



NEWFOUNDLAND & LABRADOR  
INDIGENOUS TOURISM  
ASSOCIATION

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## NLITA APPLAUDS ITAC SUPPORT FOR INDIGENOUS TOURISM OPERATORS

CORNER BROOK – The Newfoundland and Labrador Indigenous Tourism Association (NLITA) is applauding the work of the Indigenous Tourism Association of Canada (ITAC) in supporting Indigenous tourism operators throughout the province.

“Prior to COVID-19, Indigenous tourism was one of the fastest growing segments in the Canadian tourism sector, and that was certainly the case here in Newfoundland and Labrador as well” says NLITA Board Chairperson Tara Saunders. “While it’s been a challenging year for tourism operators, ITAC’s continued support - including the financial contributions to the 33 Indigenous operators in this province - has been instrumental to the survival and continued development of Indigenous tourism in Newfoundland and Labrador through these challenging times.”

ITAC has awarded a total of 678 grants to Indigenous tourism businesses across the country with its COVID-19 Stimulus Development Fund. The Fund, which has been supported by the federal government via Indigenous Services Canada, was made possible by the pointed advocacy campaign by ITAC which brought forth the impacts that COVID-19 was having on the once-thriving Indigenous tourism sector.

“The impacts of COVID-19 on our Indigenous tourism sector cannot be understated,” says Keith Henry, ITAC’s President and CEO. “We are very proud to have been able to provide \$766,500 to support 33 operators in Newfoundland and Labrador. Prior to 2020, Indigenous tourism was outpacing Canadian tourism activity overall but came to an almost complete standstill. The ability to not only advocate for but ultimately to step up alongside Indigenous Services Canada to provide financial support to struggling businesses is exactly what ITAC is here for. We take our responsibility for protecting and growing the Indigenous tourism industry across the country very seriously and we are proud to be able to do so now when we are needed the most.”

NLITA, one of Canada’s newest provincial Indigenous Tourism Associations, was established in early 2020 and released its 5-year strategy in February. “With the establishment of the Association and then the release of our strategy in February, we had such high expectations for Indigenous tourism growth within our province this year” Saunders said, “but what happened this year is out of our control, and we



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are very confident that Indigenous tourism will be key to the continued growth of Newfoundland and Labrador's tourism sector.

As for next steps for NLITA, the organization has begun preliminary discussions with funding agencies to position itself to play a more active role in Indigenous tourism development in Newfoundland and Labrador. Their goal is to open an office sometime early in 2021 that will include an Executive Director and other support staff, while also being able to support its members through advocacy, as well as funding for marketing, product development and training.

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