

# Tourism Saskatchewan



## Plan for 2019-20

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# Statement from the Minister



*The Honourable  
Gene Makowsky*

*Minister Responsible for  
Tourism Saskatchewan*

I am pleased to present Tourism Saskatchewan's Operational Plan for 2019-20.

Government Direction and Budget for 2019-20 is focused on *The Right Balance* for Saskatchewan. We're returning to a balanced budget with sound fiscal management while keeping taxes low, supporting economic growth and ensuring quality government programs and services for people and businesses in Saskatchewan.

Tourism Saskatchewan's mandate guides work to promote travel to Saskatchewan, increase visitor spending, build a robust tourism workforce, and develop quality tourism products and services.

Tourism is one of the world's largest and most rapidly growing sectors. It contributes significantly to the Saskatchewan economy and is a major source of employment. In 2017, travel expenditures in the province rose 8.2 per cent to \$2.37 billion, and total visits increased 9.9 per cent to 13.6 million over the previous year.

Nearly 64,000 Saskatchewan citizens are employed in tourism. Tourism Saskatchewan's education division, the Saskatchewan Tourism Education Council (STEC), is widely recognized for opening doors to employment for new Canadians and people under-represented in the workforce. More than 90 per cent of participants in STEC's acclaimed Ready to Work program are Indigenous. The training and mentoring equips them with valuable skills and prepares them for finding meaningful careers or returning to school.

Tourism Saskatchewan knows its markets. The organization understands the value of research to determine who is currently visiting Saskatchewan, where strong potential markets exist and what channels and tools consumers are using to plan their trips. Based on a comprehensive Content Strategy, Tourism Saskatchewan employs a "digital-first, always on" approach to marketing. Its work ensures fresh, engaging content is published on channels most popular with key audiences. Capacity to grow shoulder-season visitation positions the province as a favourable alternative to destinations where high density and over-tourism are concerns.

A new Destination Development Strategy, to be unveiled in 2019-20, will outline the direction and actions required to develop, enhance and sustain tourism product development. The strategy will guide future initiatives to ensure Saskatchewan's tourism offerings match the products, services and experiences visitors most enjoy.

Saskatchewan has earned a stellar reputation for hosting successful events that position the province in the national and international spotlight and deliver a strong economic impact. Several high-profile events will be supported through Tourism Saskatchewan's Event Hosting Program in the months ahead, including the Tim Hortons NHL Heritage Classic in 2019 and Scotties Tournament of Hearts, JUNO Awards, and Grey Cup championship in 2020.

In its commitment to key strategies, as outlined on the following pages, Tourism Saskatchewan upholds a mission to "connect people with quality Saskatchewan experiences and advance the development of successful tourism operations."

Tourism Saskatchewan will report on plan achievements, within the financial parameters provided, in its 2019-20 Annual Report.

# Response to Government Direction

The Government of Saskatchewan is committed to having *The Right Balance*. We will continue to carefully manage spending and focus on government priorities, such as competitive taxes, investments in economic growth and providing programs and services that meet the needs of Saskatchewan people and businesses.

Saskatchewan's Vision

*"... to be the best place in Canada – to live, to work, to start a business, to get an education, to raise a family and to build a life."*

Sustaining growth and opportunities for Saskatchewan people

Meeting the challenges of growth

Securing a better quality of life for all Saskatchewan people

Delivering responsive and responsible government

Saskatchewan's Vision and goals provide the framework for ministries, agencies and partners to align their programs and services and meet the needs of Saskatchewan's residents.

All organizations will report on progress in their 2019-20 annual reports.

# Operational Plan

## Mandate Statement

Tourism Saskatchewan promotes the province as a tourism destination by providing in-province and out-of-province marketing and visitor services. Tourism Saskatchewan assists industry to market and develop quality tourism products through co-operative marketing, education and training, and event funding programs.

## Vision Statement

A vibrant entrepreneurial tourism industry offering year-round compelling and memorable Saskatchewan experiences

## Mission Statement

Connect people with quality Saskatchewan experiences and advance the development of successful tourism operations

## Government Goals



Strategic priority: Market Saskatchewan's tourism experiences and stories

## Tourism Saskatchewan Goal

Increase economic benefits to the province through compelling, branded marketing initiatives

## Strategy

Strengthen the province's reputation as a destination through compelling, branded marketing initiatives

## Key Actions

- Create and evaluate consumer-focused, digital-first, always-on, influence-driven content marketing
- Provide consumers with information to encourage consideration of alternative destinations and seasons in order to mitigate pressures and spread the economic advantages of tourism province-wide

## Performance Measures

### Economic indicators

The Saskatchewan tourism industry monitors measures related to general economic performance through a variety of sources. A key measure for economic success is to increase total expenditures by travellers in Saskatchewan to \$2.8 billion by 2020

### Advertisement reach and target market success

Key target market engagement will be measured through:

- Increasing consumer interaction time with Tourism Saskatchewan content by 10 per cent by 2020
- Ensuring that all approved co-operative marketing applications that receive funding achieve a minimum score of 80 per cent, based on factors such as strategic fit and brand compliance
- Increasing angling licence sales to U.S. visitors by 15 per cent overall by 2020



## Strategy

Apply research and evaluation tools to refine and adapt marketing tactics to better target potential visitors and increase expenditures

### Key Actions

- Employ research and analysis to prioritize market segments and budget allocations to ensure efficient use of resources
- Invest in ongoing analysis of Saskatchewan's markets to continuously adjust marketing techniques and outcomes

## Performance Measures

### Marketing Effectiveness

With the shift towards targeted digital content marketing, Tourism Saskatchewan has undertaken an evaluation of the marketing content and content types that resonate the most with targeted audiences. New indicators specific to prioritized audiences will be developed in 2019.

## Strategy

Create and deliver consumer-focused content that inspires and informs travellers in key markets to visit Saskatchewan

### Key Actions

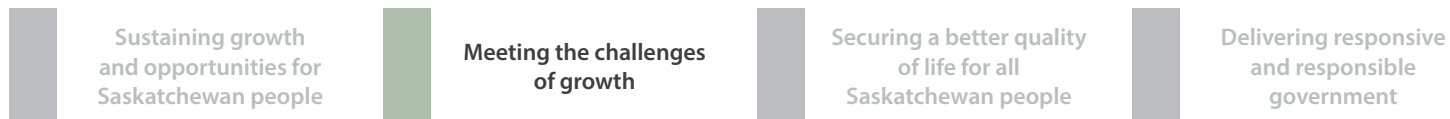
- Create, curate and distribute content to specific market segments across all forms of media
- Conduct an annual review of marketing activities to ensure a digital-first, consumer-focused, and always-on approach aligns with Tourism Saskatchewan's strategic marketing direction

## Performance Measures

### Social Media reach

Tourism Saskatchewan will determine the success of social media reach through measuring the increase in social media followers. The target is to increase Facebook and Instagram followers by 25 per cent per year, to 229,000 followers in 2021.

## Government Goals



Strategic priority: Strengthen Saskatchewan's Tourism Experiences

## Tourism Saskatchewan Goal

Increase the number and quality of Saskatchewan tourism experiences and products to meet traveller expectations

## Strategy

Provide leadership to industry operators to advance their marketing strategies by leveraging Saskatchewan's tourism brand, marketing strategy, services, and programs



## Key Actions

- Review and assess recommendations of the Destination Development Strategy to identify growth opportunities and most effective use of Tourism Saskatchewan resources in assisting industry development
- Evaluate effectiveness of Destination Development Strategy in improving industry competitiveness
- Develop and implement effective methods of communication with industry

## Performance Measures

### Destination Development Strategy implementation

The Destination Development Strategy began implementation in March 2019. Recommended actions that have started by March 31, 2020, will be an initial indicator of success.

## Strategy

Build a strong tourism workforce

## Key Actions

- Implement initiatives and programming of the Tourism Workforce Development Strategy with industry and annually update the action plan to assist tourism operators with recruitment, retention and training of tourism personnel to assure delivery of quality tourism experiences
- Through provision of training and support programs, build industry capacity for delivery of quality services and experiences

## Performance Measures

### Number of training participants

Tourism Saskatchewan will measure the number of people trained through Tourism Saskatchewan's education and training programs with the goal of having 10,245 participants annually.

## Strategy

Enhance Saskatchewan's reputation as an event-hosting destination

## Key Actions

- Evaluate Tourism Saskatchewan funding programs and explore funding opportunities that improve industry's ability to deliver quality experiences
- Work with events and stakeholders to improve tracking, evaluation, and reporting and using the information to improve and enhance events
- Continue support through event funding to enhance Saskatchewan's reputation as a host destination and contribute to visitation growth



## Performance Measures

### Event hosting

Tourism Saskatchewan will measure Event Hosting success based on the return on investment (ROI) from events supported through the program. The targeted ROI for 2020 is 30:1, up from 25:1 achieved in 2017. All supported events will be required to meet program standards for post-event evaluation metrics. By 2021, the percentage of supported events that meet post-event evaluation metrics will be 70 per cent, up from 55 per cent in 2017.

## Strategy

Assist operators and stakeholders in market-readiness and experience development

### Key Actions

- Work with the Indigenous Tourism Association of Canada (ITAC) on an approach to developing market-ready Indigenous tourism products
- Support industry's transition to targeted marketing through initiatives that advance operators' individual marketing efforts and tools

## Performance Measures

### Quality improvement indicators

By 2021, a target of 100 positive online reviews will be achieved by operators participating in the reputation management services program. The program provides access to a platform to manage a business' online reputation, conduct social marketing, and ensure its business listing information is accurate across the internet. This target is up from 59 in 2017.

## Government Goals



Strategic priority: Improve Destination Competitiveness

## Tourism Saskatchewan Goal

Engage Stakeholders

## Strategy

Deliver relevant information, programs and services based on research, trends and tourism industry needs

### Key Actions

- Engage with stakeholders to execute recommendations on the Destination Development Strategy
- Ensure funding program criteria align with the Tourism Saskatchewan identified market segments and stakeholder goals
- Support operator engagement in areas such as online reputation management, social media and website development
- Develop and deliver workshops to enhance the capacity of operators, attractions, and experiences



## Performance Measures

### Increases in stakeholder engagement

Increase industry participation in Tourism Saskatchewan workshops and engagement sessions by 10 per cent by 2021.

### Strategy

Cultivate effective partnerships with key tourism industry stakeholders

### Key Actions

- Host industry engagement events to improve communications, partnerships and capacity

## Performance Measures

### Strengthening stakeholder partnerships

By 2021, increase the number of industry representatives participating in Tourism Saskatchewan hosted events by 10 per cent over 2017-18 levels.

### Strategy

Work with stakeholders and government partners to ensure an environment conducive to tourism growth

### Key Actions

- Work with destination areas, product clusters and city marketing organizations to support businesses

## Performance Measures

### Strengthening organizational partnerships

Host a minimum of two strategy sessions per year with city marketing and destination marketing organizations.

## Government Goals



Strategic priority: Nurture an internal culture focused on excellence

## Tourism Saskatchewan Goal

Ensure use of strategic, evidence-based tools and technologies to support business decisions and improve innovation; recruit and retain a committed and engaged workforce

### Strategies

- Foster a culture of continuous improvement and innovation based on a one-team approach
- Optimize internal information-sharing to enhance employee knowledge



- Invest in research and evaluation which appropriately guides change and innovation
- Invest in technologies that support delivery of effective programs and services
- Cultivate a values-driven work environment that inspires and empowers employees

## **Key Actions**

- Implement approved recommended actions developed by Tourism Saskatchewan's internal Continuous Improvement teams working on industry-facing and consumer-facing programs and services
- Develop guidelines for document management
- Provide ongoing investment in technologies to support staff program delivery
- Build staff capacity through professional development opportunities

## **Performance Measures**

### **Indicators of a Culture of Excellence**

By 2020-2021, successfully implement a minimum of four employee-generated improvements. A new baseline for staff satisfaction will be determined in 2019.

# Highlights

Tourism Saskatchewan plans for expenses of \$18.6 million in 2019-20. This budget allows Tourism Saskatchewan to continue to fulfil its mandate to promote the province as a tourism destination by providing in-province and out-of-province marketing and visitor services, and to assist industry to market and develop quality tourism products through co-operative marketing, education and training, and event funding programs.

## **Content Strategy**

In 2016-2017 Tourism Saskatchewan undertook development of a consumer-focused content strategy to ensure that all materials produced would serve the purpose of providing visitors and potential visitors with both discovery and planning content which is focused on information the user wants and is interested in.

The pivotal recommendation from the Content Strategy is that Tourism Saskatchewan pursue a digital-first approach, which concentrates existing resources on the development of consumer-focused digital assets and content, while significantly reducing the use of professionally-printed publications and changing the style of advertising undertaken. Implementation of Content Strategy recommendations were completed in 2018 and evaluation and measurement of the strategy's success will continue into 2019-20 and 2020-21.

## **Destination Development Strategy**

In addition to the Content Strategy, Tourism Saskatchewan has invested in the creation of a Destination Development Strategy, which will provide a common vision for growth and investment with industry. It will help guide future initiatives to ensure Saskatchewan's tourism offerings match the products, services and experiences visitors most enjoy. It will also outline the strategic direction and actions required to develop, enhance and sustain tourism product development. More specifically, the strategy will:

- Project future growth potential of tourism in the province; and
- Identify the tourism products and experiences needed to respond to tourism trends and meet demand.

The 2019-20 budget and operational highlights include:

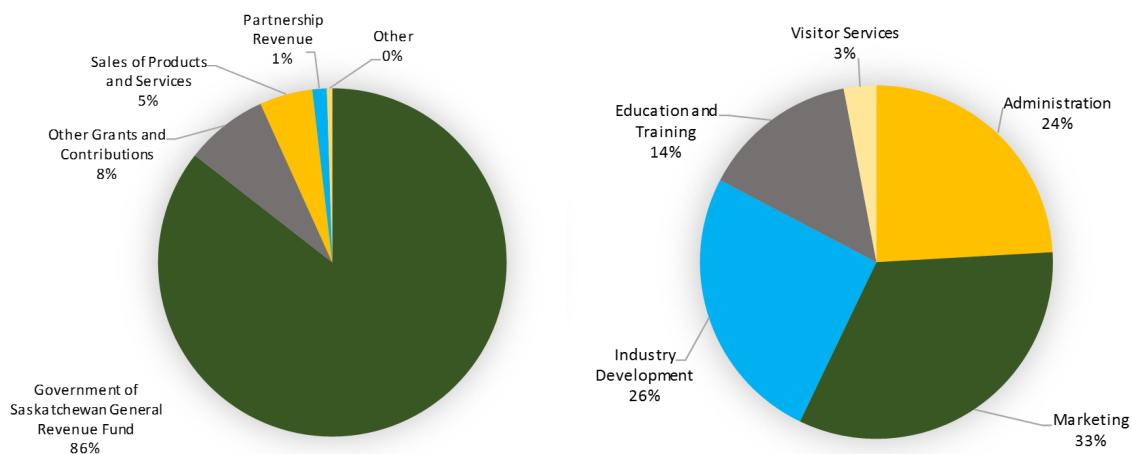
- Focusing the majority of efforts and marketing budget online through social media, paid advertising and working with travel influencers to reach a highly targeted audience interested in Saskatchewan experiences;
- Implementing a Destination Development Strategy that identifies key growth opportunities and most effective use of resources in assisting industry development;
- Launching a new portal on the industry website that will provide timely information in the format and manner that industry partners desire;
- Assisting in advancing the effectiveness of staff retention strategies for tourism and hospitality businesses;
- Continuing support for building industry capacity for delivery of a variety of services and programs;
- Continuing to offer consumers personalized service through activities such as provision of visitor services, select marketplace activity, working with carefully selected travel trade in key international markets and providing marketing support to operators and organizations to reach nearby markets in the most effective manner;
- Working with the Indigenous Tourism Association of Canada to develop market-ready indigenous tourism products;
- Continuing to support events that qualify through the Event Hosting Program; and
- Adapting and enhancing education and training offerings, in-person and online, to meet industry needs.

# Financial Summary

2019-20 Estimates	(in thousands of dollars)
Appropriation	15,491
Revenue:	
Government of Saskatchewan General Revenue Fund	15,491
Other Grants and Contributions	1,394
Sales of Products and Services	891
Partnership Revenue	242
Other	91
<b>Total Revenue</b>	<b>18,109</b>
<b>Expenses</b>	
Administration	4,473
Marketing	6,131
Industry Development	4,741
Education and Training	2,661
Visitor Services	553
<b>Total Expenses</b>	<b>18,559</b>
<b>Budgeted Deficit</b>	<b>(450)</b>

For further financial information, see the Budget Estimates at: <http://www.saskatchewan.ca/budget>

Tourism Saskatchewan Budgeted Revenue and Expenses for 2019-20:



## For More Information

Please visit Tourism Saskatchewan's website at: <http://www.tourismsaskatchewan.com>