

The Manitoba Government's Tourism Action Plan 2012-2015

The Manitoba government's Tourism Action Plan 2012-2015 outlines the government's multi-year approach to realign provincial resources to better position the industry for continued growth. The plan is based on the findings of an industry task group led by the Premier's Economic Advisory Council that explored opportunities to grow and strengthen Manitoba's tourism sector. The plan will be delivered by the Tourism Secretariat (Manitoba Culture, Heritage and Tourism).

The five 'action areas' in the plan are:

1. a commitment by government to undertake a process of change, improvement and growth – both internally and in collaboration with industry associations and agencies
2. improved alignment and rationalization of responsibilities between the provincial government, Travel Manitoba, regional tourism associations and destination organizations
3. improved statistical data collection that empowers industry and government to undertake more effective planning and investment
4. a review of a potential sustainable funding model to support tourism development and marketing
5. enhanced youth tourism education programs and recruitment initiatives

ACTION AREA 1

Grow, improve, collaborate

The government is committed to a process of change, improvement and growth – both internally and in collaboration with industry associations and agencies.

a) Integrate tourism development and tourism marketing objectives through a provincial tourism strategy

A provincial tourism strategy is needed to address fragmentation across

government and industry, and ensure that the provincial government's decisions and policy priorities have a significant and sustained impact on the tourism industry. The strategy must be developed with meaningful and comprehensive consultation with industry. The department anticipates the strategy can be in place by the third quarter of the 2013-14 fiscal year.

ACTION:

With EQ (see description on page 3) as a foundation, the Tourism Secretariat and Travel Manitoba will:

- lead the development of a provincial tourism strategy in consultation with the tourism industry, industry associations, local governments, regional tourism association, destination organizations and other stakeholders. The strategy will provide a long-term policy framework to guide and inform provincial government priority-setting and decision-making that impacts the growth of the tourism industry.
- support and encourage ongoing industry/stakeholder collaboration and input into strategy implementation. This will be accomplished through support for an industry-led tourism summit that brings stakeholders together to learn, establish a common direction and share progress.

b) Reduce fragmentation and realign tourism activities based on the 'Explorer Quotient'

The Explorer Quotient (EQ) was developed by the Canadian Tourism Commission to help experience providers and destination marketing agencies go beyond traditional market research to find out exactly why people travel and why different types of travellers seek out entirely different travel experiences. The research developed an innovative market segmentation tool that allows for a more refined and narrowed focus to marketing campaigns and experience development.

Travel Manitoba has licensed EQ and began to incorporate it into their 2012-13 marketing direction. Travel Manitoba has continued to review and reconcile the EQ research with its own and intends to more broadly use its insights to help market more effectively.

Likewise, the Tourism Secretariat will integrate EQ as a common programming tool to guide the government's investments in product innovation and product renewal. Using EQ as the foundation for development of government tourism initiatives will provide a common approach to industry development and help to maximize the return on government dollars.

Aligning tourism development with EQ and with the priority EQ segments targeted by Travel Manitoba will allow for a co-ordinated approach to identifying priority products for the segments, developing the right experiences for the visitor types, aligning development with marketing efforts, and collaboratively identifying research requirements.

ACTION:

EQ will be integrated into tourism activities as the foundation for aligning government departments and agencies with a common provincial tourism direction.

ACTION AREA 2

Clear roles and responsibilities

Through the Tourism Secretariat, government will work to improve alignment and rationalization of responsibilities between the provincial government, Travel Manitoba, regional tourism associations and destination organizations, including:

- a review of funding associated with tourism product development
- co-ordination of tourism activities with other provincial government departments
- reviewing and defining the role of regional tourism associations and destination organizations

a) Delineate the roles of the Tourism Secretariat and Travel Manitoba

An integrated approach to tourism development and tourism marketing requires ongoing collaboration and co-ordination between the Tourism Secretariat and Travel Manitoba, and between government and industry.

Using the EQ framework, the Secretariat and Travel Manitoba must work closely together to ensure that:

- the government's tourism product development investments and priorities are realistically aligned with current and potential markets
- that Travel Manitoba's tourism marketing priorities and activities are built around both current and potential markets, and are based on the full range of Manitoba's tourism product offerings

ACTION:

Travel Manitoba and the Tourism Secretariat will define roles, responsibilities and areas of collaboration. This relationship will reflect:

- that the Tourism Secretariat be responsible for capacity building, funding and development of tourism policy
- that the Tourism Secretariat not be responsible for any marketing and not provide marketing funding, except through RTA marketing plans developed in consultation with Travel Manitoba

b) Clarify and confirm the Tourism Secretariat's role to lead tourism product and destination development and coordinate cross-departmental tourism activities

The government will align tourism product development, tourism business development, and destination development through the Tourism Secretariat. The Secretariat will manage these functions as elements of a product renewal process that strengthens industry and maximizes the value of tourism.

Development priorities will incorporate EQ into product and destination development activities, including:

- Facilitate the modernization of Manitoba Star Attractions – work with Travel Manitoba to formulate an approach for incorporating EQ and experience development into Manitoba's signature attractions.
- Increase the competitiveness and encourage growth of the tourism industry throughout Manitoba - provide leadership to the tourism industry through

partnerships with industry associations, regional tourism associations and destination organizations.

- Use EQ as the framework to achieve the objectives of the Aboriginal Tourism Strategy, Eco-tourism Strategy, and Agri-tourism Strategy.

ACTION:

- To address fragmentation across government, a revised tourism development direction will see a formalized requirement for government departments and agencies that support tourism activities to align with a common provincial tourism direction. This will be achieved through an interdepartmental Deputy Ministers Working Group on Tourism, led by Manitoba Culture, Heritage and Tourism.
- To better track the government's allocations of tourism-related resources across departments, the Tourism Secretariat will be assigned overall responsibility for overseeing and monitoring all government investments in product development and tourism business development and for reporting to government on the effectiveness and value of those investments.
- Tourism initiatives currently existing in provincial government departments will be reviewed to determine if there is any potential for efficiencies or some centralization within the Tourism Secretariat.

c) Encourage co-ordination and collaboration among provincial industry associations

Manitoba's provincial industry associations with a core stake in the tourism industry include Bed and Breakfast Manitoba, Manitoba Hotel Association, Manitoba Campgrounds Association, Manitoba Lodges and Outfitters Association, Manitoba Restaurant and Food Services Association, and Manitoba Tourism Education Council.

The government will communicate to provincial industry associations its understanding and expectation that the associations, individually and collectively, are responsible for quality assurance, youth engagement, and market readiness through (a) training, (b) establishing, monitoring and enforcing quality standards, and (c) fostering a culture of 'quality service' in their respective industries.

ACTION:

- Develop a council comprised of representatives from Manitoba's six provincial industry associations, along with Travel Manitoba. The council will serve as a forum to (a) promote quality service in the tourism industry and (b) collaborate on specific initiatives to raise industry awareness of the critical role that quality service plays in building and maintaining a healthy, growing tourism industry.
- The Tourism Secretariat will encourage the provincial industry associations to better co-ordinate and align the timing of their respective provincial conferences, combining these events when possible, to maximize the benefits to industry participants in return for their investments of time and travel.

d) Define role of regional tourism associations (RTAs)

The Tourism Secretariat has worked closely with RTAs to review the Rural Regional Tourism Initiative (RRTI) funding program. The review identified a need for the department to re-affirm its commitment to the RTAs and update the funding program to define the role of RTAs.

Revisions to the RTA funding program will streamline reporting requirements, support implementation of multi-year strategic plans, and provide project funding to support annual implementation work plans. RTAs will also be resourced to improve industry engagement and relations, and support for youth programs.

The department will continue to work closely with RTAs to assess the capacity of the organizations to develop partnerships, maintain memberships and match grant contributions.

ACTION:

- The department's core funding of RTAs will be focused on supporting product and industry development on a region-wide basis. Through its core funding the province will encourage RTAs to develop regional marketing strategies in consultation with Travel Manitoba (and in alignment with Travel Manitoba's overall provincial marketing strategy).
- The department is proposing to adjust RTA boundaries through the revised funding program that allows for a more equitable municipal/industry membership base and similar travel zone sizes.

- The department will also propose a revised RTA alignment that will potentially see the number of RTAs reduced resulting in a more sustainable level of core funding for the RTAs.

e) Define role of destination organizations

Manitoba's size and diversity requires both regional tourism associations and destination organizations. RTAs have a broad mandate to ensure that all areas within a region are given the opportunity to develop tourism. Destination organizations focus on developing and marketing a specific geographic or demographic cluster of products and services, including at least one anchor attraction and a common, identifiable experiential appeal.

The Tourism Secretariat will work with destination organizations to develop multi-year destination development and management plans that identify investment priorities. Destination organizations will be eligible to receive financial support to implement components of their plan that enhance product and experiences, identify community development opportunities (ex: planning, interpretive/programming, and tourism infrastructure), youth programs, and industry development opportunities (ex: training, workshops, etc.). Plans must also be based on collaboration with Travel Manitoba and the RTAs.

The Tourism Secretariat will incorporate the destination development and management framework into the Aboriginal Tourism Strategy (ATS) to support the creation of a critical mass of attractions (cluster development). ATS cluster development will support community-based tourism activities that are consistent with the following priorities for Aboriginal tourism development:

- reflect how the Aboriginal community wants to participate in the tourism industry
- reflect market expectations and opportunities (through EQ)
- increase Aboriginal participation in the tourism industry through employment and business opportunities
- enhance existing Aboriginal tourism products

The department will work closely with destination organizations, ATS clusters, and RTAs to facilitate partnerships. In some cases, RTAs may be involved in the direct management of early phase destination development.

ACTION:

- Destination organizations develop around historical partnerships, product partnership potential, potential product alignment (ex: culture; nature, etc.), and common product offerings. Beginning on a pilot project basis, the department will support defined destination development and management activities through the funding program - product and experience enhancements, community tourism development, and industry development.
- Aboriginal Tourism Strategy clusters are centred on existing successful developments, projected developments, proximity to natural attractions, community interest, and partnership capacity/opportunities. Beginning on a pilot basis, the department will support defined Aboriginal Tourism Strategy cluster development and management activities through the funding program - product and experience enhancements, community tourism development, and industry development.

- Tourism Secretariat funds will not be provided for marketing. However, the department will encourage destination organizations to align partnerships and strategies with RTAs and with Travel Manitoba, including marketing and promotions plans developed in partnership with Travel Manitoba. These alignments will be crucial considerations in the provision of funds to the destination organization and/or ATS cluster.

ACTION AREA 3

A Sustainable Funding Model

The department will review the possible use of accommodation levies as a potential source for sustainable funding for tourism activities that include marketing (through Travel Manitoba and regional tourism association marketing partnerships), product and experience development, product and experience enhancements, business development, and business upgrades/enhancements.

ACTION:

The government will conduct a review of funding models including:

- an analysis of current practices in Manitoba and potential implications of a province-wide levy
- an inter-jurisdictional scan on practices in other provinces

ACTION AREA 4

Improved Data Collection and Reporting

- a) Develop and implement a research strategy and plan to provide industry and government with relevant and timely tourism information and analysis.

Using the EQ framework, the department will be looking to develop an integrated, market-centric approach to tourism development and marketing. The foundation for a market-centric approach is market research, for which Travel Manitoba has the responsibility and resources. Some jurisdictions, such as British Columbia, have engaged their bureaus of statistics in tourism data collection, through the creation and maintenance of a separate 'tourism account'. In Manitoba, the Manitoba Bureau of Statistics does not capture tourism as a separate economic sector; data is collected instead under other economic headings, such as retail. For a profile of Manitoba's tourism industry, Travel Manitoba relies on data collected in the national tourism account maintained by Statistics Canada; this data is necessarily of a high level nature and provides a limited range of information.

ACTION:

Government will explore how Travel Manitoba's and the Manitoba Bureau of Statistics' data collection can be better aligned to maximize the availability of relevant tourism-specific data.

b) Refine tourism-related statistical data collection and reporting

The department is proposing to work with the Bureau of Statistics to review the current system for tourism-related statistical data collection (including industry-held data) and develop a comprehensive statistical database of information for measurement and monitoring of key indicators. This will include working closely with industry to consistently collect, collate and share information within the sector. The objective is to maintain high quality and timely statistical and research information that will better encapsulate the economic impact of the tourism sector and capture information that supports tourism planning and decision-making and to share the information regularly with industry stakeholders.

ACTION:

Government will work with the Manitoba Bureau of Statistics and industry to collect, analyze and share economic data within the sector.

The department is also proposing to augment the delivery of youth programming by provincial industry associations, regional tourism associations and destination organizations by encouraging support for supplemental youth programming such as familiarization tours for students and teachers, work placement opportunities, and in-kind support for youth workshops/conferences.

ACTION:

Government will work with the Manitoba Tourism Education Council (MTEC) to conduct a review of existing youth programs and identify opportunities for expanded implementation, including:

- that support to Provincial Industry Associations facilitate participation with MTEC on implementation of youth focus programs
- that support to regional associations and destination organizations facilitate partnerships with MTEC on implementation of youth focus programs

ACTION AREA 5

Youth Tourism Education and Recruitment Initiatives

The department will work with the Manitoba Tourism Education Council to review opportunities to enhance delivery of existing tourism education and professional development programs. This will include exploring opportunities to expand programming and introduce initiatives that would encourage youth to consider a career in tourism.

FOR MORE INFORMATION:

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