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REGIONAL TOURISM ORGANIZATION 7  
EVOLUTION - A BALANCED APPROACH TO TOURISM  
DESTINATION DEVELOPMENT WITH SUPPORTING  
ACTION PLAN.  
SUSTAINABLE TOURISM  
2024-2029

William Sullivan

RT07



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## Introduction:

In the world of regional tourism, change isn't just an option—it's a vital force that drives our growth. As we enter a new era in the tourism sector, one thing is clear: Regional Tourism Organization 7 (RTO7) has the potential to be the leading force in responsible Destination Development. The upcoming changes present us with both challenges and opportunities. We need not just a supportive organization but a strong leader to guide the way in tourism. The next five years are crucial for refining our role, encouraging innovation, and bringing about positive change across the entire region.

**Adapting to Changing Landscapes:** The tourism landscape is going through significant changes, especially with the introduction of the Municipal Accommodation Tax (MAT) in many tourism-driven areas. This shift has financial and operational implications for our industry and organization. It's prompting us to rethink how we connect and work with the municipalities and Non-Profit Organizations (NFPs) overseeing the MAT. We need to find new ways to collaborate effectively.

**Responding to Climate Change:** The climate crisis demands our immediate attention. RTO7 has an essential role in promoting sustainability, and its geographic focus allows us to make a significant impact in reducing the environmental effects of tourism. Leading destination development aligns perfectly with our potential to fight climate change.

**Championing Responsible Tourism:** Responsible tourism is a significant concern as people become more aware of the impact of tourism on local cultures, economies, and ecosystems. Our role is to guide and show how responsible tourism benefits both visitors and the communities they visit. Through education, advocacy, and collaboration, RTO7 will continue to drive positive change beyond our region.

**Prioritizing Sustainability:** Sustainability remains at the core of our approach, focusing on environmental, economic, and social aspects. As the world seeks practical solutions, RTO7 will lead the way in demonstrating how sustainable practices can be seamlessly integrated into every aspect of the tourism industry, from accommodations to attractions.

**Empowering Recovery and Growth:** The ongoing effects of the global pandemic still cast a shadow on tourism operators, who need support to recover. RTO7 is ready to provide innovative solutions to enhance industry resilience and establish a strong foundation. The labor shortage is another pressing issue, and RTO7 is committed to addressing it head-on by fostering partnerships and initiatives to rejuvenate the labor market and stimulate growth.

**A Call to Evolution:** In summary, change is essential, and RTO7 is ready to lead the way. The next five years are not just about adapting but evolving. We are shifting from a supportive role to a proactive one, becoming pioneers with an unwavering purpose. Our Destination Development and Action Plan will guide us towards a future marked by sustainability, responsibility, and prosperity. With dedication and collaboration, we will overcome challenges and shape a more resilient and vibrant tourism industry across our region.

## Executive Summary:

**Progressive Leadership and Sustainable Development:** As RTO7 begins its journey of Evolution, we're taking steps that promise positive outcomes. Our operational assessment helps us find areas for growth and align with society's changing needs. We believe in clear communication to set the stage for better tourism Development, collaboration, and direction. We're also working to involve industry stakeholders, giving them information and insights for better decisions and innovation. Improving the experiences of frontline staff ensures visitors have great interactions and service. We use creative visualization to deepen our understanding and commitment to sustainability. Our partnerships are evaluated based on their impact on the economy, society, and the environment. This balanced approach ensures a vibrant and resilient future for our community and stakeholders.

**Sustainable Collaboration:** We know that partnerships and collaboration are key to sustainable growth. We're dedicated to working with various stakeholders, including local businesses and government entities. We're committed to transparent communication and a shared vision, which we demonstrate through our "Pledge to Tourism Destination Development." This forms a strong foundation for collaboration, ensuring stakeholders understand our approach and objectives. This collaboration enhances engagement and provides a clear direction for tourism Development.

**Workforce / Labour Force Development:** A thriving tourism industry needs a skilled workforce. We're dedicated to workforce development. We aim to connect industry needs with workforce capabilities by promoting tourism career opportunities and collaborating with educational institutions. Initiatives for diversity and inclusion create a workforce that reflects our region's unique identity, preserving culture and promoting responsible tourism.

**Municipal Accommodation Tax (MAT) - Engagement with Municipalities and NFPs through Collaborative Tourism Management:** We believe in collaboration and local influence in shaping tourism. We're sharing our tourism knowledge and actions with municipalities and non-profit organizations (NFPs) responsible for the MAT. We aim to streamline their delivery of tourism services, creating a sustainable ecosystem benefiting tourism operators, visitors, and local communities. Our strategy focuses on collaboration, capacity building, and sustainable growth.

**Planned Product and Experience Development:** Our approach to product and experience development focuses on creating authentic, enriching, and responsible experiences for visitors. We highlight our region's natural and purpose built assets, introducing a unique tourism product that aligns with our area's unique qualities. Collaboration ensures these experiences resonate with visitors and local communities, creating authenticity and cultural connections. Ethical and responsible practices are integrated seamlessly, raising awareness about environmental preservation and sustainable tourism.

**Responsible Marketing and Promotion:** Effective marketing shapes how people view a destination. Our responsible marketing approach includes improving wayfinding, dynamic calls to action, unified messaging, and a strategic destination marketing plan. We're enhancing wayfinding and interpretive signage to create a seamless visitor experience that deepens their understanding of our region's cultural and natural treasures. Dynamic calls to action and good practices empower businesses to go beyond traditional marketing, connecting with visitors' values and enhancing their experiences.

**Research and Learning:** Our commitment to research and learning helps us make data-driven decisions and stay informed about industry trends. We conduct year-over-year research, comprehensive impact assessments, and workforce empowerment initiatives. Collaborating with experts and stakeholders fosters continuous improvement, enriching the tourism ecosystem with informed strategies aligned with sustainability.

In our evolution, RTO7 envisions a future where economic success, responsible environmental practices, and social responsibility exist in harmony. This strategic roadmap enhances visitor experiences while ensuring the well-being of local communities and the preservation of our region's natural and cultural heritage. Through these initiatives, RTO7 sets a benchmark for responsible tourism growth, positioning the BruceGreySimcoe region as a leader in Sustainable Destination Development.

## **BruceGreySimcoe Tourism Today**

In BruceGreySimcoe, community members clearly recognize how important tourism is for the area's future. They understand that tourism helps businesses grow, create jobs, and attract more people. However, some folks worry that too many visitors might harm the environment and local communities. This could mean more trash, crowded places, and less access to local spots. People are also concerned that tourism might affect housing affordability and the traditional way of life. At the same time, tourism operators are recovering from the COVID Pandemic and the effects of shepherding their businesses through the obstacles, debt load, and changing consumer trends is overwhelming, and many are rightly concerned about their viability.

### **Outside Influences on Tourism in BruceGreySimcoe**

People know that planning for tourism doesn't happen alone. The decisions of the 37 municipal governments and 4 Indigenous Bands in BruceGreySimcoe about things like roads and communication impact tourism too. Looking at the bigger picture, issues like racism, diversity, and fairness are important. The community is changing, and it's important to welcome everyone, including new residents and visitors. To do this, groups can work together and use committees, like the ones we already have, to build strong relationships with all types of communities.

When looking at how politics affect tourism, some people worry about what locals think of tourism. Some residents might not like it because of their personal experiences. To address this, it's important to help everyone understand the benefits of tourism through research and sharing information.

Technology is crucial to use new tools to learn what visitors like. This helps to make their experience better and attract the right kind of tourists. Working with partners and using data to make decisions can help everyone involved.

Economic matters are also important. Investing in things like roads and communication helps people move around easily. A tax on accommodations could help with this and support efforts to protect the environment from things like climate change and address social and health issues within the community.

Another big issue is following the rules. Regulations are needed for short-term rentals so they're fair. A tax on these rentals could also bring in money to support tourism and the community.

Lastly, the environment is a major concern. Climate change affects everyone, and water bodies like beaches are really important. It's necessary to work together to understand how human activities impact the environment and find ways to restore it for the future.

## ALIGNMENTS

The vision for the destination aligns with RTO7's vision of collaboratively constructing lively, healthy, and sustainable tourism communities. The values upheld by RTO7 also resonate with tourism stakeholders.

1. Collaborative
2. Transparent
3. Trustworthy
4. Innovative
5. Friendly and Welcoming
6. Sustainable Practices
7. Committed to Inclusivity

## Principles

1. **Guiding by Demonstrated Leadership:** RTO7 believes in leading by example, showcasing commitment through actions that set the standard for others to follow. Whether promoting sustainable practices or fostering hospitality, RTO7 is at the forefront, demonstrating dedication and responsibility.
2. **Setting the Standard for Industry Best Practices:** RTO7 operates at the highest level of excellence, implementing best practices that serve as the foundation for their initiatives. This pursuit of operational excellence sets a benchmark for others in the industry, leading to a more competitive and prosperous destination.
3. **Promote Meaningful Connections:** Building strong relationships is essential for destination growth. RTO7 facilitates connections among stakeholders, enhancing communication and creating a sense of unity and shared purpose.
4. **Champion Holistic Tourism Engagement:** RTO7 believes in a holistic approach to tourism development, considering the entire ecosystem, including businesses, the local community, culture, and environment. Inclusive and participatory practices ensure a balanced, diverse, and resilient tourism ecosystem.
5. **Strengthening Local Facilitators:** RTO7 recognizes that the success of a destination relies on the collective efforts of all stakeholders. Empowering destination enablers taps into local knowledge and fosters a sense of ownership and collaboration for sustainable development.



## Definitions

### **Ambassadors of Responsible Practices:**

Ambassadors of Responsible Practices are individuals, organizations, or groups that actively advocate for and exemplify ethical and sustainable behaviors within the context of destination management. These ambassadors play a vital role in promoting responsible tourism, encouraging positive interactions between visitors and the local environment or community, and fostering a culture of conscientious travel.

### **Calls to Action:**

Calls to Action are specific, compelling messages or directives designed to motivate and encourage the target audience to engage in desired behaviors, activities, or initiatives. In the context of destination management, Calls to Action can be used to prompt visitors, stakeholders, or the community to participate in responsible tourism practices, support local businesses, or contribute to destination preservation.

### **Good Practices:**

Good Practices refer to well-established and proven approaches, methods, or behaviors that contribute positively to destination management, development, and sustainability. These practices typically align with ethical, environmental, and social principles, aiming to balance the interests of various stakeholders while minimizing negative impacts.

### **Good Practices Checklist:**

A Good Practices Checklist is a comprehensive document outlining a set of guidelines, standards, or actions that are deemed positive, effective, and ethical in managing and promoting a destination. This checklist serves as a tool to ensure that all aspects of destination management adhere to best practices, contributing to sustainability, visitor satisfaction, and overall success.

### **Maximum Yield:**

Maximum Yield refers to the optimal utilization and generation of positive outcomes from available resources, activities, or initiatives within a destination. It entails maximizing benefits to their fullest extent, while simultaneously achieving a balance among economic, social, and environmental successes, all within the framework of sustainability and responsible practices.

## Why is Sustainable Tourism the Best Path Forward

**Preservation of Natural Resources:** Sustainable tourism seeks to minimize its environmental footprint by promoting responsible resource management and reducing carbon emissions. This includes energy and water conservation, waste reduction, and sustainable transportation. The World Tourism Organization (UNWTO) emphasizes the importance of sustainable practices in tourism to mitigate environmental impacts.

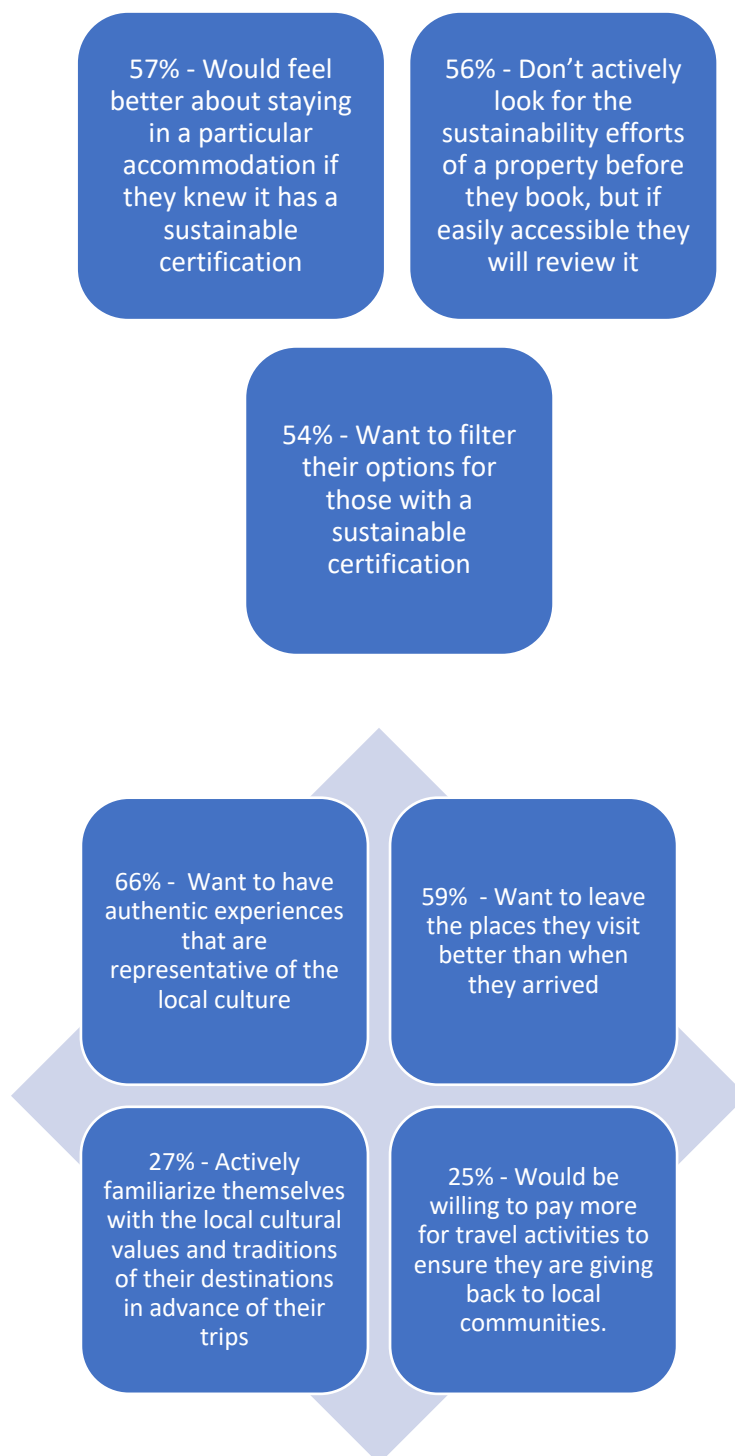
**Economic Growth and Poverty Alleviation:** Sustainable tourism can stimulate economic growth, create employment opportunities, and contribute to poverty alleviation. The United Nations Development Programme (UNDP) highlights the potential of tourism to promote inclusive economic growth and support local communities. Sustainable tourism practices aim to distribute the economic benefits of tourism more equitably, particularly benefiting small businesses and local economies.

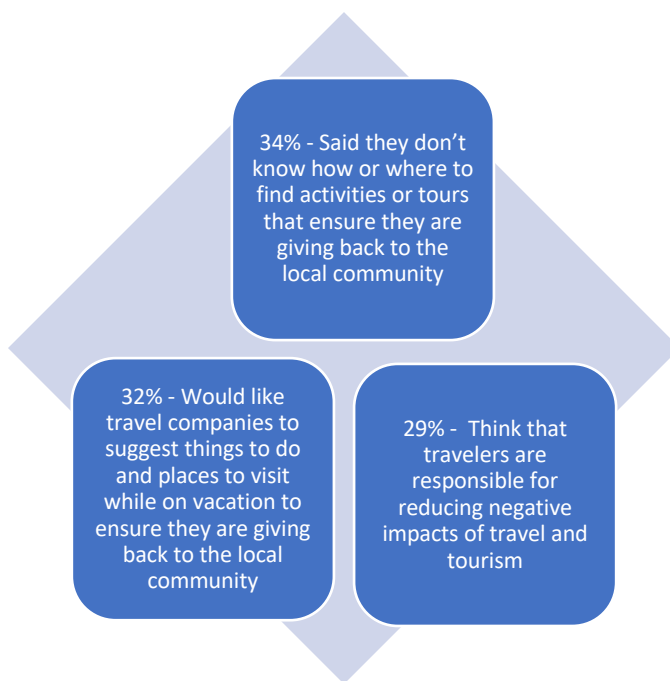
**Cultural Preservation and Heritage Protection:** Sustainable tourism plays a crucial role in preserving cultural heritage and traditions. Responsible tourism practices ensure that the cultural authenticity and integrity of destinations are maintained. UNESCO emphasizes the need for sustainable tourism to protect cultural heritage.

**Enhanced Quality of Tourism Experiences:** Sustainable tourism enhances the overall quality of the travel experience by providing authentic and meaningful interactions with local cultures, environments, and communities. Travelers increasingly seek unique and sustainable experiences that align with their values, as shown in [Booking.com's Sustainable Travel Report](#). This report is based on insights from 30,000 travelers across 32 countries and territories (including 1,000 from USA and 958 from Canada).



**Consumer Demand and Preferences:** Consumer demand for sustainable travel is on the rise. Travelers are increasingly looking for experiences that are environmentally friendly, socially responsible, and culturally immersive. Booking.com's report highlights the growing expectation of travelers for sustainable travel options and some of the obstacles to adoption([Booking.com - Sustainable Travel Report](#)).





Destination Canada highlights how travel is changing. They're focusing on a new type of traveler who cares about personal growth, enjoys local culture, and looks for genuine experiences. These travelers also care about being responsible and having a positive impact. According to their research, 62% of travelers try to avoid crowded places, 46% think about their own impact, 37% prefer places that are responsible, and 34% are willing to pay extra for sustainability. Authenticity is really important, especially experiences like exploring nature, focusing on health, and connecting with Indigenous culture. They found that one in three Canadians (33%) is interested in Indigenous experiences. When people choose where to go, they want to relax and spend time outdoors. Around 39% prefer staying within their province, and 32% look outside their province for these experiences. The big ideas to take away are that people are becoming more aware of responsible travel and are looking for genuine and enriching experiences that also help local communities and the environment. (Destination Canada – Tourism's Big Shift: November 2021)

Sustainable tourism is an essential paradigm shift in the travel industry, promoting responsible tourism practices that benefit destinations, communities, and the environment. It's crucial for a more equitable, resilient, and sustainable future in tourism.

## **Continuing Our Evolution: Progressive Leadership and Sustainable Development**

At RTO7, our commitment to progress is deeply rooted in a comprehensive approach that harmonizes economic success with environmental and social responsibility. We strive to build upon our current strengths and operational efficiency, aligning our future plans with the evolving needs and expectations of our society. Our core focus revolves around sustainability and forward progress while remaining steadfast in upholding our core values.

### **Understanding and Adapting Our Operations**

We begin our journey by closely examining how we operate and understanding the impact we have on our ecosystem. This introspection helps us identify areas where we can strengthen our role and align better with the changing needs of a society that places significant importance on sustainability and progress. Our objective is to examine our current practices, identify potential areas for improvement, and plan specific actions that contribute to a forward-thinking and resilient society.

### **Sustainable Collaboration**

Transparency and collaboration form the bedrock of our operations. We firmly believe in openly communicating our strategies and actions. At RTO7, we are in the process of formulating a clear promise outlining how we intend to manage tourism and destinations. This promise underscores our dedication to strategic management, ensuring that all stakeholders, from local businesses to government bodies, comprehend our plans and work cohesively towards a unified goal in tourism development.

### **Empowering the Industry**

An essential aspect of our strategy involves emphasizing the significance of each individual within the tourism industry. We advocate for a deep understanding of how every role interconnects, illuminating the complexity of our industry's network. We provide various learning opportunities, enabling industry professionals to comprehend their roles better, make informed decisions, and collaborate effectively, ultimately enhancing the industry's overall effectiveness.

### **Crafting Exceptional Visitor Experiences**

We are unwavering in our commitment to enhancing the visitor experience in our region. To achieve this, we facilitate special tours for our staff who directly interact with visitors. These tours provide them with invaluable firsthand experiences of the place's visitors frequent, such as attractions, hotels, local businesses, and cultural sites. Armed with this insider knowledge, our staff can offer superior service to visitors, ensuring their experiences are nothing short of memorable.

### **Strategic Partnership Selection for Maximum Impact**

We place immense emphasis on forging partnerships that create a meaningful difference. Our team meticulously evaluates potential partners based on stringent criteria, prioritizing their positive impact on the environment, the economy, and our community over purely financial gains. We carefully consider how these partnerships align with our goals, taking into account the environment, local culture, and the overall benefit to our region. This deliberate approach ensures that the projects we endorse have a lasting positive effect, contributing to the appeal, resilience, and sustainability of our region.

## **5-Year Action Plan: Forging a Sustainable Future**

### **Year 1: Establishing the Foundation**

#### **1) Operations and Impact Analysis**

- a) Conduct an in-depth evaluation of our operational processes to identify areas with significant potential for positive impact and enhancements.
- b) Collaborate with industry experts, stakeholders, and local communities to ensure a comprehensive understanding of the landscape and potential improvements.

#### **2) Unified Commitment and Partnership Criteria**

- a) Develop a clear "Pledge to Tourism Destination Development" that reflects our dedication to sustainability and collaboration, engaging stakeholders in the development process.
- b) Formulate and integrate "Maximum-Yield Criteria" to evaluate partners based on their environmental, economic, and community benefits, aligning with our sustainability goals.

#### **3) Empowering Staff and Streamlining Processes**

- a) Engage in collaborative discussions to identify development needs among our staff.
- b) Design specialized courses focusing on high-impact product development and responsible management.
- c) Collaborate with experts to understand business needs, retention, expansion, and workforce requirements

### **Year 2: Enhancing Stakeholder Engagement**

#### **1) Industry Awareness and Partnership Integration**

- a) Launch an extensive awareness campaign to educate industry stakeholders on their pivotal roles within the tourism ecosystem.
- b) Integrate "Maximum-Yield" criteria into our partnership evaluations, ensuring sustainable impact is a fundamental consideration in all collaborations.

### **Year 3: Strengthening Partnerships and Database Transformation**

#### **1) Collaborative Action Planning and Stakeholder Database Upgrade**

- a) Collaborate with partners, stakeholders, and industry associations to refine the "maximum yield" criteria and co-create joint initiatives aligned with these criteria.

- b) Transform the stakeholder database into a comprehensive repository, categorizing and tagging information for easy access and utilization by stakeholders.

#### **Year 4: Institutionalizing a Culture of Sustainability**

##### **1) Strategic Communication and Alliances**

- a) Create and implement a robust communication plan engaging diverse stakeholders through various channels, incorporating feedback mechanisms for a dynamic two-way flow.
- b) Activate Memorandums of Understanding (MoUs) and foster partnerships with Indigenous Tourism Ontario, First Nations, BIPOC, 2SLGBTQIA+, and Individuals with Disabilities communities, promoting responsible tourism.

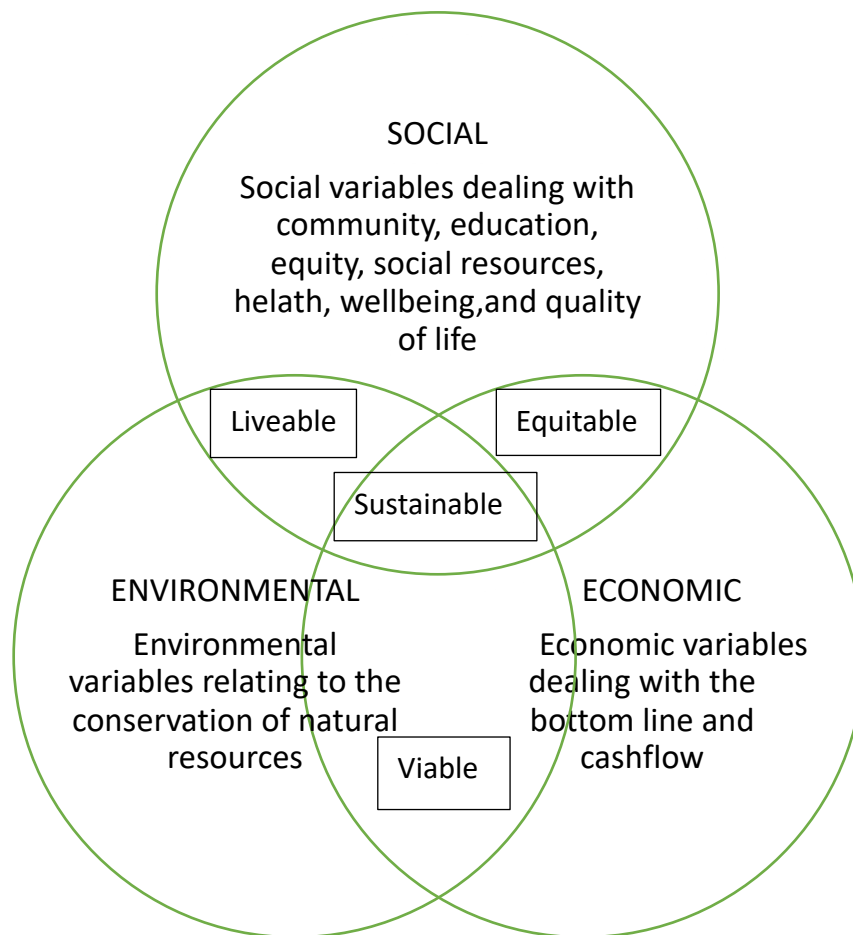
#### **Year 5: Continuous Review of Organizational Performance and Continuous Enhancement**

- 1) Empowering Staff and Streamlining Processes
- 2) Engage in collaborative discussions to identify development needs among our staff.
- 3) Design specialized courses focusing on high-impact product development and responsible management.
- 4) Collaborate with experts to understand business needs, retention, expansion, and workforce requirements.
- 5) Dynamic Collaboration and Resource Optimization
- 6) Conduct thorough analysis to identify and categorize stakeholders for effective engagement.
- 7) Utilize technology for efficient communication and information dissemination.
- 8) Conduct a comprehensive resource-needs assessment to ensure alignment between available resources and the multifaceted needs associated with destination management activities.

Through the rigorous implementation of this 5-year action plan, RTO7 will fortify its role, significantly contributing to the long-term prosperity and resilience of the destination. This evolution is a natural progression, building upon our existing strengths and values, and marks

## Continuing Our Evolution: Sustainable Collaboration

### Sustainable Tourism Model



At RTO7, we're always striving for progress by combining economic success with sustainability. We're building on what we're good at and promoting teamwork through collaboration processes and a clear promise for managing tourism destinations. Our approach involves making the industry more aware, empowering frontline staff, and evaluating the impacts of our partnerships. We believe in nurturing lasting relationships by providing resources, fostering strong communication, and working together. As RTO7's journey continues, we remain committed to creating a balanced and flourishing tourism destination.

### Our Approach: Sustainable Partnerships and Working Together

#### 1) Strengthening How We Work Together

- a) **Creating Collaborative Processes:** RTO7 works with different tourism and local organizations to develop clear and effective collaboration processes. Through discussions and workshops, we establish common goals, define contributions, and



improve communication. This helps us proactively handle challenges and make better decisions together.

- b) **Sharing Our Commitment:** Building on our existing foundation, RTO7 creates a clear "Pledge to Tourism Destination Development." This statement reflects our dedication to developing destinations strategically. We ensure that everyone, from local businesses to government bodies, understands and supports this commitment, promoting unified efforts and effective destination management.

## 2) Encouraging Active Collaboration

- a) **Showing Our Ecosystem:** RTO7 uses innovative methods to illustrate the complex connections that define our destination's identity. This visualization effort goes beyond regular maps and brochures, encompassing cultural, natural, and socioeconomic dimensions that make our area special. By showcasing various elements, we foster a sense of belonging and understanding among stakeholders, helping them make informed decisions and work together for the destination's preservation and enhancement.
- b) **Evaluating Partnership Impact:** Our dedication to collaboration continues as we include comprehensive "maximum-yield" criteria in partner evaluations. This approach ensures we assess initiatives not only for financial benefits but also for their broader value to the destination and its stakeholders. We focus on initiatives that align with economic gains, socio-cultural enrichment, environmental sustainability, and strategic goals.

## 3) Nurturing Strong Relationships

- a) **Empowering Stakeholders:** RTO7 upgrades its stakeholder database into a comprehensive resource hub, providing easy access to valuable industry insights, best practices, research findings, and collaboration opportunities. This empowers stakeholders with the information needed for better decision-making and active participation in the tourism landscape.
- b) **Building Robust Communication:** We develop a strategic communications plan to engage with a diverse range of tourism stakeholders effectively. By tailoring our communication strategies based on stakeholders' roles and expectations, we foster a sense of partnership, ownership, and shared commitment. Our two-way communication approach encourages stakeholders to actively contribute to the destination's development and growth.

## 4) Fostering Inclusivity and Collaboration with Diverse Groups

- a) **Collaborating with Diverse Groups:** RTO7 actively engages with organizations representing Indigenous, BIPOC, 2SLGBTQIA+, and Individuals with Disabilities communities. Through a formal memorandum of understanding (MoU), we collaborate on specific projects and strategies, promoting inclusivity and enriching the visitor experience.
- b) **Strengthening First Nations Engagement:** RTO7 takes purposeful steps to strengthen relationships with First Nations communities. We allocate resources and create

opportunities for dialogue, cultural exchanges, and capacity building. These efforts promote trust, respect, and shared goals, enriching the cultural fabric of our destination.

As RTO7 continues its journey, our commitment to building effective partnerships and collaboration remains strong. By seamlessly integrating economic success with sustainable practices, we aim for a balanced and thriving tourism destination that benefits everyone.

### **RTO7 Five-Year Action Plan: Fostering Sustainable Collaborations:**

#### **Year 1: Laying the Groundwork**

- 1) **Review and Update:** Review existing programs aimed at providing support for the Tourism Destination Development and Action Plan, integrating them into the Operational Plan. Encourage the implementation of elements ahead of the planned schedule whenever feasible.
- 2) **Collaborative Process Creation:**
  - a) Talk to stakeholders to identify key partners.
  - b) Hold workshops to establish collaboration procedures, roles, and communication methods.
  - c) Formulate a framework to handle challenges and conflicts collaboratively.
- 3) **Share Commitment:**
  - a) Create a clear "Pledge to Tourism Destination Development Management."
  - b) Share it with industry stakeholders, local businesses, communities, and government through workshops and digital and in-person interactions.
  - c) Collect feedback to gauge its impact.

#### **Year 2 – Engaging the Community**

- 4) **Boosting Awareness:**
  - a) Launch an awareness campaign explaining industry stakeholders' roles.
  - b) Offer educational programs and workshops for industry members.
  - c) Measure engagement and gather feedback to improve the campaign.
- 5) **Empower Frontline Staff:**
  - a) Facilitate familiarization tours for staff to better understand the industry.
  - b) Collaborate with local attractions, businesses, and cultural sites for interactive experiences.
  - c) Create a feedback system to improve the familiarization tour program.

#### **Year 3 – Understanding the Tourism Network**

- 6) **Visualize the Network:**
  - a) Develop a clear initiative to display the interconnectedness of the destination ecosystem.
  - b) Use visuals and interactive presentations to showcase landmarks, attractions, communities, and more.
  - c) Get stakeholder feedback to ensure accuracy.
- 7) **Assessing Partnership Impact:**

- a) Include "maximum-yield" criteria in the partner evaluation process.
- b) Establish a framework to evaluate initiatives based on economic, socio-cultural, and environmental factors.
- c) Collaborate with partners on joint initiatives that align with the destination's objectives.

#### **Year 4 – Effective Communication**

##### **8) Strengthen Communication:**

- a) Put the communication plan into action to connect with various tourism stakeholders.
- b) Use digital platforms, in-person interactions, workshops, webinars, and social media to engage stakeholders.
- c) Continuously assess and adjust the communication plan for effectiveness.

##### **9) Collaboration with Indigenous, BIPOC, LGBTQ+, and Disabled Individuals:**

- a) Activate the memorandum of understanding (MoU) with representative organizations.
- b) Identify joint projects and strategies aligned with shared goals.
- c) Regularly review and evaluate the MoU's implementation.

#### **Year 5 – Active Engagement**

##### **10) Engaging with First Nations:**

- a) Allocate resources to strengthen relationships with First Nations communities.
- b) Support cultural exchanges and collaborative projects through funding and dedicated positions.
- c) Offer workshops and educational programs to empower stakeholders within First Nations communities.

##### **11) Comprehensive Resource Hub:**

- a) Expand the stakeholder database to include diverse resources and opportunities.
- b) Regularly update the database with industry insights, best practices, and funding opportunities.
- c) Gather feedback to enhance the database's relevance and usefulness.

Through this strategic five-year action plan, RTO7 aims to enhance partnerships, promote collaboration, and ensure sustainable tourism growth. The goal is to create a vibrant and resilient tourism destination that benefits everyone, balancing economic success with responsible development.

## Continuing Our Evolution: Workforce/Labour Force Development

At RTO7, we're deeply committed to promoting sustainable growth in tourism. To address a major challenge of workforce shortages in our region's thriving tourism sector, we're placing a sustained emphasis on Tourism Workforce and Labour Development activities across the 5-Year Action Plan. This comprehensive plan is integrated into our broader Tourism Destination Development and Action Plan. By doing so, we're reinforcing the foundation of the industry, enhancing visitor experiences, and supporting our local communities. Our forward-thinking approach ensures a resilient and prosperous future for both our tourism sector and the regions it serves.

### Our Plan: Building a Strong and Resilient Tourism Workforce in BruceGreySimcoe

- 1) **Spreading Awareness:**
  - a) Step up efforts to inform both locals and potential employees about the tourism labour shortage through targeted marketing campaigns.
  - b) Collaborate with local media outlets to share compelling stories illustrating the impact of the labour shortage on tourism businesses and the community.
- 2) **Developing the Workforce:**
  - a) Continue supporting the creation of comprehensive training and skill development programs for current and potential tourism employees.
  - b) Strengthen collaboration with post-secondary institutions to address tourism labour shortages in the region.
  - c) Work closely with educational providers to align curricula with industry needs and provide students with practical experiences.
- 3) **Attracting and Retaining Talent:**
  - a) Promote the appeal of careers in tourism through multi-channel campaigns, highlighting growth opportunities and unique aspects of working in the industry.
  - b) Implement strategies to improve employee retention rates, such as offering competitive compensation programs, professional growth pathways, and a positive work environment.
- 4) **Embracing Diversity and Inclusion:**
  - a) Champion diversity and inclusivity within the workforce by creating initiatives that attract underrepresented groups to pursue careers in tourism.
  - b) Collaborate with community organizations to provide resources and support for individuals from diverse backgrounds entering the industry.
- 5) **Enhancing Partnerships and Collaboration:**
  - a) Establish or actively engage in collaborative platforms for tourism businesses, educational institutions, local governments, and industry associations to collectively address the labour shortage challenge.
  - b) Encourage open dialogue and knowledge sharing through regular roundtable discussions and workshops.
- 6) **Affordable Housing Solutions:**

- a) Collaborate with housing organizations to identify opportunities for developing attainable housing options, especially targeting tourism employees.
  - b) Explore incentive programs that encourage local businesses to provide housing benefits to their employees, potentially partnering with landlords or property owners.
  - c) Partner with housing support services to assist employees in finding suitable housing options and offer guidance on financial planning.
  - d) Advocate for mixed-use developments that include housing and commercial spaces, creating a convenient living and working environment.
- 7) **Reliable Transportation Options:**
- a) Confirm and collaborate with local transportation authorities and private providers to improve transportation connectivity to tourism destinations.
  - b) Encourage flexible work schedules in tourism businesses to accommodate employees relying on public transportation or facing transportation challenges.
  - c) Work with businesses to offer transportation benefits or subsidies to employees using public transportation or ridesharing services.
  - d) Advocate for improved bicycle lanes and pedestrian pathways to encourage alternative transportation methods, especially in tourist-dense areas.
  - e) Promote remote work options where feasible, reducing the need for daily commuting and easing transportation burdens.

## **RTO7 Five-Year Action Plan: Workforce/Labour Force Development**

### **Year 1: Building Foundations**

#### **1) Access, Adapt and Evolve:**

- a) Review existing programming to align with the proposed direction outlined in the Tourism Destination Development and Action Plan and incorporate into the Operational Plan. Encourage the implementation of elements ahead of the planned schedule whenever feasible.

#### **2) Awareness Campaign:**

- a) Develop clear, accessible messaging that emphasizes the issue's impact and the need for collective action.
- b) Launch a targeted campaign utilizing social media, community events, and local media to raise awareness about the tourism labour shortage.

#### **3) Workforce Assessment:**

- a) Conduct or source organizations that are conducting a comprehensive assessment of the current workforce landscape, identifying gaps, trends, and specific sectors experiencing the most acute shortages.
- b) Collect or access data through other organization's surveys, interviews, and collaboration with local tourism businesses.

#### **4) Stakeholder Engagement:**

- a) Join or form the RTO7 Tourism Workforce Advisory Group, comprising representatives from local businesses, educational institutions, industry associations, and community organizations.

- b) Hold the inaugural meeting to set priorities, define roles, and establish communication channels.
- 5) **Career Attraction Campaign:**
  - a) Develop a multimedia campaign highlighting the rewarding aspects of tourism careers, showcasing success stories and diverse role opportunities.
  - b) Coordinate with educational institutions to participate in career fairs and workshops.
- 6) **Retention Strategies:**
  - a) Collaborate with a team of human resource specialists to provide guidance to tourism businesses on employee retention strategies.
  - b) Share best practices, including mentorship programs, ongoing training, and creating positive workplace cultures
- 7) **Diversity Outreach:**
  - a) Continue and expand initiatives aimed at attracting individuals from underrepresented groups to the tourism industry.
  - b) Access new and continue efforts with partners and community organizations to provide mentorship, support, and resources for newcomers and minorities entering the workforce.
- 8) **Housing Needs Assessment**
  - a) Collaborate with local housing organizations and research firms to conduct a comprehensive assessment of housing needs for tourism employees and workers in key sectors.
  - b) Identify gaps in attainable housing and specific housing challenges faced by employees.
- 9) **Stakeholder Engagement - Transportation**
  - a) Join or establish the Attainable Housing and Reliable Transportation (AHRT) Task Force, comprising representatives from tourism businesses, housing organizations, transportation agencies, local governments, and community organizations.
  - b) Attend and actively participate in meetings to set priorities, define roles, and establish communication channels.

## **Year 2: Training and Skill Development**

### **10) Skills Training Programs:**

- a) Continue to collaborate with industry experts and training providers to update, design and launch targeted skills development programs for various tourism sectors, such as hospitality, adventure tourism, and cultural experiences.
- b) Promote these programs among existing employees and job seekers. Investigate incentive programs to encourage participation.
- c) Educational Partnerships: Forge partnerships with local colleges and universities to align curricula with the evolving needs of the tourism sector. Become a source of current data to influence outcomes.

### **11) Housing Development Initiatives**

- a) Collaborate with developers to create attainable housing projects dedicated to employees in tourism and targeted sectors.
- b) Explore incentives for developers who allocate a percentage of housing units for eligible workers.

**12) Transportation Enhancement**

- a) Collaborate with transportation providers to implement shuttle services or enhanced routes connecting residential areas to tourism hubs and workplaces.
- b) Influence flexible transportation options, such as ridesharing programs tailored to employee schedules.

**Year 3: Attraction/Retention, Implementation and Integration****13) Career Attraction Campaign:**

- a) Update and expand the multimedia campaign highlighting the rewarding aspects of tourism careers, showcasing success stories and diverse role opportunities.
- b) Continue to update and coordinate with educational institutions to participate in career fairs and workshops.

**14) Retention Strategies:**

- a) Evaluate and update current collaboration with the current team of human resource specialists that provide guidance to tourism businesses on employee retention strategies and adjust as necessary.
- b) Enhance delivery of shared best practices, including mentorship programs, ongoing training, and creating positive workplace cultures.

**15) Housing Support Services**

- a) Partner with housing support organizations to assist employees in finding suitable housing options.
- b) Develop resources to guide employees through the housing search and rental process.

**16) Sustainable Commuting Options**

- a) Advocate for increased bike lanes, pedestrian pathways, and infrastructure that support alternative commuting methods.
- b) Encourage businesses to implement flexible work arrangements and remote work options.

**Year 4: Diversity, Collaboration, Monitoring****17) Diversity Outreach:**

- a) Continue initiatives aimed at attracting individuals from underrepresented groups to the tourism industry.
- b) Expand partnerships with community organizations to provide mentorship, support, and resources for newcomers and minorities entering the workforce.

**18) Collaborative Workshops:**

- a) Organize regular workshops and roundtable discussions where stakeholders can share insights, challenges, and innovative solutions related to workforce development and provide an evaluation of RTO7 current support programs.
- b) Establish pathway for new or enhanced collaborative projects to address industry-wide workforce needs.

**19) Monitoring and Feedback Mechanism**

- a) Establish a mechanism to monitor the impact of housing and transportation initiatives on workforce well-being.

- b) Gather feedback from employees and employers to assess the effectiveness of implemented measures.

#### **20) Continuous Improvement**

- a) Review housing and transportation initiatives based on feedback and collected data.
- b) Identify areas for improvement and adjustment to ensure alignment with changing workforce needs.

### **Year 5: Sustainability and Evaluation**

#### **21) Long-Term Sustainability:**

- a) Evaluate the effectiveness and sustainability of the Tourism Workforce Advisory Group's initiatives.
- b) Consider long-term funding mechanisms for ongoing training, awareness campaigns, and workforce support.

#### **22) Impact Assessment:**

- a) Conduct an in-depth assessment of the action plan's impact, measuring success through indicators such as increased enrolment in tourism-related programs, reduced turnover rates, and enhanced community engagement.
- b) Plan Review and Renewal:
  - i) Review the 5-Year Action Plan's outcomes, challenges, and lessons learned.
  - ii) Collaboratively create a renewed action plan to build upon successes and address new developments in the tourism labour landscape.

#### **23) Long-Term Funding Strategies**

- a) Evaluate the sustainability of housing and transportation initiatives.
- b) Explore partnerships with public and private stakeholders for ongoing funding to support workforce well-being.

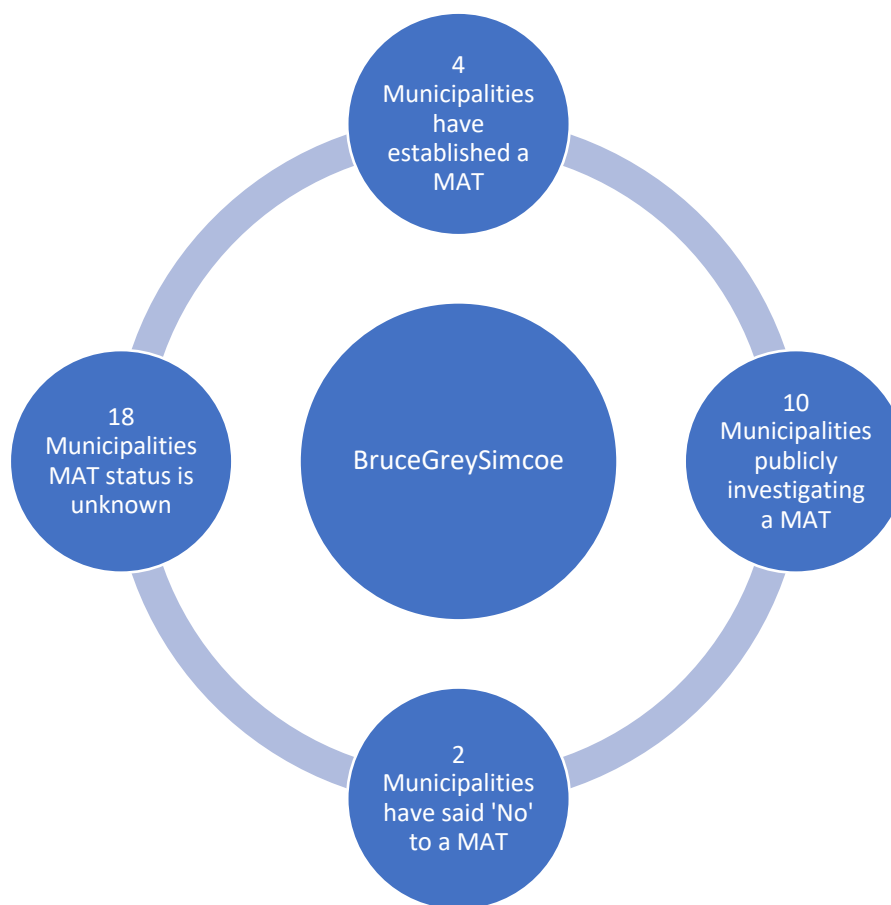
#### **24) Plan Review and Renewal**

- a) Document successful strategies and outcomes to share with other regions facing similar workforce challenges.
- b) Collaborate with other regions to replicate and adapt the housing and transportation model.

By diligently executing this 5-Year Action Plan, RTO7 aims to drive positive change within the region's tourism workforce. This strategy not only enhances the sustainability of our industry but also fosters collaboration, innovation, and continuous improvement.



## Continuing Our Evolution: Municipal Accommodation Tax (MAT) - Engagement with Municipalities and NFPs through Collaborative Tourism Management



At RTO7, we believe in the strength of working together with local entities to enhance our tourism landscape. Our goal is clear: to nurture a thriving tourism destination. To achieve this, we're strategically sharing our wealth of tourism knowledge with municipalities and non-profit organizations (NFPs) responsible for the Municipal Accommodation Tax (MAT). By streamlining the service delivery models of these entities and promoting tourism-related services, we aim to create a sustainable ecosystem that benefits tourism operators, visitors, and local communities. Our strategy is based on collaboration, capacity building, and sustainable growth, paving the way for a harmonious future for our destination.

### Our Plan: Supporting the MAT structure through Collaboration

- 1) **Collaborative Engagement:** Encourage active collaboration among municipalities, NFPs, and tourism stakeholders to combine resources, share expertise, and align goals.

- 2) **Empowering Capacity:** Provide municipalities and NFPs with tailored training programs, workshops, and skill-building sessions to enhance their tourism management capabilities.
- 3) **Data-Driven Insights:** Develop a unified data collection and analysis system to offer valuable insights for informed decision-making and effective tourism strategies.
- 4) **Promoting Sustainability and Responsibility:** Encourage responsible tourism practices, environmental stewardship, and community engagement for the long-term viability of our destination.
- 5) **Enhancing Visitor Experiences:** Provide comprehensive and accessible information to visitors, creating a welcoming atmosphere and innovative tourism experiences

### **5-Year Action Plan: Municipal Accommodation Tax (MAT) - Engagement with Municipalities and NFPs through Collaborative Tourism Management**

#### **Year 1: Laying the Foundation for Collaboration Success**

- 1) **Operational Alignment:**
  - a) Review existing programs to align with the proposed direction outlined in the Tourism Destination and Action Plan, integrating it into our Operational Plan. Encourage the implementation of elements ahead of the planned schedule whenever feasible.
- 2) **Stakeholder Engagement:**
  - a) Initiate dialogues with municipalities, NFPs, and key tourism stakeholders involved with MAT to communicate the benefits of collaboration and ensure alignment of goals.
- 3) **Skill Development:**
  - a) Tailor training programs and toolkits to equip municipalities and NFPs with the necessary skills and knowledge for effective tourism management.
- 4) **Data Collection Framework:**
  - a) Collaboratively design a unified data collection system to track visitor trends, spending behavior, and tourism operator performance for informed decision-making.
- 5) **Sustainable Tourism Initiatives:**
  - a) Launch sustainability initiatives to promote responsible tourism practices, community engagement, and environmental stewardship.

#### **Year 2: Orchestrating Collaborative Initiatives**

- 6) **Joint Marketing:**
  - a) Co-create and execute joint marketing campaigns, leveraging the strengths of municipalities and NFPs to promote unique offerings and enhance destination visibility.
- 7) **Visitor Information Enhancement:**
  - a) Guide municipalities and NFPs in revising visitor information services and digital platforms for easy access to relevant information.
- 8) **Innovative Tourism Experiences:**

- a) Encourage cross-sector collaboration to generate innovative tourism experiences, expanding the destination's offerings.

### **Year 3: Nurturing Sustainable Growth**

#### **9) Data-Driven Insights Sharing:**

- a) Share actionable insights derived from data analysis with tourism operators to tailor their services to evolving visitor preferences.

#### **10) Collaborative Partnerships:**

- a) Initiate alliances among accommodation providers, attractions, and local businesses to curate holistic visitor experiences.

### **Year 4: Strengthening Infrastructure for Enhanced Experiences**

#### **11) Online Presence Enhancement:**

- a) Collaborate to elevate the destination's online visibility through cohesive websites, impactful social media, and user-friendly platforms.

### **Year 5: Cultivating Responsible and Lasting Tourism**

#### **12) Destination Branding:**

- a) Co-create a compelling Sustainable Tourism Destination Brand that resonates with visitors and encapsulates the region's unique identity.

#### **13) Ongoing: Evolution and Progress Evaluation**

#### **14) Progress Evaluation:**

- a) Establish a review process to evaluate the impact of the strategy and action plan on tourism operator success and visitor experiences.

#### **15) Continuous Improvement:**

- a) Gather feedback from stakeholders to refine and adapt strategies, ensuring sustained momentum and commitment.

Through this approach, we are fostering a dynamic and self-sustaining tourism ecosystem. Our collaborative efforts reshape a destination that delivers exceptional visitor experiences while enriching our communities. Together, we are redefining the future of tourism.

## Continuing Our Evolution: Planned Product and Experience Development

In RTO7, we are committed to creating innovative tourism experiences that showcase our natural beauty and purpose-built tourism attractions and assets. By collaborating closely with local communities and experts, we're assisting in the development and fine tuning of these asset with a focus on creativity and sustainability. Our approach includes a checklist and criteria for responsible experiences, professional development programs for businesses, guided tours, and a collaborative self-assessment system. Together, we are striving for a future of responsible and impactful tourism while preserving our natural assets.

### Strategy: Advancing Product and Experience Development

#### 1) Enhancing Exploration of Natural and Purpose-Built Assets

- a) **What:** We're dedicated to providing accessible experiences and are working on creating enhanced tourism products/experiences based on our region's natural and purpose-built attractions.
- b) **How:** We're assessing our diverse assets for their unique qualities and involving local communities and experts to design inclusive experiences that align with visitor preferences.
- c) **Why:** This initiative promotes responsible tourism and helps visitors connect with our region's natural and cultural heritage.

#### 2) Empowering Responsible Experiences

- a) **What:** We've introduced a "Good Practices Checklist" and specific criteria to encourage the tourism industry to create experiences that benefit society and the environment.
- b) **How:** By providing practical guidance and benchmarks, we're ensuring that tourism experiences embrace economic gains while recognizing and actively managing social and environmental impacts.
- c) **Why:** This initiative enriches the visitor experience and supports the well-being of local communities.

#### 3) Cultivating Transformation through Professional Development

- a) **What:** We're offering specialized professional development programs to selected DMOs/Municipalities and businesses, focusing on maximizing experience development and responsible destination management.
- b) **How:** Our programs cover various skills like storytelling, sustainable practices, community engagement, and authentic representation, guided by industry experts.
- c) **Why:** This approach helps businesses become champions of responsible tourism, enhancing their offerings.

#### 4) The Experience Tours: Forging Collaborative Enrichment

- a) **What:** We'll initiate guided tours, partnering with local businesses, cultural institutions, and community groups to showcase all of our region's attractions.
- b) **How:** These tours are designed with sensitivity to the environment, cultural heritage, and communities, providing an enlightening experience.

- c) **Why:** The tours exemplify collaboration and responsible tourism, enriching the visitor's perspective.

#### **5) Empowering Impactful Experiences through Self-Assessment**

- a) **What:** We've introduced a collaborative self-assessment system, empowering businesses to improve their offerings.
- b) **How:** The system includes a toolkit for businesses to assess their practices and gather feedback for continuous improvement.
- c) **Why:** This fosters a culture of continuous enhancement, aligning with inclusive and impactful tourism practices.

### **RTO7 5-Year Action Plan: Planned Product and Experience Development**

#### **Year 1: Foundation and Assessment**

##### **1) Understanding and Adapting:**

- 2) Review current programs to support the proposed direction in the Tourism Destination Development and Action Plan, integrating them into the Operational Plan. Encourage the implementation of elements ahead of the planned schedule whenever feasible.

##### **3) Developing Nature-Based Products:**

- a) Study the region's natural assets for recreational potential, ecological importance, and cultural relevance.
- b) Collaborate with local communities, stakeholders, and experts to gather insights for improving outdoor tourism offerings.
- c) Plan immersive nature-based experiences considering diverse interests and abilities.
- d) Test initial prototypes with focus groups.

##### **4) Building a Responsible Tourism Framework:**

- a) Form a diverse team of experts and stakeholders to create a "Good Practices Checklist" and criteria.
- b) Research successful case studies and best practices to inform the checklist's content.
- c) Pilot the checklist with selected businesses and gather feedback for improvement.
- d) Establish partnerships with local organizations to promote responsible practices.

#### **Year 2: Experience Enhancement Training**

##### **5) Improving Nature Tourism Experiences:**

- a) Refine nature-based experiences based on feedback and testing.
- b) Collaborate with environmental organizations to incorporate sustainability and conservation principles into experiences.
- c) Develop educational and interpretive elements to raise awareness about nature preservation.

##### **6) Skill Development for the Industry:**

- a) Launch specialized professional development programs for businesses, focusing on maximizing experience development and responsible destination management.
- b) Engage industry experts to lead workshops, seminars, and interactive sessions.

- c) Provide continuous mentorship and support to program participants.

### **Year 3: Implementation and Partnership**

#### **7) Guided Tours Highlighting Attractions:**

- a) Launch the Experience Tours, showcasing the region's attractions through curated guided tours.
- b) Collaborate with local businesses, cultural institutions, and community groups to enhance tour offerings.
- c) Develop a comprehensive marketing and promotion strategy to attract diverse audiences.

#### **8) Testing Self-Assessment Systems:**

- a) Pilot the collaborative self-assessment system with a group of businesses.
- b) Provide training and resources for businesses to conduct thorough self-assessments.
- c) Gather feedback from pilot participants to improve the self-assessment toolkit and process.

### **Year 4: Expansion and Refinement**

#### **9) Expanding Nature Experiences:**

- a) Increase the variety of nature experiences based on demand and feedback from visitors.
- b) Partner with local schools and educational institutions to integrate tourism/nature-based educational programs.
- c) Monitor and evaluate the ecological impact of increased tourism activities, making necessary adjustments.

#### **10) Integrating Responsible Tourism Practices:**

- a) Encourage more businesses to adopt the "Good Practices Checklist" and criteria for their experience development.
- b) Collaborate with local communities to ensure experiences respect cultural heritage and support community empowerment.
- c) Showcase successful case studies of responsible tourism at industry conferences and events.

### **Year 5: Sustainability and Continuous Improvement**

#### **11) Promoting Sustainable Growth and Innovation:**

- a) Develop a long-term sustainability plan for nature-based tourism, focusing on ongoing conservation and stewardship efforts.
- b) Invest in research and development of innovative eco-friendly technologies for nature-based experiences.

#### **12) Gaining National Recognition:**

- i) Share the success of RTO7's initiatives with other regional tourism organizations, encouraging similar responsible tourism efforts.

- ii) Collaborate with government agencies and policymakers to advocate for policies that support sustainable tourism practices.

**13) Evaluating and Adapting Strategies:**

- 14) Continuously evaluate the effectiveness of the self-assessment system and professional development programs.
- 15) Collect data on the economic and environmental impact of the nature-based tourism product and responsible tourism initiatives.
- 16) Use feedback and data to refine and adapt strategies for continuous improvement.

Throughout this five-year plan, we'll be building a strong foundation, refining experiences, integrating responsible tourism practices, scaling efforts, gaining recognition, and continually evaluating and adapting our strategies. Our focus remains on balancing economic success with sustainability, preserving our natural assets, and enriching the tourism landscape.

## Continuing Our Evolution: Through Responsible Marketing and Promotion

RTO7 is committed to enhancing visitor experiences, boosting our region's identity, and advocating for sustainable practices in the dynamic area of marketing and promotion. We are dedicated to refining wayfinding and interpretive signage, crafting engaging "calls to action," promoting a comprehensive framework of "good practices," and defining impactful key messages. By aligning with emerging trends and co-creating transformative offerings with local stakeholders, our aim is to harmonize economic success with sustainability and nurture a thriving, values-driven destination.

### Strategy: Marketing and Promotion

#### 1) Enhancing Wayfinding and Interpretive Signage:

- a) We're improving wayfinding mechanisms and interpretive signage within our region to enrich visitor experiences and amplify our region's identity.
- b) Collaboration with local communities, businesses, and cultural institutions is key to gathering insights that harmonize with our unique context.
- c) Our approach involves creating a strategic roadmap for improvement, encompassing new interpretive signage, digital wayfinding tools, community engagement strategies, and stakeholder empowerment.
- d) The objective is to create a seamless visitor journey that navigates physical routes while deepening their understanding of our cultural, historical, and natural treasures.

#### 2) Empowering Through Innovative "Calls to Action" and Comprehensive "Good Practices":

- a) Our continuous evolution includes empowering the industry to move beyond traditional marketing practices.
- b) We're crafting dynamic "calls to action" and a comprehensive set of "good practices" through collaboration with industry stakeholders and experts.
- c) These initiatives aim to broaden business horizons, offering actionable steps and innovative ideas that elevate offerings into holistic visitor experiences.
- d) Acknowledging the diverse sectors within our industry, we're tailoring approaches to resonate authentically across segments, enriching visitor experiences and enhancing destination appeal.

#### 3) Unified Messaging: Collaboration, Identity, and Values:

- a) We're co-developing key messages that align with our core values and define our destination's identity.
- b) Infused with values like sustainability, inclusivity, and cultural preservation, our messages resonate with visitors' ethical sensibilities.
- c) These messages form the cornerstone of our communication strategy, ensuring a unified voice across various channels.
- d) Through co-creation, we're fostering a deeper appreciation and engagement with our region's authentic essence.

#### 4) A Strategic Destination Marketing Plan: Collaboration and Impact:



- a) Our evolution involves a strategic and collaborative effort, co-creating a detailed Destination Marketing Plan that unites stakeholders toward an impactful marketing strategy.
  - b) Collaborative workshops refine strategic pillars that represent dimensions like outdoor adventure, cultural immersion, sustainability, and culinary experiences.
  - c) Stakeholders collaborate to outline tactics, initiatives, and campaigns aligned with each pillar, creating a roadmap that measures effectiveness and guides marketing efforts.
  - d) Co-creating this comprehensive plan fosters alignment, synergy, and collective commitment among stakeholders, nurturing a resonant brand identity that enriches and sustains our region.
- 5) Prioritizing "Maximum-Yield" Transformational Experiences:**
- a) We're spotlighting "maximum-yield" tourism products, experiences, and narratives that resonate deeply with our values and aspirations.
  - b) Engaging local businesses, artisans, and cultural practitioners, we co-create these transformative offerings, fostering profound connections with visitors.
  - c) Our promotional strategy amplifies the reach of these offerings through digital marketing, storytelling campaigns, and experiential events to draw visitors into meaningful encounters.
  - d) Through prioritizing these transformative experiences, we aim to elevate the visitor evolution, promoting responsible and meaningful tourism practices that contribute to our cultural, environmental, and economic well-being.

## **RT07 5-Year Action Plan: Responsible Marketing and Promotion**

### **Year 1: Establishing the Foundation**

#### **1) Review and Align:**

- a) Review existing programs to align with the proposed Tourism Destination Development and Action Plan, integrating them into the Operational Plan. Encourage the implementation of elements ahead of the planned schedule whenever feasible.
- b) Analyze current wayfinding and interpretive signage in BruceGreySimcoe.
- c) Collaborate with local communities, businesses, and cultural institutions to gather insights and plan improvements.
- d) Develop a detailed roadmap for enhancement, including new interpretive signage and digital wayfinding tools.

### **Year 2: Crafting Messages and Engaging Stakeholders**

#### **2) Co-Create Key Messages:**

- a) Facilitate collaborative workshops with industry partners to craft key messages that resonate with sustainability and inclusivity values.
- b) Incorporate these key messages consistently across all communication channels.

#### **3) Strengthen Destination Marketing Plan:**

- a) Refine strategic pillars in the Destination Marketing Plan through collaboration with industry experts and stakeholders.

- b) Develop a comprehensive plan outlining execution strategies for each pillar and measure effectiveness using key performance indicators (KPIs).

### **Year 3: Enhancing Experiences and Encouraging Collaboration**

#### **4) Prioritize High-Impact Tourism Offerings:**

- a) Evaluate and curate "maximum-yield" tourism products and experiences that align with our values and enrich communities.
- b) Promote these offerings effectively through digital marketing and experiential events.

#### **5) Foster Collaborations:**

- a) Facilitate deeper collaboration with stakeholders through regular engagement sessions and partnerships with media outlets.
- b) Monitor and evaluate the impact of these collaborations on visitor engagement and destination development.

### **Year 4: Continue Sustainable Practices**

#### **6) Expand and Implement Sustainable Practices:**

- a) Integrate sustainable practices across all initiatives, including signage development and marketing campaigns.
- b) Collaborate with environmental experts to ensure responsible tourism practices are incorporated.

#### **7) Measure and Improve:**

- a) Continuously monitor and evaluate the effectiveness of enhancements, marketing initiatives, and visitor sentiment.
- b) Gather feedback to refine and expand successful initiatives, incorporating lessons learned and emerging trends.
- c) Legacy and Future Path

### **Year 5: Embracing Sustainable Growth and Continuous Improvement**

- 8) Document the achievements and impact of the 5-year action plan through case studies and success stories.
- 9) Engage with educational institutions and local communities to share knowledge and best practices.
- 10) Establish a framework for ongoing collaboration to sustain the initiatives beyond the 5-year period.
- 11) Celebrate the accomplishments of the 5-year evolution and set the stage for a continued path of balanced growth and sustainable practices.

RTO7 remains committed to evolving and innovating, shaping a destination that thrives economically while staying true to its core values of sustainability and responsible tourism. Through collaboration, strategic planning, and a commitment to excellence, we pave the way for a vibrant and enduring future.

## Continuing Our Evolution: Dedicated to Research and Learning

RTO7 is committed to perpetual learning and innovation within the tourism industry. Our methodology involves continuous research and partnerships with industry experts to derive actionable insights. We are dedicated to developing an assessment toolkit and conducting thorough market research to elevate visitor experiences. Our programs for workforce development prioritize innovation, sustainability, and integration of diverse cultures. This commitment to progress harmonizes economic triumph with responsible practices, enriching the tourism ecosystem in RTO7.

### Strategy: Industry Insight and Adaptability

#### 1) Comprehensive and Ongoing Research

- a) Execute annual research cycles to scrutinize industry trends, shifts, and emerging prospects.
- b) Collaborate with industry experts, data scientists, and cultural observers to gather and interpret data.
- c) Leverage advanced statistical techniques for trend forecasting and scenario planning.
- d) Engage local businesses, community representatives, and environmental experts for a comprehensive understanding.
- e) Deliver valuable reports of actionable insights, empowering businesses to make informed decisions.
- f) Foster collective industry responses through dialogues and collaborative forums.

#### 2) Toolkit for Assessing Impact – In-Depth Impact Evaluation

- a) Research and craft state-of-the-art methodologies and frameworks for impact evaluation.
- b) Collaborate with sustainability and data analysis experts to curate a toolkit.
- c) Tailor tools to diverse stakeholder needs, reflecting operational dynamics and priorities.
- d) Encompass dimensions such as environmental, social, and economic impact metrics.
- e) Present the toolkit in a user-friendly format with step-by-step guides and real-world case studies.
- f) Promote knowledge-sharing through workshops, webinars, and seminars.

#### 3) Enriching Visitor Insights for Elevated Experiences – Thorough Market Research

- a) Conduct annual comprehensive market research cycles to comprehend visitor behavior.
- b) Utilize surveys, data analytics, focus groups, and observation studies for a holistic view.
- c) Analyze travel motivations, preferences, expenditure patterns, and satisfaction levels.
- d) Segment visitors based on demographics, psychographics, and travel behaviors.
- e) Synthesize research findings into actionable reports and disseminate insights.
- f) Foster engagements through workshops, seminars, and collaborative platforms.
- g) Cultivate a culture of data-driven decision-making and collaboration.

#### 4) **Empowering Workforce Excellence – Targeted Professional Growth**

- a) Identify staff developmental needs and collaborate with experts for curated programs.
- b) Focus on high-impact product development and responsible management practices.
- c) Engage staff in immersive workshops, hands-on exercises, and collaborative projects.
- d) Equip staff with skills in innovation, creativity, market responsiveness, and authentic local integration.
- e) Provide comprehensive training in environmental stewardship, cultural preservation, and ethical practices.
- f) Foster experiential learning through simulations, site visits, and peer-to-peer exchanges.
- g) Cultivate a pool of enhanced expertise within RTO7, driving its mission forward.
- h) Promote knowledge-sharing among staff, industry partners, and the broader community.

In the spirit of continuous advancement, RTO7 is committed to a journey of growth that harmonizes economic success with responsible practices. Through ongoing research, impactful assessment tools, evolving visitor insights, and a well-equipped workforce, RTO7 ensures that its practices remain at the forefront of the industry. This journey not only enriches experiences for visitors but also fosters a resilient, innovative, and sustainable tourism ecosystem within the RTO7 region.

### **5-Year Action Plan: Dedicated to Research and Learning**

#### **Year 1: Laying the Foundations and Research Advancement**

##### **1) Access, Adapt, and Evolve:**

- a) Review existing programs to align with the proposed direction outlined in the Tourism Destination and Action Plan and incorporate into the Operational Plan. Encourage the implementation of elements ahead of the planned schedule whenever feasible.
- b) Robust Data Collection and Analysis.
- c) Collaborate with industry experts to establish a comprehensive research framework.
- d) Identify key data sources and set up data collection mechanisms for industry trends.
- e) Launch the year-over-year research initiative to gather data on visitor behavior, market trends, and emerging opportunities.
- f) Conduct workshops and training sessions to equip staff with data analysis skills.
- g) Analyze collected data to identify evolving dynamics and insights for future strategies.

#### **Year 2: Toolkit Development and Stakeholder Engagement**

##### **2) Creation of Impact Assessment Toolkit**

- a) Form a working group with sustainability experts to define impact assessment metrics.
- b) Collaborate with data scientists to develop user-friendly impact assessment tools.
- c) Pilot-test the toolkit with a select group of businesses to gather feedback and refine the tools.
- d) Organize workshops to introduce stakeholders to the toolkit and its application.
- e) Establish an online platform for knowledge-sharing and tool dissemination.

### **Year 3: Deepening Visitor Insights and Engagement**

#### **3) Comprehensive Visitor Behavior Understanding**

- a) Implement the annual cycle of market research to gather insights on visitor behavior, preferences, and spending patterns.
- b) Segment visitors based on demographics, psychographics, and travel behaviors.
- c) Conduct focus group sessions to delve deeper into specific visitor segments.
- d) Organize seminars and webinars to share research findings with stakeholders and gather input.
- e) Collaborate with local post-secondary school institutions to enhance the research process and validate findings.

### **Year 4: Workforce Empowerment and Professional Development**

#### **4) Enhance Workforce Expertise**

- a) Identify staff members for enrollment in targeted professional development programs.
- b) Partner with educational institutions to offer high-impact product development and responsible management courses.
- c) Conduct immersive workshops, experiential learning activities, and simulations for participants.
- d) Encourage participants to apply learned skills to their roles and share insights with colleagues.
- e) Evaluate the effectiveness of the professional development programs and make necessary improvements.

### **Year 5: Sustainability Integration and Future Roadmap**

#### **5) Integration and Continuous Improvement**

- a) Embed impact assessment tools into business operations and track progress over time.
- b) Incorporate research insights into marketing strategies and product development initiatives.
- c) Expand the dissemination of impact assessment tools to a wider network of stakeholders.
- d) Develop a roadmap for future research, focusing on emerging areas of the tourism industry.
- e) Collaborate with industry partners, government entities, and communities to align strategies for a sustainable future.

By diligently implementing this 5-year action plan, RTO7 will continue on its journey of enhancing economic success while embracing sustainable practices. Through comprehensive research, impactful tools, enriched visitor insights, and a skilled workforce, RTO7 will not only contribute to the prosperity of the region but also set an example of responsible and innovative tourism practices for years to come.

## Conclusion

The journey ahead for Regional Tourism Organization 7 (RTO7) is marked by transformation and progress, fueled by an unwavering dedication to responsible and sustainable tourism. The road ahead presents significant challenges and opportunities, including navigating the intricacies of pandemic recovery, addressing the Municipal Accommodation Tax (MAT), and confronting the pressing realities of climate change while advocating for responsible tourism practices.

RTO7's strategic roadmap presents a holistic approach encompassing Sustainable Collaboration, workforce development, responsible marketing, and continuous learning. It underscores the importance of aligning with the values and principles of the local community, emphasizing transparency, trust, innovation, and inclusivity.

A pivotal aspect of RTO7's approach is its commitment to setting a high standard for the industry through leadership by example, inspiring positive change and operational excellence. By promoting meaningful connections and advocating for comprehensive tourism engagement, RTO7 ensures that all stakeholders play an active role in shaping the future of the destination.

Furthermore, RTO7 recognizes the crucial role of local catalysts, empowering them to actively contribute to the region's growth and prosperity. This inclusive approach taps into the abundant local knowledge and creativity, fostering a sense of ownership and collaboration that drives sustainable development.

As RTO7 embarks on its evolutionary journey, it envisions a future where economic success, responsible environmental practices, and social responsibility coexist in harmony. This strategic roadmap not only enriches visitor experiences but also ensures the well-being of local communities and the preservation of the region's natural and cultural heritage. Through these comprehensive initiatives, RTO7 establishes a benchmark for responsible and meaningful tourism growth, positioning the BruceGreySimcoe region as a leader in sustainable destination Development.

In the face of external influences such as shifting politics, evolving technology, economic considerations, and environmental concerns, RTO7 remains steadfast in its commitment to steering the region towards a future characterized by sustainability, responsibility, and prosperity. The call for change has been heeded, and RTO7 is at the forefront, leading the way towards a brighter and more resilient tourism industry across its expansive region.

Note: This strategic plan was developed with the assistance of artificial intelligence (AI) technology, which played a crucial role in the data analysis, content organization, and generation of insights presented herein. The utilization of AI allowed for advanced data processing, pattern recognition, and strategic recommendations to enhance the quality and efficiency of the planning process. However, it's essential to acknowledge that human expertise and oversight were fundamental in shaping and interpreting the AI-generated content to ensure relevance, accuracy, and alignment with strategic objectives. The integration of AI in this strategic planning process signifies a collaborative effort aimed at leveraging cutting-edge technologies to optimize decision-making and strategy formulation.