prevent too much money sitting in reserve.

Data Insights at All Levels

- ❖ Improve data access to help inform business decisions and remove barriers to tourism business creation and entrepreneurship.
- ❖ Remove the data fee for service model to improve access to information for communities and create more cost efficiency across the system.
- ❖ Establish the economic impact of B.C.'s outdoor recreation and adventure tourism sectors (e.g. direct, indirect and induced impacts, jobs, Gross Domestic Product) similar to jurisdictions like Alberta, Montana, and Washington.

Appendix C: Mechanisms and Tools for a More Resilient Tourism Sector

During the engagement sessions, participants were asked to suggest mechanisms and tools for making B.C.'s tourism sector more resilient; highlights from these conversations are captured in the table below.

Business Capacity	Policy and Regulation	Communications and Marketing	Infrastructure and Product Development	Social Organization and Governance
- Support businesses complete a Business Continuity Plan - Simplify the application process for grants and relief funding - Invest in developing shoulder season products to extend seasonality of industry	- Streamline the foreign worker recruitment process - Increase access to accessible funding (i.e., priority rates) - Ensure policy and regulations allow for regional variation instead of province-wide - Allow for flexible use of MRDT funds - Ensure timely and reliable permitting process	- Promote tourism as a career path in secondary and post-secondary institutions - Change DMO's role to promote regional collaboration - Develop Emergency Response plans - Communicate the link between resident quality of life and tourism - Regular roundtables and feedback calls between DMOs, DBC, Ministry etc. - Ensure shared resources (e.g., BC Content Hub) are known by new tourism entities and operators	- Direct more support to regional airlines to increase access around the province - Ensure cell phone coverage province-wide - Ensure public transportation within and between towns - Build accessible and inclusive public bathrooms and benches - Direct funding to maintain infrastructure - Direct funding to trail network maintenance - Construct new, or adapt existing, accessible infrastructure projects to reach more visitors	- Develop easily accessible training for business owners on how to incorporate reconciliation and cultural awareness into their business practices - Ensure an equal distribution of resources to all tourism regions in B.C. - Develop mechanisms to merge MRDTs

Appendix D: Participating Organizations

4VI
Aboriginal Affects
Consulting, Williams Lake
Arrow Slocan Tourism
Backcountry Lodges of
British Columbia Association
Barkerville Historic Town and
Park
BC Hotel Association
Bear Camp Wilderness
Camp, Chilko Lake
Beaty Biodiversity Museum,
Vancouver
Bella Coola Grizzly Tours
Bella Coola Vehicle Rentals
Best Western Plus Tin Wis
Resort, Tofino
Big White Ski Resort,
Kelowna
British Columbia Institute of
Technology
C+ Rodeos, 150 Mile House
Cadence Strategies, Whistler
Canadian Rockies
International Airport (YXC),
Cranbrook
Capilano University
Cariboo Chilcotin Coast
Tourism Association
City of Coquitlam
City of Cranbrook
City of Fernie
City of Kelowna
City of Kimberly
City of Revelstoke
City of Rossland
City of Surrey
City of Vancouver
City of Vernon

College of the Rockies
Cowichan Regional Visitor
Centre, Duncan
Cranbrook Tourism
Crest Hotel: Prince Rupert
Creston Valley Tourism
Society
D. Arnott Consulting, Cache
Creek
Davidson Descendants, Old
Massett
Delta Hotels by Marriott
Grand Okanagan Resort,
Kelowna
Delta Hotels by Marriott
Victoria Ocean Pointe Resort,
Victoria
Destination Campbell River
Destination Castlegar
Destination Greater Victoria
Destination Osoyoos
Destination Silver Star/Silver
Star Resort Association,
North Okanagan
Destination Think!
Destination Vancouver
Discover Surrey
District of Invermere
District of New Hazelton
District of Sicamous
Development Corporation
District of Tofino
District of Ucluelet
En Route Travel Canada &
USA, Penticton
Fairmont Empress, Victoria
Fernie Chamber of
Commerce
FLOOR13, Quebec

Fort Berens Estate Winery,
Lillooet
Fraser Valley Regional
District, Chilliwack
GainingEdge, Australia
go2HR
Golf Kamloops
Greater Victoria Chamber of
Commerce
Greater Victoria Harbour
Authority
Gulf Island Seaplanes
Harbour Air, Victoria
Harrison Hot Springs Resort
Heiltsuk Nation, Bella Bella
Homalco Wildlife & Cultural
Tours, Campbell River
Hotel Association of Greater
Victoria
Indigenous Tourism British
Columbia
Island Coastal Economic
Trust, Courtenay
Kekuli Cafe Properties Inc.
(Merritt, Westbank,
Kamloops, Kelowna)
Kimberley Alpine Resort
Kootenay Rockies Tourism
Association
Ktunaxa Nation: Tourism
Engagement for Economic &
Investment Sector,
Windermere
Malahat Skywalk
Ministry of Jobs, Economic
Recovery and Innovation
MMGY NextFactor, West
Vancouver
Moccasin Trails, Vancouver

Mount Baldy Ski Resort, Oliver

Nelson Kootenay Lake Tourism

Nisga'a Nation, New Aiyansh

Nk'Mip Desert Cultural Centre, Osoyoos

Northern BC Tourism Association

Northern Rockies Regional Municipality

Okanagan College

Okanagan Indian Band, Vernon

Old House Hotel & Spa, Courtenay

Ovintiv Event Centre, Dawson Creek

Parksville Qualicum Beach Tourism

Pemberton Valley Lodge

PMG Communication, Williams Lake

Ramada by Wyndham Penticton Hotel & Suites

Regional District of Bulkley Nechako

Regional District of East Kootenay

Resonance Consultancy, Vancouver

Resort Municipality of Sun Peaks

Resort Municipality of Whistler

Royal Roads University

Sandman Hotel & Suites Williams Lake

Sandman Hotel Quesnel

Shearwater Resort, Bella Bella

Similkameen Valley Planning Society (Princeton, Keremeos, Hedley, Manning Park)

Sky Helicopters, Pitt Meadows

Songhees Nation, Victoria

Southern Gulf Islands Tourism Partnership Society, Salt Spring Island

Sparkling Hill Resort, Vernon

St. Eugene Golf Resort and Casino, Cranbrook

Sunshine Coast Tourism, Gibsons

Takaya Tours, Vancouver

TEAM Tourism Consulting, United Kingdom

The Butchart Gardens, Victoria

The Travel Foundation, United Kingdom

The Wickaninnish Inn, Tofino

Thompson Okanagan Tourism Association

Thompson–Nicola Regional District

Tla-o-qui-aht Tribal Parks, Tofino

Tourism Abbotsford

Tourism Burnaby

Tourism Chilliwack

Tourism Fernie

Tourism Golden

Tourism Kamloops

Tourism Kelowna

Tourism Langley

Tourism Nanaimo

Tourism New Westminster

Tourism Prince George

Tourism Radium

Tourism Revelstoke

Tourism Richmond

Tourism Rossland

Tourism Smithers

Tourism Sun Peaks

Tourism Tofino

Tourism Ucluelet

Tourism Whistler

Town of Golden

Town of Osoyoos

Travel Penticton

TRAXX Coachlines, Delta

Tumbler Ridge Global Geopark

Twenty31 Consulting Incorporated, Vancouver

Vancouver Airport Authority

Vancouver Island University

Village of Harrison Hot Springs

Village of Tahsis

Village of Valemount

Visit Prince Rupert

Visit Terrace

Williams Lake & District Chamber of Commerce

Wilson's Transportation Ltd., Victoria

Wine Growers British Columbia, Kelowna

Xwísten (formerly Bridge River Indian Band), Lillooet