



## **What We Learned:**

### Tourism Strategy Stakeholder Engagement Summary (1)

*September to December 2019*

## **Ce que nous avons appris :**

### Sommaire des échanges avec les intervenants à propos de la stratégie sur le tourisme (1)

*septembre à décembre 2019*

*Le présent rapport contient la traduction française du sommaire.*





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# Executive Summary

## Introduction

The Department of Industry, Tourism and Investment (ITI) is developing its next five-year tourism strategy. The strategy will serve as a roadmap to guide tourism activities and investments by the Government of the Northwest Territories (GNWT) from 2021 to 2025. It will identify goals and actions to strengthen the tourism industry and increase visitor spending for all Northwest Territories (NWT) regions. The What We Learned: Tourism Strategy Stakeholder Engagement Summary (1) presents feedback provided by those who took part in the engagement process, and will help inform the development of the strategy.

## Engagement Approach

To support the development of the NWT's next tourism strategy, a wide range of stakeholder engagement activities were undertaken. The engagement activities involved a total of 380 individuals taking part from September to December 2019.

*[With the rise of COVID-19 in March 2020 and the following impacts of the pandemic on the tourism industry, a second engagement was carried out in May - June 2020. For the results of the second engagement, please see "What We Learned: Tourism Strategy Stakeholder Engagement Summary (2) May-June 2020"]*

## Engagement Activities

The engagement included: tourism sector-specific facilitated sessions held during the Northwest Territories (NWT) Tourism Annual General Meeting (AGM) and Conference; community engagement sessions held with tourism industry representatives and the general public; interviews with municipal representatives, tourism partner organizations, tourism funding partners, and tourism sector-specific representatives; an online survey; a discussion forum; and an ideation tool.

- A tourism sector-specific engagement session was conducted with tourism operators who attended the 2019 NWT Tourism AGM and Conference. In total, 70 participants took part in the session. The tourism sector representatives were arranged in the following way for the breakout groups: Accommodations, Airlines and Services, Aurora, Culture, Fishing, Hunting, and Paddling, General Touring, and Parks.
- In-person engagements were carried out in seven communities (Norman Wells, Inuvik, Hay River, Fort Smith, Fort Simpson, Yellowknife, and Dettah). Two sessions were held in each community - one targeted at those involved in the tourism industry and the other open to the public. Two French teleconferences were scheduled to provide French-speaking residents with the opportunity to participate in the engagement process in their language of choice. A total of 125 people took part in these sessions.



- Interviews were conducted with representatives from municipalities, Tourism Partner Organizations, Tourism Funding Partners, and Tourism Support Sectors. In total, 16 took part in the interview process.
- A web-based public engagement platform was used to solicit opinions with three tools: an online survey, an ideation tool asking an open-ended question, and focused discussion forums on key topics in tourism. A total of 81 respondents participated in the survey. A total of 49 individuals responded to the forum and ideation questions generating 248 contributions.
- To build awareness throughout the engagement process, there was a comprehensive paid promotion campaign using social media, newspapers, posters, and radio to get the word out and drive people to background information and editorial content to help them meaningfully engage.
- To ensure a government-wide perspective was considered, 39 interviews were conducted with the following GNWT departments: ITI; Education, Culture and Employment; Municipal and Community Affairs; Infrastructure; Lands; and, Environment and Natural Resources.

## What We Learned

The stakeholder engagement activities resulted in a wealth of information to help inform and guide the development of the tourism strategy. Key ideas and opinions provided by stakeholders include:

- **Positive aspects of tourism**
  - The benefits of tourism identified included:
    - Economic diversification
    - Local business development and employment opportunities
    - Population growth
    - Opportunities to showcase the natural beauty and Indigenous and cultural heritage of the NWT
    - Investment in infrastructure that benefits both tourists and locals
    - Increased sense of community pride
- **Tourism challenges/Negative aspects of tourism**
  - Stakeholders noted that tourism in the NWT is challenged by things like:
    - The high cost of travel
    - Lack of tourism products/activities
    - Lack of/limited tourism planning at the community level
    - Lack of an adequately trained tourism workforce
    - Lack of infrastructure, insufficient marketing efforts
    - Inadequate tourism funding
    - Lack of coordination/collaboration among tourism support sectors

- Stakeholders also mentioned that a growth in tourism could be detrimental if it resulted in:
  - Negative environmental impacts
  - Increased prices at stores and restaurants
  - Increased crime
  - Communities unprepared to offer tourism products
  - Increased wear and tear on existing infrastructure
  - Loss of quiet lifestyle
- **Priority areas for tourism investment**
  - Stakeholders feel that the GNWT should focus its investments over the next five years on:
    - Developing infrastructure; developing new tourism products
    - Providing more education, training programs and employment opportunities
    - Enhancing engagement and communication with communities outside of Yellowknife to support growth and development of Indigenous and community tourism
    - Strengthening and building partnerships with all levels of government and businesses
    - Increasing marketing efforts and social media presence; collecting good data to support sound business decisions
    - Supporting the arts and crafts trades
    - Educating tourists about cultural protocols and safety
- **Opportunities to enhance and expand tourism across the NWT**
  - Stakeholders identified a variety of ways to enhance and expand tourism including:
    - Offering more tourism products
    - Focusing more on Indigenous and cultural tourism in the communities
- Providing more information for tourists via online tools and apps
- Continuing to build business/conference travel
- Enhancing collaboration, coordination and communication among organizations/businesses involved in tourism
- Identifying more funding opportunities, educating the youth about tourism career opportunities
- Increasing marketing efforts, increasing presence of the NWT in reality television shows and documentaries
- Increasing local involvement in tourism
- Conducting more research to inform decision making
- Encouraging entrepreneurship among residents
- **Approaches to leveraging and maximizing existing assets, activities and resources**
  - Stakeholder ideas included:
    - Increasing promotional efforts
    - Repurposing existing facilities/building
    - Expanding tourism into the off-seasons
    - Bundling tourism products to keep tourism in the NWT longer
    - Offering easier access to tourist information, creating new tourism products that focus on NWT's heritage
    - Providing opportunities for the sharing of tourism best practices and lessons learned,
    - Providing more operator training programs
    - Providing continued and additional support to festivals and other high profile attractions across the NWT
    - Strengthening relationships among tourism service providers





- **Success in five years**

- Stakeholders feel that success in the NWT tourism in the next five years looks like:
  - Increased number of tourists and tourism spending
  - Increased number and variety of tourism products
  - Increased employment opportunities
  - Increased number of licenced tourism operators and
  - More Indigenous operators offering cultural tourism products
  - More tourism products being offered outside of Yellowknife
  - More education and training opportunities resulting in greater youth participation in the tourism industry
  - Increased awareness, both nationally and internationally, of the NWT as a vacation destination
  - More and improved infrastructure to support tourism

More comprehensive feedback organized by stakeholder group and method may be found in the What We Learned section.

## Next Steps

The feedback gathered from engagement participants will help inform and guide the GNWT in the development of the strategy to be released in 2021. These responses will be carefully reviewed alongside information obtained from a national and international jurisdictional review of tourism strategies, and an evaluation of the outcomes of Tourism 2020.

# Sommaire

## Introduction

La Division du tourisme et des parcs du ministère de l'Industrie, du Tourisme et de l'Investissement (MITI) élabore actuellement la prochaine stratégie touristique sur cinq ans. La stratégie servira de feuille de route pour orienter les activités et les investissements touristiques du gouvernement des Territoires du Nord-Ouest (GTNO) de 2021 à 2025. Elle définira des objectifs et des mesures visant à renforcer l'industrie touristique et à augmenter les dépenses des visiteurs dans toutes les régions des Territoires du Nord-Ouest (TNO). Le document *Ce que nous avons appris : Sommaire des échanges avec les intervenants à propos de la stratégie sur le tourisme (1)*, qui présente les commentaires formulés par les personnes qui ont participé au processus d'échange, contribuera à l'élaboration de la stratégie Tourisme 2025.

## Approche d'échange avec les intervenants

De nombreuses activités de dialogue avec les intervenants ont eu lieu afin d'appuyer l'élaboration de la stratégie Tourisme 2025. 380 personnes ont pris part de septembre à décembre 2019.

*[En raison de la pandémie de COVID-19 qui a débuté en mars 2020 et des répercussions qu'elle a eues sur l'industrie du tourisme, on a tenu un deuxième échange avec les intervenants en mai et en juin 2020. Pour connaître les résultats de cette deuxième consultation, référez-vous au document « Ce que nous avons appris : Sommaire des échanges avec les intervenants à propos de la stratégie sur le tourisme (2) – mai et juin 2020 ».]*

## Activités de dialogue

Les échanges comprenaient : séances avec animateur axées sur le secteur du tourisme pendant la conférence sur le tourisme et l'AGA de Tourisme TNO, séances de participation communautaire avec des représentants de l'industrie touristique et des membres du public, entrevues avec des représentants municipaux, des organismes touristiques partenaires et des représentants du secteur touristique, un sondage en ligne, un forum de discussion et un outil de génération d'idées.

- Une séance portant précisément sur le secteur touristique a été organisée avec des exploitants d'entreprise touristique qui ont participé à la conférence sur le tourisme et l'AGA de Tourisme TNO de 2019. En tout, 70 personnes ont participé à la séance. Les représentants du secteur touristique ont été regroupés selon les catégories suivantes : hébergement, compagnies aériennes et services, aurores, culture, pêche, chasse et excursions nautiques, tourisme général et parcs.
- Des séances d'échange avec le public ont été organisées dans sept collectivités (Norman Wells, Inuvik, Hay River, Fort Smith, Fort Simpson, Yellowknife et Dettah). Deux séances ont eu lieu dans chaque collectivité : une séance pour les intervenants de l'industrie touristique et une séance ouverte au public. Deux téléconférences en français ont été organisées afin de permettre aux résidents francophones de participer au processus dans la langue de leur choix. En tout, 125 personnes ont participé à ces séances.



- Des entrevues ont été réalisées avec des représentants des municipalités, des organismes touristiques partenaires, des partenaires de financement du tourisme et des secteurs de soutien au tourisme. En tout, 16 personnes ont participé aux entrevues.
- Une plateforme d'échange en ligne avec le public a été utilisée pour solliciter des commentaires à l'aide de trois outils : un sondage en ligne, un outil de génération d'idées et un forum de discussion sur des sujets pertinents au tourisme. Au total, 81 personnes ont répondu au sondage et 49 personnes ont participé au forum. L'outil de génération d'idées a produit 248 contributions.
- Pour faire connaître le processus d'échange avec les intervenants, nous avons lancé une campagne promotionnelle payée exhaustive (médias sociaux, journaux, radio et affiches), afin de passer le mot et de diriger les gens vers l'information générale et le contenu éditorial leur permettant de participer au processus.
- Pour s'assurer de prendre en compte une perspective pangouvernementale, des entrevues ont été réalisées avec 39 employés du GTNO travaillant dans les ministères suivants : Industrie, Tourisme et Investissement; Éducation, Culture et Formation; Affaires municipales et communautaires; Infrastructure; Administration des terres; et Environnement et Ressources naturelles.

## Ce que nous avons appris

Les activités de dialogue avec les intervenants ont généré une mine de renseignements pour éclairer et orienter l'élaboration de la stratégie Tourisme 2025. Voici certaines idées et opinions présentées par les intervenants :

- **Aspects positifs du tourisme**

- Avantages du tourisme :
  - diversification économique;
  - développement des entreprises locales et création d'emplois;
  - croissance de la population;
  - possibilités de présenter la beauté de la nature et le patrimoine autochtone et culturel des TNO;
  - investissement dans les infrastructures qui profitent aux touristes et aux résidents;
  - sentiment de fierté communautaire accru.

- **Défis et aspects négatifs du tourisme**

- Les intervenants ont noté que le tourisme aux TNO doit surmonter les obstacles suivants :
  - coût élevé des déplacements;
  - manque de produits et d'activités touristiques;
  - planification touristique insuffisante ou inexistante dans les collectivités;
  - manque d'employés bien formés dans le secteur du tourisme;
  - manque d'infrastructures et efforts de marketing insuffisants;
  - financement insuffisant du tourisme;
  - manque de coordination et de collaboration entre les secteurs du soutien au tourisme.

- Les intervenants ont également souligné que la croissance du tourisme pourrait être nuisible si :
  - elle a des répercussions environnementales négatives;
  - elle entraîne une augmentation des prix dans les magasins et les restaurants;
  - elle entraîne une augmentation du taux de criminalité;
  - les collectivités ne sont pas préparées à offrir des produits touristiques;
  - elle entraîne une dégradation excessive des infrastructures existantes;
  - elle dérange la quiétude des résidents.
- **Secteurs prioritaires pour les investissements dans le tourisme**
  - Les intervenants estiment que le GTNO devrait concentrer ses investissements des cinq prochaines sur les mesures suivantes :
    - développer les infrastructures et de nouveaux produits touristiques;
    - offrir davantage de programmes de formation et d'occasions d'emploi;
    - solliciter davantage les collectivités à l'extérieur de Yellowknife pour soutenir la croissance du tourisme autochtone et communautaire;
    - établir des partenariats avec tous les ordres de gouvernement et les entreprises, et renforcer les partenariats existants;
    - intensifier les efforts de marketing et la présence sur les médias sociaux; recueillir des données utiles pour prendre des décisions commerciales éclairées;
    - appuyer les arts et les métiers d'art;
    - informer les touristes au sujet des protocoles et des mesures de sécurité.
- **Occasions de développer le tourisme partout aux TNO**
  - Les intervenants ont déterminé différentes façons de développer le tourisme, notamment :
    - offrir davantage de produits touristiques;
    - mettre l'accent sur le tourisme autochtone et culturel dans les collectivités;
    - fournir plus d'information aux touristes grâce aux outils en ligne et aux applications;
    - continuer à développer le segment des voyages d'affaires et des conférences;
    - accroître la collaboration, la coordination et la communication entre les entreprises et les organismes qui jouent un rôle dans le tourisme;
    - trouver plus de possibilités de financement et de formation des jeunes en tourisme;
    - accroître les efforts de marketing et la présence des TNO dans les émissions de télé-réalité et les documentaires;
    - favoriser la participation des résidents au tourisme;
    - faire plus de recherches pour prendre de meilleures décisions;
    - encourager l'entrepreneuriat chez les résidents.
- **Approche pour tirer parti des atouts, activités et ressources touristiques déjà en place et optimiser les avantages qu'ils présentent**
  - Voici certaines idées des intervenants :
    - intensifier les activités promotionnelles;
    - changer la vocation de certaines installations ou de certains immeubles;
    - développer le tourisme pendant la basse saison;
    - regrouper des produits touristiques pour garder les touristes aux TNO plus longtemps;



- offrir un meilleur accès à l'information touristique et créer de nouveaux produits axés sur le patrimoine des TNO;
  - offrir des occasions de partager les pratiques exemplaires et les leçons apprises;
  - offrir plus de programmes de formation pour les exploitants;
  - fournir un soutien continu et plus poussé aux festivals et aux autres attractions populaires partout aux TNO;
  - renforcer les relations entre les fournisseurs de services touristiques.
- **Le succès dans cinq ans**
    - Voici, selon les intervenants, les indicateurs de succès de la stratégie touristique des TNO après cinq ans :
      - augmentation du nombre de touristes et de leurs dépenses;
      - augmentation du nombre et de la variété des produits touristiques;
      - augmentation du nombre d'emplois;
      - augmentation du nombre d'exploitants d'entreprise touristique accrédités;
      - augmentation du nombre d'exploitants autochtones offrant des produits touristiques culturels;
      - augmentation du nombre de produits touristiques offerts à l'extérieur de Yellowknife;
      - augmentation des occasions de formation, afin de favoriser une participation accrue des jeunes à l'industrie touristique;
      - visibilité accrue, à l'échelle nationale et internationale, des TNO en tant que destination touristique;
      - augmentation et amélioration des infrastructures pour soutenir le tourisme.

Les commentaires plus détaillés des intervenants regroupés par secteur et méthode sont disponibles à la section Ce que nous avons appris.

## Prochaines étapes

Les commentaires recueillis auprès des participants aux échanges éclaireront et guideront le GTNO dans l'élaboration de la prochaine stratégie quinquennale, qui sera présentée en 2021. Les réponses et l'information recueillie pendant une revue des stratégies touristiques nationales et internationales et une évaluation des résultats de la stratégie Tourisme 2020 feront l'objet d'un examen exhaustif.

# Acronyms

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<b>AGM</b>	Annual General Meeting
<b>BDIC</b>	Business Development and Investment Corporation
<b>CanNor</b>	Canadian Northern Economic Development Agency
<b>CDETNO</b>	Conseil de développement économique des Territoires du Nord-Ouest
<b>CTC</b>	Community Tourism Coordinator
<b>CTIC</b>	Community Tourism Infrastructure Contribution
<b>DMO</b>	Destination Marketing Organization
<b>ECE</b>	Department of Education, Culture and Employment
<b>ENR</b>	Department of Environment and Natural Resources
<b>GNWT</b>	Government of the Northwest Territories
<b>HSS</b>	Department of Health and Social Services
<b>ITAC</b>	Indigenous Tourism Association of Canada
<b>ITI</b>	Department of Industry, Tourism and Investment
<b>LGBTQ2</b>	Lesbian, Gay, Bisexual, Trans, Queer and Two-Spirit
<b>LKFN</b>	Líídljì Kúę First Nation
<b>MACA</b>	Department of Municipal and Community Affairs
<b>NWT</b>	Northwest Territories
<b>NWTT</b>	Northwest Territories Tourism
<b>SEED</b>	Support for Entrepreneurs and Economic Development
<b>TDO</b>	Tourism Development Officer
<b>TMP</b>	Tourism Mentorship Fund
<b>TOL</b>	Tourism Operator Licence
<b>TPDMP</b>	Tourism Product Diversification and Marketing Program
<b>TTF</b>	Tourism Training Fund
<b>YKDFN</b>	Yellowknives Dene First Nation

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## 1.0 Introduction

The Department of Industry, Tourism and Investment (ITI) is developing the next five-year tourism strategy. The strategy will serve as a roadmap to guide tourism activities and investments by the Government of the Northwest Territories (GNWT) from 2021 to 2025. It will identify goals and actions to strengthen the tourism industry and increase visitor spending for all Northwest Territories (NWT) regions.

To inform the development of the strategy, a wide range of engagement activities were carried out to ensure tourism stakeholders involved in the tourism industry in NWT had an opportunity to provide ITI with their thoughts and ideas on NWT tourism past, present and future.

The What We Learned: Tourism Strategy Stakeholder Engagement Summary (1) presents the information gathered from: community engagement sessions held with tourism industry representatives and the general public; interviews with tourism partner organizations, tourism funding partners, tourism sector-specific representatives, GNWT Departments and municipalities; tourism sector-specific facilitated sessions held during the Northwest Territories Tourism (NWT) Annual General Meeting (AGM) and Conference; and, responses to a publicly accessible online survey, discussion forum and ideation tool.

The stakeholder engagements findings, including the contents of this Summary document will be used to help inform and guide the development of the NWT's next tourism strategy.

*[With the rise of COVID-19 in March 2020 and the following impacts of the pandemic on the tourism industry, a second engagement was carried out in May - June 2020. For the results of the second engagement, please see "What We Learned: Tourism Strategy Stakeholder Engagement Summary (2) May-June 2020"]*

## 2.0 Stakeholder Engagement Approach

To support the development of the strategy, a wide range of stakeholder engagement activities were undertaken. The overall approach to the engagement was guided by the GNWT's Public Engagement Employee Guide and the Open Government Policy which articulates the government's commitment to providing its residents with meaningful opportunities to take part in engagement activities to inform decisions affecting their lives. The principles guiding this policy reflect the expectation that all GNWT employees approach public engagement in a way that promotes departmental consistency, strengthens relationships, demonstrates respect, builds trust and models the principles of openness, transparency and accountability.<sup>1</sup>

The stakeholder engagement activities were carried out by a consulting firm contracted by ITI. The contractor collaborated with the ITI Tourism and Parks Division and Communications staff to plan and implement the activities.

### 2.1 Engagement Methods

In total, 380 individuals took part in the stakeholder engagement.

#### Engagement Activities

The engagement was carried out from November 3 to December 20, 2019<sup>2</sup> and included: tourism sector-specific facilitated sessions held during the NWTT AGM and Conference; community engagement sessions held with tourism industry representatives and the general public; interviews with municipal representatives, tourism partner organizations, tourism funding partners, and tourism sector-specific representatives; an online survey; a discussion forum; and an ideation tool.



## NWT Tourism AGM and Conference

A tourism sector-specific engagement session was conducted on November 5, 2019 with tourism operators who attended the 2019 NWT Tourism AGM and Conference. In total, 70 participants took part in the session. The tourism sector representatives were arranged in the following way for the breakout groups:

- Accommodations (8)
- Airlines and Services (6)
- Aurora (8)
- Culture (15)
- Fishing, Hunting, and Paddling (9)
- General Touring (11)
- Parks (13)

The session took approximately four (4) hours to complete, with two (2) hours spent on facilitated discussions within the sector-specific breakout groups, and another two hours spent on discussions with the larger group. All participants were asked to respond to the same question set (refer to Appendix A -NWT AGM and Conference). A PowerPoint (PPT) presentation was used to guide the facilitated session.

To capture the information that was shared during the sector-specific break out groups, each group had a dedicated notetaker from ITI who was present for the entirety of the session. These notes were transcribed and cross referenced against the flipchart notes recorded by the facilitators to supplement any gaps.

## Community Engagement

In-person engagements were carried out in seven (7) communities (Norman Wells, Inuvik, Hay River, Fort Smith, Fort Simpson, Yellowknife, and Dettah). Two (2) sessions were held in each community - one session was targeted at individuals involved in the tourism industry and the other was open to the public.<sup>3</sup>

Two French teleconference call sessions were scheduled to provide French-speaking residents with the opportunity to participate in the engagement process in their language of choice.<sup>4</sup>

Table 1 presents the schedule of engagements, the targeted group, the dates and times, and the number of attendees at each session.

In-person sessions were held from November 20 to December 5, 2019. The French teleconference calls were scheduled for November 20, 2019 and December 11, 2019.

<sup>3</sup> One Yellowknife tourism industry representative sent information via email that has been included in the Yellowknife industry section.

<sup>4</sup> No participants attended the first session.

**Table 1: Engagement Schedule**

Community	Group	Date	Time	Number of Attendees
Norman Wells	Tourism Industry	November 20, 2019	1:30 – 4:00 pm	9
	Community Members	November 20, 2019	7:00 – 9:30 pm	2
Inuvik	Community Members	November 21, 2019	6:00 – 8:00 pm	12
	Tourism Industry	November 22, 2019	9:00 – 11:00 am	8
Hay River	Tourism Industry	November 26, 2019	1:30 – 4:00 pm	11
	Community Members	November 26, 2019	7:00 – 9:30 pm	13
Fort Smith	Tourism Industry	November 27, 2019	1:30 – 4:00 pm	10
	Community Members	November 27, 2019	7:00 – 9:30 pm	7
Fort Simpson	Tourism Industry	December 3, 2019	1:30 – 4:00 pm	6
	Community Members	December 3, 2019	6:00 – 8:00 pm	3
Yellowknife	Tourism Industry	December 4, 2019	1:30 – 4:00 pm	25
	Community Members	December 4, 2019	7:00 – 9:30 pm	9
Dettah	Tourism Industry	December 5, 2019	1:30 – 4:00 pm	8
	Community Members	December 5, 2019	7:00 – 9:30 pm	0
French Teleconferences	Tourism Industry and Community Members	November 20, 2019	2:00 - 4:00pm	0
		December 11, 2019	7:00 – 9:00pm	2
<b>TOTAL</b>				<b>125</b>

Depending on which engagement session they attended, community participants were asked to respond to either the industry or public question set (refer to Appendix A – Community Engagement: Industry and Public).

Two PowerPoint presentations were prepared and used to guide the tourism industry and the public sessions. Bilingual versions of the presentations were prepared for the sessions held in Inuvik, Fort Smith, Hay River and Yellowknife.

The contractor facilitated the engagements based on the approved approach, methods and question sets. An ITI employee was on hand to answer any content-specific questions and take detailed notes. The notes taken by ITI were shared with the contractor and integrated with flipchart notes taken by the contractor during each of the facilitated sessions.

The French teleconference call was facilitated by a French speaker from the contractor and detailed notes were taken by another contractor also fluent in French.



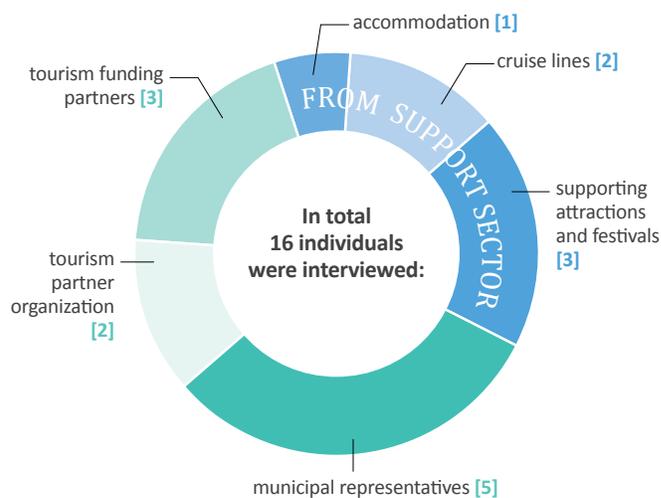
Participants were asked to respond to the public question set (refer to Appendix A – Community Engagement: Public).

### Interviews

In-person and telephone interviews were conducted with Municipalities, Tourism Partner Organizations, Tourism Funding Partners, and Tourism Support Sectors and representing the following:

- **Municipalities**
  - City of Yellowknife
  - Community Government of Whatì
  - Community of Ulukhaktok
  - Town of Inuvik
  - Łútsël K'é Dene First Nation
- **Tourism Partner Organizations**
  - NWT Tourism (NWTT)
  - NWT Chamber of Commerce
- **Tourism Funding Partners**
  - Indigenous Tourism Association of Canada (ITAC)
  - Canadian Northern Economic Development Agency (CanNor)
- **Tourism Support Sectors**
  - Accommodations
  - Cruiselines
  - Supporting Attractions and Festivals

Both individual and group interviews were carried out. The interviews ranged in length from 25 to 45 minutes. Interview participants were asked to respond to a specific questions set (refer to Appendix A - Municipalities, Tourism Partner Organizations, Tourism Funding Partners, Tourism Support Sectors).



One participant provided links to additional resource materials they felt would further clarify their responses.

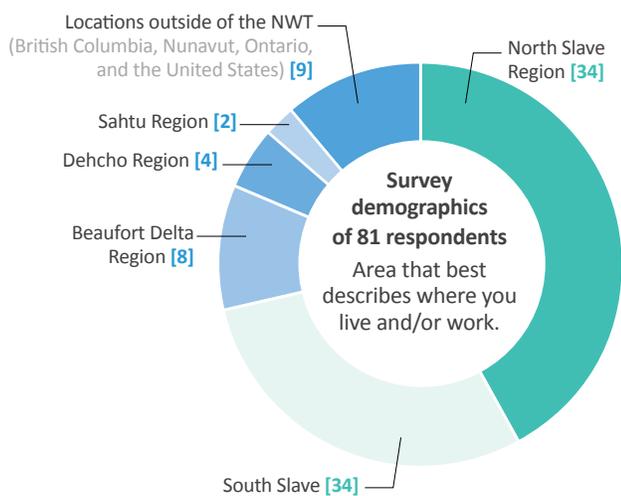
### Online Engagement Tools

A web-based public engagement platform, hosted by ITI, was used to solicit opinions via an online survey. This portal was advertised using GNWT ITI website messaging and social media platforms. It was also advertised during the NWT Tourism AGM and Conference and during community engagement sessions.

## Survey

The survey included questions on topic areas such as: tourism investments; direction of, and approach to tourism; key strengths, challenges and successes; priorities; tourism programs and workshops; tourism trends; and, new tourism products. The survey included both closed- and open-ended questions. The open-ended questions provided respondents with the opportunity to provide more in-depth information on the topic being queried.

The survey was open from November 3 to December 20, 2019. A total of 81 respondents participated in the survey.



The survey questions can be found in Appendix B – Online Survey Questions.

Option that best describes your involvement in the tourism industry:



## Discussion Forum and Ideation Tool

The online discussion forum included open-ended questions on topic areas such as: positive and negative aspects of the current tourism development strategies; tourism improvements; tourism strengths; tourism success; partnerships; opportunities; and, priorities.

The ideation tool included one general question seeking new ideas for a stronger tourism industry in the Northwest Territories. The goal was to spark blue-sky and outside-the-box thinking.

The discussion forum and ideation tool site were open from November 3 to December 20, 2019. A total of 49 individuals responded to the forum and ideation questions generating 248 contributions.

The questions are located in Appendix C – Discussion Forum Questions and Appendix D – Ideation Tool Question. An overview of GNWT Department insights can be found in Appendix E – GNWT Departments.

## 2.2 Outreach

Designing the engagement methods was just one piece of the puzzle. The other was making sure stakeholders across the NWT had the awareness and understanding to meaningfully participate.

To build that awareness and understanding throughout the engagement process, we used the following methods:



**Social media:** Through an aggressive paid advertising campaign, ITI used community-targeted Facebook events for each session, drove traffic to the online engagement tools, and built awareness of background tools available on the engagement site. Regular updates were also provided using engaging organic posts on Facebook and Twitter, and the creation of #TalkTourismNWT to give the online conversation a home.



**Direct outreach:** Through targeted e-newsletters — both at the beginning and at key points throughout the process — ITI reached out to stakeholders to promote opportunities to participate in-person and online, and encourage additional participation from those who had already attended sessions. ITI also worked with organizations such as CDETNO and NWT Tourism to reach their membership through their channels.



**Editorial content:** Using ITI's newsfeed, debriefs from each session were published and distributed through social media to keep the project top-of-mind



**Background information:** Through ITI's engagement platform, links and documents were provided with information on the tourism industry. At each session, presentations were delivered to help participants better understand the tourism industry, and the engagement project.



**Traditional media:** Radio and newspaper ads were placed. Posters were distributed throughout communities where sessions were to be held.

## 3.0

# What We Learned

This section of the Summary presents What We Learned from the engagement activities. The information is presented in the following way:

- Community/Public
- Tourism Industry
- Tourism Partners

Because the online survey, discussion forum and ideation tool were open to the general public, it is not possible to attribute the responses to specific groups. As such information retrieved from these sources is found in different sections throughout the document and has been identified as such.

### 3.1

## Community/ Public

This section presents information gathered from community members during the community engagement sessions, the French teleconference call, and interviews with municipal representatives. This information is supplemented with responses to questions from the online survey and discussion forum.

### 3.1.1

## Positive Aspects of Tourism

This section reflects responses to questions inquiring about the main benefits of tourism in your community and the ways in which tourism growth could be beneficial to your community or the NWT.

- **Norman Wells**

- Participants stated that Norman Wells has great trips to offer to tourists.
- Community members noted that growth in the tourism industry could result in more employment opportunities, an economy that is less reliant on oil and gas, and a renewed sense of pride in the community by its residents.

- **Inuvik**

- Participants noted that the main benefits of tourism in Inuvik are the opportunity for employment, the sharing and preservation of and connection to local culture and history, and bringing greater awareness of other cultures to the residents of Inuvik.
- Participants pointed out several benefits to the community that would accompany growth in the tourism industry including more employment and volunteer opportunities, more funding directed towards improving infrastructure that everyone benefits (e.g., roads, stage, community freezer, gallery,



museum), a growth in the population (people who visit enjoy it so much they decide to stay), youth remain in the community instead of going south, and improving the quality of life for locals through having more activities.

- **Hay River**

- Community members noted that tourism generates important economic and employment benefits, and creates opportunities to increase engagement among community members and with people from other cultures.
- Participants noted that growth could help sustain and grow local businesses in the off season and provide a range of new employment opportunities.

- **Fort Smith**

- Community members noted the economic and employment (focus on youth) benefits associated with tourism.
- Participants pointed out a number of ways in which tourism can be beneficial including building community pride, creating opportunities to exchange ideas and raise awareness about the North and important topics such as climate change and Indigenous culture.

- **Fort Simpson**

- Participants stated that the main benefit of tourism is a diversified economy with the creation of jobs outside of the public sector.
- Participants stated that a growth in the tourism industry will be beneficial to the community through the emergence of additional small businesses (e.g., hair salons/ barbershops, hotels, arts and crafts), a growth in the population, a larger tax base, and increased availability of services.

- **Yellowknife**

- Participants identified job creation, diversification of the economy and making the NWT known to others as benefits of tourism.
- Participants felt that tourism could be beneficial to Yellowknife through: opportunities for economic diversification; allowing those outside of the NWT to find out about it; opportunities for local artisans to display and sell their arts and crafts; and, investment in infrastructure that benefited both tourists and locals (e.g. parks).

Municipal representatives were asked to identify the key strengths of tourism in their municipality.

- **Community Government of Whati**

- Strengths include waterfalls, lake for fishing and boating, and adventure tourism (canoeing down the river).

- **Community of Ulukhaktok**

- Strengths include beauty of the community (being on the high land), location beside an ocean, mountains, arts and crafts, and old historic sites

- **Town of Inuvik**

- Strengths include their location (North of the Arctic Circle, access to Dempster Highway), geography, and an authentic Arctic life.

- **Łútsël K'é Dene First Nation**

- Strengths include the fact that the community has a long history of being involved in tourism (fishing lodges since 1950s), signing of the new Thaidene Nëné National Park, dramatic scenery and beautiful nature, unique wildlife – muskox trails, Aurora, fishing year-round, cultural strengths (interpretive tours of the lake and area), closeness to Yellowknife, and established infrastructure.

- **City of Yellowknife**

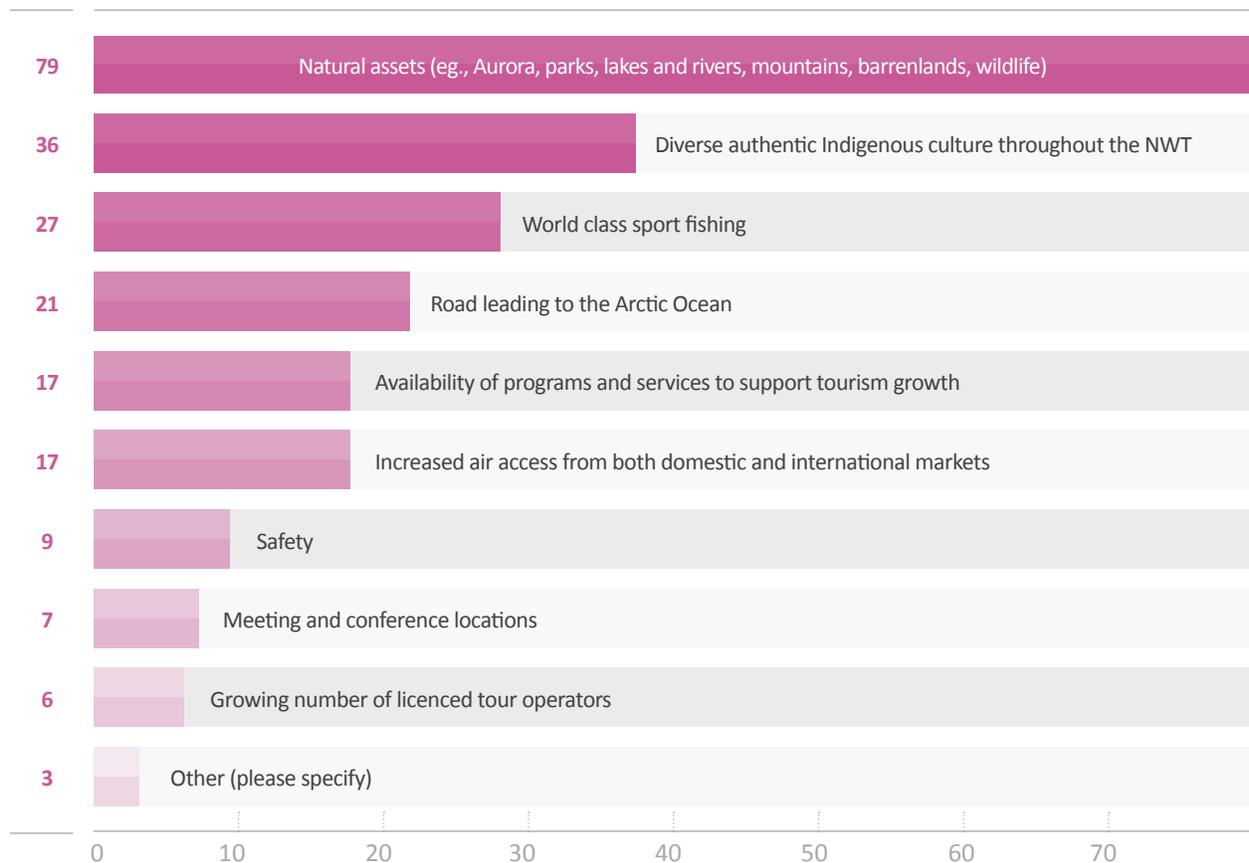
- Strengths include the fact that there are lots of opportunities for new businesses to be developed, lots of Yellowknife residents interested in tourism, capital city with lots of nice restaurants and accommodations to attracts visitors, and access to equipment and materials (e.g., warm clothes if needed)

- **Survey**

- Figure 1 reveals that respondents feel that natural assets (79; 35.6% of all responses) are the greatest strength of tourism in the territory. Indigenous culture (36; 16.2% of all responses) and sport fishing (27; 12.2% of all responses) are also considered key strengths.

Survey respondents were asked to identify the key strengths of tourism (select up to 3 options) in the NWT .

**Figure 1: Key Strengths of Tourism in the NWT**



### 3.1.2

## Enhancing community member experiences

This section reflects responses to the question inquiring as to whether, with respect to tourism, there is anything that could be done to improve the experience of community members.

- **Norman Wells**
  - Participants mentioned that involving youth in the tourism industry and having locals offer more nature tours will enhance the experience.
- **Inuvik**
  - Ideas included having more opportunities for locals to interact with the visitors through the sharing of cultural and historical experiences (e.g., having workshops at the Visitor Centre to help visitors understand local culture and history, local Ambassadors), encouraging enthusiasm, helping locals understand the benefits and opportunities of tourism (e.g., broadening their perspectives on tourism so they understand it is bigger than just hotels and boats), and encouraging friends and family to visit Inuvik thereby gaining a tourist's perspective.
- **Hay River**
  - Community members focused on the importance of local residents taking advantage of the activities and events that Hay River has to offer through: being a tourist in their own community; and, by having communities do their own familiarization tours to promote local businesses and opportunities for residents and tourists. They noted that through their involvement in tourism activities, residents will be better able to sell the experience and support local businesses and operators.

- **Fort Smith**

- Key areas discussed by community members included working with the community to determine what kind of vision it has for tourism, defining its identity, and developing a long term strategy to implement that vision.

- **Fort Simpson**

- Participants stated that focusing on attracting more tourists will improve community buy-in because of the resulting economic benefits. Participants also noted that local residents use many of the same services that the tourists use, so improving tourism infrastructure benefits the community members as well.

- **Yellowknife**

- Participants identified allowing AirBnBs to operate out of rental properties to provide economic opportunities for more locals and allow more tourists to visit; educating operators and implementing regulations regarding ice road usage which would enhance safety for tourists and locals; and, encouraging tourists to spend more money in Yellowknife by arranging ahead of time for them to take part in other activities.

### 3.1.3

## Negative Aspects of Tourism

This section reflects responses to questions inquiring about the challenges associated with tourism in your community and the ways in which tourism growth could be detrimental to your community or the NWT.

- **Norman Wells**

- Community members stated tourism is challenged by things such as costs associated with travel (including insurance and liability), safety (e.g. healthcare access on the land, wildlife and hunting incidents, and transportation) and a lack of tourism activities.

- Participants mentioned that growth in the tourism industry could be negative if there was an increase in consumptive tourism products, an increase of crime, a population unprepared to interact with visitors (lack of training and preparation on history, culture and how to interact with tourists), and local operators uncertain of the permitting requirements.
- **Inuvik**
  - Some of the identified challenges include environmental issues such as litter, unrealistic visitor expectations (come with preconceived notions of presentation and quality of experience that we cannot match), inadequate workforce training and/or stability, poorly maintained highways and roads, and a lack of interest in tourism as a career.
  - Participants noted that a growth in tourism may be detrimental to the community as a result of negative environmental impacts (e.g., water and wildlife), over-tourism (e.g., not having the infrastructure and capacity to accommodate a large increase in tourists), introduction of social and health issues, and increased prices at the stores and restaurants.
- **Hay River**
  - High costs of travel and inadequate infrastructure were identified as challenges, along with a lack of awareness or effort in marketing local products to attract travellers (e.g., lack of signage means that tourists cannot find the product (e.g., lake) or they don't know that the product even exists).
  - Community member identified some potential down sides to growth in tourism, such as increased wear and tear on infrastructure (e.g., roads), change in quiet lifestyle, and the risk of cultural insensitivity among travellers.
- **Fort Smith**
  - Community members identified key tourism challenges such as the unpredictability of tourism volume, a lack of facilities, and a lack of coordination among support services.
  - Community members felt that a growth in tourism could be detrimental if community members were not prepared for the amount and type of tourism that was occurring, visitors not being prepared for what to expect when they arrive (e.g., high end traveller expecting high end tourism that is not available), and negative reviews posted on social media and in the Lonely Planet guide.
- **Fort Simpson**
  - The challenges that were discussed include businesses and outfitters not contributing to the community, and a perceived reluctance on the part of government to support community tourism initiatives in the past.
  - Community members identified a few negative impacts associated with tourism growth including: shortages in various products due to an influx of tourists; criminal activities may result due to the type of tourists visiting; environmental degradation; and, increased wear and tear on existing infrastructure.
- **Yellowknife**
  - Participants spoke about a variety of challenges including lack of emotional connection/lack of culture of tourism in Yellowknife, lack of access to local services by residents, lack of activities for tourists to take part in (e.g., not getting enough bang for their buck), and limited attention paid to the Francophone population (e.g., few French resources available).



- Participants were concerned that a growth in tourism would further stress the environment (e.g. air, water, sewage, trail system) and would result in a loss of northern solitude (e.g., too many people fishing in the same place).

Municipal representatives were asked to identify the key barriers to growing the tourism economy in their municipality and solutions to help address those challenges.

- **Community Government of Whatì**
  - Barriers to tourism growth include: self-government, lack of available funds, difficulty getting community members involved in and educated about tourism potential and business
  - Solutions include ongoing education, support, and mentorship
- **Community of Ulukhaktok**
  - Barriers to tourism growth include a lack of short and long term funds to help us connect to the world (marketing through our website) and rehabilitating our historic sites
  - Funding would help us create a tourism centre to showcase what we have here (a lot of opportunity because a lot of cruise ships come through here)
- **Town of Inuvik**
  - Barriers include lack of entrepreneurs (hard to get new businesses to start, especially tourism businesses), large population with land and traditional skills but they are not prepared to offer year round tourism options

- Solution – small communities in other jurisdictions use community corporations/development corporations/hunter and trapper groups to be the licence holders because they have the capacity, they have an office, they're open 9-5, they do the books - they would contract out people to provide the tourism services

- **Lútsël K'é First Nation**

- Barriers include difficulty for licence-holders to get proper equipment because of shortage of money, skill gaps in tourism hospitality and business management, and lack of funds to refit the lodge.
- Solutions include more money for equipment and training (a lot of people who have land skills who would make good guides if they had the right support) and hiring a full-time professional advisor/coordinator who is well-connected in the tourism industry and can guide work on branding, marketing, and other activities.

- **City of Yellowknife**

- Barriers include a resistance to change, lack of capacity to provide services and supports (hard for businesses to hire and retain employees, hard to keep businesses going), limited training and knowledge in priority areas such as cultural tourism, land constraints (operators having difficulties accessing land for events – for example, Aurora viewing operators want to build platforms – GNWT owns lots of land but won't make it available), and some operators with buses have trouble finding places to park.

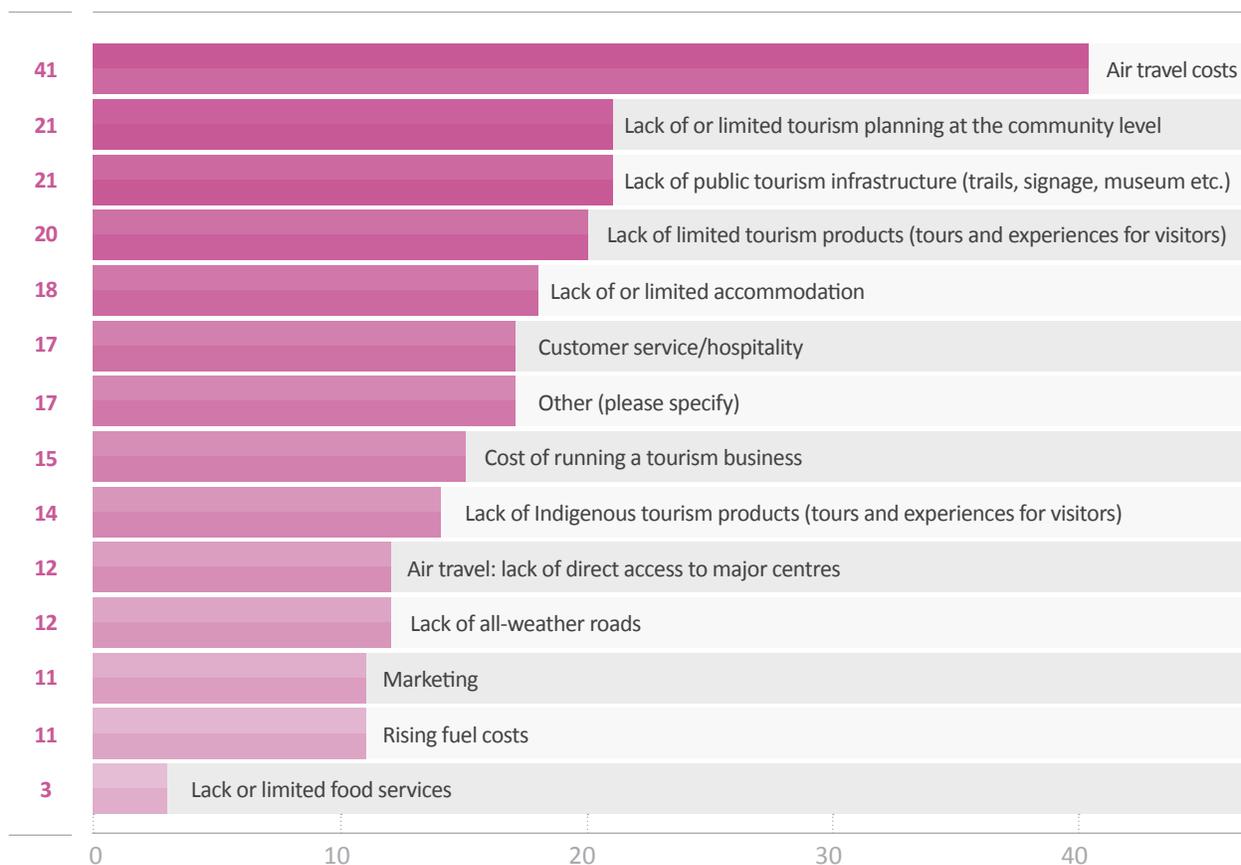
Survey respondents were asked to identify the key challenges facing tourism in the NWT in the next five years (select up to 3 options).

- **Survey**

- Figure 2 reveals that survey respondents feel that air travel cost (41; 17.6% of all responses) is the key challenge facing tourism in the next five years. Lack of/limited tourism planning at the community level (21; 9.0% of all responses), lack of tourism infrastructure (21; 9.0% of all responses), and lack of or limited tourism products (20; 8.6% of all responses) were also identified as other key challenges.

- “Other” key challenges identified by the respondents included barriers for new tourism operators such as the cost of licences and insurance, protecting the quality of life for the local population, and shortcomings in hospitality and customer service.

**Figure 2: Key challenges facing NWT tourism in the next five years**



The Discussion Forum asked respondents to comment on where ITI has missed the mark in developing the tourism industry in the NWT over the last five years.

- **Discussion Forum**

- Respondents focused almost entirely on marketing.
- They commented on limited marketing efforts especially outside of Yellowknife, a lack of understanding about what should be marketed (i.e., greater focus on the uniqueness of the NWT (communities, cultures, etc.), limited regional and community partnerships aimed at keeping visitors in the NWT longer, and limited marketing diversification (i.e., need to market to other populations).

### 3.1.4

## Opportunities to Enhance and Expand Tourism

This section reflects responses to questions on: opportunities to build on existing community tourism strengths, ways to mitigate challenges, and major prospects for tourism in their community or in the NWT as a whole.

- **Norman Wells**

- Participants feel that more products, more marketing, more coordination and communication, reduced costs (e.g., insurance), and more local involvement (including youth) will enhance the existing benefits of tourism and address some of the challenges.

- Community members identified the following tourism opportunities:

- Being able to share local foods with visitors
- Having presence on reality TV shows as well as documentaries
- Developing infrastructure to better utilize the mountains and rivers for various activities; and
- Marketing the isolated experience to a niche market.

- **Inuvik**

- Participants feel that existing tourism strengths could be built on and challenges mitigated by focusing on ecotourism (e.g., attracting the right type of tourist – those who are aware, mindful and respectful of the environment), offering more cultural experiences, and educating the youth about tourism career opportunities.
- The major opportunities identified by community members include such things as: more concerts, festivals, and conventions in the smaller communities; more research to inform decision-making about tourism products; more off-season products; increased road access, and enhanced collaboration with Yukon Government, businesses, communities, GNWT departments, not-for-profits, and Indigenous governments.
- Participants also commented on the importance of developing both regional and territorial tourism plans in order to capture the variation in tourism opportunities across the NWT.

- **Hay River**

- Identifying things that make individual communities distinctive and encouraging local residents to contribute to the visitor experience were noted as ways to build on the positives and address the negatives.

- Community members identified a wide range of opportunities for Hay River and other communities in the NWT to capitalize on a growth in tourism including such things as: highlighting local stories (e.g., Mad Trapper, creature in the Great Slave Lake); showcasing Indigenous and cultural tourism; offering more summer (e.g., fishing derbies, scuba diving, bird watching) and winter (e.g., winter carnival, winter camping, ice fishing derbies) activities as well as events (e.g., sports tourism conference); carrying out research to identify opportunities; getting more support from NWT; more marketing; and, collaborating with regional communities.

- **Fort Smith**

- Ideas about how to capitalize on the positives and address the negatives include leveraging existing facilities, obtaining better data (to ensure we are marketing to the right audience), and building better on-line and information tools for visitors.
- Community members identified a wide range of opportunities including:
  - Indigenous and cultural tourism (e.g., authentic experiences, arts and crafts, culture camps);
  - Sharing local stories (e.g., history of WWII, first Catholic mission);
  - Collaborating on a number of fronts (communities (e.g., Hay River), host community forum to get momentum going), operators, government entities and programs); offering package tours; and better marketing of products such as the park, paddling (e.g., Facebook).

- **Fort Simpson**

- Ideas to build on the strengths and mitigate the challenges include such things as supporting tourism products that would result in employment for local Indigenous people and encouraging outfitters to contribute to the local economy.
- Community members identified a number of opportunities such as: developing packages with existing products; developing new products including cultural activities and outdoor activities (e.g. birdwatching); providing services for the road traffic; trail development for skidoos and biking; converting empty or abandoned buildings into tourism attractions and displays; and, expanding the airport with youth involvement.

- **Yellowknife**

- Focusing more on the development of tourism products associated with Indigenous culture and local heritage were identified as ways to build on the positives and reduce the negatives.
- Participants noted a number of opportunities for tourism to grow in Yellowknife and the NWT more generally, including: product diversification that focuses on local heritage (e.g. mines); building up the convention business market; and, improved infrastructure (e.g. signage, communication, pullouts, existing facilities, etc.) that better supports tourists.

Municipal representatives were asked to identify opportunities to enhance and expand tourism in their municipality and in the NWT.



- **Community Government of Whatì**
  - Community opportunities include the all season road coming
  - NWT opportunities include focusing beyond the northern lights to offering more adventures, more traditional experiences, skidoo trails, explorations, canoeing
- **Community of Ulukhaktok**
  - Opportunities include setting up different tourist trips for when the cruise ships come in and focusing on developing culture and tradition as more of a focus of tourism
- **Town of Inuvik**
  - Opportunities include creating more local buy-in for tourism industry (e.g., getting youth involved, offering employment opportunities (more than just working in a hotel) and encouraging entrepreneurship
- **Lútsël K'é Dene First Nation**
  - Opportunities include refurbishing the lodge, finding the cultural-wilderness-park-tours market and successfully attract them here, expanding infrastructure in the area (need cabins and facilities) and, offering more air services as a way to see all of the park
- **City of Yellowknife**
  - Opportunities include creating our own Destination Marketing Organization (DMO), lobbying for a hotel tax and using that money for DMO development to market Yellowknife, developing sports tourism that uses city facilities to host, and expanding business and conference tourism

## 3.2

# Tourism Industry

This section presents information gathered from industry representatives during: the community engagement sessions; NWTT AGM and Conference sector-specific breakout group sessions; and, sector support interviews. This information is supplemented with responses from the online survey, discussion forum and ideation tool.

### 3.2.1

## ITI Programs and Workshops

This section highlights responses to the question asking about the relevancy of product development and skills development programs offered by ITI Tourism and Parks Division.

- **Norman Wells**
  - Some participants are not aware of the programs offered by ITI, whereas others have taken advantage of programs such as Support for Entrepreneurs and Economic Development (SEED), Community Tourism Coordinator (CTC), and NorthernMost Host. Participants discussed the need for training programs offered at the community level and focused on high school and college students.
- **Inuvik**
  - Some participants stated that the current programs are comprehensive and that the focus should be on maintaining what is currently offered, with specific mentions of the Tourism Product Diversification and Marketing Program (TPDMP). Participants also stated that including the personal financial portion in program applications is a deterrent for some aspiring operators and that programs should offer additional support to those operators who can demonstrate business potential. Examples of additional

programs topics that could be offered included programming aimed specifically for artists, cross-cultural training, social media training, and traditional skills training for younger generations.

- **Hay River**

- Overall, participants feel that ITI programs are relevant and appropriate and specifically mentioned the Community Tourism Coordinator (CTC) and NorthernMost Host programs as being beneficial. Industry representatives spoke about the need for training supports focused on proposal writing and using technology (e.g. social media, booking platforms). They also noted the importance of communication and marketing networks to build up tourism products/packages.

- **Fort Smith**

- Some industry participants feel that there is a lack of awareness of ITI's programs services and that the Department could take a more proactive role in identifying and delivering training and support. Others noted that ITI programs are very good but seem to be oversubscribed. Participants indicated that additional funds and training are required for the CTC program and in the areas of business development. Industry representatives also noted that partnering with Aurora College to train youth in the tourism industry would be beneficial.

- **Fort Simpson**

- Some of the industry participants are very happy with the programs that are available and have utilized a number of them in the past (e.g. TPDMP and CTC Program). Others are less familiar with the programs and stated that this information needs to be better communicated. Participants also discussed the importance of maintaining a community-focused, as well as regional-

focused approach to training and skills building. Participants discussed the barrier that insurance presents to many operators and stated that the strategy and future programs should focus on identifying ways to overcome this barrier (e.g. bulk insurance through Business Development and Investment Corporation (BDIC).

- **Yellowknife**

- Some participants commented that programs such as the Tourism Business Mentorship Program and the Tourism Training Fund (TTF) are relevant and good and that there is need for additional funds to be allocated to programs such as Community Tourism Infrastructure Contribution (CTIC) and the TTF. A number of industry representatives spoke about the need for additional skills development programs particularly in the areas of business development (e.g. starting a business, bookkeeping), board training, volunteer recruitment and language (e.g. need for more operators who speak the languages of visitors). There was a request for short workshop-style courses taught by northerners who understand the northern context.

- **Dettah**

- Participants commented that they were unaware of the tourism programs and services provided by ITI. They spoke about the need for more training in the areas of business development including information on how to get an operator licence, how to get insurance, and how to do the books and, about the need to simplify the application process so that it is easier and less intimidating.



- **Sector-Specific Sessions**

- Overall, sector participants indicated a lack of knowledge and awareness of the programs offered by ITI. Some of those participants who had taken part in programming noted that the training was relevant and helpful, while others mentioned the content needed to be updated and that program criteria guidelines needed to be clearer. Programs that were identified as beneficial included: SEED, Tourism Mentorship Fund (TMP), TTF, and CTC Program. While the TPDMP was identified as being useful, the application process was considered too onerous.

- **Tourism Support Interviews**

- Of those respondents who were aware of the product development and skills development programs offered by ITI, most feel that they were relevant.

On the survey, respondents were asked to indicate the ITI tourism programs they participated in over the last five years and to provide feedback on those programs.

- **Survey**

- Respondents identified the Tourism Product Diversification and Market Development program as the most highly participated followed by the Community Tourism Infrastructure Contribution program and the Tourism Training Fund program.
- Respondents noted that the programs are useful and that end users are satisfied with them. Some respondents commented that the funds associated with these programs are insufficient.
- The program challenges noted included: lack of focus on fishing sector; difficult to access funds if you don't live in the NWT; lack of consistently offered programs; and, overly restrictive guidelines. Programs could be improved through open application dates and focusing funding on northern operators.

On the survey, respondents were asked to indicate the ITI tourism workshops they participated in over the last five years and to provide feedback on those workshops.

- **Survey**

- Respondents identified the NorthernMost Host and the Business-ready, Market-ready, and Trade-ready Standards as the most highly participated workshops.
- Respondents noted that the workshops are very helpful and that the workshop facilitators are very important to the success of the workshop. Programs could be improved by offering 'starting a tourism business' more often.
- On the survey, respondents were asked to identify any new programs/workshops needed to support tourism over the next five years.

- **Survey**

- Customer service/ hospitality was the program/workshop area mentioned most often. Other ideas include:
  - Wilderness safety training
  - Indigenous/cultural tourism workshops
  - Relationship/partnership-building (i.e., businesses working together, businesses working with governments)
  - Tourism start-up training aimed at artists
  - Marketing for commercial fishers
  - Social media training

### 3.2.2

## Priority Areas for Investment

This section provides information in response to the question asking what priority areas the GNWT should focus its investments on over the next five years.

- **Norman Wells**

- The key priorities identified include areas such as: infrastructure; partnerships; and, training programs and the provision of information about those programs.

- **Inuvik**

- The main priorities identified by participants include: enhanced engagement and communication with communities; increased marketing and social media presence; collaborations with the Yukon Territorial Government; and, education and training opportunities for local residents with a focus on youth and the identification of role models.

- **Hay River**

- Industry participants feel that investments over the next five years should focus on priorities such as: improving infrastructure with a focus on highways, roadside services and signage as well as Indigenous tourism (cultural centres) and development outside of Yellowknife; decreasing travelling costs; increasing support for traditional arts and crafts; and, enhancing promotion of the NWT.

- **Fort Smith**

- Industry representatives feel that investments should focus on the following areas: reducing or eliminating fees; building community-based hospitality; developing a tourism co-op model to support new operators; revisiting the current role of Tourism Development Officers (TDOs); and, collecting good data to support good business decisions.

- **Fort Simpson**

- The main priority areas include: product development that results in visitors staying longer; employing a coordinated approach to developing packages to both promote additional tourism, as well as capitalize on tourists that are coming through the community; and creating information guides to let tourists know what is available.

- **Yellowknife**

- The main priorities identified by participants are quality assurance/quality control (with a focus on instituting occupational standards of practice), safety (roads, ice, bears, water) and availability of maintained outhouses.

- **Dettah**

- The key priorities include: education and employment (e.g., offering a course for operators so they can go out and educate visitors about the truth of the land, get jobs for YKDFN members as guides at the lodges); Indigenous tourism supported by an Indigenous Tourism Association; developing a cultural understanding tourism product so tourists can come to our community and learn about the Yellowknives Dene First Nation (YKDFN); having more Indigenous/cultural tourism operator licences; and, developing cultural protocols for tourists to follow when they visit the community.

- **Sector-specific Sessions**

- The main priorities identified by participants include:
  - Education and skills training (e.g., hospitality, interpretative, guide, youth focused)
  - Infrastructure (e.g., IT, roads, airports, washrooms, accommodations)

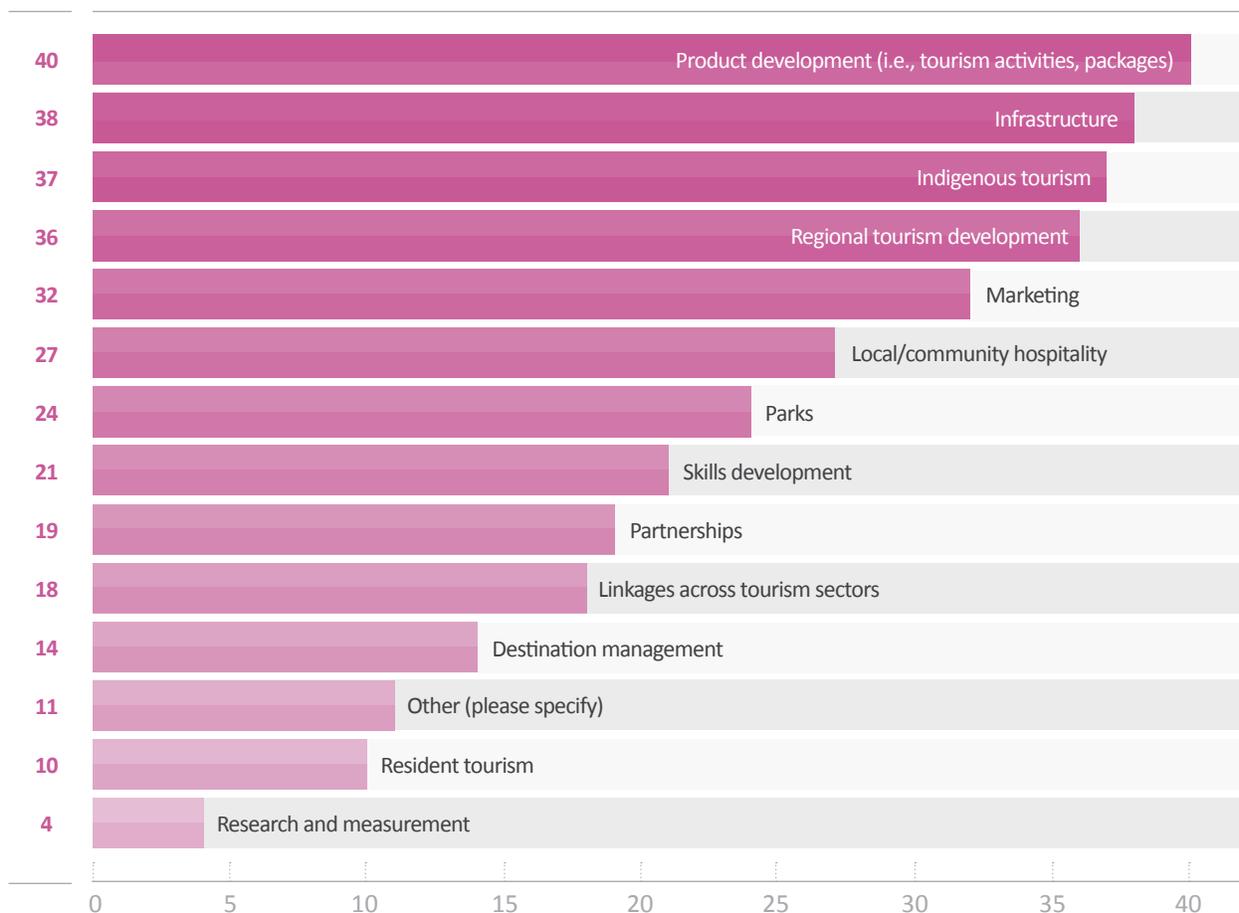


- Partnership-building between communities, territorial, and federal governments, Indigenous organizations, industry, and territorial parks
  - Marketing
  - Product and tourist diversification
  - Community tourism
  - Indigenous and cultural tourism
  - Research
  - Increasing investment in tourism
- **Tourism Support Interviews**
    - The key priority areas that respondents mentioned are infrastructure, accessibility, training, and development of community-based tourism.

The survey provided respondents with a list of tourism priority areas and asked them to identify the areas (select up to five options) they feel are most important to focus on over the next five years.

- **Survey**
  - Figure 3 shows that the top five tourism priority areas that respondents feel should be focused on in the next five years include product development (40; 12.1%), infrastructure (38; 11.5%), Indigenous tourism (37; 11.2%), regional tourism development (36; 10.9%), and marketing (32; 9.7%).

**Figure 3: Top priorities areas for focus over the next five years**



- ‘Other’ priority areas included: promotion of tourism in other regions and communities outside of Yellowknife; sport fishing sector; and, hunting sector.

The survey asked respondents to identify any new products they feel should be added in the five years.

- **Survey**

- Respondents identified a wide range of new product ideas. The most common ideas included: parks (e.g., more hiking trails, more parks, longer season); infrastructure (e.g., in the smaller communities, visitor information centres, park amenities, observation decks) and Indigenous/cultural and community development tourism (e.g., authentic experiences). Other ideas included: short trip excursions; air balloon tours; more fly-in lodges; international hostel; and sailing cruises.

The ideation tool asked participants to identify any great ideas they have for a stronger tourism industry in the NWT. Several ideas related to priority investment areas.

- **Ideation Tool**

- Participant ideas for a stronger tourism industry in the NWT, fell into several categories, including:
  - Tourism programs and supports for ideas such as tourism co-ops for small communities, an Elders-in-Residence program, additional program funding for the Community Tourism Infrastructure Contribution (CTIC) and TPDMP programs, accommodation taxes for out-of-territory visitors, more supports for existing tour operators, and building Indigenous tourism through partnerships with Aurora College or Dechinta, creating a tourism program at Aurora College to support education and employment

- Specific strategic consideration ideas such as increasing safety for tourists, developing regional tourism strategies, enforcing air quality standards for tour buses, enforcing language standards for tour buses and companies (signage should be easily identifiable and in an official language), and further ongoing improvement of tour operator business licensing
- Attraction ideas such as an arts and craft market, transportation museum in Hay River, mining museum in Yellowknife, a multi-use lake facility in Yellowknife, non-resident hunting on the Barrenlands, and teepees, sculptures and arts in Yellowknife (create a hub to showcase the North’s culture)
- Park and trail ideas such as extending the park season, establishing new trails, and offering interpretive programming in the parks
- Marketing ideas such as working with influencers (e.g., photographers, videographers, bloggers) to promote the NWT, more targeting marketing efforts for regions and communities outside of Yellowknife, more marketing of winter activities and TV advertisements.
- Other ideas focused on infrastructure (e.g., improve connectivity), accommodation (e.g., clear dome/igloo hotel/resort), transportation (e.g., tour bus parking and pullouts), and visitor information (e.g., multifunctional experience centre outside of Yellowknife).



### 3.2.3

## Approaches to Leveraging and Maximizing Existing Tourism Assets, Activities and Resources

This section provides information on various approaches to leveraging and maximizing existing tourism assets, activities and resources.

- **Norman Wells**

- Tourism industry representatives stated that the best approaches to leveraging and maximizing tourism assets, activities and resources already in place are to increase marketing efforts, reclaim old buildings for tourism purposes (that could also be used by locals), and improve/maintain infrastructure (e.g. signage).

- **Inuvik**

- Participants feel that the best approaches are through enhanced marketing efforts including: commercials, television shows and television channels and social media. It was noted that marketing should be aimed at both tourists and local residents.

- **Hay River**

- Participants feel that the best approaches to leveraging and maximizing tourism assets, activities and resources already in place are through building better connections between existing businesses, taking advantage of the existing NWT Tourism advertising campaign [Spectacular NWT branding], and looking for alternative ways to promote the NWT and attract tourists.

- **Fort Smith**

- This group believe increasing collaboration among all parties, bundling tourism products to keep tourists longer, developing social media and 'app' based tools to increase marketing, providing easy access to information; and, obtaining better data to target their efforts were the best approach to maximizing and leveraging existing assets.

- **Fort Simpson**

- Participants stated that the best ways to leverage and maximize existing tourism assets, activities and resources are enhancing promotion and marketing of unique community features. More specifically, they noted that promotional activities should target: regional and community level efforts; different target populations; and, the shoulder and winter seasons. Participants also discussed the benefits of focusing more on arts and crafts, festivals and cultural celebrations.

- **Yellowknife**

- Overall, participants noted that the best approaches are through enhancing focus on NWT's heritage (e.g. mines, including remediation efforts), aviation history, natural history, geological history), investments in infrastructure, department collaborations, and exciting events (e.g. festivals) to help maximize per tourist spending and decrease pressure on hotels. Additionally, it was noted that addressing issues in Yellowknife's downtown core is necessary to make the visitor experience better.

- **Dettah**

- Participants identified a variety of approaches to leverage and maximize existing tourism assets, activities and resources, including:
  - Establishing an Indigenous Tourism Association to help Indigenous operators open and run a tourism business
  - Ensuring resources to support tourism business development are readily accessible and widely marketed
  - Working groups and idea-sharing about tourism products and programs
  - Connecting youth with Elders so that can learn about YKDFN traditions and can then share those traditions with tourists with the dual benefit of maintaining traditional knowledge

- **Sector-specific Sessions**

- Overall, participants noted that the best approach to leveraging and maximizing existing tourism assets, activities and resources is through enhanced marketing efforts including: visitor information centres; phone applications; social media; advertisements in airports; and signage. It was noted that marketing should be aimed at both tourists and local residents. Other approaches to leveraging and maximizing existing tourism supports, included: investing more in existing infrastructure; building on the products already offered; strengthening partnerships (e.g., ITI and ECE); offering more operator training; and, conducting more research.

- **Tourism Support Interviews**

- The best approaches to leveraging and maximizing existing tourism assets, activities and resources noted by respondents include more communication, more coordination, more training, more accountability, more marketing and more research.

### 3.2.4

## Opportunities to Make Greater Use of Parks

This section reflects responses to the question about what opportunities exist to make use of/greater use of territorial parks year-round.

- **Norman Wells**

- Industry participants stated that parks are already being utilized year-round, but that this use is not being advertised as a tourism feature.
- Some do not like the idea of the parks being open year-round because it may lead to competition with local businesses.

- Participants identified a variety of activities that could be offered if the parks were promoted as a tourism product including snowshoeing and nighttime events. It was also noted that year-round park access would require additional infrastructure (e.g. sewer, water) and staff to support it.

- **Inuvik**

- The majority of participants indicated that the best way to make greater use of the parks is to extend their open season. Participants stated that having the Dempster open year-round will support this as would offering winter activities such as snowshoeing, skiing, winter camping and guided excursions.
- The group also noted that investments in such things as snow clearing and signage would be needed to support an extended season.

- **Hay River**

- Industry participants feel that greater access to parks outside of the current open season will be beneficial and will be an important contributor to an extended and increased tourism industry for the community.
- Participants noted that the parks could be used for activities such as cultural events, skiing, snowshoeing, dogsledding and carnivals.

- **Fort Smith**

- Industry representatives feel that the park season should be extended beyond September 15<sup>th</sup>. Participants identified a variety of ways to take greater advantage of parks, including looking at cabin rentals and Aurora viewing, increasing access for snowshoeing and campfires, and opportunities for interpretive and arts programming.





- **Fort Simpson**

- Participants had mixed thoughts on the viability of keeping parks open year-round.
- Some think that parks should be open year-round period because they are public property and valuable community assets that are already being used but not capitalized upon for the purposes of tourism.
- Others are hesitant about opening the parks without proper maintenance citing the possibility of vandalism, the cost of maintenance, and visitor safety. These participants stated that parks should only remain open if they are properly staffed and maintained.
- Still others think that the best solution would be to either extend the season that the parks stay open or open them up for coordinated events only.

- **Yellowknife**

- A number of participants commented that the best way to make greater use of the parks is to extend the season and to offer more winter tourism products in the parks. It was suggested that portable infrastructure (e.g. huts, tents) could be constructed to support these activities. Safety with respect to winter camping was raised as a concern.

- **Detah**

- Participants discussed designating lands around Yellowknife Bay (that go through YKDFN Lands/water) as territorial parks to create jobs for Indigenous people. They also spoke about the need for better signage that provides more information on the location and about safety issues (e.g., no gas, no services ahead).

- **Sector-specific Sessions**

- The majority of participants indicated that the best way to make greater use of the parks is to extend their open season.

- For some, this included opening earlier in the spring season and staying open later in the fall season, while for others this meant having the parks open throughout the winter months.
- Participants also mentioned that offering more products in the parks would help to attract more tourists and locals. Examples of products included: skiing (hut-to-hut ski packages); snowshoeing; ice skating; mountaineering; touring; winter camping and glamping; and, ice climbing; events (festivals, Aurora).
- Some participants noted that extending the parks season and offering more products would also offer more opportunities for Indigenous operators to take part in the industry.
- Some participants indicated that research into extending the park season should be conducted to determine the level of interest before moving forward.

- **Tourism Support Interviews**

- Most respondents feel that there are definite opportunities associated with having parks open for a longer season or year round.
- They also mentioned that there would be operational and funding issues that would need to be considered in order for this to happen.

### 3.2.5

## Success in five years

This section provides information on what participants feel success in the NWT tourism industry looks like in five years.

- **Norman Wells**

- Most participants stated that success in the tourism industry five years from now would include: increased tourism growth in the Sahtu; more local operators; Sahtu operators collaborating to offer packages; changes to the Tourism Operator Licence (TOL) requirements that now necessitate local investment and local involvement; good data; and a focus on youth tourism skills building.

- **Inuvik**

- Overall, participants noted that success in tourism in the NWT in the next five years would include the following:
  - Increased number of local tourism operators
  - increased product and tourist diversification
  - Improved infrastructure (e.g., upgraded airport, more hotels and restaurants, signage)

- **Hay River**

- Industry representatives feel that success in the tourism industry five years from now includes a variety of different of things including:
  - Diversification of tourism activities outside of Yellowknife and beyond typical Aurora-based activities — in particular into Indigenous cultural tourism
  - More collaboration between operators
  - More operators
  - More locals taking advantage of ‘tourism activities’

- **Fort Smith**

- Participants noted that success would mean increases in community tourism activity, increased collaboration among tourism support entities (like NWTT and regional tourism coordinators), increased knowledge and awareness of what each region and community have to offer in the way of tourism, and more diversity in tourism products.
- It was also noted that success means respecting the level and kind of tourism experiences a community is prepared to support.

- **Fort Simpson**

- Industry participants feel that success in tourism in five years would encompass growth in the smaller communities, availability of diversified products, collaboration, and greater awareness of the NWT both nationally and internationally.

- **Yellowknife**

- Overall, participants noted that success in tourism in the NWT in the next five years would include the following: increased product diversification; increased regional and community tourism supported by an increased number of Indigenous operators; and, an increased focus on exhibiting local art.

- **Dettah**

- Participants said that success looks like: Indigenous cultural tourism provided by Indigenous operators on Indigenous lands; increased employment opportunities; adoption of a collaborative approach to how operators are approved; and, the development of a land use plan that identifies where tourism can take place.



- **Sector-specific Sessions**
  - Overall, participants noted that success in tourism in the NWT in the next five years would include the following:
    - Increased, but sustainable tourism numbers and spending
    - Increased Indigenous, community and cultural tourism
    - Improved infrastructure
    - Increased education and training opportunities for youth in both high schools and through the college
    - Increased product and tourist diversification
    - Strengthened partnerships
    - Quality/standardized products
    - Marketing efforts that result in the NWT being known as a leading tourism destination
- **Tourism Support Interviews**
  - Respondents felt that success in the tourism industry in the next five years includes improved infrastructure, increased levels of community-based tourism, and more amenities (e.g., restaurants).
- **Discussion Forum**
  - Participants stated that success in the tourism industry would include more visitors, more visitor spending, more local jobs, more infrastructure, more all-season roads, more parks, and more hiking trails in all regions, not just in Yellowknife (“...NWT as a destination that is all four corners...”). Participants also stated that marketing efforts should be highlighting all the unique features and available experiences of all the different regions and communities. It was also mentioned that success would entail more collaboration between all parties, reduction of red-tape and other barriers, and a tourism program offered through the college.

### 3.3

## Tourism Partners

This section highlights the key responses provided by tourism funding partners and tourism partner organizations.

### 3.3.1

#### Priority Areas for Investment

This section identifies the priority areas that participants think the GNWT should focus its tourism investments over the next five years.

- **Tourism Partner Organization Interviews**
  - Respondents stated that items such as infrastructure (e.g., internet and road access), support for growth of products outside of the North Slave, more market research funding, partnerships with Indigenous governments, training and festival support should be the focus of tourism investments.
- **Tourism Funding Partner Interviews**
  - Participants feel that the priority areas such as support for the development of an Indigenous tourism strategy, capacity development, infrastructure development, and stronger commitment and communications between partners should be the tourism priorities over the next five years.

### 3.3.2

## Opportunities to Expand and Enhance Tourism Across the NWT

This section identifies short- and longer-term opportunities to enhance and expand tourism across the NWT.

### Short-term

- **Tourism Partner Organization Interviews**
  - Respondents feel that convention/conference travel, obtaining funding from Destination Canada to explore more rural communities and on day fishing licences represent short term opportunities to grow and enhance tourism.
- **Tourism Funding Partner Interviews**
  - Participants identified Indigenous/ cultural tourism, Aurora (linking it to other products), wilderness adventure tourism, culinary tourism and identifying ways to get tourists to spend more money when they visit the NWT as opportunities to growth ad enhance tourism.

### Longer-term

- **Tourism Partner Organization Interviews**
  - Developing new tourism marketing (Australia and Mexico), developing a tourism hospitality program at the new polytechnic, and providing RV rental and servicing are longer term ideas for tourism growth in the NWT.

### 3.3.3

## Trends with Potential

This section identifies which growing trends within Canada – culinary tourism, Indigenous tourism, luxury tourism, LGBTQ2 tourism and bleisure (mix of business and leisure travel) tourism – participants feel hold potential for the NWT.

- **Tourism Partner Organization Interviews**
  - Participants feel that bleisure and Indigenous tourism have a lot of potential. Culinary was also identified but requires product development. Other trends identified include climate change and ecotourism and further support for Aurora tourism to keep in front of the competition from other jurisdictions.

### 3.3.4

## Partnerships

This section identifies the key partnerships required to enhance and grow tourism across the NWT.

- **Tourism Partner Organization Interviews**
  - Participants identified a variety of important partnerships including: government (GNWT, community, federal), business/mining, NWTT, ITAC, private sector, and research.



### 3.3.5

## Approaches to Leveraging and Maximizing Existing Tourism Assets, Activities and Resources

This section identifies approaches to leveraging and maximizing existing tourism assets, activities and resources.

- **Tourism Partner Organization Interviews**
  - Participants feel that best way to leverage and maximize existing tourism products and services is by continuing to do what is already being done, focusing more on festivals and ensuring that the NWT remain competitive in the Aurora viewing market, and supporting licensing for operators especially in areas where there are tourism activity gaps.
- **Tourism Funding Partner Interviews**
  - Participants indicated that capacity development (to ensure tourists are receiving the level of service they expect), research to determine the supports required by Indigenous operators, streamlined tourism partnership communications (e.g., ITI-ITAC-NWTT), and aligned partnership priorities.

### 3.3.6

## Success in five years

This section reveals what participants feel success in the NWT tourism industry would look like in the next five years.

- **Tourism Partner Organization Interviews**
  - Participants feel success in the next five years includes:
    - A greater variety of tourism experiences
    - More tourism in communities outside of Yellowknife
    - Tourism occurring during off seasons
    - More Indigenous cultural tourism
    - The polytechnic university offering tourism programs

## 4.0

# Next Steps

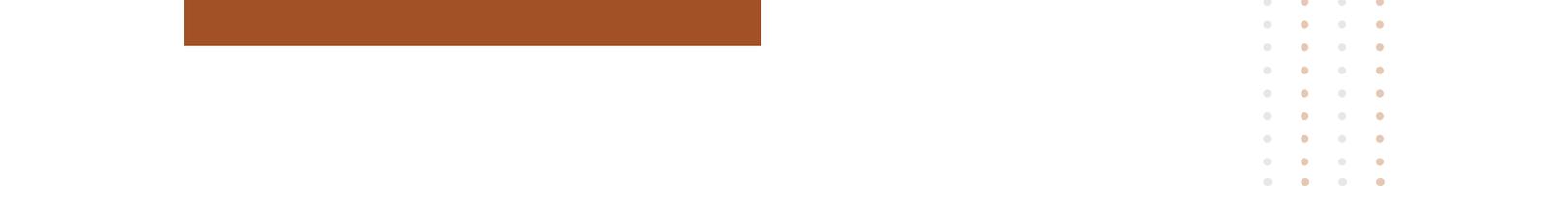
The feedback gathered from participants and presented in this document will help inform and guide the GNWT in the development of the NWT's next tourism strategy. This strategy will be implemented in 2021.

These responses will be carefully reviewed alongside information obtained during a national and international jurisdictional review of tourism strategies (e.g., products, marketing, etc.), and an evaluation of the outcomes of Tourism 2020.

The objective is to build on the lessons and success of Tourism 2020 to expand the industry's footprint as a tool to build a stronger, more diverse economy for the NWT.

Those interested can expect to be kept up-to-date on strategy release and implementation through the Department of Industry, Tourism and Investment's website, social media, and direct email outreach channels over the coming year.





5.0

## Contact

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# Appendices

## **Appendix A: Interview Questions**

- NWTT AGM and Conference
- Community Engagement
  - Industry Sessions
  - Public Sessions
- Municipalities
- Tourism Partner Organization
- Tourism Funding Partners
- Tourism Sectors

## **Appendix B: Online Survey Questions**

## **Appendix C: Discussion Forum Questions**

## **Appendix D: Ideation Tool Question**

## **Appendix E: GNWT Departments**





## Appendix A

# Interview Questions

### NWTT AGM and Conference Tourism Sector-Specific

1. How relevant are the product development and skills development programs offered by ITI Tourism and Parks Division to you and your tourism business?
2. Based on your tourism sector, what priority areas do you think the GNWT should focus its investments on over the next five years?
3. What is the best approach to leveraging and maximizing tourism assets, activities and resources already in place?
4. How supportive are local residents of tourism in the communities where you deliver your products? Is there anything that could be done to increase local resident buy-in/support of tourism?
5. Based on your tourism sector, what opportunities do you see to make use of/greater use of territorial parks year-round?
6. What does success in the tourism industry in the NWT look like in five years?

### Community Engagement

#### Industry Sessions

1. How relevant are the product development and skills development programs offered by ITI Tourism and Parks Division to you and your tourism business?
2. Based on your tourism sector, what priority areas do you think the GNWT should focus its investments on over the next five years?
3. What is the best approach to leveraging and maximizing tourism assets, activities and resources already in place?
4. How supportive are residents of tourism in the communities where you deliver your products? Is there anything that could be done to increase local resident buy-in/support of tourism?
5. Based on your tourism sector, what opportunities do you see to make use of/greater use of territorial parks year-round?
6. What does success in the tourism industry in the NWT look like in five years?
7. How can Visitor experience be improved?

#### Public Sessions

1. What do you see as the main benefits of tourism in your community?
  - a. What issues or challenges do they give rise to?
  - b. How can the positive effects be enhanced, built upon or further improved?
  - c. How can the less positive effects be avoided, or otherwise addressed?

2. When it comes to tourism, is there anything that could be done to enhance the experience of community members?
3. In what ways could growth in the tourism industry be beneficial to your community or the NWT?
4. In what ways could growth in the tourism industry be negative to your community or the NWT?
5. What are the major opportunities for tourism in this community or in NWT as a whole?
6. Any final thoughts on what the Department should focus on in the new strategy?

### Municipalities

1. Please describe your role/your municipality's role with regards to tourism in the NWT.
2. What tourism products does your municipality offer?
3. What funds does your municipality access to support local tourism?
4. What are the key strengths of tourism in your municipality?
5. What are the key barriers to growing the tourism economy in your municipality in the short-term? Long-term? What solutions can you identify to help address these challenges?
6. What opportunities exist to enhance and expand tourism in your municipality? In the NWT?
7. What is the best approach to leveraging and maximizing the tourism assets, activities and resources already in place in your municipality?
8. In what priority areas do you think the GNWT should focus its investments over the next five years, and why?
9. What role do you see your municipality playing in the growth of tourism in the NWT over the next five years?
10. Do you have anything else you would like to add?

### Tourism Partner Organizations

1. In what way is your department/organization involved in tourism?
2. In the last five years, what was your department's/organization's most significant tourism/tourism-related success?
3. What does success in the NWT tourism industry look like in five years?
4. In your view, how can visitor experience in the NWT be improved?
5. In what priority areas do you think the GNWT should focus its investments over the next five years, and why?
6. Within Canada, there are a number of growing tourism trends - Culinary tourism, Indigenous tourism, Luxury travel, LGBTQ2 travel and Bleisure (mix of business and leisure travel). Which of these trends do you feel hold potential for the NWT?
7. What short- and longer-term opportunities exist to enhance and expand tourism across the NWT?
8. What tourism partnerships (e.g., government, agency, business) are necessary to enhance and grow tourism across the NWT?
9. What is the best approach to leveraging and maximizing tourism assets, activities and resources already in place?
10. What is the best approach to expanding/diversifying destination development and marketing efforts?
11. In what ways could growth in the tourism industry be beneficial to the NWT?
12. In what ways could growth in the tourism industry be detrimental for the NWT?
13. What role do you see your department/organization playing in the growth of tourism over the next five years?
14. Do you have anything else you would like to add?





### Tourism Funding Partners

1. Please describe your role/your organization's role with regards to tourism in the NWT.
2. What tourism programs, services and supports does your organization's funding target?
3. What are the key strengths of tourism in the NWT?
4. What are the key barriers to growing the tourism economy in the NWT in the short-term? Long-term? What solutions can you identify to help address these challenges?
5. In what priority areas do you think the GNWT should focus its investments over the next five years, and why?
6. What opportunities exist to enhance and expand tourism across the NWT?
7. What is the best approach to leveraging and maximizing tourism assets, activities and resources already in place?
8. Are you aware of any other funding opportunities for tourism in the NWT?
9. What role do you see your organization playing in the growth of tourism in the NWT over the next five years?
10. Do you have anything else you would like to add?

### Tourism Support Sectors

1. How relevant are the product development and skills development programs offered by ITI Tourism and Parks Division to you and your tourism business?
2. Based on your tourism sector, what priority areas do you think the GNWT should focus its investments on over the next five years?
3. What is the best approach to leveraging and maximizing tourism assets, activities and resources already in place?
4. How supportive are local residents of tourism in the communities where you deliver your products? Is there anything that could be done to increase local resident buy-in/support of tourism?
5. Based on your tourism sector, what opportunities do you see to make use of/greater use of territorial parks year-round?
6. What does success in the tourism industry in the NWT look like in five years?
7. Do you have anything else you would like to add?

## Appendix B

# Online Survey Questions

1. Please choose the area that best describes where you live and/or work.
  - Beaufort Delta/Western Arctic Region
  - Dehcho Region
  - North Slave Region
  - Sahtu Region
  - South Slave Region
  - I am involved in tourism territory wide
  - Other (please specify)
2. Please choose the option that best describes your involvement in the tourism industry:
  - A licensed tourism operator
  - Employed by a licensed tourism operator (tour operators, hunting outfitters, etc.)
  - Employed by or own a tourism related business (accommodations, food and beverage, gift shop, etc.)
  - Employed or volunteer with an event(s)/festival(s) that attracts or could attract tourists
  - Employed or volunteer with a tourism related organization (museum, NWT Tourism, etc.)
  - A municipal, town or hamlet (Council, staff, etc.)
  - An Indigenous government or organization (Band Council, staff, board, etc.)
  - A Government of Northwest Territories Department
  - Not involved in tourism but interested
  - Prefer not to say
  - Other (please specify)
3. Please indicate the level to which you agree or disagree with the following statements.
  - a. I am satisfied with the level of investment the GNWT has made in tourism training.
  - b. I am satisfied with the level of investment the GNWT has made in Indigenous cultural tourism.
  - c. I am satisfied with the level of investment the GNWT has made in community tourism development.
  - d. I am satisfied with the level of investment the GNWT has made in infrastructure to support tourism.
  - e. I am satisfied with the direction the tourism industry is headed in the NWT.
  - f. I am satisfied with the direction the tourism industry is headed in my region.
  - g. I am satisfied with the direction the tourism industry is headed in my community.
  - h. Overall, the people in my community are happy to support local tourism activities.
  - i. I am satisfied with the level of investment the GNWT has made in tourism marketing.
  - j. I am satisfied with the level of investment the GNWT has made in parks.
  - k. I am satisfied with the level of investment the GNWT has made in my community to support tourism.
  - l. I would be able to do more with more money.
4. What are the key strengths of tourism in the NWT? (Select up to 3 options)
  - Natural assets (e.g., Aurora, parks, lakes and rivers, mountains, barrenlands, wildlife)
    - Road leading to the Arctic Ocean
    - Increased air access from both domestic and international markets
    - Diverse authentic Indigenous culture throughout the NWT
    - World class sport fishing
    - Safety



- Growing number of licensed tourism operators
  - Meeting and conference locations
  - Availability of programs and services to support tourism growth
  - Other (please specify)
5. What are the key challenges facing NWT tourism in the next five years? (Select up to 3 options)
- Air travel costs
  - Customer service/hospitality
  - Marketing
  - Lack or limited tourism planning at the community level
  - Lack or limited tourism products (tours and experiences for visitors)
  - Cost of running a tourism business
  - Rising fuel costs
  - Lack or limited accommodation
  - Lack of Indigenous tourism products (tours and experiences for visitors)
  - Lack or limited food services
  - Lack of all-weather roads
  - Air travel lack of - direct access to major centres
  - Lack of public tourism infrastructure (trails, signage, museums, etc.)
  - Other (please specify)
6. The GNWT's approach to tourism is the right one. (Indicate level of agreement)
7. In your opinion, how successful has the GNWT been in supporting tourism across the territory over the last five years? (Indicate level of success)
8. What tourism priority areas do you believe are the most important to focus on over the next five years? (Select up to five options)
- Marketing
  - Parks
  - Product development (i.e., tourism activities, packages)
  - Indigenous tourism
  - Regional tourism development
  - Research and measurement
  - Local/community hospitality
  - Resident tourism
  - Infrastructure
  - Skills development
  - Partnerships
  - Destination management
  - Linkages across tourism sectors
  - Other (please specify): \_\_\_\_\_
9. The following list of programs are currently offered to support tourism in the NWT. Please identify all of the programs you have participated in over the last five years.
- Tourism Product Diversification and Marketing Program
  - Tourism Business Mentorship Program
  - Aboriginal (Indigenous) Tourism Champions Program
  - Community Tourism Coordinator Program
  - Community Tourism Infrastructure Contribution
  - Youth Mentorship for Tourism Program
  - Tourism Training Fund
10. Please provide any feedback you have on the programs you have accessed.
11. The following list of workshops are currently offered to support tourism in the NWT. Please identify all of the workshops you have participated in over the last five years
- Risk Management
  - Starting a Tourism Business
  - NorthernMost Host
  - Business-ready, Market-ready, and Trade-ready Standards
12. Please provide any feedback you have on the workshops you have attended
13. Are there any new programs/workshops needed to support tourism over the next five years? If so, please share your ideas.
14. Please identify any new tourism products that you feel should be added in the next five years.
15. Within Canada, there are a number of growing tourism trends. Please indicate the trends you feel hold potential for the NWT. (Select all that apply)
16. Please provide any additional feedback that you feel is important for future NWT tourism planning

## Appendix C

# Discussion Forum Questions

1. Where have we missed the mark in developing our tourism industry over the last five years?
2. What does success in the NWT tourism industry look like in five years?
3. How can we play to the strengths which already exist in our tourism industry?
4. What partnerships (government, agency, business) are necessary to take tourism in the NWT to the next level?
5. In the last five years, what has the Northwest Territories done right in developing tourism?
6. What short, medium, and long-term opportunities should we capitalize on to expand our tourism industry?
7. How should we focus our efforts to provide more world-class experiences for visitors in our territory?

## Appendix D

# Ideation Tool Question

1. Do you have great ideas for a stronger tourism industry in the Northwest Territories? Share them here and start a conversation!





## Appendix E

# GNWT Departments

Due to the 2019 fall election, and the resulting transition period which limits public-facing activities, engagement with GNWT Departments was carried out from September 9 to 30, 2019. This included in-person and telephone interviews with GNWT Departments with connections to tourism, and a review of background materials (e.g., GNWT tourism strategies, tourism survey data, tourism programs and services, Skills for Success 10-year strategic framework and 4-year action plan, GNWT economic and employment strategies).

In total, 39 representatives were interviewed from the following GNWT departments: Industry, Tourism and Investment; Education, Culture and Employment; Municipal and Community Affairs; Infrastructure; Lands; and, Environment and Natural Resources. The interviews ranged in length from 30 to 75 minutes. All interview participants were asked to respond to the same question set (see below). One participant solicited additional responses to the question set from other department staff. One individual submitted a written response to the questions. Some participants provided additional resource materials they felt would further clarify their responses.

### Interview Questions

1. In what way is your department/organization involved in tourism?
2. In the last five years, what was your department's/organization's most significant tourism/tourism-related success?
3. What does success in the NWT tourism industry look like in five years?
4. In your view, how can visitor experience in the NWT be improved?
5. In what priority areas do you think the GNWT should focus its investments over the next five years, and why?
6. Within Canada, there are a number of growing tourism trends - Culinary tourism, Indigenous tourism, Luxury travel, LGBTQ2 travel and Bleisure (mix of business and leisure travel). Which of these trends do you feel hold potential for the NWT?
7. What short- and longer-term opportunities exist to enhance and expand tourism across the NWT?
8. What tourism partnerships (e.g., government, agency, business) are necessary to enhance and grow tourism across the NWT?
9. What is the best approach to leveraging and maximizing tourism assets, activities and resources already in place?
10. What is the best approach to expanding/diversifying destination development and marketing efforts?
11. In what ways could growth in the tourism industry be beneficial to the NWT?
12. In what ways could growth in the tourism industry be detrimental for the NWT?
13. What role do you see your department/organization playing in the growth of tourism over the next five years?
14. Do you have anything else you would like to add?

## Responses

### Priority Areas for Investment

This section identifies the priority areas that participants think the GNWT should focus its tourism investments over the next five years.

- **GNWT Departments**

- **Skills Development / Tourism Career**

**Awareness** - Many GNWT respondents spoke about the need to build partnerships with Aurora College to develop postsecondary tourism courses and/or a tourism diploma/certificate program and about the need to build the skills of youth (and to a lesser extent adults) in the tourism industry and to promote tourism as a career opportunity.

- **Community Tourism Development and Indigenous Tourism** - GNWT participants spoke about the importance of empowering communities to engage in the tourism industry by providing opportunities for employment and economic development. These opportunities included increased community and Indigenous supports in the areas of business training, interpretive training, and investments for start-ups. Some staff also commented on the importance of promoting authentic Indigenous tourism and partnerships and ensuring that Indigenous culture is not appropriated.

- **Infrastructure** - GNWT staff discussed infrastructure investments in core infrastructure such as roads that will benefit both residents and tourists. They also identified investment in accommodations (tourists and workers), parks, Visitor Information Centres, signage, road amenities (e.g., washrooms), and shared artist space that artists can use to work, meet other artists, exhibit and sell their work.

- **Strengthening Relationships** - Many staff commented on the need for ITI to collaborate with: other GNWT departments to share expertise, development educational experiences, enhance learning and develop best practices in sustainable tourism; Indigenous governments and organizations to ensure cultural protocols and heritage values are portrayed appropriately and that visitors and land users respect the unique biodiversity and cultures of the north; and, funders (e.g., CanNor and Heritage Canada) to identify multi-year funding opportunities.
- **Other priority areas mentioned by GNWT staff include:**
  - Developing more tourism products so that visitors have more options
  - Educating tourists in order to increase awareness and appreciation of wildlife and minimize impacts on the environment and culture
  - Marketing tourism in the NWT to countries beyond Asia (e.g., Germany, other parts of Canada, Australia, United States)
  - Focusing investments on ensuring that the current tourism products, program and services work well and meet tourists' needs
  - More tourism funds available; and, the need for strategic regional investments to help capitalize on return on investment



## Opportunities to Expand and Enhance Tourism Across the NWT

This section identifies short- and longer-term opportunities to enhance and expand tourism across the NWT.

### SHORT-TERM

#### • GNWT Departments

- Participants identified a variety of tourism products that could be developed and/or improved in the short-term to enhance and expand tourism including:
  - Increasing Indigenous and cultural immersion products/packages
  - Supporting authentic art experiences — including meeting artists, hearing their stories, watching them create their art, buying art from artists still living a traditional life;
  - Extending the park season beyond May to September to allow for new activities like cross-country skiing, winter camping, and skating for visitors and residents alike
  - Focusing on road-based tourism (e.g., increasing road touring along the Inuvik to Tuktoyaktuk, Dempster and Alaska highways)
  - Short excursions/boat cruises and day trips /packages to the smaller communities.
- Staff felt continuing to focus on developing and implementing programming to build skills would help to enhance the tourist experience through consistent delivery of quality products.
- Improved marketing efforts including promoting the NWT beyond the Asian market, promoting new parks and road , and marketing the NWT through film were considered to be an important short-term opportunities.

- GNWT Staff feel that establishing new partnerships, strengthening existing partnerships and increasing communication and collaboration with partners (e.g., Indigenous Tourism Association of Canada (ITAC), communities, Indigenous governments and economic development corporations, federal government and GNWT departments) will enhance tourism opportunities across the NWT.

### LONGER-TERM

- Many GNWT staff identified infrastructure projects such as building new roads/corridors and establishing new protected areas and offering new products such as seasonal ferry link between Tuktoyaktuk and Deadhorse, Alaska and more cruise service in the higher Arctic communities as the key focus for longer term opportunities to improve tourism across the NWT.

## Trends with Potential

This section identifies which growing trends within Canada – culinary tourism, Indigenous tourism, luxury tourism, LGBTQ2 tourism and bleisure (mix of business and leisure travel) tourism – participants feel hold potential for the NWT.

### • GNWT Departments

- Participants noted that bleisure has already shown great potential in the NWT as is obvious from the large number of business travellers found in the territory. They mentioned that because it is so expensive to get to the NWT, it is important to take advantage of the fact they are already here and offer more tourism products so that they will stay an additional day or two and spend more money.
- Staff commented that while Indigenous (and Community) Tourism is already an important component of tourism in the NWT, there is a lot more potential for growth in this sector. Some participants also stated that Indigenous tourism needs to be authentic and as such, needs to be delivered and endorsed by Indigenous people.
- GNWT staff also felt several areas of tourism have strong potential:
  - Culinary tourism with a focus on Indigenous traditional foods (e.g., Indigenous chef preparing seal)
  - LGBTQ2 tourism since the NWT is an open, welcoming place with quality pride events
  - Luxury travel given that many people who visit the NWT have a lot of money and would likely pay for high-end accommodation

- Other potential trends identified by GNWT staff included: adventure tourism/extreme/wilderness/ecotourism as non-consumptive opportunities to showcase land and culture; film tourism; art tourism; golf tourism; fly and drive tourism /RV tourism; health, wellness and healing retreat tourism; and, climate change tourism (i.e., opportunity to see first-hand the impacts of climate change).
- Some respondents commented that it is important to remember that the NWT is five distinct regions with different strengths and appeals. Therefore, marketing and prioritizing needs to be targeted specifically to these regions.

## Partnerships

This section identifies the key partnerships required to enhance and grow tourism across the NWT.

### • GNWT Departments

- The most important partnerships for ITI to build and strengthen were those with municipal governments; Indigenous governments, economic development corporations and businesses; and, other GNWT departments so as to provide more targeted and effective support to the tourism industry.
- Other partners that are considered important for the growth of tourism include those with the federal government (e.g., Parks Canada, Heritage Canada), NWTT, Tourism operators; industry/business (e.g., retailers, restaurants, museum), not-for-profits, national organizations (ITAC, Destination Canada), international tourism organizations, airlines, and the film industry.
- It was noted that there is a need for equity across the tourism industry that allow new businesses and entrepreneurs to enter the market and to participate in industry decision-making by sitting on boards that influence tourism in the NWT.

- It was also noted that “development of strategies and plans need to be inclusive and equitable of all Indigenous peoples and interests. Community needs assessments are helpful tools to use as a starting point once tourism goals are determined. Capacity building is key to success and taking the time, in the beginning, to ensure there is community buy-in and an equitable strategy in place should help to ensure that communities are engaged and leading the process of development at their speed.”

#### Approaches to Leveraging and Maximizing Existing Tourism Assets, Activities and Resources

This section identifies approaches to leveraging and maximizing existing tourism assets, activities and resources.

- **GNWT Departments**
  - New and continued marketing efforts through increased web presence (e.g., portal accessible by any media and managed by regional offices), targeted television advertisements in airports (e.g., Edmonton), and familiarization tours for influencers, tourism writers, film directors and producers to gather content and leverage funding support.
  - Expanding the park season and offering more products to encourage tourists and locals to stay longer
  - Providing more tourism information through booking desks, concierge desk in hotel, online apps to book products, and Visitor Information Centres was considered necessary to maximize existing tourism products.

- Revisiting how current tourism investments are allocated to see if there are better ways to spend the money (e.g., target funds to those ventures that provide evidence (research and develop business plans) that the idea has a high likelihood of success) and looking for additional sources of funding (e.g., federal funds).
- Identifying new opportunities for collaboration (e.g., communities work together to offer multi-community packages) and strengthening existing partnerships (e.g., working together across departments by breaking down silos).
- Increasing research to provide data for tourism operators, park managers and protected areas management boards and training (e.g., interpretive training)

#### Success in 5 years

This section reveals what participants feel success in the NWT tourism industry would look like in the next five years.

- **GNWT Departments**
  - A number of GNWT staff felt that an increased number of tourism products would be a strong indicator of success. They specifically spoke about:
    - More activities for tourists in Yellowknife during the days and on Sunday;
    - Aurora tours occurring outside of Yellowknife
    - More products available in the off seasons/shoulder seasons (i.e., beyond May to October)
    - More products reflecting Indigenous cultural values which help preserve culture
    - More trails and other outdoor recreation products available in the parks

- Staff stated that seeing more support for training so that communities/individuals have a better understanding of the tourism business and are equipped with the skills necessary to support development and operationalization of tourism business opportunities (e.g., interpretive programs, environmental education programs, certificate/diploma program in travel and tourism at the College that incorporates Indigenous culture training) would be evidence of success.
- Participants commented that more infrastructure/services supporting tourism would be a measure of success.
  - Examples included hotels, restaurants, visitor centres, signage, roads, parks, viewpoints, trails, conference centres of different sizes in different locations that allow for expansion of business and sporting event markets, RV and campground in Tuktoyaktuk, festival venue in Yellowknife for 500+ people.
- Other signs of success in the next five years included:
  - Accelerating tourism growth across the territory measured through spending, visitors, per-visitor spend, regional growth, and other measures indicating whole-of-territory industry health
  - Improved service quality and tourist satisfaction levels
  - Growth in festivals and large events.



