

MEDIA RELEASE

For Immediate Release

The Indigenous Tourism Association of Canada (ITAC) and Trans Canada Trail announce new partnership

Agreement outlines shared priority of developing and promoting trails tourism destinations inclusive of authentic Indigenous experiences

Montreal (Tiohtià:ke), March 13, 2023 – The [Indigenous Tourism Association of Canada](#) (ITAC), a global leader in the marketing and development of Indigenous tourism experiences, and [Trans Canada Trail](#), steward of the world’s longest recreational trail network, are pleased to announce the signing of a Memorandum of Understanding (MOU).

The MOU is an agreement that signifies and outlines the two organizations’ commitment to work together and share resources, knowledge and expertise to improve, develop, support and promote tourism destinations inclusive of authentic Indigenous experiences and trail experiences for domestic as well as international guests.

A first-of-its-kind initiative, the MOU has been established with the desire to create the foundation for a long-term relationship and collaboration between the organizations, in support of ITAC and Trans Canada Trail’s shared objectives of growing Indigenous and trails tourism in Canada.

Keith Henry, President & CEO, ITAC, and **Eleanor McMahon, President & CEO, Trans Canada Trail**, signed the MOU at the 2023 International Indigenous Tourism Conference hosted in Winnipeg from March 8-10 in the company of the **Honourable Randy Boissonnault, Minister of Tourism and Associate Minister of Finance**.

As an early priority, both organizations will work with their members and trail operators to develop exceptional trail experiences and authentic Indigenous experiences through accreditation programs delivered by each organization.

The MOU will:

- Link Indigenous experiences and trails that can be accredited by ITAC’s Accreditation Program — [The Original Original](#) — and Trans Canada Trail’s Exceptional Trail Experience program which is focused on mobilizing the growth of trail tourism in Canada and part of its National Trails Tourism Strategy.

- Provide an opportunity for trail operators to learn from the guardians of the land on Indigenous knowledge, nature education and preservation.
- Grow Indigenous tourism and help address the demand for development and marketing of authentic Indigenous experiences.
- Enhance the capacity and knowledge of trail operators by developing and promoting various sections of the Trans Canada Trail as tourism products.
- Create educational materials to support Indigenous-owned community enterprises and trail operators for tourism development assistance and capacity building. ITAC's [members](#) are Indigenous-owned and controlled businesses from every province and territory in the country.
- Help put Canada's trails on the itineraries of international and domestic guests for the benefit of hosting communities.

The Honourable Randy Boissonnault, Minister of Tourism and Associate Minister of Finance, says, "Indigenous tourism provides unique experiences to Canadians as well as international visitors and drives economic growth for Indigenous communities. This partnership between the Indigenous Tourism Association of Canada and Trans Canada Trail will not only help create memorable and sustainable outdoor experiences for visitors from all horizons all year long, but also will showcase and develop authentic world-class attractions this place, our home, has to offer."

ITAC President & CEO, Keith Henry, comments, "As we continue to focus on our vision of creating a thriving Indigenous tourism economy sharing authentic, memorable and enriching experiences, we are so thrilled to establish this formal partnership with Trans Canada Trail. Through meaningful exchange, we will successfully advance the growth of Indigenous tourism in Canada with a goal of making Canada the world leader in Indigenous tourism by 2030."

"This is a significant moment for Trans Canada Trail as we build this foundation for a long-term relationship with the Indigenous Tourism Association of Canada," says **Eleanor McMahon, President & CEO, Trans Canada Trail**. "This collaboration is based on our mutual sustained commitment to supporting both trails tourism and Indigenous tourism through regenerative destination development programs. Trails continue to play a significant role in everyone's lives and we celebrate this moment to create more inclusive experiences and opportunities to share and learn from one another."

Resources:

- Explore ITAC [media assets](#).
- Discover ITAC's [Vision for the Growth of Indigenous Tourism in Canada](#).
- To find an Indigenous experience near you, visit [here](#).
- Read a [bio](#) of ITAC President & CEO Keith Henry.
- [Explore a map](#) of the Trans Canada Trail.
- For images and B-roll of the Trans Canada Trail, visit the [photo gallery](#) and [video gallery](#).
- 95% of Canadians say their increased trail use boosts their mental and physical health. Read Trans Canada Trail's Léger survey [research on trail use in Canada](#).
- Read Trans Canada Trail's [Conference Board of Canada report](#) on the health, environmental and economic benefits of Canada's trail system.

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About The Indigenous Tourism Association of Canada (ITAC)

The Indigenous Tourism Association of Canada (ITAC) focuses on creating partnerships between associations, organizations, government departments and industry leaders from across Canada to support the growth of Indigenous tourism in Canada and address the demand for development and marketing of authentic Indigenous experiences. ITAC has an established membership process that enables Indigenous tourism industry partners to engage with and show support for Indigenous tourism. The purpose of ITAC is to improve the socio-economic situation of Indigenous people within the 10 provinces and 3 territories of Canada. Indigenoustourism.ca

About Trans Canada Trail

The Trans Canada Trail (the Trail) is the longest recreational trail in the world, spanning over 28,000 kilometres on land and water. Linking three oceans – the Atlantic, Pacific and Arctic – the Trail connects 15,000 rural, urban and Indigenous communities across every province and territory. It is a ribbon that connects Canada's diverse landscapes, seasons, people and experiences, and fosters unity, collaboration and connectedness. Trans Canada Trail is a registered charity and stewards this national trail in collaboration with local Trail partners. With funding from the Government of Canada through Parks Canada, and investments from all levels of government and generous donors, Trans Canada Trail is the largest investor in trail infrastructure projects in Canada, supporting improvements, growth and enhancements for generations to come. tctrail.ca

Where to find us:

