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NEWS RELEASE

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NACCA and Government of Canada Expand Support for Indigenous Tourism

March 17, 2026 - Millbrook First Nation, Mi'kma'ki (Nova Scotia) - The [National Aboriginal Capital Corporations Association \(NACCA\)](#) is partnering with [Innovation, Science and Economic Development Canada](#) to launch the second round of the Signature Indigenous Tourism Experiences Stream (SITES), backed by a new \$6 million investment announced in Budget 2025 under the Indigenous Tourism Fund. This new funding builds on the success of the SITES pilot and will help Indigenous communities scale up world-class tourism experiences rooted in Indigenous cultures, lands and languages.

The new investments were announced today at the Millbrook Cultural and Heritage Centre in Mi'kma'ki by the Honourable Rechie Valdez, Minister of Women and Gender Equality and Secretary of State (Small Business and Tourism), alongside NACCA CEO Shannin Metatawabin and local leadership. Six new Indigenous tourism projects across Alberta, British Columbia, Nova Scotia, Ontario, Quebec and the Northwest Territories will receive support through this second round of SITES.

"Building a strong Canadian economy in partnership with First Nations, Métis and Inuit peoples is a key government priority outlined in Budget 2025," said The Honourable Rechie Valdez, Minister of Women and Gender Equality and Secretary of State (Small Business and Tourism). "I am proud to highlight the added investment for the Indigenous Tourism Fund's Signature Indigenous Tourism Experiences Stream as one of our commitments to advancing economic reconciliation and Indigenous self-determination. Together with NACCA, this stream continues to create economic opportunities in local communities and showcase inspiring, authentic Indigenous tourism experiences on the world stage."

One of the recipients of the funding, the Mi'kmawey Debert Cultural Centre, will receive \$1.1 million for the construction of a road to welcome new visitors and support the future Indigenous-led cultural tourism destination.

"The road construction in Debert is symbolic of the pathways we're building toward shared prosperity through Indigenous tourism," said Shannin Metatawabin, CEO of NACCA. "Building on the success of the first round of SITES funding, this additional



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investment will expand that impact to more regions across Canada, supporting Indigenous tourism operators to create meaningful experiences, strengthen local economies, and celebrate the richness of First Nations, Métis and Inuit cultures from coast to coast to coast.”

“This support helps us keep moving forward with the vision for Mi’kmawey Debert Cultural Centre,” said Tim Bernard, Executive Director, Mi’kmawey Debert Cultural Centre. “Our Elders have created a place where people can come together, spend time on the land, and learn about Mi’kmaw history and culture directly from Mi’kmaw voices. Projects like this take many partners, and this investment helps us continue the work of building a space that will welcome students, families and visitors from across Mi’kma’ki and beyond. In the years ahead, Mi’kmawey Debert Cultural Centre will be a place where we welcome visitors to deepen their understanding of Mi’kmaw history and culture, and our 13,000 years of connection to this land.”

With this additional \$6 million, NACCA will support a total of six new projects, including the **Derbert Cultural Centre**, that will expand Indigenous-owned destinations and enhance visitor experiences:

- In Quebec, **Restaurant Sagamité TQB S.E.N.C.** will receive funding to develop Sagamité - YQB at the Québec City airport, extending an authentic Indigenous culinary experience from Wendake and Old Québec to an international gateway.
- In Ontario, **Six Nations of the Grand River** will receive funding to construct a new welcome centre that will support Indigenous tourism experiences, enhance visitor capacity and promote the community’s historic sites.
- In Alberta, **Enoch Cree Nation** will receive funding to support a new River Cree Thermal Spa at the River Cree Resort and Casino, positioning the community as a premier Indigenous wellness destination.
- In British Columbia, the **Spo7ez Cultural Centre and Community Society** will receive funding to expand its cultural centre, add a commercial kitchen and café, and grow its gift shop to generate additional community-based revenues.
- Also in British Columbia, the **Tla-o-qui-aht Development Corporation** will receive funding to add a Beachfront Wellness Hut at TinWis Resort and to expand Tsawaak RV Resort with up to twelve unique spherical “treehouse” glamping units.



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Indigenous tourism remains one of the fastest-growing segments of the visitor economy, generating billions in annual revenue and supporting tens of thousands of jobs across the country. [SITES](#) is a national initiative delivered by NACCA that provides larger-scale, non-repayable contributions to Indigenous-led tourism destinations that serve as anchors for regional visitor economies. By investing in cultural centres, wellness offerings, accommodations and culinary experiences, SITES supports the development of Indigenous infrastructure, and the services entrepreneurs and communities need to welcome more visitors, create employment and advance economic reconciliation. By working with Indigenous communities and financial institutions, SITES helps ensure that more of this value is created and retained in Indigenous hands, on Indigenous lands.

Early results from the first round of SITES funding show that investments are helping Indigenous tourism businesses increase visitation, diversify revenue streams and create new employment opportunities. The additional \$6 million announced today will allow NACCA to continue this momentum with a new cohort of flagship Indigenous tourism destinations.

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QUICK FACTS

Results Sites I:

- Total investment: \$9.5 million
- Number of projects funded: 11
- Provinces and territories represented: 7 (AB, BC, SK, ON, QC, YK, NS)
- Estimated revenue generated: over \$78 million across all projects.

SITES II:

- Total new investment (round two): \$6 million
- Number of new projects funded: 6
- Provinces and territories represented: 5 (NS, QC, ON, AB, BC)
- Estimated increase in visitors across all locations: 659,324
- New jobs created: 126

ABOUT SITES

[SITES was first launched in 2024](#) under the Indigenous Tourism Fund and is administered by NACCA in collaboration with an Indigenous Advisory Committee that includes representatives



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from Indigenous tourism associations across the country. In its pilot phase, SITES [invested \\$9.5 million in 11 Indigenous tourism projects](#) across Canada.

ABOUT NACCA

NACCA is a national Indigenous organization with a network of more than 50 Indigenous Financial Institutions (IFIs) across Canada. For over 35 years, NACCA has played a crucial role in advancing economic growth and entrepreneurship among Indigenous communities. Through programs like SITES, NACCA continues to strengthen Indigenous businesses, promote sustainable, community-based development and contribute to a more inclusive and prosperous tourism sector.

RELATED LINKS

- [National Aboriginal Capital Corporations Association](#)
- [SITES Program Information](#)
- [Indigenous Tourism Fund: Signature Indigenous Tourism Experiences Stream](#)

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