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NEWS RELEASE

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Strengthening Indigenous Tourism and the Economy

Qalipu First Nation implementing tourism strategy with government support

July 29, 2019 – Corner Brook, NL – Atlantic Canada Opportunities Agency

Tourism is a key contributor to the Atlantic Canadian economy. It generates new economic activities, creates good paying jobs for the middle class and diversifies communities. The industry also offers tremendous opportunity for further growth in areas like Indigenous tourism.

Recognizing the opportunities that exist in Indigenous tourism in Newfoundland and Labrador, the [Qalipu First Nation](#) is undertaking various activities as part of the implementation of its Experience Qalipu Tourism Strategy. The five-year strategy will help to further develop and promote Indigenous tourism in the province, enhance community capacity and build stronger Indigenous communities.

Phase I of the strategy included creating a database of member tourism businesses, enhancing on-line entrepreneurial skills training, developing a marketing plan, hosting a tourism forum, designing signage and displays and conducting facilitation training. Phase II involves further analysis and design of tourism assets, hosting an additional tourism forum, advanced facilitation training, infrastructure improvements and tourism product development.

The Government of Canada is providing a non-repayable contribution of \$418,257 and the Government of Newfoundland and Labrador is contributing \$157,892 towards phases I and II of the tourism strategy.

Gudie Hutchings, Member of Parliament for Long Range Mountains, on behalf of the Honourable Navdeep Bains, Minister of Innovation, Science and Economic Development and Minister responsible for the [Atlantic Canada Opportunities Agency \(ACOA\)](#), along with Scott Reid, MHA for St. George's-Humber, on behalf of the Honourable Christopher Mitchelmore, Newfoundland and Labrador Minister of [Tourism, Culture, Industry and Innovation \(TCII\)](#), made the announcement today.

These investments build on commitments made by the Government of Canada and the four Atlantic Provinces to drive economic growth in the region through the [Atlantic Growth Strategy](#) by helping the region's tourism industry attract more visitors and create new jobs. This bold approach is in line with [Canada's Tourism Vision](#), which seeks to make Canada a top-ten global tourism destination by 2025.

Quotes

"Indigenous tourism is a key part of Canada's growing tourism industry. It is outpacing the growth of this sector overall, as more and more travellers are coming here to experience Indigenous cultures and heritage. Our government is committed to making sure this growth continues by helping Indigenous communities across the country showcase their authentic products, traditions and histories, while generating new economic opportunities and creating good middle-class jobs."

- *The Honourable Mélanie Joly, Minister of Tourism, Official Languages and La Francophonie*

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“Our investment in this initiative will better position the Qalipu First Nation to advance Indigenous tourism in our province, encourage entrepreneurship and foster economic development in Indigenous communities. We are proud of our partnership with the Qalipu First Nation and I commend their commitment to seizing new opportunities to promote Indigenous culture and history and build a strong and sustainable tourism industry that will draw more visitors seeking authentic cultural experiences.”

- *Gudie Hutchings, Member of Parliament for Long Range Mountains on behalf of the Honourable Navdeep Bains, Minister of Innovation, Science and Economic Development and Minister responsible for ACOA*

“This investment will allow the Qalipu First Nation to continue to enhance economic development opportunities in key areas such as tourism. One of the top recommendations from the Destination Development Plan for tourism operators is to focus more on building program-and people-based experiences and understanding visitor profiles that will drive visitation. Many of the elements of the Experience Qalipu Tourism Strategy are aligned with this recommendation. This project will help to ensure the stories, traditions and beliefs of the Mi'kmaq are captured as a vital part of this region's growth and development.”

- *The Honourable Christopher Mitchelmore, Newfoundland and Labrador Minister of Tourism, Culture, Industry and Innovation*

“Qalipu First Nation is appreciative of this funding and the ability to support our Indigenous tourism providers. We look forward to the next phase of our five-year Experience Qalipu Tourism Development Strategy and any opportunity to support Indigenous tourism on the provincial level, including our collaboration with the Newfoundland and Labrador Indigenous Tourism Working Group.”

- *Brendan Mitchell, Chief, Qalipu First Nation*

Quick Facts

- The Government of Canada is investing \$398,338 in this project through ACOA's [Business Development Program](#) and \$19,919 from the Department of Indigenous and Northern Affairs.
- The Government of Newfoundland and Labrador is contributing \$157,892 towards this project.
- The Experience Qalipu Tourism Strategy focuses on developing market-ready cultural experiences and other tourism products throughout Mi'kmaq communities, connecting the visitor to the vibrant culture of the Mi'kmaq people and forming strong partnerships within the industry to lead to a strengthened economy and culture.
- Officially formed in 2011, the Qalipu First Nation is the largest Indian Act Band in Atlantic Canada and represents over 20,000 members who live in nine Wards throughout Central and Western Newfoundland.

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