



For Immediate Release

TOURISM INDUSTRY ASSOCIATION OF BRITISH COLUMBIA (TIABC) AND TOURISM INNOVATION LAB ANNOUNCE STRATEGIC PARTNERSHIP TO FOSTER TOURISM INNOVATION IN THE PROVINCE

TIABC and the Tourism Innovation Lab are pleased to announce a new strategic partnership to foster and inspire tourism innovation and entrepreneurs in British Columbia.

The two organizations are joining forces to support tourism innovation and development programs in the province, including the Lab's "Spark" Mentorships & Grants Program and TIABC industry events, training workshops and market resources. They will work to broaden their reach, partnerships and collaborations with tourism entrepreneurs, start-up incubators, business groups and public sector stakeholders through the creation of a "Spark" Program alumni and tourism innovation network across British Columbia.

The "Spark" Mentorships & Grants Program is designed to help tourism entrepreneurs, small businesses and non-profit organizations overcome challenges and barriers often experienced in bringing new tourism products to life. The "Spark" Program was first launched in Ontario in 2018 by the Tourism Innovation Lab and since 2021 has been offered across British Columbia with the lead support of Destination BC.

Previous BC "Spark" Program recipients were selected for cycling and accommodation packages, Indigenous cultural experiences and tours, off-grid cabins, improv and theatre shows, interactive mobile apps, campervan rentals and more.

TIABC will use its primary communication platforms, including social media channels, Voice of Tourism newsletter and podcast, Wednesday Webinar Series, website and events such as the annual AGM and BC Tourism & Hospitality Conference to promote the services of Tourism Innovation Lab throughout the year.

TIABC and the Tourism Innovation Lab have a shared vision of promoting tourism and economic development across British Columbia, elevating and implementing diversity, equity and inclusion efforts, connecting the private and public sectors, and encouraging more tourism entrepreneurship and innovation in the sector.

QUOTES:

Walt Judas, CEO, TIABC

Our new partnership with Tourism Innovation Lab comes at an opportune time for our industry as we continue to rebuild and rebound from the impacts of the pandemic. We're excited by the prospect of new investment in tourism products and services with the guidance and support of TIL, which will also help shape the future of British Columbia's visitor economy.

Justin Lafontaine, Program Lead, Tourism Innovation Lab

"We are thrilled to be partnering with TIABC to foster tourism innovation and development programs in British Columbia. Our shared goal is to inspire and support new tourism ideas and entrepreneurs to grow the tourism sector and offerings across the province."

About TIABC:

As the voice of tourism, the Tourism Industry Association of BC (TIABC) advocates for the interests of British Columbia's multi-billion dollar visitor economy. As a not-for-profit tourism industry association, TIABC works collaboratively with its members – private sector tourism businesses, industry associations and destination marketing organizations – to ensure the best working environment for a competitive tourism industry.

About the Tourism Innovation Lab:

The Tourism Innovation Lab is a non-profit initiative created to find, foster and support new tourism ideas, experiences and partnerships, to cultivate and propel collaborations between the tourism and tech sectors, and to build a community of tourism innovators, idea makers and entrepreneurs in Canada. Launched in Ontario in 2018, the Lab and its "Spark" Mentorships & Grants Program are expanding to British Columbia. The Tourism Innovation Lab is a program of Hackforge and is based at the University of Windsor-EPICentre, with a Western Canada home base located in Squamish, BC. For more information, visit www.tourisminnovation.ca.

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