



# Tourism Business Mentorship Program Guidelines

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# Table of Contents

Introduction: What is the Tourism Business Mentorship Program?	2
Program Goals	2
Tourism Business Definition	2
Program Administration	3
Program Structure	3
Eligibility Criteria	4
Program Priority Areas	4
Professional Conduct and Conflict of Interest	5
General Funding Requirements	5
Eligible Costs	6
Application Process: Mentee Selection	6
Appeals Process	7
Applicant Notification	7
Number of Mentorships Available	7
Reporting and Monitoring	7



## Introduction: What is the Tourism Business Mentorship Program?

The Tourism Business Mentorship Program provides opportunities and resources for interested NWT tourism operators (Mentees) to learn and benefit from experienced operators (Mentors).

Learning from a Mentor can be an important element in a tourism operator's success. Mentors share their expertise and knowledge and provide support and encouragement to help entrepreneurs remain focused on what is important for the success of their business. Through the Tourism Business Mentorship Program, tourism operators who are less experienced can gain valuable skills in business, leadership and networking to help maximize their potential and become successful and profitable independent tourism operators.

The mentoring process may involve the Mentor visiting the Mentee's place of business, the Mentee visiting the Mentor's place of business, and/or the Mentor providing online support.

## Program Goals

The goals of the program are to:

- provide the resources necessary to strengthen the tourism industry by developing skills and increasing business knowledge of tourism operators;
- provide opportunities for NWT tourism business operators to learn and benefit from more experienced tourism operators/professionals;
- enhance the strength of the tourism industry over the long term by providing resources and opportunities for NWT tourism businesses to learn from experienced professionals; and
- facilitate knowledge transfer from more experienced professionals to new/younger entrepreneurs.

## Tourism Business Definition

For the purpose of this program, the definition of a tourism business is *a business that relies on travellers for a significant portion of their income*. Examples of tourism businesses are those that provide hotels, restaurants, entertainment, services etc. for people who are travelling.

For the purpose of this fund, the aviation industry is excluded from this definition of tourism.



## Program Administration

*Government of the Northwest Territories, Department of Industry, Tourism and Investment (ITI)*

ITI provides employment support and training to foster positive economic growth across the Northwest Territories (NWT). Regional Tourism Officers (RTOs) are employees of the Department and are available to discuss project proposals, help complete your application and to accept your completed application forms.

ITI staff also comprise the Mentorship Committee and are responsible for the selection of mentees. ITI staff are involved in both Stream 1 and Stream 2 of the Mentorship Program, in varying capacities.

*Canadian Executive Services Organization (CESO)*

CESO is a leading economic development organization dedicated to fostering economic growth in Canada and globally. CESO has nearly 50 years of business mentorship experience, with over 50,000 assignments successfully delivered in 122 countries worldwide.

CESO works with ITI for Stream 1 of the Mentorship Program and matches Mentees with suitable Mentors. CESO administers the overall Mentorship process and provides expertise and guidance on the Mentorship Program.

## Program Structure

The Tourism Business Mentorship program has two Streams: 1) Individual Operators  
2) Groups.

### **Stream 1**

*Individual Operators*

Stream 1 is a partnership initiative between ITI and CESO. Under this stream, ITI and CESO review applications against a specific set of criteria to select individual operators (Mentees) to take part in the program and be matched with a suitable Mentor.

### **Stream 2**

*Best Practices Observation Program for Groups*

Stream 2 is for groups of tourism operators or community tourism project managers who are interested in observing and learning about tourism operation best practices at identified tourism businesses. Under this stream, RTOs will select eligible groups to visit and learn about tourism operations management best practices at tourism operations recognized for their excellence. Selection is made through a proposal submission process.

## Eligibility Criteria

### Mentees

#### *Stream 1*

Criteria for individual tourism operators (Mentees) to apply to the program:

- Must be a resident of the NWT
- Must have a valid Tourism Operator License or be a business, collective or organization that is engaged in the NWT tourism sector
- Must be legally entitled to be a business in the NWT
- Must have a business plan

#### *Stream 2*

Criteria for group tourism operators (Mentees) to apply to the program:

- Must be resident in the NWT
- Must have a valid Tourism Operator License or be a business, collective or organization that is engaged in the tourism sector

### Mentors

#### *Stream 1*

CESO sets Mentor criteria and standards, and selects business Mentors.

#### *Stream 2*


ITI develops criteria to identify specific tourism operations that have been recognized for their excellence in tourism operations management. Applicants to the Group Stream can also propose tourism operations that they feel they would benefit from visiting and learning from.

## Program Priority Areas

The Tourism Business Mentorship Program provides Mentors to assist in the following priority areas:

### Stream 1

- Marketing
- Product Development
- Product Packaging and Pricing
- Business Planning
- Financial Management

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- Human Resources Management
  - Technology and Business
  - Business Performance Management

## **Stream 2**

- Mentees who are proposing a tourism operation to act as a Mentor should be able to demonstrate how that Mentor excels in at least three, but ideally all, of the priority areas noted above.

## **Professional Conduct and Conflict of Interest**

- Mentors and Mentees must agree to the terms outlined by ITI and CESO before starting the mentorship process.
- Mentors are prohibited from gaining any commercial benefit from their mentoring work.
- Mentors and Mentees will decide together what the mentorship process will include, considering the program guidelines and approval by CESO.
- Mentors and Mentees agree that any information shared during the mentorship process is private and confidential.

## **General Funding Requirements**

There is no cost to participate in the Program. The Program provides funding support to approved Mentees and Mentors to take part according to the amounts and requirements outlined below and as identified in the Funding Agreement:

### **Stream 1**

- Funding will cover costs up to a maximum of \$5500 as per the agreement between CESO and ITI.
- CESO will reimburse the Mentee at the conclusion of the mentorship program after processing of approved receipts takes place.

### **Stream 2**

- The costs covered for this stream of mentorship will not exceed \$10,000 and will be provided as a contribution agreement.

The funding contract for both Stream 1 and Stream 2 is valid for one year. All funding is subject to availability and approval.

## Eligible Costs

### Stream 1

- Eligible costs are as determined in the agreement between CESO and ITI. Costs may include travel to the Mentee's or Mentor's place of business.

### Stream 2

- Eligible costs will include airfare, accommodations, meals, ground transportation and Mentor fees. The Mentor fees shall not exceed \$2500 per fiscal year.

## Application Process: Mentee Selection

### Stream 1

- ITI will make an annual call for applications to the program and send notice to NWT tourism businesses, as well as post the applications on their website at [www.iti.gov.nt.ca/bmp](http://www.iti.gov.nt.ca/bmp).
- Potential Mentees will submit applications to ITI indicating their desire to take part in the mentoring program.
- An ITI Mentorship Committee will review the applications and select successful applicants. Meeting the application criteria is not a guarantee of acceptance to the mentoring program.
- ITI will then advise CESO on the selected Mentees for that given year, and CESO will contact successful applicants.

### Stream 2

- Potential Mentee groups submit proposal to ITI Regional Tourism Officers, noting on the application if they have a proposed tourism business to act as a Mentor.
- An ITI Mentorship Committee will review the applications and select successful applicants. The Committee will also determine if the proposed Mentor meets the criteria for excellence in tourism operations. Meeting the criteria is not a guarantee of being accepting to the mentoring program.
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Final approval of successful Mentees and Mentors under both Streams is with the Director of Tourism and Parks, ITI.



## Appeals Process

In the event an applicant is unsuccessful in their application and is not satisfied with the decision of the Mentorship Committee, they can appeal in writing to the Assistant Deputy Minister of ITI. Appeals should outline reasons why the applicant is appealing the decision.

## Applicant Notification

Successful applicants under stream 1 and 2 will be notified by letter, email or telephone within 4-8 weeks of receipt of application. CESO will contact the successful Stream 1 applicants as soon as ITI notifies them of successful applicants.

## Number of Mentorships Available

### **Stream 1**

Five mentorships per fiscal year are available.

### **Stream 2**

Two group mentorships per fiscal year are available.

## Reporting and Monitoring

The ITI Mentorship Committee and CESO will continually monitor and evaluate the program, making changes and improvements where deemed necessary. The Committee and CESO reserve the right to make any changes to the Program as they deem fit, to ensure the ongoing success of the program.

### **Stream 1**

Upon completion of the mentoring process, CESO will work with Mentees to gauge their experience and gather feedback regarding the program.

### **Stream 2**

Group Mentees are required to submit a final report regarding their visit to the selected tourism operation, the best practices they observed, and how they will incorporate what they learned into their own tourism business.