Economic Development Readiness Program Final Report

Organization's Name: Tourism Vancouver Island

Project Name: Powering Economic Alignment & Growth through Tourism

Commencement Date: September 6, 2013

Completion Date: August 31, 2014

ICET Contribution: $30,000.00

Total Project Budget: $60,000.00

Briefly describe your project's:

1. Purpose and Goals

Please describe what your project aimed to accomplish.

This project will stimulate investment by forming a foundational piece that will lead to greater investment, alignment and collaboration in the economic development community within the Vancouver Island Region. Tourism Vancouver Island has developed the tools in the first phase of a multifaceted communications strategy that will broaden the understanding of the Value of Tourism as an engine that can be utilized to grow tourism to the region, as well as support investment, labour force and resident attraction. With the conclusion of this project, Tourism Vancouver Island will continue to support the economic development community in development and initiation of strategies that will leverage this heightened awareness and ideally increased investment in promoting economic growth.

Project objectives include:

- Increase the awareness of tourism as a powerful engine that contributes to economic and social growth
- Increase the investment of government agencies in support of tourism and economic development
- Increase the investment of tourism stakeholders in tourism development and marketing
- Increase the investment of economic development agencies in promoting the amenities and lifestyles of the region
- Increase the alignment and collaboration of agencies with the capacity to attract visitation, investment, workforce and relocation to the region

During the planning stages of identifying the messaging for the four specific target groups, Tourism Vancouver Island established key aspects of how tourism connects to residents, stakeholders, government and economic development.

Residents	Tourism Organizations

• Who is Tourism Vancouver Island
• What do we do
• Value of Tourism / Value of Tourism VI
• Experiences due to tourism
  ○ Ski resorts
  ○ Getaways
  ○ Golf courses
  ○ Cultural / heritage attractions
  ○ Arts
  ○ Wineries
  ○ Theatres
  ○ Mountain biking trails/hiking trails, parks, beaches
  ○ Whale watching
  ○ Kayaking
  ○ Campgrounds
  ○ Spas
  ○ Luxury properties, resorts
  ○ Farmers markets, grocery stores
  ○ Events
  ○ Gas stations
  ○ Coffee shops
  ○ Restaurants/dining opportunities
• Roads & highways
• Increased real estate value
• Makes our residents more culturally diverse
• Impact of tourism
• Economic benefits
• Quality of life
• Number of tourism jobs
• Community beautification
• Transportation options (on & off island)
  ○ Direct access to domestic/international destinations
  ○ Support industries (i.e. airport shuttles)
  ○ Increased frequency of options (i.e. flights, ferries)
  ○ Increased amenities at ferry & airport terminals
• Greater market share
• Tourism tax dollars contribute to: health care, infrastructure, education, social services, etc
• Pride of place
	• Jobs
	• Support to market their own community
	• Stakeholder relations
	• Support of residents
	• Support of government (local & provincial)
	• Support of regional reps
	• Support of economic development agencies
	• Increased media & public relations
	• Tax dollars through visitation/ overnight stays
	• Travel trade business
	• Importance of regional marketing & destination marketing structure
	• Effectiveness of alignment & collaboration
	• Increased education
	• Increased training
	• Increased capacity
	• Cooperative opportunities
	• Funding partnerships
	• More economic impact data / proof points
	  ○ Number of jobs
	  ○ Dollars spent in the community
	  ○ Number of impressions / market research / market share
	  ○ CTO, programs offered

Government	**Economic Development Agencies**
• Economics • Economic impact data • Increased tax revenues • Increased tax investment • Increased resident attraction • Increased workforce • Pride of place • Increased awareness • Tourism marketing and development alignment, collaboration & coordination • Positive impacts on residents • Value / return on destination marketing investment • Property values / tax • Residential growth • Business attractions / new business start ups	• Increased investment attraction • Membership increase • Economic impact data • Increased funding from tax revenue • Increased government support & understanding of function • Increased community support • Increased resident support • Increased collaboration with tourism organizations • Agency alignment ○ Communications with tourism messages • Regional brand development / alignment

Phase 1 goals were to produce the communications strategy messaging to the target audiences through internet-based interactive tools and a variety of traditional media. The completed tools are described below in the Implementation section.

2. Implementation

Describe how the project was implemented.

The legacy of the project is the collaboration of many agencies utilizing the tourism sector as the powerhouse to promote the destination as a place to live, work, play and invest. The collateral materials developed for this project are long lasting and have the capacity to be updated and used for many years to come. The specific tools that are available are:

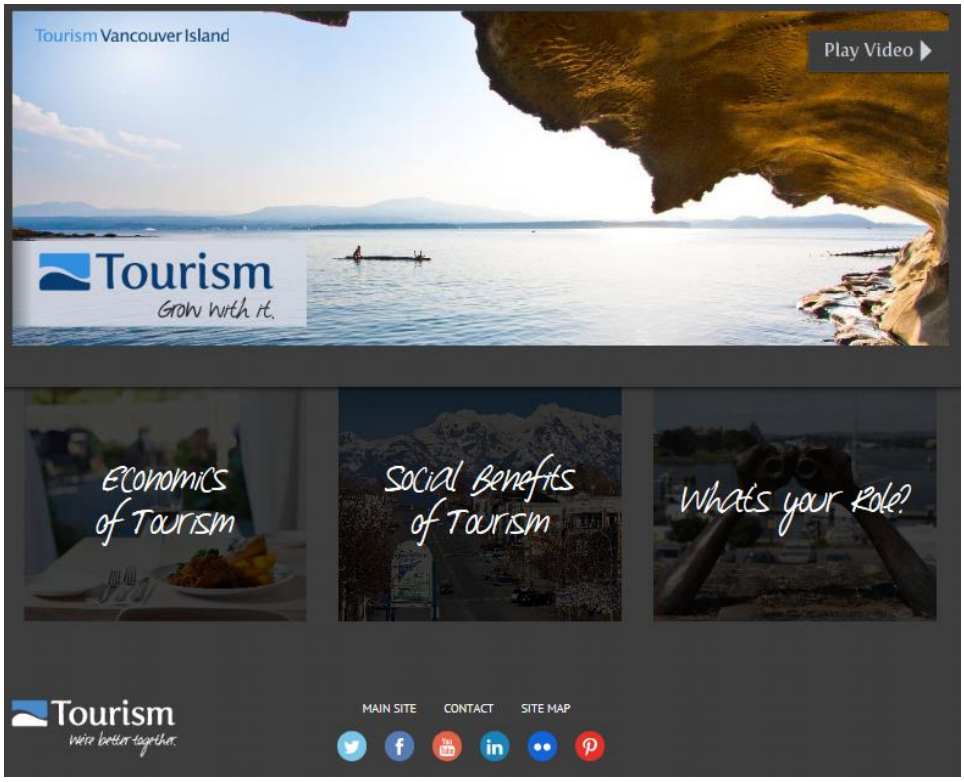
1. One compilation video vignette and four video vignettes directed at the four target audiences (Government, Economic Development, Residents, and Tourism Business) that will inspire viewers to learn more about how they can contribute to improving the economic and social benefits that Vancouver Island residents enjoy.
    a. The voiceover content included in each video is specific to the video's intended audience. For example:
        i. Resident Voice-over Sample: *A good place to visit can be a very good place to live! The signs of tourism, you see them all around you... a host of natural and man-made amenities AND experiences. Made possible and paid for, in no small part, by tourism!*
        ii. Economic Development Voice-over Sample: *Tourism and economic development... they do go hand-in-hand! Tourism depends upon and grows the same essential ingredients that make our communities' desirable… things like quality of life, extended infrastructure and a sense of… togetherness. Tourism walks the same walk with economic development efforts to attract investment, stimulate jobs, draw new residents and showcase our region to others. Tourism links directly to sectors and industries like agriculture, construction, utilities and transport... where one job in tourism indirectly generates 1.5 additional jobs in the related economy. Talk about creating value!*

2. Packaged multi-media presentations that are available to agencies engaged in tourism and economic development in their efforts to build support for economic development and tourism initiatives. These presentations are geared to the corresponding target markets. Using Prezi, a 3D cloud-based presentation platform, the presenter will guide the audience through a more cinematic and engaging experience.

   Stakeholders Prezi Final http://prezi.com/2ndx7jqariot/
   Ec Dev Prezi Final http://prezi.com/j8hp8abjrc0h/
   Residents Prezi Final http://prezi.com/xhqe4zcihlol/
   Government Prezi Final http://prezi.com/isupq_gfyonw/

3. Project-specific window decals/clings as a leave behind item with a call-to-action following speaking engagements/presentations.

4. An interactive website (www.valueoftourism.ca) with rich content, imagery and video productions that will support ongoing understanding of the importance of tourism as an economic and social contributor. This is hosted by Tourism Vancouver Island, and is available to all agencies engaged in economic development.
    a. The Website is developed into three main sections of *Economics of Tourism*, *Social Benefits of Tourism*, and *What's your Role?* Within the *What's your Role* section is specific information divided into the four target markets of Government, Residents, Economic Development Agency, and Tourism Business.
    b. The website houses the video vignettes with the four corresponding target markets with a fifth generic video.
        - Stakeholder: http://youtu.be/HHXluwWxQ08
        - Resident: http://youtu.be/y0qOR_3To7k
        - Economic Development: http://youtu.be/8RG2SIccRfg
        - Government: http://youtu.be/cSqhz73IwL4
        - Compilation: http://youtu.be/LeQrCDiWaIE



During the development stage of these communication tools, a minimum of 15 reviews of the project took place to ensure materials and information was relevant and informative. These communication tools will be utilized by Tourism Vancouver Island during scheduled presentations and meetings with the target audiences. The tools will also be available to community destination marketing organizations and tourism stakeholders for their use, and are customizable.

On October 16th, 2014 Tourism Vancouver Island conducted a trial delivery of the presentation and project materials to the Tourism Vancouver Island staff. The project team will take feedback from this delivery, make small adjustments and then deliver in the same fashion to all of the project partners. Again feedback will be gathered and small adjustments made as required. After this process is complete in October 2014 the project team will then be scheduling to deliver a minimum of 10 presentations, within this fiscal, to the identified audiences (Economic Development, Government, Tourism Stakeholders and Residents). After the small adjustments pertaining to delivery of the materials have been finalized, the project partners will have access to the project materials to use how they see fit in delivering the value of tourism messaging to their communities.

3. Impacts

Please describe to what degree the objectives proposed for this project have been met.

This project was designed to stimulate the economy and will result in greater support and investment in the marketing of visitor, investment, workforce and resident attraction. The long term outcomes are economic and social growth, however these will not be measurable in the short term.

The tools developed, (prezi presentations, video vignettes) are leading examples of communication tools to promote the value of tourism. Prezi is a bold reinvention of presentation software that captivates audiences by 'zooming' through the story. Prezi is cloud-based allowing the presentation to be delivered from a browser, desktop, iPad or iPhone having the latest version available with the ability to create or edit on the go. The video vignettes include up-to-date information, stunning visuals, informative graphics, voice overs and stakeholder testimonials which speak to the audience about the relevancy and connection of tourism to the lifestyle and economic growth in the region.

During the development stage, a trial run of video vignettes and prezi presentations were presented to the Oak Bay tourism group. In their incomplete stage, the presentations were positively received and promoted discussion and dialogue.

Throughout the development process of this project, there has been considerable support and investment from tourism and economic development agencies and individuals. Communities provided input and information to support the project as well as support from individuals to be part of the filming production of the video vignettes from a visitor to resident point of view. The support from the economic development community to realize the connection to tourism and invest in development tools is a positive step in collaborative efforts to grow the economy.

4. Community Involvement and Collaboration

Please provide a description of what successes occurred in initiating or expanding partnerships and collaborative efforts with other organizations and individuals.

From the initial project conception, the support from tourism communities and economic development agencies was overwhelming and showed high interest in collaboration and partnerships in utilizing tourism as the common thread to unite agencies invested in stimulating the economy. Tourism Vancouver Island presented the project concept in detail to many Vancouver Island communities and received letters of support of the project from the following communities/organizations:

- Alberni Valley Tourism
- Campbell River Economic Development Corporation (Rivercorp)
- City of Port Alberni

- Cowichan Valley Regional District
- Nanaimo Economic Development Corporation
- Parksville & District Chamber of Commerce
- Parksville Qualicum Beach Tourism Association
- Regional District of Mount Waddington
- Rick Roberts
- Sunshine Coast Tourism
- Tourism Cowichan
- Tourism Mount Washington
- Tourism Nanaimo
- Tourism Tofino
- Ucluelet Chamber of Commerce
- Vancouver Island Economic Alliance
- Vancouver Island Real Estate Board

The following communities/organizations provided the matching contributions to initiate the first step in the project by securing a specialized consultancy to produce the communication tools for phase 1:

- Alberni Valley Tourism Association
- Campbell River Economic Development Corporation (Rivercorp)
- Comox Valley Economic Development
- Parksville Qualicum Beach Tourism Association
- Regional District of Mount Waddington
- Sunshine Coast Tourism
- Tourism Cowichan
- Tourism Mount Washington
- Tourism Nanaimo
- Tourism Tofino
- Tourism Ucluelet

Throughout the development process of the communication tools, there was collaboration of agencies in respect to gathering the required information to populate the website, video vignettes and presentation materials. In many cases, there was collaboration with organizations and/or individuals that Tourism Vancouver Island does not typically connect with such as the real estate sector. Communities provided information on relevant filming subjects/models to provide testimonials and many individuals supported by allowing their 'tourist first' story to be utilized to show the connection of tourism to economic development and growth.

Tourism community contacts provided detailed information on topics relevant to the project such as:

- how the community destination marketing organization supports tourism business in the community
- how Tourism Vancouver Island and community destination marketing organizations are relevant to grow tourism
- tourism campaigns that have been particularly successful
- Tourism Vancouver Island campaigns that have been particularly successful for community/ stakeholders
- Examples of success as a direct result of community destination marketing organizations supporting tourism businesses

5. Lessons Learned

Please provide a critical review of your project including a discussion of lessons learned, recommendations and overall perception of project success.

Time was a significant factor in that the development of the separate communications tools took much longer to develop than initially anticipated. Collection of information and community feedback was challenging to collect in a timely fashion. The large amount of research collected was time consuming to sort through and compile. Throughout the development stages, a minimum of 15 comprehensive reviews took place which entailed a great deal of time and resources to ensure the project was updated or revised to keep the original focus of the projects.

During the initial discussion process with the specialized consultancy group to produce the tools, the overall 'vision' of the desired outcomes was not conveyed as much as was originally thought. This was evident through the regular reviews when projects didn't seem to convey the visuals and information that was expected. However, with regular reviews, the project was able to stay on track in terms of the outputs, but time impediments impacted the project.

The budget for the project was focused on building the communication tools, while the delivery and facilitation of presentations were projected to be a part of Tourism Vancouver Island's budget expenses, as identified in the organizations Strategic Business Plan '*to increase the community's support of the tourism industry*'. Expenditures for delivering the communications strategy will add considerable expense but will be required in order to connect with the communities and audiences in the region to deliver the valuable communications/messaging tools created in this project.

Upon final review of the tools, the finished products are stunning examples of communication tools that are sure to capture the audience's attention through striking visuals and detailed information on tourism, while providing thought-provoking examples of how tourism affects everyone.

6. Next Steps

Based on the project findings, briefly outline the follow up steps for this initiative and how the project outcomes will be sustained.

One of Tourism Vancouver Island's strategic goals is to increase the community's support of the tourism industry. The tools developed in this project will assist in obtaining the objectives. The organization will conduct outreach programs by providing presentations to the four identified audiences. Presentations will be delivered to community and services groups, mayors and councils, regional district boards, Vancouver Island MLAs, economic development agencies, and community destination marketing organizations. Community DMOs will be encouraged to deliver the presentations in their communities. The Prezi presentations will be customizable for community delivery.

Following presentations to target audiences, surveys will be deployed to measure the effectiveness of the presentations and their ability to heighten the awareness of the value of tourism.

The current survey results to measure against are as follows:

- When Mayors were asked to rate the level of importance of the work Tourism Vancouver Island does for their community on a scale of 1-10, the average response was 6.0/10. (2014)
- When Mayors were asked to rate the level of importance of the value of tourism to their community on a scale of 1-10, the average response was 7.2/10. (2014)
- 56% of Vancouver Island Residents think their overall quality of life was contributed to significantly by the tourism industry in the region. (2014)
- 64% of tourism stakeholders in the Vancouver Island region believe Tourism Vancouver Island is a valuable organization for the tourism industry in the region. (2014)

The above statistics will be monitored by continuous research through the next few years as we implement the Powering Economic Alignment tools. The next steps include rolling into Phase 2, utilizing the platform developed in Phase 1 to: conduct research that identifies agencies presently engaged in some form of economic development activities to assess duplication, gaps and appetite for collaboration; engage in dialogue about potential 'shared approaches' to economic development where tourism is embedded in a more comprehensive way; develop tools that support common themes in investment, resident and workforce attraction that focus on the amenities of the region.

Storytelling

If you had one story to tell to illustrate the impact of the project (whether in the community, your organization, business or an individual etc) what would it be? If media reports, please attach copies.

The Powering Economic Alignment and Growth through Tourism Project has created a true buzz in the tourism industry. It has everyone talking about the value of tourism and has brought the topic to the forefront of meeting room tables.

The project has gained media attention appearing in a local Nanaimo Newspaper as well as in Business Vancouver.

> Darrell Bellaart, Nanaimo Daily News, June 20, 2014
> Tourism Strategy Promotes Lifestyle
> http://www.nanaimodailynews.com/news/nanaimo-region/tourism-strategy-promotes-lifestyle-1.1137529
>
> Glen Korstrom, Business Vancouver, June 18, 2014
> Tourism Vancouver Island Makes Strategic Shift to Become More Political
> http://www.biv.com/article/2014/6/tourism-vancouver-island-makes-strategic-shift-to-/

The project was used as an example at the 'Tourism Drives the Provincial Economy workshop' hosted by the Tourism Industry Association of BC (TIABC). Tracy Lakeman of Tourism Richmond included in her presentation details from Tourism Vancouver Island's Strategic Plan and reviewed with the workshop participants the objectives of the project. This shows Tourism Vancouver Island is really being viewed as a leader in communicating this message.

An example of a tweet that came from the workshop:

Communities are eager to invite Tourism Vancouver Island to provide the value of tourism presentations to their groups, residents and mayor and councilors. The organization began receiving invitations in the Spring of 2014 and were not able to accommodate with the full presentation and materials as they were not fully developed. Tourism Vancouver Island took this opportunity and presented some of what was available to the Oak Bay Tourism Committee as they were so eager to see what had been developed to date. The materials that were shared were received with much enthusiasm. After the presentation the presenter received many positive accolades to the work that was being completed.

The community partners of the Powering Economic Alignment and Growth through Tourism Project are eager and excited to see the finished product. They have been asking for updates along the way that they can share with their Boards so they are able to start strategically planning how they will utilize the materials as well. They are all looking forward to being able to use these tools in promoting the value of tourism to their groups and residents. Tourism Vancouver Island is just as elated to be able to share all of our hard work with them to further spread this message.

Financial Report

*The final **financial report** should include a signed and dated financial statement for the period of the project which includes:*

- *Total **actual** project spending (by categories as submitted in your proposal)*
- *Total of **all** funding received from other sources (matching funding)*
- *Surplus/Deficit if any*

Value of Tourism - Powering Economic Alignment Project
(Tourism Vancouver Island)
Period: November 4, 2013 to March 31, 2014

Project Expenditures	
Consulting and Project Management	10,000.00
Video and Website	48,977.72
Contractor Expenses	959.97
Total Expenditures	59,937.69
Project Income (Sources of Funding)	
Tourism Vancouver Island	29,968.84
Island Coastal Economic Trust	29,968.85
Total Income (Sources of Funding)	59,937.69
Balance	-

I hereby certify that this statement accurately represents all project expenditures and all sources of project funding

Sharon Scott, Financial Services Manager September 25, 2014

Certification:

I, the undersigned, have authority to represent the recipient and certify that to the best of my knowledge that all the information in this final report is true and complete.

Dave Petryk	**President & CEO**
Print Recipient's Name	**Title**
	October 3, 2014
Recipient's Signature	**Date**