



MEDIA RELEASE

For Immediate Release: October 18, 2022

NEW PROGRAM AIMS TO “SPARK” INNOVATIVE TOURISM IDEAS IN NORTHERN BC

[PRINCE GEORGE] – A new program aimed at sparking and supporting innovative tourism ideas in Northern BC was officially announced today by local and provincial tourism partners.

www.tourisminnovation.ca/NorthernBC

The “Spark” Mentorships & Grants Program will match selected applicants from the region with a tourism mentor, provide a \$3,000 grant and additional partner support to help take their new tourism ideas to the next level of development.

The goal is to find, foster and support new tourism ideas, experiences and partnerships that will enhance current offerings, address gaps or challenges, motivate travel and longer stays, and increase year-round visits.

Applications are encouraged from entrepreneurs, small businesses and non-profit organizations based in Northern BC from October 18, 2022 to December 6, 2022. Following a review process, five finalists will be invited to a virtual Pitch Session where three winners will be selected.

The “Spark” Program was first launched in Ontario in 2018 by the Tourism Innovation Lab, and has now expanded to several regions across British Columbia.

The Northern BC “Spark” Program is presented by Destination British Columbia in collaboration with the Northern BC Tourism Association, Tourism Prince George, Tourism Prince Rupert, Tourism Terrace, Tourism Smithers, Tourism Dawson Creek, the Community Futures offices of Northern BC, and the Tourism Innovation Lab.

For more information on the “Spark” Mentorships & Grants Program and upcoming Info Sessions visit www.tourisminnovation.ca/NorthernBC.

QUOTES

Richard Porges, President & CEO, Destination BC

“We are delighted to be awarding “Spark” grants and mentorships to three local tourism entrepreneurs in Northern BC. The entire Destination BC team looks forward to seeing the winning initiatives bring diverse and innovative tourism experiences to life, helping to motivate travel, longer stays, and increase year-round visitation.”

Clint Fraser, CEO, Northern BC Tourism Association

“Our region is filled with resourceful and innovative entrepreneurs and through this program we are aiming to inspire the development or enhancement of new travel experiences across northern BC. This program is a great way to further strengthen our northern tourism sector and we can’t wait to see what new ideas come to market as a result of it.”

Justin Lafontaine, Program Lead, Tourism Innovation Lab

“We are excited to be launching the “Spark” Program in British Columbia in Northern BC. We are keen to spark and support new tourism ideas that will enhance the region’s tourism offerings and drive innovation.”

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Social Media:

Northern BC Tourism Association

LinkedIn: @northern-bc-tourism-association

Facebook: @NorthernBC

Twitter: @TourismBCNorth

Instagram @travelnorthernbc

Destination BC

Twitter: @DestinationBC

LinkedIn: [linkedin.com/company/destinationbritishcolumbia](https://www.linkedin.com/company/destinationbritishcolumbia)

Tourism Innovation Lab

Facebook: @tourisminnovationcanada

Instagram: @tourisminnovationcanada

Twitter: @tourinnovation

ABOUT

About Northern BC Tourism Association:

Northern BC Tourism Association (NBCTA) works to develop, support, and sustain the tourism sector in northern BC and is one of six regional destination management organizations in the province. NBCTA is a non-profit association led by a board of directors elected by industry, and works collaboratively with the provincial government and Destination BC, a Provincial Crown

Corporation, to advance the tourism sector throughout the region. Learn more at www.TravelNBC.com/.

About Destination BC:

Destination British Columbia (Destination BC) is a Provincially funded, industry-led Crown corporation that supports a strong and competitive future for BC's tourism industry through a combination of global marketing, destination development, industry learning, cooperative community-based programs, and visitor servicing. Destination BC's programs help to improve the visitor experience, support businesses and communities across the province, and strengthen BC's worldwide reputation as a destination of choice. For more information about Destination BC's programs and services, please visit: www.DestinationBC.ca.

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. Launched in Ontario in 2018, the Lab and its "Spark" Mentorships & Grants Program are expanding to new regions across Canada. The Tourism Innovation Lab is a program of Hackforge and has a BC home base in Squamish. Learn more at www.TourismInnovation.ca/.