



NOVA SCOTIA
INDIGENOUS TOURISM
ENTERPRISE NETWORK

Enhancing Indigenous Tourism in Mi'kmaw Communities

in Nova Scotia

May 2024
Presented By



NOVA SCOTIA INDIGENOUS
TOURISM ENTERPRISE NETWORK

Table of Contents

<u>Executive Summary</u>	1
<u>Introduction</u>	4
<u>Community Engagement</u>	11
<u>Analysis of the Current Business Environment</u>	15
<u>Funding for Indigenous Tourism Development</u>	19
<u>Treaty Rights and Indigenous Tourism</u>	27
<u>Tourism Education and Authenticity in Mi'kmaw Community</u>	30
<u>Business Opportunities within the Mi'kmaw Tourism Industry</u>	32
<u>Economic Impact of Events on Mi'kmaw Communities</u>	34
<u>Cultural and Tourism Roundtable</u>	39

Table of Contents

<u>Challenges and Opportunities for Indigenous Businesses</u>	41
<u>Case Studies and Community Profiles</u>	50
<u>Supporting Data and Research Findings</u>	57
<u>A Case for Enhanced Support for Mi'kmaw Tourism by ACOA and the Provincial Government</u>	61
<u>Recommendations and Future Directions</u>	64
<u>Conclusion</u>	69
<u>Appendices</u>	71
<u>A. NSITEN Member Registrations Survey</u>	A1
<u>B. NSITEN 5-Year Budget</u>	B1
<u>C. KMKNO Authenticity Guidelines</u>	C1

Executive Summary

The "Enhancing Indigenous Tourism in Mi'kmaw Communities in Nova Scotia" project lead by the Nova Scotia Indigenous Tourism Enterprise Network (NSITEN), represents a significant initiative aimed at bolstering the economic and cultural vitality of Mi'kmaq communities through the development and promotion of Indigenous tourism. This comprehensive study underscores the critical need for multiyear secured funding and strategic support to ensure the sustainability and growth of Indigenous tourism enterprises in the region.

Purpose and Methodology

The primary objective of this project is to provide a detailed understanding of the current state of Mi'kmaw tourism in Nova Scotia, identify existing assets and opportunities, address challenges, and propose actionable strategies for future development. NSITEN conducted extensive community engagement sessions across Nova Scotia's 13 Mi'kmaw communities and the urban Mi'kmaw population in Halifax. These consultations involved engaging with community members, business owners, artists, crafters, elders, cultural knowledge experts, and local leaders to gather insights and perspectives on the tourism sector. The project also included a thorough analysis of the broader Indigenous tourism ecosystem, focusing on key areas such as business literacy, funding accessibility, infrastructure development, and market reach.

Key Findings

- 1. Tourism Assets and Opportunities:** The engagement sessions revealed a wealth of cultural, historical, and natural assets within Mi'kmaw communities. These include cultural centers, traditional craft shops, guided tours showcasing Mi'kmaw heritage, and stunning natural landscapes. These assets present significant opportunities for developing unique and authentic tourism experiences that can attract visitors and generate economic benefits.
- 2. Challenges and Barriers:** Mi'kmaw tourism businesses face substantial challenges, including limited access to funding, inadequate infrastructure, and insufficient marketing resources. These barriers hinder their ability to compete with non-Indigenous tourism enterprises and fully realize their economic potential. Additionally, issues related to land use, recognition of cultural practitioners as legitimate businesses, and the complexities of operating on and off reserve land further complicate the landscape.
- 3. Community Engagement:** The community engagement sessions highlighted a strong interest in developing tourism that respects and promotes Mi'kmaw culture. There is a clear desire for greater involvement in tourism planning and decision-making, as well as a need for capacity-building initiatives to enhance local expertise in business management, hospitality, and cultural interpretation.
- 4. Economic Impact of Events:** Events play a significant role in driving tourism and economic activity in Mi'kmaw communities. The economic benefits of hosting events extend beyond the immediate community to neighboring non-Indigenous businesses, such as hotels and restaurants, contributing to regional economic growth and the role of the Mi'kmaq when it comes to "Welcoming the World" to both local Canadian visitors but also people of all age groups from around the globe to its ancestral home of Mi'kma'ki.

Executive Summary

Strategic Recommendations

Strategic Recommendations

1. **Multiyear Secured Funding:** Establish dedicated funding streams for Mi'kmaw and Indigenous tourism projects, including grants, low-interest loans, and matching funds for community initiatives. Secure multiyear funding to provide stability and enable long-term planning and development.
2. **Infrastructure Development:** Invest in the development of essential tourism infrastructure within Mi'kmaw communities, such as transportation, accommodation, and visitor centers. This will enhance the visitor experience and support the growth of tourism businesses.
3. **Marketing and Promotion:** Fund comprehensive marketing campaigns that highlight Mi'kmaw and Indigenous tourism experiences, leveraging digital platforms and partnerships with travel agencies to reach broader audiences. Support participation in national and international tourism fairs to promote Mi'kmaw tourism offerings.
4. **Capacity Building and Training:** Develop training programs in hospitality, business management, and cultural interpretation to build local expertise and enhance service quality. Establish mentorship programs that connect Indigenous entrepreneurs with experienced business leaders and tourism professionals.
5. **Policy Advocacy and Reform:** Advocate for simplified regulatory processes and reduced bureaucratic barriers for Mi'kmaw and Indigenous tourism businesses. Ensure that treaty rights are respected and integrated into tourism policies, providing a clear framework for the participation of Mi'kmaw communities in the tourism economy.
6. **Collaborative Partnerships:** Foster partnerships between Mi'kmaw communities and mainstream tourism operators to ensure representation and inclusion in major tourism attractions. Develop co-management agreements for the use of Crown, provincial, and federal lands to enhance tourism opportunities.
7. **Supporting Artisans and Cultural Practitioners:** Amend local and provincial business classification systems to formally recognize artisans and cultural practitioners as legitimate businesses. Extend business support services, such as mentorship programs, business planning assistance, and access to financial resources, to artisans and cultural practitioners to aid in the re-establishment of the cottage industries.
8. **Leveraging Hotel Levies:** Integrate hotel levies into the funding strategy for Mi'kmaw tourism development. Allocate a portion of these tariffs back to Mi'kmaw communities to support business growth, local tourism infrastructure, cultural preservation projects, and community development initiatives.
9. **Equitable Distribution of Gas Tax Revenues:** Establish a policy that mandates a percentage of gas tax revenues collected from gas stations on reserve lands be directly allocated to the respective First Nations communities. This funding can support local infrastructure, economic development, and community projects.
10. **Comprehensive Planning and Implementation:** Integrate land use planning with tourism development strategies, ensuring that Indigenous land rights are respected and that tourism initiatives align with community priorities and environmental sustainability.

Executive Summary

Future Directions

Future Directions

The findings of this report underscore the immense potential of Mi'kmaw tourism to drive economic growth, cultural preservation, and social cohesion within Mi'kmaw communities across Mi'kma'ki (present day Nova Scotia). By implementing the recommended strategies, stakeholders can create a robust and sustainable Mi'kmaw and Indigenous tourism sector that benefits all Nova Scotians. This document serves as a call to action for government bodies, funding organizations, and community leaders to provide the necessary support and investment to ensure the long-term success of Indigenous tourism in the province.

Significance of Mi'kmaw Tourism

Mi'kmaw tourism is a vital component of economic development and cultural preservation for Mi'kmaw communities. It provides a platform for sharing and celebrating Mi'kmaw heritage, promotes cultural exchange, and generates economic opportunities through job creation and entrepreneurship. By investing in Mi'kmaw tourism, we can support the sustainable growth of these communities, enhance their economic resilience, and contribute to the broader goal of reconciliation through a stronger sustainable economic investment lens.

This document serves as a comprehensive guide for stakeholders, including government bodies, funding organizations, and community leaders, to understand the current landscape of Mi'kmaw and Indigenous tourism in Nova Scotia and to take informed actions that support its development. The findings and recommendations outlined herein are intended to drive the necessary support and investment to create a thriving Indigenous tourism sector that benefits all.



Introduction

Project Description and NSITEN's Role

The "Enhancing Indigenous Tourism in Mi'kmaq Communities in Nova Scotia" project is spearheaded by the Nova Scotia Indigenous Tourism Enterprise Network (NSITEN). NSITEN, a Mi'kmaq-owned and operated non-profit organization, is dedicated to fostering the growth of Mi'kmaq and Indigenous tourism across Nova Scotia. The project's primary objective is to support and promote Mi'kmaq-owned tourism businesses by identifying current assets, opportunities, challenges, and barriers faced by Mi'kmaq communities. Through community engagement sessions and research, NSITEN aims to develop actionable strategies that will enhance tourism development, ensuring sustainable economic growth and cultural preservation for the Mi'kmaq people.

Background on the Current State of Indigenous Tourism in Nova Scotia

Mi'kmaq tourism in Nova Scotia represents a crucial but underdeveloped segment of the province's overall tourism industry. While there are successful examples of Mi'kmaq tourism initiatives, such as cultural centers, craft shops, and guided tours showcasing Mi'kmaq heritage, these efforts often lack the sustainable support and resources available to non-Indigenous tourism enterprises. The disparity is evident in areas such as funding accessibility, infrastructure development, investments, research and marketing reach.

The current state of Mi'kmaq & Indigenous tourism in Nova Scotia is characterized by active development and engagement activities driven inclusively by organizations such as the Nova Scotia Indigenous Tourism Enterprise Network (NSITEN). NSITEN is working to support the growth of authentic and cultural tourism businesses and community enterprises within Nova Scotia, providing resources and networking opportunities to Mi'kmaq artists, crafters, and cultural performers.

Additionally, NSITEN is focused on building tourism capacity within the Mi'kmaq Nation, and supports a unified approach to Mi'kmaq cultural tourism in Nova Scotia, ensuring that initiatives are sustainable, respectful of the land, and create opportunities for economic development. There's a recognition of the need for cross-cultural capacity building, investments, and research to support the ongoing growth of the Mi'kmaq & Indigenous tourism industry.

The federal government has shown support through funding initiatives like the Kinu Tourism Program, which is set to begin in September 2024, highlighting a significant investment in the sector. This is reflective of the growing demand for authentic cultural tourism experiences, an area where Mi'kmaq tourism operators are looking to strengthen their presence.

Mi'kmaq tourism in Nova Scotia is on a positive trajectory, with NSITEN leading the way in collaboration with governmental and educational institutions to foster growth, capacity building, and the showcasing of Mi'kmaq culture to a wider audience.

Introduction

Current Provincial/Federal Supports

The province of Nova Scotia and the federal government, through various initiatives and partnerships, are actively supporting Mi'kmaw & Indigenous businesses, particularly in the tourism sector. These efforts represent significant steps toward bolstering economic development, preserving cultural heritage, and ensuring sustainable growth. Multiyear secured funding is needed to ensure their long-term success.

1. **Investment in Mi'kmaw-Led Economic Development:** The Government of Canada has made investments in projects like the Acadia First Nation's timber inventory and firewood processing. This is part of a broader effort to strengthen economic development in Indigenous communities (Canada.ca).
2. **Atlantic Canada Opportunities Agency (ACOA) Programs:** ACOA provides several funding programs designed to support Mi'kmaw & Indigenous businesses and community growth. These include:
 - a. **Regional Economic Growth through Innovation (REGI)**
 - b. **Innovative Communities Fund (ICF)**
 - c. **Business Development Program (BDP)**
 - d. **Community Futures (CF) Program**
 - e. **Canada Community Revitalization Fund (CCRF)**
 - f. **Jobs and Growth Fund**
 - g. **Tourism Relief Fund (TRF)**
3. **Indigenous Services Canada and New Services:** Services like the Indigenous Business Navigator offer a single point of contact for Indigenous organizations and businesses, connecting them to government services and programs. This service simplifies the process for Indigenous entrepreneurs to access necessary resources, making it easier to develop and sustain their businesses (Canada.ca).
4. **Support for Indigenous Tourism through ITAC:** The Indigenous Tourism Association of Canada (ITAC) supports Mi'kmaw & Indigenous tourism operators in Nova Scotia by offering development grants, subsidies for trade shows, business listings, and social media coverage. ITAC collaborates with local organizations like NSITEN and Tourism Nova Scotia to enhance marketing, development, and partnership opportunities for Indigenous tourism operators (IndigenousTourism.ca).
5. **Educational Programs and Training:** Efforts are being made to introduce Indigenous tourism programs in educational institutions, such as Mount Saint Vincent University, which aims to create a specialized Indigenous cohort tourism education program. This initiative equips both Indigenous and non-Indigenous students with the knowledge and skills necessary for the development of authentic Indigenous tourism experiences (Globalnews.ca).
6. **Cultural Preservation and Promotion:** Various initiatives use tourism as a platform for the cultural preservation and promotion of Mi'kmaw culture and heritage. These efforts support authentic experiences, contributing to both cultural preservation and economic development (mikmaqrights.com).

Introduction

Current Provincial/Federal Supports

These initiatives demonstrate a comprehensive approach to supporting Mi'kmaw & Indigenous businesses in Nova Scotia, with a strong emphasis on tourism as a vehicle for economic and cultural development. The collaboration between government bodies, educational institutions, and Mi'kmaw organizations is pivotal in driving these efforts forward. However, to ensure that Mi'kmaw communities can fully leverage tourism for sustainable growth and cultural preservation, multiyear secured funding is essential. This funding will provide the stability needed to build on these initiatives, addressing disparities, and fostering long-term success.

Examples of Current Provincial Support:

- **Kinu Tourism Program:** Nearly \$2 million in federal funding to promote Mi'kmaq culture through tourism education starting September 2024.
- **Indigenous Tourism Association of Canada (ITAC):** Collaborates with local partners, providing Indigenous tourism operators with access to marketing, development grants, trade show subsidies, and more.

While the current support for Mi'kmaw tourism in Nova Scotia, including federal investments like the Kinu Tourism Program and initiatives by ITAC, represents positive steps forward, there remains a significant opportunity for both provincial and federal governments to enhance their support. To truly elevate Mi'kmaw tourism, considerations for more comprehensive funding, dedicated infrastructure development, expanded educational programs, and targeted marketing strategies are crucial. This would not only promote the authentic representation of Mi'kmaw culture but also ensure sustainable economic growth within Mi'kmaw communities. Further support could empower these communities to share their rich heritage on a broader scale while fostering economic resilience and cultural preservation.

Integrating Mi'kmaw Tourism Sections: Integrating Mi'kmaw tourism sections into Nova Scotia's tourism bureaus could significantly enhance the visibility and accessibility of authentic cultural experiences for visitors. This inclusion not only aligns with efforts towards reconciliation and cultural respect but also enriches the tourism offering with diverse, authentic experiences. It benefits the tourism bureaus by attracting a broader audience interested in cultural tourism, fostering inclusivity, and supporting the economic growth of Indigenous communities through increased visibility and engagement.



Introduction

NS Government Support

Nova Scotia Government Support for Mi'kmaw Communities and Indigenous Initiatives

The Nova Scotia government has outlined several initiatives and support mechanisms for Mi'kmaw communities and Indigenous people in their recent budget and department documents. Here are some key areas of support:

1. Healthcare and Equity

- a. **Mi'kmaw Indigenous Patient Navigator Program:** This program hires Mi'kmaw patient navigators to act as liaisons and support staff, helping coordinate patient care and improve healthcare access for Mi'kmaw communities (Government of Nova Scotia News).
- b. **Equity and Anti-Racism Strategy:** The budget allocates \$1.2 million to support communities in addressing inequity and racism across the province, which includes initiatives aimed at Indigenous communities (Government of Nova Scotia).

2. Justice and Legal Support

- a. **Indigenous Justice Action Strategy:** The province is advancing work on an Indigenous Justice Action Strategy, which aims to address legal and systemic challenges faced by Indigenous people (Government of Nova Scotia).

3. Education and Language Preservation

- a. **Mi'kmaw Language Act:** This legislation recognizes Mi'kmaw as Nova Scotia's first language and supports efforts to preserve and promote it, working closely with Mi'kmaw communities and organizations such as Mi'kmaw Kina'matnewey (Government of Nova Scotia).
- b. **Customized Nursing Programs:** The budget includes support for nursing programs at various universities tailored for Mi'kmaw learners, such as a 30-seat practical nursing cohort at the NSCC Pictou campus (Government of Nova Scotia).

4. Economic and Community Development

- a. **Mi'kmaq Forestry Initiative:** This initiative integrates traditional Mi'kmaw knowledge into forestry practices, supporting sustainable economic opportunities for Mi'kmaw communities (Government of Nova Scotia).
- b. **Indigenous Equity Loan:** The Canada Infrastructure Bank's first Indigenous equity loan supports economic projects, including energy storage facilities in partnership with Nova Scotia Power Inc. (Government of Nova Scotia).
- c. **Community Housing Growth Fund:** An additional \$2 million is allocated to this fund, which supports housing development projects, including those in Indigenous communities (Government of Nova Scotia).
- d. **Social and Cultural Initiatives**
 - i. **Mi'kmaw Native Friendship Centre:** The budget supports initiatives like the Every One Every Day Kjiptuk/Halifax project, which aims to connect community members and enhance social integration and support (Government of Nova Scotia News).

Introduction

Federal Government Support

Federal Government Support for Mi'kmaw Communities in Nova Scotia

1. **Mi'kmaq Forestry Initiative (MFI):** This initiative integrates traditional Mi'kmaw knowledge with modern forestry practices, promoting sustainable economic opportunities related to timber and non-timber industries. The MFI covers approximately 30,000 hectares across various counties and supports eco-tourism, crafting, and educational projects (MikmaqRights).
2. **Seal Harvesting Industry:** A pilot project funded by federal and provincial programs aims to revive the seal hunting industry. This initiative focuses on using every part of the animal for commercial purposes, generating economic opportunities for Mi'kmaw and rural coastal communities in Nova Scotia. The project includes training for seal harvesters from various Mi'kmaw communities (Indigenous Watchdog).
3. **Educational Initiatives through Mi'kmaw Kina'matnewey:** The federal government supports Mi'kmaw Kina'matnewey (MK) in managing the education of Mi'kmaw children. This includes language immersion programs, culturally appropriate teaching methods, and professional development for teachers. Collaborative efforts with provincial education authorities enhance these programs, bridging gaps in literacy, numeracy, and overall educational outcomes (EdCan Network).
4. **Energy Efficiency Upgrades:** The Mi'kmaw Home Energy Efficiency Project, funded by both provincial and federal governments, provides free energy efficiency upgrades to homes in Mi'kmaw communities. This initiative aims to improve living conditions and reduce energy costs for Mi'kmaw families (Government of Nova Scotia News).
5. **Long-Term Care Facilities:** New long-term care homes are being developed to provide culturally responsive care to Mi'kmaw seniors. This initiative ensures that elders receive care within their communities, surrounded by familiar cultural practices and support networks (Government of Nova Scotia News).

These initiatives reflect the federal government's commitment to supporting the cultural, economic, and social well-being of Mi'kmaw communities in Nova Scotia. By integrating traditional knowledge with modern practices and providing targeted support, these programs aim to foster sustainable development and enhance the quality of life for Indigenous people in the region.

Current State: Challenges and Opportunities

Despite these challenges, there is a growing interest in Indigenous tourism among travelers seeking authentic cultural experiences. This interest provides a significant opportunity for Mi'kmaw communities to leverage their rich cultural heritage and natural resources. However, to fully realize this potential, substantial investments are needed in infrastructure, training, and marketing to elevate Indigenous tourism to be on par with mainstream tourism offerings in Nova Scotia.

Introduction

Current State

Presentation of Current Statistical Data

The most recent NSITEN Member Registrations survey conducted between January and April 2024, which included responses from 51 participants, provides critical insights into the state of Mi'kmaw & Indigenous tourism businesses in Nova Scotia. Many of these key findings from the survey are very similar to the statistics that we have seen with membership over the past number of years. They are listed below as follows:

- **Business Registration and Operation:**
 - 41.2% of respondents have their businesses registered with the Nova Scotia Registry of Joint Stocks, while 58.8% do not, highlighting a significant gap in formal business recognition.
 - A large proportion of businesses operate without a formal business plan or tourism strategy, with 39.2% expressing a need for assistance in developing these essential tools.
- **Funding and Support:**
 - Access to funding remains a critical challenge, with 62.7% identifying it as a major issue.
 - Only a small fraction of businesses have received funding from key tourism and business organizations, indicating a need for improved access to financial resources.
- **Training Needs:**
 - There is a high demand for training in areas such as marketing and promotion, financial/accounting, and market readiness, with over 60% of respondents highlighting these as critical needs.
 - There is an increased level of concern when Mi'kmaw communities are not set up with the capacity to identify, develop and deliver the identified training that would most benefit the business owners, artists, crafters and in house strategies of staff involved in the future development of tourism community enterprises.
- **Marketing and Promotion:**
 - Social media is a significant tool for business promotion, with 80.4% using Facebook and 43.1% using Instagram.
 - Despite the heavy reliance on social media, 70.6% of businesses do not have a website, which limits their online presence and accessibility.
- **Business Operations:**
 - A significant number of businesses operate year-round with physical locations both on and off-reserve, as well as online.
 - The majority of businesses (84.3%) are operational for the 2023-2024 tourism season, indicating resilience and a willingness to engage in the tourism market.

Analysis of Economic Spin-offs

Indigenous tourism has the potential to generate significant economic spin-offs for Mi'kmaw communities and the broader provincial economy.

Introduction

Current State

By leveraging festivals and events, such as cultural celebrations and traditional gatherings, Mi'kmaw communities can attract substantial visitor numbers, which in turn stimulate local economies. For example, hosting an event that attracts 800 visitors over two days can generate direct spending on accommodations, food, and local crafts, with broader economic benefits through increased demand for local services and supplies. To capitalize on these opportunities, it is essential to address the following challenges:

- **Funding Accessibility:** Ensure equitable access to funding for Indigenous tourism businesses by streamlining application processes and providing targeted financial support.
- **Infrastructure Development:** Invest in essential infrastructure to support tourism activities, including transportation, accommodations, and cultural centers.
- **Marketing Reach:** Enhance marketing efforts to promote Indigenous tourism experiences through digital platforms, partnerships with mainstream tourism organizations, and participation in tourism trade shows.
- **Impact Studies:** Research is needed specific to the Mi'kmaw tourism impacts that take place each year with community, regional and province wide events, spending and investments into Mi'kmaw cultural tourism initiatives and business activity but also visitor spending and traffic. Tracking this through further research must be developed, managed and utilized as a way of developing the Mi'kmaw tourism industry.

By addressing these challenges, Mi'kmaw communities can develop sustainable tourism businesses that not only preserve and showcase their cultural heritage but also contribute significantly to the economic development of Nova Scotia.

Scope of the Document

This document outlines the strategic approach and findings of the "Enhancing Indigenous Tourism in Mi'kmaw Communities in Nova Scotia" project. It is structured to provide a comprehensive overview of the following key areas:

1. **Tourism Assets and Opportunities:** An inventory of existing tourism assets and **potential areas for development within Mi'kmaw communities.**
2. **Challenges and Barriers:** An analysis of the challenges and barriers faced by Indigenous tourism businesses, including funding, infrastructure, and market access.
3. **Community Engagement:** Insights from community consultations highlighting the perspectives and aspirations of Mi'kmaw community members regarding tourism development.
4. **Strategic Recommendations:** Actionable recommendations to enhance Mi'kmaw tourism, focusing on capacity building, funding mechanisms, and strategic partnerships.

Community Engagement

- **Policy and Funding Support:** Advocacy for increased governmental and institutional support to ensure the sustainable development of Indigenous tourism.

By providing detailed insights and practical recommendations, this document aims to garner much-needed funding and support for Indigenous tourism in Nova Scotia. It underscores the importance of creating a level playing field where Indigenous tourism can thrive, contributing to the economic empowerment and cultural preservation of Mi'kmaq communities.

Community Engagement

As part of the comprehensive effort to develop and enhance Mi'kmaq tourism in Nova Scotia, community sessions were held in each of the 13 Mi'kmaq communities, as well as with the urban Mi'kmaq population in Halifax. These sessions were integral to the project scope, aimed at gathering in-depth insights from community members about their unique challenges, opportunities, and aspirations related to tourism development. Each session provided a platform for community members to share their perspectives on business registration, cultural preservation, infrastructure needs, and the economic impact of local events. The discussions also highlighted the desire for increased collaboration between communities, sustainable tourism practices, and greater autonomy in business development. These community-driven insights are essential for shaping a strategic plan that aligns with the needs and goals of Mi'kmaq communities, ensuring that tourism initiatives are culturally appropriate, economically beneficial, and sustainably managed.

Community Findings

1. Challenges with Business Registration

- **Business Registration and Treaty Rights:** A recurring theme was the challenge of registering businesses and how this process might conflict with treaty rights. Many participants expressed concerns that current business registration processes do not provide any tangible benefits back to First Nations and might even create barriers to Indigenous entrepreneurship.

2. Direct Benefits from Registration

- Many members did not see the direct benefit from registering as a Registry of Joint Stock company. All they saw it was a way for government to track their business for taxation reporting and with the limited knowledge on how their tax exempt treaty rights were respected, included and implemented into their business operations it didn't provide them with the incentive to register. Also, the lack of follow up from a provincial government agency or representative to offer any support services for their business was another incentive they didn't see. NSITEN provided this incentive so they felt that at least registering with NSITEN gave them the services they didn't have through the provincial organizations set up (Tourism NS and TIANS).

Community Engagement

3. Lack of Direct Financial Benefits

- **Revenue Sharing from Gas Stations:** Despite the presence of gas stations on reserve lands, there is a significant issue with revenue sharing. Gas taxes collected from these businesses do not flow back into the Mi'kmaw communities, highlighting a gap in equitable financial support and resource allocation.

4. Desire for Local Governance and Control

- **Self-Governance in Business Development:** There is a strong desire for more autonomy and control over business development within Mi'kmaw communities. Participants emphasized the need for local governance structures that can support and nurture Indigenous businesses, rather than relying solely on external agencies.

5. Need for Dedicated Indigenous Business Advisors

- **Provincial Support:** There was a specific call for the province to appoint Mi'kmaw business and tourism advisors. This role would provide tailored support and guidance to Mi'kmaw & Indigenous entrepreneurs, helping them navigate the complexities of business development and access available funding.

6. Community-Specific Opportunities and Strengths

- **Unique Assets and Cultural Strengths:** Each community identified unique cultural and natural assets that could be leveraged for tourism. For example, the We'koqma'q community noted the potential for basket-making tours, while others highlighted opportunities in eco-tourism, land based teachings/tours, and cultural education.

7. Concerns about Cultural Appropriation

- **Authenticity and Representation:** A significant concern among Mi'kmaw communities is ensuring the authenticity of cultural representations in tourism. There is a strong desire to prevent cultural appropriation and to ensure that Indigenous stories and products are accurately and respectfully represented by Indigenous people. Building relationships and establishing partnerships through Memorandums of Understanding (MOUs) with non-Indigenous tourism operators can help safeguard cultural integrity. These agreements can outline the terms of collaboration, ensuring that Mi'kmaw communities retain control over their cultural narratives and receive appropriate recognition and benefits.

8. Inter-Community Collaboration

- **Collaboration Between Communities:** Participants expressed a desire for greater collaboration between different Mi'kmaw communities. This includes sharing resources, marketing efforts, and developing joint tourism packages to attract more visitors and create a more cohesive tourism experience.



Community Engagement

9. Infrastructure and Accessibility Issues

- **Need for Infrastructure Improvements:** Many communities identified infrastructure gaps, such as inadequate roads, lack of accommodations, and insufficient visitor facilities, as significant barriers to developing a robust tourism sector.
- **Infrastructure investments “Off Reserve”:** There are many opportunities to partner with non-Indigenous tourism organizations linked to the work of Mi'kmaw tourism development specific to infrastructure opportunities. Building cultural appropriate and supportive spaces for “Mi'kmaw Welcome Centres” in VIC's (current provincial and federal Visitor Information Centres), spaces where Parks Canada and Provincial Parks can showcase Mi'kmaw culture and history as part of the tourism “experience” and many more regional and community development opportunities will lend to the overall growth of Mi'kmaw tourism in the future. This ties in many employment, training and contract opportunities for Mi'kmaw people of all age groups as well.

10. Economic Spin-offs from Festivals and Events

- **Impact of Local Events:** There was an emphasis on the economic benefits of local festivals and events. These occasions not only draw visitors but also provide substantial economic spin-offs for local businesses, highlighting the need for more organized and well-funded cultural events.

11. Environmental Concerns

- **Sustainable Practices:** There is a strong emphasis on incorporating sustainable practices in tourism development. Communities are concerned about protecting their natural environments and ensuring that tourism growth does not lead to environmental degradation.

These insights from the community session notes reveal a complex landscape with unique challenges and opportunities for Mi'kmaw tourism in Nova Scotia. Addressing these issues requires tailored solutions that respect treaty rights, provide equitable financial benefits, and support the autonomy and cultural integrity of Mi'kmaw communities. These unexpected themes underscore the importance of developing a nuanced and inclusive approach to Indigenous tourism development.

Community Assets

Indigenous communities possess a rich array of assets that can be leveraged for tourism development. These assets not only offer unique experiences to visitors but also play a vital role in preserving and promoting Indigenous culture and heritage. Here are some key community assets that Indigenous communities could consider:

1. Cultural Heritage and Traditions: Mi'kmaw communities have rich traditions, languages, and cultural practices that can form the basis of educational and immersive tourism experiences. This includes traditional dances, music, storytelling, and spiritual ceremonies.

Community Engagement

2. **Art and Craftsmanship:** Authentic Mi'kmaw art, including paintings, sculptures, beadwork, and basketry, is deeply rooted in cultural significance and can be a significant draw for tourists. Workshops or galleries showcasing these arts provide visitors with a unique and authentic experience.
3. **Natural Resources and Landscapes:** Mi'kmaw communities often have deep spiritual and cultural connections to specific natural landscapes, which can be incorporated into eco-tourism and outdoor activities such as guided nature walks, wildlife viewing, or traditional fishing and hunting practices. The huge challenge is the physical access to ancestral land resources as signed through treaty agreements. This must be addressed to fully develop cultural tourism opportunities for Mi'kmaw & other Indigenous people here and world wide.
4. **Historical Sites and Monuments:** Sites of historical (story telling) and cultural significance, such as ancient settlements or sacred places, can be developed into educational attractions. It's important to approach these sites respectfully and in a way that aligns with the community's values.
5. **Local Culinary Experiences:** Building opportunities for showcasing authentic Mi'kmaw cuisine, which is often based on local, traditional ingredients and preparation methods, can provide a huge opportunity for unique culinary experience for tourists.
6. **Community-Led Initiatives:** Initiatives like community tours, local festivals, and markets not only showcase Mi'kmaw culture but also support local entrepreneurship and community development. This is where Elders can really begin to share in the oral history of the people and share this with visitors in a very laid back social atmosphere integrated into the community cultural tourism packages.
7. **Educational Programs:** Workshops or programs that educate visitors about the history, struggles, and contemporary issues faced by Indigenous peoples can foster greater understanding and respect. There is a huge need and opportunity to link Mi'kmaw youth in Junior High & Highschool levels with cultural tourism. Find ways to train them, employ them in more summer jobs (need funding here) and prepare them for the long term model for Mi'kmaw cultural tourism development.
8. **Collaborations with Local Businesses:** Partnering with local accommodations, tour operators, and other businesses can create comprehensive tourism packages and increase the reach of Mi'kmaw & Indigenous tourism initiatives.
9. **Digital Media and Virtual Experiences:** Utilizing digital platforms to offer virtual tours, online workshops, or digital storytelling can broaden the audience and make Mi'kmaw Indigenous tourism more accessible.
10. **Sustainable Practices and Ecotourism:** Showcasing traditional ecological knowledge and sustainable practices in land and wildlife management can be a significant draw for tourists interested in sustainability and conservation.

Each of these assets must be developed and managed in a way that respects and preserves the integrity of the Mi'kmaw culture and community. It's crucial to involve community members in decision-making processes to ensure that tourism development aligns with their values and benefits the community as a whole.

Analysis of the Current Business Environment

Business Landscape in Indigenous Communities

The business landscape within Mi'kmaw communities in Nova Scotia is characterized by a diverse array of enterprises, ranging from traditional crafts and cultural tourism to modern services and retail operations. However, there exists a significant disparity between registered and non-registered businesses, which affects their ability to access funding, support, and broader market opportunities.

As observed during community consultations, there are approximately 52 registered businesses and around 54 non-registered businesses across these communities. This mixture of formal and informal economic engagement reflects various levels of business literacy and accessibility to formal economic systems.

It is estimated that there is another 150-200 non registered Mi'kmaw owned tourism specific and cultural tourism (artists, crafters, beaders, cultural knowledge experts, tour guides, etc) businesses that are not registered with us yet. They exist in the communities on their own but we believe that they can be brought into the fold as part of developing long term Mi'kmaw cultural tourism.

Count of Registered vs. Non-Registered Businesses: Based on recent research and available data:

- **Registered Businesses:** Approximately 52 businesses are officially registered within the Mi'kmaw communities.
- **Non-Registered Businesses:** There are around 54 businesses operating informally without official registration.

The disparity between registered and non-registered businesses highlights several challenges:

1. **Business Literacy:** Many community members lack the necessary knowledge and skills to navigate the formal business registration process. This includes understanding regulatory requirements, tax obligations, and the benefits of formalizing their businesses.
2. **Access to Funding:** Registered businesses are more likely to access government grants, loans, and other financial support mechanisms. In contrast, non-registered businesses often struggle to secure funding, limiting their growth and sustainability.
3. **Market Opportunities:** Formal registration provides businesses with greater visibility and credibility, opening up broader market opportunities. Non-registered businesses miss out on these opportunities, restricting their customer base and revenue potential.

Analysis of the Current Business Environment

4. Support Systems: Registered businesses can benefit from various support systems, including business development services, training programs, and networking opportunities. Non-registered businesses are typically excluded from these resources, hindering their development.

Business Ratios

The business-to-population ratio in Nova Scotia provides insight into the density and availability of businesses relative to the population, which is crucial for economic development and planning, particularly for supporting Indigenous tourism and business initiatives.

As of recent estimates, Nova Scotia has a population of approximately 1,030,953 people (World Population Review). According to the Nova Scotia Department of Finance, there were approximately 30,000 businesses operating in the province in 2023 (Government of Nova Scotia). This results in a business-to-population ratio of approximately 29 businesses for every 1,000 residents.

In contrast, the Mi'kmaw population in Nova Scotia, spread across various communities, totals approximately 19,157 registered individuals. With 106 Indigenous businesses in Nova Scotia, this equates to a business-to-population ratio of roughly 5.5 businesses for every 1,000 Mi'kmaw residents.

Population of Mi'kmaw Communities in Nova Scotia:

1. **Eskasoni First Nation:** 4,314
2. **Sipekne'katik First Nation:** 2,554
3. **Membertou First Nation:** ~1,750
4. **Millbrook First Nation:** ~1,800
5. **Potlotek First Nation:** ~700
6. **Paq'tnkek First Nation:** ~600
7. **Wagmatcook First Nation:** ~700
8. **We'koqma'q First Nation:** ~900
9. **Bear River First Nation:** ~300
10. **Glooscap First Nation:** ~300
11. **Acadia First Nation:** ~1,300
12. **Annapolis Valley First Nation:** ~300
13. **Pictou Landing First Nation:** ~500
14. **Mi'kmaw Population in Halifax:** 5,877

Total Registered Mi'kmaw Population in Nova Scotia: 19,157

Analysis of the Current Business Environment

Business Ratios (cont.)

The disparity between the general business-to-population ratio and the ratio within Mi'kmaw communities highlights a significant gap. Bridging this gap is essential for several reasons:

- **Economic Empowerment:** Increasing the number of Mi'kmaw businesses can create more job opportunities and foster economic independence within Mi'kmaw communities.
- **Cultural Preservation:** Supporting Mi'kmaw businesses, particularly those involved in cultural tourism, helps preserve and promote Mi'kmaw culture and heritage.
- **Equitable Development:** Ensuring that Mi'kmaw communities have the same opportunities for business development as non-Indigenous communities is crucial for achieving economic equity and social justice.

By focusing on equalizing these numbers through targeted support and funding for Mi'kmaw businesses, the Nova Scotia Government can help foster a more inclusive and robust economy that benefits all residents.

Importance of Business Registration

Economic Benefits and Support Access: Business registration provides numerous benefits, including access to financial assistance, eligibility for government and private sector contracts, and enhanced credibility with customers and partners. Registered businesses can apply for grants, loans, and other forms of financial support that are often inaccessible to non-registered entities.

Impact on Mi'kmaw: For Mi'kmaw communities, business registration can also play a critical role in broader economic development strategies. It enables more precise tracking of economic activity within the community, informing better planning and allocation of resources. Furthermore, it helps in showcasing the community's economic contributions and potential to external investors and partners.

Relation to Treaty Rights: Business registration intersects with treaty rights in significant ways. Treaty rights affirm the economic sovereignty and self-determination of Mi'kmaw peoples. Ensuring that Mi'kmaw businesses can operate within the legal frameworks while honoring these rights is crucial. However, current registration processes can sometimes be cumbersome and expensive, posing barriers to Mi'kmaw entrepreneurs.

Analysis of the Current Business Environment

Importance of Business Registration (Cont.)

Proposing Solutions: No-Fee Business Registration

To address these challenges and encourage more Indigenous entrepreneurs to formalize their businesses, a no-fee business registration option can be proposed. This approach would remove financial barriers to registration and support the economic empowerment of Mi'kmaq communities. Through sustainable and specific business capacity funding support for NSITEN we can provide those supports to registered businesses to provide the “incentive” for them that they have been looking for, which includes connection to provincial, federal and other business resources that typically require registration to the Registry of Joint Stocks.

Benefits of a No-Fee Option:

1. **Increased Registration:** Lowering the cost of registration would likely lead to an increase in the number of registered businesses, enhancing their access to support and growth opportunities.
2. **Economic Data Collection:** With more businesses registered, communities and policymakers would have better data to understand economic trends and make informed decisions.
3. **Equity and Inclusion:** A no-fee registration policy promotes equity by ensuring that all entrepreneurs, regardless of their financial situation, can formalize their operations and benefit from available resources.

Implementation Strategy

- **Policy Advocacy:** Engage with provincial and federal governments to advocate for policy changes that introduce a no-fee registration option for Mi'kmaw businesses.
- **Community Awareness:** Launch awareness campaigns within Mi'kmaw communities to educate entrepreneurs about the benefits of registration and the availability of the no-fee option.
- **Support Services:** Provide support services to assist businesses in the registration process, including workshops, one-on-one consultations, and legal assistance.

By addressing the current disparities between registered and non-registered businesses and proposing inclusive solutions, we can foster a more supportive and robust business environment within Mi'kmaw communities. This approach aligns with broader goals of economic self-sufficiency and cultural preservation, empowering Indigenous entrepreneurs to thrive.

Funding for Indigenous Tourism Development

Overview of Funding Mechanisms

In Nova Scotia, Mi'kmaw tourism businesses and organizations like NSITEN have access to various funding mechanisms. However, there remains a significant disparity between funding allocated for Mi'kmaw versus non-Indigenous tourism initiatives.

Indigenous Business Funding:

1. **Aboriginal Entrepreneurship Program:** Provides financial support to Indigenous entrepreneurs, but the competition for these funds is high, and the amounts are often limited. This program aims to foster business development but does not sufficiently address the unique challenges faced by Mi'kmaw tourism operators.
2. **Indigenous Services Canada (ISC):** Offers various grants and loans through programs such as the Economic Development Fund and the Indigenous Community Infrastructure Fund. While these funds aim to support community infrastructure and economic development, specific allocations for tourism are relatively rare and often insufficient to meet the needs of Indigenous tourism businesses. Much of the targets are also focused on the development of and support for community enterprises not entrepreneurs.
3. **Urban Programming for Indigenous Peoples (UPIP):** This program funds infrastructure projects that support Indigenous communities in urban areas. A notable example is the Mi'kmaw Native Friendship Centre in Halifax, which received nearly \$50 million from federal and provincial sources for its expansion. However, such substantial funding is not consistently available for smaller, community-based tourism projects.

Non-Indigenous Tourism Funding:

1. **Tourism Nova Scotia (TNS):** Provides extensive funding and marketing support for non-Indigenous tourism businesses through initiatives like the Digital Marketing Program and the Tourism Revitalization Program. These programs often have larger budgets and more accessible application processes compared to Indigenous-specific funds, resulting in an imbalance of support.
2. **Atlantic Canada Opportunities Agency (ACOA):** Offers significant support for tourism infrastructure and marketing. Indigenous projects, however, must compete with non-Indigenous ones, often leading to underrepresentation in funded projects. ACOA's broad focus does not adequately address the unique needs of Indigenous tourism operators.

Funding for Indigenous Tourism Development

Recommendations for Improving Access to Funding

- 1. Appointment of an Indigenous Business Advisor:** The province should appoint an Indigenous business advisor dedicated to assisting Mi'kmaw entrepreneurs in navigating the funding landscape. This advisor would help in accessing grants and loans, developing business plans, and providing ongoing support to ensure successful application processes and project implementation.
- 2. Simplified Grant Application Processes:** Streamline the application processes for government grants and loans to reduce administrative burdens. Providing clear guidelines, step-by-step assistance, and dedicated support for Indigenous entrepreneurs can help them overcome bureaucratic challenges and improve their chances of securing funding.
- 3. Dedicated Funding Streams:** Establish dedicated funding streams specifically for Mi'kmaw tourism projects. These could include micro-grants for startups, matching funds for community-led tourism initiatives, and specific allocations within broader tourism funding programs. This targeted approach would ensure that Mi'kmaw tourism receives the necessary financial support to thrive.
- 4. Financial Literacy Programs:** Invest in comprehensive financial literacy programs tailored to Indigenous entrepreneurs. These programs should cover essential topics such as financial management, accessing capital, understanding credit, and budgeting. Ensuring these programs are culturally relevant and accessible will empower Indigenous business owners to make informed financial decisions.
- 5. Partnerships with Financial Institutions:** Foster partnerships between financial institutions and Indigenous organizations to create financial products and services specifically designed for Indigenous businesses. These could include low-interest loans, microfinance options, and flexible repayment terms. Collaborations with banks and credit unions can provide Indigenous entrepreneurs with the financial tools they need to grow their businesses.
- 6. Long-Term Funding Commitments:** Advocate for multiyear funding commitments from both provincial and federal governments to ensure the sustainability of Mi'kmaw tourism initiatives. Long-term funding stability will allow for strategic planning, infrastructure development, and capacity building, ultimately leading to more robust and resilient Mi'kmaw tourism enterprises.
- 7. Equity in Tourism Funding Programs:** Ensure that Mi'kmaw tourism projects are given equal consideration in all tourism funding programs. This could involve setting aside a specific percentage of funds within existing tourism programs exclusively for Mi'kmaw projects or creating parallel funding programs that operate under similar terms but are exclusively available to Mi'kmaw applicants.

Funding for Indigenous Tourism Development

Recommendations for Improving Access to Funding

8. Support for Market Readiness: Provide funding and resources to help Mi'kmaw tourism businesses achieve market readiness. This includes support for product development, market research, branding, and marketing strategies. Ensuring that Indigenous tourism offerings are competitive and appealing to a broad audience will enhance their success and sustainability.

9. Community-Based Tourism Development: Encourage and fund community-based tourism projects that involve collaboration among multiple stakeholders, including local governments, Mi'kmaw organizations, and private sector partners. Such projects can foster economic development, cultural preservation, and community cohesion.

10. Advocacy and Policy Development: Work with policymakers to advocate for changes that support Mi'kmaw tourism. This could include policy adjustments to recognize the unique needs of Mi'kmaw businesses, improve access to funding, and ensure that Mi'kmaw voices are included in tourism planning and decision-making processes.

By addressing these recommendations, the Nova Scotia Government can significantly enhance the viability and sustainability of Indigenous tourism, fostering economic growth, cultural preservation, and social cohesion within Mi'kmaw communities.

The Importance of Supporting Mi'kmaw Tourism

Supporting Mi'kmaw communities in Nova Scotia through tourism initiatives is essential for several economic, cultural, and social reasons. Here are compelling arguments for why the Nova Scotia Government should prioritize this support:

1. Economic Empowerment: Tourism acts as a significant economic driver for Mi'kmaw communities by creating jobs, supporting local businesses, and fostering entrepreneurship. Investment in this sector can lead to sustainable economic growth.

2. Cultural Preservation: Tourism provides a platform for the preservation and sharing of Mi'kmaw culture and traditions. By integrating these cultural elements into the tourism experience, communities can keep their heritage alive and vibrant.

3. Authentic Representation: Ensuring that Mi'kmaw stories and cultural expressions are accurately represented in the tourism industry helps prevent cultural appropriation and misrepresentation. Investment in authentic representation supports the integrity of Mi'kmaw heritage.

Funding for Indigenous Tourism Development

The Importance of Supporting Mi'kmaw Tourism

- 4. Education and Awareness:** Tourism serves as an educational tool, offering visitors insights into the history and culture of the Mi'kmaw people. This promotes greater understanding and reconciliation between Indigenous and non-Indigenous communities.
- 5. Community Development:** Financial support for tourism can lead to the development of infrastructure and services that benefit both tourists and community members, improving overall quality of life in Mi'kmaw communities.
- 6. Sustainable Development:** Focusing on eco-tourism helps protect Nova Scotia's natural environment. Supporting Mi'kmaw tourism initiatives that emphasize sustainability ensures that tourism growth does not come at the expense of environmental health.
- 7. Marketing and Promotion:** Investing in marketing can significantly raise the profile of Mi'kmaw tourism experiences, attracting a wider audience and increasing visitor numbers. Effective marketing strategies can highlight the unique cultural offerings of Mi'kmaw communities.
- 8. Skills Training:** Funding for skills training in areas such as hospitality, business management, and tourism services can build a more robust workforce within Mi'kmaw communities, enhancing their capacity to deliver high-quality tourism experiences.
- 9. Network Expansion:** Support can help establish networks and partnerships that extend beyond local communities to national and international markets, broadening the reach and impact of Mi'kmaw tourism businesses.
- 10. Social Cohesion:** Tourism fosters collaboration within and between communities, strengthening social ties as they work together to create and share tourism experiences. This collaboration can lead to greater social cohesion and mutual support.
- 11. Recognition of Treaty Rights:** Supporting Mi'kmaw tourism acknowledges and respects the treaty rights of the Mi'kmaw people, reinforcing their sovereign rights to manage and benefit from their traditional lands and resources.
- 12. Access to Land for Tourism specific project initiative:** Facilitating access to land for tourism initiatives allows Mi'kmaw communities to develop culturally significant sites and attractions, fostering economic growth and cultural preservation.

By addressing these areas and providing targeted support, the Nova Scotia Government can enhance the viability and sustainability of Indigenous tourism. This, in turn, fosters economic growth, cultural preservation, and social cohesion within Mi'kmaw communities, contributing to the broader goals of reconciliation and equity.

Funding for Indigenous Tourism Development

Recommendations for Hotel Levies Allocation

Integrating Hotel Levies to Support Indigenous Tourism

A strategic approach to supporting Indigenous tourism involves leveraging hotel levies. Currently, Destination Cape Breton (DCB) and other Destination Marketing Organizations (DMOs) benefit from hotel tariffs to fund tourism initiatives. However, Indigenous communities and organizations like the Nova Scotia Indigenous Tourism Enterprise Network (NSITEN) do not receive similar benefits, even when these hotels are located within their communities. Redirecting or allocating a portion of these tariffs to Indigenous communities can significantly enhance their tourism development efforts.

Recommendations for Hotel Levies Allocation:

1. **Direct Allocation to Mi'kmaw Communities:** Establish a policy that mandates a percentage of hotel tariffs collected from properties within Indigenous communities to be directly allocated back to those communities. This funding can support local tourism infrastructure, cultural preservation projects, and community development initiatives.
2. **Fund NSITEN Programs and Initiatives:** Designate a portion of the hotel levies collected province-wide to fund NSITEN's programs. This would provide NSITEN with a stable funding source to develop, promote, and sustain Mi'kmaw cultural tourism across Nova Scotia.
3. **Collaborative Agreements with Hotels:** Encourage hotels within Mi'kmaw communities to enter into agreements that stipulate a portion of their tariffs be invested in local tourism projects. These agreements can ensure that funds are used for projects that benefit both the hotels and the community, creating a symbiotic relationship.
4. **Establish a Community Tourism Fund:** Create a fund specifically for Mi'kmaw tourism development, financed by hotel tariffs. This fund can be managed by NSITEN and used to support tourism businesses, provide training and capacity building, and enhance marketing efforts.
5. **Transparency and Accountability:** Implement transparent mechanisms for tracking and reporting the use of hotel tariff funds. This will ensure that the funds are used effectively and for the intended purposes, fostering trust and accountability among stakeholders.

Funding for Indigenous Tourism Development

Benefits of Allocating Hotel Levies:

1. **Economic Empowerment:** Redirecting hotel tariffs to Mi'kmaw communities provides them with much-needed financial resources. This empowers local businesses and entrepreneurs, creating jobs and stimulating economic growth.
2. **Cultural Preservation and Promotion:** Funds from hotel tariffs can support the preservation and promotion of Mi'kmaw culture and heritage. This includes funding for cultural festivals, arts and crafts, and educational programs that attract tourists and enrich the visitor experience.
3. **Sustainable Tourism Development:** By investing in infrastructure and community projects, hotel tariffs can contribute to the sustainable development of Mi'kmaw tourism. This ensures that tourism growth does not come at the expense of cultural or environmental degradation.
4. **Enhanced Visitor Experience:** Improved infrastructure and well-funded cultural programs enhance the overall visitor experience. Tourists are more likely to have meaningful and positive experiences, leading to increased visitation and positive word-of-mouth promotion.
5. **Strengthened Partnerships:** Collaborative agreements between hotels and Mi'kmaw communities foster stronger partnerships. This collaborative approach ensures that tourism benefits are shared equitably and that communities have a stake in the success of local tourism enterprises.

Integrating hotel levies into the funding strategy for Indigenous tourism development presents a unique opportunity to support Mi'kmaw communities and organizations like NSITEN. By allocating a portion of these tariffs back to the communities where they are collected, the government can ensure that Indigenous tourism receives the financial support it needs to thrive. This approach not only empowers Indigenous businesses and preserves cultural heritage but also enhances the overall tourism landscape of Nova Scotia, benefiting all stakeholders involved.

Gas Tax Collection and Allocation in Nova Scotia: The Need for Equitable Distribution to First Nations

Collection of Gas Tax

In Nova Scotia, the gas tax is collected as part of the fuel tax system. The process involves several steps:

1. **Point of Sale:** The gas tax is levied on fuel at the point of sale, which includes gasoline, diesel, and other motor fuels. This tax is included in the price per liter that consumers pay at the pump.

Funding for Indigenous Tourism Development

Gas Tax

2. Tax Rates: As of the latest data, Nova Scotia imposes a fuel tax rate of 15.5 cents per liter on gasoline and 15.4 cents per liter on diesel fuel. These rates are subject to change based on provincial budget decisions.

3. Collection by Retailers: Fuel retailers collect the gas tax from consumers at the point of sale. The tax collected is then remitted to the provincial government by the retailers.

Allocation of Gas Tax

Once the gas tax is collected, it is allocated and used for various purposes within the province:

- 1. Provincial Revenue:** The gas tax is a significant source of revenue for the Nova Scotia provincial government. It contributes to the general revenue fund, which is used to finance various public services and infrastructure projects.
- 2. Infrastructure and Transportation:** A portion of the gas tax revenue is earmarked for infrastructure and transportation projects. This includes the maintenance and development of roads, highways, bridges, and public transit systems. Ensuring safe and efficient transportation networks is a priority for the government.
- 3. Municipal Transfers:** Through agreements like the Federal Gas Tax Fund, a portion of the gas tax revenue is transferred to municipalities. This fund supports local infrastructure projects that contribute to economic growth, environmental sustainability, and community well-being. Municipalities use these funds for projects such as road repairs, public transit improvements, and water systems. However, it is important to note that none of these funds are specifically allocated to Mi'kmaw communities, despite the presence of numerous gas stations on reserve lands.
- 4. Environmental Initiatives:** Some of the gas tax revenue is allocated to environmental initiatives aimed at reducing greenhouse gas emissions and promoting sustainable practices. This includes investments in public transit systems and infrastructure that supports alternative modes of transportation, such as cycling and walking paths.
- 5. Debt Servicing:** In some cases, gas tax revenue is also used to service the provincial debt. This helps the government manage its financial obligations and maintain fiscal stability.

Funding for Indigenous Tourism Development

The Need for Equitable Distribution to First Nations

Despite the critical role that Mi'kmaw communities play in the provincial economy, particularly with gas stations on reserve lands contributing to gas tax revenues, these communities do not receive a fair share of the funds. Unlike municipalities, which receive transfers from the gas tax revenue for infrastructure and development projects, First Nations communities are often excluded from these allocations.

Recommendations for Equitable Distribution

1. **Direct Allocation to Mi'kmaw:** Establish a policy that mandates a percentage of gas tax revenues collected from gas stations on reserve lands be directly allocated to the respective Mi'kmaw communities. This funding can support local infrastructure, economic development, and community projects.
2. **Fair Treatment and Reconciliation:** In the spirit of reconciliation and fair treatment, the government should recognize First Nations communities as essential municipalities and ensure they receive equitable funding. This would help address historical inequities and support the sustainable development of these communities.
3. **Inclusive Federal and Provincial Programs:** Modify existing programs like the Federal Gas Tax Fund to include Mi'kmaw communities explicitly. This inclusion would ensure that Mi'kmaw communities benefit from the same funding opportunities as other municipalities, promoting parity and fairness.
4. **Transparent Reporting and Accountability:** Implement mechanisms for transparent tracking and reporting of gas tax allocations to Mi'kmaw communities. This transparency will ensure that funds are used effectively and that communities have a clear understanding of how the money is being spent.

The current allocation of gas tax revenues in Nova Scotia fails to provide equitable support to Mi'kmaw communities, despite their significant contributions. By revising policies to include direct allocations to Mi'kmaw communities, the government can take meaningful steps towards reconciliation and fair treatment.

Ensuring that Mi'kmaw receive a fair share of gas tax revenues will support economic development, infrastructure improvement, and community well-being, helping to build a more inclusive and equitable province.

Treaty Rights and Indigenous Tourism

Examination of Treaty Rights Relevant to Tourism Development in Indigenous Communities

The Mi'kmaw people of Nova Scotia have a long history of treaty relationships with the Crown, dating back to the Peace and Friendship Treaties of the 18th century. These treaties, particularly those signed in 1725, 1752, and 1760-61, are foundational documents that recognize and affirm Mi'kmaw rights. These treaty rights are legally recognized and protected under Section 35 of the Constitution Act, 1982.

Treaty rights play a crucial role in shaping the landscape of Mi'kmaw tourism development. These rights, established through historical treaties between Mi'kmaw nations and the Crown, provide legal and cultural foundations for the self-determination and economic development of Mi'kmaw people and their communities. In Nova Scotia, the Mi'kmaq hold treaty rights that are integral to their sovereignty and cultural preservation.

Key Aspects of Treaty Rights in Nova Scotia

- 1. Peace and Friendship Treaties:** The Mi'kmaw people, along with the Maliseet and Passamaquoddy nations, entered into a series of treaties with the British Crown between 1725 and 1779. These Peace and Friendship Treaties did not cede land but established a framework for peaceful coexistence and mutual benefit. They recognize the Mi'kmaq's rights to hunt, fish, and gather in their traditional territories, which are essential for cultural practices and economic activities, including tourism ([The Canadian Encyclopedia](#)) ([Government of Nova Scotia News](#)).
- 2. Supreme Court Decisions:** The Supreme Court of Canada has upheld these treaty rights in several landmark cases, such as *R. v. Marshall* (1999), affirming the Mi'kmaq's right to engage in commercial activities based on these treaties. These decisions reinforce the legal standing of Mi'kmaw communities to develop tourism enterprises that leverage their cultural and natural resources ([FutSkillsCentre](#)).

Key Treaty Rights Relevant to Tourism

- 1. Right to Self-Governance:** The treaties affirm the Mi'kmaw right to self-governance, including the ability to manage lands and resources according to their own laws and customs, which is crucial for developing and regulating tourism activities that align with Mi'kmaw cultural values and environmental stewardship.
- 2. Right to Land and Resource Use:** The treaties guarantee Mi'kmaw access to their traditional lands and resources. This right supports the development of tourism initiatives that utilize natural landscapes, such as eco-tourism, cultural tours, and outdoor recreational activities.
- 3. Right to Cultural Practices:** The treaties protect Mi'kmaw rights to practice and preserve their culture, language, and traditions. Tourism development that incorporates and respects these cultural practices can help preserve and promote Mi'kmaw heritage.

Treaty Rights and Indigenous Tourism

Suggestions for Incorporating Treaty Rights into Tourism Development Plans

1. **Support for Business Development:** Provide support for Mi'kmaw entrepreneurs and businesses involved in tourism. This includes access to funding, training, and resources to help them develop and grow their tourism enterprises.
2. **Legal Framework and Advocacy:** Advocate for the recognition and incorporation of treaty rights within provincial and federal tourism policies. This includes ensuring that funding and support programs for tourism development are designed to respect and uphold these rights. Legal support and consultation can help navigate the complexities of integrating treaty rights into business practices.
3. **Community-Driven Planning:** Ensure that tourism development plans are driven by the Mi'kmaw communities themselves. This means engaging in meaningful consultation and collaboration with community leaders, elders, and members to ensure that tourism projects align with their values, needs, and aspirations.
4. **Cultural Protocols and Authenticity:** Develop guidelines and protocols to ensure that all tourism activities and representations are culturally accurate and respectful. This includes training for tourism operators and staff on Mi'kmaw culture and history, and ensuring that Mi'kmaw voices and perspectives are central in all cultural tourism initiatives.
5. **Land and Resource Management:** Incorporate traditional land and resource management practices into tourism development. This can involve creating protected areas, sustainable resource use plans, and eco-tourism initiatives that reflect Mi'kmaw environmental stewardship principles.
6. **Legal and Policy Frameworks:** Work with legal experts to ensure that tourism development plans are compliant with treaty rights and relevant legal frameworks. This can involve creating agreements or memorandums of understanding (MOUs) that formalize the role of Mi'kmaw governance in tourism projects.
7. **Collaborative Governance:** Establish governance structures that involve Mi'kmaw leadership in decision-making processes related to tourism. This can be achieved through advisory boards, joint management agreements, or co-management models that ensure Mi'kmaw voices guide the development and implementation of tourism projects.
8. **Economic Benefits Projects:** Develop tourism projects that provide tangible economic benefits to Mi'kmaw communities. This includes creating employment opportunities, supporting local businesses, and ensuring that a significant portion of tourism revenues is reinvested in the community.

Treaty Rights and Mi'kmaw Tourism

Suggestions for Incorporating Treaty Rights into Tourism Development Plans

9. Tourism Mechanisms for Revenue Sharing: Establish mechanisms for equitable revenue sharing from tourism activities. This ensures that Mi'kmaw communities receive direct economic benefits from tourism operations on their lands. Examples include community-owned tourism enterprises, hotel operations, fuel stations, joint ventures, and benefit-sharing agreements.

10. Education and Awareness: Develop educational programs for tourists to raise awareness about Mi'kmaw treaty rights and history. This can include interpretive centers, guided tours, and informational materials that educate visitors about the significance of treaties and Mi'kmaw culture.

11. Infrastructure Development: Invest in infrastructure that supports sustainable tourism in Mi'kmaw communities. This includes transportation, accommodations, and facilities that are designed and managed in ways that respect and enhance Mi'kmaw cultural and environmental values.

12. Community Engagement and Consultation: Engage with Mi'kmaw communities from the outset in planning and developing tourism projects. This involves regular engagement, respecting community priorities, and ensuring that tourism initiatives align with the community's values and aspirations.

13. Capacity Building and Education: Provide education and training programs for Mi'kmaw community members to develop the skills needed to manage and operate tourism businesses. These programs should include components on treaty rights, business management, and cultural interpretation to empower communities to lead tourism initiatives effectively.

14. Cultural Integrity and Authenticity: Ensure that tourism development plans honor and promote Mi'kmaw culture and traditions. This involves creating tourism experiences that are authentic and led by the community, highlighting traditional practices such as storytelling, crafts, and ecological knowledge.

Integrating treaty rights into tourism development plans is essential for fostering sustainable and respectful tourism that benefits Mi'kmaw communities. By recognizing and upholding these rights, the government and tourism operators can support the economic empowerment, cultural preservation, and self-determination of the Mi'kmaw people.

This approach not only aligns with legal and constitutional obligations but also enriches the tourism experience for all visitors by providing authentic and meaningful insights into Mi'kmaw culture and heritage.

Tourism Education and Authenticity in Mi'kmaw Communities

Importance of Tourism Education Focusing on Mi'kmaw Cultural Tourism

Tourism education plays a vital role in the successful development and sustainability of Mi'kmaw cultural tourism. It involves providing the necessary knowledge, skills, and understanding to both tourism operators and visitors about the rich cultural heritage of the Mi'kmaw people. Here are some key reasons why tourism education is important:

1. **Cultural Preservation and Respect:** Educating both Mi'kmaw community members and visitors about Mi'kmaw culture helps preserve traditional knowledge, practices, and languages. It ensures that tourism activities are conducted in ways that respect and honor Mi'kmaw traditions and values.
2. **Enhancing Visitor Experience:** Well-informed visitors who understand the cultural significance of the sites and experiences they engage with are more likely to have a meaningful and respectful tourism experience. This education can lead to a deeper appreciation and understanding of Mi'kmaw heritage.
3. **Empowering Mi'kmaw Entrepreneurs:** Providing education and training for Mi'kmaw community members in areas such as hospitality, business management, and cultural interpretation helps empower Mi'kmaw entrepreneurs. This knowledge enables them to create and manage successful tourism businesses that are authentic and sustainable.
4. **Building Community Capacity:** Tourism education initiatives can help build the capacity of Mi'kmaw communities to develop, manage, and market their tourism offerings. This includes training in areas such as customer service, marketing, and digital literacy.
5. **Supporting Sustainable Tourism:** Education focused on sustainable tourism practices ensures that tourism development does not harm the natural environment or cultural heritage. It promotes responsible tourism that benefits both the community and the visitors.



Tourism Education and Authenticity in Mi'kmaw Communities

Ensuring authenticity in Mi'kmaw tourism is crucial for preserving the integrity of Mi'kmaw culture and providing genuine experiences to visitors. The KMKNO Authenticity Guidelines, developed with input from NSITEN, ensure that Mi'kmaw cultural experiences offered to tourists are genuine and respectful. These guidelines help maintain cultural integrity and promote economic growth within Mi'kmaw communities. The full guidelines can be found in the appendices.

1. Authenticity Guidelines:

- **Cultural Protocols:** Establish clear guidelines that ensure all tourism activities and representations are culturally accurate and respectful. This includes adhering to Mi'kmaw cultural protocols and involving community elders and cultural leaders in tourism planning and implementation.
- **Certification Programs:** Develop certification programs that recognize and promote businesses and experiences that meet authenticity standards. This can help visitors identify and choose authentic Mi'kmaw tourism offerings.
- **Ongoing Training:** Provide continuous training and education for tourism operators on the importance of cultural authenticity and how to achieve it in their businesses.

2. Supporting Mi'kmaw Businesses Over Non-Indigenous Entities:

- **Economic Equity:** Prioritize support for Mi'kmaw-owned businesses to ensure that the economic benefits of tourism are retained within Mi'kmaw communities. This support can include access to funding, business development resources, and marketing assistance.
- **Preventing Cultural Appropriation:** Non-Indigenous entities producing Indigenous-themed products often misrepresent or exploit Mi'kmaw culture for profit. Supporting Mi'kmaw businesses helps prevent cultural appropriation and ensures that cultural expressions remain true to their origins.
- **Community Empowerment:** Investing in Mi'kmaw businesses empowers Mi'kmaw entrepreneurs and helps build sustainable economies within their communities. This empowerment fosters self-reliance and economic resilience.
- **Authentic Visitor Experiences:** Visitors are increasingly seeking authentic cultural experiences. Supporting Mi'kmaw businesses ensures that visitors receive genuine, enriching experiences that accurately reflect Mi'kmaw culture.

Tourism education and authenticity are fundamental to the success and sustainability of Mi'kmaw cultural tourism. By focusing on comprehensive education programs and strict authenticity guidelines, Mi'kmaw communities can preserve their cultural heritage, empower their entrepreneurs, and provide meaningful experiences for visitors.

Business Opportunities within the Mi'kmaw Tourism Industry

To diversify and strengthen the Mi'kmaw tourism industry, several business opportunities can be developed, focusing on cultural authenticity, traditional practices, and unique experiences. Here are some creative and viable business recommendations:

1. Artisan Craft Shops:

- Traditional Crafts: Establish shops that sell handmade Mi'kmaw crafts such as beadwork, quillwork, baskets, and pottery. These items can be crafted by local artists, preserving traditional methods and designs.
- Art Galleries: Showcase and sell artwork created by Mi'kmaw artists, including paintings, sculptures, and prints. Galleries can also host exhibitions and cultural events to attract visitors.

2. Cultural Experience Tours:

- Guided Canoe Treks: Offer guided canoe trips on traditional Mi'kmaw waterways. These tours can include storytelling about the history and significance of the routes, traditional fishing techniques, and wildlife observation.
- Fishing Guides: Provide guided fishing experiences that teach traditional Mi'kmaw fishing methods. This can include both freshwater and saltwater fishing, depending on the region.
- Hiking and Nature Walks: Conduct guided nature walks that highlight the natural beauty of Mi'kmaw territory. Guides can share knowledge about local flora and fauna, traditional uses of plants, and environmental stewardship practices.

3. Cultural Workshops and Classes:

- Crafting Workshops: Offer workshops where visitors can learn traditional Mi'kmaw crafts such as basket weaving, beadwork, and quillwork. These hands-on experiences can be a unique draw for tourists.
- Cooking Classes: Host cooking classes that teach traditional Mi'kmaw recipes and cooking techniques. Visitors can learn to prepare dishes using local ingredients, offering a taste of Mi'kmaw culinary heritage.
- Language and Storytelling: Provide classes and sessions on the Mi'kmaw language and traditional storytelling. This helps preserve the language and offers tourists a deeper understanding of Mi'kmaw culture.

4. Outdoor Adventure and Eco-Tourism:

- Eco-Lodges and Campgrounds: Develop eco-friendly accommodations that blend with the natural environment and promote sustainable tourism practices. These lodges can offer a rustic yet comfortable experience for eco-conscious travelers.
- Wildlife Tours: Offer guided wildlife tours that focus on the diverse species found in Mi'kmaw territories. These tours can emphasize conservation efforts and traditional ecological knowledge.

Business Opportunities within the Mi'kmaw Tourism Industry

5. Cultural Festivals and Events:

- Annual Cultural Festivals: Organize annual festivals that celebrate Mi'kmaw culture, including music, dance, crafts, and traditional food. These events can attract large numbers of visitors and provide significant economic benefits.
- Seasonal Celebrations: Host seasonal events that align with Mi'kmaw cultural practices, such as powwows, harvest celebrations, and winter feasts.

6. Heritage and Historical Tours:

- Historical Site Tours: Develop tours of significant historical sites within Mi'kmaw territories. These tours can include visits to ancient settlements, sacred sites, and locations of historical events.
- Museum Exhibits: Create museum exhibits that display Mi'kmaw artifacts, historical documents, and multimedia presentations. These exhibits can educate visitors about the rich history and heritage of the Mi'kmaw people.

7. Culinary Tourism:

- Traditional Food Stalls: Set up food stalls that sell traditional Mi'kmaw dishes at local markets, festivals, and tourist hotspots.
- Farm-to-Table Restaurants: Open restaurants that focus on locally sourced ingredients and traditional Mi'kmaw recipes, offering a unique dining experience.

8. Wellness and Healing Retreats:

- Healing Lodges: Establish retreats that focus on traditional Mi'kmaw healing practices, including sweat lodges, herbal medicine, and spiritual guidance.
- Wellness Workshops: Offer workshops and retreats that combine traditional wellness practices with modern techniques, such as meditation, yoga, and nature therapy.

9. Accommodation and Hospitality:

- Cultural Homestays: Provide homestay experiences where visitors can stay with Mi'kmaw families, offering a deeper cultural immersion and personal connection.
- Bed and Breakfasts: Develop bed and breakfast establishments that offer cozy accommodations with a touch of Mi'kmaw culture, including traditional décor and local cuisine.

10. Interactive and Educational Experiences:

- Living History Programs: Create interactive programs where visitors can participate in reenactments of historical events and daily life in traditional Mi'kmaw communities.
- Cultural Performance Groups: Form performance groups that travel to different venues, showcasing traditional Mi'kmaw music, dance, and storytelling.

◦

Economic Impact of Events in Mi'kmaw Communities

The Power of Events to First Nations Communities

Economic Impact on First Nations and Neighboring Communities

Events held in First Nations communities can have significant economic impacts, benefiting not only the host community but also the surrounding areas. These events can attract visitors, generate revenue, and create opportunities for cultural exchange and community development. Let's explore the potential impacts, using the example of an event that hosts 800 people over two days and costs \$200,000 to put on.

Direct Economic Benefits to First Nations

1. Revenue Generation:

- Ticket Sales: If each attendee pays an average of \$50 for a ticket, the total revenue from ticket sales would be \$40,000.
- Vendor Sales: Local artisans, food vendors, and businesses can generate significant income. If 20 vendors each make an average of \$1,500 over the event, this totals \$30,000.
- Sponsorships and Grants: Events often attract sponsorships and grants. Assuming \$50,000 in sponsorships and grants, this provides additional financial support.

2. Employment Opportunities:

- Temporary Jobs: Events create temporary jobs for community members in roles such as event staff, security, setup and teardown crews, and vendors.
- Long-Term Opportunities: Successful events can lead to the establishment of annual festivals, creating ongoing employment and business opportunities.

Indirect Economic Benefits to Neighboring Communities

1. Tourism and Hospitality:

- Hotel Stays: Assuming 50% of attendees (400 people) stay in nearby hotels for one night at an average cost of \$150 per night, the total revenue for local hotels would be \$60,000.
- Restaurants and Bars: Attendees are likely to dine at local restaurants and bars. If each attendee spends an average of \$50 on food and drinks, the total revenue would be \$40,000.

2. Retail and Services:

- Local Shops: Visitors may also spend money at local shops, gas stations, and other services. Assuming an average spend of \$30 per attendee, this would total \$24,000.

Economic Impact of Events in Mi'kmaw Communities

Tax Revenue and Economic Multiplier Effect

1. Tax Revenue:

- Sales Tax: Assuming a 15% sales tax on \$164,000 (total spending by attendees and local businesses), the government would collect \$24,600 in sales tax.
- Income Tax: The income generated by temporary and long-term jobs, as well as increased business revenues, contributes to higher income tax collections.

2. Economic Multiplier Effect:

- Increased Local Spending: The revenue generated by the event and the increased income for local residents and businesses often leads to further spending within the community. This multiplier effect can significantly boost the local economy.

Cultural and Social Benefits

1. Cultural Exchange:

- Showcasing Culture: Events provide an opportunity to showcase Mi'kmaw culture, traditions, and heritage to a broader audience, fostering greater understanding and appreciation.
- Community Pride: Successfully hosting events enhances community pride and cohesion, encouraging further cultural and social initiatives.

2. Community Development:

- Infrastructure Improvements: Hosting events can lead to improvements in local infrastructure, such as roads, community centers, and event facilities, which benefit the community long-term.
- Skill Development: Organizing and managing events helps community members develop valuable skills in project management, hospitality, and business.

Events held in First Nations communities have the potential to create significant economic, cultural, and social benefits. By attracting visitors, generating revenue, and fostering cultural exchange, these events can enhance the vitality of both the host community and neighboring areas. The economic impact includes direct revenue from ticket sales, vendor income, and sponsorships, as well as indirect benefits such as increased spending in local hotels, restaurants, and shops. Additionally, the tax revenue generated supports government services, and the economic multiplier effect further boosts local economies. Supporting and expanding Mi'kmaw tourism events can thus be a powerful tool for community development and reconciliation.

Economic Impact of Events in Mi'kmaw Communities

Taxation and Indigenous Communities in Canada

Federal Taxation

1. Income Tax:

- Indigenous people are subject to the same income tax laws as non-Indigenous Canadians, with specific exemptions under Section 87 of the Indian Act. Income earned on a reserve is exempt from federal income tax. This exemption applies if the income is connected to reserve-based employment or business activities ([FutSkillsCentre](#)) ([ISC-SAC](#)).
- For the income to be tax-exempt, the employer must be situated on a reserve, and the employee's duties must be primarily performed on a reserve. Income earned off-reserve is generally subject to taxation.

2. Goods and Services Tax (GST) and Harmonized Sales Tax (HST):

- Indigenous individuals and bands are generally exempt from paying GST/HST on goods and services acquired on reserve or delivered to a reserve. However, goods purchased off-reserve are subject to GST/HST unless delivered to a reserve by the vendor or an agent ([ISC-SAC](#)) ([ISC-SAC](#)).
- Businesses on reserve must charge GST/HST to non-Indigenous customers. The tax exemption for Indigenous people does not extend to non-Indigenous people purchasing goods or services on reserve.

Provincial Taxation

1. Provincial Income Tax:

- Similar to federal income tax, provincial income tax exemptions apply to income earned on a reserve. Each province aligns with the federal guidelines provided under the Indian Act. If income is exempt from federal tax due to being earned on reserve, it is also exempt from provincial tax.

2. Provincial Sales Tax (PST):

- In provinces with a PST, such as British Columbia and Saskatchewan, Indigenous individuals are generally exempt from paying PST on goods and services purchased on a reserve. When goods are delivered to a reserve, they may also be exempt from PST, similar to the GST/HST exemptions.

Economic Impact of Events in Mi'kmaw Communities

Taxation and Indigenous Communities in Canada

Municipal Taxation

1. Property Tax:

- Property on reserve land is exempt from municipal property taxes under Section 87 of the Indian Act. This exemption applies to both individual and band-owned property.
- Properties owned by Indigenous individuals or entities off-reserve are subject to the same property taxes as non-Indigenous properties.

2. Service Fees:

- Municipalities may charge service fees for utilities and services provided to reserve lands. These are not taxes but fees for services such as water, sewage, and waste management.

Misconceptions and Realities

• General Tax Exemptions:

- A common misconception is that all Indigenous people are exempt from all forms of tax. In reality, tax exemptions are specific and generally apply to income and goods related to activities on reserve lands.

• Business and Employment:

- Indigenous people working off-reserve or owning businesses off-reserve are typically subject to the same tax regulations as non-Indigenous Canadians. Income earned in these contexts is fully taxable.
- Indigenous businesses on reserve must charge applicable taxes, such as GST/HST, to non-Indigenous customers.

• Sales Tax:

- Indigenous people are not automatically exempt from sales taxes on all purchases. The exemption is specific to transactions that occur on reserve lands or when goods are delivered to a reserve.

Summary

The taxation landscape for Indigenous communities in Canada is nuanced, with specific exemptions provided under the Indian Act for income and goods connected to reserve lands. These exemptions are designed to respect the unique legal and economic status of Indigenous peoples; however, Indigenous individuals and businesses operating off-reserve are generally subject to the same federal, provincial, and municipal taxes as other Canadians. Additionally, businesses on reserves are required to charge applicable taxes to non-Indigenous customers. Understanding these distinctions is crucial for accurately navigating the tax obligations and benefits available to Mi'kmaw communities.

Economic Impact of Events in Mi'kmaw Communities

Importance of a Future Taxation Study for Indigenous Businesses

Conducting a future taxation study specific to Indigenous businesses is crucial for several reasons. First, it would provide a comprehensive understanding of the unique tax challenges and opportunities faced by Indigenous entrepreneurs. Currently, there is a significant knowledge gap regarding the taxation of Indigenous businesses, particularly those operating on and off reserve lands. A detailed study would help identify and address the specific tax barriers that hinder the growth and sustainability of these businesses.

Moreover, such a study would inform policy development aimed at fostering a more equitable tax environment for Indigenous businesses. By examining how existing tax policies impact Indigenous enterprises, the study could recommend tailored tax incentives and exemptions that support economic empowerment and self-sufficiency. This would align with broader efforts towards reconciliation by ensuring that Indigenous businesses are not disproportionately disadvantaged by the tax system.

Additionally, a taxation study would provide valuable data to support advocacy efforts. Indigenous business leaders and organizations could use this information to engage with government officials, advocating for changes that reflect the unique circumstances of Indigenous businesses. This would help ensure that tax policies are inclusive and supportive of the economic development goals of Indigenous communities.

In summary, a future taxation study specific to Indigenous businesses is essential for creating a fair and supportive tax environment. It would help address existing disparities, inform policy development, and support advocacy efforts, ultimately contributing to the economic resilience and growth of Indigenous communities.

Cultural and Tourism Roundtable

Recommendation for a Cultural and Tourism Roundtable

To support the development and expansion of Mi'kmaw tourism in Nova Scotia, we recommend establishing a Cultural and Tourism Roundtable. This roundtable will serve as a collaborative forum for funders, stakeholders, and interested parties to discuss strategies, share insights, and coordinate efforts to enhance Mi'kmaw tourism and cultural initiatives.

Purpose and Objectives

The primary purpose of the Cultural and Tourism Roundtable is to foster collaboration and ensure that funding and support mechanisms are aligned with the needs and aspirations of Mi'kmaw communities. The roundtable will:

1. Facilitate Dialogue and Collaboration

- Provide a platform for open dialogue between Mi'kmaw communities, government agencies, funding bodies, and tourism organizations.
- Encourage collaboration on joint projects and initiatives that promote Mi'kmaw culture and tourism.

2. Align Funding with Community Needs

- Ensure that funding programs are tailored to address the unique challenges and opportunities within Mi'kmaw communities.
- Identify gaps in current funding structures and propose solutions to improve accessibility and effectiveness.

3. Promote Cultural Authenticity and Sustainability

- Develop guidelines and best practices for preserving cultural authenticity in tourism initiatives.
- Advocate for sustainable tourism practices that respect and protect Mi'kmaw cultural and environmental heritage.

4. Enhance Marketing and Promotion

- Coordinate marketing efforts to raise awareness of Mi'kmaw tourism experiences both locally and internationally.
- Highlight successful Mi'kmaw tourism businesses and cultural events to attract more visitors.

5. Support Economic Empowerment

- Identify opportunities for economic development and entrepreneurship within Mi'kmaw communities.
- Provide resources and training to help Mi'kmaw entrepreneurs succeed in the tourism industry.

Cultural and Tourism Roundtable

Participants

The Cultural and Tourism Roundtable should include representatives from a diverse range of organizations and stakeholder groups to ensure comprehensive and inclusive discussions. Key participants should include:

1. Mi'kmaw Community Leaders

- Chiefs and council members from each of the 13 Mi'kmaw communities in Nova Scotia.
- Representatives from urban Mi'kmaw populations, particularly those in Halifax.

2. Indigenous Tourism Organizations

- Nova Scotia Indigenous Tourism Enterprise Network (NSITEN).
- Indigenous Tourism Association of Canada (ITAC).

3. Government Agencies

- Department of Communities, Culture, Tourism, and Heritage (CCTH).
- Atlantic Canada Opportunities Agency (ACOA).
- Indigenous Services Canada (ISC).

4. Funding Bodies

- Provincial and federal grant programs relevant to tourism and cultural development.
- Private foundations and philanthropic organizations with a focus on Indigenous initiatives.

5. Tourism and Business Associations

- Tourism Industry Association of Nova Scotia (TIANS).
- Destination Cape Breton and other regional tourism marketing organizations.

6. Educational Institutions

- Universities and colleges with programs in tourism, business, and Indigenous studies.
- Research organizations focused on cultural preservation and economic development.

7. Non-Governmental Organizations

- NGOs involved in cultural preservation, environmental sustainability, and community development.

8. Private Sector Partners

- Representatives from the hospitality industry, including hotels, restaurants, and tour operators.
- Indigenous and non-Indigenous businesses with a vested interest in promoting Mi'kmaw tourism.

The coordinated efforts of a roundtable will contribute to the overall success and vibrancy of Mi'kmaw tourism in Nova Scotia, benefiting Mi'kmaw communities and the broader provincial economy.

Land and Business Development Strategies for Mi'kmaw Tourism in Nova Scotia

Land Considerations for Mi'kmaw Tourism Development

Access to land is a critical component of developing Mi'kmaw tourism in Nova Scotia, a region that is historically and legally recognized as unceded Mi'kmaq territory. For both community-based and entrepreneurial tourism ventures, the availability and accessibility of land, whether Crown, provincial, or federal, present unique opportunities and challenges.

Unceded Territory and Land Rights

Nova Scotia is part of Mi'kma'ki, the traditional and unceded territory of the Mi'kmaq people. This means that, although treaties exist, the land was never surrendered, and the Mi'kmaq hold inherent rights to it. Recognizing these rights is crucial for any discussion about land use and tourism development. The concept of "Land Back" is an important initiative that seeks to return control of lands to Indigenous peoples, fostering self-determination and the ability to steward their lands according to traditional practices and modern needs.

Access to Crown, Provincial, and Federal Lands

Access to Crown, provincial, and federal lands is pivotal for expanding Mi'kmaw & Indigenous tourism. These lands often encompass significant natural and cultural sites that are integral to authentic Mi'kmaw & Indigenous tourism experiences. However, restrictions and bureaucratic hurdles can limit the use of these lands for tourism purposes:

1. **Crown Lands:** These are public lands managed by the provincial government. Access for tourism development can involve lengthy processes, including environmental assessments and obtaining permits. Streamlining these processes and ensuring that Mi'kmaw & Indigenous communities have prioritized access could significantly enhance tourism opportunities.
2. **Provincial Lands:** Similar to Crown lands, provincial parks and heritage sites are often key attractions for tourism. However, current regulations may restrict development and use by Mi'kmaw communities. Policies that facilitate co-management agreements or direct transfers of such lands to Mi'kmaw governance could help overcome these barriers.
3. **Federal Lands:** Lands under federal jurisdiction, such as national parks, also offer significant tourism potential. Collaborative management agreements between federal agencies and Indigenous communities can ensure that tourism development aligns with both conservation goals and Mi'kmaw & Indigenous cultural practices.

Land and Business Development Strategies for Mi'kmaw Tourism in Nova Scotia

Challenges and Opportunities for Off-Reserve Development

Most Mi'kmaw businesses are located on reserve lands, where infrastructure and market access may be limited. Expanding tourism businesses off-reserve can provide greater opportunities but also comes with challenges

1. **Funding and Support:** Off-reserve businesses often face difficulties in accessing funding that is otherwise available for on-reserve enterprises. Establishing funding mechanisms specifically tailored for off-reserve Mi'kmaw tourism ventures can mitigate this issue.
2. **Land Use Restrictions:** Mi'kmaw entrepreneurs might face restrictions related to zoning, land use policies, and environmental regulations when developing off-reserve. Advocating for policy changes that recognize Mi'kmaw & Indigenous land rights and allow more flexible land use can facilitate business development.
3. **Land Back Initiatives:** Supporting the "Land Back" movement can create a more conducive environment for Mi'kmaw tourism by returning lands to Mi'kmaw control. This not only respects historical treaties but also empowers communities to develop tourism in ways that are culturally appropriate and economically beneficial.

Mainstream Tourism Opportunities and Mi'kmaw Inclusion

Mainstream tourism opportunities in Nova Scotia often revolve around key attractions like the Cabot Trail, national parks, and coastal regions. Ensuring Mi'kmaw presence and participation in these areas is vital:

1. **Representation and Inclusion:** Incorporating Mi'kmaw cultural sites and narratives into mainstream tourism attractions can enrich visitor experiences and promote cultural understanding. This requires partnerships between Mi'kmaw communities and mainstream tourism operators.
2. **Economic Benefits:** The economic impact of tourism can extend beyond Mi'kmaw communities to neighboring non-Indigenous businesses, such as hotels and restaurants. Events and attractions managed by Mi'kmaw communities can drive regional economic growth, benefiting both Mi'kmaw and non-Indigenous stakeholders.

Land and Business Development Strategies for Mi'kmaw Tourism in Nova Scotia

Recommendations

1. **Policy Advocacy:** Advocate for policies that facilitate access to Crown, provincial, and federal lands for Mi'kmaw & Indigenous tourism development, including co-management agreements and streamlined permitting processes.
2. **Funding Mechanisms:** Develop targeted funding programs to support off-reserve Mi'kmaw tourism businesses, ensuring equitable access to financial resources.
3. **Land Back Initiatives:** Support initiatives that return lands to Mi'kmaw & Indigenous control, enabling communities to manage and develop tourism in line with their cultural values and economic goals.
4. **Inclusive Development:** Foster partnerships between Mi'kmaw communities and mainstream tourism operators to ensure representation and inclusion in major tourism attractions.
5. **Comprehensive Planning:** Integrate land use planning with tourism development strategies, ensuring that Mi'kmaw & Indigenous land rights are respected and that tourism initiatives align with community priorities and environmental sustainability.

By addressing land access issues and supporting Indigenous control over their traditional territories, the province can help create a robust and sustainable Indigenous tourism sector that benefits all Nova Scotians.

Current Challenges for Mi'kmaw Businesses

1. Lack of Funding from Bands:

- **Limited Financial Support:** Many First Nations bands have limited financial resources and are often unable to provide substantial funding to support the establishment and growth of businesses within their communities. The focus of band funding is frequently on essential services and community infrastructure rather than business development.
- **Dependency on External Funding:** Mi'kmaw entrepreneurs often rely on external funding sources, such as federal and provincial grants, loans, and private investments, which can be challenging to secure.

2. Limited Space on Reserve:

- **Land Constraints:** Many reserves have limited land available for business development due to small land bases and high population densities. This restriction makes it difficult for businesses to find suitable locations to operate and expand.
- **Competition for Land Use:** The available land on reserves is often prioritized for housing, community facilities, and other essential services, leaving little room for commercial ventures.

Land and Business Development Strategies for Mi'kmaw Tourism in Nova Scotia

Recommendations

1. **Policy Advocacy:** Advocate for policies that facilitate access to Crown, provincial, and federal lands for Mi'kmaw tourism development, including co-management agreements and streamlined permitting processes.
2. **Funding Mechanisms:** Develop targeted funding programs to support off-reserve Mi'kmaw tourism businesses, ensuring equitable access to financial resources.
3. **Land Back Initiatives:** Support initiatives that return lands to Mi'kmaw control, enabling communities to manage and develop tourism in line with their cultural values and economic goals.
4. **Inclusive Development:** Foster partnerships between Mi'kmaw communities and mainstream tourism operators to ensure representation and inclusion in major tourism attractions.
5. **Comprehensive Planning:** Integrate land use planning with tourism development strategies, ensuring that Mi'kmaw land rights are respected and that tourism initiatives align with community priorities and environmental sustainability.

By addressing land access issues and supporting Mi'kmaw control over their traditional territories, the province can help create a robust and sustainable Indigenous tourism sector that benefits all Nova Scotians.

Current Challenges for Indigenous Businesses

1. **Lack of Funding from Bands:**
 - **Limited Financial Support:** Many First Nations bands have limited financial resources and are often unable to provide substantial funding to support the establishment and growth of businesses within their communities. The focus of band funding is frequently on essential services and community infrastructure rather than business development.
 - **Dependency on External Funding:** Indigenous entrepreneurs often rely on external funding sources, such as federal and provincial grants, loans, and private investments, which can be challenging to secure.
2. **Limited Space on Reserve:**
 - **Land Constraints:** Many reserves have limited land available for business development due to small land bases and high population densities. This restriction makes it difficult for businesses to find suitable locations to operate and expand.
 - **Competition for Land Use:** The available land on reserves is often prioritized for housing, community facilities, and other essential services, leaving little room for commercial ventures.

Land and Business Development Strategies for Mi'kmaw Tourism in Nova Scotia

3. Lack of Land Ownership:

- **No Individual Land Ownership:** On most reserves, land is held collectively by the band, and individual businesses do not own the land they operate on. This situation can create uncertainty and limit the ability of businesses to invest in and improve their properties.
- **Access to Land:** Securing land for business use requires approval from the band council, which can be a complex and time-consuming process. This can deter potential entrepreneurs and delay business development.

Potential Benefits of Using Off-Reserve Land

Allowing Mi'kmaw businesses to operate on off-reserve land while still benefiting from the advantages of being on-reserve can provide a balanced approach to overcoming these challenges. Here are some potential benefits and solutions:

1. Increased Access to Land:

- **Greater Availability:** Off-reserve land provides a broader range of options for business locations, reducing the competition for limited on-reserve land and allowing for larger or more suitable business sites.
- **Strategic Locations:** Businesses can choose locations that are strategically advantageous, such as areas with higher foot traffic, better infrastructure, and closer proximity to target markets.

2. Ownership and Investment:

- **Land Ownership Opportunities:** Mi'kmaw businesses can purchase or lease off-reserve land, providing greater security and control over their operations. Ownership encourages investment in property improvements and long-term planning.
- **Equity and Collateral:** Owning land off-reserve can provide businesses with equity that can be used as collateral to secure loans and attract investment.

3. Economic Integration and Growth:

- **Market Expansion:** Operating off-reserve allows Mi'kmaw businesses to tap into broader markets, increasing their customer base and revenue potential.
- **Networking and Partnerships:** Being off-reserve facilitates partnerships with non-Indigenous businesses and access to broader business networks, fostering collaboration and growth.

Land and Business Development Strategies for Mi'kmaw Tourism in Nova Scotia

4. Maintaining Benefits of On-Reserve Status:

- **Tax Exemptions:** Policies could be developed to extend certain tax exemptions or benefits typically associated with on-reserve status to off-reserve Mi'kmaw businesses. This approach ensures businesses do not lose financial advantages when relocating.
- **Cultural and Community Ties:** Off-reserve businesses can maintain strong cultural and community ties by employing Indigenous staff, using traditional practices, and supporting on-reserve initiatives.

Recommendations for Implementation

1. Policy Development:

- **Supportive Legislation:** Develop policies and legislation that recognize and support the unique needs of off-reserve Mi'kmaw businesses, including extending certain on-reserve benefits and protections.
- **Incentives and Grants:** Create incentive programs and grants specifically designed for Mi'kmaw businesses operating off-reserve, helping to mitigate initial costs and barriers.

2. Collaboration with Municipalities:

- **Partnership Agreements:** Establish partnership agreements between Mi'kmaw communities and municipal governments to facilitate the integration of off-reserve businesses, ensuring they receive local support and services.
- **Zoning and Land Use:** Work with municipalities to identify suitable land for business development and streamline zoning and land use processes for Mi'kmaw entrepreneurs.

3. Community and Economic Development:

- **Capacity Building:** Provide training and resources to Mi'kmaw entrepreneurs to help them navigate the complexities of operating off-reserve businesses, including financial management, marketing, and regulatory compliance.
- **Support Networks:** Develop networks and support systems for Mi'kmaw businesses, including mentorship programs, business incubators, and access to business development services.

By developing supportive policies and fostering collaboration between Mi'kmaw communities and municipal governments, the government can help create a more equitable and prosperous environment for Mi'kmaw businesses. This strategy aligns with broader goals of reconciliation and economic empowerment, ensuring that Indigenous entrepreneurs have the resources and opportunities they need to succeed.

Land and Business Development Strategies for Mi'kmaw Tourism in Nova Scotia

Current Recognition Issues

One significant issue that surfaced during community sessions is the lack of recognition for artisans and cultural practitioners as legitimate business entities within Mi'kmaw communities, as well as by government departments and some band councils. Despite the fact that many artisans rely on their craft for income, they are often not viewed or treated as businesses. This lack of recognition extends to cultural activities, which are frequently not considered integral parts of the tourism industry, despite visitor interest in experiencing authentic Mi'kmaw culture.

Challenges Faced by Artisans and Cultural Practitioners

1. Lack of Formal Business Recognition

- **Economic Impact:** Artisans who generate income through their crafts are not formally recognized as businesses, which limits their access to business development resources, funding, and support services.
- **Statistical Inclusion:** The exclusion of artisans from business statistics underrepresents the economic contributions of these individuals and the cultural sector as a whole.

2. Inadequate Support and Funding

- **Access to Resources:** Without formal recognition, artisans have limited access to business grants, loans, and training programs designed to support business growth and sustainability.
- **Funding Gaps:** Cultural initiatives often struggle to secure funding as they are not always seen as viable tourism products despite their appeal to visitors.

3. Perception Issues

- **Tourism Disconnect:** There is a disconnect between what visitors to Nova Scotia desire (authentic cultural experiences) and what is formally recognized and promoted as tourism by local and provincial authorities.
- **Cultural Value:** The intrinsic cultural value of artisans' work is often undervalued, leading to a lack of investment in preserving and promoting these traditions.

4. Policy and Regulation Barriers

- **Regulatory Framework:** Existing policies and regulations may not be inclusive of the unique nature of artisan businesses and cultural activities, leading to bureaucratic challenges.
- **Taxation and Licensing:** Artisans may face difficulties with taxation and licensing that are not aligned with the informal, flexible nature of their work.

Land and Business Development Strategies for Mi'kmaw Tourism in Nova Scotia

Possible Resolutions

1. Formal Recognition and Support

- **Business Classification:** Amend local and provincial business classification systems to formally recognize artisans and cultural practitioners as legitimate businesses. This can include adjusting criteria for what constitutes a business to encompass income-generating cultural activities.
- **Support Services:** Extend business support services, such as mentorship programs, business planning assistance, and access to financial resources, to artisans and cultural practitioners.

2. Inclusive Tourism Strategies

- **Integrated Marketing:** Develop marketing strategies that explicitly include Mi'kmaw artisans and cultural activities as key components of the tourism experience. Highlight the cultural richness and uniqueness of these offerings in promotional materials.
- **Cultural Tourism Programs:** Create tourism programs that integrate cultural experiences with other tourism activities, such as guided tours that include visits to artisan workshops and cultural performances.

3. Funding and Grants

- **Dedicated Funding Streams:** Establish dedicated funding streams for cultural tourism that prioritize the support of artisans and cultural practitioners. Ensure these funds are accessible and tailored to the needs of these individuals.
- **Microgrants and Small Business Loans:** Provide microgrants and small business loans specifically for artisans to help them scale their operations, purchase materials, and market their products.

4. Policy Advocacy and Development:

- **Policy Changes:** Advocate for policy changes at the provincial and federal levels to include cultural and artisan businesses in economic development programs and tourism strategies.
- **Simplified Regulations:** Work towards simplifying regulatory requirements for artisans, making it easier for them to operate formally without compromising their traditional practices.

Land and Business Development Strategies for Mi'kmaw Tourism in Nova Scotia

5. Capacity Building and Training

- **Business Training Programs:** Develop training programs tailored to artisans that cover business management, marketing, financial literacy, and digital skills. This can help them navigate the formal business environment and leverage new opportunities.
- **Cultural Preservation Training:** Offer programs that focus on preserving traditional skills and knowledge, ensuring that these cultural practices continue to thrive.

6. Community Engagement and Awareness

- **Public Awareness Campaigns:** Launch public awareness campaigns to educate both the local community and visitors about the importance and value of Mi'kmaw artisans and cultural practitioners. Highlight their contributions to the economy and cultural heritage.
- **Events and Festivals:** Organize events and festivals that showcase Mi'kmaw culture, including artisan markets, cultural performances, and workshops. These events can attract tourists and generate revenue for the artisans.
-

Recognizing and integrating artisans and cultural practitioners into the broader tourism industry is crucial for preserving Mi'kmaw culture, supporting economic development, and meeting the expectations of visitors seeking authentic cultural experiences. By implementing these recommendations, NSITEN and other stakeholders can create a more inclusive and supportive environment for Mi'kmaw artisans and cultural practitioners, ensuring their contributions are valued and their businesses can thrive.

Case Studies and Community Profiles

1. Eskasoni First Nation

- **Population:** 4,314
- **Registered Businesses:** 10
- **Non-Registered Businesses:** 15

Strengths: Cultural center, traditional crafts

Challenges: Limited infrastructure, funding access

Distinguishing Attributes: Eskasoni is renowned for its vibrant cultural center and traditional Mi'kmaq crafts. Visitors can engage in Eskasoni Cultural Journeys, offering immersive cultural experiences that highlight the community's rich heritage. Despite challenges with infrastructure and funding, the community's commitment to cultural preservation makes it a significant draw for cultural tourism.

Community Engagement and Cultural Initiatives: Eskasoni is deeply committed to preserving the Mi'kmaq language and culture, which is evident in their educational initiatives, including immersion programs.

Economic Development: The community has diversified business interests, including tourism ventures that showcase its rich cultural heritage.

Barriers: Like many Indigenous communities, Eskasoni faces issues with economic development, healthcare, and education.

2. Sipekne'katik First Nation

- **Population:** 2,554
- **Registered Businesses:** 8
- **Non-Registered Businesses:** 12

Strengths: Proximity to urban areas, strong community leadership

Challenges: Business literacy, market access

Distinguishing Attributes: Sipekne'katik benefits from strong community leadership and proximity to urban areas, enhancing its potential for tourism development. The community is actively engaged in cultural preservation and economic initiatives, positioning itself as a significant player in Mi'kmaq cultural tourism.

Tourism Assets: Focus on authentic cultural expression and potential development of tourism facilities that respect and promote indigenous heritage.

Community Engagement: Strong emphasis on cross-cultural education and maintaining cultural safety in tourist interactions.

Barriers: Challenges include the need for supportive infrastructure for artisans and crafters, and better integration of community members in tourism initiatives.

Case Studies and Community Profiles

3. Membertou First Nation

- **Population:** 1,750
- **Registered Businesses:** 12
- **Non-Registered Businesses:** 8

Strengths: Successful tourism enterprises, strong governance

Challenges: Infrastructure development, funding

Distinguishing Attributes: Membertou First Nation is distinguished by its successful tourism enterprises and strong governance. The Membertou Heritage Park offers visitors a comprehensive understanding of Mi'kmaw culture and history, making it a model for other Indigenous communities in economic development and cultural tourism.

Tourism Assets: Membertou has a robust economic framework, featuring facilities like the Trade and Convention Centre and Kiju's restaurant, which play significant roles in their tourism sector.

Community Engagement: The community has been active in identifying tourism assets and initiatives, emphasizing grassroots approaches to tourism development.

Future Plans and Recommendations: There is a strong focus on utilizing community assets to further develop destination Membertou and engaging youth in tourism planning.

4. Millbrook First Nation

- **Population:** 1,800
- **Registered Businesses:** 15
- **Non-Registered Businesses:** 10

Strengths: Strategic location, successful partnerships

Challenges: Regulatory barriers, market reach

Distinguishing Attributes: Millbrook First Nation benefits from a strategic location and successful partnerships. The Glooscap Heritage Centre and Mi'kmaq Museum are key attractions that promote Mi'kmaw culture, drawing numerous visitors to the area.

Tourism Assets: The community discussed the potential for business registration improvements and the need for better recognition of indigenous languages in business practices.

Community Engagement: There's strong community interest in developing financial literacy and authentic cultural practices.

Barriers: The community feels there are barriers in education on financial management and authenticity in cultural representation.

Case Studies and Community Profiles

5. Potlotek First Nation

- **Population:** 700
- **Registered Businesses:** 5
- **Non-Registered Businesses:** 6

Strengths: Rich cultural heritage, scenic landscapes

Challenges: Infrastructure limitations, funding challenges

Distinguishing Attributes: Potlotek is known for its rich cultural heritage and scenic landscapes, offering potential for eco-tourism and cultural tourism initiatives. The community actively works on overcoming infrastructure and funding challenges to enhance its tourism potential.

Cultural and Economic Activities: Potlotek is known for its strong cultural heritage and traditional practices, with economic activities centered around fishing, forestry, and tourism.

Community Assets: The community values its language and traditions, with ongoing efforts in cultural revival, including language preservation and community events.

Challenges and Opportunities: Potlotek is working on enhancing cultural tourism and addressing infrastructure needs while maintaining its cultural integrity.

6. Paq'tnkek First Nation

- **Population:** 600
- **Registered Businesses:** 6
- **Non-Registered Businesses:** 5

Strengths: Strong cultural practices, community engagement

Challenges: Market isolation, business literacy

Distinguishing Attributes: Paq'tnkek First Nation is a vibrant community with strong cultural practices and active community engagement. Known for its strategic location and recent economic developments, it is poised for growth in tourism and business sectors.

7. Wagmatcook First Nation

- **Population:** 1000
- **Registered Businesses:** 7
- **Non-Registered Businesses:** 8

Strengths: Natural beauty, community events

Challenges: Funding access, infrastructure development

Distinguishing Attributes: Wagmatcook is celebrated for its natural beauty and active community events, including cultural festivals that attract visitors. The Wagmatcook Cultural and Heritage Centre is a key attraction that showcases the community's rich cultural heritage.

Case Studies and Community Profiles

8. We'koqma'q First Nation

- **Population:** 1050
- **Registered Businesses:** 8
- **Non-Registered Businesses:** 6

Strengths: Eco-tourism potential, cultural assets

Challenges: Infrastructure, market access

Distinguishing Attributes: We'koqma'q First Nation has significant eco-tourism potential, with rich cultural assets and natural resources. The community is focused on developing sustainable tourism practices to attract and accommodate visitors.

Cultural Preservation: We'koqma'q is active in preserving the Mi'kmaw language and culture through various cultural programs and initiatives.

Economic Initiatives: The community has invested in projects that support self-sufficiency and economic development, such as commercial fisheries and local businesses.

Community Engagement: There's a strong emphasis on involving community members in tourism development, with strategies aimed at enhancing cultural tourism and supporting local artisans.

9. Bear River First Nation

- **Population:** 500
- **Registered Businesses:** 3
- **Non-Registered Businesses:** 2

Strengths: Artisan crafts, small community cohesion

Challenges: Small population, limited resources

Distinguishing Attributes: Bear River is known for its artisan crafts and close-knit community. Despite its small population, the community's unique cultural offerings provide a strong foundation for tourism development.

Tourism Assets: Key assets include the Medicine Trail and a strong tradition of craft like basket weaving and canoe building. There's potential for tourism tied to cultural demonstrations and local events.

Community Engagement: Discussions about enhancing visibility and branding, such as associating meals with Mi'kmaw accreditation.

Barriers: The community experiences challenges with visibility and access, needing better infrastructure and promotional strategies.

Case Studies and Community Profiles

10. Glooscap First Nation

- **Population:** 300
- **Registered Businesses:** 4
- **Non-Registered Businesses:** 3

Strengths: Strategic partnerships, cultural programs

Challenges: Funding, market access

Distinguishing Attributes: Glooscap First Nation leverages strategic partnerships and cultural programs to enhance its tourism profile. The community is dedicated to promoting Mi'kmaw culture through various initiatives and collaborations.

Tourism Assets: Notable assets include new cultural grounds and Glooscap landing, with its advantageous location near Halifax and the valley.

Community Engagement: Leaders like Charlotte and Zabrina are involved in tourism development, focusing on youth opportunities and economic development.

Barriers: Tourism is emerging as a priority slowly, with recent initiatives like the first Pow Wow and needs for greater community involvement in tourism planning.

11. Acadia First Nation

- **Population:** 1,300
- **Registered Businesses:** 11
- **Non-Registered Businesses:** 9

Strengths: Community initiatives, cultural festivals

Challenges: Infrastructure, business literacy

Distinguishing Attributes: Acadia First Nation is vibrant with community initiatives and cultural festivals. These events play a crucial role in preserving and promoting Mi'kmaw culture, attracting visitors to the area.

Tourism Assets: Acadia FN is considering a hotel and additional land development, highlighting its strategic location and existing businesses like gas stations and a potential hotel near Yarmouth.

Community Engagement: The community has active crafters and artisans, and there's discussion about developing a Mi'kmaq heritage center near the airport to promote indigenous culture.

Barriers: Funding and infrastructure support are needed, especially for the promotion and sustainable management of cultural and tourism projects.

Case Studies and Community Profiles

12. Annapolis Valley First Nation

- **Population:** 300
- **Registered Businesses:** 3
- **Non-Registered Businesses:** 2

Strengths: Proximity to urban areas, strong cultural identity

Challenges: Market reach, funding

Distinguishing Attributes: Annapolis Valley First Nation benefits from its proximity to urban centers and a strong cultural identity. The community is actively seeking ways to expand its market reach and secure funding for tourism development.

13. Pictou Landing First Nation

- **Population:** 500
- **Registered Businesses:** 6
- **Non-Registered Businesses:** 4

Strengths: Cultural heritage, community engagement

Challenges: Funding access, infrastructure

Distinguishing Attributes: Pictou Landing is known for its rich cultural heritage and strong community engagement. The community is working to improve its infrastructure and access to funding to better support tourism initiatives.

Tourism Assets: Discussed potential for creating visitor centers to educate tourists about local history and culture, leveraging their location near cruise ship routes.

Community Engagement: Community leaders suggest developing more local tourism activities and infrastructure, such as facilities for local crafts and foods.

Barriers: Key challenges include marketing, funding for tourism development, and ensuring that local entrepreneurs receive sufficient support.

14. Halifax Mi'kmaw

- **Population:** 5,877
- **Registered Businesses:** 20
- **Non-Registered Businesses:** 25

Strengths: Urban resources, cultural diversity

Challenges: Urban competition, funding

Distinguishing Attributes: The Halifax Mi'kmaw community benefits from urban resources and cultural diversity. The presence of numerous Mi'kmaw businesses in an urban setting provides unique opportunities for cultural exchange and economic growth.

Case Studies and Community Profiles

Insights from Community Session Notes

The community notes reflect a diverse range of tourism assets and initiatives across different communities, which aligns with the project's goal to document and enhance these assets. Each community has unique offerings, from cultural sites and traditional crafts to modern tourism facilities, which are crucial for tailoring the development strategies.

Key Recommendations Based on the Project Scope and Community Insights

- 1. Documenting and Leveraging Tourism Assets:** Continue to build a comprehensive inventory of tourism assets in each community as initiated. This should include both tangible assets like cultural centers and natural landscapes, and intangible assets like cultural practices and community stories.
- 2. Addressing Community-Specific Challenges and Opportunities:** The detailed community feedback should be used to address specific challenges such as funding, marketing, and infrastructure development. Tailored support in these areas will be crucial for the sustainable growth of tourism in each community.
- 3. Fostering Community Involvement and Leadership:** As highlighted in the project's approach to engage community leaders and members through consultations, continue to foster strong community involvement in tourism planning and decision-making. This will help ensure that the development strategies are culturally appropriate and widely supported within the communities.
- 4. Developing and Implementing Targeted Training Programs:** Utilize insights from the community sessions to develop targeted training and support programs for local entrepreneurs and businesses. Focus on areas like marketing, customer service, and sustainable tourism practices to enhance the professional capacity of these businesses.
- 5. Creating a Feedback Loop:** Establish mechanisms for ongoing feedback and adaptation of strategies based on community input and the evolving needs of the tourism sector. This could involve regular review meetings, updates on the project's progress, and adaptations of strategies based on real-time feedback from the communities.
- 6. Strategic Partnerships and Funding:** Strengthen partnerships with local, provincial, and national bodies to secure sustainable funding and support for Indigenous tourism projects. Leverage these partnerships to enhance the visibility and marketability of Indigenous tourism destinations.

These recommendations aim to align the project execution with the documented needs and aspirations of the Mi'kmaw communities, ensuring that the strategies developed are effective, sustainable, and supportive of the broader goals of enhancing Indigenous tourism in Nova Scotia.

Supporting Data and Research Findings

Breakdown of the "TNS NSITEN Voice of the Visitor Results - 2023"

Introduction

The "TNS NSITEN Voice of the Visitor Results - 2023" report provides insights into visitor perceptions, experiences, and expectations regarding Mi'kmaw cultural tourism in Nova Scotia. This report aims to guide strategic decisions and improvements to enhance the visitor experience and promote sustainable tourism growth.

Objectives

The primary objectives of this report are to:

- Understand visitor motivations and expectations.
- Identify areas for improvement in Mi'kmaw tourism offerings.
- Provide actionable insights to enhance marketing and development strategies.

Methodology

The data was collected through a combination of surveys, interviews, and feedback from visitors who engaged with Mi'kmaw cultural tourism experiences. This mixed-method approach ensured a comprehensive understanding of visitor perspectives.

Key Findings

- **Visitor Demographics**

- A significant proportion of visitors are from within Canada, particularly from neighboring provinces.
- International visitors primarily come from the United States, the United Kingdom, Germany, and France.

- **Visitor Motivations**

- Cultural and traditional festivals: High interest among international visitors, particularly from the UK and Germany.
- Exploring Indigenous culture, traditions, and history: Strong appeal across all visitor segments, with international visitors showing greater interest than domestic ones.
-

Visitor Preferences

- **Activities of Interest**

- High interest in authentic cultural activities, such as traditional crafts, storytelling, and dance performances.
- Strong demand for outdoor eco-tourism experiences, including nature walks, wildlife viewing, and guided tours.

- **Accommodation Preferences**

- Visitors prefer a mix of accommodation types, with a notable interest in culturally immersive stays such as lodges, B&Bs, and home-stays.

Supporting Data and Research Findings

Visitor Satisfaction

- **Overall Experience**

- Visitors expressed high satisfaction with the authenticity and educational value of Mi'kmaw cultural experiences.
- Areas for improvement include infrastructure, availability of information, and online presence.

Challenges

- **Access to Funding:** Many Mi'kmaw businesses struggle with accessing adequate funding to develop and market their offerings.
- **Infrastructure:** Limited infrastructure in some communities affects the overall visitor experience.
- **Business Literacy:** A need for increased business training and support to enhance the market readiness of Mi'kmaw tourism businesses.

Opportunities for Development

- **Enhancing Online Presence:** Increasing the visibility of Mi'kmaw tourism experiences through improved websites and social media engagement.
- **Training and Capacity Building:** Providing targeted training programs to improve business literacy, market readiness, and customer service skills.
- **Partnerships:** Developing partnerships with regional and national tourism organizations to expand reach and attract more visitors.

Recommendations

- **Marketing and Promotion**
 - Develop a cohesive marketing strategy that highlights the unique aspects of Mi'kmaw culture.
 - Utilize social media and digital platforms to reach a broader audience.
- **Product Development**
 - Invest in infrastructure improvements to enhance the visitor experience.
 - Support the creation of new, authentic cultural experiences and events.
- **Capacity Building**
 - Provide ongoing training and support for Mi'kmaw tourism operators.
 - Encourage business registration and formalization to access more funding opportunities.

Conclusion

The "Voice of the Visitor" report highlights the potential for Mi'kmaw cultural tourism to thrive with the right support and strategic initiatives. By addressing the challenges and leveraging the opportunities identified, Mi'kmaw communities can enhance their tourism offerings, attract more visitors, and foster economic and cultural sustainability.

Supporting Data and Research Findings

Breakdown of the 2023-2028 Mi'kmaw Sustainable Cultural Tourism Strategic Plan

Introduction

The 2023-2028 Mi'kmaw Sustainable Cultural Tourism Strategic Plan, titled "Walking Forward Together," outlines a comprehensive strategy to develop and sustain Mi'kmaw cultural tourism in Nova Scotia. The plan emphasizes the preservation of Mi'kmaw culture, language, and traditions while fostering economic opportunities for Mi'kmaw communities. This document is a living, breathing guide influenced by extensive community engagement and reflects the aspirations, concerns, and needs of the Mi'kmaw people.

Organizational Structure

- **NSITEN Board and Executive Strategy:** The strategic governance and oversight provided by the NSITEN Board are essential in guiding the work of Mi'kmaw cultural tourism.
- **Core Values:** Leadership, authenticity, environmental sustainability, partnerships, and integrity are the core values driving this initiative.

Current Landscape and SWOT Analysis

- **National Context:** Indigenous tourism in Canada has shown resilience and growth potential despite setbacks from the COVID-19 pandemic.
- **Local Insights:** Mi'kmaw cultural tourism is in the early stages of development, with significant opportunities for growth.
- **SWOT Analysis:** Identifies the strengths, weaknesses, opportunities, and threats facing Mi'kmaw cultural tourism. Strengths include rich cultural heritage and strong community support, while weaknesses highlight infrastructure and funding challenges.

Strategic Framework

The strategy is built on a GSOT (Goals, Strategies, Objectives, Tactics) model, focusing on:

- **Vision Statement:** A vibrant Mi'kmaw culture and globally recognized destination for authentic Indigenous experiences.
- **Overarching Goal:** Increase authentic Mi'kmaw tourism businesses and experiences by 700% by 2028.
- **Strategic Pillars:** These include cultural tourism leadership, authenticity, sustainable tourism development, partnerships, branding and marketing, training, and infrastructure development.

Supporting Data and Research Findings

Action Plan

The action plan outlines specific tactics and measures to achieve the strategic goals. Key actions include:

- Establishing a Mi'kmaw Tourism Advisory Committee.
- Sharing and promoting the Mi'kmaw Authenticity Brand.
- Identifying funding for developing tourism programs.
- Providing cross-cultural training and developing partnerships.

Importance of Funding

- **Funding Mechanisms:** The plan outlines the need for significant investment to support Mi'kmaw cultural tourism. This includes funding for business development, training, and infrastructure.
- **Indigenous Business Advisor:** Recommends appointing a provincial Indigenous business advisor to facilitate access to funding.
- **Supporting Economic Growth:** Emphasizes that funding will empower Mi'kmaw communities economically, preserve culture, and promote sustainable development.

Treaty Rights and Indigenous Tourism

- **Relevance to Tourism Development:** Incorporating treaty rights into tourism plans ensures respect for Mi'kmaw sovereignty and cultural heritage.
- **Suggestions:** Advocates for policies that recognize and integrate treaty rights into tourism strategies, ensuring Mi'kmaw communities benefit directly from tourism development.

Business Landscape in Indigenous Communities

- **Current Environment:** Many businesses are not formally registered, highlighting a need for better business literacy and support.
- **Registration and Treaty Rights:** Discusses the impact of business registration on First Nations and proposes solutions like a no-fee option for Indigenous businesses.

Summary of Community Profiles

Each Mi'kmaw community has unique features, strengths, and challenges that can be leveraged for tourism development. The profiles highlight population statistics, key businesses, and distinctive attributes of each community.

Conclusion and Next Steps

The strategic plan concludes with a call for ongoing support and collaboration from government, industry partners, and communities to realize the vision of a thriving Mi'kmaw cultural tourism sector. Regular review and adaptation of the strategy will ensure its relevance and effectiveness in achieving the outlined goals.

This comprehensive breakdown showcases the critical areas of focus and the strategic direction for advancing Mi'kmaw cultural tourism in Nova Scotia, emphasizing the need for robust support and investment to achieve sustainable growth and cultural preservation.

A Case for Enhanced Support for Mi'kmaw Tourism by ACOA and the Provincial Government

Historical Context and Treaty Obligations

The history of Indigenous communities in Canada is marked by centuries of colonial policies that sought to assimilate and displace First Nations people. These policies included the forced removal of Indigenous peoples from their lands, the establishment of residential schools, and the suppression of Indigenous languages and cultures. The cumulative effect of these policies has led to the socio-economic marginalization of Indigenous communities.

In Nova Scotia, the Mi'kmaw people are signatories to the Peace and Friendship Treaties, which date back to the 18th century. These treaties, negotiated with the British Crown, were meant to ensure peaceful coexistence and mutual benefit. Crucially, they did not involve the cession of land but recognized the Mi'kmaq's rights to their traditional lands and resources. These treaties affirm the Mi'kmaq's rights to hunt, fish, and trade, forming a legal basis for their participation in economic activities, including tourism.

Current Challenges in Mi'kmaw Tourism

Despite the legal recognition of these rights, Mi'kmaw communities face substantial barriers to developing successful tourism enterprises. These challenges include:

1. **Lack of Infrastructure:** Many Mi'kmaw communities lack the basic infrastructure necessary for tourism, such as transportation, accommodation, and hospitality services.
2. **Limited Access to Capital:** Mi'kmaw entrepreneurs often struggle to secure funding due to limited financial literacy and the absence of collateral.
3. **Cultural and Market Isolation:** Mi'kmaw tourism businesses frequently operate in isolation, without access to broader marketing networks and professional support.
4. **Administrative and Regulatory Hurdles:** The bureaucratic processes involved in establishing and running a business can be particularly cumbersome for Mi'kmaw entrepreneurs.

The Role of ACOA and the Provincial Government

The Atlantic Canada Opportunities Agency (ACOA) and the Nova Scotia provincial government have a critical role to play in addressing these challenges and fostering the growth of Mi'kmaw tourism. Enhanced support from these bodies is essential for long-term success and should be viewed as part of their commitment to reconciliation and justice.

A Case for Enhanced Support for Mi'kmaw Tourism by ACOA and the Provincial Government

The Case for Enhanced Support

1. Economic Empowerment and Self-Sufficiency

- **Job Creation:** Tourism can be a significant economic driver, creating jobs and supporting local businesses in Mi'kmaw communities.
- **Entrepreneurship:** By fostering Mi'kmaw entrepreneurship, tourism development can lead to sustainable economic self-sufficiency for Mi'kmaw communities.

2. Cultural Preservation and Promotion

- **Authentic Representation:** Support for Indigenous tourism ensures that Mi'kmaw stories and cultural expressions are presented authentically, preventing cultural appropriation and misrepresentation.
- **Education and Awareness:** Tourism provides a platform for educating visitors about Mi'kmaw history, culture, and contemporary issues, promoting greater understanding and reconciliation.

3. Reconciliation and Justice

- **Redressing Historical Wrongs:** Enhanced support for Mi'kmaw & Indigenous tourism is a step towards addressing the historical injustices faced by the Mi'kmaq people, acknowledging their treaty rights and sovereignty.
- **Government Commitments:** Both federal and provincial governments have committed to reconciliation. Concrete support for Indigenous tourism aligns with these commitments, demonstrating a tangible effort to support Mi'kmaq self-determination and economic development.

4. Sustainable Development

- **Eco-Tourism:** Mi'kmaw communities are often located in areas of significant natural beauty. Supporting eco-tourism initiatives can promote environmental stewardship and sustainable development practices.
- **Community Development:** Investment in tourism infrastructure not only benefits tourists but also enhances the quality of life for community members, providing improved facilities and services.

5. Leveraging Existing Frameworks

- **Indigenous Tourism Association of Canada (ITAC):** Collaborate with ITAC to leverage their frameworks and resources, ensuring that Indigenous tourism initiatives are supported by robust marketing, training, and networking opportunities.
- **Provincial and Federal Synergies:** Align provincial efforts with federal programs to maximize impact, ensuring cohesive and comprehensive support for Mi'kmaw & Indigenous tourism development.

A Case for Enhanced Support for Mi'kmaw Tourism by ACOA and the Provincial Government

Recommendations

1. Increased Funding and Resources

- Establish dedicated funding streams for Mi'kmaw tourism projects, including grants, low-interest loans, and matching funds for community initiatives.
- Provide financial literacy programs and business advisory services tailored to Indigenous entrepreneurs.

2. Infrastructure Development

- Invest in the development of tourism infrastructure within Mi'kmaw communities, including transportation, accommodation, and visitor centers.

3. Marketing and Promotion

- Fund marketing campaigns that highlight Mi'kmaw tourism experiences, leveraging digital platforms and partnerships with travel agencies to reach broader audiences.
- Support participation in national and international tourism fairs to promote Mi'kmaw tourism offerings.

4. Capacity Building

- Provide training programs in hospitality, business management, and cultural interpretation to build local expertise and enhance service quality.
- Establish mentorship programs that connect Mi'kmaw entrepreneurs with experienced business leaders and tourism professionals.

5. Policy Advocacy and Reform

- Advocate for simplified regulatory processes and reduced bureaucratic barriers for Mi'kmaw tourism businesses.
- Ensure that treaty rights are respected and integrated into tourism policies, providing a clear framework for the participation of Mi'kmaw communities in the tourism economy.

Clarification of Roles and Relationships

To ensure cohesive and comprehensive support for Mi'kmaw & Indigenous tourism, it is essential that the Atlantic Canada Opportunities Agency (ACOA) clarifies its role and relationship when it comes to funding alongside Indigenous Services Canada (ISC) and the Office of L'nú Affairs (OLA). By defining these relationships clearly, ACOA can help streamline efforts, avoid duplication of resources, and ensure that all support mechanisms are aligned towards common goals. This collaboration will enable a more coordinated and effective approach to fostering Mi'kmaw tourism development, ensuring that funding and support are delivered efficiently and equitably.

Recommendations and Future Directions

Review of Nova Scotia Policies on Indigenous Tourism

In Nova Scotia, several policies and initiatives aim to support Indigenous tourism, though there remains significant room for improvement to ensure equitable treatment and robust support for Mi'kmaw communities.

Existing Support Structures

1. **Tourism Nova Scotia (TNS):** Tourism Nova Scotia is a Crown corporation focused on growing the province's tourism industry through marketing, sector development, and visitor services. TNS collaborates with Indigenous Tourism Association of Canada (ITAC) to support Mi'kmaw & Indigenous tourism operators, providing them access to marketing, development grants, and business listings ([Indigenous Tourism Association of Canada](#)).
2. **Federal Gas Tax Fund (GTF):** This program includes transfers to municipalities for infrastructure projects. However, it does not explicitly allocate funds to First Nations, despite their significant contributions through businesses like gas stations on reserve lands ([Plan Your Trip to Nova Scotia](#)).
3. **Partnerships with Indigenous Organizations:** The Nova Scotia Indigenous Tourism Enterprise Network (NSITEN) works closely with Tourism Nova Scotia and ITAC to foster the growth of Indigenous tourism businesses. These partnerships aim to enhance access to funding, training, and market opportunities for Indigenous tourism operators ([Indigenous Tourism Association of Canada](#)).



Recommendations and Future Directions

Gaps and Recommendations

Despite these efforts, current policies fall short in several key areas:

1. **Equitable Revenue Sharing:** Unlike municipalities, First Nations do not receive a fair share of revenue from gas taxes collected from businesses on their lands. To rectify this, a policy should mandate a percentage of gas tax revenues be allocated directly to First Nations communities to support local infrastructure and tourism projects.
2. **Enhanced Presence in Major Tourism Areas:** There is a need for greater Mi'kmaw representation in significant tourism destinations like the Cabot Trail. Establishing cultural centers, market stalls, guided tours, and interpretive signage can enhance visibility and educate visitors about Mi'kmaw culture and history.
3. **Dedicated Funding Streams:** The provincial government should create dedicated funding streams for Mi'kmaw tourism development, similar to those available for organizations like Destination Cape Breton and TIANs. This could include grants for infrastructure, marketing, and capacity-building specific to Mi'kmaw tourism businesses.
4. **Inclusive Policy Development:** Mi'kmaw & Indigenous voices should be integral to the policy-making process. Establishing advisory boards or committees with Indigenous representation can ensure policies reflect the needs and aspirations of Mi'kmaw communities.
5. **Capacity Building and Training:** Increase funding for training programs to improve business literacy and market readiness among Mi'kmaw entrepreneurs. This can include partnerships with educational institutions and business development organizations.
6. **Sustainable Development Initiatives:** Promote eco-tourism and sustainable tourism practices within Indigenous communities. Provide funding for environmental conservation projects and the development of sustainable tourism infrastructure.

Supporting NSITEN and enhancing Mi'kmaw tourism in Nova Scotia requires targeted policy changes and dedicated funding streams. By addressing the existing gaps and implementing these recommendations, the government can foster a vibrant, sustainable Mi'kmaw tourism sector that benefits Mi'kmaw communities and the broader provincial economy. This approach aligns with reconciliation efforts and ensures fair treatment and support for Mi'kmaw businesses, ultimately contributing to the cultural and economic vitality of Nova Scotia.

Recommendations and Future Directions

Funding and Support Solutions

To ensure the sustainable growth and development of Mi'kmaw tourism and Indigenous businesses in Nova Scotia, the government can consider the following funding and support solutions:

1. **Direct Financial Support:** Allocate specific grants and funding streams dedicated to Mi'kmaw tourism development. This could include infrastructure grants, business development funds, and operational support for organizations like NSITEN.
2. **Equitable Revenue Sharing:** Implement policies to ensure that a portion of revenues from sources such as gas taxes and hotel tariffs collected within Mi'kmaw & Indigenous communities are reinvested back into those communities. This approach would support local infrastructure and community projects.
3. **Capacity Building Programs:** Fund training and capacity-building initiatives aimed at enhancing business literacy and market readiness among Mi'kmaw entrepreneurs. This could involve partnerships with educational institutions and business development organizations.
4. **Creation of Indigenous Business Advisor Roles:** Establish Indigenous business advisor positions within provincial economic development agencies. These advisors would provide tailored support and guidance to Mi'kmaw businesses, helping them navigate funding opportunities and business challenges.
5. **Enhanced Marketing and Promotion:** Invest in marketing campaigns that highlight Mi'kmaw cultural tourism experiences. This could include support for digital marketing, participation in tourism trade shows, and the development of promotional materials.
6. **Infrastructure Development:** Provide funding for critical infrastructure improvements in Mi'kmaw communities, such as transportation, accommodations, and tourism facilities. This would enhance the visitor experience and support the growth of local tourism businesses.
7. **Support for Cultural Preservation:** Fund initiatives that preserve and promote Mi'kmaw culture, including festivals, arts and crafts, and cultural heritage sites. These initiatives would enrich the tourism offerings and provide educational experiences for visitors.
8. **Inclusive Policy Development:** Ensure that Mi'kmaw & Indigenous voices are included in policy development processes related to tourism and economic development. This could involve establishing advisory boards or committees with Indigenous representation.
9. **Sustainable Development Initiatives:** Support eco-tourism and sustainable tourism practices within Indigenous communities. This could include funding for environmental conservation projects and the development of sustainable tourism infrastructure.

Recommendations and Future Directions

10. Regular Review and Adjustment of Funding Models: Implement mechanisms for the regular review and adjustment of funding models to ensure they remain responsive to the evolving needs of Mi'kmaw communities and businesses. This approach would ensure ongoing relevance and effectiveness of support programs. By implementing these funding and support solutions, the government can play a pivotal role in fostering the growth of Mi'kmaw tourism and Indigenous businesses, contributing to economic empowerment, cultural preservation, and sustainable development within Mi'kmaw communities.

Expanding Mi'kmaw Presence in Significant Tourism Areas

An important aspect of supporting Mi'kmaw tourism and ensuring equitable representation is increasing the visibility and presence of Mi'kmaw culture and businesses in major tourism destinations, such as the Cabot Trail. Despite being on unceded Mi'kmaw territory, the presence of Mi'kmaw culture in these significant tourism areas is limited. Here are some solutions to enhance Mi'kmaw presence:

- 1. Cultural Centers and Visitor Information:** Establish Mi'kmaw cultural centers and visitor information points at key locations along the Cabot Trail and other major tourism draws. These centers can offer educational exhibits, cultural performances, and information about Mi'kmaw history, traditions, and current communities.
- 2. Tourism Partnerships:** Foster partnerships between Mi'kmaw tourism operators and existing businesses in significant tourism areas. This could involve collaborative tour packages, joint marketing efforts, and co-hosted events that highlight Mi'kmaw culture.
- 3. Signage and Interpretation:** Install interpretive signage and information panels that acknowledge Mi'kmaw territory and provide insights into Mi'kmaw history and culture. These signs can be placed at scenic lookouts, trailheads, and key attractions along the Cabot Trail and other high-traffic areas.
- 4. Ferries and Cruise Ships Cultural Welcome Ceremonies:** Implementing traditional Mi'kmaw welcome ceremonies for passengers arriving on ferries and cruise ships at major docks in Sydney and Halifax can provide an immediate and powerful introduction to Mi'kmaw culture. These ceremonies can include traditional music, dance, and storytelling, creating a memorable first impression and setting the stage for deeper cultural engagement.
- 5. Onboard and Shore Excursions:** Developing partnerships with cruise lines to offer Mi'kmaw-led onboard activities and shore excursions can greatly enhance the cultural experience for visitors. Excursions could include guided tours of significant cultural sites, workshops on traditional crafts, and tastings of Indigenous cuisine. This not only educates visitors but also provides economic opportunities for Mi'kmaw communities.
- 6. Airports:** Installing permanent cultural displays and interactive information kiosks in airports, particularly in high-traffic areas, can educate travelers about Mi'kmaw culture and history.

Recommendations and Future Directions

7. Mi'kmaw Artisans and Performers: Arranging regular performances and demonstrations by Mi'kmaw artisans and performers within airport terminals can provide travelers with live cultural experiences. This can include traditional music and dance performances, craft demonstrations, and opportunities for travelers to purchase authentic Mi'kmaw crafts and products, supporting local artisans and promoting cultural appreciation.

8. Market Stalls and Artisan Shops: Create opportunities for Mi'kmaw artisans and businesses to have market stalls or shops in popular tourist areas. This would provide a platform for selling Indigenous crafts, artwork, and cultural products directly to visitors.

9. Guided Tours and Experiences: Develop guided tours and experiential tourism activities led by Mi'kmaw guides. These tours can offer unique cultural experiences, such as traditional storytelling, wildlife viewing through an Indigenous lens, and participation in cultural ceremonies.

10. Cultural Events and Festivals: Host Mi'kmaw cultural events and festivals in significant tourism destinations. These events can attract tourists and provide an immersive cultural experience, fostering greater appreciation and understanding of Mi'kmaw heritage.

11. Education and Training Programs: Implement education and training programs for non-Indigenous tourism operators and staff in major tourism areas. These programs can provide cultural sensitivity training and information about Mi'kmaw history and culture, ensuring respectful and accurate representation.

12. Digital Presence and Promotion: Enhance the digital presence of Mi'kmaw tourism through targeted online marketing campaigns, virtual tours, and interactive websites. Highlight Mi'kmaw experiences available in major tourism areas to attract a global audience.

13. Infrastructure Support: Provide funding and logistical support for the development of Mi'kmaw-owned infrastructure, such as eco-lodges, cultural retreat centers, and sustainable tourism facilities in key locations.

14. Policy Advocacy: Advocate for policies that recognize and support the inclusion of Mi'kmaw culture and businesses in all major tourism development plans. This can ensure that future tourism projects incorporate spaces and opportunities for Mi'kmaw representation.

Conclusion

Expanding Mi'kmaw presence in significant tourism destinations like the Cabot Trail is essential for promoting cultural awareness, supporting Indigenous businesses, and ensuring equitable representation on unceded Mi'kmaw territory. By implementing these solutions, the government can help create a more inclusive tourism landscape that honors Mi'kmaw heritage and provides meaningful economic opportunities for Mi'kmaw communities. This approach aligns with reconciliation efforts and demonstrates a commitment to respecting and uplifting Mi'kmaw culture in Nova Scotia.

Conclusion

Conclusion and Future Directions

The findings of this comprehensive report highlight the current state of Indigenous tourism in Nova Scotia, underscoring both the challenges and opportunities faced by Mi'kmaw communities and entrepreneurs. The disparity in funding, infrastructure, and recognition of Indigenous businesses compared to non-Indigenous counterparts is a significant barrier to growth. However, the rich cultural heritage and natural beauty of Mi'kma'ki present immense potential for developing a vibrant and sustainable Indigenous tourism sector.

Summary of Findings

1. **Current Business Landscape:** Mi'kmaw & Indigenous tourism businesses, ranging from cultural centers and craft shops to guided tours, face limitations in funding, land access, and formal recognition. These challenges hinder their ability to compete on equal footing with mainstream tourism enterprises.
2. **Land and Resource Access:** The legal and historical context of unceded Mi'kmaq territory, coupled with current restrictions on Crown, provincial, and federal lands, necessitates policy changes to facilitate greater access and control for Mi'kmaw & Indigenous communities.
3. **Opportunities for Off-Reserve Development:** Allowing Mi'kmaw & Indigenous businesses to operate on off-reserve land, while retaining benefits associated with on-reserve status, can drive economic integration and growth, expanding market access and fostering partnerships.
4. **Recognition of Artisans and Cultural Practitioners:** The lack of formal recognition for artisans and cultural practitioners limits their economic potential and undervalues their contributions to cultural tourism.

Recommended Strategies

1. **Policy Advocacy and Development:** Advocate for policies that recognize Mi'kmaw & Indigenous land rights and support access to lands for tourism development. Develop supportive legislation and incentives tailored to the needs of Indigenous businesses operating both on and off-reserve.
2. **Funding Mechanisms:** Create targeted funding programs to ensure equitable access to financial resources for Indigenous tourism ventures. This includes microgrants, small business loans, and dedicated funding streams for cultural tourism.
3. **Inclusive Tourism Strategies:** Foster partnerships between Mi'kmaw communities and mainstream tourism operators to ensure representation and inclusion in major tourism attractions. Develop marketing strategies that highlight Indigenous cultural experiences.

Conclusion

4. **Capacity Building and Support:** Provide training and resources to Mi'kmaw entrepreneurs, focusing on business management, marketing, financial literacy, and cultural preservation. Establish support networks, including mentorship programs and business incubators.

5. **Community Engagement and Awareness:** Launch public awareness campaigns to educate both local communities and visitors about the value of Mi'kmaw & Indigenous tourism. Organize events and festivals that showcase Mi'kmaw culture and generate revenue for artisans and cultural practitioners.

Call to Action

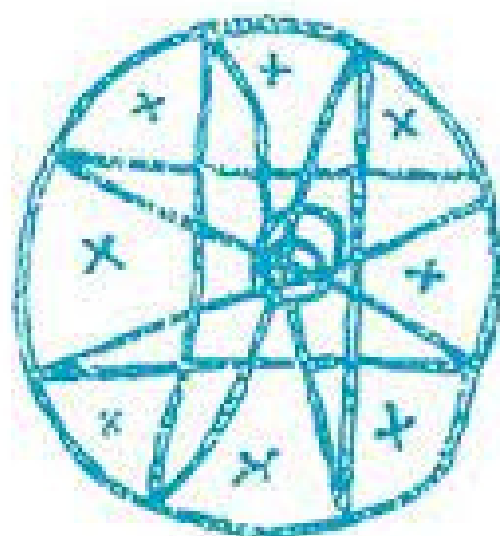
Stakeholders, including government agencies, funding bodies, tourism operators, and Indigenous communities, are urged to consider the recommendations outlined in this report. By prioritizing the development of Indigenous tourism, Nova Scotia can achieve significant economic, cultural, and social benefits. A concerted effort to support Indigenous tourism businesses will not only empower Mi'kmaw communities but also enrich the province's tourism offerings, attracting visitors seeking authentic cultural experiences.

Future Directions

Looking ahead, it is crucial to implement a multi-year secured funding strategy to support Indigenous tourism development. Regular monitoring and evaluation of progress, coupled with ongoing collaboration between stakeholders, will ensure that the strategies are effective and adaptive to changing needs. Embracing these recommendations will pave the way for a robust and sustainable Indigenous tourism sector that honors Mi'kmaq heritage and contributes to Nova Scotia's economic prosperity.

This report serves as a blueprint for action, calling on all stakeholders to invest in the future of Mi'kmaw tourism in Nova Scotia. Through collective effort and commitment, we can create a more inclusive and prosperous tourism industry that benefits all Nova Scotians.





NOVA SCOTIA
INDIGENOUS TOURISM
ENTERPRISE NETWORK

Appendices A

NSITEN Member Registrations Survey

Introduction to Survey Data

The following data is derived from the NSITEN Member Registrations survey conducted between January and April 2024. This survey aimed to gather comprehensive insights into the current state of Indigenous tourism businesses within the Mi'kmaw communities of Nova Scotia. The survey collected responses from 51 participants, encompassing a diverse range of business types, operational statuses, and needs. The findings provide valuable information on the challenges and opportunities faced by these businesses, helping to inform strategic planning and support initiatives. This data serves as a critical foundation for understanding the landscape of Indigenous tourism in Nova Scotia and identifying the areas where targeted interventions and support are most needed.

Summary of Themes, Key Results, and Implications from Survey Data

Themes:

1. Engagement and Participation
 - a. High interest in attending meetings and learning more about ITAC accreditation programs.
 - b. Significant willingness to volunteer and engage with tourism organizations.
2. Demographics and Identity
 - a. Diverse age groups with a strong representation of older adults (55+).
 - b. Majority of respondents identify as female.
 - c. Predominantly full-status Mi'kmaq Nation members.
3. Business Registration and Type
 - a. A substantial portion of businesses are not registered with the Nova Scotia Registry of Joint Stocks.
 - b. Variety of business types, with many identifying as Indigenous business owners, artists, and cultural performers.
4. Use of Social Media and Online Presence
 - a. High usage of Facebook and Instagram for business promotion.
 - b. Many businesses lack websites and mobile compatibility.
5. Training and Support Needs
 - a. Strong demand for marketing, promotion, financial/accounting, and website development training.
 - b. Access to funding and business development training are major challenges.
6. Funding and Financial Status
 - a. Limited access to funding from various sources.
 - b. Most businesses have low gross yearly incomes, indicating financial struggles.
 - c. Mixed levels of tax submission to the provincial government.
7. Operational and Strategic Planning
 - a. A majority are operational for the current tourism season and plan to be operational next year.
 - b. Many lack updated business plans or tourism strategies.
8. Community and Cultural Support
 - a. High demand for more community-level supports for entrepreneurship and cultural tourism development.
 - b. Mixed awareness and involvement in Mi'kmaw Authenticity Guidelines and Branding process.

Appendices A

NSITEN Member Registrations Survey

Key Results

1. Participation and Engagement:
 - 47.1% of respondents are willing to attend meetings if beneficial, indicating a high level of engagement potential.
 - 76.5% are interested in ITAC accreditation programs, suggesting a strong desire for formal recognition and improvement.
2. Business Registration:
 - 51% of businesses are not registered, highlighting a significant area for improvement in formal business practices.
3. Social Media and Online Presence:
 - 80.4% use Facebook for business promotion, but 70.6% do not have a website, indicating a reliance on social media over formal online presence.
4. Training Needs:
 - High demand for training in marketing, promotion, and financial/accounting, pointing to essential areas for capacity building.
5. Funding Challenges:
 - 62.7% face challenges in accessing funding, and many businesses have low annual incomes, indicating financial vulnerability.
6. Operational Planning:
 - 84.3% are operational for the current season, showing resilience but also highlighting the need for strategic planning support.
7. Community Support:
 - 92.2% believe more support is needed at the community level, emphasizing the need for targeted interventions and resources.

Implications

1. Need for Enhanced Business Formalization:
 - The high percentage of non-registered businesses suggests a need for initiatives to encourage and facilitate business registration.
2. Training and Capacity Building:
 - The significant demand for training indicates that programs focusing on marketing, financial management, and website development are crucial for business growth and sustainability.
3. Improved Access to Funding:
 - Addressing funding challenges is critical, requiring tailored financial support programs and easier access to existing funding opportunities.
4. Support for Online Presence:
 - Encouraging and assisting businesses to develop websites and improve online presence can enhance market reach and competitiveness.
5. Strategic and Business Planning:
 - Providing resources and support for business and tourism strategy development can help businesses plan for long-term success and stability.
6. Community-Level Support and Engagement:
 - Increasing support for community-level entrepreneurship and cultural tourism initiatives is essential for fostering sustainable economic development.

Appendices A

NSITEN Member Registrations Survey

Recommendations

1. Establish Business Registration Support Programs:
 - Create programs to assist Indigenous businesses with the registration process, possibly including no-fee registration options.
2. Develop Comprehensive Training Programs:
 - Launch training initiatives focusing on marketing, financial management, and online presence to build business capacity.
3. Enhance Access to Funding:
 - Simplify access to funding and create specific grants for Indigenous businesses, ensuring equitable distribution of resources.
4. Support Digital Presence:
 - Provide grants or services to help businesses create and maintain websites, ensuring they are mobile-compatible and SEO-optimized.
5. Facilitate Strategic Planning:
 - Offer workshops and consulting services to help businesses develop comprehensive business and tourism strategies.
6. Strengthen Community-Level Support:
 - Increase investments in community-level entrepreneurship and cultural tourism programs, ensuring they are tailored to the unique needs of each community.
7. Promote Mi'kmaw Authenticity:
 - Increase awareness and involvement in the Mi'kmaw Authenticity Guidelines and Branding process to ensure cultural integrity.
8. Create a Centralized Support Hub:
 - Establish a centralized hub for Indigenous tourism businesses to access information, resources, and support services.
9. Encourage Collaborative Marketing:
 - Develop collaborative marketing campaigns that promote Mi'kmaw tourism businesses and highlight successful examples.
10. Implement Regular Feedback Mechanisms:
 - Establish regular feedback mechanisms to continually assess and address the needs and challenges of Indigenous tourism businesses.

These recommendations aim to address the key challenges and leverage the strengths identified in the survey, fostering a more robust and sustainable Indigenous tourism sector in Nova Scotia

Appendices B

NSITEN 5-Year Budget - Leadership/Governance

Nova Scotia Indigenous Tourism Enterprise Network

Project Name: Nova Scotia Indigenous Tourism Leadership & Governance

Project Focus: Execute successful delivery of all identified priorities of NSITEN

1	Project Administration	2023-2024	2024-2025	2025-2026	2026-2027	2027-2028
	Project Administrator	\$ 96,000.00	\$ 97,500.00	\$ 99,000.00	\$ 101,500.00	\$ 103,000.00
	Travel	\$ 25,000.00	\$ 25,500.00	\$ 26,000.00	\$ 26,500.00	\$ 27,000.00
	Training/Prof Dev	\$ 17,500.00	\$ 18,500.00	\$ 19,500.00	\$ 20,500.00	\$ 21,500.00
	Organizational Development (BOD Meetings, Implementation, Design, Strategy)	\$ 20,000.00	\$ 21,000.00	\$ 22,000.00	\$ 23,000.00	\$ 24,000.00
	Tourism Industry Development	\$ 30,000.00	\$ 31,500.00	\$ 33,000.00	\$ 34,500.00	\$ 36,000.00
	Board Honorarium and Travel (8.5k + 10k)	\$ 18,500.00	\$ 19,500.00	\$ 20,500.00	\$ 21,500.00	\$ 22,500.00
	External Consultant Support	\$ 25,000.00	\$ 25,000.00	\$ 25,000.00	\$ 25,000.00	\$ 25,000.00
	Professional Fees/Conferences/Etc	\$ 10,000.00	\$ 10,000.00	\$ 10,000.00	\$ 10,000.00	\$ 10,000.00
	Admin costs (Office Rental, Supplies/Etc)	\$ 17,500.00	\$ 20,000.00	\$ 22,500.00	\$ 25,000.00	\$ 27,500.00
	Marketing & Promotion (Organization)	\$ 25,000.00	\$ 25,000.00	\$ 25,000.00	\$ 25,000.00	\$ 25,000.00
	Budget Totals (1-7)	\$ 284,500.00	\$ 293,500.00	\$ 302,500.00	\$ 312,500.00	\$ 321,500.00
	5 Yr Administrative Budget					\$ 1,514,500.00
	NOTE: DETAILS OF ITEMS #2 - #7 IN TABS BELOW					
	Project Descriptions & Values	2023-2024	2024-2025	2025-2026	2026-2027	2027-2028
1	NSITEN Leadership & Governance (Details above)	\$ 284,500.00	\$ 293,500.00	\$ 302,500.00	\$ 312,500.00	\$ 321,500.00
2	Mikmaw Product Development & Promotion	\$ 512,500.00	\$ 492,000.00	\$ 493,000.00	\$ 498,500.00	\$ 507,000.00
3	Sustainable Cultural Tourism Development	\$ 255,000.00	\$ 247,500.00	\$ 260,000.00	\$ 272,500.00	\$ 285,000.00
4	Partnerships & Collaboration	\$ 267,500.00	\$ 266,000.00	\$ 324,500.00	\$ 293,500.00	\$ 329,500.00
5	Marketing & Communications (Branding)	\$ 222,500.00	\$ 234,000.00	\$ 265,500.00	\$ 299,500.00	\$ 333,500.00
6	Training & Skill Development (Market Readiness)	\$ 302,500.00	\$ 267,000.00	\$ 274,000.00	\$ 281,000.00	\$ 288,000.00
7	Infrastructure Development Initiative (VIC's)	\$ 227,000.00	\$ 218,000.00	\$ 226,500.00	\$ 235,000.00	\$ 243,500.00
	All Projects Outlined in Tabs below					
	Budget Totals (3a - 8f)	\$ 2,071,500.00	\$ 2,018,000.00	\$ 2,146,000.00	\$ 2,192,500.00	\$ 2,308,000.00
	Grand Total - Budget Totals	\$ 2,071,500.00	\$ 2,018,000.00	\$ 2,146,000.00	\$ 2,192,500.00	\$ 2,308,000.00
	Grand Total (5 Year Strategic Plan)					\$ 10,736,000.00

Project descriptions available in the detailed outlines provided on the NSITEN's Strategic Plan documents with project deliverables, target and timelines.

Appendices B

NSITEN 5-Year Budget- Product Development

Nova Scotia Indigenous Tourism Enterprise Network

5 YEAR STRATEGIC PLAN BUDGET (2023-2028)

Project Name: NSITEN Product Development & Promotion

Project Focus: Help coordinate NSITEN cultural program development efforts across Nova Scotia.

Project Activities	2023-2024	2024-2025	2025-2026	2026-2027	2027-2028
1 NSITEN Product Development & Promotion Coordinator	\$ 52,500.00	\$ 53,500.00	\$ 54,500.00	\$ 55,500.00	\$ 56,500.00
2 Travel (Community, Meetings/Conference/Training & Development)	\$ 15,000.00	\$ 15,000.00	\$ 15,000.00	\$ 17,500.00	\$ 20,000.00
3 Training & Development Costs for Coordinator	\$ 25,000.00	\$ 20,000.00	\$ 15,000.00	\$ 15,000.00	\$ 15,000.00
4 Cultural Leadership & Development Consultant Support (Contract-Part Time)	\$ 27,500.00	\$ 28,500.00	\$ 29,500.00	\$ 30,500.00	\$ 31,500.00
5 Marketing & Promotion	\$ 10,000.00	\$ 15,000.00	\$ 17,500.00	\$ 20,000.00	\$ 22,500.00
6 Admin costs (Rental Space, Phone, Supplies/Etc)	\$ 7,500.00	\$ 10,000.00	\$ 11,500.00	\$ 10,000.00	\$ 11,500.00
7 Province Wide Cultural Tourism Conference (w/ Partners)	\$ 75,000.00	\$ 75,000.00	\$ 75,000.00	\$ 75,000.00	\$ 75,000.00
a Cultural Training - Artists, Businesses, Industry	\$ 100,000.00	\$ 75,000.00	\$ 75,000.00	\$ 75,000.00	\$ 75,000.00
specific to authenticity model roll out plan (KMKNON/NSITEN)					
b Hosting 4 Regional Workshops on Cultural Tourism Experience	\$ 100,000.00	\$ 100,000.00	\$ 100,000.00	\$ 100,000.00	\$ 100,000.00
Development Training & Land Based Learning Development					
c Hosting 4 Regional Workshops on Authentic Indigenous Culinary	\$ 100,000.00	\$ 100,000.00	\$ 100,000.00	\$ 100,000.00	\$ 100,000.00
Cultural tourism development focus sessions (Tie in with Festival/Events)					
Budget Totals	\$ 512,500.00	\$ 492,000.00	\$ 493,000.00	\$ 498,500.00	\$ 507,000.00

Please Note:

With respect to the Cultural Tourism Product Development and the implementation of the authenticity guidelines document, there is an expectation and a natural anticipation that these projects will grow in size due to the projected interest levels based on recent community engagement session responses. This would work towards developing authentic Indigenous experiences via artists, song, dance, culinary/food, events/festivals. It is estimated that the participation and investment model would target a growth of 15-25% in terms of participants, costs and impacts.

Appendices B

NSITEN 5-Year Budget- Sustainable Cultural Tourism

Nova Scotia Indigenous Tourism Enterprise Network

5 YEAR STRATEGIC PLAN BUDGET (2023-2028)

Project Name: Sustainable Cultural Tourism Development

Project Focus: Research & Development based on updated statistical data on Business Ready, Market Ready, Visitor Ready Businesses

	Project Activities	2023-2024	2024-2025	2025-2026	2024-2025	2025-2026
1	Sustainable Cultural Tourism Development Coordinator	\$ 52,500.00	\$ 53,500.00	\$ 54,500.00	\$ 55,500.00	\$ 56,500.00
2	Travel	\$ 15,000.00	\$ 17,500.00	\$ 20,000.00	\$ 22,500.00	\$ 25,000.00
3	Training/Prof Dev	\$ 10,000.00	\$ 11,500.00	\$ 13,000.00	\$ 14,500.00	\$ 16,000.00
4	Pre-Planning for Project Start-up (2023-2024)	\$ 5,000.00	\$ -	\$ -	\$ -	\$ -
5	External Consultant Support	\$ 10,000.00	\$ 5,000.00	\$ 5,000.00	\$ 5,000.00	\$ 5,000.00
6	Professional Fees/Conferences/Etc	\$ 25,000.00	\$ 15,000.00	\$ 15,000.00	\$ 15,000.00	\$ 15,000.00
7	Admin costs (Rental, Supplies/Etc)	\$ 7,500.00	\$ 7,500.00	\$ 7,500.00	\$ 7,500.00	\$ 7,500.00
	Marketing & Promotion					
a	Sustainable Cultural Tourism Promotion & Development	\$ 15,000.00	\$ 17,500.00	\$ 20,000.00	\$ 22,500.00	\$ 25,000.00
b	Sustainable Cultural Tourism Workshops (Community)	\$ 50,000.00	\$ 52,500.00	\$ 55,000.00	\$ 57,500.00	\$ 60,000.00
c	Digital Marketing Assets (Content Development)	\$ 25,000.00	\$ 27,500.00	\$ 30,000.00	\$ 32,500.00	\$ 35,000.00
d	NSITEN Membership Implementation	\$ 15,000.00	\$ 15,000.00	\$ 15,000.00	\$ 15,000.00	\$ 15,000.00
	... twelve month virtual based yearly series					
e	Industry Initiatives (Provincial/National)	\$ 25,000.00	\$ 25,000.00	\$ 25,000.00	\$ 25,000.00	\$ 25,000.00
	... promote Mi'kmaw Cultural Sustainability					
	... create standards for Mi'kmaw & Industry companies					
	through industry supports, training & development					
	Budget Totals	\$ 255,000.00	\$ 247,500.00	\$ 260,000.00	\$ 272,500.00	\$ 285,000.00

Please Note:

Project descriptions available in the detailed outlines provided on the NSITEN's

Strategic Plan documents with project deliverables, targets and timelines.

Appendices B

NSITEN 5-Year Budget- Partnerships

Nova Scotia Indigenous Tourism Enterprise Network

5 YEAR STRATEGIC PLAN BUDGET (2023-2028)

Project Name: Mi'kmaw Cultural Tourism Partnerships & Collaboration

Project Focus: Help bridge industry, government and community tourism opportunities & cultural tourism education

Project Activities	2023-2024	2024-2025	2025-2026	2026-2027	2027-2028
1 Partnerships & Collaboration Project Coordinator	\$ 52,500.00	\$ 53,500.00	\$ 54,500.00	\$ 53,500.00	\$ 54,500.00
2 Travel	\$ 15,000.00	\$ 17,500.00	\$ 20,000.00	\$ 22,500.00	\$ 25,000.00
3 Training/Prof Dev	\$ 10,000.00	\$ 10,000.00	\$ 7,500.00	\$ 7,500.00	\$ 7,500.00
4 Marketing/Promotion	\$ 7,500.00	\$ 7,500.00	\$ 7,500.00	\$ 7,500.00	\$ 7,500.00
5 External Consultant Support	\$ 10,000.00	\$ 5,000.00	\$ 5,000.00	\$ 5,000.00	\$ 5,000.00
6 Professional Fees/Conferences/Etc	\$ 10,000.00	\$ 7,500.00	\$ 7,500.00	\$ 7,500.00	\$ 7,500.00
7 Admin costs (Rental, Supplies/Etc)	\$ 10,000.00	\$ 12,500.00	\$ 12,500.00	\$ 12,500.00	\$ 12,500.00
8 Tourism Industry Events & Linkage Initiatives					
... Cross Cultural Awareness Training Opportunities	\$ 25,000.00	\$ 27,500.00	\$ 30,000.00	\$ 27,500.00	\$ 30,000.00
... Bridging Industry Events with Cultural Protocol Welcomes	\$ 7,500.00	\$ 10,000.00	\$ 15,000.00	\$ 10,000.00	\$ 15,000.00
... Market Readiness Regional Training Sessions (4)	\$ 40,000.00	\$ 40,000.00	\$ 40,000.00	\$ 40,000.00	\$ 40,000.00
9 Pre-Planning for Project Start-Up	\$ 5,000.00				
... Hosting Provincial/Atlantic Indigenous Tourism	\$ 75,000.00	\$ 75,000.00	\$ 125,000.00	\$ 100,000.00	\$ 125,000.00
Conferences & Regional Tourism Meetings	LIVE	LIVE EVENT	LIVE EVENT	LIVE EVENT	LIVE EVENT
	EVENT	PROVINCIAL	ATLANTIC	PROVINCIAL	PROVINCIAL
Budget Totals	\$ 267,500.00	\$ 266,000.00	\$ 324,500.00	\$ 293,500.00	\$ 329,500.00

Project Overview Details located below (scroll down)

Please Note:

Project descriptions available in the detailed outlines provided on the NSITEN's Strategic Plan documents with project deliverables, targets and timelines.

Appendices B

NSITEN 5-Year Budget- Training/Development

Nova Scotia Indigenous Tourism Enterprise Network

5 YEAR STRATEGIC PLAN BUDGET (2023-2028)

Project Name: Mi'kmaw Cultural Tourism Training & Skill Development Coordinator

Project Focus: Help manage growth for the overall development NSITEN Member Market Readiness

Project Activities	2023-2024	2024-2025	2025-2026	2024-2025	2025-2026
1 NSITEN Training & Skill Development Coordinator	\$ 55,000.00	\$ 56,000.00	\$ 57,000.00	\$ 58,000.00	\$ 59,000.00
2 Travel	\$ 15,000.00	\$ 17,500.00	\$ 20,000.00	\$ 22,500.00	\$ 25,000.00
3 Training/Prof Dev	\$ 10,000.00	\$ 7,500.00	\$ 7,500.00	\$ 7,500.00	\$ 7,500.00
4 Project Plan Development for Project Start-Up	\$ 5,000.00				
5 External Consultant Support	\$ 10,000.00	\$ 10,000.00	\$ 10,000.00	\$ 10,000.00	\$ 10,000.00
6 Professional Fees/Conferences/Etc	\$ 7,500.00	\$ 7,500.00	\$ 7,500.00	\$ 7,500.00	\$ 7,500.00
7 Admin costs (Rental, Supplies/Etc)	\$ 10,000.00	\$ 11,000.00	\$ 12,000.00	\$ 13,000.00	\$ 14,000.00
8 Market Readiness Development Training					
Develop & Implement NSITEN Market Readiness Training Manual	\$ 25,000.00	\$ 17,500.00	\$ 20,000.00	\$ 22,500.00	\$ 25,000.00
Community Cultural Tourism Strategic Plan Development (3 per year)	\$ 75,000.00	\$ 75,000.00	\$ 75,000.00	\$ 75,000.00	\$ 75,000.00
Assist Members with Digital Marketing Assets (Content Development)	\$ 75,000.00	\$ 50,000.00	\$ 50,000.00	\$ 50,000.00	\$ 50,000.00
Online Business Training for Membership (New & Existing)	\$ 15,000.00	\$ 15,000.00	\$ 15,000.00	\$ 15,000.00	\$ 15,000.00
... twelve month virtual based yearly series					
Aligning Market Readiness Projects with the Industry					
Partnership Coordinator's sectoral approach involving					
businesses, industry partners as well as overall					
NSITEN priorities. These will intersect with how plans					
from the ITAC National Perspective builds out their					
strategies in cooperation with Provincial initiatives.					
Budget Totals	\$ 302,500.00	\$ 267,000.00	\$ 274,000.00	\$ 281,000.00	\$ 288,000.00

Overview of project descriptions below - please refer to NSITEN 5 Year Strategic Plan for details.

Appendices B

NSITEN 5-Year Budget- Infrastructure

Nova Scotia Indigenous Tourism Enterprise Network

5 YEAR STRATEGIC PLAN BUDGET (2023-2028)

Project Name: Indigenous Tourism Infrastructure Project Coordinator

Project Focus: Help manage the overall development of program development

Project Activities	2023-2024	2024-2025	2025-2026	2026-2027	2027-2028
1 Indigenous Tourism Infrastructure Project Coordinator	\$ 52,000.00	\$ 53,000.00	\$ 54,000.00	\$ 55,000.00	\$ 56,000.00
2 Travel	\$ 15,000.00	\$ 16,500.00	\$ 18,000.00	\$ 19,500.00	\$ 21,000.00
3 Training/Prof Dev	\$ 10,000.00	\$ 7,500.00	\$ 7,500.00	\$ 7,500.00	\$ 7,500.00
4 Marketing/Promotion	\$ 5,000.00	\$ 5,000.00	\$ 5,000.00	\$ 5,000.00	\$ 5,000.00
5 External Consultant Support	\$ 10,000.00	\$ 12,500.00	\$ 15,000.00	\$ 17,500.00	\$ 20,000.00
6 Professional Fees/Conferences/Etc	\$ 5,000.00	\$ 5,000.00	\$ 5,000.00	\$ 5,000.00	\$ 5,000.00
7 Admin costs (Rental, Supplies/Etc)	\$ 10,000.00	\$ 11,000.00	\$ 12,000.00	\$ 13,000.00	\$ 14,000.00
8 Mainstream Tourism Infrastructure Project Development					
... Connecting to Fed/Prov/Indigenous Depts/Orgs/Comm's	\$ 15,000.00	\$ 17,500.00	\$ 20,000.00	\$ 22,500.00	\$ 25,000.00
... Bridging Tourism Industry with Project Priorities	\$ 15,000.00	\$ 15,000.00	\$ 15,000.00	\$ 15,000.00	\$ 15,000.00
... Developing Visitor Information Centre Projects across N.S.	\$ 50,000.00	\$ 50,000.00	\$ 50,000.00	\$ 50,000.00	\$ 50,000.00
... Linking other Major Projects to Indigenous Culture/Tourism	\$ 25,000.00	\$ 25,000.00	\$ 25,000.00	\$ 25,000.00	\$ 25,000.00
(Note re Above costs are to assist with time/travel/meetings with industry, organizations, businesses, communities, etc)					
9 Infrastructure Project Development Plan/Strategy	\$ 15,000.00				
Infrastructure Budget Development (TBD)		TBD	TBD		TBD
	2023-2024	2024-2025	2025-2026	2026-2027	2027-2028
Budget Totals	\$ 227,000.00	\$ 218,000.00	\$ 226,500.00	\$ 235,000.00	\$ 243,500.00

Project description below - see attached Pg. 2



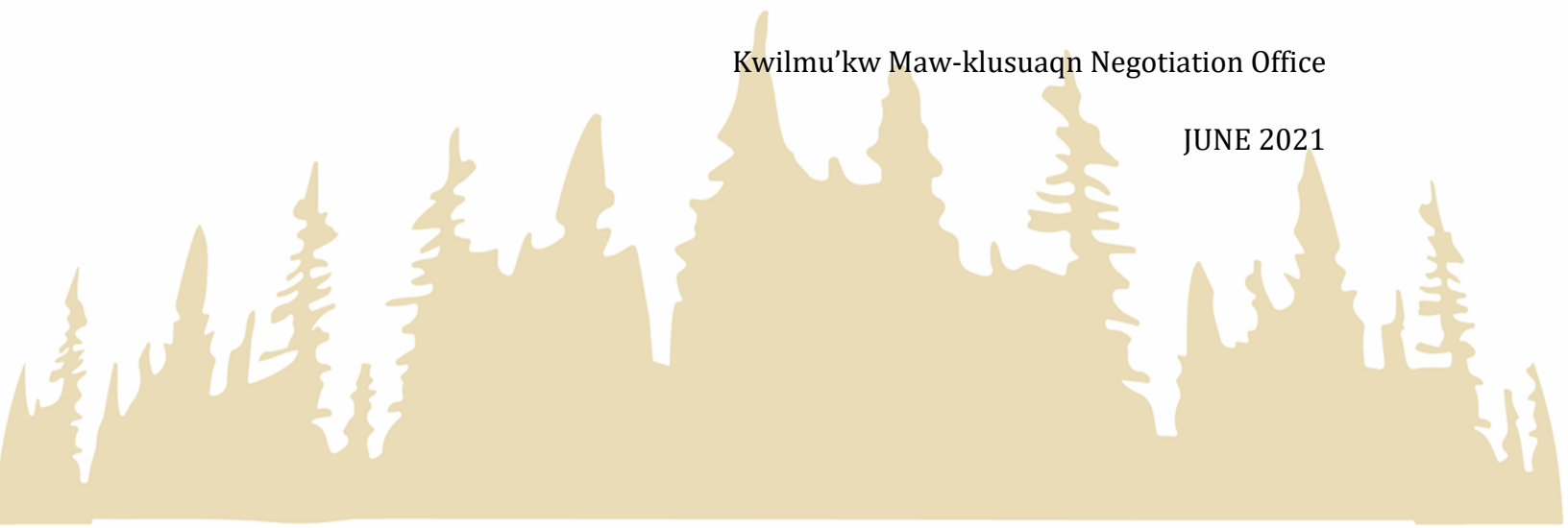
COMMUNITY ENGAGEMENT GUIDE

Authentic Mi'kmaw Cultural Tourism Guidelines for Nova Scotia

(See the *Interim Report* for more information)

Kwilmu'kw Maw-klusuaqn Negotiation Office

JUNE 2021





INTRODUCTION

Since time immemorial, the L'nu'k (Mi'kmaq people) have been artists and crafters. Art was a natural reflection of the world around us. It infused our culture through the beauty and structure of our tools and clothing, our stories, our songs, and our dances. Artists in our communities were recognized and revered for the contributions they made to our way of life. They were respected and supported so that they could do what they do best - inspire beauty and create joy while also helping our communities ensure they had the items they needed to survive.

Mi'kmaw Cultural Tourism provides an opportunity for our people to share our culture and language with others. It instills a sense of pride within our communities, especially for our youth – our next generation. Cultural Tourism creates opportunities to educate and share awareness of who we are as L'nu'k, as well as increasing economic benefit for our communities and entrepreneurs. Whether it is sharing our stories over a campfire, while paddling our ocean waters, or while preparing a traditional meal, the essence of who we are as Mi'kmaq is important and of value.

This Community Guide¹ is a draft document based on interviews with over 20 Mi'kmaw Elders, Knowledge Keepers, tourism operators and artisans. It outlines ideas for creating Authenticity Guidelines, following up on the *Cultural Tourism Strategy for the Mi'kmaq of Nova Scotia (Strategy)*, commissioned by the Assembly of Nova Scotia Mi'kmaw Chiefs in 2018, to outline opportunities and necessary steps for growth in the Indigenous tourism sector in Nova Scotia.

With this draft document, we are seeking to engage with community - Mi'kmaw Elders, Knowledge Keepers, community leaders, artists, crafters, performers, tourism operators and interested community members - to obtain feedback and input for the development of the Guidelines for Authentic Mi'kmaw Cultural Tourism for Nova Scotia. We hope to hear discussions about Mi'kmaw songs, dances, traditional stories, history, traditional images (e.g., petroglyphs) and other cultural ceremonies and practices and how you want to see the Mi'kmaw story told.

¹ In addition to this Community Guide, there is a full draft interim report available with more detailed information and research. Please contact Shannon at KMKNO for a copy.



WHY ARE AUTHENTIC MI'KMAW CULTURAL TOURISM GUIDELINES NECESSARY?

Although we know the COVID-19 pandemic has had huge impacts on the tourism industry globally, we also know that tourism will return and we want to be ready to welcome visitors from around the world. Extensive research has shown that visitors to Nova Scotia want authentic cultural experiences. Here, it doesn't get any more authentic than L'nu'k – the first peoples of this land.

Authentic Mi'kmaw Cultural Tourism Guidelines are required to support the growth and evolution of the Mi'kmaw tourism industry, while safely creating and sharing Mi'kmaw culture and heritage as a tourism offering. At its core, Mi'kmaw Cultural Tourism must be Mi'kmaq-led and have a sincere appreciation and celebration of Mi'kmaw culture. Authenticity – what is real and truly Mi'kmaq – comes from the hearts, minds, voices and hands of the Mi'kmaq - past, present, and future.

Authenticity Guidelines will help our communities to clarify the features of an authentic Mi'kmaw tourism experience for Mi'kmaw tourism operators. They help to address pressing questions such as:

- Which cultural practices or ceremonies can be shared with visitors? Under what circumstances? Which practices or ceremonies should not be shared with visitors?
- Can fees be applied to cultural traditions, knowledge, or ceremonies? How?
- Can ceremonies be part of a larger set of experiences purchased as a package?
- Are spiritual songs and stories able to be shared? Under what circumstances?
- Can ceremonies be photographed and/or filmed?
- What can visitors participate in? What can visitors observe?
- How do the Guidelines protect traditional knowledge from exploitation?
- How do we determine who can deliver authentic Mi'kmaw experiences?
- Who determines who, and what is authentic? What process is needed to certify this?
- Who oversees the implementation of (and enforcement of) the Authenticity Guidelines?
- Are there community considerations that impact what can be shared and what is to be kept sacred?
- How are the Authenticity Guidelines communicated to visitors/tour operators and tourism partners?



Ideally, these Guidelines will be a catalyst for the growth of Mi'kmaw Cultural Tourism, including for those already delivering cultural tourism experiences, and those yet to be created and delivered by Mi'kmaw community members. A desirable outcome of the development of these Guidelines is a sense of ownership and control over our culture, a sense of confidence and unity throughout our communities and an increasing number of Mi'kmaq owned and operated cultural tourism businesses offering authentic experiences and products. This will also help tourism associates throughout the province to better understand how to partner with, and support, Mi'kmaw Cultural Tourism.

THE IMPORTANCE OF AUTHENTICITY

"A Nation approach to broadly share authentic Mi'kmaw culture, language and landscape to enable visitors and residents to connect with, understand and more fully appreciate the original peoples of Nova Scotia, while contributing to socio-economic development in support of greater self-reliance through best-in-class Mi'kmaw cultural tourism."

This vision for Mi'kmaw Cultural Tourism is grounded in the Mi'kmaw values of legitimacy, self-determination, and self-reliance. Collaboration and co-creation are essential for working together to create and grow tourism opportunities with a strong foundation based on Mi'kmaq values - *L'nuimk* - the essence of being Mi'kmaq.

- Pkijo'tmnej – Let's make it last long
- Wlo'tmnej – Let's treat it well
- Maliaptmnej – Let's take care of it



Mi'kmaw authenticity, in a visitor context, supports the presentation and celebration of authentic culture and tradition, by contributing to, presenting, maintaining, and advancing the Mi'kmaq way of life. Implicit in this is ownership and control of Mi'kmaw cultural tourism enterprises. This ensures cultural integrity, while directing both social and economic benefits to the community and its members.



WHAT WE LEARNED

These Guidelines are an initial best attempt to translate complex and powerful discussions into an actionable checklist and guiding resource. The development of the Guidelines will be an ongoing journey. At a high level, there are clear emerging principles that seem to resonate with all Mi'kmaq, while other aspects of authenticity are more complicated and difficult to define. Selected findings from the interviews with Mi'kmaw Elders and Knowledge Keepers are provided below:

- Terms such as honesty, sincerity, positive intentions, and openness were used to describe authenticity. While there was agreement that authenticity comes from Mi'kmaw traditions, ceremony, language, ways of learning and doing, and many intangibles, perspectives are shaped by age, religious affiliation, gender, historical legacy, personal experience, among other factors.
- Everyone agreed that transparency and openness about a story or product's origin and connection to history and tradition is paramount to Mi'kmaw cultural authenticity.
- There was broad agreement that tourism is an important way to celebrate the Mi'kmaw culture.
- A Mi'kmaq delivered tourism experience must connect the visitor to Mi'kmaw culture to be considered authentic.
- It is acceptable to share community ceremonies (e.g., dancing, feasting, pow wows, mawiomis), but it is generally unacceptable to share spiritual, personal and medicine ceremonies (e.g., sweat lodge, naming ceremony) as part of a tourism experience.
- Sharing and monetizing Mi'kmaw ceremonies is a difficult cultural and ethical question, and the answer will likely evolve over time.
- Questions involving ceremonial fees may require input from the Chief and Council, as well as Elders, Knowledge Keepers and other Mi'kmaw experts.
- Authentic experiences, stories, and traditions will vary from Mi'kmaw community to Mi'kmaw community.
- While nearly all participants agreed that it is appropriate for non-Mi'kmaq to collaborate with Mi'kmaw communities and entrepreneurs, Mi'kmaw community members must create, control, and deliver the experience: and
- There was consensus that authenticity (including approval, application, and ongoing refinement of the Guidelines) must be led by Elders, with the support of other Mi'kmaw subject matter experts, and approved at the Community and/or Nation level.



THE ROLE FOR COMMUNITIES TO GUIDE NEXT STEPS

Further dialogue and engagement with Mi'kmaw Elders and Knowledge Keepers, as well as leadership and Mi'kmaw tourism industry participants, is necessary to advance and refine the Authenticity Guidelines – particularly in relation to different approaches and options for collaboration on cultural tourism between Mi'kmaq and non-Mi'kmaq partners. The accompanying Guidelines Checklist (Appendix A) should be viewed as a draft for community review, input and refinement going forward. Judging authenticity is complex and evolving.



Ongoing collaboration with Mi'kmaw Elders and Knowledge Keepers will be integral to ensuring the Guidelines adapt and continue to be relevant.

Points to consider in reviewing the draft Guidelines include:

- What are the strengths of the draft Guidelines?
- What suggestions do you have for improving the draft Guidelines?
- What, if anything, is missing from the draft Guidelines?
- How would community members and businesses be supported to follow the Guidelines?
- What steps, if any, should be taken if community members and businesses do not follow the Guidelines?
- What is the best approach to achieving Community and/or Nation level approval of the Guidelines?
- Would you be available to provide guidance for a community member seeking direction on a cultural tourism experience?
- Is it fair to ask other Mi'kmaw Elders and Knowledge Keepers to provide guidance for a community member seeking direction on a cultural tourism experience?
- What resources are required to support ongoing Elders and Knowledge Keeper involvement in the authenticity process?
- How do we ensure that tourism operators are supported with both cultural guidance and business guidance?
- What is acceptable to offer for a fee to visitors seeking to learn more about the Mi'kmaw culture and history? How would we set the fees? Examples:
 - Guided hike with an Elder along the Bay of Fundy to hear legends or look at medicines
 - Drum making workshop
 - Cooking class using traditional foods and preparation methods
 - Canoeing the shores of the Bra d'Or Lakes to learn about the cultural significance of the lands and waters



- Are the Guidelines helpful in navigating options and approaches for collaboration between Mi'kmaq and non-Mi'kmaq tourism operators to deliver tourism experiences? Why or why not?
- What would you add to a Mi'kmaq Cultural Tourism Authenticity Toolkit? What is undeniably, authentically Mi'kmaq?
- What is sacred and not for sale?
- What would you add to the checklist?





APPENDIX A: AUTHENTIC MI'KMAW CULTURAL TOURISM GUIDELINES

Our ancestors have shared our culture with visitors to our traditional territories since time immemorial, closely guided by their community values of respect, honour and integrity. The only way for our industry to succeed is to continue following those guiding principles when we develop and deliver Mi'kmaw cultural tourism experiences. It not only makes for an authentic experience for our visitors, but also helps to ensure that our future generations have that same opportunity.

Mi'kmaw Cultural tourism authenticity supports the presentation and celebration of authentic culture and tradition by contributing to, presenting, maintaining, and carrying forward traditional and current Mi'kmaq ways of life. An essential element of this is Mi'kmaq ownership and control of cultural tourism enterprises. This ensures cultural integrity, while directing both social and economic benefits to the Community and Community members.

The following Mi'kmaw Cultural Tourism Authenticity Checklist was developed based on the Authentic Mi'kmaw Cultural Tourism Guidelines for Nova Scotia, while reflecting the ITAC Indigenous Tourism Self-Assessment Guide. The development of an Authentic Cultural Tourism Experience Development Guide for the Mi'kmaq of Nova Scotia will be informed by discussion of the following draft protocols:

Mandatory Protocols

The following are considered “mandatory protocols” to be considered an Authentic Mi'kmaw cultural experience. Kwilmu'kw Maw-klusuaqn Negotiation Office (KMKNQ) supports the authority of each community to determine their own cultural protocols and boundaries, while recognizing the diverse values and beliefs of community members.

Is your cultural tourism operation a Mi'kmaw owned and operated business or led by a Mi'kmaw Community or organization?	Yes ☐ No ☐ N/A ☐
Is the cultural content of the experience or product developed by Mi'kmaw Community members?	Yes ☐ No ☐ N/A ☐
Is the cultural content approved by the appropriate Elder, Knowledge Holder or Chief and Council? (What is the approval process within your community?)	Yes ☐ No ☐ N/A ☐
Is the experience Mi'kmaw delivered? (If there are partnerships and collaborations, what is acceptable?)	Yes ☐ No ☐ N/A ☐
Does the experience exclude sacred ceremonies? (Has the community determined this? Is there a list or policy or document to refer to?)	Yes ☐ No ☐ N/A ☐



Does the operation reflect Mi'kmaw cultural values? (How does this connect back to community values? Can you articulate what they are?)	Yes ☐ No ☐ N/A ☐
Does the operation reflect Mi'kmaw culture and traditions? (How does this connect back to your community? What is it based on? Elder teachings? Historical knowledge? Family stories?)	Yes ☐ No ☐ N/A ☐

Recommended Protocols

The following are considered “recommended protocols” to be considered an Authentic Mi'kmaw cultural experience. Kwilmu'kw Maw-klusuaqn Negotiation Office (KMKNNO) supports the authority of each community to determine their own cultural protocols and boundaries, while recognizing the diverse values and beliefs of community members.

Experience Delivery:

Have the operator and front-line staff completed requisite authenticity training (e.g., cultural appreciation)?	Yes ☐ No ☐ N/A ☐
Is the Mi'kmaw presenter speaking from lived experience?	Yes ☐ No ☐ N/A ☐
Is the Mi'kmaw presenter sharing what they have learned from an Elder or Knowledge Keeper?	
Is the experience personalized or shared in an intimate setting?	Yes ☐ No ☐ N/A ☐
Is the experience shared in a culturally relevant or appropriate setting?	Yes ☐ No ☐ N/A ☐
Does the experience provide a personal connection between the Mi'kmaw operator and the visitor?	Yes ☐ No ☐ N/A ☐
Is the Mi'kmaw language appropriately reflected in the experience?	Yes ☐ No ☐ N/A ☐
Does the experience enable the visitor to learn about the Mi'kmaw language?	Yes ☐ No ☐ N/A ☐

Communication:

Does your tourism experience provide opportunities for visitors to interact face-to-face with Mi'kmaw artisans, craftspeople, Elders, storytellers, hosts or entertainers?	Yes ☐ No ☐ N/A ☐
Are visitors exposed to local Mi'kmaw language? Is the Mi'kmaw language included on items such as greetings, signage, printed materials, websites, social media, and other means of communication?	Yes ☐ No ☐ N/A ☐
Have you protected sensitive cultural activities, artifacts, and sites from visitors?	Yes ☐ No ☐ N/A ☐



Community Support:

Are the guests provided with an outline of what to expect from their Mi'kmaw experience and what is considered acceptable behaviour while on site and in the community?	Yes ☐ No ☐ N/A ☐
Do visitors have access to materials that give information on the host Mi'kmaw culture and community? Consider: Are the materials online? Can bookings be made online? Is there a website to access information? Do you use different social media? Do you have additional physical materials onsite? These materials may include guidebooks, pamphlets, brochures, videos, books or other materials.	Yes ☐ No ☐ N/A ☐
Is the local Mi'kmaw community aware of and generally supportive of the tourism initiative? (How do we know? How would we demonstrate this?)	Yes ☐ No ☐ N/A ☐
Do you encourage and welcome Mi'kmaw community input and feedback on the cultural experience?	Yes ☐ No ☐ N/A ☐
Does the tourism experience impact the community's culture and economy in a positive way?	Yes ☐ No ☐ N/A ☐
Are there cultural tourism contacts in the community, and designated Elders and Knowledge Keepers to provide direction and guidance to tourism operators (Mi'kmaw or non-Mi'kmaw individuals or entities)	Yes ☐ No ☐ N/A ☐

How does the community benefit? (i.e., jobs, suppliers, support other business in the region, etc.)

How do you reduce negative impacts on daily life for the community and environment? (i.e., visitor codes of conduct, clear signage, environmentally friendly practices etc.)



Cultural Integrity:

Have Mi'kmaw visual symbols and design elements been incorporated into the experience? Have they been developed by Mi'kmaw artists / crafts people? Have the Mi'kmaw artists/crafts people been adequately compensated for the use of their art?	Yes ☐ No ☐ N/A ☐
Is there a component of the experience that reflects the resilience of the Mi'kmaq?	Yes ☐ No ☐ N/A ☐
Have Elders and Knowledge Keepers approved the experience, story, culture that is being shared with visitors?	Yes ☐ No ☐ N/A ☐

Types of Authentic Experiences:

Authentic experiences can take many forms and incorporate many different media and cultural teachings. They may include artistic expression found in songs, dances, stories, art and crafts, or outdoor activities. They can include animals, plants, medicines, lands and waters. What kind of experience(s) do you offer?

Community Celebration <i>Example: Summer Solstice Mawiomi</i>	Yes ☐ No ☐ N/A ☐
Storytelling <i>Example: Monthly Storytelling Circle featuring a community Elder</i>	Yes ☐ No ☐ N/A ☐
Learning Circles <i>Example: Learning Circle with a focus on Mi'kmaq Centralization Policy</i>	Yes ☐ No ☐ N/A ☐
Cultural Performances <i>Example: Kojua Demonstration</i>	Yes ☐ No ☐ N/A ☐
Outdoor Adventures <i>Example: Culture Camp featuring how to dry fish</i>	Yes ☐ No ☐ N/A ☐
Cultural displays or exhibits <i>Example: Quillbox exhibit</i>	Yes ☐ No ☐ N/A ☐
Traditional Foods <i>Example: Cooking class featuring eel</i>	Yes ☐ No ☐ N/A ☐
Arts/Crafts Workshops <i>Example: Beading workshop</i>	Yes ☐ No ☐ N/A ☐
Interactive discussions between the host and visitors <i>Example: Questions and Answers with a Mi'kmaw fisher</i>	Yes ☐ No ☐ N/A ☐
Cultural Demonstrations <i>Example: How to play Waltes</i>	Yes ☐ No ☐ N/A ☐
The opportunity to understand and appreciate the contemporary community experience. <i>Example: Tour of the community</i>	Yes ☐ No ☐ N/A ☐
On site/near site options for cultural-themed accommodation <i>Example: Cottage by the ocean with Mi'kmaw decor</i>	Yes ☐ No ☐ N/A ☐



Pricing:

Are ceremonial fees charged and collected in a respectful manner?	Yes ☐ No ☐ N/A ☐
Are Elders and Knowledge Keepers adequately compensated for the knowledge and value they bring to the experience?	Yes ☐ No ☐ N/A ☐

Do you support your community by:

Buying Mi'kmaw?	Yes ☐ No ☐ N/A ☐
Hiring Mi'kmaw?	Yes ☐ No ☐ N/A ☐



APPENDIX B: SPIRIT OF THE MI'KMAQ

The *Spirit of the Mi'kmaq* logo and branding strategy was originally developed to identify minimum criteria to qualify Mi'kmaw businesses to use the brand for their market-ready product or service. The goal was to bring together various Mi'kmaw cultural tourism products and experiences within Nova Scotia and to unite them under one common brand.

The brand would serve as a high standard of expectation for the providers of these products and experiences, and as a guarantee of quality and authenticity for consumers. It would also serve as a promotional tool for broad-based tourism communications and marketing, and as a powerful symbol of our Nation's commitment to helping visitors discover the spirit of the Mi'kmaq and share in our deep connection to our ancestral lands.

We are interested in hearing from cultural tourism businesses, artisans, and community members about their thoughts on a Mi'kmaw logo and branding strategy. This includes ideas for developing a process for defining culturally authentic products and experiences, a certification process, and a co-operative body to regulate this.

