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2026 - 2027

Business & Operational Plan

April 1, 2026 - March 31, 2027

Explorers' Edge - RTO 12

Muskoka - Algonquin Park - Parry Sound - Almaguin Highlands – South Algonquin – Loring Restoule

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Executive Summary

Established in 2010 by the Ontario Ministry of Tourism, Culture & Gaming (MTC&G), Explorers' Edge (EE) is one of eleven Regional Tourism Organizations (RTOs) in the province. Representing tourism stakeholders across Algonquin Park, the Almaguin Highlands, Loring-Restoule, Muskoka, west Parry Sound District, and South Algonquin, the organization is governed by an independent Board of Directors. The region is located on the traditional lands and waterways of the Anishinabek, Algonquin, Metis and Mohawk peoples, and is part of the Robinson-Huron (1850) and Williams (1923) Treaty territories, as well as the unceded territory of the Algonquins.

This Business and Operational Plan outlines the priorities and activities of Explorers' Edge for the fiscal year April 1, 2026 to March 31, 2027. The plan provides context on the state of the regional tourism industry and identifies the goals, activities, timelines, performance measures, and budget required to fulfill the organization's responsibilities under the annual Transfer Payment Agreement with the Ministry of Tourism, Culture & Gaming.

The upcoming fiscal year represents an important phase in the organization's evolution - a period focused on optimization, refinement, and scaling of initiatives launched in previous years. After several years of strategic program development and organizational transformation, Explorers' Edge is now concentrating on maximizing the impact, efficiency, and outcomes of its programs, partnerships, and revenue-generation initiatives.

Tourism remains a critical economic driver for both Ontario and the Explorers' Edge region. Ontario's tourism sector contributes more than \$33 billion in GDP and supports approximately 360,000 jobs across the province. Within this broader context, the Explorers' Edge region continues to demonstrate strong tourism performance. In 2025, regional hotel performance data showed Revenue per Available Room (RevPAR) growth of 7.4%, significantly outperforming the Ontario provincial average of 1.6%.

This performance reflects the strength of the region's domestic leisure market and its proximity to the Greater Toronto Area, positioning the region as one of Ontario's premier nature-based destinations. With peak summer occupancy approaching capacity levels across many properties, future growth opportunities increasingly depend on extending the tourism season, strengthening shoulder-season visitation, and increasing visitor yield rather than expanding peak-season volume.

A central focus of this year's plan is the continued optimization and operationalization of the Explorers' Edge Regenerative Travel Agency. This initiative represents a significant shift in the organization's role - from traditional destination marketing toward a more integrated destination development and distribution model. Through curated travel packages, day itineraries, and bookable experiences, the travel agency connects visitors directly with regional tourism operators while helping to generate new revenue streams for local businesses and communities.

The travel agency is designed as a values-based distribution platform, aligning with Explorers' Edge's regenerative tourism philosophy by keeping more tourism revenue within the region, supporting small and medium-sized tourism operators, and encouraging visitors to engage more deeply with the destination through longer stays and multi-experience travel. During the upcoming fiscal year, efforts will focus on expanding bookable product, refining distribution channels, strengthening industry participation, and improving visitor conversion through enhanced marketing and digital integration.

Explorers' Edge continues to operate as a Destination Development Organization (DDO) with a broad mandate that includes marketing, product development, partnership investment, workforce initiatives, sustainability leadership, and regional collaboration. Over the past year, the organization advanced a number of initiatives including tourism workforce programming, sustainability education through the Creating Positive Impact Learning Series, inclusion initiatives supporting 2SLGBTQ+ and Women in Tourism networks, and the advancement of a Regional Indigenous Youth Tourism Entrepreneurship Strategy.

Partnership and collaboration remain foundational to the organization's work. Explorers' Edge supported more than 42 active partnerships across the region spanning tourism product development, community events, infrastructure initiatives, and collaborative marketing programs. At the same time, internal organizational restructuring

strengthened governance, financial oversight, and operational capacity, including the recruitment of new staff supporting partnership development and travel services.

These initiatives are guided by the organization's Region-Centric Regenerative Tourism Approach, introduced in 2021. This framework emphasizes long-term destination stewardship, community resilience, inclusive tourism development, and the creation of tourism experiences that generate positive economic, social, cultural, and environmental outcomes for the region.

Looking ahead, the 2026-2027 Business and Operational Plan prioritizes the following key areas:

- Optimizing and expanding the Regenerative Travel Agency and bookable visitor experiences
- Strengthening shoulder-season tourism and year-round visitation
- Supporting tourism operators through partnerships, product development, and training initiatives
- Advancing inclusive and regenerative tourism practices across the region
- Leveraging new transportation opportunities and emerging travel trends to increase visitor access

Through these priorities, Explorers' Edge will continue working with municipalities, tourism operators, Indigenous communities, provincial partners, and regional stakeholders to strengthen the visitor economy while ensuring tourism growth supports the long-term health and vitality of the communities and landscapes that define the Great Canadian Wilderness.

Fiscal 2025-2026 Outcome Highlights

2025 Regional Tourism Summit

The 2025 Explorers' Edge Regional Tourism Summit, hosted at KOA Parry Sound, reflected the region's deep connection to outdoor recreation and the important role camping and campground operators play within the visitor economy. By choosing a campground setting for the summit, Explorers' Edge intentionally highlighted the significance of the outdoor hospitality sector - campgrounds, RV parks, and nature-based accommodations - which continue to serve as foundational tourism infrastructure across Muskoka, Parry Sound, Almaguin Highlands, South Algonquin, Loring-Restoule and Algonquin Park. The venue reinforced the authentic experiences visitors seek in the Great Canadian Wilderness and provided an appropriate backdrop for conversations about sustainable growth, product development, and regenerative tourism.

The summit also placed strong emphasis on cultural awareness and community connection. The day began with a traditional smudge ceremony and welcome from the team at the Parry Sound Friendship Centre, grounding the gathering in respect for Indigenous culture and the lands on which the tourism industry operates. Feedback from the event was very positive: of the 65 attendees, 28 completed the post-summit survey, with respondents rating the event as satisfied or very satisfied, reinforcing the value of bringing industry partners together in meaningful settings that reflect the character and strengths of the Explorers' Edge region.

Community, Inclusion & Destination Stewardship.

Regional Indigenous Youth Tourism Entrepreneurship Strategy

Explorers' Edge has begun advancing a Regional Indigenous Youth Tourism Entrepreneurship Strategy, supported through a partnership with FedNor. This initiative focuses on creating pathways for Indigenous youth to explore entrepreneurship within the tourism sector through mentorship, training, and business development support. The strategy aims to strengthen Indigenous-led tourism experiences across the region while fostering economic development, cultural storytelling, and long-term participation of Indigenous youth in the visitor economy.

2SLGBTQI+ Destination Development Work

With a successful launch through Diva Dialogues, Explorers' Edge initiated work to better understand and support 2SLGBTQI+ inclusion within the regional tourism ecosystem. This work includes a destination audit conducted in partnership with Destination Northern Ontario, identifying opportunities to enhance welcoming practices, visitor experiences, and operator readiness. In addition, Explorers' Edge has made a research partnership investment with Destination Ontario to support broader insights into the 2SLGBTQI+ travel market and opportunities for inclusive destination development.

As part of this commitment, Explorers' Edge staff are currently completing the Rainbow Registry Foundation Course, with the goal of achieving Rainbow Registered status for the organization. This training supports the development of inclusive workplace practices and strengthens the organization's capacity to support tourism operators across the region in advancing 2SLGBTQI+ inclusion.

Together, these efforts support the broader goal of ensuring the Explorers' Edge region is recognized as an inclusive destination for both visitors and tourism professionals.

Women in Tourism

Building on the success of previous Women in Tourism gatherings, Explorers' Edge continues to support networking and leadership opportunities for women across the regional tourism workforce. Through partnerships such as Damenfest with the Muskoka Lakes Chamber of Commerce, the initiative celebrates the contributions of women while creating space for professional development, mentorship, and collaboration within an industry where women represent a significant majority of the workforce.

Sustainability & Positive Impact Learning Series

As part of its commitment to regenerative tourism and destination stewardship, Explorers' Edge has invested in sustainability education through a partnership with GreenStep Solutions. This work includes the Creating Positive Impact Learning Series, a business-to-business program designed to help tourism operators better understand and implement sustainable practices. The program is complemented by an ongoing sustainability resource series hosted on the Explorers' Edge website, providing operators with practical tools and guidance to support environmentally and socially responsible tourism development across the region.

Big Applause Awards - Celebrating Seasonal & Winter Workforce

The Big Applause Awards continue to recognize the dedication and impact of frontline tourism employees who help deliver exceptional visitor experiences across the Explorers' Edge region. With a particular focus on winter and seasonal staff, the program celebrates the individuals working in lodges, restaurants, attractions, outdoor recreation businesses, and tourism services who play a critical role in welcoming visitors during peak travel periods. Through nominations submitted by employers, colleagues, and guests, the Big Applause Awards highlight stories of outstanding customer service, leadership, and commitment to the tourism industry.

Travel Agency Development - Packages & Day Itineraries

As part of the operational rollout of the Explorers' Edge travel agency, work was completed on the development and launch of curated travel packages and day itineraries designed to showcase the unique experiences available across the region. These offerings bring together accommodations, attractions, culinary experiences, outdoor recreation, and cultural assets into bookable visitor experiences that highlight the diversity of the Great Canadian Wilderness just north of Toronto.

This work marks an important step in operationalizing the travel agency model, shifting beyond traditional destination marketing to direct visitor conversion and revenue generation. By creating ready-to-book experiences and structured itineraries, Explorers' Edge is building a platform that helps visitors easily discover and purchase regional tourism products while providing new distribution opportunities for local tourism businesses.

Partnership Development & Collaboration

In a relatively short period of time, Explorers' Edge successfully navigated and supported 42 active partnerships across the region, reflecting the organization's role as a connector within the tourism ecosystem. These partnerships span multiple areas of focus, including tourism product development, community engagement, and collaborative marketing initiatives, helping to align local operators, municipalities, and sector organizations around shared destination-building goals.

Organizational Restructuring & Governance Strengthening

During the year, Explorers' Edge undertook an internal organizational review to ensure the team structure aligns with the evolving scope of the organization and the launch of new initiatives such as the regional travel agency. As part of this process, five updated job descriptions were developed and circulated, clarifying roles, responsibilities, and areas of accountability across the organization. This work was accompanied by the recruitment of key new positions, including a Travel Counselor to support the operational launch of Explorers' Edge Travel Co., and a Partnership Manager to strengthen the organization's capacity for managing its growing portfolio of regional partnerships.

Board of Directors

Explorers' Edge is governed by an independent Board of Directors representing tourism stakeholders across the region. The Board provides strategic oversight, ensures accountability to the Ministry of Tourism, Culture & Gaming, and guides the organization's long-term direction as a Destination Development Organization.

Gabriela Hairabedian, Chair	Four Seasons Algonquin Cabins, South Algonquin
Sarah North-Harris, Vice-Chair	Camping In Ontario
Darren Smith, Treasurer	Lake of Bays Brewing Company, Baysville, Muskoka
Brent Ellerson	Algonquin Outfitters, Muskoka & Algonquin Park
Kate Hood	North Ridge Inn, Sandridge, Almaguin Highlands
Ken Schulz	Rocky Crest Resort, Seguin, Parry Sound
Tristan Berry	Parry Sound KOA Holiday, Parry Sound
Didier Dolivet	JW Marriott The Rosseau Resort & Spa, Minett, Muskoka
Jackie Leung	Fern Glen Inn, Emsdale, Almaguin Highlands

Resource Member

Darlene Leskovar, Regional Development Advisor | Darlene.Leskovar@ontario.ca | (416) 993-7493 | Ministry of Tourism, Culture & Gaming

Explorers' Edge is governed by a nine (9) member Board of Directors representing each of the six sub-regions (Algonquin Park, Almaguin Highlands, Loring-Restoule, Muskoka, west Parry Sound district, and South Algonquin).

As Explorers' Edge continues to diversify its revenue-generating activities and operational scope, strong governance and financial oversight remain essential. The Budget & Finance working group supports the CEO and Board in ensuring financial stewardship across the organization. This includes oversight of complex budgeting and reporting processes, compliance with regulatory requirements, alignment of revenue generation initiatives with strategic priorities, and responsible allocation of resources to support sustainable tourism development.

Over the past year, the organization has strengthened its internal financial and administrative controls through organizational restructuring that included updated job descriptions, recruitment of new team members, and the engagement of a Chartered Professional Accountant to further enhance fiduciary oversight and reporting practices.

Committee and working group terms of reference and governance documentation are maintained on the administrative website, ExplorersEdge.ca. Explorers' Edge continues to undergo annual independent financial audits as part of its commitment to open and transparent governance.

In 2022, Explorers' Edge became an incorporated non-profit under the legal entity name "Explorers' Edge," replacing the operating name "RTO12." All governance documents, policies, and programs are publicly available through the administrative website at ExplorersEdge.ca.

Organizational Leadership & Team

Explorers' Edge operates with a lean and highly collaborative team structure designed to support regional tourism development, industry engagement, and the organization's expanding revenue-generation initiatives. Governance oversight is provided by the Board of Directors, supported by an Executive Committee, HR Working Group, and Finance Working Group to ensure strong fiduciary management, sound governance practices, and organizational accountability.

Reporting directly to the Board of Directors, Chief Executive Officer James Murphy provides overall leadership and strategic direction for the organization. In addition to guiding regional tourism development initiatives, the CEO oversees organizational operations, stakeholder partnerships, industry engagement, and the continued evolution of Explorers' Edge as both a destination development organization and an emerging travel services entity. James brings more than two decades of experience in tourism, hospitality, and destination development, with a focus on building collaborative regional initiatives that strengthen both the visitor economy and community well-being.

Supporting the CEO is a multidisciplinary team responsible for partnerships, sustainability leadership, communications, marketing strategy, and operational coordination.

Current Staff

Jennifer Montpetit, Partnership Manager

Jennifer leads the development and management of strategic partnerships across the region. Her role focuses on strengthening relationships with tourism operators, municipalities, and sector partners while advancing collaborative initiatives that support product development, marketing alignment, and industry growth. She brings extensive experience in project management, stakeholder engagement, and strategic program development across both the public and non-profit sectors.

Rebecca Francis, Sustainability Specialist

Rebecca leads the organization's sustainability and regenerative tourism initiatives. Her work focuses on supporting tourism operators in adopting responsible practices while helping the region strengthen its long-term environmental and community resilience. With graduate-level training in environmental sustainability and professional experience spanning the public, private, and non-profit sectors, she brings a collaborative and solutions-focused approach to advancing sustainable tourism within the region.

Jake Good, Social Media Coordinator and Content Developer

Jake leads digital storytelling and social media engagement across Explorers' Edge's consumer and corporate platforms. A long-time Muskoka resident with more than two decades living and working in the area, Jake brings a strong background in journalism, marketing, and digital communications. His previous experience includes serving as Marketing and Social Media Manager at Sawdust City Brewing and Editor of The Muskokan.

Rachel Dawson, Administration and Travel Services Coordinator

Rachel supports the day-to-day operations of the organization while assisting in the operational coordination of Explorers' Edge's emerging travel services and tourism packaging initiatives. Her role bridges internal administration, partner communications, and travel agency logistics. Rachel brings more than seven years of experience in tourism, events, and destination marketing, including roles with the Town of Bracebridge, Kicking Horse Mountain Resort in British Columbia, and Arowhon Pines Resort in Algonquin Park.

Peter Coish, Strategist and Marketing Agency of Record (Kuration)

Peter serves as Explorers' Edge's Strategist, providing strategic leadership in marketing, communications, and digital engagement. As founder and president of Kuration, Peter brings more than three decades of experience in brand development, marketing strategy, and digital transformation. Through Kuration, he supports Explorers' Edge in brand positioning, content strategy, campaign development, and digital performance optimization.

2025-2026 Organizational Chart

EXPLORERS' EDGE

Organizational Structure - Regional Tourism Organization 12

Naturally Adventurous



Explorers' Edge - RTD12 - Muskoka, Parry Sound, Algonquin Park & Almaguin Highlands

TEAM PROFILES

Explorers' Edge - Regional Tourism Organization 12

Naturally Adventurous

James Murphy	Jennifer Montpetit	Rebecca Francis	Jake Good	Rachel Dawson
<p>James Murphy Chief Executive Officer james@explorersedge.ca</p> <p>Provides overall leadership and strategic direction for Explorers' Edge. Oversees regional tourism development, organizational operations, stakeholder partnerships, and industry engagement. Guides the organization's evolution as both a destination development organization and an emerging travel services entity. Brings more than two decades of experience in tourism, hospitality, and destination development with a focus on building collaborative regional initiatives that strengthen both the visitor economy and community well-being.</p>	<p>Jennifer Montpetit Partnership Manager jennifer@explorersedge.ca</p> <p>Leads development and management of strategic partnerships across the region. Focuses on strengthening relationships with tourism operators, municipalities, and sector partners while advancing collaborative initiatives supporting product development, marketing alignment, and industry growth. Previously held senior roles with Lakeland Holding and Habitat for Humanity Ontario Gateway North, managing multi-million-dollar infrastructure and community projects and securing significant government funding.</p>	<p>Rebecca Francis Sustainability Specialist rebecca@explorersedge.ca</p> <p>Leads the organization's sustainability and regenerative tourism initiatives. Supports tourism operators in adopting responsible practices while helping the region strengthen its long-term environmental and community resilience. Delivers sustainability coaching, practical tools, and pilot projects that demonstrate the business value of responsible tourism. Brings graduate-level training in environmental sustainability and professional experience spanning the public, private, and non-profit sectors.</p>	<p>Jake Good Social Media Coordinator / Content Developer jake@explorersedge.ca</p> <p>Leads digital storytelling and social media engagement across Explorers' Edge's consumer and corporate platforms. A long-time Muskoka resident with more than two decades living and working in the area. Previous experience includes Marketing and Social Media Manager at Sawdust City Brewing and Editor of The Muskokan, creating editorial content highlighting Muskoka, Parry Sound, and Algonquin Park while working closely with local businesses and tourism partners.</p>	<p>Rachel Dawson Administration & Travel Services Coordinator rachel@explorersedge.ca</p> <p>Supports day-to-day operations while assisting in coordination of Explorers' Edge's emerging travel services and tourism packaging initiatives. Bridges internal administration, partner communications, and travel agency logistics as the organization expands its consumer-facing travel offerings. Brings more than seven years of experience in tourism, events, and destination marketing, including roles with the Town of Bracebridge, Kicking Horse Mountain Resort, and Arowhohn Pines Resort in Algonquin Park.</p>

Explorers' Edge - RTD12 - Muskoka, Parry Sound, Algonquin Park & Almaguin Highlands

Peter Coish · Kuration

Strategist & Marketing Agency of Record - External Partner

Role at Explorers' Edge

Provides strategic leadership in marketing, communications, and digital engagement as Explorers' Edge's Strategist and Marketing Agency of Record. Supports brand positioning, content strategy, campaign development, and digital performance optimization — helping ensure the organization effectively reaches and inspires travellers while strengthening the visibility and growth of the Great Canadian Wilderness brand.

Background

Founder and President of Kuration, Peter brings more than three decades of experience in brand development, marketing strategy, and digital transformation. His career spans traditional direct marketing, publishing, and the evolution of digital media and social marketing.

Areas of Focus

<p>Brand Positioning</p> <p>Strengthening the Explorers' Edge and Great Canadian Wilderness brands</p>	<p>Content Strategy</p> <p>Guiding editorial and digital content to engage and inspire travellers</p>	<p>Campaign Development</p> <p>Planning and executing marketing campaigns across channels</p>	<p>Digital Performance</p> <p>Optimizing digital presence, analytics, and audience engagement</p>
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Explorers' Edge Vision, Mission and Mandate

Vision	Mission	Mandate
A Destination Development Organization leading Canadian tourism in regenerative development - ensuring regional communities and tourism stakeholders are resilient and able to thrive long-term.	To steward the regional tourism industry's recovery, rebuild and renewal by developing innovative regenerative programs to ensure long-term sustainability and success for all stakeholders.	Steward / Lead • Research / Innovate • Recover / Build • Sustain • Train • Collaborate

Explorers' Edge Guiding Principles

- Develop regenerative strategies, programs and products that are the result of out-of-the-box thinking, innovation and strategic collaboration.
- Use strategy, process and the business of tourism as guiding beacons to ensure the sustainability of the organization, tourism stakeholders and connected communities.
- Prioritize industry, stakeholder and community communications.

Explorers' Edge Operating Principles

- Lead the recovery and rebuild as the regional Destination Development Organization.
- Build programs and initiatives using the lens of regenerative business thinking.
- Leverage significant strategic partnerships.
- Engage various direct and indirect stakeholders to ensure wider sustainability and growth.
- Build revenue generation for the long-term sustainability of the organization and the regional industry.

Industry Scan

Provincial Travel Indicators

Prior to the pandemic, visitation and spend results from the Research Unit of the Ministry of Tourism, Culture & Sport showed that domestic travel to the region remained strong up until the last year reported (2019). The following data tracks estimated visits, spending, and number of businesses across the region.

4.4M Estimated Visits (2022)	\$1.3B Estimated Spending (2022)	879 Tourism Establishments (2022)
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Regional visit estimates ranged from 3.5 million in 2008 to a peak of 4.8 million in 2011, with consistent performance around 4.3-4.7 million through 2017. Following the pandemic interruption in 2020, the region recovered to 4.4 million visits and \$1 billion in spending in 2021, growing to 4.4 million visits and \$1.3 billion in spending in 2022. Data for 2023 and 2024 were not available at time of publication.

Hotel Industry Scan & 2026 Strategic Outlook

CBRE Hotels - RTO 12 - Muskoka Region - Ontario

A Year in Muskoka Hotels: January through November 2025

55.5% YTD OCCUPANCY	+1.1 pts VS. 2024	\$228.42 YTD ADR	+5.2% ADR GROWTH	\$126.75 YTD REVPAR	+7.4% REVPAR GROWTH
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01 Executive Overview: Explorers' Edge Outperforms Ontario

The region delivered a notably strong 2025, with RTO 12 posting RevPAR growth of +7.4% year-to-date through November - more than four times Ontario's provincial pace of +1.6%. The headline story is one of pricing power: hoteliers successfully lifted average daily rates by 5.2% even as occupancy ticked up modestly (+1.1 points). This ADR-led growth model signals a maturing market where demand quality - not just volume - is improving. The summer peak was exceptional, and the shoulder seasons demonstrated new resilience, particularly in September.

02 Seasonality & Demand Patterns

The region's hotel market is one of Canada's most pronounced seasonal curves. Occupancy swings from a winter low of approximately 30% in January to a summer peak of 83% in August. RTO 12 outperformed Ontario in 7 of 11 months in 2025. September was the strongest outperformance month, while April showed the most dramatic RevPAR variance due to the prior-year Easter timing anomaly.

03 Pricing Power & Average Daily Rate

RTO 12 properties consistently commanded premium rates in 2025, growing ADR at a pace that outstripped Ontario province-wide. The Muskoka submarket - capturing premium resort and cottage-country properties - led with rates exceeding \$310 in peak summer months. This signals strong leisure demand and pricing confidence among operators.

04 Revenue Per Available Room

RevPAR is the definitive profitability metric, combining occupancy and rate into a single measure. RTO 12's RevPAR growth of +7.4% YTD significantly outpaced Ontario's +1.6%, driven by exceptional summer performance and improving shoulder season results.

05 Bracebridge – Gravenhurst Faces Rate Strategy

Despite posting strong occupancy recovery in summer 2025 (+7.4 pts in August), the Bracebridge | Gravenhurst sub-market saw ADR decline or stagnate in multiple months. YTD ADR is essentially flat at \$198.22 vs. \$198.69 in 2024 (-0.2%). This market needs a rate strategy, not just volume recovery.

06 Domestic Leisure is Driving the Story

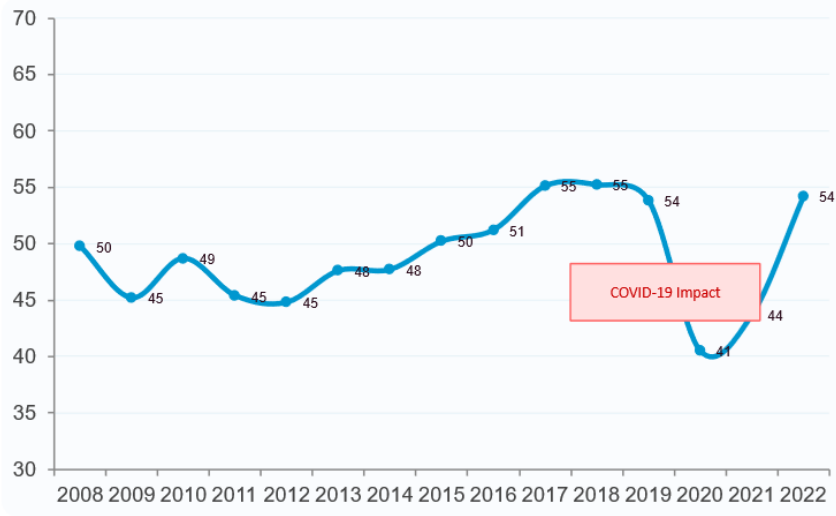
RTO 12's strong performance relative to Ontario — especially in leisure-heavy months — reflects the continued strength of domestic leisure and drive-to-destination demand. The region benefits structurally from its proximity to the GTA. Monitoring US-Canada travel dynamics and currency movements will be important as the macro picture evolves in 2026.

07 Strategic Insights

- **ADR-Led Growth Is Sustainable - For Now** - RTO 12 grew RevPAR by 7.4% primarily through rate increases (+5.2% ADR) rather than occupancy gains (+1.1 pts). This is a healthy signal of demand quality, but operators must monitor rate elasticity heading into a potentially softer consumer spending environment in 2026.
- **September Is the Region's New Secret Weapon** - September 2025 delivered RTO 12's strongest year-over-year outperformance: occupancy surged +3.3 points to 70.3% while RevPAR jumped +7.2% vs. 2024. This shoulder-season strength is a strategic asset.
- **November Is the Cliff** - November 2025 saw RTO 12 occupancy fall to 39.5% (-0.6 pts vs. 2024) with RevPAR down -1.4%. The seasonal drop-off from October's 65.9% to November's 39.5% is a 26-point cliff. Strategic off-season product development is now a priority.
- **Peak Summer Demand Has Nowhere Left to Go** - July and August 2025 saw occupancy of 80.7% and 83.0% respectively - essentially at or near capacity. Peak revenue growth must now come entirely from ADR increases. Properties that have not implemented dynamic pricing and last-room-value optimization are leaving significant money on the table.
- **Domestic Leisure Is Driving the Story** - RTO 12's strong performance relative to Ontario - especially in leisure-heavy months - reflects the continued strength of domestic leisure and drive-to-destination demand. The region benefits structurally from its proximity to the GTA.

HOTEL OCCUPANCY RATE

2008 – 2022 Historical Performance



54.2%

2022 Occupancy
Peak Recovery

Source: CBRE Hotels – reproduced for internal planning purposes only

Macro Environment

The State of Canadian & Ontario Tourism

Canada's tourism sector entered 2025 in a position of genuine strength. National tourism revenues reached \$129.7 billion and contributed \$50.8 billion to GDP - confirming the sector's role as a foundational pillar of the Canadian economy. Employment supported by tourism stands at approximately 1.8 million jobs coast to coast.

\$129.7B Canada 2024 National Tourism Revenues	\$50.8B National Tourism GDP Contribution	1.8M Canada-wide Jobs Supported by Tourism
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Ontario remains Canada's single largest tourism economy. The province generated \$33.4 billion in tourism GDP and supports 360,000 jobs. Ontario travellers and visitors collectively spent \$24.8 billion in the province in 2024, a signal of resilient domestic demand despite macroeconomic pressures.

\$33.4B Ontario Tourism GDP (2024)	360K Province-wide Jobs Supported	\$24.8B Visitor Spending in Ontario (2024)
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Explorers' Edge is Outperforming the Province

Against this strong provincial backdrop, the Explorers' Edge region - Muskoka, Algonquin Park, Parry Sound and Almaguin Highlands - delivered its most significant year of rate-led growth on record. Drawing on CBRE Hotels monthly data through November 2025, RTO 12's hotel sector grew RevPAR by 7.4% year-over-year, more than four times Ontario's provincial growth rate of 1.6%. Peak summer occupancy reached 83% in August 2025 - essentially at capacity - signalling that future revenue growth must come from rate increases, not volume.

Regional visitor research reinforces the hotel data. According to the Explorers' Edge 2023 Visitor Survey, guests explore an average of 2.4 subregions per visit, with 80% visiting Muskoka and 50% visiting Algonquin Park. Nearly half of all visitors stay five or more nights - a profile that drives exceptional yield per visitor and demonstrates the region's ability to attract high-value, multi-night leisure travellers.

Travel Costs: Pressure Persisting but Moderating

Tourism consumer prices remain elevated - approximately 19% above 2019 - but annual inflation within the sector is slowing. RTO 12 grew ADR at 5.2% - more than double the provincial rate of 2.1% - confirming the region's premium is holding and widening.

Domestic Travel: The Region's Structural Advantage

Domestic tourism continues to carry Ontario's tourism economy. Ontario domestic travel spending reached \$19.0 billion in the first nine months of 2024, growing 9.0% year-over-year. As a drive-to leisure destination within 2-3 hours of the GTA, the Explorers' Edge region is structurally positioned to capture this spending. Visitor research confirms quality demand - 80% of regional visitors travel to Muskoka, 50% visit Algonquin Park, and nearly half stay five or more nights.

International Travel: Recovery Underway, New Risks Emerging

International visitor spending in Ontario reached \$10.1 billion in the first nine months of 2024, improving from a 4.5% mid-year decline to -2.2%, with long-term recovery averaging +3.9% per year since 2019. However, 2026 introduces a new layer of risk: evolving US-Canada trade and diplomatic dynamics may suppress cross-border travel intent in the near term.

Economic Conditions: Cautious Recovery

The macroeconomic picture has improved materially. Easing inflation and Bank of Canada rate cuts through 2024-25 have improved consumer confidence. Ontario's total tourism sector spent \$29.1 billion in the first nine months of 2024 - a 4.8% increase over 2023. The November-March period remains the critical risk window.

Industry Confidence: Operators Are Optimistic

On the ground, operator sentiment is positive. The Explorers' Edge Business Confidence Survey reports increased confidence and strong demand expectations across Muskoka, Parry Sound, and Algonquin Park. The challenge and opportunity for 2026 is extending that confidence into the shoulder and off-season months.

Region Specific Data

Strategic Rationale: Why This Plan, Why Now

The convergence of strong national and provincial fundamentals with RTO 12's demonstrated outperformance creates a clear strategic window. Three imperatives define the rationale for this operational plan:

1 - Extend the Season to Protect Revenue Resilience

The region's July-August capacity ceiling means incremental RevPAR gains can only come from shoulder season development. September 2025 already demonstrated this opportunity - occupancy surged to 70.3% (+3.3 pts YoY) with RevPAR growing 7.2%. Structured investment in fall and winter programming, group business, and experiential product is the single highest-return initiative available to the region in 2026.

2 - Lead With Rate, Protect the Premium Position

The Explorers' Edge region commands a premium over most Ontario leisure markets. Area properties delivered average daily rates exceeding \$310 in peak summer 2025. Sustaining this premium requires continued investment in destination brand strength, product quality, and collective marketing - ensuring the region is positioned as a high-value destination rather than competing on price.

3 - Leverage Data to Navigate Uncertainty

2026 brings genuine uncertainty: potential consumer spending softness, evolving US-Canada travel dynamics, and competitive pressure from urban markets. The region's domestic leisure base - proximity to the GTA and strong drive-to-destination demand - provides structural insulation. This plan is built with data intelligence at its core, with ongoing monitoring through the Explorers' Edge Regional Data Hub, CBRE monthly benchmarks, and the Business Confidence Survey.

The data is clear: the Explorers' Edge region is performing. This plan is designed to protect what is working, address what is not, and position the destination to grow sustainably through 2026 and beyond.

Climate Impact

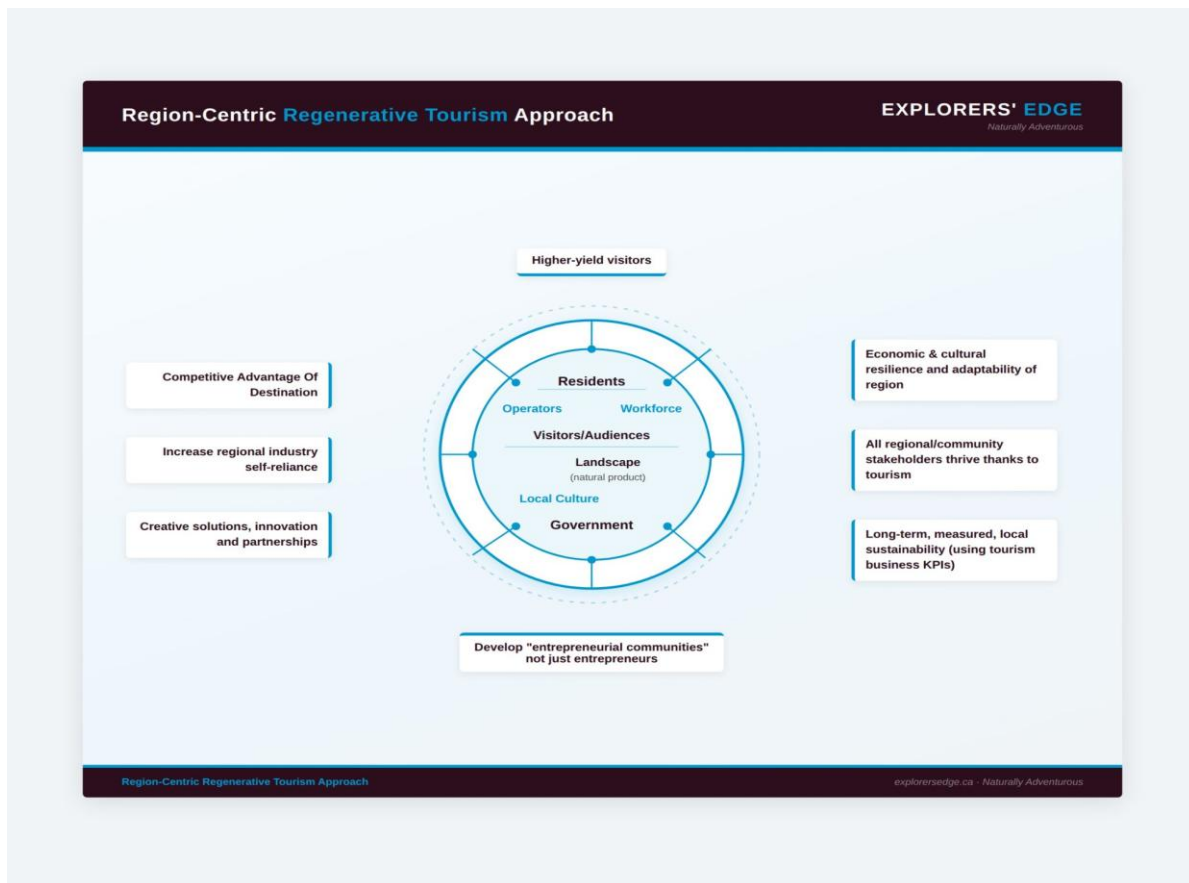
Climate change continues to present both challenges and opportunities for the Explorers' Edge region. Shifts in seasonal weather patterns affect the timing and quality of key visitor experiences, including winter activities dependent on snowfall and ice conditions, fall foliage timing, and water levels affecting paddling and boating. The organization continues to monitor climate-related impacts on regional tourism and works with operators to build resilience and adaptability into their business models.

At the same time, growing consumer interest in nature-based travel and responsible tourism practices presents an opportunity for the region to position itself as a leader in sustainable, regenerative tourism development - attracting values-aligned visitors who are motivated by authentic connection with natural environments.

Regenerative Review: Staying the Course in an Uncertain World

In 2021, Explorers' Edge embarked on an ambitious Region-Centric Regenerative Tourism Approach, designed to create innovative solutions for industry sustainability, wider community development, and organizational resilience. This positioned Explorers' Edge as one of the first Regional Tourism Organizations in Canada to formally operationalize a regenerative framework.

The diagram below illustrates the foundational model: community stakeholders - Residents, Operators, Workforce, Visitors, Local Culture, Landscape, and Government - at the centre, surrounded by the intended outcomes of the region-centric approach. The model is not a hierarchy. It is a system, in which every stakeholder group is both a beneficiary and a contributor.



Destination Canada subsequently launched its own regenerative strategy in alignment with these principles, hosting its first International Stewardship Symposium in 2023. For F26-27, the question is not whether this direction is correct - the evidence has settled that. It is how to deepen and accelerate the work already underway.

Destination Canada’s regenerative corridor strategy and International Stewardship Symposium align directly with the framework Explorers’ Edge established in 2021 - national validation of a regionally led vision.

The Region-Centric Regenerative approach is not just a philosophy - it is an organizational structure. The diagram below maps Explorers’ Edge’s full functional architecture as a Destination Development Organization, spanning seven interdependent domains.



This structure demonstrates that Explorers' Edge is not a marketing organization with regenerative ambitions. It is a Destination Development Organization with a fully articulated operational architecture across all seven domains: Marketing & PR; Products & Experiences; Operator & Workforce Development; Infrastructure; Governance & Government Relations; Regenerative Community Development; and Revenue Generation.

Transportation & Access

Three significant transportation developments are converging in F26-27 to make the Explorers' Edge region more accessible than it has been in a generation: the continued growth of Great Lakes cruise tourism through Parry Sound, the return of the Ontario Northlander rail service, and the expansion of Air Canada's Landline motorcoach program into Muskoka. In parallel, Explorers' Edge will begin research and regional coordination toward the development of a more comprehensive electric vehicle (EV) charging network across the region, supporting the transition to low-carbon travel and improving accessibility for EV travellers.

Great Lakes Cruise – Parry Sound

14 Cruise calls in Parry Sound (2025)	800+ Great Lakes port visits forecast (2026)	175,000+ Passenger visits forecast (2026)	US\$300M+ Regional economic impact forecast (2026)
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Parry Sound continued building momentum as a Great Lakes cruise destination in 2025, with a 14-call season that included 12 visits by Pearl Mist and 2 fall calls by Hanseatic Inspiration. A key watchpoint for F26-27 is waterfront infrastructure. Priority 2 dock repairs - required before vessels larger than the Island Queen can use the Parry Sound dock - are estimated at approximately \$625,000, with the Town engaged with DFO on the path forward.

F26-27 Priorities

- Advance cruise shore excursion product in partnership with the Town of Parry Sound and regional operators
- Develop packaged day-trip and overnight itineraries linked to cruise arrivals, bookable through the Regenerative Travel Agency
- Monitor dock infrastructure progress and advocate for Priority 2 repairs as a regional economic development investment
- Track and report cruise visitor spending and regional economic impact

Ontario Northlander - Rail Return

<p>740 km Toronto to Timmins corridor</p>	<p>16 Stops along the corridor</p>	<p>4-7x Weekly service (seasonal)</p>	<p>\$100M+ Rail infrastructure investment</p>
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The Ontario Northlander is returning, with service expected to begin in 2026 operating between Toronto and Timmins. For the Explorers' Edge region, the critical stops are Huntsville, Bracebridge, Gravenhurst, and Washago. The first new Northlander trainset arrived January 8, 2026; more than \$100 million in rail infrastructure work is nearing completion; and the North Bay Rail Bypass is complete, reducing trip time by approximately 15 minutes.

F26-27 Priorities

- Develop last-mile product and itineraries linked to Northlander stops, bookable through the Regenerative Travel Agency
- Partner with Ontario Northland on marketing co-investment opportunities and joint packaging
- Position car-light Muskoka travel as a differentiated offer for GTA audiences motivated by sustainability and ease

Air Canada Landline - Muskoka Airport

<p>2x daily Proposed YQA-YYZ return service</p>	<p>Global Air Canada network + Aeroplan integration</p>	<p>Year-round Proposed service including winter</p>
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Air Canada's Landline program - which replaces short-haul feeder flying with premium motorcoach connections into Toronto Pearson - has expanded meaningfully over the past year. Stakeholder engagement work positions Muskoka Airport (YQA) as a potential addition to the Landline network, with a targeted June 2026 launch of two daily year-round roundtrip services between YQA and Toronto Pearson (YYZ). If implemented, this would represent the single most significant access breakthrough for the Explorers' Edge region in a generation.

Note: As of the date of this plan, a public Air Canada announcement confirming Muskoka service has not been made. This section reflects stakeholder-stage intelligence and active partnership development. EE will update accordingly upon public launch confirmation.

Priority Projects: 2026-2027

The following section outlines the six priority project areas that define Explorers' Edge's strategic agenda for fiscal 2026-2027. Each area builds on the foundation established in F25-26 and is oriented toward deepening impact, scaling successful initiatives, and advancing the organization's regenerative mandate.

1. Revenue Generation

Revenue generation is a sustained organizational priority. EE's model must evolve beyond core government funding to ensure long-term financial resilience - for the organization, the sector, and the communities it serves. Explorers' Edge leadership and staff lead a multi-pronged effort to grow and diversify the funding base.

Foundation: What F25-26 Established

- Budget & Finance working group continues to strengthen fiscal governance
- AGCO licence explored, to possibly enable regenerative contest and promotional programming tied to the TICO licence
- Regional Tourism Summit registration monetized; event sponsorship framework developed
- Advertising and consulting revenue streams identified and scoped

F26-27 Plan

- Scale Explorers' Edge Regenerative Travel Agency (RTA) as the organization's primary earned-revenue engine, with bookings, packaging fees, and supplier commissions tracked against annual targets
- Expand the event sponsorship program across EE's full event calendar, including the Regional Tourism Summit and partner-facing programming
- Pursue consulting and advisory fee revenue from partner organizations seeking to apply EE's regenerative planning model
- Activate AGCO promotional program through TICO-registered channels to drive RTA bookings while generating community benefit
- Report monthly to the Budget & Finance working group on earned revenue progress and diversification targets

2. Growing the Regenerative Travel Agency (RTA)

Explorers' Edge Regenerative Travel Agency launched in F25-26 following TICO registration in 2024, the hiring of a Travel Counsellor, and an initial co-creation lab to develop bookable itineraries. F26-27 is the year of scale - moving from proof-of-concept to a functioning regional travel business that generates revenue, moves higher-yield visitors, and reinforces the regenerative brand.

Foundation: What F25-26 Established

- TICO registration secured; Revenue Manager hired; RTA operational
- Travel package co-creation lab completed; first high-yield itineraries developed and tested
- ILTM (International Luxury Travel Market) partnership attendance to build export-ready product and trade relationships
- Air Canada and Landlines luxury coach service partnership developed by the Muskoka Airport, including winter-season access
- AGCO licence and contest framework explored to generate leads for RTA

F26-27 Plan

- Expand the package catalogue: scale from pilot itineraries to a full seasonal offering across summer, shoulder, and winter, with products co-created with regional operators and fed by the Partnership Fund
- Deepen the Landlines / Air Canada partnership - review volume commitments, marketing co-investment, and international source market targeting
- Use relationships and FAM tour alumni (Rendezvous Canada, Ontario Northlander, FlixBus) to generate inbound trade bookings through the RTA

- Pursue FIFA-adjacent and major-event travel demand as a high-visibility acquisition channel
- Track and report RTA performance against regenerative KPIs: yield per visitor, operator revenue impact, seasonality distribution, and community reinvestment

3. Sub-Regional Product Development & Co-Creating Community Ecosystems

Differentiated product is the foundation of the RTA and the competitive advantage of the region. EE's role is to catalyze and co-create - not to produce product unilaterally, but to convene operators, communities, and anchor partners around shared priorities and ensure the resulting experiences are bookable, export-ready, and regenerative in character.

Foundation: What F25-26 Established

- Tourism Co-Creation Labs conducted in targeted sub-regions including Parry Sound-area communities
- Parry Sound cruise shuttle experience developed as a water-based gateway product
- Partnership Program reoriented to prioritize collaborative, bookable, and export-ready experiences; 70+ applications received
- Budget allocation for Indigenous, Women in Tourism (WIT), and 2SLGBTQ+ product streams; budget allocation for sustainability programming

F26-27 Plan

- Continue sub-regional co-creation labs in under-resourced communities, with explicit linkage to RTA packaging so new product has a distribution pathway from day one
- Deepen Indigenous, WIT, and 2SLGBTQ+ product development with sustained Partnership Program investment and integration into luxury and export-ready itineraries
- Expand sustainability and regenerative product portfolio: experiences that demonstrate measurable positive impact on communities, ecology, and culture
- Formalize the Partnership Program's role as the primary feeder for RTA product - with co-investment, co-creation, and co-marketing built into Partnership Fund agreements
- Pursue rural equity in product distribution: ensure communities beyond the core Muskoka corridor have visible, bookable product through EE channels

4. Investment Attraction

EE plays a lead role in attracting investment in regional access, infrastructure, and visitor flow - particularly for international and inter-provincial markets where individual operators cannot engage at scale. The Air Canada and Landlines partnership represents the most significant investment attraction effort underway, and F26-27 is the year to demonstrate and measure its impact.

Foundation: What F25-26 Established

- Landlines luxury coach partnership discussed, bringing urban visitors to the region outside of highway-dependent peak periods
- FAM tours developed for Air Canada, Rendezvous Canada, Ontario Northlander, and FlixBus - building trade awareness and editorial coverage
- ILTM partnership attendance opened relationships with international luxury trade buyers
- FIFA-adjacent travel interest scoped as a high-profile demand catalyst

F26-27 Plan

- Formalize and expand the Landlines partnership and our role: move from pilot to a structured seasonal program with marketing commitments, defined routes, and RTA-linked booking capability
- Pursue regional route development with data from pilot-year demand to support the business case for expanded leisure-market service
- Convert ILTM relationships into confirmed trade bookings through Explorers' Edge RTA targeting at least one new international market as an active source
- Use FAM alumni networks - Ontario Northlander, Rendezvous Canada, FlixBus, and media contacts - for sustained earned media and trade distribution in F26-27

- Track investment attraction outcomes against regional economic impact: new room nights, visitor spending, and operator revenue attributable to access partnerships

5. Differentiated Marketing for Higher Conversion

EE's marketing mandate has evolved. With approximately \$3.5 million in total regional tourism marketing investment across all players, duplication is the dominant risk. EE's role is to lead where others cannot - differentiated channels, higher-yield audiences, and a direct conversion pathway into the RTA rather than stopping at awareness or inspiration.

Foundation: What F25-26 Established

- Identified social media fatigue and market duplication as strategic risks; redirected investment toward conversion-focused tactics
- Curated travel package marketing developed and linked to RTA booking pathways
- AI efficiency tools piloted in content workflows; operator training in Facebook Ad Manager, iPhone photography, and content marketing delivered
- AGCO promotional framework reviewed; PR and earned media program expanded with source-market targeting
- Marketing budget of \$304k focused on economic outcomes: room nights, visitor spend, and measurable regional impact rather than reach alone

F26-27 Plan

- Anchor the marketing strategy in RTA conversion: every channel, campaign, and content asset has a defined pathway to an Explorers' Edge Travel Co. booking or lead
- Scale AI tools for content efficiency while maintaining authentic regional voice - with clear editorial guardrails and human oversight at brand touchpoints
- Continue and deepen operator digital literacy programming: AI for marketing, content strategy, and channel management delivered as accessible, practical training
- Expand earned media and PR program targeting source markets identified through RTA booking data and ILTM trade intelligence
- Maintain evergreen content investment to support rural equity and keep smaller communities visible and competitive alongside anchor destinations
- Report on marketing performance using a regenerative KPI dashboard: economic impact per dollar invested, visitor yield, seasonality distribution, and operator benefit

6. Local Workforce Training & Development

Labour gaps remain one of the most significant structural constraints on growth across the Explorers' Edge region. With revised federal immigration and temporary foreign worker policies reducing access to international labour, and local residents now identified as the most sustainable talent source, EE has committed to building a multi-partner workforce ecosystem that connects training, career pathways, and housing stability into a coherent regional offer.

F25-26 moved this priority from strategy to action, delivering two flagship programs and establishing the foundational partnerships that will define the F26-27 agenda.

Foundation: Inclusive Service Excellence (November 2025)

In partnership with OTEC (Ontario Tourism Education Corporation) and the Town of Huntsville, EE delivered the Inclusive Service Excellence full-day workshop on November 18, 2025 at Canvas Brewing Co. in Huntsville. Led by certified facilitator Kadine Cooper, the session equipped up to 20 front-line and supervisory tourism staff with skills in emotional intelligence, bias recognition, inclusive service design, and service recovery. Participants received OTEC certification upon completion.

Foundation: Lakehead University & Parks Canada - Tourism SHSM (October 2025)

On October 30, 2025, Lakehead University's Office of Community Engagement and Lifelong Learning and Parks Canada delivered a Specialist High Skills Major (SHSM) reach ahead experience at Bethune Memorial House in Gravenhurst. Students from Trillium Lakeheads District School Board participated in an Innovation, Creativity, and

Entrepreneurship (ICE) Challenge, toured a local tourism business, and explored career pathways in the visitor economy.

F26-27 Plan: Front-Line & Operator Training

- Continue and expand the Inclusive Service Excellence program to additional sub-regions - moving from a single Huntsville delivery toward a repeatable regional training calendar
- Develop a regional training schedule that is accessible to operators across the full Explorers' Edge geography, including rural and under-resourced communities
- Integrate workforce training as a component of the Partnership Fund program, enabling operators to access training support as part of their co-investment agreement

F26-27 Plan: Youth Pathways - Lakehead University & Ontario Hostelry Institute (OHI)

EE is deepening its youth engagement strategy through two parallel streams: the Lakehead University SHSM program, which connects high school students to real-world tourism careers, and a new potential partnership with OHI - We Are Hospitality (weareohi.ca), an Ontario Hostelry Institute initiative that places industry speakers directly into high schools and builds structured pathways from classroom to regional employment.

Commitment to Rural Tourism Development

Explorers' Edge is committed to ensuring that tourism development benefits communities across the entire region, including smaller and rural destinations that may not have the same resources or market visibility as larger tourism centres. As a regional organization serving Muskoka, Parry Sound District, Almaguin Highlands, South Algonquin and the communities surrounding Algonquin Park, EE works to create a more equitable playing field for tourism operators regardless of size, capacity, or geographic location. Tourism represents a critical economic driver in many rural communities, supporting small businesses, sustaining local services, and strengthening community vitality.

Through initiatives such as the Partnership Program, Tourism Co-Creation Labs, workforce development programs, and the Explorers' Edge Regenerative Travel Agency, the organization actively supports rural operators in developing market-ready experiences, accessing marketing and training opportunities, and connecting to new distribution channels. By ensuring that rural communities are represented in bookable itineraries, regional storytelling, and partnership investments, Explorers' Edge helps extend the benefits of tourism more evenly across the region while strengthening the overall visitor economy.

Supporting Ontario's Provincial Tourism Strategy

Explorers' Edge supports the direction outlined in Tourism Industry Association of Ontario's "Forward Motion" strategic playbook, which provides a sector-led roadmap to strengthen Ontario's visitor economy through coordinated investment, workforce development, improved transportation access, sustainability, and collaborative leadership. The strategy identifies six core priorities - attracting more visitors and spending, expanding transportation infrastructure, strengthening workforce resilience, facilitating product development and capacity investment, advancing practical sustainability, and fostering collaboration across the tourism ecosystem. Explorers' Edge recognizes that these priorities align closely with the region's own strategic agenda and reinforce the importance of coordinated action between provincial, regional, and local tourism partners to drive long-term growth and competitiveness.

As a Regional Tourism Organization, Explorers' Edge will contribute to the implementation of the playbook by advancing regional product development, supporting workforce training initiatives, strengthening transportation and access partnerships, and continuing to develop regenerative travel experiences that attract higher-yield visitors to rural communities. Through collaboration with industry partners, operators, municipalities, Indigenous communities, and provincial organizations, EE will help translate the strategy's provincial vision into on-the-ground action within the region. In doing so, Explorers' Edge will continue to support a stronger, more resilient visitor economy while ensuring that the benefits of tourism growth extend to communities across the Great Canadian Wilderness region.

Explorers' Edge 2026-2027 Government Pillars

Explorers' Edge structures its work around the following government pillars, which guide how the organization allocates resources, develops programs, and reports outcomes to the Ministry of Tourism, Culture & Gaming.

Product Development

To enhance visitor experience through well-designed tourism products that meet current and future visitor demand. Differentiated product is the competitive foundation of the Explorers' Edge region and the primary engine of the Regenerative Travel Agency. In F26-27, EE will deepen its commitment to sub-regional product development - particularly in the Almaguin Highlands, Loring-Restoule, west Parry Sound district, and South Algonquin.

Investment Attraction / Investor Relations

To increase investment in the tourism industry to enhance visitor experience. EE's approach is to pursue the investment it can uniquely catalyze - transportation access, trade partnerships, and international distribution - rather than competing for the same capital as larger regions. In F26-27, EE will formalize and scale the Landlines partnership, pursue regional Air Canada route development, convert ILTM trade relationships into confirmed bookings, and advance last-mile packaging for the Ontario Northlander train service.

Workforce Development & Training

To facilitate and support the attraction, development, and retention of a tourism workforce to enhance the visitor experience. Workforce development remains the top priority of the EE Board. Labour gaps across the visitor economy are structural and persistent. In F26-27, EE will scale programs across the region, formalize a Regional Workforce Ecosystem working group, and advance the Catalyst Housing agenda in active dialogue with Tapestry Capital and the Muskoka Community Land Trust.

Marketing

To increase awareness of Ontario as a travel destination and increase conversion in target markets. In F26-27, every EE marketing channel, campaign, and content asset will have a defined pathway to a Regenerative Travel Agency booking or qualified lead. The \$304,000 marketing budget is structured to drive room nights, visitor spending, and measurable regional economic outcomes - not solely website traffic or social reach.

Partnership

To become a catalyst in building strategic alignment and promoting collaboration within the industry. EE's \$251,000 Partnership Allocation funds a co-investment program that matches up to 50% of stakeholder investment in experience development, marketing, workforce initiatives, and tourism infrastructure. The previous Partnership Fund cycle attracted 70+ applications - a clear signal of regional demand and operator confidence.

Industry Communication, Liaison & Accountability

EE maintains regular communication with the regional tourism industry through industry newsletters, social media, town halls, sub-regional in-person engagement, the annual AGM, and the Regional Tourism Summit. In F26-27, EE will continue to deepen its sub-regional presence and continue its Board of Directors recruitment and renewal process.

High Level Goals for Each Pillar

Governance & Administration - \$367,000

- Governance training, compliance, and corporate filings
- Employee Manual review and updates: remote work, AI/technology use, respectful workplace standards, privacy
- Bookkeeper to Controller/Accountant upgrade - strengthening financial management and reporting
- Finance and Administration: office rent, phone, office expenses
- Travel: TIAO Conference, industry training and investment
- Industry Relations, Stakeholder Engagement, and Regional Tourism Summit
- Tools and Technology upgrades
- Additional strategic memberships: Culinary Tourism Alliance, Golf Ontario
- Budget & Finance Committee ongoing

Marketing - \$304,000

- RTA Marketing - driving bookings through Explorers' Edge Regenerative Travel Agency
- Content Development / Guest Authors / FAM Tours: FIFA, Rendez-vous Canada, Air Canada, Ontario Northlander, FlixBus
- Promotions / Contests / Incentives: AGCO-licensed regenerative contest program
- PR Earned Media: builds destination credibility and influences traveller decisions in key source markets
- Marketing Strategist (Retainer)
- Creative Development
- Work with Destination Ontario broadcast and product leads

Product Development - \$115,000

- Indigenous, Women in Tourism (WIT) & 2SLGBTQ+ product development - \$25,000
- Sustainability Programming - \$30,000
- Continuation of testing and assessing high-yield affinity product: luxury travel, pet-friendly experiences, golf and resorting, experiences for new Canadians and urban dwellers
- Experiential Product Development: Motorcycle Touring, Cycling, Visiting Friends & Relatives (VFR)
- Product Development related to RTA Workshops - Co-Creation Labs (sub-regional focus: Almaguin Highlands, Loring-Restoule, west Parry Sound, South Algonquin)
- Research Programs: CBRE & Context Research Group

Workforce Development - \$85,000

- Communication, Training and Outreach
- High school programming - Lakehead University (Tourism SHSM) & Parks Canada
- Inclusive Service Excellence - expanded regional delivery
- Catalyst Housing - multi-partner training development, community bond integration (Tapestry Capital, Muskoka CLT)
- Big Applause Awards - workforce recognition
- Women in Tourism Events
- Regional Tourism Job Content Marketing

Investment Attraction - Staff Resources

- Air Canada & Landlines Luxury Coach Program - formalize and scale from pilot to structured seasonal program
- Northlander train service - packages, itineraries, and last-mile product development
- Great Lakes Cruise strategy - continued partnership with Town of Parry Sound
- ILTM (International Luxury Travel Market) - convert trade relationships into confirmed RTA bookings
- FAM tour alumni follow-up: Rendezvous Canada, Ontario Northlander, FlixBus, Air Canada
- FIFA-adjacent travel market development

Partnership Allocation - \$251,000

- Support product development projects that align with EE's regenerative tourism objectives, with priority given to collaborative, bookable, and export-ready experiences integrated into Explorers' Edge Regenerative Travel Agency
- Enhance marketing strategies that align with Explorers' Edge conversion and economic impact outcomes
- Encourage programs that address labour shortages, upskill employees, and foster improved workplace conditions
- Marketing & Development - \$116,000
- Workforce Development - \$10,000
- Stakeholder Training Workshops (includes Product Development) - \$40,000

Explorers' Edge Consumer Marketing Plan

Explorers' Edge will continue evolving its consumer marketing approach to reflect the changing tourism landscape, shifting traveller behaviour, and the operationalization of the Explorers' Edge Regenerative Travel Agency (RTA). Building on the foundational work completed in F25-26, the organization will maintain core marketing components while testing new tactics, technologies, and partnerships that support conversion-driven outcomes.

The primary focus of consumer marketing in F26-27 is to build engaged audiences, generate qualified travel leads, and convert interest into bookings through the RTA and curated regional experiences. At the same time, Explorers' Edge will continue promoting the region's core visitor offerings - stay, eat, and do - through content marketing, storytelling, and collaborative campaigns with tourism operators and sector partners.

A longer-term objective remains the development of destination loyalty: increasing repeat visitation, length of stay, and visitor advocacy through authentic experiences rooted in the region's nature, culture, and communities.

The Explorers' Edge Travel Lounge

The Explorers' Edge Travel Lounge continues to be developed and may serve as the organization's branded content hub - the destination where targeted audiences discover curated travel ideas and value-added information organized around their interests and travel motivations. In F26-27, the platform will evolve from a content destination into a conversion engine, with clearer pathways from inspiration to RTA booking at every stage of the visitor journey.

F26-27 Platform Enhancements

- Virtual information sessions and travel planning webinars
- Expert demonstrations, operator spotlights, and regional storytelling
- Podcast and video content series
- Digital memberships and community-building tools
- Travel concierge services and direct trip-planning support
- Experiential pop-ups, industry activations, and live events
- Incentives, contests, and experiential giveaways (AGCO-licensed)
- AI-assisted planning and content personalization tools

The Travel Lounge and the Regenerative Travel Agency are designed to work in tandem: the Lounge builds the audience; the RTA converts it.

Marketing Goals

The overall goals of the F26-27 marketing program, anchored in the guiding principle of 'personalize, inspire, and convert,' are:

- **Build Awareness:** Increase visibility of the Explorers' Edge region and its tourism products in target markets
- **Engage:** Connect with travel planners through compelling, story-driven content across digital and experiential channels
- **Convert:** Turn interest into confirmed bookings and experiences through the Regenerative Travel Agency
- **Retain:** Encourage repeat visitation and build destination advocacy among past visitors
- **Co-Create:** Develop authentic content and campaigns in genuine partnership with operators, municipalities, and sector partners
- **Measure:** Evaluate performance against economic impact metrics - room nights, visitor spending, and regional benefit - not reach alone

Market Positioning & Audience Strategy

Rather than focusing solely on geographic source markets, Explorers' Edge will continue targeting audiences based on affinity experiences and travel motivations - recognizing that today's travellers seek experiences aligned with

their interests, not destinations defined by administrative boundaries. This affinity-based approach allows EE to maintain marketing agility in response to shifting geopolitical, economic, and travel conditions.

Primary Affinity Audiences

- Outdoor recreation and adventure travellers
- Culinary and agritourism enthusiasts
- Cultural and heritage explorers
- Wellness and nature-based travellers
- Pet-friendly travel audiences
- Cycling, paddling, and trail enthusiasts
- Luxury and high-yield visitors (international and inter-provincial)
- New Canadians and urban dwellers seeking accessible wilderness experiences

Data & Marketing Intelligence

Explorers' Edge will continue leveraging Google Analytics 4 (GA4) and other digital intelligence tools to measure engagement, user behaviour, and conversion performance across all marketing channels. In F26-27, marketing success will be evaluated primarily against conversion and economic impact metrics rather than reach alone. The shift reflects EE's broader strategic reorientation: approximately \$3.5 million in total regional tourism marketing investment flows across municipal, regional, provincial, federal, and global players. EE's competitive advantage is conversion.

Primary Performance Indicators

- Engagement with curated Travel Lounge content
- Lead generation and qualified audience growth
- Travel planning inquiries and concierge interactions
- RTA experience and package bookings
- Partner participation and co-campaign collaboration
- Room nights, visitor spending, and regional economic impact attributable to EE marketing activity

Content Development & Partnerships

Explorers' Edge will significantly expand in-house creative content production in F26-27, developing storytelling that highlights regional experiences, local operators, and authentic community voices - content that cannot be replicated by provincial or national marketing players because it is genuinely rooted in place. Tourism operators, municipalities, sector organizations, and destination partners will continue to have opportunities to co-create content, experiences, and marketing campaigns through EE's platforms.

Looking Ahead: Strategic Marketing Review

Fiscal 2026-27 will serve as an important evaluation and transition year for consumer marketing at Explorers' Edge. The organization will undertake a comprehensive marketing strategy review, drawing on insights from across the system - operators and industry stakeholders, municipal and sector partners, consumer data and marketing performance metrics, emerging travel trends, and RTA booking data - to shape the next generation of EE's consumer marketing approach.

Guiding Principle: Personalize, inspire, and convert. Every marketing investment in F26-27 should be traceable to an audience reached, a lead generated, or a booking confirmed - and ultimately to measurable economic benefit for the operators, communities, and region EE exists to serve.

2026-2027 BOP: Objectives, Key Activities and Timelines, Performance Measures

Governance & Administration

Governance

Priority / Strategic Focus	Objectives	Key Activities / Tactics	Performance Indicator
Govern EE through effective leadership, strong equitable industry representation, and optimal governance, strategies, and process. Hold AGM. Budget & Finance Committee active and reporting.	Ensure the Board runs efficiently and effectively; that Directors and stakeholders are informed about and benefitting from EE's regenerative destination development model.	Update the Board quarterly with full BOP execution review. Review activities and finances at every Board meeting. Conduct Board reviews via surveys of RTA plans and performance against targets; adjust as required. Conduct annual multi-stage strategic planning confirmation. Annual onboarding for new Directors.	4 quarterly updates provided to the Board. 90% Board attendance at update meetings. Minimum 3 actionable inputs incorporated per quarter. Minimum 4 financial and activity reports reviewed annually. Minimum 2 new strategic objectives identified and adopted.
Ensure organizational decisions meet the needs of both the tourism business community and the community as a whole - tourism SMEs, employees, and residents.	Ensure a level playing field for all sub-regional stakeholders. Advance board diversity to reflect the region.	Encourage Board participation at sub-regional events and workshops. Board champions recruit new Directors aligned with the Regenerative Tourism Strategy. Continue governance training and diversity, inclusion, and equity (DIE) training.	Minimum 10 sub-regional events/workshops attended collectively by Board members. 100% of Board members completing governance and DIE training annually.
Share regenerative program development and destination development outcomes. Consult and engage industry and community stakeholders continuously.	Communicate often and effectively to inform stakeholders and to solicit critical feedback on programs.	Develop committees and working groups as needed that are inclusive to the community. Co-Creation Lab sessions conducted to ensure stakeholder input and buy-in.	80% of committee or working group membership representing diverse or underrepresented community groups.

Operations

Priority / Strategic Focus	Objectives	Key Activities / Tactics	Performance Indicator
CEO and Partnership Manager along with Travel Counsellor leads administration of the RTA and multiple revenue streams.	Assist CEO in managing revenue streams, reporting, and accountability across all BOP deliverables.	Weekly team / status meetings (40+ annually). Monitor BOP and TPA deliverables and finances. Optimize revenue via advertising, packages, memberships, and RTA sales. Development of in-community regenerative investment from new revenue streams. Budget & Finance Committee active with value-added members.	40 weekly status meetings held annually. RTA generates minimum \$30,000 gross sales. Minimum 1 community reinvestment recipient identified and awarded from RTA revenue.
Maintain positive work culture and professional development standards.	Ensure professional standards are exceeded and a positive, high-retention work environment is sustained.	Semi-annual meetings with HR consultant to review best practices, culture, and staff satisfaction. Staff performance evaluations completed annually.	Outcomes of staff performance evaluations reported to Board. Minimum 2 professional development certificates completed by staff.

Industry Communication, Liaison & Accountability

Priority / Strategic Focus	Objectives	Key Activities / Tactics	Performance Indicator
Host 5th Annual Regional Tourism Summit	Distinguish EE as a leader in rural destination development. Provide informative sessions, speakers, panels, and exceptional networking. Generate revenue.	Begin planning in Q1 for November 2026 Regional Tourism Summit. Identify speakers not on the standard Canadian/provincial circuit; invite voices that advance regenerative tourism strategy. Value-added ticketed event; 100% cost recovery target.	Summit dates announced by April 2026. All speakers confirmed by July 31, 2026. Minimum 100 tickets sold. Full cost recovery achieved.
Corporate Website	Optimize corporate website for streamlined communications and expanded media asset deployment.	Maintain Data Asset Management system; continue adding video and photo assets. Media Centre operational for press releases and stakeholder asset access. Invite operators to sign up for asset access.	1 corporate media release per month. 40+ operators signed up and active in asset management system.
Committee Meetings / Co-Creation Labs	Increase in-person sessions to foster reciprocal communication and develop organic champions of regenerative tourism.	Continue annual Town Halls. Increase sub-regional collaborative sessions for experiential product development, particularly in AH, LR, SA, and west PS. All sessions framed through the Regenerative Tourism Strategy lens.	3 Town Halls held. Minimum 2 in-person sessions per sub-region (excluding Muskoka) pertinent to product development.
Educational Webinars	Keep tourism businesses and staff current on industry trends, technology, and regenerative practice.	Book industry and extra-industry experts for webinars. AI for marketing, content management, and operational efficiency included in programming. Sustainability and workforce topics covered.	Minimum 5 industry webinars delivered.

Regenerative Travel Agency - Packages & Conversion

Priority / Strategic Focus	Objectives	Key Activities / Tactics	Performance Indicator
Scale the Regenerative Travel Agency (RTA)	Expand the RTA from launch-year testing to a full seasonal package catalogue - emphasis on Fall and Winter. Build revenue, move higher-yield visitors, and reinforce the regenerative brand.	CEO & Board approve and oversee Go-To-Market Plan. Scale package catalogue: summer, shoulder, and winter offerings. Integrate Partnership Fund recipients as primary product feeders into RTA. Key partners identified for co-packaging and co-marketing.	20+ packages live and promoted across all seasons. 15-20 operators participating. Minimum 150 packages sold. RTA generates minimum \$30K gross sales. Purchasing functionality embedded in consumer website.
Build the Travel Lounge or similar platform as a conversion engine	Evolve the Travel Lounge from a content hub into a qualified lead generator with direct pathways to RTA bookings.	Officially scale podcasts, expert webinars/Zooms, video storytelling, members-only content. Travel concierge services and direct trip-planning support active. Experiential pop-ups and live events linked to RTA booking.	Minimum 6 expert Zoom/webinar sessions hosted. Podcast active with minimum 4 episodes published. Members-only content section live. Lead database growth tracked quarterly against F25-26 baseline.
Target high-yield affinity audiences for conversion	Replace geographic targeting with interest-based and affinity audience segmentation wherever they live.	Use GA4 analytics to identify high-engagement, high-conversion affinity audiences. Target: outdoor recreation, culinary, wellness, luxury, cycling, pet-friendly, new Canadians/urban dwellers, VFR. Align audience targeting with RTA package themes.	8-10 high-yield affinity audiences actively targeted. Conversion (package purchase) tracked per audience segment via GA4.
Promote packages and itineraries across digital channels	Launch digital and where appropriate print campaigns targeting high-yield audiences.	Content marketing promotion across social and owned channels with packages embedded. Affinity marketing partnerships with operators and B2B partners. Create in-market value-added content for audiences closer to purchase.	Minimum 3 content pieces with packages promoted per quarter. Minimum 20 reels and 200 images produced for content promotion. Benchmark RTA referral traffic via GA4.
AI & content translation for broader reach	Use AI tools to reach Quebec and international audiences efficiently.	Translate pertinent content using AI translation functionality. Test AI-assisted personalization and trip-planning tools on consumer website. Editorial guardrails maintained to protect authentic brand voice.	Minimum 10 pieces of content translated. Overseas engagement benchmarked via GA4. AI tools reviewed and assessed mid-year.

Priority / Strategic Focus	Objectives	Key Activities / Tactics	Performance Indicator
Broadcast media, trade, and influencer engagement	Increase media exposure through broadcast, trade, and earned media partnerships.	Work with Destination Ontario and media partners to promote the RTA and itineraries/packages. FAM tours: FIFA, Rendezvous Canada, Air Canada/Landlines, Ontario Northlander, FlixBus. Product influencers engaged.	Minimum 1 broadcast opportunity with Destination Ontario completed. Minimum 3 FAM tours or hosted media visits completed. Product influencers engaged and content tracked.

General Marketing

Priority / Strategic Focus	Objectives	Key Activities / Tactics	Performance Indicator
Evergreen Content Marketing	Create awareness of regional product and travel experiences not yet available as RTA packages.	Develop and traffic content across social media channels; monitor and respond to travel enquiries. Update channels with regional product and experience information. Evergreen content maintained for all sub-regions including rural and under-resourced communities.	Minimum 3 pieces of content promoted per quarter. Engagement and enquiries tracked per platform.
Marketing Strategy Review	Evaluate and reset EE's consumer marketing approach for the next planning cycle.	Comprehensive review of F25-26 and F26-27 marketing performance. Consult operators, municipal and sector partners, and consumer data. Review emerging travel trends, technology adoption, and provincial tourism strategies.	Review completed and findings reported to Board by Q4 F26-27. Recommendations inform F27-28 operational plan and BOP.

Product Development

Experiential & Sub-Regional Product

Priority / Strategic Focus	Objectives	Key Activities / Tactics	Performance Indicator
Experiential Product Development	Assist sub-regions with development of experiential tourism product to foster competitiveness and community economic development in all four seasons.	Conduct in-person Co-Creation Labs to identify and develop marketable product in AH, LR, SA, and west PS. Conduct follow-up Zoom sessions for continuous feedback. All new product developed with a defined RTA distribution pathway from inception.	Minimum 8 in-person Co-Creation Lab sessions. Minimum 8 new experiential products developed or in active development. All new products with RTA integration pathway documented.
Culinary & Agritourism	Position the Explorers' Edge region as a destination for meaningful culinary and agritourism experiences rooted in local food systems, seasonal production, and authentic community food culture.	Partner with the Culinary Tourism Alliance as a regional member to access destination development services, Feast On certification support, food trail development resources, and national consumer marketing channels. Identify Explorers' Edge operators eligible for Feast On certification and support their application process. Develop at least two bookable culinary/agritourism packages or itineraries for the RTA.	Culinary Tourism Alliance membership active by Q1. Minimum 2 EE-region operators supported through Feast On certification process. Minimum 2 culinary/agritourism RTA packages or itineraries developed and promoted.
Indigenous Cultural Tourism	Continue identifying opportunities to support Indigenous cultural product development.	Work collaboratively with Indigenous stakeholders. Nurture relationships by attending non-tourism events and educational sessions (e.g. Pow Wows). Economic reconciliation opportunities identified through cultural product development.	Progress measured in relationship depth and trust rather than definitive numeric outcomes. Opportunities documented and reported to Board annually.
Women in Tourism (WIT) & 2SLGBTQ+ Product	Develop inclusive product that reflects the diverse identities of visitors and workers in the region.	Dedicated \$25,000 Partnership Fund stream for WIT and 2SLGBTQ+ product development. Product integrated into RTA itineraries and Travel Lounge content.	Minimum 2 WIT/2SLGBTQ+ products developed or supported. Integrated into RTA catalogue by Q3.
Luxury Experiences	Create differentiated marketing targeting High Net Income Travellers (HNIT) through the RTA and Travel Lounge.	Identify interested operators for collective luxury marketing through the Travel Lounge and ILTM channels. Develop luxury packages bookable through the RTA.	Minimum 4 operators participating in luxury test marketing. Minimum 2 luxury packages live in RTA. ILTM trade relationships converted to confirmed bookings.

Investment Attraction

Transportation & Access

Priority / Strategic Focus	Objectives	Key Activities / Tactics	Performance Indicator
Air Canada Landline - Muskoka Airport (YQA)	Formalize and scale the Landlines luxury motorcoach partnership; support Muskoka Airport's entry into the Air Canada Landline network.	Support YQA-YYZ Landline launch through co-branded marketing and RTA itinerary readiness. Develop international and inter-provincial itineraries assuming Pearson connectivity. Pursue joint marketing investment with Air Canada and Landline in key source markets. Position year-round, winter-season motorcoach access as a differentiated offer.	Landline service launched and marketed by Q2 (pending public announcement). Minimum 2 RTA packages developed specifically for Landline/Pearson-connected visitors. Joint marketing investment confirmed with Air Canada/Landline.
Ontario Northlander - Rail Service	Capitalize on the return of Northlander rail service with last-mile product and GTA-to-Muskoka positioning.	Develop last-mile product and itineraries linked to Huntsville, Bracebridge, Gravenhurst, and Washago stops. Partner with Ontario Northland on marketing co-investment, building on F25-26 FAM relationship. Position car-light Muskoka travel for sustainability-motivated GTA travellers.	Minimum 3 Northlander-linked RTA packages developed. Marketing co-investment agreement with Ontario Northland confirmed. Service launch monitoring and marketing activation aligned.
Great Lakes Cruising - Parry Sound	Continue supporting the Town of Parry Sound's cruise strategy; develop shore-side visitor readiness and excursion product.	Advance shore excursion product with Town of Parry Sound and regional operators. Develop packaged day-trip and overnight itineraries linked to cruise arrivals, bookable through RTA. Advocate for Priority 2 dock infrastructure repairs (\$625,000 estimated). Support Chamber of Commerce information tent and shuttle service.	14+ cruise calls supported in F26-27. Minimum 2 cruise-linked RTA packages developed. Dock infrastructure advocacy position communicated to Town and DFO. Cruise visitor spending tracked and reported.
Investment Communication	Ensure EE's investment opportunities are prominently communicated to potential partners.	Maintain dedicated investment attraction section on corporate website. Regularly update with current transportation, product, and RTA partnership opportunities.	Corporate website investment section updated by Q1. Minimum 1 new investment partner or institutional supporter confirmed in F26-27.

Workforce Development

Priority / Strategic Focus	Objectives	Key Activities / Tactics	Performance Indicator
Front-Line Training - Service Excellence	Scale Service Excellence training across the region, building on the November 2025 Huntsville pilot.	Continue and expand delivery to additional sub-regions. Develop a regional training calendar accessible to operators across the full EE geography. Integrate training access as a component of Partnership Fund agreements.	Minimum 2 Service Excellence sessions delivered in different sub-regions. Minimum 30 participants trained and certified. Training embedded in Partnership Fund co-investment framework.
Youth Pathways - Lakehead University SHSM & OHI Be Our Guest	Build integrated talent pipeline from high school to regional tourism employment, through Lakehead SHSM and OHI programs.	Expand Lakehead University Tourism SHSM Reach Ahead and Sector Partner programming to additional schools. Formalize OHI - We Are Hospitality / Be Our Guest delivery in Trillium Lakeheads DSB schools with EE as regional convener. Develop joint employer-student engagement calendar linking SHSM, OHI, and EE operator network.	Minimum 2 sub-regional high schools supported. Minimum 1 OHI Be Our Guest delivery in Trillium Lakeheads DSB schools. Joint engagement calendar developed and distributed by Q2.
Catalyst Housing - Community Bond & CLT Integration	Advance the Catalyst Housing model through community bond and Community Land Trust partnerships, with tourism-sector training graduates prioritized.	Formalize EE's connector role within Tapestry Capital and Muskoka Community Land Trust frameworks. Develop pipeline: training - certification - employer match - housing support. Bring ORHMA/OHI, OTEC, Lakehead, Tapestry, and Muskoka CLT to a Regional Workforce Ecosystem working group convened by EE.	Regional Workforce Ecosystem working group established by Q2. Pipeline model documented and presented to Board. Minimum 1 housing pathway formalized for training program graduates.
Big Applause Awards	Reward employee excellence to promote retention and promote tourism as a great regional career.	Host 5th Annual Big Applause Awards and Luncheon. Publicize winners through media and social channels.	Minimum 30 nominees recognized. Media coverage of employee excellence secured.
Women in Tourism	Support women in tourism and hospitality careers and attract more workers to the sector.	Host minimum 2 Women in Tourism events annually. Partner with industry colleagues to co-present. Foster mentorship initiatives.	Minimum 2 WIT events hosted. 70+ women participate in annual event.

Partnership

Priority / Strategic Focus	Objectives	Key Activities / Tactics	Performance Indicator
Partnership Fund - Co-Investment Program (\$251,000)	Support innovative tourism product development in underfunded sub-regions. Prioritize bookable experiences that integrate with the RTA. Align marketing and workforce programs with EE regenerative objectives.	Leverage internal staff resources to communicate operational plans, strategies, and partnership outcomes. Distribute updated partnership criteria with explicit RTA integration and regenerative alignment requirements. Collaborate with third-party entities to develop work plans with clear deliverables and timelines. Present mid-partnership progress updates and final reports to Board and stakeholders.	Minimum 12 active partnerships supported. All funded partnerships have defined RTA integration pathway or regenerative outcome. Mid-year and final reports presented to Board for all partnerships. Full \$166,000 allocated and reported against outcomes.
Partnership Fund - Sustainability Stream	Direct Partnership Fund investment toward projects that measurably improve the environmental sustainability of regional tourism - supporting operators, communities, and experiences that advance EE's regenerative tourism model.	Establish a Sustainability Stream within the Partnership Fund that prioritizes projects reducing environmental impact, strengthening ecological resilience, and improving sustainable visitor management. Support operators pursuing credentials such as Feast On, Green Key, or Biosphere. Develop sustainability-focused experiences bookable through the RTA. Provide operator coaching and site visits through EE's Sustainability Strategist.	Partnership Fund directed to sustainability-focused projects. Minimum 2 funded operators supported through sustainability certification process. Minimum 2 sustainability-linked experiences developed and listed in the RTA. Minimum 4 GCW Positive Impact Spotlights published featuring funded sustainability projects. Operator sustainability improvements tracked and reported to Board annually.
Regional Indigenous Youth Tourism Entrepreneurship Strategy	Partnership Fund investment toward Indigenous-led and Indigenous-partnered tourism projects that advance economic reconciliation, celebrate cultural heritage, and create authentic, community-controlled visitor experiences.	Indigenous youth support aligned with the Regional Indigenous Youth Tourism Entrepreneurship Strategy. Prioritize projects that are Indigenous-led or developed in genuine partnership with Indigenous communities, ensuring communities determine the pace and nature of tourism engagement. Support the development of bookable Indigenous cultural experiences - such as land-based learning, storytelling, and cultural interpretation - with integration into the Regenerative Travel Agency.	Partnership Fund supporting the development of a youth entrepreneurship strategy integrated into the Regenerative Travel Agency. Explorers' Edge staff to attend a minimum of three Indigenous community events annually to build relationships and trust. Progress evaluated through relationship strength, community leadership, and self-determined outcomes, with Indigenous partnership progress reported to the Board on an annual basis.

Priority / Strategic Focus	Objectives	Key Activities / Tactics	Performance Indicator
		Build relationships through participation in community events and connect partners with networks like Indigenous Tourism Ontario and Indigenous Tourism Association of Canada.	
Marketing & Development	Support marketing initiatives that strengthen conversion and operator reach.	Allocate budget to domestic marketing and development. Prioritize programs that generate RTA leads or direct bookings.	Domestic allocation fully activated. Domestic campaign results tracked against RTA conversion metrics.
Workforce Development through Partnership	Encourage partners to address labour shortages, upskill employees, and improve workplace conditions.	Allocate budget to workforce-focused partnership programs. Prioritize OTEC training, OHI engagement, and operator workforce support.	Workforce allocation fully activated. Minimum 40 operators supported through workforce partnership funding.
Stakeholder Training Workshops	Build operator capacity in marketing, sustainability, digital tools, and regenerative tourism practice.	Deliver stakeholder training workshop programming. Include AI for marketing, HR resources, content management, iPhone photography, and Facebook Ad Manager.	Minimum 4 stakeholder training workshops delivered. Operator satisfaction tracked post-workshop.

Fiscal 2026-2027 Budget

Budget Item	Q1	Q2	Q3	Q4	Total
Governance and Administration					
Salaries & Benefits	32,500	32,500	32,500	32,500	130,000
Governance	10,000	5,000	2,500	2,500	20,000
Overhead / Facilities	17,750	17,750	17,750	17,750	71,000
Finance and Administration (Accounting, Audit, Legal)	18,250	18,250	18,250	18,250	73,000
Travel	13,750	13,750	13,750	13,750	55,000
Industry Relations / Stakeholder Engagement	3,000	3,000	3,000	3,000	12,000
Information Technology	4,000	1,000	500	500	6,000
SUBTOTAL - Governance and Administration					367,000
Product Development					
Salaries & Benefits	11,250	11,250	11,250	11,250	45,000
Product Development Enhancements	15,000	20,000	10,000	10,000	55,000
Research	5,000	5,000	4,000	1,000	15,000
SUBTOTAL - Product Development					115,000
Marketing and Promotion					
Salaries and Benefits	18,750	18,750	18,750	18,750	75,000
Media Spend	40,000	60,000	20,000	19,107	139,107
Content Development / Guest Authors / FAM Tours	5,000	2,000	1,000	2,000	10,000
Promotions / Contests / Incentives	5,000	-	5,000	500	10,500
Creative Development	3,000	500	500	1,000	5,000
Project Mgmt. / Ad Trafficking	4,000	3,000	1,500	1,500	10,000
Strategist (Retainer)	7,500	7,500	7,500	7,500	30,000
Reservation Platform TICO	3,000	1,000	500	500	5,000
PR Earned Media	5,000	5,000	5,000	5,000	20,000
SUBTOTAL - Marketing and Promotion					304,607

Investment Attraction					
Salaries & Benefits	5,750	5,750	5,750	5,750	23,000
Outreach / Meetings	500	500	500	1,000	2,500
SUBTOTAL - Investment Attraction					25,500
Workforce Development					
Salaries & Benefits	16,250	16,250	16,250	16,250	65,000
Communication, Training & Outreach	5,000	5,000	5,000	5,000	20,000
SUBTOTAL - Workforce Development					85,000
Partnership					
Salaries & Benefits	21,250	21,250	21,250	21,250	85,000
Marketing & Development	50,000	25,000	25,000	16,000	116,000
Workforce Development	5,000	5,000	-	-	10,000
Stakeholder Training Workshops (Includes Product Dev)	20,000	10,000	5,000	5,000	40,000
SUBTOTAL - Partnership					251,000
TOTAL AGREEMENT COSTS					1,148,107

2026 – 2027 Business and Operational Plan Approval

Chair, Sarah North Harris, Camping in Ontario

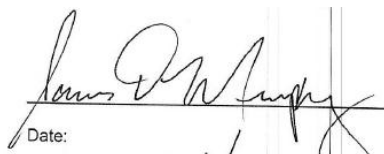

Date: March 24, 2026

Treasurer, Darren Smith, Lake of Bays Brewery

Signed by:

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Date: 3/27/2026

CEO, James Murphy, Explorers' Edge


Date: March 24/2026