

IMPLEMENTATION UPDATE

Presented November 18, 2021

STRATEGIC PLAN 2019-2024



Nature & Outdoor Tourism Ontario

About NOTO



GUIDING PRINCIPLES:

- Provide a system of support to tourism operators and businesses to help them succeed within the industry.
- Advocate and provide a voice for resource-based tourism operators and businesses to government and the larger public.
- Support growth of the tourism industry through promoting optimized use of resources for long-term social and economic benefits, while focusing on the protection and enhancement of Ontario's natural resources and environment.
- Develop partnerships and seek out collaborative opportunities to help achieve organizational goals.
- Attain financial stability through increased membership, innovative partnerships and value-added member services.



Strategic Priorities



Each of the strategic priorities outlined below are thoroughly described within the 5-year strategic plan and are based on supporting NOTO's guiding principles.

- Rebrand
- Communication
- Sustain & Revitalize
- Partnerships
- Value-Added Services



Rebrand

Description of Goals



Goal: Focus on Northern Ontario with a more modern look and feel to increase trust, build confidence, and establish credibility and rapport with members.

- 1. NEW NAME:** Establish a new name to identify that the organization represents predominantly Northern Ontario RBT operators.
 - *In Progress:* The NOTO Board to date is considering Northern Ontario Tourism Operators Association to better reflect NOTO's northern roots.
- 2. NEW LOGO:** Design a new logo that reflects the organization's mission, vision, values, guiding principles and goals.
 - *Under consideration.*
- 3. WEBSITE REDEVELOPMENT:** Re-develop the content and layout of website to build credibility and reflect the new brand.
 - *Near completion:* The new website is near completion! It will be very user-friendly and feature the following: industry updates, resource pages, quick links to important Ministry websites, a member only portal, e-commerce capabilities and more! We are aiming to launch the new website in December 2021 or early January 2022.



Rebrand

Description of Goals



Goal: Focus on Northern Ontario with a more modern look and feel to increase trust, build confidence, and establish credibility and rapport with members.

4. BUILD SOCIAL MEDIA PRESENCE:

- *Work in progress:* We've increased our social media presence but more work can be done to streamline content to keep our pages more relevant to NOTO and the work it does for the industry.

5. NEW MARKETING COLLATERAL: Create new marketing materials and collateral to reflect brand update.

- *Partially Complete:* We haven't yet rebranded, however we have updated the format of the e-newsletters to make them look more modern and to ensure the industry remains informed on regulation changes and advocacy efforts and wins.

6. UPDATE EMAIL ADDRESS FROM .NET TO .CA: Change email addresses to .ca to build credibility with members, partners and government.

- *Will not be done:* The board does not feel this will make a significant difference to credibility.



Rebrand

Indicators of Success



- ✗ Development of new brand that reflects the organization: *In progress*
- ✓ Increased engagement from current members
- ✓ Increased awareness of NOTO within the industry: *Through our COVID newsletters & weekly TIAO calls, many operators are more aware of who we are and what we do for the industry. Newsletter now reaching over 1400 tourism businesses.*
- ✓ Increased and strengthened partnerships
- ✓ Increased membership: *61 new/returning members between 2020 and 2021 so far*
- ✓ Increased social media presence (likes, comments, shares etc.): *Increased significantly in 2020/2021*
- ✗ Utilization rate of member portal: *Not yet completed, however visits have increased 2K per week to website.*
- ✓ Open rate of newsletters: *Open rates float between 50-60% during the busy season, 60-75% on off season*



Communication

Description of Goals



Goal: Develop and implement a communications plan to engage members, non-members and stakeholders.

1. DEVELOP AND IMPLEMENT COMMUNICATION PLAN FOR REGULAR AND NON-MEMBERS:

- *Completed:* Pre-COVID, we had monthly newsletters to our members and quarterly newsletters for non-members. We currently have weekly COVID Newsletters that go to all in the RBT industry (members and non-members). As we are beginning to emerge from the crisis, we are building strategies to resume a new schedule that will benefit members and encourage others to join to continue getting information.

2. INCREASE AWARENESS/OUTREACH TO GOVERNMENT: NOTO to be present at Queens park on a regular basis to advocate on issues related to the industry. Strengthen partnerships with ministries to ensure NOTO's voice is heard. Advocate to all levels of government the importance of the tourism sector as a whole including the resource-based sector.

- *Completed:* NOTO continues to have several virtual meeting with MPPs, MPs, Ministers both at Provincial and Federal Levels. We have also strengthened our partnerships with TIAO, DNO, CFOA and other industry organizations to ensure NOTO's voice is heard through several channels and for us to effectively advocate to all levels of government.



Communication

Description of Goals



Goal: Develop and implement a communications plan to engage members, non-members and stakeholders.

3. **PROMOTE SUCCESSES:** Utilize communications channels to highlight successes to members, non-members, community and tourism stakeholders to continue to build support for the organization.
 - *Completed:* Each one of NOTO's successes are sent to the entire industry in a special e-blast and they are included in our e-newsletters. Depending on the type of accomplishment, press releases are used. These are posted on social media as well.

4. **INCREASE TRADESHOW ATTENDANCE AND VISIBILITY OF NOTO TO BUILD MEMBERSHIP BASE:**
 - *Completed:* Prior to COVID, Laurie attended many tradeshow. We've now shifted to increasing our visibility through our COVID updates to the entire industry and taking part in TIAO's weekly industry calls and webinars.

5. **IMPLEMENT A SCHEDULE TO REGULARLY UPDATE MEMBERS ON REGULATIONS, POLICIES, IMPACT OF GOVERNMENT DECISIONS/CHANGES AND ONGOING ACTIVITIES BY THE ORGANIZATION:**
 - *Completed*



Communication Indicators of Success



- ✓ Implementation of a Communication Plan: *Weekly to all industry*. Pre-COVID: Monthly for members, quarterly for non-members. Will review plan as we emerge from crisis period.*
- ✓ Enhanced partnership activity: *Significant increase in partnership projects and initiatives*
- ✓ Increased tradeshow participation & NOTO visibility: *No tradeshows but have increased visibility through COVID*
- ✓ Distribution of consistent messaging
- ✓ Facilitation of communication between organization and government ministries
- ✓ Increased promotion of organizational successes: *Special eblasts & newsletter features*



Sustain & Revitalize

Description of Goals



Goal: Create a financially secure, sustainable operating environment and increase organization effectiveness.

1. ESTABLISH NORTHERN ONTARIO TOURISM ACT:

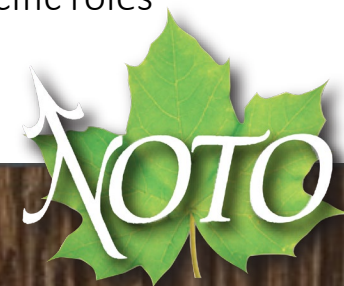
(1) Work with the provincial government in partnership with DNO to establish a Northern Ontario Tourism Act that aligns policy and regulation development to support economic growth within the tourism sector. Identify methods to ensure all regulations impacting the tourism sector are discussed with NOTO prior to implementing to ensure any changes are measured against the potential industry impact.

(2) Work with the provincial government to establish a tourism licensing program. This program will set standards for tourism operators which has been identified as a need throughout the stakeholder engagement process

- *On temporary pause*

2. UNDERTAKE A BOARD GOVERNANCE PROCESS: Review board procedures, by-laws, core values/functions, priorities and board structure to ensure it aligns with the organizations' future direction. Measure the quality of performance of the board. Develop and implement a board governance/engagement strategy to ensure active participation and specific roles on board to support sustainability.

- *On temporary pause*



Sustain & Revitalize

Description of Goals



Goal: Create a financially secure, sustainable operating environment and increase organization effectiveness.

3. **DEVELOP NEW INITIATIVES AND PARTNERSHIPS TO INCREASE REVENUE, BUILD CAPACITY AND PROVIDE ADDITIONAL VALUE TO MEMBERS:** Partnerships will lead to additional exposure for the organization, increase membership value as well as additional revenue sources depending on the partnership.

- *Complete:* NOTO has partnered with TIAO, DNO, TEN, DMOs, CFOA, TIAC, OTEC and others on several projects and advocacy initiatives. Here are a few: DNO, TIAO (Northern Ontario Border Working Group), DNO (Development of RBT Protocols), CFOA (advocacy at Federal Level), TIAC (advocacy at Federal Level), TIAO (stakeholder calls, Advocacy work, tourism delegations), TEN (with some Adapt2020 and Adapt2021 webinars), DNO & OTEC (TSNN), TIAO (AMO, ROMA), DNO (Summit/Training Weeks), Lobbyist (assist with advocacy and strengthen relationships with Government officials), TIAO, DNO, DMOs etc. (creation and sharing of industry surveys), DNO (Experience Fishing), Fish'n Canada (Great Ontario Getaway Giveaway Contest)

4. **DEVELOP A SUCCESSION PLAN FOCUSED ON STAFF AND BOARD OF DIRECTORS:** Develop a succession plan to provide continued success of the organization if any staff members change position, and for the Board of Directors to ensure board relevancy, engagement, performance and effective leadership.

- *On temporary pause*



Sustain & Revitalize

Description of Goals



Goal: Create a financially secure, sustainable operating environment and increase organization effectiveness.

5. **BUILD HUMAN RESOURCE CAPACITY TO INCREASE ORGANIZATIONAL EFFICIENCY, MEMBERSHIP RECRUITMENT AND RETENTION INITIATIVES, PARTNERSHIP OPPORTUNITIES AND GOVERNMENT RELATIONS:**

- *In Progress*

6. **PRIORITIZE ADVOCACY INITIATIVES THAT ALIGN WITH MEMBERS NEEDS:** NOTO staff should work with board, partners and members to develop the key priorities. Develop a process for providing updates to members and highlighting successes to build credibility, trust and engagement.

- *Complete:* Pre-COVID, the NOTO board provided input to help prioritize advocacy efforts. During the pandemic, we have conducted surveys to ensure that we have the data to support our advocacy work as well to ensure we know where the needs are for our sector. We also ask members to provide feedback regularly on specific items in our newsletters. We provide updates on advocacy efforts in our weekly newsletter updates and highlight wins in special eblasts as well



Sustain & Revitalize

Indicators of Success



- ✗ Adoption of Northern Ontario Tourism Act: *On pause temporarily*
- ✚ Strong working relationship with all levels of government: *Always a work in progress*
- ✚ Future regulatory changes are reviewed before implementation: **Success with MNDMNR**
- ✗ Industry licensing program established: *On pause temporarily*
- ✗ Number of operators enrolled in the licensing program
- ✓ Increased revenue generation: *Through increase in membership and partnership projects*
- ✗ Increased human resource capacity: *Internship application in the works*
- ✗ Succession plan developed
- ✓ Number of partnerships developed **15**
- ✓ Membership engagement: 50-60% engagement in newsletters and surveys (sent to over 1400)
- ✓ Number of advocacy initiatives successfully completed **11**



Partnerships

Description of Goals



Goal: Support members by establishing relationships with government, organizations, and other stakeholders to facilitate collaboration and maximize resources.

1. INCREASE GOVERNMENT RELATIONS LOCALLY, PROVINCIALY AND FEDERALLY:

- *Completed and Always in Progress:* NOTO has successfully strengthened relationships with various Ministers, MPs, MPPs over the past two years. NOTO also continues to work with our lobbyist at Queen's Park to ensure NOTO has a voice during the decision making process with items that may impact the RBT industry.

2. CONTINUE TO BUILD STRONG RELATIONSHIPS WITH RTOs and DMOs: Continue to partner on projects with key tourism stakeholders across the North. Host professional development and networking events to tourism operators in partnerships with RTO's and DMO's.

- *Completed and more to come:* DNO & TEN (Adapt2020/2021 webinars), DNO (Northern Ontario Tourism Training Week), DNO, NOTO and OTEC (TSNN). DNO, Fish'n Canada, Algoma Country, Sunset Country, Superior Country and Northeastern Ontario Tourism (GOGG).

3. DEVELOP BUSINESS RELATIONSHIPS WITH BUSINESS DEVELOPMENT AGENCIES THROUGHOUT THE NORTH:

Partner with Small Business Enterprise Centres, CFDCs and EDCs to share resources and build training to assist members.

- *Incomplete but initiated*



Partnerships

Description of Goals



Goal: Support members by establishing relationships with government, organizations, and other stakeholders to facilitate collaboration and maximize resources.

4. **INCREASE PARTNERSHIPS WITH REAL-ESTATE AND INSURANCE COMPANIES TO OFFER COMPLEMENTARY BENEFITS TO MEMBERS AND ASSIST WITH MEMBERSHIP RECRUITMENT:**

- *On temporary pause*

5. **DEVELOP PARTNERSHIPS FOCUSED ON CONSERVATION WITH CONSERVATION AUTHORITIES ACROSS THE NORTH:** Develop mutually-beneficial partnerships with conservation authorities and Ontario Federation of Anglers & Hunters (OFAH) to ensure that efforts are being made in relation to the resource-based sector's sustainability.

- *In Progress:* NOTO is building a stronger relationship with the Ontario Federation of Anglers and Hunters (OFAH) to advocate on specific items that impact both of our organizations members.



Partnerships

Indicators of Success

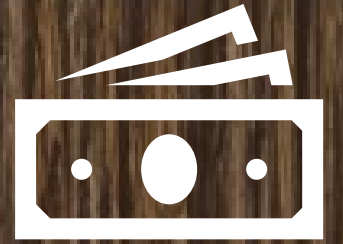


- ✓ Increased partnership activity
- ✓ Additional revenue sources: *Through increase in partnership projects and memberships*
- ✗ Increase membership benefits
- ✓ Eliminate duplication of efforts
- ✓ Increased awareness for stakeholders/groups
- ✓ Facilitate communication between organization and government ministries
- ✓ Increased membership from new operators



Value-Added Services

Description of Goals



Goal: Develop value-added services that helps support tourism operators.

1. **RE-BRAND AND RE-DEVELOP THE ADVENTURE GUIDE TO PROVIDE ADDITIONAL VALUE TO NOTO MEMBERS:**

Partner with DMOs to ensure pieces complement each other. Utilize the tool as a membership recruitment tactic. Showcase NOTO's successes, future goals and priorities within the guide to inform and educate members. Create advertising opportunities for increase revenues. Utilize the guide as an advocacy tool to effectively represent the size of the resource-based tourism industry.

- *On temporary pause*

2. **REVIEW THE MEMBERSHIP STRUCTURE TO ENSURE IT ALIGNS WITH INDUSTRY NEEDS AND CAPACITY:**

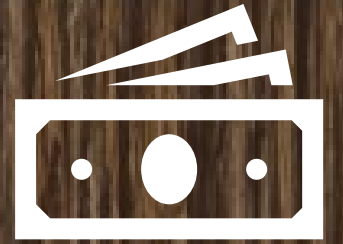
Explore the opportunity to recruit non-consumptive tourism operators as members. Consider reviewing membership fees. Create automatic membership fee collection processes. Implement late charges for unpaid memberships.

- *In Progress:* NOTO reviewed it's membership fees and increased fees in 2020 as they have not changed in a long time. Online membership renewals will be available in 2022. NOTO considered developing a late fee policy but has not implemented it yet. May be an item to consider in the future post-COVID.



Value-Added Services

Description of Goals



Goal: Develop value-added services that helps support tourism operators.

3. CREATE RESOURCES FOR TOURISM OPERATORS TO ASSIST WITH OVERCOMING BARRIERS TO GROWTH:

Offer research study services to government organizations requiring white papers and data to make informed decisions. Link and host available resources within the membership portal, to provide added value to members.

- *In Progress:* Resources have been developed through TEN's Adapt webinar series and NOTO/DNO's Northern Ontario Tourism Training Weeks. We will develop a resource library in our new website. Current RBT research papers and data are currently dated which presents an opportunity for NOTO and DNO to partner to build more current new data.

4. DEVELOP AND SHOWCASE RESEARCH PAPERS TO MEMBERS, PARTNERS, GOVERNMENT AND COMMUNITY

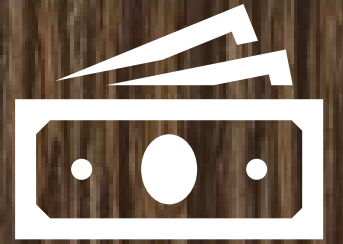
STAKEHOLDERS: Build internal capacity to develop research papers to educate all stakeholders and members about industry related issues, successes and opportunities. Partner with related Ministries to educate operators about industry trends and regulations.

- *In Progress:* There have been some recent research conducted through DNO, TIAO and NOTO via surveys but no official research papers have been produced, only summaries.



Value-Added Services

Description of Goals



Goal: Develop value-added services that helps support tourism operators.

5. CONTINUE TO CONDUCT SITE VISITS WITH TOURISM OPERATORS ACROSS THE NORTH: Strengthen relationships with current members and attract new members by visiting locations and educating them about the importance of NOTO and membership benefits. Work with partnering organizations to conduct outreach across Northern Ontario through “Town Hall” style meetings to discuss opportunities and challenges with industry and government stakeholders.

- *On temporary pause:* Couldn't do site visits due to COVID. NOTO has extended it's newsletter to the entire industry (members and non-members) which increased awareness of NOTO and led to the enrollment of over 60 new members.

6. DEVELOP TRAINING WEBINARS AND DOWNLOADABLE WORKBOOKS AND MATERIALS TO EDUCATE MEMBERS: Work with partners to develop training resources on issues such as workforce development, access to capital and ministry regulations.

- *Complete:* NOTO has partnered with TEN on several Adapt2020 and Adapt2021 Webinars & with DNO to host the Northern Ontario Tourism Training Weeks

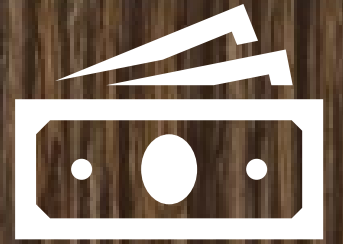
7. INCREASE PREFERRED SUPPLIERS' MEMBERSHIP BASE TO ENSURE BENEFITS OFFERED ALIGN WITH MEMBERSHIP NEEDS:

- *On temporary pause*



Value-Added Services

Indicators of Success












- ✓ Increased partnership activity
- ✓ Additional revenue sources
- ✗ Increased membership benefits
- ✗ Number of resources/ research papers created
- ✓ Attendance during webinars: *varied from 25-150 participants*
- ✗ Number of site visits: *Could not be done during the pandemic*
- ✓ Increased membership engagement
- ✓ Increased number of members: *61 new members*
- ✗ Increased number of preferred suppliers



Goals for 2022



-  Launch new website by January 2022
-  Rebrand to go back to Northern Ontario roots
-  Continue to increase social media presence and make social networks more relevant to NOTO's work
-  Continue to strengthen relationships with industry partners and Government
-  Begin exploring what a Northern Ontario Tourism Act and RBT licensing program may look like
-  Continue to explore revenue generating opportunities
-  Increase number of Preferred Suppliers and membership benefits for membership types
-  Continue to build resources for RBT operators which will be hosted on NOTO's new website
-  Beginning building a succession plan and increase capacity



*Stay tuned for our next
phase of exciting changes*

STRATEGIC PLAN
2019-2024

