

2022-2023
ANNUAL REPORT



INDIGENOUS TOURISM

QUEBEC

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MESSAGE FROM THE PRESIDENT AND THE EXECUTIVE DIRECTOR

Dear Indigenous Tourism Quebec members,

We are proud to present yet another positive review of our team's initiatives for 2022-2023. As you go through this annual report, you will take the measure of key initiatives undertaken and the excellent results obtained, all aligned with our association's 2022-2027 strategic plan. The post-pandemic recovery of our sector is well on track! With relentless conviction and professionalism, the Indigenous Tourism Quebec (ITQ) team has supported Indigenous tourism enterprises through initiatives around development, awareness-building, promotion and representation. It is not a matter of chance that the number of members has increased for the 11th year running, and that the association's budget has grown significantly. In that regard, we would like to acknowledge and highlight the dedication and talent of our team and board members.

As we reflect on the financial year 2022-2023, we are optimistic about the outlook for our sector in Quebec in the coming years. We thus delight in the positioning of Indigenous tourism in Quebec Ministry of Tourism's new 2023-2027 strategic plan, as well as in the new Federal Tourism Growth Strategy unveiled on July 5. Moreover, we are grateful for the continued support from Indigenous Services Canada through the Strategic Partnerships Initiative (SPI), the financial endorsement from Quebec to develop a sectoral strategy, and the exceptional leadership of the Alliance de l'industrie touristique du Québec. The substantial growth of Indigenous tourism over the past decade would not have been possible without the support and trust of our various partners.

Thanks to the unwavering support and trust of our members, ITQ is proud to play a positive economic role in a key sector bringing Indigenous and non-Indigenous peoples closer together. Tiawenhk to the whole team for their hard work. ITQ is an association that stands proud and strong, reflecting the 11 Nations and 55 communities of Indigenous Quebec.

Steve Wadohandik Gros-Louis
Président

Dave Laveau
Executive director



INDIGENOUS TOURISM QUEBEC



Founded in 1991, ITQ is the first Indigenous tourism association in Canada and provides services around 3 main mandates:

- Safeguarding the interests of enterprises, entrepreneurs and band councils.
- Structuring and supporting the development of the Indigenous tourism industry.
- Supporting the visibility and promotion of Indigenous tourism products.

Our mission is to guide and propel the success of Indigenous entrepreneurs in tourism markets through our strengths: human-centered relations, expertise, advice, networks and strategies.

ITQ is the sectoral tourism association recognized by the provincial ministry of tourism as the official representative of Indigenous tourism and by the Assembly of First Nations Quebec-Labrador as the representative space for sharing and services related to the development and promotion of the Indigenous tourism offer. ITQ represents over 200 tourism enterprises and band councils from the province's 11 Indigenous Nations.



ITQ is committed to working diligently everyday to implement its vision of supporting sustainable Indigenous enterprises through tourism and fostering meaningful encounters by promoting the tourism and cultural offer of the First Nations and Inuit, in keeping with its core values of partnerships, authenticity, engagement and respect.

STRATEGIC PLANNING

2022- 2027

ITQ is deeply committed to the Canadian and Quebec tourism ecosystem, as well as to Indigenous economic development. It has established a reputation of excellence within the industry and relies on a multitude of strategic partners to drive the growth of the organization, its membership, and the industry it represents.

Indigenous tourism plays a key role in enhancing the diversity and appeal of Quebec among other international markets. It is one of the top priority distinctive experiences that contribute to the enriched offer of Quebec and Canada as destinations. The province boasts over 250 Indigenous tourism enterprises owned by the First Nations and Inuit which operate in a variety of settings: within or outside the community, private or community-owned, in urban, peri-urban or remote areas.

As one of the fastest-growing sectors within the Canadian tourism industry¹, Indigenous tourism faces challenges that are common to the entire industry: workforce issues, digital transformation, access to funding (especially in Indigenous communities), traction in domestic market, and adaptation of the offer, etc. However, it is also important to acknowledge the undeniable strengths of Indigenous tourism:

- Job creation and a driving force for social, cultural, and economic development within communities and enterprises
- Unique opportunities to share our stories, knowledge about our communities, heritage and culture
- A platform for teaching and passing down traditional know-how
- A means of affirming and strengthening our cultural identities
- An opportunity to enhance the visibility and vibrancy of regions
- An authentic and holistic tool for creating and supporting initiatives that foster closer ties between peoples



¹ Source : Conference Board of Canada



As an association, ITQ's success and growth rest on a small yet solid team committed to the visionary leadership of its general management. Building on the findings of the diagnostic report on the 2017-2022 strategic plan, ITQ repeated this exercise with the expert assistance of Raymond Chabot Grant Thornton and its partner Oasis Communication to ensure that its future actions are based on a relevant, innovative and structuring strategic plan focused on four development pillars and five strategic targets:

- Targeted promotion
- Sustainable tourism offer
- Business intelligence
- Efficient organization



5

STRATEGIC OBJECTIVES 2022-2027

1 Encourage more Quebecers to take part in Indigenous tourism experiences increase from 47% to 60%.

2 Increase the number of Indigenous-owned tourism enterprises from 247 to 300.

3 Aim for 85% of Indigenous-owned tourism enterprises to become ITQ members (currently 79%).

4 Contribute to the maturity of a growing number of export-ready Indigenous tourism enterprises to reach the 30% target (currently 20%).

5 Help a greater number of Indigenous enterprises through support services and programs (number of different enterprises and number of interventions; indicator to be set in year 1).

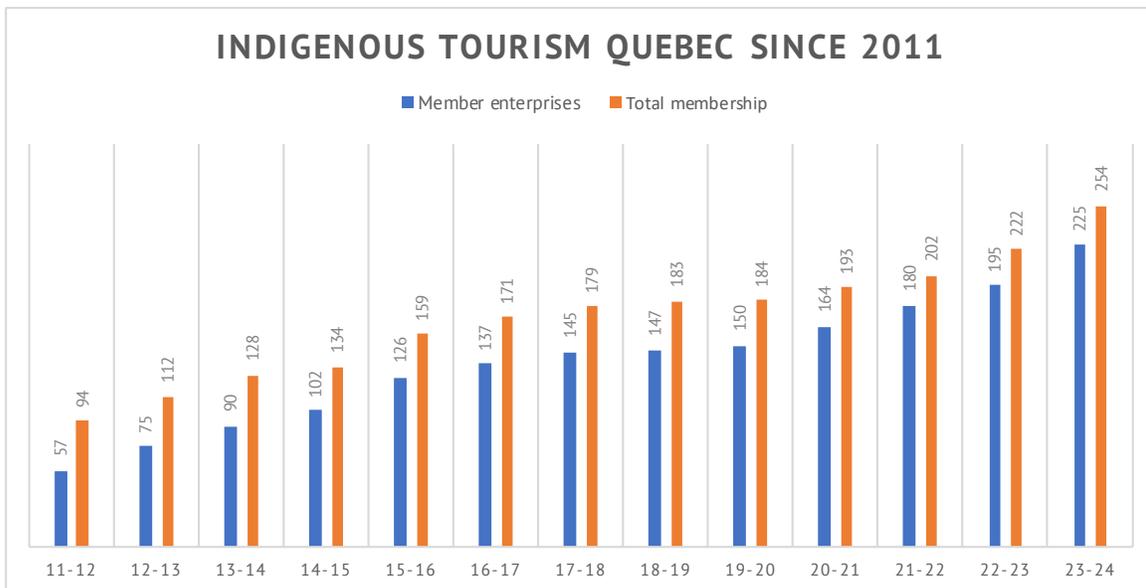
2022-2023 A YEAR OF RECOVERY AND TRUST



Prior to the pandemic crisis which lasted till 2022, the tourism industry had been growing strongly in Quebec for the past ten years. In fact, practically all indicators were trending upwards: number of enterprises, number of Nations/communities involved, number of jobs, economic benefits, etc.

ITQ is pleased to end the year 2022-2023 and start 2023-2024 with yet tens of new member enterprises – driven by continued trust in the association, our rising reputation and, above all, our targeted professional initiatives that are appreciated by our membership.

Although the tourism industry has been one of the most impacted by the pandemic, the Indigenous tourism industry has proved to be resilient, stepping up to meet all the challenges brought about by the crisis and the subsequent recovery.





A PARTNERSHIP-BASED BUSINESS MODEL

Working in close collaboration with various strategic players and sitting on a number of key committees and boards, ITQ and its team of professionals are committed to giving a voice to our industry and to forging dynamic, proactive and innovative partnerships.

**Alliance de l'industrie touristique du Québec
Board of directors**

**Alliance de l'industrie touristique du Québec
Culture and Heritage roundtable**

**Indigenous tourism association of Canada
Board of directors**

**Tourism and leisure in cooperative development
branch committee of the Coopérative de dévelop-
pement régional du Québec (CDRQ)**

**Fondation québécoise de la relève en tourisme
Board of directors**

**Working group on First Nations and Inuit employment
integration and retention in the tourism sector**

**Northern-incubator accelerator
Implementation and Steering Committees**

**Palais Montcalm
Board of directors**

**Tourisme Montréal
Board of directors**

**Quebec international pee-wee hockey tournament
Board of directors**

**Wapikoni mobile
Board of directors**

KEY PARTNERS

Alliance de l'industrie
touristique du Québec

Assembly of First Nations
Quebec-Labrador

Indigenous Tourism
Association of Canada

Aventure Écotourisme Québec

Boîte Rouge Vif

Centre de développement et de
formation de la main d'œuvre

Conseil québécois des ressources
humaines en tourisme

Destination Canada

DestiNATIONS

Canada Economic Development

Fédération des chambres de
commerce du Québec

Quebec Outfitters Federation

Northern-Incubator Accelerator

Ashukan Institute

Institut de tourisme et
d'hôtellerie du Québec

Quebec's Ministry of Tourism

Montreal Convention Centre

Partnership with 12 regional
tourism associations

The Économusée Network

Réseau des Sociétés d'aide
au développement des
collectivités (SADC) et Centre
d'aide aux entreprises (CAE)

Secrétariat aux Relations avec les
Premières Nations et les Inuit

Indigenous Services Canada

Tourisme Montréal

Wapikoni Mobile



ITQ would also like to **acknowledge and express its gratitude to its financial partners for their continued trust**, enabling it to close the year with a budget of \$ 3,427,445 – an increase of 43% compared to last year. Consequently, the fiscal year 2022-2023 ends with a surplus of \$ 82,707 and net assets of \$ 322,732. The audited financial statements are available on our website at indigenouquebec.com.

ITQ benefits from the valuable contributions of numerous partners and funders in the development of tourism experiences, business coaching, marketing and promotion within and beyond Quebec, outreach initiatives and mission support. Our special thanks to:

- Indigenous Services Canada
- Quebec's Ministry of Tourism
- Canada Economic Development
- Indigenous Tourism Association of Canada
- Secrétariat aux Relations avec les Premières Nations et les Inuit
- Alliance de l'industrie touristique du Québec



ACHIEVEMENTS AND HIGHLIGHTS

SAFEGUARDING THE INTERESTS OF ENTERPRISES, ENTREPRENEURS AND BAND COUNCILS

*ITQ has the support of **Indigenous Services Canada** for its core operations, in keeping with our primary mission of **guiding and propelling the success of Indigenous entrepreneurs** in tourism markets through our strengths: human-centered relations, expertise, advice, networks and strategies. Our annual agreement with the **Indigenous Tourism Association of Canada** also facilitates our daily operations and allows us to collaborate on initiatives and provide guidance in terms of development, marketing and positioning. Having such allies is an invaluable asset that we deeply appreciate.*

Over the past year, ITQ has supported numerous promoters, managers and projects, working closely with public decision-makers at all levels of government, as well as strategic partners and key stakeholders to optimize the positioning of our sector and the projects undertaken by our members. Moreover, each and every year ITQ is called upon to support innovative Indigenous tourism ventures and local, national, and international initiatives of its members and partners, through personalized letters and dedicated assistance.

MAMOWINITAN VIVRE ENSEMBLE PROJECT

Since 2021, ITQ has been working, consulting and collaborating with its members, employees and partners to develop a 2022-2027 strategic plan that meets and exceeds expectations. This strategic plan highlights a real need for structuring and managing teams beyond the quality and range of services offered. Thus, it is necessary to structure our management to enhance our performance approach and ensure rigorous and adequate follow-up of work plans for each team member. The support we have received from the **Secrétariat aux Relations avec les Premières Nations et les Inuit** helped in addressing the impact of the Indigenous tourism industry's growth on our team.

Under the coordination and guidance of the Deputy Executive Director, the dedicated resource involved in this project has taken on a number of important aspects in order to increase the efficiency and effectiveness of our organization and meet the strategic goals and objectives of the 2022-2025 action plan.



STRUCTURING AND SUPPORTING THE DEVELOPMENT OF THE INDIGENOUS TOURISM INDUSTRY



TOURISM RELIEF FUND

*The year 2022-2023 was undoubtedly a pivotal year of recovery, characterized by a concerted effort to closely support enterprises and address their specific needs amidst the recovery process. In this regard, ITQ was allocated **a major project with a total investment of \$ 1,012,000 via the Tourism Relief Fund by Canada Economic Development**. From navigating the pandemic to recovery, the Indigenous tourism sector underwent a remarkable shift that allowed for the development of Indigenous tourism destinations in line with eco-responsible practices, enabling Indigenous communities in Quebec to seize post-pandemic market opportunities. The main activities of the project were grouped into three components: premium business support, sustainable and responsible tourism, and digital capacity development.*

Premium business support

ITQ provided support to 24 Indigenous tourism enterprises, offering specialized, targeted consulting services to help them upgrade, develop and adapt their experience to meet visitor expectations. Our involvement helped extend the tourism season for some, alleviate labour shortages, boost revenues and much more.

- Some examples of supported activities:
- Cultural teachings
- Training and expansion of entrepreneurial skills
- Mechanization of production processes
- Business plan
- Efficiency and profitability improvement plan
- Tourism development plan
- Financing plan and assistance with the process
- Business diversification strategy

Tourisme Québec was actively involved in this development initiative, taking on a portion of the consulting fees for the participating enterprises.



Digital support

Indigenous Tourism Québec has a proven track record in supporting enterprises and is recognized for its expertise in driving sector performance through skill sharing and acquisition. Strategic intervention within enterprises is essential for improving the customer experience. Equipped with structured digital action plans resulting from past ITQ involvement, Indigenous tourism enterprises have been able to benefit from digital support through the Tourism Relief Fund to implement improvements in order to:

- Accelerate the development of skill sets.
- Stimulate their digital transformation.
- Create innovative content that inspires and engages visitors while enhancing visitor experience.

As of March 31, 2023, ITQ supported 24 enterprises in structuring, developing, and modernizing their digital presence.

Toward sustainable tourism

Thanks to this project and the strong support of Tourisme Québec, ITQ has embarked on a shift toward environmental sustainability through a structuring approach to self-reliance known as the Shipeku initiative comprising 19 Indigenous tourism enterprises and ITQ. Shipeku: toward sustainable Indigenous tourism proposes an 18-month journey for Indigenous tourism enterprises, combining scientific and Indigenous traditional knowledge.

ITQ, therefore, initiated a transition program comprising itself and offering a cohort of 19 enterprises the opportunity to obtain tailored support from professionals in sustainable and responsible tourism as well as Indigenous knowledge.

Just like the other enterprises, ITQ has actively participated in the seven (7) phases of the journey toward sustainability and is keeping pace with its Shipeku cohort members by developing and introducing new tools. ITQ is currently at Phase 4 of the Action Plan, and its carbon footprint report will be issued in January 2024. Furthermore, a carbon offset program for business travel is in place since April 1st. ITQ is also planning a review of its mission and vision with a view to incorporating an even more sustainable approach.

Tourisme Québec was also actively involved in this development initiative, taking on a portion of the consulting fees involved.



1. Engagement

- Choose an internal team or team member
- Acquire basic knowledge
- Program start: define your sustainable mission



2. Coaching

Receive professional coaching and/or use a credible, easy-to-use tool



3. Diagnosis

- Sustainability assessment:
- Evaluation of greenhouse gases
 - Holistic diagnosis: environmental/social/governance (ESG)
 - Lifecycle assessment
 - Resilience: risk assessment



4. Action Plan

- 5R2Z (Refuse, Reduce, Replace, Reuse, Recycle, Zero waste, Zero plastic)
- Decarbonization and compensation
- Sustainable procurement policy
- Adaptation to climate change
- Community action
- Participation in the circular economy
- Resilience: risk assessment



5. Certification

Recognized, credible certification with an external audit



6. Communication

- Sustainable marketing plan
- Share your successes with your team and stakeholders



7. Ongoing improvement

Listen, and be flexible and resilient



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THE 19 ENTERPRISES PARTICIPATING IN THIS INNOVATIVE INITIATIVE

Abénaki Aventure

Cree Outfitting and Tourism Association

Domaine Notcimik

Festival Innucadie

First Peoples Festival

Hébergement aux Cinq Sens

Hôtel-Musée Premières Nations

Kina8at

La Maison des peuples autochtones

Mer et Monde Écotours

Musée des Abénakis

Musée ilnu de Mashteuiatsh

Huron-Wendat Museum

Onquata

Pow-Wow Odanak

Quality Inn Uashat

La Traite restaurant

Sagamité restaurant

Tourisme Winipekut Nature

SMALL TOURISM BUSINESS ASSISTANCE PROJECT IN PARTNERSHIP WITH FCCQ AND RÉSEAU DES SADC/CAE NETWORK

On January 11, 2023, ITQ took part in the press conference where it was announced that a sum of \$ 40 million in investments will be granted to the **Fédération des chambres de commerce du Québec (FCCQ)** and the **Réseau des SADC et CAE** as part of the **Small Tourism Business Assistance Project of the Tourism Relief Fund (TRF)**. This tourism recovery assistance project aimed to allocate non-refundable contributions to small Indigenous and non-Indigenous tourism enterprises by March 31, 2023. CED's financial assistance made it possible for these enterprises to implement investment projects for adapting or developing their products and services to meet customer needs.

ITQ partnered with the FCCQ and the Réseau des SADC et CAE to ensure greater accessibility for projects from Indigenous tourism enterprises in Quebec. The ITQ team thus encouraged the participation of 33 Indigenous projects in this recovery initiative, by assisting enterprises with the application process, ensuring compliance with eligibility criteria and deadlines.



MANDATE CONTINUUM

Backed by a development plan comprising 18 initiatives implemented in collaboration with the Ministry of Tourism and numerous partners, ITQ is proud to support hundreds of Indigenous tourism enterprises in three main areas:

- Development of the tourism offer
- Support to tourism enterprises
- Sector expertise

Below are the highlights. A comprehensive report has been submitted to the Ministry of Tourism for accountability purposes.

DEVELOPMENT OF THE TOURISM OFFER

In 2022-2023, we focused our efforts on fostering relationships with tourism partners in Montreal – a gateway for international visitors. In this regard, ITQ and **Tourisme Montréal** signed an agreement outlining 11 specific initiatives to promote Indigenous tourism in the metropolis. These include establishing tourism connections between Montreal, the city's Indigenous cultural offer, the nearby Kahnawà:ke community and all of Quebec's Indigenous communities to ensure the sustainable development of the Indigenous and Montreal tourism sectors.

Furthermore, ITQ organized a familiarization tour so that **Tourisme Montréal** employees can discover tourism experiences in Kahnawà:ke and propose them to visitors. Additionally, in its ongoing efforts to promote Indigenous cultures in the metropolis, ITQ initiated a collaborative project with the **Montreal Convention Centre** this year. The goal is to establish a dedicated space where Indigenous tourism and cultures can be showcased to conference attendees on a permanent basis.

Given that our members are present in 17 of Quebec's 22 tourism regions, we are committed to traveling and meeting key tourism stakeholders across the different regions. This year, we had the opportunity to meet numerous strategic tourism stakeholders in the Mauricie, Abitibi-Témiscamingue, Saguenay-Lac-Saint-Jean, and Eeyou Istchee regions. Moreover, ITQ accepted invitations to participate in **two editions of the Grand Economic Circle of Indigenous Peoples and Quebec**, held in Mashteuiatsh (June 15 and 16, 2022) and Gatineau (March 22 to 24, 2023) respectively. During the event in Gatineau, ITQ presented an overview of best practices in partnerships for Quebec's Indigenous tourism industry in collaboration with the Alliance de l'industrie touristique du Québec and organized a panel discussion on Indigenous tourism as a means of fostering closer ties with our partners from Quebec Outfitters and **Tourisme Outaouais**.

Moreover, under this component, ITQ embarked on a major initiative with the **ITHQ and the Ashukan Institute** to create a culturally adapted version of the **"100% welcoming" training program**. Currently, the project is being drafted and developed, and is expected to be launched in 2023.

In addition, in collaboration with **La Boîte Rouge Vif (BRV)**, **ITQ has taken on a major project to create a traveling exhibition showcasing the history of Indigenous tourism in Quebec**. The initial planning phase involved defining the mandate with BRV, setting up working committees, and creating a detailed implementation timeline that will facilitate the research process. ITQ and BRV will work together to document and bring this collective history to life, using participatory, collaborative, and community-based methodologies such as roundtables, focus groups, individual interviews, and co-creation workshops. Ultimately, this historical showcase of Indigenous tourism will tour various locations across Quebec, serving as a tool for preserving and sharing knowledge for Indigenous communities and the wider public.

SUPPORT TO TOURISM ENTERPRISES

ITQ continued to implement its business support plan based on actual needs of its members and the industry, and comprising different levels and aspects:

1

Direct support to enterprises through member services

2

Support through the Indigenous Tourism Development Support Program

3

Expert support with specialized resources

4

Support to tourism enterprises in implementing sustainable development initiatives

5

Support to tourism ecosystem partners

Direct support to enterprises

The support offered to our network is gaining more and more recognition in the Indigenous tourism industry in Quebec, leading to an increased demand for our services. The development department team is now made up of 3 full-time resources, allowing ITQ to provide an extensive range of services to its members for their optimal development. Once again, over 100 enterprises benefited from ITQ's services this year to access various funding opportunities, receive valuable business advice tailored to their specific situations, obtain technical guidance on their operations or establish connections with key players in the tourism sector.

Support through the Indigenous Tourism Development Support Program

Now recurring, this ITQ initiative led to a call for projects for the Indigenous Tourism Development Support Program, which aims to provide financial support to promoters wishing to develop or better structure their offer, and thus meet the demands of today's tourism market while ensuring the sustainability of their enterprise. This fund has helped **support 17 projects** in 11 different regions.

The analysis committee was principally made up of two ITQ development advisors, one representative from the Secrétariat aux Relations avec les Premières Nations et les Inuit and one representative from Quebec's Ministry

of Tourism. We believe that this selection exercise is very relevant for our partners. It is an opportunity to witness the innovation deployed on the ground and to provide personal, tangible and financial support to enterprises. The analysis committee used 5 key criteria to evaluate projects: anticipated benefits, consistency with program objectives, project feasibility within deadline, innovation/creativity and investment relevance.

In total, over \$ 180,000 was deployed to support enterprises. This funding was made possible through the support of Tourisme Québec and the Indigenous Tourism Association of Canada.

Expert support with specialized resources

This measure has enabled **33 enterprises to receive direct support** in managing their specific needs and to benefit from the contribution of an expert in the following areas: human resources, financial management, legal services, communication and marketing, and tourism advisory services.

ITQ made sure to have discussions with the entrepreneurs beforehand to fully grasp their needs and help them in identifying the best resource to support them. This initiative also included ongoing support from the team to help enterprises apply to Canada Economic Development's Tourism Relief Fund program. The development team helped promoters in making decisions, exploring funding options, submitting applications, etc.

Support to tourism enterprises in implementing sustainable development initiatives

Sustainability is at the core of Indigenous tourism. When it comes to crafting their tourism offers, Indigenous communities embrace a comprehensive and community-driven approach that takes into consideration environmental, economic, and social aspects, irrespective of whether the promoter is a private entity or a community-based organization via a band council. Many promoters consult and include community members in the process from the outset, in order to stimulate their interest and make the project meaningful to all.

With the aim of becoming a sustainable tourism ambassador and supporting its members in this endeavour, ITQ launched the Shipeku: toward sustainable Indigenous tourism initiative that involves providing support and guidance to 20 Indigenous tourism enterprises over an 18-month period. This initiative is mainly funded by Canada Economic Development, with a substantial contribution from Tourisme Québec.

Through this initiative and with the support of sustainable development experts, we were able to conduct an analysis and assessment for each participating enterprise and provide recommendations to help them embark on a sustainable transition in tourism and become leaders in sustainable tourism in Québec and Canada. Moreover, participating enterprises also had access to a range of tools and training, including a tool developed in-house by ITQ, an assessment of greenhouse gases emissions, and training on circular economy principles, etc.

Moreover, ITQ leveraged the momentum to train an in-house sustainable development advisor to be able to continue supporting enterprises once the Shipeku program comes to an end. The program will be running until March 2024.





Support to tourism ecosystem partners

In order to facilitate collaboration between Indigenous entrepreneurs and tourism industry stakeholders, ITQ has developed **Aashukan: Guide for raising awareness about Indigenous realities in a tourism context**. The purpose of this guide is to demystify contemporary Indigenous realities by educating and equipping various stakeholders so that they become respectful and supportive allies. It is intended for tourism and economic stakeholders as well as our allies at different levels of government. A tour of tourism associations and interested stakeholders will follow this initiative. More promising opportunities to foster the development of Quebec's Indigenous tourism offer!

Support for an Indigenous économusée project

Support was provided with regard to research and development of the thematic tour for the Onquata économusée project. The museum-related expertise offered to Onquata helped refine the interpretation resources for the target clientele and elaborate tour scenarios and their content.

Presentations on Indigenous realities

To strengthen our working relationships with partners, ITQ is dedicated to providing educational presentations on Indigenous realities and our industry as a whole. This year, we had the privilege of showcasing our sector, organizing panels with tourism enterprises, and delivering tailored training sessions for our industry partners. These initiatives included a customized workshop with Indigenous entrepreneurs at the Aventure Écotourisme Québec conference, an adapted plenary session with Indigenous entrepreneurs at the Québec Maritime conference, collaborative efforts and engagement with the Kina8at financial express network, a presentation to Tourisme Outaouais employees, and a workshop for members of Tourisme durable Québec at their annual symposium, etc.

Participation in the working group on First Nations and Inuit employment integration and retention in the tourism sector

This working group has been set up by the **First Nations and Inuit Labour Market Advisory Committee** and the CQRHT to develop initiatives that will help boost Indigenous employability.

Inspiration mission

ITQ invited nine Indigenous tourism enterprises to take part in an **inspiration tour exploring best practices in sustainable development** within enterprises in the Quebec City region: SÉPAQ, Monastère des Augustines and Vallée-Bras-du-Nord. This tour enabled entrepreneurs to acquire valuable knowledge while forging connections with fellow participants. Moreover, ITQ provided support and participated in a **marine ecotourism inspiration mission** organized by the Cree Outfitting and Tourism Association from June 6 to 10, 2022. Spanning various regions such as Saguenay Lac-St-Jean, Côte-Nord, Bas St-Laurence, and Quebec, this tour enabled 10 tourism stakeholders from Cree coastal communities to explore different types of maritime tourism experiences as visitors and draw inspiration from best practices in hospitality, interpretation, innovation, etc.

SECTORAL EXPERTISE - PRIORITIES

Structuring initiatives have been implemented in terms of strategic knowledge development, particularly by collaborating with the **Quebec Outfitters Federation** on their study project on the energy transition of Quebec outfitters.

The objective of this study is in line with the priorities of Indigenous outfitters who have a strong connection with nature and its resources. Their approach to land use is guided by the intention to preserve enough resources to meet the needs of future generations. However, this poses a major challenge since many outfitters are located off-grid and have to rely on energy sources that can be detrimental to the environment. The findings of this study will undoubtedly equip our members with valuable insights to address this challenge.

Continuing its active engagement with the Indigenous Tourism Association of Canada (ITAC), ITQ took part in an accreditation training for The Original Original program and conducted a webinar in March 2023 to provide information about this national program and its process. The Original Original program recognizes the best Indigenous tourism experiences in the country through standards (sustainable quality, authenticity, safety, etc.) which have been established by and for Indigenous tourism operators. ITQ provides ongoing support to ITAC in order to rally entrepreneurs and encourage their participation in the program.



L'ORIGINAL
ORIGINAL



NORTHERN INCUBATOR- ACCELERATOR AND TOURISM PRIVATE ENTREPRENEURSHIP SPI

As part of the **NORTHERN INCUBATOR-ACCELERATOR** project, the three sectoral tourism associations covering the nature-culture-adventure offer – **Quebec Outfitters Federation (QOF)**, **Aventure Écotourisme Québec (AEQ)** and **ITQ** – are working in collaboration with **Quebec’s Ministry of Tourism and Société du Plan Nord** to develop tourism experiences north of the 49th parallel. A total of forty entrepreneurs have been met since the first two cohorts, and 28 of them are currently receiving support to propel their projects through the start-up and acceleration phases. ITQ actively participates in both the steering committee and the implementation committee of the incubator-accelerator project.

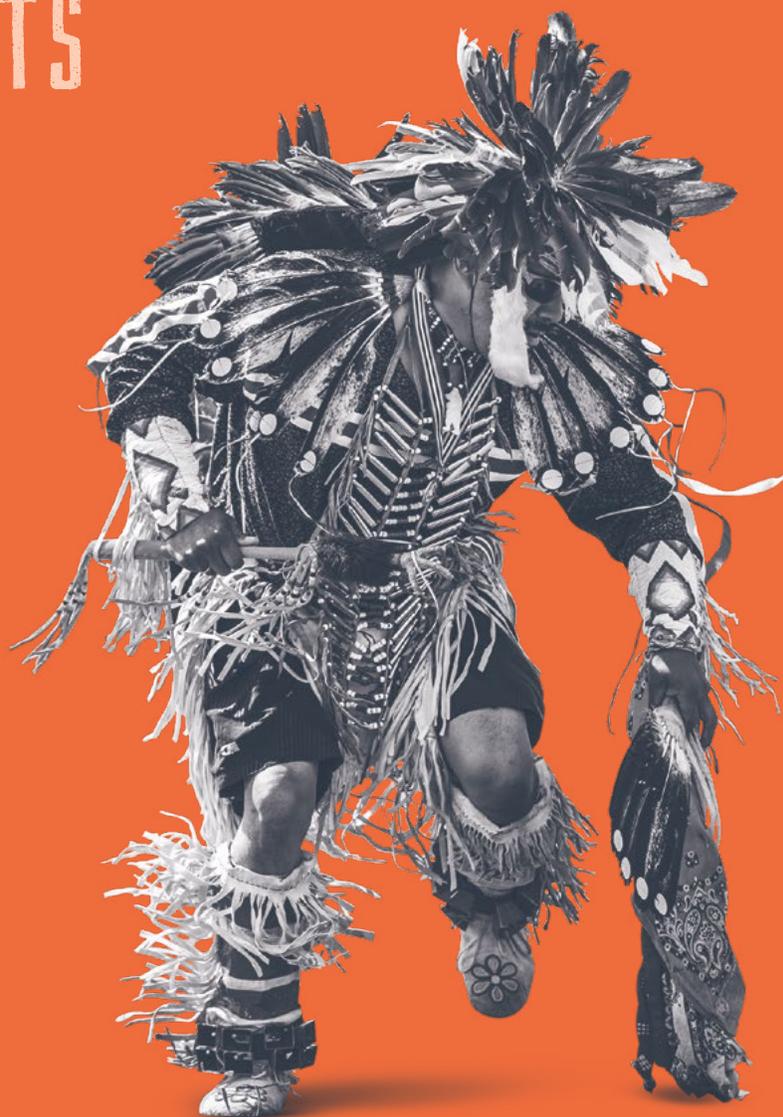
This major project for Quebec has enabled the partners to kickstart the process of collaboration with various stakeholders and to structure the intervention model of the incubator-accelerator in keeping with local communities and territorial considerations. The selection criteria are based on respect for cultural values and commitment to sustainable development. Moreover, the sustainability of the initiative and the transfer of expertise from the South to the North are prime discussions within the steering and the implementation committees of which ITQ is a member. The financial support provided by **Indigenous Services Canada through the Indigenous Tourism SPI** helped ensure that the private enterprises involved in the project were able to secure the necessary funds for the success of their incubation and acceleration projects.

In 2022-2023, support was provided to 12 Indigenous enterprises offering nature/adventure/culture experiences in 4 of the 5 regions north of the 49th parallel. Of these, 4 private Indigenous enterprises continue to be involved in this process in 2022-2023, 3 of which have received funding from this SPI to:

- Create jobs for Indigenous people.
- Generate new tourism revenues.
- Contribute to Indigenous economic development.

These enterprises are Etua’s Arctic Adventures, Nunawild and Ungava Polar Eco-Tours.

SUPPORTING THE VISIBILITY AND PROMOTION OF INDIGENOUS TOURISM PRODUCTS



MARKETING OUTSIDE QUEBEC

In collaboration with the alliance de l'industrie touristique du québec (promotional business partnership – indigenous experience project) and canada economic development

2022-2023 saw not only a resurgence in trade shows, fairs and trade missions, but also a growing interest in Indigenous tourism, both in Quebec and in international markets.

Visitors are eager to explore Indigenous tourism and this demand is evident through interactions with the travel trade and the media. The relationships we have nurtured in previous years have resulted in concrete actions and positive outcomes for this year and the years to come.

During the year, we participated in over **10 tourism trade fairs and shows and 9 trade missions**. Thanks to our partnerships with Destination Canada and the Indigenous Tourism Association of Canada, we were also able to take part in major events such as Signature Travel in Las Vegas and Showcase in London with Audley Travel.

The results have been remarkable with over **43 articles in the international media and several million impressions in our key markets**.

Furthermore, the Indigenous Traditions and Living Stories collaborative project has been instrumental in carrying out major activities in international markets, such as featuring in the American TV show “Hoda & Jenna” and participation in the Plaisirs d’Hiver christmas market which will be renewed in 2023.

MEDIA FAIRS AND SHOWS

Rendez-vous Canada Toronto – May 2022

110 appointments for 2 representatives with travel agencies, receptive tour operators and the media from various international markets.

Bienvenue Québec – Montreal

The event Bienvenue Québec returned to Montreal. Presentation of the new Indigenous tourism offers in Québec.

Adventure Week – Saguenay

Participation in the Adventure Week event with the Nibiischii Corporation and the Société de développement économique ilnu de Mashteuiatsh.

International Media Marketplace in New York – January 2023

In-person participation and leading a panel on Indigenous tourism with ITAC. The US media demonstrated a keen interest in Indigenous tourism. Several tours are planned for 2023-2024.

Showcase in London

Participation in the Showcase event (London) organized by Destination Canada and in the Audley Travel activation with ITAC.



Indigenous culinary event in Paris – November 2022

Organized in partnership with the Indigenous Tourism Association of Canada and Destination Canada, a media event was held at the Ducasse culinary school in Paris. More than 18 leading French media came to meet the chefs which included Maxime Lizotte and Marc de Passorio of La Traite restaurant.

Destination Canada Media Roadshow – June 2022

In collaboration with DC and ITAC, a press tour was held from Wendake to Essipit with media from around the world.

Signature Travel in Las Vegas – November 2022

Co-registration at the Signature Travel trade show in Las Vegas on invitation by ITAC to promote Indigenous luxury tourism in Québec.

BOURSE DES MÉDIAS ÉTÉ & HIVER

Trade missions for the tourism industry

Bonjour Québec trade mission in Boston & NYC – April 2022

An important mission that marked our first in-person presence in the US market after the pandemic. Several productive meetings with the media culminated in tours.



Bonjour Québec trade mission in Paris, Marseille, AIX and Bruxelles – November 2022

Multiple activation missions in the French-speaking European market. Media, influencer and trade missions and a training component for travel agencies.

Bonjour Québec trade mission in Toronto – April and October 2022

Events with the media and influencers in the Greater Toronto Area to invite them to visit Québec in summer and winter. Several tours have resulted from these missions including The Globe and Mail on the expansion of the Hôtel-Musée Premières Nations and the visit of the influencer TheCuriousCreature, which generated significant benefits for the destination.

Bonjour Québec trade mission in Vancouver – April 2022

Trade and media mission in Western Canada markets.



MEDIA VISIBILITY AND RESULTS OF INITIATIVES

Through its press relations and initiatives in international markets, ITQ fosters a genuine connection based on trust and respect with journalists and key magazines, who remain an important source of information for various audiences.

In 2022-2023, we made over 43 media appearances.

A few examples:

- Canada Food & Travel Magazine ;
- Travel Guide To Canada & DreamScapes ;
- The Curious Creature – over 30 million impressions.

A complete 2022-23 press review is available on request.

Digital campaign & SEM

In collaboration with the **Indigenous Tourism Association of Canada**, we executed a **digital and SEM campaign** retargeting visitors of the Destination Indigenous platforms (destinationindigenous.com) based on their geographical interests. With an investment of \$ 25k, we reached over 7,855,529 impressions and generated over 31,180 qualified unique visitors to the ITQ site.

The results are available from the marketing team.

Collaborative project – Indigenous traditions and living stories

This project is one of the outcomes of the work carried out by CED, the Alliance de l'industrie touristique du Québec and its partners consisting of tourism associations. The collaborative group has the mandate to develop promotional activities targeting travellers, the travel trade and the media in the market outside Québec with a view to encouraging trips to Québec and marketing the Indigenous Traditions experience.

The following activities have been carried out in 2022-2023:

- **Adventure Week – ITQ organized a cultural program with Tourisme Saguenay Lac-St-Jean** that included the following: opening of the day with a territorial recognition by a Mashteuiatsh Elder, a snack break with blueberry bannock, a musical performance by an Innu singer and pow-wow drummers.
- **Christmas market - Plaisirs d'hiver in Brussels** – Indigenous tourism was the guest of honour at the 2022 edition and is set to have an even more significant presence at the 2023 edition. A 6-minute video on Indigenous tourism was shown on a loop for the entire duration of the market, along with traditional dance performances by the Sandokwa troupe, and traditional Inuit songs during the first week of activities.
- **Entreprises du Voyage - Île-de-France** – Reception on the first day of the EDV conference at the Huron Traditional Site with a short presentation on Indigenous tourism.
- **La Grande Balade** – Participation in the filming of the Belgian show on Québec. Visit to Wendake.
- **Advertorial in Grands Reportages** – 12 pages in the magazine Grands Reportages distributed in France.
- **Maple syrup season tour – Press tour** with 4 French media, 1 Belgian media, 6 ITQ member enterprises, 4 Indigenous culinary chefs, 8 representatives from the travel trade as well as regional and Alliance representatives.
- **Presse-Pro** with Québec le Mag – Best of Canada & Petit Futé.
- **Press tour in Nunavik** with Steven Herteleer – Video to be released in November 2023.
- **Today Show – Hoda & Jenna**



MARKETING WITHIN QUEBEC

Indigenous tourism SPI

Led by Indigenous Services Canada, the Strategic Partnerships Initiative enabled ITQ in 2022-2023 to actively implement its sectoral recovery plan aimed at empowering and supporting Indigenous enterprises and communities in addressing their respective tourism challenges and positioning them in the Quebec and neighbouring markets through three major strategic, high-impact actions.





INDIGENOUS TOURISM PRESENCE AT GATEWAYS

As the province's tourist gateways, Quebec City and Montreal are the perfect settings for showcasing the vast range of Quebec's Indigenous tourism experiences. ITO, therefore, positioned Indigenous tourism in major events in these vibrant city centres popular with visitors where it is imperative to ensure an Indigenous presence.





KWE! Meet with Indigenous Peoples 2022

KWE! Meet with Indigenous Peoples 2022, a public event celebrating First Nations and Inuit cultures, traditions and contemporary way of life, was held from June 17 to 21, 2022 at Parc Jean-Béliveau. ITQ proudly participated once again in this edition of the event which serves as a showcase for Indigenous tourism at the regional, national, and international levels. As a valued partner, ITQ curated a gastronomic program to allow visitors to discover and learn about Quebec's rich and diverse Indigenous cuisine. This included a shaputuan which offered a virtual glimpse into Quebec's Indigenous tourism offer as well as a market featuring an array of Indigenous flavours.

Les Fêtes de la Nouvelle-France 2022

From August 4 to 7, 2022, Les Fêtes de la Nouvelle-France (FNF) presented a highly diverse program under the theme "Celebrating our great achievements" to mark their 25th anniversary. This year again, ITQ contributed to the event by infusing it with the rich culture of Indigenous Quebec. The visibility plan included strategies to promote awareness on various platforms: on the FNF website under the "Know more" section about Quebec's 11 Nations with a link to the ITQ website, in the newsletter La Criée and on social media with followers being invited to answer questions on Quebec's Indigenous Nations.

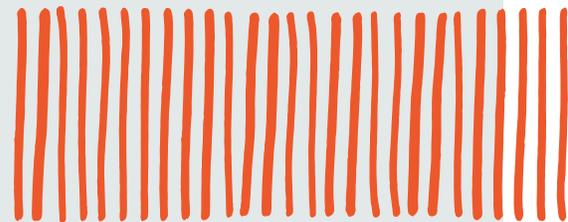


Quebec Winter Carnaval 2023

With the return of a full line-up of activities, the 69th edition of the Quebec Winter Carnaval was a resounding success. Festival-goers turned out in large numbers, despite the bitter cold. Thanks to our partnership with the event, attendees were able to seek warmth at the Station Confort de Bonhomme while learning about Indigenous Quebec. Strategically positioned at the heart of the festivities (Place de l'Assemblée nationale), the ITQ space enabled visitors to warm up while watching a video showcasing Quebec's Indigenous tourism offer. The station featured 12 backlit photos adorning its walls as well as a number of Indigenous decorative elements. In terms of visibility, ITQ's name and logo were displayed on several billboards, on the event's website, in the program (40,000 copies), in the Carnaval press releases, on social media and even in ads in the Journal de Québec!

Montréal en lumière 2023

ITQ was also involved in the Indigenous component of the Montréal en lumière 2023 program. The 24th edition of the event was held, under the theme "The Best of Montreal in winter", in the Quartier des spectacles from February 16 to March 5, 2023. The program proudly featured culinary workshops with Indigenous chefs.



Campaign targeting the domestic market for a successful recovery

Tourism recovery in Quebec inevitably relies on the local clientele. This important new market deserves our full attention. The Indigenous tourism industry has been working in close collaboration with the Alliance de l'industrie touristique du Québec and associative partners to craft a recovery plan, specifically targeting this market. Thanks to this strategic partnership, we have been able to identify a key audience among Quebecers. According to a recent study conducted by **Leger Marketing** in collaboration with **Raymond Chabot Grant Thornton**, Quebecers are not only open to learning more about Quebec's Indigenous cultures but are also interested in experiencing them firsthand.

Conducted in January and February 2022, this survey of some 2000 people aged 18 and above having traveled to Quebec in the past five years showed that 89% of Quebecers are interested in taking part in at least one of the proposed Indigenous activities, while 53% have never experienced an Indigenous tourism and cultural activity in Quebec.

We have always known that Quebecers were interested in the local Indigenous tourism offer. However, it is through this Leger survey that we have been able to clearly demonstrate that their interest in Indigenous communities and tourism is stronger than ever.

Leveraging this data and in partnership with the Oasis Communication agency, we created a marketing campaign inviting Quebecers to connect with Indigenous peoples in Quebec.

Highlights:

- Digital campaign under the theme "Enter the dance"
- Flavours series with La fabrique culturelle – Société de télédiffusion du Québec
- Plan with partners – The Alliance de l'industrie Touristique du Québec targeting the following media: CBC & Radio-Canada, Salut Bonjour!, La Presse Xtra and social media.



Promotional video

In the course of the year, ITQ created a promotional video to raise awareness about the positive impacts of the Tourism SPI on the development, structuring and marketing of Indigenous tourism in Quebec. Made with the support of professionals from Wapikoni Mobile, the video features testimonials and shows the direct benefits experienced by the enterprises and communities involved.

Filming locations and dates:

- Unamen Shipu (July 2022)
- Mistissini (August 2022)
- Kanesatake (September 2022)

This project was also supported by **Mamowinitotan *Vivre ensemble* of the Secrétariat aux Relations avec les Premières Nations et les Inuit**, especially with regard to the societal portion that will be deployed over the next few years. The Mamo project, which is in its first year of implementation, has been instrumental in creating the concept, developing the strategy, positioning and presenting the comprehensive campaign for *Faites parties de l'histoire* in collaboration with Oasis Communication agency:

- Strategy: Development of a strategic media ecosystem, messages and content.
- Consulting service, meetings and travel: Kick-off and weekly meetings and travel for project management and various follow-ups between the agency and ITQ. Daily tracking of various media and web tactics, and administrative and content follow-up.
- Research and analysis: Research on Quebec's Indigenous societal and tourism landscape as well as competitive research. Analysis of various data sources and campaign reports.
- Concept and creation: Development of advertising concepts, communication messages and various written content.
- Design: Artistic direction for campaign materials and the website.
- Project management: Implementation and monitoring of media and web tactics, administrative tasks and content.
- Production: Creation of various campaign elements including videos, banners and other static visuals.



OUR COMMUNICATION TOOLS

Origin(e) – The tourism magazine for Indigenous Quebec

- ONE-THIRD OF A PAGE DEDICATED TO EACH ACTIVE MEMBER in good standing featuring their photo, contact details, description and the services offered.
- CONTACT DETAILS of associate and delegate members.
- Offered free of charge to local and international tourists through members and partners, border crossings, tourist information centres in Quebec City and Montreal, the Alliance de l'industrie touristique du Québec network, professionals of the industry and major local and international trade and consumer shows.
- Online version of the magazine available at indigenousquebec.com.
- Renewed and diverse editorial content in the first part, plus a guide by region in the second part.



This year, the distribution of the Origin(e) magazine is back on track with over 33,000 copies in circulation. On the cover is an image symbolizing the sustainable exploration of Indigenous Quebec. The serene visual invites readers to embark on a harmonious journey through Indigenous territories that embraces both adventure and eco-responsibility while immersing themselves in vibrant ancestral cultures. It is a unique opportunity to discover Quebec's 11 Indigenous Nations.

Published by **Colab Studio** with ever richer and more diverse editorial content, including a guide section to facilitate planning by region, this 124-page issue of Origin(e) aims at engaging and inspiring tourists. The magazine highlights the distinctive appeal of Indigenous tourism in Quebec. This year's issue was made possible through funding from Indigenous Services Canada.

indigenoquebec.com

Throughout the year, we worked in close collaboration with the firm **Spektrum** to ensure that our website meets our expectations and those of our members, associations and visitors. Furthermore, we decided to have an external audit, by the digital marketing agency HINT, to assess if the site was performing optimally. Following receipt of the audit report, a number of recommendations were made to improve the efficiency of our website. These were promptly implemented by Spektrum and our summer interns.

The website now perfectly meets the current expectations of visitors and tourists. Over the year, **more than 164,000 users visited our website, resulting in over 450,000 page views and a peak in traffic during the summer months.** Our initiatives have clearly paid off, yielding a remarkable boost of over **80% in the number of users and an increase of almost 50% in page views!** This shows that once on our website, users are genuinely interested in discovering more about Indigenous Quebec. It comes as no surprise that over 84% of our website visitors were from Canada. Given our various marketing initiatives targeting the local market and limited international travel, it follows suit that website visitors are mostly local.

Google Ad Grants campaign

Google Ad grants are one of the means of increasing the brand awareness of a non-profit organization. Building on the initiatives we took in 2021-2022, the **HINT digital marketing agency** ensured our year-round online presence by targeting relevant, industry-related keywords.



Social media

This year again, social media has enabled us to maintain direct and daily contact with our clientele and gain valuable insights into their interests and intentions. Social media is a vital tool for showcasing Indigenous tourism and an important step in the customer journey when planning a stay.

Since April 2022, the management of our Facebook Page and Instagram account has been entrusted to Récréation agency, a long-standing partner of our association.

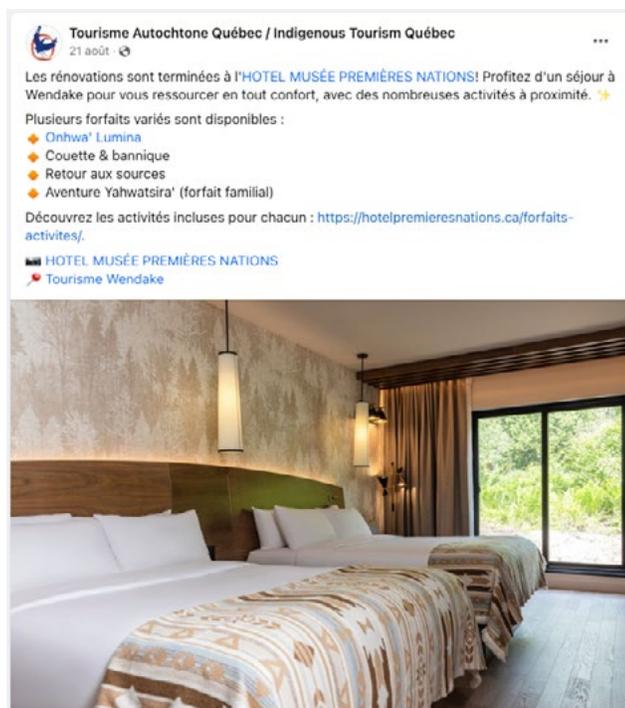
The close collaboration and synergy between the two teams made for a productive year in crafting creative and captivating content.

Facebook

[Facebook](#) remains a key platform for interacting with our clientele. Our editorial approach is, and will always be, focussed on representing all our members, partners and Nations in our content.

This year, we celebrated the Decade of Indigenous Languages (United Nations) by highlighting Quebec's various Indigenous languages and dialects in a series of publications. This editorial approach paid off: **over 18,700 people now follow the page, which represents a 30% increase in our community!**

Our Facebook page **Groupe Corporatif – Tourisme Autochtone Québec/ITQ – Members Network** is where we post important announcements for members and internal information like job postings, press releases, administrative news, and so forth. Throughout the year, there was plenty of sharing and exchanges!



Instagram

[Instagram](#), the leading social media platform for sharing memorable travel photos and videos, is a favourite with travel enthusiasts, with over 7790 following ITQ's activities! Within a year, **we have once again witnessed an increase of nearly 50% in our number of followers**, thus proving the effectiveness of our consistent presence in catching users' interest.

Youtube

[YouTube](#) – an endless repository of inspiring visuals! The view count for our channel has now reached 69,148, which represents a **32% increase over last year**. The video on the diversity of Indigenous Quebec remains unrivalled in terms of views, now totalling over 53,000. Its strategic position on our website homepage serves as the perfect gateway to explore Indigenous Quebec.



Member Newsletter

This year, around 20 newsletters were sent to ITQ's members, partners and contacts. With **an average open rate of over 55% (some occasions north of 65%)**, this electronic newsletter is an effective way to maintain communication and to share current news, various development and marketing opportunities, job postings, etc. It also encourages regular visits to our website which highlights active, delegate and associate members. Given that some of our members still do not have a social media presence, this newsletter remains an essential tool to share information relevant to their enterprises and communicate with them directly and quickly.



OUR BOARD OF DIRECTORS

Each year, we are pleased to count on 9 key players, from 6 Indigenous Nations and various business areas, making up a board of directors that is representative of our equality aspirations.

President

Steve Gros-Louis, Active member
La Sagamité restaurant

Vice-president

Kalika Sinnett, Active member
Micmac Interpretation Site of Gespeg

Secretary

Marc Plourde, Associate member
Quebec Outfitters Federation

Treasurer

Michelle Picard, Delegate member
Native Commercial Credit Corporation

Board members

Kimberly Cross, Active member | Kahnawake Tourism

Robert Lancup, Associate member | Québec City Tourism

Josée Leblanc, Active member | Atikuss

Sean McDonagh, Active member | Inuit Adventures

Robin McGinley, Delegate member | Cree Outfitting and Tourism Association



THE ITQ TEAM 2022-2023

ITQ partners and members can always count on the professionalism of a dedicated team to fulfill the mandates assigned by the board of directors and drive the association further.



Dave Laveau, Executive Director

Patricia Auclair, Deputy Executive Director

Marie-Pierre Lainé, Development
and Partnership Coordinator

Émilie McKenzie, Development Advisor

Pierre Kanapé, Development Advisor

Andrew Gros-Louis Germain, Marketing Advisor

Laurence Lainé, Communication and Events Advisor

Mélissa Cloutier, Administrative Assistant
and Member Services

This 2022-2023 Annual Report has been prepared by the Indigenous Tourism Quebec team for its financial partners. A condensed and illustrated version will be available in the summer of 2023 and presented at the Annual General Meeting in October.

For more information on ITQ's 2022-2023 activities, please contact management.

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Photo credit

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Audet photo
Bonjour Québec
Eric Danhier
Mathieu Dupuis
Moment Factory



**INDIGENOUS
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