Thompson Okanagan Geography

Southern Interior of British Columbia, Canada

- 71,600 km² (27,644 mi²)
- named for two major geographic features: the Thompson River and Okanagan Lake
- 120+ communities, including 33 Indigenous communities
- Diverse landscape - the tallest peak in the Canadian Rockies to the semi-arid climate of the Okanagan Desert
Thompson Okanagan Tourism Association

- TOTA is a not-for-profit organization that operates social enterprise activities.
- We provide destination development, marketing, industry and experience development, and research services to our over approx. 2500 stakeholders (tourism businesses in the Thompson Okanagan region) to improve industry practices, support their economic success and overall sustainability through tourism marketing, awareness raising and training programs.
7 Affirmations Pledge

- Created in 2019
- Articulate guidelines for realizing sustainable tourism in the region.
- Individuals and companies are invited to commit to these ideals and practices.
- Based on the Indigenous Seven Generations Principle, it recognizes that the decisions an individual makes today have an impact for seven generations to come and that it is the individual’s responsibility to consider the long-term implications of their actions.
COVID Response & Recovery

- Together with the BC Regional Tourism Secretariat, TOTA launched the BC Tourism Resiliency Network in April 2020 to support tourism businesses throughout the province.
- TOTA leads the regional branch, the Thompson Okanagan Tourism Resiliency Program, offering one-on-one advising and information resources for tourism companies in the region.
Economic Benefits

Partnering for Economic Data and Development Indicators
Economic Benefits - Data Sources and Indicators

- TOTA works closely with Provincial and Municipal entities to monitor tourism economic benefits throughout the region - these entities provide data every several years
  - Work closely with provincial government to monitor development projects that have been funded through provincial and federal programs
- TOTA created a for-profit entity (Symphony Tourism Services) that focuses primarily on research around economic data, tourism behaviour and industry sustainability
  - This data is up-to-date and easily accessible to our team
  - Data is provided through third party data sources
  - Environic Analytics
Economic Benefits - Data Sources and Indicators - Cont’d

- TOTA also has access to its own primary data sources through the Biosphere Commitment Program
  - Eco-Efficiency Program; conducts energy, waste and water audits for each biosphere member for ROI
  - This program is meant to create these audits every several years to compare progress with an industry sample size - approx 100 businesses.
- With these Sources TOTA is able to extrapolate relevant data and interpret the data for our stakeholders. We are currently in the process of completing our Data Impact portal for an easy to understand interface.
Primary Economic Indicators

- Overall contribution of tourism to the regional economy
- Domestic and international overnight stays
- Average length of stay (domestic vs international overnight stays)
- Hotel room revenues per community
- Average daily room rate per community
- Proportion of tourism businesses that are locally owned
Tourism Impact Portal
Launching Spring 2022

Welcome to the British Columbia Tourism Impact Portal

A central place providing key insights about tourism development in the province to support well-informed decisions for a sustainable future.

Learn More

British Columbia is one of the most attractive destinations worldwide. With this initiative, the participating regions within the province seek to strengthen their commitment towards sustainable development through more transparent reporting and continuous monitoring of economic, environmental, and social impacts of tourism.

Discover the committed regions and their tourism assets on the map.

View Map

Explore the data

This platform includes a variety of tourism-relevant information gathered from different sources across BC. It is an ever-evolving platform where data is regularly edited to continuously expand the available economic, environmental and social insights and improve their spatial and temporal quality.

Tourism Industry & Arrivals
Tourism Employment
Tourism Development Funds

Participating Regions

Thompson Okanagan

Size
94,000

Population
612,076

Tourism Employment
30,250

Total Employment
380,000
Analysis, Findings and Conclusions

- We can only monitor data of sufficient quality which has limited our indicators, which illustrates where support is needed
- Community capacity to undertake infrastructure projects and gather local data
- Partnerships are key for data extrapolation
- Report is guiding our alignment with partners and initiatives focused on the Sustainable Development Goals in our community:
  - SDG Local Voluntary Review (first in Canada)
  - National Climate League Standings
- Guide our planning for future partnerships and support to gather data.
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