



Context

Tourism has been identified as a major driver of economic growth by Canada, Québec and regional stakeholders. The development of an authentic cultural, eco-friendly and sustainable tourism sector promises a number of spinoffs, including community development (improved airports, hotels, visitor centres and food services), jobs especially for young people and elders, and the reinforcement of Inuit culture.

A Few of the Challenges

Care must be taken to ensure that tourism benefits the communities, in addition to providing protection and reinforcing Inuit culture, traditions and language.

Nunavimmiut lack knowledge about how the tourism sector works and a lack of coordination between stakeholders slows down development.

The pool of qualified workers to develop and serve the tourism potential is small.

Risk management planning that reinforces safety for tourists is next to inexistent.

The cost of travel limits the marketability of tourism packages to a niche market. Existing operators require support to diversify their products and upgrade facilities.

Local services, attractions and accommodation infrastructure are not sufficient to support quality tourism packages.

Little data is available to support planning, monitoring, evaluation and responsible management of the sector.

Regional policies regarding tourism are for the moment inexistent.

Solutions and Priorities

The *Nunavik Tourism Trends and Opportunities Report* provides a comprehensive overview of the state of the regional tourism industry and proposes future orientations.

An important strategy and action plan to develop international tourism were prepared by regional stakeholders and Québec under the Projet ACCORD in 2010 and 2011. The strategy and plan cover many of the priorities listed immediately below.

Create certification standards for tourism training adapted to the region in order to deliver quality international tourism packages and help operators to obtain affordable liability insurance.

Promote career opportunities and support continued training, especially through youth-oriented events such as adventure races.

Support the development of a regional market by packaging day trips for travellers on business and attending community-based festivals, giving youth guides a chance to gain experience and generating spinoffs for communities.

Develop a strong brand for Nunavik and implement a comprehensive marketing strategy to attract national and international markets.

Promote the region as a centre of excellence for arctic, Aboriginal tourism and export this expertise across the country and around the world.

Continue to develop national parks as a key component of the tourism sector.

Support the vision proposed by Québec in its northern tourism development strategy, as long as Québec provides the necessary human and financial resources to enable Nunavik to address its priorities.

Discussion

Through capacity building, regional stakeholders are making important strides towards creating a more diverse tourism industry that focuses on Inuit culture and the outdoors. Nonetheless, as the industry continues to progress, many challenges such as infrastructure, labour power and quality standards will still have to be overcome. Focus must be directed to creating packages for a smaller, niche clientele that can afford a superior outdoor adventure experience.

