

Pan-Canadian Tourism Workforce Recovery & Growth Task Force **Terms of Reference**

RESPONDING TO THE LABOUR CRISIS

The tourism industry is facing an unprecedented shortfall of workers and major structural challenges impacting its workforce. The labour shortage is expected to be long-lasting—it may be a decade or more before the industry reaches pre-pandemic employment levels.

Tourism, at its core, is a people business and one that relies on a skilled workforce to capitalize on its economic potential for Canada. Re-opening tourism businesses and guiding their recovery requires an all-of-sector approach. A workforce recovery strategy will require flexibility, coordination, and resources to ensure it is responsive to urgent demands and is economically and socially viable over the long term. Fundamentally, the aim must strive for a cohesive strategy to address systemic and structural issues, improve on the sector's resilience and strengthen its capacity as a key economic driver.

COVID-19 has caused significant disruption to the tourism labour market, much greater than the economy overall. The economic and social implications of an unequal and slow recovery will impact tourism disproportionately (with more persistent underemployment of vulnerable workers). Early research by Tourism HR Canada indicated that many workers were not going to return to jobs once they were restored, causing some of the greatest labour shortages ever seen¹. The short supply of workers, a growing skills gap, and increased barriers to employment have also contributed to reputational damage. Largely because of the protracted recovery period and the ongoing pandemic (with continued health measures and restrictions), many jobs in the sector remain precarious.

The structural changes impacting tourism are part of a larger workforce context affecting all sectors. The industry is undergoing a great deal of change during a highly disruptive period, and the emergent business models also mean there are changing demands on the number and types of workers and the skills needed. The recovering job market is heightening Canada's labour scarcity—and for tourism, the scale of the problem is large, affecting businesses in all regions of Canada.

Addressing the shortfall in the supply of workers, the growing skills mismatch, and barriers to employment is a complex undertaking that requires a sustained all-of-sector approach—one that is dynamic and responsive to ongoing

¹ Tourism HR Canada, *Growth Interrupted* (September 2020) and *Workforce Shortfall* (February 2021)

market needs and to economic, social, and political drivers. The industry will need to employ several new strategies to attract and retain workers. Adopting new technologies, improving its human capital management practices, and aligning with government-sponsored programs are all part of operating in a post-pandemic environment. The next several years will also see a focus on new labour and employment law reforms and the need to focus on targeted policies that help secure a reliable supply of workers for the sector.

These Terms of Reference are intended to guide the work of the Task Force.

FOCUS OF THE VOLUNTARY TASK FORCE

Led by Tourism HR Canada, the Pan-Canadian Tourism Workforce Recovery & Growth Task Force’s overall aim is to develop a framework for recovery that addresses short-term and long-term systemic and structural issues, i.e.:

- seek new approaches that create a reliable supply of qualified workers;
- optimize workforce productivity through targeted and sustained workforce development initiatives;
- tackle barriers to employment in the sector through policy reform;
- recommend ways to improve human resource management practices and supports to enable employers better navigate new and emergent workforce issues; and
- advise on strategies to address reputational damage, to enable the industry to attract and retain workers more effectively.

Minimally, the Task Force will explore six pillars as part of workforce recovery framework:

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| 1 • Recovery Programs and Services for Reskilling and Upskilling | 2 • Digitalization Strategy to Enhance Business Resilience | 3 • Comprehensive Attraction and Retention Strategy |
| 4 • Tools to Help Employers Manage New HR Demands | 5 • Policy and Advocacy Efforts | 6 • Continued Workforce/LMI Research to Inform Strategies |



More generally, the Task Force is a reference group for consultation on labour market issues. The Task Force will:

- provide information, ideas, and non-binding strategic advice;
- assist with stakeholder consultation on labour market issues;
- increase awareness and elevate discussions on labour market issues; and
- increase awareness of Tourism HR Canada’s mandate and strategic aims.

The Task Force will have various outputs including near- and long-term measures and recommendations. The group will assist with market analysis, oversee and contribute to reports, and promote and enable stakeholder engagement.

EXTENSIVE STAKEHOLDER CONSULTATION, COLLECTIVE ACTION

Task Force Composition

Expert advice and recommendations on how to help the tourism workforce recover and grow is needed from a broad range of stakeholders fully representative of the industry. The Task Force will include leaders from each of the national (pan-Canadian) associations, representation by Destination Canada, representation from the network of provincial and territorial tourism human resource organizations (HROs), and specialists in workforce-related matters.

The Task Force is also welcoming leaders from established regional *working groups* whose mandate is to address tourism workforce issues.

The role of the national associations is important to the overall recovery plan. Tourism HR Canada is not an *advocacy body*. At times, the Task Force will recommend policy or advocacy efforts of the national tourism associations (e.g., Tourism Industry Association of Canada, Hotel Association of Canada, Indigenous Tourism Association of Canada). These groups will command a special role on the Task Force, and Tourism HR Canada is also represented on their respective *workforce committees*, to ensure that efforts to address workforce issues are complementary.

Tourism HR Canada is facilitating, coordinating, and enabling the activities of the Task Force. In this role, staff will participate in all meetings, calls, and other activities.

Comprehensive Stakeholder Engagement

A comprehensive workforce recovery strategy can only be informed by a broad cross-section of stakeholders from across Canada, who will provide recommendations and ideas, and who will be instrumental to implementing tools and strategies to address the issues. The Task Force will help facilitate and enable many engagement activities, including roundtables, expert presentations, and written submissions.

GUIDING PRINCIPLES

- Alignment with Sectoral Strategies: The Task Force will consider existent or new national, regional, and local labour market plans/strategies in its deliberations and ensure that stakeholders of these plans/strategies are duly

consulted, with the opportunity to engage in the Task Force's work. Task Force recommendations and action plans will aim to complement and not duplicate efforts of existent labour market plans/strategies.

- Alignment with UN Sustainable Development Goals: The Task Force will seek to develop recommendations and actions that adhere to the United Nations Sustainable Development Goals, where it concerns workers.
- Special Attention re: Indigenous Workforce Matters: The Task Force will support the lead efforts of the Indigenous Tourism Association of Canada to develop a plan supporting Indigenous workforce recovery and growth efforts.
- Inclusive and Respectful of Diverse Ideas: The Task Force is inclusive (not exclusive), representing diverse interests of tourism stakeholders from across Canada. Acceptance of the diverse values, interests, and knowledge of individuals involved is essential. Participants will be treated with dignity and respect, with a commitment to the free and open exchange of ideas and discoveries.
- Openness and Transparency: Task Force members will receive timely, complete, and accurate information to effectively participate in and contribute to decision-making.
- Objective: Recommendations made by the Task Force, and decisions made in their deliberations, must be based on objective criteria, rather than bias, undue influence, or prejudice.

MEETING FREQUENCY

- The Task Force will meet virtually and in-person, as needed. Annually, it is expected the Task Force will meet 1 – 2 times in person and up to 8 times virtually (i.e., via Zoom).
- Tourism HR Canada will cover Task Force travel costs to attend in-person meetings, where possible. Tourism HR Canada will work to ensure that travel expense is not a barrier to participating in the Task Force.