

Tourism Corridor Strategy Program Overview

1.0 Context

1.1 Background

In 2022, Destination Canada's Destination Development Team (DD Team) collaborated with partners and local communities across the country to collate and populate a pipeline of destination development initiatives/projects that would potentially have a notable impact on tourism in the short, mid and long term across Canada.

The identified tourism-related projects/initiatives were assessed against criteria such as:

- Business viability,
- Stage of development,
- Geographic coverage,
- Investment needs,
- Project type or theme (culinary, culture, hiking, etc.),
- Setting (urban, rural, remote, indigenous)

1.2 Our Findings

Based on the DD Team's engagement to populate the pipeline, and initial consultations with partners on destination development throughout 2022, we were able to garner additional findings:

- Depending on the province/territory, region, city/municipality there were varying mandates, governance models, and resources/budgets.
- The maturity level was also vastly different and on a spectrum.
 - **Tourism Ecosystem:** Some destinations have fully embraced the entire tourism ecosystem and community (residents, businesses, not-for-profits, government, and political bodies) and are actively working to:
 - determine the role and future of tourism,
 - the type and amount of investment in tourism,
 - establish Indigenous partnerships,
 - improve wealth distribution amongst the community as a result of tourism – while addressing affordable housing, childcare and so on.

- **Development Stage:** Some destinations are venturing into seasonal and geographic distribution and others are attempting to be recognized as a tourism destination.
- **Consistency:** Significant differences based on a rural, remote, urban, or Indigenous setting.
- Corridor development within provinces/territories is already well managed by our PTMO partners, however there is an opportunity to connect the work between two provinces/territories with a more holistic, national scope.

1.3 The Opportunity

Corridors that cross interprovincial and interterritorial boundaries is an existing gap and opportunity for the DD Team to foster collective action and help overcome barriers, namely jurisdictional mandates, in destination development and tourism planning across Canada.

What is a Tourism Corridor?

Tourism corridors connect clusters of tourism assets together and provides motivation for visitors to travel through the area. A wine region such as Niagara or the Napa Valley is a tourism corridor. To understand the concept of tourism corridors, we need to understand cluster theory.

Cluster Theory Summarized: The idea that a concentration of similar businesses or institutions create synergies and can drive regional economies by leveraging each other's resources and customers. Collectively they create greater overall demand for their products. A tourism example is a cluster of wineries; because of the geographic concentration, they attract a labour pool, develop winery-based support services and drive more visitation and resiliency than a single tasting room can on its own.

2.0 Tourism Corridor Strategy Program

2.1 Program Goal

The **primary goal** of the Tourism Corridor Strategy Program is to contribute to a more resilient tourism industry through accelerated destination development of multiple corridors across Canada. We will achieve this through comprehensive strategic planning that stimulates investment and contributes to the wealth and wellbeing for the people of Canada. Destination Canada's approach to corridor development places an emphasis on accelerating collaboration amongst varying stakeholders within the corridor and, especially between provinces and territories, to strengthen capacity and leadership.

2.2 Program Objectives

The Corridor Strategy Program aims to:

1. Catalyze connections, integrate strategies, and align priorities to support shared goals,
2. Cultivate new economic prosperity, attract investments and bring awareness to development opportunities across Canada,
3. Develop capacity to practice regenerative principles and evolve community-led destination development to build socio-cultural vibrancy and environment thriving,
4. Empower destinations to intentionally plan and consider their participation in the visitor economy,
5. Increase authentic and transformational experiences that are distinctly Canadian and valued and explored by residents and visitors.

2.3 Program Deliverables

With the support of the DD Team, partners in the Corridor Strategy Program will co-create the following in three corridors across the country:

1. **Strategy** that defines the vision and aligns resources of corridor partners and stakeholders.
2. **Implementation Plan** to execute the strategy.
3. **Financial Plan** that identifies gaps; investment and resources needed; investment opportunities; and potential funding sources required to bring the strategy and implementation plan to fruition.

2.4 Program Funding

Destination Canada will fund the development of the strategy, implementation plan, and financial plan up to a maximum of \$250,000 CAD (inclusive of taxes) by contracting industry experts/consultants for each corridor project.

2.5 Program Timeline

Best efforts will be made to have all deliverables completed by the end of December 2023. However, under extenuating circumstances an extension may be considered.

3.0 Corridor Selection 2023

3.1 Process

There are three stages in the corridor selection process:

1. **Intake:** through online submission form
2. **Assessment:** against established criteria
3. **Selection:** confirmation with partners of three corridors

3.2 Criteria

Corridor projects will be assessed against the following criteria:

- Collaboration
- Business viability/market opportunity
- Theme
- Talent and jobs
- Indigenous reconciliation
- Regenerative approach
- Community engagement
- Community champion
- Project team/governance
- Project readiness

3.3 Examples of Potential Corridor Projects

Corridor projects that could be eligible under this program include:

- Improving the supply and connection of culinary experiences through the creation or expansion of a route,
- Connecting points of interest with deep historical significance,
- Enabling the development of outdoor adventure that focus niche experiences,
- Developing opportunities that leverage a new or revitalized highway or transportation route,
- Regional planning and infrastructure that links attractions.

Ineligible Projects: Corridor projects that focus on marketing and branding of products and experiences will be excluded from this program.