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THE CURRENT STATE OF TOURISM DEVELOPMENT IN CANADA

Before the Covid-19 Pandemic, Canada's Tourism Industry was worth $105 billion in total economic activity and 1,8 million jobs. Even amid the current crises, tourism is one of the few truly national industries that generate business in every region, province, territory, town, and community.

The travel and tourism sector provides a vital stimulus to Canada's commercial growth through the visitor economy. This is especially true because of the amount of economic activity which the sector draws into the country.

Then the pandemic hit, and travel and tourism was the industry first, the hardest and it will be the last sector to fully recover.

It is no secret that despite amazing progress and growth in the tourism sector over the last number of years, COVID-19 has had and will continue to have a negative impact on future growth. Since the shutdown of Canada's borders to all non-essential travel since March 2020, we have seen month-over-month losses of 98% of visitors. This is compounded by restrictions on domestic activities that have forced many tourism and hospitality businesses to face imminent closure.

Tourism is one of the few sectors that has a presence in every local economy in Canada. Before COVID-19, the sector employed 1 in 11 Canadians and contributed $105 billion to the economy. Canada cannot afford to lose its tourism industry. There is much to be done, but it requires the support of the government.

As the National Voice for the travel economy, the Tourism Industry Association (TIAC) has been the industry's champion, laser-focused on its survival and recovery post-COVID. TIAC has a recovery plan to lead the industry forward and regain its position both as a national economic contributor and global destination.

Number of factors are driving growth in the tourism sector:

– cruise ship activity is projected to increase in many provinces this year;

– convention activity in many cities is expected to be strong in 2022;

– domestic air capacity continues to increase and new ultra-low-cost carriers are emerging;

– new direct flights from Europe, Asia-Pacific, and South America are helping Canada tap into new international markets.

However, increasing gas prices are eating into the disposable income of potential travelers and pushing up the cost of travel. High accommodation rates in some regions can also deter potential visitor.

We can see four main types of tourism that will be popular in Canada.

Indigenous tourism. First Nations, Métis and Inuit tourism businesses have a unique opportunity to engage with and teach visitors about their thought-provoking histories and distinct cultures. Canadian and international travelers alike are eager to partake in authentic Indigenous experiences.

Rural and remote tourism. Canadians living in rural and remote areas can unlock the economic potential of tourism to drive growth and job creation in their communities. Now, more than ever, Canada has what the world wants: wide-open spaces, rugged coastlines and unspoiled wilderness. And Canadian tourism businesses are looking to make the most of it.

LGBTQ2+ tourism. Canada is consistently named a top destination for LGBTQ2+ travellers, thanks to shared values of diversity, equity, inclusion and personal security.

Francophone tourism. Say «bonjour» and «bienvenue» to francophones, francophiles and anyone curious to discover Canada's francophonie from here and abroad [1].

Randy Boissonnault, Minister of Tourism says: As we move forward with relaunching the visitor economy across Canada, we will make sure we lead, engage and inspire Canadians and visitors alike to travel in our country. To do that, we'll focus on the five following pillars:

1. Adapt to living in COVID-19.
2. Focus on everyone's safety first, then travel.
3. Entice corporate and business travellers to stay longer.
4. Retain workers and showcase tourism's career potential.
5. Invest in existing and new tourism destinations.

«The Government of Canada is committed to supporting you every step of the way because we know that the Canadian economy will not recover until our tourism sector recovers» [2].

References:

1. About the Canadian tourism industry. URL: https://tiac-aitc.ca/our-focus.html (дата звернення: 22.10.2022).
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