Innovative Best Practices to Foster Sustainable Tourism in Ontario's Rural Communities

University of Guelph Tourism Collaborative

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Acknowledgements

Introduction

Innovation is widely acknowledged as a pivotal factor for advancement in various sectors of the world's economies. Although innovation in tourism has lagged behind other sectors, more concerted efforts have recently been dedicated to conducting empirical research in the area of tourism innovation – efforts which are expected to have significant implications and impact for both destinations and national economies (Hjalager, 2010). This research represents one such endeavour and is aimed at supporting the transformation of rural tourism in Ontario through identifying best practices and/or lessons learned from exemplary cases in Canada and internationally to benefit long-term sustainable growth.

The power of innovation – which can occur and be harnessed at various levels of the development process – depends on engaged entrepreneurs, adequate and appropriate support services, and effective governance. At the core of the framework for nurturing robust innovation in rural tourism is the identification of unique products (i.e., those that possess exceptional attributes that are distinctive to their place of existence) that are appropriately linked to satisfying the needs of the community in which they exist. Leadership, governance structure, strategic planning, and long-term funding that complements strategic planning represent the corresponding inner tier pillars for successful innovation in rural tourism. Fundamental outer tier factors include active community engagement, community participation, partnerships, and coordination.

The framework presented in this report not only provides guidance for strengthening existing rural tourism initiatives in Ontario, but also serves as a model for effective future development. Extensive research, diverse consultative processes, and the direct nature of case study research yielded comprehensive descriptions of the factors responsible for success (and failure). This report illuminates innovative best practices for cultivating sustainable rural tourism development based on Ontario's land and water, agricultural, community, and cultural/heritage resources – elements determined by Ontario's premier-ranked destination assessments to be the province's key rural strengths. In addition, the importance of alliances and partnerships to create the conditions for generating a critical mass of experiences in communities dominated by micro and small organizations and support structures is underscored.

Background and Overview

Over the decades, rural Ontario's agrarian sector has become more closely aligned with services, particularly tourism-related services. Indeed, tourism has been a driving force for a hybrid economy that presents significant economic, social, and environmental development opportunities for the province. Historically rich and diverse attractions render rural destinations intriguing for Ontarians and, to a lesser extent, American and other international visitors. Ontario is home to over 12 million people, yet 86% live in urban centres (Martel & Chagnon, 2012), leaving much of the province as rural and 40,000 square kilometres as protected regions (Ontario Ministry of Agriculture and Rural Affairs [OMAFRA], n.d.).

In 2011, rural Ontario welcomed 28.5 million visitors, 12.6 million (44%) of which stayed overnight. The vast majority (26.3 million or 93%) were domestic visitors (Ontario Ministry of Tourism, Culture and Sport [OMTCS], 2014). Approximately 15.1 million, or 52% of international tourists visiting Canada, came to Ontario in 2013 (OMTCS, 2014). About one-third of overseas visitors and just under 40% of American visitors frequent rural areas (Beshiri, 2005). Although visits to rural areas occur year round, most take place from July to September (OMTCS, 2014).

Rural tourism has been broadly defined as "any form of tourism that showcases the rural life, art, culture and heritage at rural locations, thereby benefiting the local community economically and socially, as well as enabling interaction between the tourists and the local community for a more enriching tourism experience" (Ghosh, 2008, p. iii). Statistics Canada defines rural as settlements with fewer than 1,000 inhabitants and a population density below 400 people per square kilometre (Statistics Canada, 2007 as cited in Munro, Alasia, & Bollman, 2013). In Ontario, this represents a majority of the province geographically and a vital 14% of the population economically, socially, and culturally (Martel & Chagnon, 2012).

The development of rural tourism in Ontario has mirrored the transformation of the province from a resource-based economy dependent upon the traditional sectors of farming, forestry, and mining to a service-based economy with tourism and other services representing the new drivers of growth. Tourism was initially touted as a tool for rural economic development in the late 1970s (Gartner, 2004), with early models emphasizing attributes, access, and service development (Gunn, 1979). However, it was not long before rural-based community studies began to critique the environmental and sociocultural impacts of unplanned development, thereby engendering a focus on community-based sustainable tourism development (Joppe, 1996) and responsible tourism practices that balance economic goals with social and environmental considerations (Godfrey &

Clarke, 2000). Additionally, safety became an issue accorded careful consideration during analysis and planning because of its far-reaching implications for the image of a destination relative to other aspects of the tourism product and experience (Enright & Newton, 2005). Current theory advocates the advancement of sustainable community tourism through long-term planning and community participation (Choi & Murray, 2010).

On the supply side, the development of rural tourism based on natural and cultural amenities is viewed as a promising strategy for creating a more diversified economy (Koster, 2010; Wozniczka, Koster, & Lemelin, 2010). Hence, interest in the potential role for rural tourism in regional economic development is growing. On the demand side, as society has become more urban, rural tourism seems positioned to meet the growing needs for personal contact, individualism, authenticity, and heritage experiences stipulated by the more highly educated and health conscious consumer (Long & Lane, 2000). The emergence of improved transportation, technological advances, and high performance outdoor equipment has made rural tourism more accessible to a broader population (Hall, Roberts, & Mitchell, 2004).

For new entrants, the challenge of transforming from rural landowners or farmers to rural tourism entrepreneurs can be daunting. To attract tourists, it is often necessary to develop a coordinated strategy involving multiple enterprises. Failures often result from a lack of industry knowledge and experience, particularly among micro, small, and medium enterprises (MSMEs). To address the issue of underskilled and inexperienced operators, governments often intervene to provide support for tourism training and education, producer accreditation, and local supply chain development.

The culmination of these transformative factors is an abundance of research focussing on rural tourism development globally. For instance, although the European Union has given considerable attention and support to rural tourism initiatives (Hall et al., 2004), substantial research on community-based and pro-poor tourism in Africa and Asia has also surfaced (Ghosh, 2008), and the *Journal of Rural and Community Development* has featured a special issue on rural tourism and recreation in Canada (Koster, 2010). Provincially, Alberta has been a strong supporter of rural tourism and has produced a regional tourism strategy planning manual (Alberta Economic Development Authority [AEDA], 2006).

While the importance of rural tourism development has certainly been recognized, implementing it remains a challenge (Roberts, Mitchell, & Hall, 2004). Furthermore, the practical application of generalized approaches has proven difficult (Matarrita-Cascante, 2010). Therefore, communities have turned to the grounded theory of case studies for direction. Case study methodology represents an empirical inquiry process for investigating a contemporary phenomenon within its

real context, through reporting with words and/or images, to understand multifaceted situations (George, Mair, & Reid, 2009). It also permits careful selection of the most relevant units of analysis. In Ontario, these include rural culinary tourism, place-based tourism, and attraction-based tourism (i.e., forms of tourism that build directly on the resource strengths of rural regions).

Growing interest in locally sourced foods, regional gastronomy, specialty foods, and healthy eating has created opportunities to embed food in rural tourism (Hall et al., 2004). However, as the anchor of culinary tourism experiences, the minimum expectation of consumers is that the food will be safe. Consequently, policies and procedures that are visible and inclusive in the experience are essential to providing the guest with an assurance of safety and enhancing the image of the business. Image and reputation for safety are key factors considered by consumers when selecting a destination (MacLaurin, 2004; MacLaurin, MacLaurin, & Loi, 2000). A negative experience and the resulting publicity can have severe repercussions for the image of the destination and tourism product (Brayshaw, 1995). Indeed, safety is one of the themes commonly identified in the premier-ranked tourist destination plans developed by more than 20 Ontario destinations (Sorbara, 2009).

Local is a term that has evolved to have significant marketing value when applied to food items and restaurant menus. Unfortunately, the Canadian Food Inspection Agency's (CFIA) definition is not particularly helpful because it permits a great deal of latitude in its use. The CFIA (2014) recognizes local food as "food produced in the province or territory in which it is sold, or food sold across provincial borders within 50 km of the originating province or territory." If destinations are to derive value from local foods, particularly in the context of tourism, and subsequently for food purchased for consumption at home (thereby adding more value to the regional economy), the term must be more clearly defined. Alternatively, rural communities may determine more superior ways to market and feature local products by choosing descriptors that have greater specificity and appeal than the word local (Murray, 2009; Herzog & Murray, 2010). Despite this, debate remains as to whether culinary experiences drive or complement tourist activity (Benaroia, 2009; McKercher, Okumus, & Okumus, 2008; Murray 2008) – a critical distinction especially when various economic development initiatives are competing for scarce marketing dollars.

Core attractions are identified in the premier-ranked tourist destination plans, thereby creating a potential base from which to develop place-based tourism (Elliot, Papadopoulos, & Kim, 2011) unique to each community. Ontario's regional tourism organizations (RTOs) are important stakeholders in the process of rural tourism development, and their strategic plans facilitate the identification of community attractions, amenities, and appeal.

The main objective of this project has been to delineate innovative best practices in rural tourism development that align with the resource strengths of Ontario's rural communities. To this end, key factors that positively or negatively affect the success of rural tourism initiatives are expounded. The overriding contribution of studying innovative best practices is to provide Ontario's rural communities with guidance to enable sustainable economic growth. The long-term anticipated benefits include the potential to attract greater investment flows, restore population growth, encourage new business development, create jobs, and retain youth in rural Ontario communities. Tourism benefits may also include enhancing a community's cultural, historical, and natural resources as well as the overall quality of life for its residents.

Methodology

The research team (Appendix 1) adopted a multifaceted approach, ranging from desk research to interviews. Steering Committee, peer, and stakeholder input was also obtained to refine and focus the work at various stages.

Literature Review

Because rural tourism has been a focus of economic development initiatives in various countries for many years, the research process began with a review of the literature on rural tourism, the aim of which was to determine key considerations and clarify relevant terms and concepts (Appendix 2). While founding principles of development, ranging from stakeholder participation to good governance, remain critical, the literature review revealed that traditional models alone are insufficient to facilitate success. Innovation is pivotal and was pinpointed as an important success factor for tourism product development, packaging, partnerships/governance, and promotion.

Simultaneously, a review of completed Ontario premier-ranked destination assessments led to the identification of Ontario's key rural strengths (Table 1). These attractions create a potential base from which to develop place-based tourism that is unique to rural Ontario.

Table 1. Ontario's Key Rural Strengths

Natural Resources		Agricultural Produce	Community	Culture and Heritage
Land	**Water**			
Agritourism Trails and scenic drives/ touring Parks Wildlife viewing	Fishing Boating	Culinary experiences Farmers' markets	Festivals Events Village experiences	Museums, heritage buildings, and sites Galleries and art installations

Consultative Process

Principal project activities included several brainstorming meetings among project committee members, field research by academics, two international tourism and rural entrepreneurship conferences, two broader tourism research conferences, and a stakeholder workshop which included economic development officers and representatives from provincial, regional, and

community-based destination marketing organizations, rural entrepreneurs, academics, government, and not-for-profit organizations (Appendix 3).

To focus discussions, stakeholders were asked to identify what they believed was wrong with rural tourism in Ontario (Figure 1), an exercise that was useful for teasing out factors necessary to overcome barriers to success and, in particular, stressed the importance of community engagement and participation for ensuring the authenticity of tourism development.

Figure 1. Stakeholder Perceptions of What is Wrong with Rural Tourism in Ontario
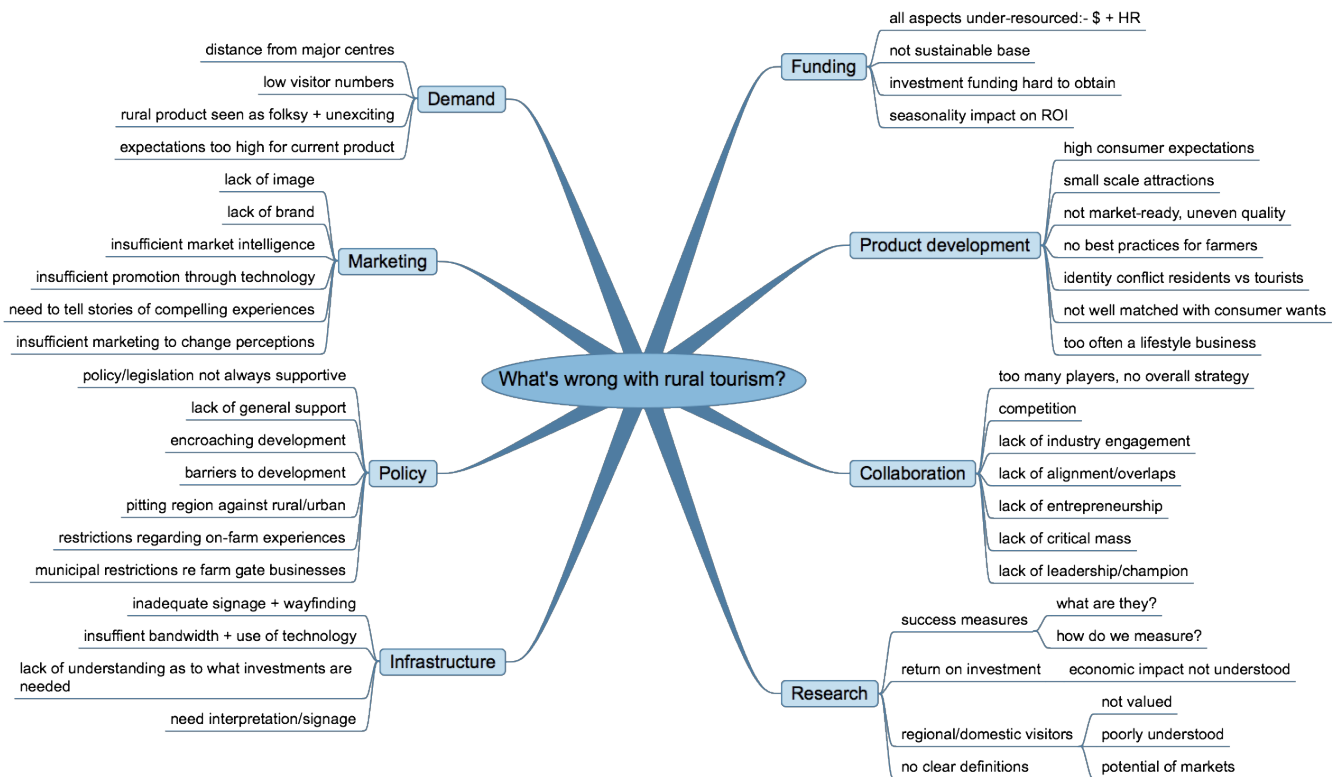
Consultations provided the means to refine the case selection process; informed the identification of elements that constitute innovation, success, and failure in rural development; and resulted in the generation of seven categories of factors for innovation success: knowledge sharing, strategic marketing, market intelligence, network facilitation, community-based governance, human resource (HR) leadership, and sustainable financing (Figure 2).

Figure 2. Innovation Success Factors Identified by Stakeholders
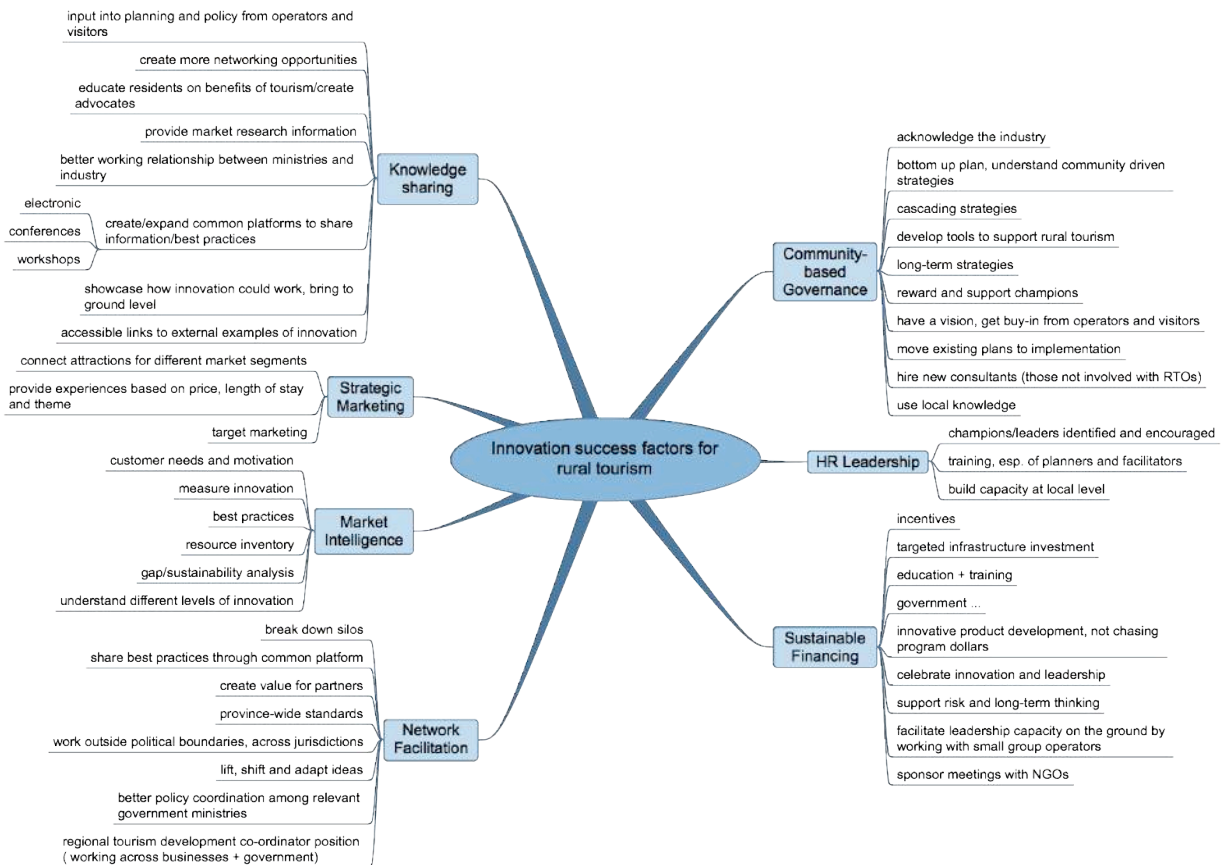
Case Research

The case study method represents an empirical inquiry tool for investigating successes and failures in rural development practices. A rigorous process for identifying exemplary rural development initiatives was implemented, commencing with a preliminary assessment of 70 cases that illustrated the major themes identified during the consultative process (Appendix 4). Only material published after 2000 was considered, including web pages, brochures, reports, books, scholarly articles, and published case studies.   This review, which was not intended to constitute an exhaustive analysis of the literature on rural tourism, provided the foundation from which to select 11 cases representing a mix of national and international stories relevant to rural Ontario (Appendix 5).

The 11 focal case studies were chosen based primarily on their perceived success, magnitude of influence on rural development, and alignment with Ontario's rural strengths (Table 1).   In

addition, several of the cases were included because they illustrate innovative approaches to alliances, partnerships, support structures, or governance approaches. Although some cases bridge multiple categories, each was classified according to its dominant strength (Table 2).

Table 2. Cases by Rural Strength and Location

Rural Strength	Case	Location
Natural Resources	Outdoor Capital of the UK	Fort William and Lochaber, Scotland, United Kingdom
	Bruce County	Bruce Peninsula, Ontario, Canada
Agricultural Produce	Island Chefs Collaborative: Connecting the Farmer and the Chef	Vancouver Island, British Colombia, Canada
	The Butter Tart Trail	Township of Wellington North, Ontario, Canada
	Culinary Bounty	Finger Lakes, New York, USA
	Stratford Tourism Alliance	Stratford, Ontario, Canada
	FlavourFest	Norfolk County, Ontario, Canada
Community/Culture and Heritage	St. Jacobs Country	St. Jacobs, Waterloo Region, Ontario, Canada
	The Townships Trail	The Eastern Townships, Quebec, Canada
Alliances	Ontario Culinary Tourism Alliance (OCTA)[1]	Southern Ontario, Canada
Partnerships	First Nations Partnerships for Economic Development	Osoyoos, British Columbia, Canada
Support Structures	Learning Communities	North Queensland, Australia and Ireland

Cases were assigned to researchers based on their respective areas of expertise and research area specialization. A sequential process for case study development which encompassed developing a structured case outline, recording field notes, coding based on the themes identified during consultation and those that emerged from the data, and displaying data in tabular format was adopted as a guide. Although the actual process followed varied due to the idiosyncrasies of specific cases, each author formulated conclusions in a concise framework for presentation as findings in this final report.

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[1]*Presented in conjunction with the analysis of Culinary Bounty in Appendix 5.5.*

Findings

Stakeholders' Input Workshop

Initial judgements relating to factors for successful innovation in rural tourism emerged from the literature review and stakeholders' input workshop where stakeholders (Appendix 3) used their experience and knowledge to respond to the question, "What are the innovation success factors in rural tourism?" The identified factors were categorized according to seven themes: knowledge sharing, strategic marketing, market intelligence, network facilitation, community-based governance, human resource (HR) leadership, and sustainable financing (Figure 2).

Case Study Analysis and Rural Strengths

Table 3 encapsulates key strengths (i.e., factors contributing to success) and weaknesses (i.e., factors undermining success) of the rural tourism initiatives investigated during analysis of the 11 focal case studies. In addition, lessons that can be learned by rural communities in Ontario are highlighted. The factors contributing to success, factors undermining success, and lessons learned are categorized based on the resources believed to represent Ontario's rural strengths (Table 1) as well as alliances/partnerships, support structures, and governance, themes that emanated from the stakeholders' input workshop (Figure 2).

Table 3. Factors Contributing to Success, Factors Undermining Success, and Lessons Learned by Rural Strength

Rural Strength	Factors Contributing to Success	Factors Undermining Success	Lessons Learned
Natural Resources	Aesthetically pleasing and diverse landscape and waterscape Natural geological beauty Diverse range of land- and water-based activities Easy access and close proximity to major population centres	Insufficient access to trails, lakes, and waterways Poor signage to locate access opportunities and parking	Resources and vistas must be protected Wayfinding and interpretive signage must be in place to increase accessibility
Agricultural Produce	Branded food and experiential attractions Culinary trails with diverse offerings Annual culinary festival with managed growth	Constant changes in the businesses participating in the culinary attraction Limited access to tertiary education in both agriculture and tourism	Strategic use of television can create awareness and enhance brand recognition Media coverage can be increased through chefs networking with food writers

Rural Strength	Factors Contributing to Success	Factors Undermining Success	Lessons Learned
	Extensive media and editorial coverage gained through networking with food writers Continuous introduction of new and creative culinary attractions	Difficult to safeguard from imitation even if trademarked Logos not fully reflective of the brand Developments pay limited attention to environmental sustainability	Implementation of culinary products requires significant investment, time, talent, effort, and leadership Continuous product differentiation and innovation are necessary to reduce the risk of imitation Formal organization with key food producing stakeholders contributes to unique value chain benefits
Community/ Culture and Heritage	Strong desire of visitors to experience diverse cultural lifestyles Well-established brand that highlights the leading experiences Attractions that serve multiple purposes (e.g., educate visitors, provide recreation, and meet the needs of the community) Differentiated product offerings for various demographics and four season appeal Unique offerings created by blending heritage with modern features Community involvement in determining the pace of growth and type of tourism development Strong visitor awareness created by serving as a film location or hosting international sporting events Accessible location and close proximity to major population centres Diverse modern amenities	Lack of a clear sense of future direction Increased traffic and noisy activities may be irritants for the resident population Urbanization of rural life Loss of rural landscape due to tourism development Loss of waterfront access waterfront due to privatization Undifferentiated rural retail suffers from competition with urban retail giants Lack of a captivating draw to the attraction Lack of a critical mass of attractions and events Vulnerable to external and natural events Emphasis on promotions rather than industry development and management of the region Limited emphasis on increasing the value and quality of experiences Difficulty attracting longer haul markets	Creative responses to visitors' curiosity about rural lifestyles facilitate innovation A critical mass of attractions and continuous renewal are required to entice repeat visitation Attractions that are used by the community foster long-term sustainability Relics at attractions spaces can be creatively developed into products of interest to visitors Hosting film crews and sporting events helps to build awareness Direct competition with retail giants can be avoided by offering authentic, locally produced, and/or unique products Growth needs to be managed in light of carrying capacity Improved quality of life generates increased community pride Place branding must resonate with residents and the actual tourism experience

Rural Strength	Factors Contributing to Success	Factors Undermining Success	Lessons Learned
	Cultural heritage products that differentiate destinations Funding from international development agencies for destination branding Positioned to take advantage of trends (e.g., health, unique experiences, wellbeing, personal development)	Limited control of messaging Attractions that do not complement the image of the destination Multiple businesses that do not complement or contribute to the sense of a single brand Poor signage	Holistic and balanced planning is necessary to develop new product ideas
Alliances and Partnerships	Learning networks that facilitate capacity building Hosting networking events to address key functional entrepreneurship areas Strong integrated marketing strategies led by the governing organization Active engagement with key stakeholders Government commitment to find partners that can deliver capacity building in tourism business management Dedicated (public, private, not-for-profit) organization to drive vision, planning, and investment Established policy of the governing organization to reinvest part of the profits in innovative initiatives, tourism amenities, and community quality of life enhancements Governing organization leverages partnerships and grants for major capital-intensive projects	Limited innovative capacity from within the rural area Low capital and skills requirement for tourism development in rural areas Insufficient resources to make major infrastructure investments (e.g., roads, signage, streetscaping) No long-term partner funding High dependence on grant funding that stymies innovation Inequality in benefit distribution as well as a lack of collective effort among businesses as major contributors No effort to translate investment impact in meaningful terms for residents Weak revenue model of governing organization	Consistent communication between operators and the community is key to addressing contentious issues and/or anti-tourism sentiments Stakeholder consultation is imperative A major role of the governing organization is to engender stakeholder engagement The governing organization is instrumental in fostering product diversification, innovation, marketing, and funding support The governing organization must represent community and key stakeholder interests Well-planned tourism attracts investors Unconventional stakeholder partnerships are instrumental in the innovative process Local government is an apt convener during stakeholder engagement phases
Support Structures	Customized enterprise level tourism training for agrarian entrepreneurs	New entrants to tourism operations in rural areas often start as lifestyle activities	Emerging and existing tourism MSMEs must be supported with business development programs

Rural Strength	Factors Contributing to Success	Factors Undermining Success	Lessons Learned
	Well-trained MSMEs (i.e., trained to use management software and other materials that introduce entrepreneurs to the business of tourism) Special teams that lead the implementation of innovative projects Well-funded planning and tourism departments Strong focus on training and development of youth and employees Consistent funding from development organizations Funding available for the planning phase	Owner-operated tourism businesses have limited opportunity for training Inability of MSMEs to take advantage of executive development High maintenance needs for some attractions are not adequately met Many projects are too small to act as a major draw for longer haul visitors Inconsistent funding to foster training and innovation Skills gap and an overall lack of training in rural areas	Surveys of MSMEs' capacity needs are important to provide a good foundation for training and development The development of MSMEs is critical for innovation and enhanced productivity Effectiveness of training for MSMEs can be measured by independent assessment of business achievements Social media is a powerful and cost-effective means of reaching new and existing clientele, but it requires ongoing professional development

Case Study Analysis and Factors of Innovation Success

The 11 focal cases were also reviewed in light of the factors of innovation success (Figure 2) to ascertain key strengths and attributes (i.e., factors contributing to success) and challenges (i.e., factors undermining success) relating to rural tourism initiatives. In addition, lessons to be learned and recommendations or best practices to be considered by rural communities in Ontario were highlighted for each of the seven innovation success factors (Table 4).

Not surprisingly, the most critical factor for innovation success that emerged is the development of a unique rural tourism product based on local strengths that can also satisfy many of the community's needs. Furthermore, easy access to, and within, rural regions, including public transportation, wayfinding, clear and consistent signage, and interpretive signage, is fundamental to ensuring the long-term economic sustainability of rural tourism products and destinations. Since the rural product typically comprises numerous smaller attractions, these must be linked, whether physically, thematically, and/or promotionally (e.g., through cross promotions), to ensure a critical mass capable of drawing visitors from urban centres is created.

Initiatives that are based on the needs of the community and address local requirements, not just those of visitors or funding organizations, have a greater chance for long-term economic sustainability. This point was underscored in all cases studied, although at varying levels. Further,

the importance of community engagement, community participation, partnerships (especially for marketing and raising capital), and coordination throughout the development process was reinforced in virtually all the case studies.

Table 4. Factors Contributing to Success, Factors Undermining Success, Lessons Learned, and Best Practices by Innovation Success Factor

Innovation Success Factor	Factors Contributing to Success	Factors Undermining Success	Lessons Learned	Recommendations (Best Practices)
Knowledge Sharing	Community involvement in naming (i.e., theme description) that is ultimately used for branding the tourism product Knowledge transfer among chefs, farmers, and community members through education programs on organic farming	Outward focussed communication that does not include community members	Impact and performance data must be clearly communicated to the community to obtain buy in for tourism development Key stakeholders must be actively involved in planning tourism initiatives	Community members must be able to relate to how their region is portrayed by various media
Strategic Marketing	Well-differentiated tourism product achieved by stressing its uniqueness relative to competitors Market perceptions of a tourism brand that is activity oriented and connected with the geographic beauty	Excessive focus on marketing and promotion rather than on product and service quality enhancements	The branding message for the initiative must be clear, consistent, and understood by the community Strategic visibility strategies (e.g., hosting televised programs [i.e., the Food Network] or competitions that popularize the rural tourism product, must be formulated to leverage promotional efforts Trademark and brand symbols must be formally established to prevent duplication Target markets must be clearly defined	Unconventional markets should be targeted using distinct features of the offering (e.g., leveraging growing interest in health, wellbeing, unique experiences, and personal development) The tourism product should encourage repeat visitation A clear and concise marketing strategy based on the overall theme for the area must be formulated for each target market

Innovation Success Factor	Factors Contributing to Success	Factors Undermining Success	Lessons Learned	Recommendations (Best Practices)
			A strong domestic market is required	
Market Intelligence	Continuous research and consultation with stakeholders throughout the development cycle to facilitate long-term strategic planning	Performance data to improve strategic planning and track community benefits are difficult to capture	Marketing strategies must be informed by research Ongoing monitoring of key performance indicators is essential	Performance targets for economic development should be published and communicated Improvements to the quality of life in the community must be evident and felt
Network Facilitation	Deliberate and strategic networking among relevant organizations in the community that is aimed at optimizing the tourism product offerings	Finding convenient times for network partners to meet is difficult Need to repeat information for those unable to attend to ensure ongoing buy in	A group of visionaries that is committed to progressive development is required The community must be actively involved in developing the tourism product	It is vital to engage in succession planning to address issues relating to an overreliance on one or two key volunteers
Community-Based Governance	Strong measure of stakeholder involvement in problem solving through the auspices of the lead organization Establishment of a membership organization to provide governance for rural initiatives in the region Governance structure facilitates joint marketing, financing, and management of tourism products Strategic planning corresponds with multiyear funding and the marketing strategy	Rural areas often lack organizational capacity	The vision, mission, purpose, and targeted outcomes of the rural tourism initiative must be clearly articulated and understood A formal governance structure (whether not-for-profit, public, or private) to lead development must be established Long-term institutionalized planning is necessary for future development The lead organization must have clear strategic goals and objectives	Governance structures must adopt a holistic approach to manage the development process and should not only be focussed on marketing, but also be concerned with issues of equity and corporate democracy in the community Strategic objectives should be based on the inherent and collective needs of the community

Innovation Success Factor	Factors Contributing to Success	Factors Undermining Success	Lessons Learned	Recommendations (Best Practices)
Human resource Leadership	Existence of a visionary/champion with access to funds, time, and talent Stakeholder commitment capital (i.e., the willingness to do all that is needed to succeed) Strong commitment from the local population in support of the tourism product Extreme volunteerism in cases where there is community buy in for the initiative/s Support for developing the capacity of new entrants to tourism and lifestyle rural businesses Targeted product development niches that capitalize on the specialized human resource capacity in the community Strong community pride, cooperation, and resourcefulness	Significant skills gap in rural areas Difficult to find innovative thinking merged with leadership Limited appetite to think in terms of Innovative governance and leadership structures	The community must be able to invest in and gain ownership of the tourism product Collective leadership must be supported by futuristic product development planning and new idea think tanks Community volunteerism should be viewed as a strategy for filling seasonal jobs Networking of trained MSMEs to consolidate organizational learning capacity and engender partnership and innovation is vital Products that are used by and benefit the community can be shared with visitors	Development must be based on the common/desired good (employment, economic activities, community development) The community must support the initiative by playing an integral participatory role Government has a responsibility to ensure that the business capacity and competencies of MSMEs are developed The lead organization must represent all key groups of beneficiaries and other stakeholders Leadership should have a strong focus on community participation
Sustainable Financing	Business environment is conducive to attracting investment (e.g., municipal investment groups, strong business associations, and stakeholder dialogue) Philanthropic support to mitigate risk	Limited funding availability and overdependence on grants	The role of community fundraising activities must be recognized Strategies that involve community fundraising and matching funds from development and donor organizations must be adopted	The focus should be on funding tourism initiatives that complement the destination brand, boost development, and enhance the area's appeal and prominence

Innovation Success Factor	Factors Contributing to Success	Factors Undermining Success	Lessons Learned	Recommendations (Best Practices)
	Dedicated fundraising through moderate taxes/fees Funding from partnership organizations including microloans for entrepreneurship and rural development Local funding agency (organically established with limited government intervention) to support tourism development with at least one major investor contributing to the investment funds Tourism product that attracts community business investments		The lead organization must engage in investment planning and fundraising, including raising capital from outside the community Long-term funding for progressive development must be in place (i.e., grant funding for at least two to five years from the governing body coupled with the lead organization's ability to raise private capital)	Sufficient funding for at least two to five years for the lead organization to begin development activities must be in place
Tourism Business Development	Commercial zones that have made a concerted effort to create an appealing shopping and recreational environment to attract visitors	Lack of cluster investment and development strategies results in a paucity of critical services in rural areas (e.g., accommodations, information centres, and recreation) Difficult to develop commercial areas if the centre is located on a provincial highway	Entrepreneurship that supports the continuous evolution of products/services that meet/exceed visitor needs/expectations is vital An environment conducive to community entrepreneurship must be created	Planning that ensures a diversified portfolio of products/services within the rural space must be undertaken Tourism offerings that include a mix of arts and crafts, food production, accommodations, culinary businesses, and water and land attractions should be developed

Discussion of Findings

Rural tourism has been a focus of economic development initiatives in numerous countries for many years. However, although the underpinning principles of development are acknowledged as critical, they are insufficient by themselves to enable success. The main objective of this document is to unveil a comprehensive framework to guide and strengthen rural tourism in Ontario. The findings indicate that innovation has played multifarious roles in the success of rural tourism globally. Indeed, innovation is not only integral to rural tourism, but in fact, rural tourism itself has been credited with major innovation (Hjalager, 1996).

While it is generally agreed that innovation involves the introduction of a novel concept, whether it is new to consumers, a sector, or an organization, three distinct levels of innovation have recently been divulged: incremental, liminal, and radical, also referred to as *now*, *new*, and *next* (Brooker & Joppe, 2014). Since tourism operators tend to be risk averse (Morrison, Carlsen, & Weber, 2010; Rogers, 1995), most tourism innovations involve incremental improvements or adjustments (Dewar & Dutton, 1986) that are designed to improve performance, increase efficiency, and boost short-term profits (Brooker, 2012). Lying between incremental improvements and radical innovation, liminal innovation exists where ideas are lifted from one context, shifted and adapted to fit another, and then introduced as a new concept. In contrast, radical innovation involves the introduction of a new idea that disrupts conventions (Joppe, Brooker, & Thomas-Francois, 2014).

The case studies yielded various examples of incremental and liminal innovations, thereby illustrating that sources of tourism innovation can occur in various spheres, from the individual operator/entrepreneur (as a result of mindset, product development, marketing, or collaboration) to support services/structures (including infrastructure, research, funding, and policies) to governance structures (often related to entrepreneurial activities, government agencies, or marketing). Entrepreneurial innovation included adopting new business models to advance entrepreneurship while simultaneously incorporating strategies to foster and sustain the development of placed-based rural tourism products. Largely due to their limited exposure to product development in other regions and countries, tourism stakeholders often perceive these liminal innovations as being radical.

That this misunderstanding also exists among rural tourism stakeholders in Ontario was evidenced in a follow-up survey of workshop participants which asked them to identify innovative ideas based on the seven factors for innovation success (Figure 2), classify them as *now*, *new*, or *next* levels of innovation, identify innovative rural tourism businesses in Ontario, and explain their choices (Joppe

et al., 2014). Most examples cited were either incremental or liminal innovations, and even those characterized as radical were, in reality, versions of well-established initiatives in other jurisdictions. Engaged entrepreneurs who introduced both incremental improvements and liminal innovations dominated the endeavours seen as being most innovative. Nonetheless, in each instance, the entrepreneurs tweaked rather than rebuilt existing offerings, focussing primarily on existing markets. Aware of the potential for novel approaches to entice new markets, these operators introduced modifications, but they did so without changing their core offerings.

Support structures are particularly important in enabling the sustainability of rural businesses and organizations, which tend to be very small and, therefore, to rely on facilitated networks for knowledge sharing, funding, marketing, and human resource development to a much greater extent than their larger counterparts. The demands on the time and resources of owners of microenterprises are high as their volunteer involvement in business and civic organizations removes them from their daily tasks whereas, in larger organizations, volunteer support activities can be delegated to salaried employees.

Governance, which can be broadly described as "the ability to coordinate the aggregation of diverging interests to promote policy, projects, and programs that credibly represent the public interest" (Trousdale, 1999, p. 842), is another important factor that empowers innovation in rural tourism. Tourism governance implies a holistic and complex process of coordination among the public, private, and not-for-profit sectors (de Bruyn & Fernández Alonso, 2012). Because a myriad of small players within these three sectors must be consulted, coordinated, and aligned in planning and marketing, effective governance is essential.

The case studies also indicated that, although its structures differ among rural tourism initiatives, governance makes a profound contribution to success, or the lack thereof. Where sound governance exists, innovation is implied as a key value in addition to participation, openness, consultation, dialogue, strong leadership, and coordination (de Bruyn & Fernández Alonso, 2012, p. 225). This suggests that rural tourism is multifaceted, with several underlying issues to address. Complemented by effective leadership, the governance structure must facilitate community participation, community engagement, partnership, and the coordination of people and resources.

Therefore, to expedite progress in rural tourism, it is advisable to create an enabling environment that fosters innovation at many different levels (Brooker & Joppe, 2014). It is conceivable that programs that facilitate the introduction of innovation to rural tourism initiatives encourage the transformative and continuous development necessary for thriving rural communities. To this end, the framework presented in this report presents a model to enhance development in rural Ontario.

Rural Tourism Innovation Framework

The framework that surfaced as being critical to fostering innovative best practices in rural tourism in Ontario intimates that at the heart of effective development is the identification of a unique product (i.e., it possesses exceptional attributes that are distinctive to its place of existence) that can be developed holistically to meet the needs of community residents and visitors (Figure 3).

Figure 3. Rural Tourism Success Framework

Dynamic leadership, effective governance structures, long-term strategic planning, and long-term funding strategies are essential inner tier ingredients that not only propel development but, most importantly, also facilitate the constant advancement of rural economies. Innovative practices at all levels enable the generation of a culture of sustainable growth. Interestingly, the data suggest that learning communities can be cultivated through the implementation of targeted and customized enterprise level (i.e., essential business skills) training despite weak leadership and limited organizational capacity provided rural tourism businesses are actively involved, even if they are lifestyle initiatives. Entrepreneurial leadership is also important for creating a culture of innovation among tourism operators in rural communities.

Surrounding the inner tier success factors are those that define the community environment and influence the success or failure of particular rural tourism initiatives: community engagement, community participation, partnerships, and coordination. The existence and combination of *all* these factors working together lead to success. Conversely, the absence of one will result in an imbalance that signals the ultimate demise of the undertaking.

The framework also underscores the importance of long-term strategic planning. Stakeholders must share a clear vision that delineates the community's aspirations for rural tourism. Long-term strategic planning should not occur in isolation; rather, it must be synchronized with activities aimed at sourcing funds to implement planned initiatives. Indeed, raising capital should be a long-term strategic activity since access to funds to facilitate ongoing innovation is instrumental to ensuring the advancement of rural entrepreneurs and the communities in which they operate.

The efficacy of implementing the inner tier of the framework depends on outer tier support. Community engagement, partnership, community participation, and coordination contribute to engendering a shared commitment to the development process among stakeholders. The community at large should be able to visualize the benefits and potential opportunities of the rural tourism initiative at both the individual and community levels. The case studies spotlighted the absolute need for governing bodies to actively encourage and support community engagement irrespective of the overall governance structure for rural tourism in the region. An analysis to identify key stakeholders must be conducted to ensure they are not only actively engaged, but that they also participate in the development initiatives.

Community engagement is also fundamental to identifying strategic partnerships that can become agencies for raising capital for innovative projects. Indeed, in some of the cases studied, strategic partnerships among members within the community, and even external to the business environment, were instrumental in raising capital for new projects. These relationships are likely to foster innovation since the merging of ideas forces some degree of creativity. Proper coordination involves organizing and managing communication among relevant stakeholders. Moreover, at all stages of development, communities must *feel* a sense of equitable access to resources and opportunities.

In summary, community engagement, partnerships, coordination, and community participation provide the impetus and an enabling environment for good governance in tourism development.

Conclusion

Economic development in rural areas is challenging. Nonetheless, tourism presents an opportunity for nurturing economic development even in regions that are dispersed or underpopulated. Unique attributes of the place, culture and heritage, geography, agriculture, or history represent potential catalysts for establishing thriving industries. Moreover, developing cultures of innovation in rural touristic areas is a viable means of increasing the competitiveness of these areas, creating destinations, and possibly improving the livelihoods and quality of life of local residents.

Innovation in rural tourism can, and should, occur at various levels of the development process and involve entrepreneurs, support services, and governance approaches. The amalgamation of innovative attributes in as many forms as possible is likely to trigger interest in rural areas, thereby stimulating success in the distinctiveness of the rural experience that will inevitably contribute to a robust rural tourism product. Features that are believed to have facilitated the success of several of the cases studied have guided the framework presented in this report for fostering innovation success in rural tourism in Ontario.

It should be noted, however, that innovation is both an overused and misused term. In most instances, it is merely an adaptation of practices implemented elsewhere. Radical innovation does not often occur in rural communities, largely due to the small size of organizations, the attendant lack of resources, and the collaborative, consensus-based approach adopted for marketing, packaging, and product development.

The inevitable shift from resource- and manufacturing-based rural economies to reliance on the service sector and visitation by non-resident consumers to broaden the customer base is a challenge for many public, private, and not-for-profit organizations. The connectivity between the inner and outer tier factors, as indicated by the circular nature of the framework (Figure 3), must be acknowledged and underscored in all strategic planning activities. This review of best practices to foster sustainable tourism in Ontario's rural communities has generated a number of insights that can be helpful if incorporated into rural tourism strategies (Table 5). The summary of critical lessons learned illustrates how best practices overlap categories of success factors and explains how rural innovation is possible only when a confluence of factors reaches a critical mass.

Table 5. Summary of Critical Lessons Learned for Rural Tourism Development

Governance Structure - Coordination

- Clear and specific objectives for the tourism destination must be established and inform strategy development.
- Organizational structure and capacity are critical to sustaining the success of rural tourism initiatives.
- Strategic innovation is essential and must be based on a solid and realistic evaluation of attributes and opportunities.
- Governing organizations must be proactive in planning for development and also plan for the possibility of exponential growth.
- Governing organizations must plan for economic downturns and disasters.
- Strategic planning must include clear formulation of the lead organization's mandate and the development of a long-term funding strategy to ensure the development, promotion, and coordination of a differentiated brand for the community.

Long-Term Funding - Partnerships

- A working partnership for securing support from the local population, community businesses, and the public and private sectors must be established.
- A significant amount of time must be invested in planning, and key stakeholders must be committed both financially and conceptually.
- Consistent connection between the lead organization and the media is an imperative for visibility and other long-term benefits.

Unique Product - Community

- Attraction tourism must begin with an innovative captivating draw for visitors and represent a critical mass capable of attracting visitation.
- Primitive artifacts, historic events, and cultural and traditional activities present opportunities for the development of innovative tourist attractions.
- Continuous innovation and creative additions to tourism products are essential to enhance long-term sustainability and competitiveness.
- Products should not only satisfy visitors' curiosity, but also educate them (e.g., lifestyle, history, architecture).
- Using farmers' ingredients at culinary sites and promoting local handicrafts to encourage the growth of value-added products that visitors can purchase and take away can create additional value and versatility.

Leadership - Participation

- Skills gaps in rural tourism initiatives are likely to have a crippling effect on the tourism product and, therefore, they must be addressed in the initial stages of product development.
- Individual learning needs assessments must be the first step in developing training programs for MSMEs.
- The curriculum for training MSMEs should emphasize three main levels: (1) service excellence (focus on the consumer), (2) best practices (focus on the operations), and (3) business excellence (focus on the business).

Strategic Planning - Engagement

- Selection of primary target markets should be informed by market intelligence.

- The brand must be compelling and represent the geographic environs and activities to create a unique identify for the destination.

- Visitors to the community in which the attraction exists must feel welcome.

- Critical market factors that must be considered include proximity of major population centres, the demographics and disposable income of visitors, the appeal of cultural tourism, and the short haul market.

- The target market should include locals, not just visitors and tourists.

- Nearby populations must be considered when identifying primary target markets.

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Appendix 2. Summary of Literature Review

This appendix defines and clarifies key terms and concepts pertaining to rural tourism as well as highlights select points extracted from the literature relating to tourism products, governance, and marketing.

Definition of Concepts

Rural Tourism

- Buck (2000) defines rural tourism as "… the act of leaving the urban environment and traveling into the rural regions, for the purpose of experiencing and enjoying the natural beauty; the agricultural diversity; the quaintness of small towns; the cultural richness; and to escape the pressures of urban lifestyles in order to have pleasurable experiences and improve the quality of life." (p. 12).

- Rural tourism comprises many other types of tourism, including "agritourism, natural resource tourism, historical tourism, eco-tourism, cultural tourism, farm tourism, green tourism and alternative tourism" (Buck, 2000, p. 12).

- Rural tourists, who represent a relatively large market segment, are defined as "… those who travel to the country-side to experience the rural life-style, beauty and uniqueness that only the country-side can provide" (Buck, 2000, pp. 13-14).

Agritourism

- Agritourists have been involved in agriculture-related activities and, therefore, are interested in visiting agricultural sites. This segment accounts for a very small portion of the population.

- Agritourism is a diversification strategy that creates new sources of income for farmers (Ammirato, 2010).

- Diversification can be implemented in two ways: on-farm nonagricultural diversification (e.g., craft shops and blacksmiths) and off-farm diversification (e.g., saddlers or wine merchants) (Ilbery, Healey, & Higginbottom, 1997 as cited in Ammirato, 2010, p. 91).

- On-farm diversification is commonly adopted by larger farms that can afford to hire a sufficient number of employees to provide farming and tourism-related activities simultaneously, whereas smaller farms use their on-farm employees to operate off-farm businesses after farming tasks have been completed (Ilbery et al., 1997 as cited in Ammirato, 2010).

- Relocalization, establishing shorter agrifood supply chains, and e-commerce are effective strategies for lowering costs and increasing revenue (Ammirato, 2010, p. 90).

- Relocalization is defined as the "… rediscovery of local traditions and environmental and cultural heritage as means of improving well-being, authenticity and … quality of life …" (Ammirato & Felicetti, 2013, p. 483).

- Appendix 2A provides a list of different agritourism and rural tourism market segments as well as their respective activity and attraction interests.

Integrated Rural Tourism

- Integrated rural tourism (IRT) is defined as:

  - "… tourism that is explicitly linked to the economic, social, cultural, natural and human resources of the localities in which it takes place" (Jenkins and Oliver, 2001 as cited in Saxena, Clark, Oliver, & Ilbery, 2007, p. 350).

  - "… a web of networks of local and external actors, in which endogenous and embedded resources are mobilized in order to develop the assets and capabilities of rural communities and empower them to participate in, influence and hold accountable the actors and institutions that affect their lives" (Saxena et al., 2007, p. 358).

- Both horizontal and vertical integration are required. Horizontal integration refers to the diversification of agricultural products through the addition of complementary products and services. Vertical integration is focussed on community participation in rural tourism development (Panyik, Costa, & Rátz, 2011, p. 1353).

- Sustainability is key in IRT and emphasizes the responsible use of resources; balancing economic, social, and environmental outcomes; and the negative and positive impacts of tourism for different stakeholders (Saxena et al., 2007).

- Based on *complementarity*, IRT involves combining different resources and activities to form a unique and desirable tourism experience and calls for strategies that enhance networking and partnership. In contrast, *resource substitution* encourages competition among business owners and providers of tourism services (Petrou, Fiallo-Pantziou, Dimara, & Skuras, 2007, p. 241).

- Planners and policymakers should encourage business owners to form and join informal networks and also facilitate the generation of more formal, structured networks based on the existing informal relationships (Petrou et al., 2007).

- As part of the SPRITE project (Supporting and Promoting Integrated Tourism in Europe's Lagging Rural Regions), Clark & Chabrel (2007) introduced seven dimensions to measure the

degree to which tourism is integrated with economic, social, cultural, natural, and human resources in rural areas (Table 1).

Table 1. Seven Dimensions of Tourism Integration

Dimension	Description
Networking	The ability of people, firms, and agencies in the locality and beyond to work together to develop and manage tourism
Scale	The extent of tourism in an area in terms of its distribution over time and geographically, bearing in mind any thresholds related to the area's carrying capacity
Endogeneity	The degree to which tourism is recognized as being based on the real resources of the area
Sustainability	The extent to which tourism does not damage, and possibly enhances, the environmental and ecological resources of the area
Embeddedness	The role tourism plays as a local priority in the politics, culture, and life of the whole area and population
Complementarity	The degree to which tourism provides resources or facilities that benefit those who live in the area, even if they are not directly involved in the tourism industry
Empowerment	The extent of political control over the tourism industry through ownership, laws, or planning; particularly control exercised at the local level

Source: Clark & Chabrel, 2007, p. 373

Food Tourism

■ Food tourism is defined as "… the desire to experience a particular type of food or the produce of a specific region" (Hall & Sharples, 2003 as cited in Everett, 2012, p. 2).

■ A form of niche or alternative tourism, food tourism has three main components (du Rand & Heath, 206, pp. 206, 209):

  ■ *Agriculture* that provides the core product.

  ■ *Culture* that adds history and authenticity to the product.

  ■ *Tourism* that transforms the agricultural product into a tourism product by providing added value through complementary services.

■ Food is usually a supporting attraction or part of the overall destination experience as opposed to the primary purpose of travel (Hjalager & Richards, 2002 as cited in du Rand & Heath, 2006,

p. 209; Long, 2003 as cited in du Rand & Heath, 2006, p. 209; Selwood, 2003 as cited in du Rand & Heath, 2006, p. 209).

- A distinguishing feature of food tourism is that production and consumption often occur in the same place, thereby creating a potential challenge because the producers' workplaces become the settings for tourists' activities. Using the same space for both tourism and production may violate food production standards. To circumvent potential problems, many food producers limit tourists' direct access to production sites by installing viewing windows or even building two separate places, one for food production and another for tourism (Everett, 2012).

- Local food producers may be willing to adjust their production methods to provide better tourism experiences (Everett, 2012).

- Appendix 2B portrays a process for developing and implementing food tourism.

Key Findings

Product

- Phillip, Hunter, & Blackstock (2010) employed three criteria to categorize agritourism:

  - Whether tourists are visiting a working farm, defined as a "farm in which agricultural activities are being practiced" (p. 755).

  - The level of tourist contact with agricultural activity:

    - *Direct contact*: tourists are directly involved (e.g., milking cows).

    - *Indirect contact*: tourists engage in experiences that connect them to agricultural activities through intermediary practices (e.g., purchasing agricultural produce).

    - *Passive contact*: tourism and agricultural activities are conducted separately but at the same location (i.e., the farm).

  - The extent to which tourists have authentic vs. staged agricultural experiences.

- Five forms of agritourism emerged based on these criteria (Phillip et al., 2010, p. 756):

  - Non-working farm agritourism

  - Working farm, passive contact agritourism

  - Working farm, indirect contact agritourism

  - Working farm, staged agritourism

  - Working farm, direct contact authentic agritourism

- Visitors perceive rural destinations as being one integrated product without considering that they are actually a combination of several components provided by different stakeholders. Therefore, it is very important for local business operators to form partnerships and work together (Petrou et al., 2007).

- Based on a study of a national event campaign in Hungary, Panyik et al. (2011) argued that creating packages with a combination of products and services helps to attract visitors to less frequently visited rural destinations. However, to prevent potential conflicts among service providers and misunderstandings concerning the package features among consumers, it is essential to establish standards and clearly define the suppliers' responsibilities to each other as well as to consumers (Panyik et al., 2011).

- Incorporating local food in tourism experiences is an effective strategy to "sell the identity and culture of a destination" (Quan & Wang, 2003 as cited in du Rand & Heath, 2006, p. 207).

- Designing tourism drive routes is useful for grouping a set of tourism products and attractions. However, it should be noted that 80% of travellers first decide on the destination, and the drive route is a secondary factor (Tourism Queensland, 2004).

- Research has shown that tourists plan 60% of their trips before they commence. Therefore, relevant information must be provided prior to their departure (Tourism Queensland, 2004).

Governance

- A key factor in regional economic development, governance has been defined as "… the ability of key private and public actors to define a common vision, economic objectives and the role that each actor should play … to reach the objectives" (European Association of Development Agencies [EURADA], n.d., p. 5).

- A common barrier to providing effective regional development support is the fragmentation of support services which arises from overlapping intervention plans, multiple operators, separate and disintegrated policies at the community and national levels, and implementing new initiatives instead of revising existing ones (EURADA, n.d., p. 2).

- To avoid potential conflicts and redundancies among organizations that provide development support services, a *First Stop Advisory Shop* system can be established in which business operators first consult a central organization which refers them to the service provider that has the best set of skills and resources to address their particular needs (EURADA, n.d., p. 10).

- Public organizations that provide support services to local businesses should be able to understand and assess business needs, provide effective education, organize and structure different actors in the segment, and focus on partnership building (EURADA, n.d., p. 12).

- Appendix 2C showcases the development model introduced by EURADA.

- Appendix 2D illustrates EURADA's framework for adopting an integrated regional approach to the stimulation of entrepreneurship.

Marketing

- Marketing represents a significant challenge for agritourism operators (Schilling, Marxen, Heinrich, & Brooks, 2006 as cited in Ammirato, 2010).

- Local marketing is believed to be critical to the effective promotion of national events and can be implemented by working with local media using direct marketing methods, and collaborating with local tourism organizations (Panyik et al., 2011).

- An important ingredient in developing event-based IRT is encouraging stakeholders' participation in formulating and implementing a local marketing strategy (Panyik et al., 2011).

- Offering discounted rates is associated with higher risks in rural areas compared to urban areas. Research shows that in the context of event-based rural tourism, offering discounts higher than 30% does not necessarily lead to increased visitation. Therefore, specific attention should be paid to the impact of discounted rates on suppliers (Panyik et al., 2011).

- A study conducted by Carmichael and McClinchey (2008) in Southwestern Ontario indicated that rural accommodation entrepreneurs might act as tourism brokers. Because they have close interactions with tourists, accommodation operators can help tourists decide which attractions to visit. Destination marketing organizations (DMOs) can use this to develop relationship marketing campaigns to inform tourists about the rural tourism products available, specifically agricultural fairs and festivals (p. 392).

- Based on a study in South Africa, du Rand and Heath (2006) identified a lack of food promotion, local food events, and funding as being principal impediments to cultivating food tourism. They suggested that marketing-related issues (e.g., special food events, branding, media coverage, brochures) are more important than product-related issues (e.g., routes, speciality restaurants, quality of foodservice and products) (pp. 216-217).

- To promote food as a competitive and sustainable destination attraction, du Rand and Heath (2006) recommended the following (p. 229):
  - Capitalizing on cross marketing.

- Establishing standards to ensure consistent quality.

- Focussing on lifestyle positioning and emphasizing quality of life, nature, and leisure.

- Targeting niche segments in both domestic and international markets.

- Using food tourism to expand the tourism season.

- Leveraging attractive, unusual, and/or unknown cuisine when branding destinations.

- Creating specialty restaurants as a means of promoting local food.

- Using innovative signage and logos.

- Enhancing the tourism experience by combining food with other elements such as nature, sports, history, and culture through theming, packaging, and routing strategies.

- Europe's e-Business Watch (2007) has categorized agribusiness as being among the industries with a relatively low rate of adoption of information and communications technology (ICT) and e-business strategies (Ammirato, 2010).

- Despite the potential advantages of e-commerce for agribusinesses, the costs associated with this strategy may outweigh the benefits (Ammirato, 2010).

- Educating agritourism operators about the importance of ICT is key to establishing a long-term strategic approach for ICT adoption and increasing farmers' willingness to accept the short-term costs and initial challenges associated with using ICT (Ammirato, 2010).

Appendix 2A. Rural Tourism vs. Agritourism

Rural Tourists: Who They Are	Rural Tourism Attractions and Sites	Agritourists: Who They Are	Agritourism Attractions and Sites
- F.I.T. travellers - Bus tour groups - School children - Senior citizens - Hunters - Hikers - Birdwatchers - Gardeners - Botanists - Snowmobilers - Cyclists - Farm stay visitors - Sunday drivers - Wine enthusiasts - Photographers - Rally car drivers - Cross-country skiers - Cottagers	- Country roads - Roadside fruit stands - Garden centres - Forests and woodlots - Small towns - Historic sites - Walking trails - Swimming areas - Trailer resort parks - Conservation areas - Wineries - Scenic attractions - Cultural centres (Mennonites, First Nations, Amish) - Country homes, barns, mills - Pick-your-own farms	- Farmers: domestic and international - Incentive programs: business specific agricultural visits - Trade association tour groups - Buying missions (food, genetics, equipment, technology) - Agricultural education and training study tours - Convention and agricultural exhibition travel groups - Students on agricultural study tours - Student on-farm trainees - Flying farmers 4-H, young farmers	- Farms and greenhouses - Agricultural colleges and universities - Garden centres - Agricultural conferences - Agricultural expositions - Pick-your-own farms - Agribusinesses (grain elevators, feed companies, agricultural supply companies) - Agricultural museums - Farm equipment companies - Food processing companies - Maple syrup producers

Source: Buck, 2000, p. 17

Appendix 2B. Framework and Procedure for Developing and Implementing Food Tourism

Policies & Strategies
- National
- Provincial
- Local

STEP 1

Situation Analysis

Evaluation of the:
Environment
Markets
Resources and attractions

Review tourism attraction status in destination

General assessment of food tourism potential

No | Yes

STEP 2

Strategic Evaluation of Food Tourism

Use tools
- TOURPAT
- Market assessment
- Audit

Product Potential Attractiveness Tool

PAT

STEP 3

Key Marketing Management Tasks

- Prioritizing products and markets
- Positioning and branding
- Theming, packaging, and routing
- Promoting

General Assessment of Food Tourism Potential

Source: du Rand & Heath, 2006, p. 222

Appendix 2C. EURADA's Development Model

Governance

Business Support

Direct

Indirect

Human Resources

Attractivity of the Area

Non Financial Services
Information
Audit/Advice
Training
Awareness raising

Intermediate Structures
Development agencies
Venture capital companies
Technology transfer agencies

Education
Training
Employment creation
Integration of less-favoured people
Territorial pacts
Analysis of the qualification needs

Infrastructure
Environment
Industrial promotion
Inward investment attraction
Reclamation of derelict land
Promotion of the region
Tourism
Sectoral approach (clusters)
Internationalization
Research, Innovation, Technology transfer

Financial Services
Grants
Loans
Guarantees
Venture capital
Factoring - Leasing
Tax holidays

Local infrastructure
Enterprise centres
Incubators
Industrial parks
Science parks
First Stop Shops

Source: EURADA, n.d., p, 4

Appendix 2D. An Integrated Regional Approach to the Stimulation of Entrepreneurship

Pre Start-up

Creating Awareness And Culture
- Media
- School programs
- Case studies
- Personal enterprise
- Seminar/events

Sources
- SMEs
- R&D
- Universities
- Unemployed
- Craftsmen
- Special groups

Support Agencies
- Measures
- Skills
- SME Observatory
- First Stop Shops

Business Support Infrastructure
- Smart buildings
- Incubators
- Facilitating environment
- Facilitating access

ENTREPRENEURSHIP

Finance
- Banks
- Seed/Venture capital
- Business Angels
- Guarantees
- Exit routes

Information
- Economic intelligence
- Technology
- Trends
- Business opportunities
- Business validation

Training
- Technology and entrepreneurship
- Market research
- Business plans
- Finance

Post Start-Up (1-2 years)

Mentoring
- Practical hands-on advice from experienced practitioners and specialists
- Management practice workshops

Networking
- Formal and informal networks
- Sub-supplier networks
- Focus groups on key development areas

Source: EURADA, n.d., p, 9

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Appendix 3. List of Attendees – OMAFRA Project on Best Practices in Rural Tourism Stakeholder Workshop, December 7, 2012, Delta Hotel, Guelph, Ontario

Name	Position and Organization	E-mail Contact
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Name	Position and Organization	E-mail Contact
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Heather Mair	Associate Professor, University of Waterloo	hmair@uwaterloo.ca

Appendix 4. Case Studies Reviewed

No	Case Name	Place	Key Features	Sources
1	**Arctic Watch**	Nunavut, Canada	■ Five-star resort in the Arctic Circle ■ Animal watching and adventure ■ Unique location and activities that complement location	■ Stakeholder recommended ■ Website
2	**Woody Island Resort**	Newfoundland, Canada	■ Owner-operated hospitality homes ■ Provides an experience of living in a remote fishing village ■ Kayaking instruction	■ CTC Product Club case study ■ Website
3	**Auberge Beauséjour**	Quebec, Canada	■ Historic family-owned and operated country inn ■ Fine dining ■ Packages and tours	■ CTC Product Club case study ■ Website
4	**Charlevoix** a. **Flavour Trail** b. **Terroir et Saveurs** c. **Le Massif** d. **Cap-à-l'Aigle** e. **Terroir Products Quebec**	Quebec, Canada	■ Idea of a pioneer villager to enhance the village ■ Started as a not-for-profit corporation ■ Planned development of area ■ Planning and development strategy for villages ■ Tourism and recreation destination products include cultural, horticultural, and communal activities ■ Diversified product offerings based on three themes: mountain, farm, and train ■ Certification of members' operators	■ Website
5	**Circuit du Paysan**	Quebec, Canada	■ Governance structure supported by memberships ■ Variety of products offered by member entrepreneurs ■ Strategic partnerships among key stakeholders ■ Strong focus on heritage, culture, food, and art	■ Website

No	Case Name	Place	Key Features	Sources
6	**Eastern Townships**	Quebec, Canada	■ Regional tourism development initiative with good leadership ■ Governance structure involves an association of members ■ Long-term benefits from historical and cultural institutional development although not originally planned ■ Resilient core enterprises ■ Focus on natural products and themed trails ■ Competitive tourism development	■ Book chapter ■ Website ■ Brochure
7	**Ale Trail**	Ontario, Canada	■ Led by a group of brewers, the initiative capitalizes on the region's brewing experts ■ Established planning committee with various stakeholders (including representatives from development organizations for the Ale Trail) provides guidance ■ Place-based trail around three small towns ■ Largest market is near the region ■ A focus on collaboration and partnerships with a prevalence of business alliances among brewers and businesses ■ Brewers have a shared vision, mission, and objectives for the advancement of the trail ■ Financial contribution from member brewers to sustain the trail and its open house activities ■ Special events provide creative features	■ Journal articles ■ Website
8	**Alisa Craig International Quilt Festival**	Ontario, Canada	■ Not-for-profit entity ■ Primary goal: marketing ■ International festival ■ Street quilt trail featuring artistic quilts from many countries	■ Stakeholder recommended ■ Website

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No	Case Name	Place	Key Features	Sources
9	**Alton Mill**	Ontario, Canada	■ Mid-1800s mill was converted into an art centre, host gallery, and café ■ Continuous expansion of offerings beyond art (e.g., weddings/events)	■ Stakeholder recommended ■ Website
10	**Archibald Orchard and Estate Winery**	Ontario, Canada	■ Fourth generation family farm ■ Pick-your-own apples ■ Apple market and play area ■ Winery and cider house ■ Wine gift baskets ■ Golf course	■ CTC Product Club case study ■ Website
11	**Blue Heron (Tobermory) Company**	Ontario, Canada	■ Glass bottom boat cruises ■ Accommodations and gift shops ■ Continuous investment in infrastructure enhances the visitor experience	■ Stakeholder recommended ■ Website
12	**Blue Mountain Resorts Ltd.**	Ontario, Canada	■ Seasonal resort with adventure activities ■ Seasonal activities and attractions (e.g., *Jazz on the Mountain*)	■ Stakeholder recommended ■ Website
13	**Blue Mountain Village Association**	Ontario, Canada	■ Not-for-profit entity ■ Primary goals: animation, events, marketing, and beautification ■ New product development creates community spirit and enhances village life and economic activities (e.g., *Salsa Blue Festival*)	■ Stakeholder recommended ■ Website
14	**Bonnechere Cave**	Ontario, Canada	■ Underground cave ■ Educational and informational tours ■ Special events and activities (e.g., bike challenges, *Tie Dye Tuesdays*)	■ Stakeholder recommended ■ Website
15	**Brooks Farms**	Ontario, Canada	■ Destination and adventure farm with more than 20 attractions, including festivals, pick-your-own experiences, and farm market ■ Formal business planning and development strategy focussing on farming and tourism ■ Continuous attraction additions ■ New produce ■ Educational/special packages developed for children	■ Stakeholder recommended ■ Website

No	Case Name	Place	Key Features	Sources
16	**Bruce County** a. **Explore the Bruce** b. **Spruce the Bruce** c. **Foodlink Grey Bruce**	Ontario, Canada	■ Diversified place-based attractions: many attractions sites and events, accommodation options, and eateries ■ Promotion of tourism and agriculture ■ Culture of developing partnerships among regional and provincial tourism organizations ■ Special programs to revitalize downtowns (e.g., *Spruce the Bruce*) ■ Strong focus on economic development in the region for the benefit of residents ■ Special programs that focus on local food (e.g., Foodlink Grey Bruce works with over 350 local farmers, food processors, and retailers to improve revenue by value adding and direct marketing local food products) ■ Strategic planning for the destination	■ Websites (Explore the Bruce, Tourism and Economic Development) ■ Visitor analysis presentation ■ Premier rankings and strategic direction: Bruce ■ RTO7: tourism wayfinding and signage manual
17	**Clovermead Apiaries**	Ontario, Canada	■ Adventure farm with 32 attractions, bee-line tours, and honey gift shop ■ Periodic addition of new products and attractions	■ Stakeholder recommended ■ Website
18	**Elmhirst's Resort**	Ontario, Canada	■ Lakeside resort with its own farm, herb and vegetable garden, wine cellar, and spirit adventures ■ Leverages food as a tourism asset ■ Fully integrated supply chain and Canadian products	■ Stakeholder recommended ■ Website
19	**E'terra**	Ontario, Canada	■ Luxury villa serving organic and local foods ■ Destination experience (forest) targets lucrative demographics	■ Stakeholder recommended ■ Website
20	**Georgian Bay Destination Partnership**	Ontario, Canada	■ Specialized adventure packages and activities ■ Primary goal: marketing	■ Stakeholder recommended ■ Website
21	**Golden Gryphon Medieval Entertainment and Catering**	Ontario, Canada	■ Unique dining experience with plays that complement meals	■ Stakeholder recommended ■ Website

No	Case Name	Place	Key Features	Sources
22	**Long Point Eco Adventures**	Ontario, Canada	■ Outdoor adventure/luxury suites ■ Seven adventure tours target lucrative demographics	■ Stakeholder recommended ■ Website
23	**Mapleton Dairy and Organics**	Ontario, Canada	■ Specialty organic product store and restaurant ■ Formal business planning and development strategy focussing on farming and tourism ■ Product development in niche organic products	■ Stakeholder recommended ■ Website
24	**Niagara Economic Development Corporation (NEDC)**	Ontario, Canada	■ Governing organization to foster regional development ■ Strong focus on partnership with the region's twelve municipalities to provide effective and innovative services that encourage investment in and travel to the region, along with business support services to attract, maintain, and increase jobs ■ Attractions built on the natural resources in the area ■ Use of public/private partnership in brand development	■ Website ■ Journal articles ■ Niagara 2010 business plan ■ Niagara economic growth strategy ■ Niagara case study
25	**Niagara Wine Route**	Ontario, Canada	■ Local wineries collaborate to develop the region as a wine destination ■ Formal and informal agreements between wineries, tour operators, and the food industry highlight the significance of horizontal and vertical linkages ■ On-site wine and related merchandise	■ Telfer, D. (2001). "Strategic Alliances Along the Niagara Wine Route." *Tourism Management*, 22: 21-30
26	**Northern Edge Algonquin**	Ontario, Canada	■ Park adventure/retreats with several outdoor activities ■ Focussed on sustaining quality and providing authentic experiences	■ Stakeholder recommended ■ Website
27	**Oxford Fresh**	Ontario, Canada	■ Chefs, growers, and processors work together to create artisanal local foods ■ Creative products and unique new experiences (e.g., *Oxford Country Cheese Trail* and *Oxford Garden Party*)	■ Stakeholder recommended ■ Website

No	Case Name	Place	Key Features	Sources
28	**Prince Edward County**	Ontario, Canada	■ Well-packaged island destination ■ Diverse heritage, art, culture, food, and wine experiences and festivals ■ Outstanding example of a rural community that has leveraged its natural resources with a focus on the creative economy including gastronomy, oenology, culture and heritage, and the visual arts to create not only a desirable tourist destination but also vibrant regional economic development ■ Cultural planning (including resource mapping and identity mapping)	■ Website ■ Journal articles ■ *Taste 2011 Trails* guide ■ Tourism strategy for PEC ■ PEC agrifood market study ■ Brochures
29	**Regional Tourism Marketing Partnership**	Ontario, Canada	■ Facilitates and supports product and service development and marketing of the Grey Bruce destination ■ Visitor value is created through outdoor and undiscovered nature adventures, experience-based products, small town atmosphere, culture, and proximity to market	■ Stakeholder recommended ■ Website
30	**Saunder's Farm**	Ontario, Canada	■ Destination farm with over 35 attractions ■ Formal business planning and development strategy focussing on farming and tourism ■ Specialized services for niche markets	■ Stakeholder recommended ■ Website
31	**Scandinave Spa**	Ontario, Canada	■ Resort spa ■ Nature spa with unique get-a-way products/service offerings	■ Stakeholder recommended ■ Website
32	**Smith's Apples & Farm Market**	Ontario, Canada	■ Apple orchard and working farm with visitor attractions ■ Formal business planning and development strategy focussing on both farming and tourism ■ Additional amenities enhance the tourism component	■ Stakeholder recommended ■ Website

No	Case Name	Place	Key Features	Sources
33	**Spirit Tree Estate Cidery**	Ontario, Canada	■ Pick-your-own farm operation, cidery, kitchen, bakery, and farm store ■ Formal business planning and development strategy focussing on farming and tourism ■ Study tours to gather knowledge and skills for product development (e.g., bread making) to target food lovers	■ Stakeholder recommended ■ Website
34	**Springridge Farm**	Ontario, Canada	■ Fun farm yard, orchard, gift shop, bakery, and café ■ Unique festivals supported by marketing campaigns	■ Stakeholder recommended ■ Website
35	**St. Jacobs**	Ontario, Canada	■ Destination based on the culture of the Old Order Mennonites who farm the surrounding countryside and welcome visitors to experience their lifestyle ■ Appropriate planning processes that result in win-win situations for the town and area's industries	■ Website ■ Journal articles ■ Text books
36	**Stratford Tourism Alliance**	Ontario, Canada	■ Not-for-profit entity ■ Representation by city ■ Primary goal: marketing ■ Unique community products (e.g., *Savour Stratford* programming and special visitor packages)	■ Stakeholder recommended ■ Website
37	**Summerhouse Park**	Ontario, Canada	■ Waterfront campground, cottages, and guesthouse ■ Investments in facilities, infrastructure, and amenities to facilitate family fun	■ Stakeholder recommended ■ Website
38	**White Cress Mushroom Farm**	Ontario, Canada	■ Producer/processor of mushrooms, retail outlet, and country store ■ New produce (e.g., arctic kiwi) requiring considerable technical expertise ■ Educational tour for guests	■ Stakeholder recommended ■ Website
39	**Country Roads Agritourism Product Club**	Manitoba, Canada	■ Created and enhanced market readiness of agriculture-based tourism products in Canada ■ Ceased operations after five years	■ CTC Product Club case study

No	Case Name	Place	Key Features	Sources
40	**Earth Rhythms**	Manitoba, Canada	■ Creates meaningful encounters in inspiring natural locations and innovative cultural settings ■ Learn-by-doing experiences ■ Storytelling	■ Website
41	**Riding Mountain Guest Ranch**	Manitoba, Canada	■ Owner-operated guest ranch ■ Wildlife viewing and photography tours ■ Escorted vacation packages to other parts of Canada	■ CTC Product Club case study ■ Website
42	**Southwest Trails Association for Regional Tourism (START) aka Tourism Westman**	Manitoba, Canada	■ Not-for-profit dedicated to promoting tourism in southwest Manitoba ■ Provides proactive coordinated tourism development/promotion ■ Acts as a destination marketing organization	■ Website
43	**Westman Heritage Inc.**	Manitoba, Canada	■ Provides a partnership framework for heritage organizations in western Manitoba to reinforce the quality, appeal, and value of the region's heritage sites and to assist in achieving conservation and education tourism goals	■ Website
44	**Prairie Berries**	Saskatchewan, Canada	■ U-pick farming cooperative ■ On-site facility for processed products ■ Corn maze ■ Trout pond	■ CTC Product Club case study ■ Website
45	**Lucasia Ranch Vacations**	Alberta, Canada	■ Working cattle ranch ■ Owner-operated bed and breakfast establishment ■ Cattle drive ■ Horseback riding ■ Packaged as a historical educational experience	■ CTC Product Club case study ■ Website
46	**Bold Point Farmstay**	British Columbia, Canada	■ Organic farming ■ Eco-friendly living ■ Partnerships with local professionals (e.g., massages, workshops) ■ Learn-by-doing farm life experiences	■ CTC Product Club case study ■ Website

No	Case Name	Place	Key Features	Sources
47	**Chemainus**	British Columbia, Canada	■ Conversion of the community from a mill town to a destination based on outdoor murals ■ Developed into a full-service art, heritage, and culture destination	■ Website
48	**Osoyoos**	British Columbia, Canada	■ Destination built around natural resources and the culture and history of the Aboriginal people of the Okanagan Valley ■ The Indian brands of several successful community businesses play a leading role in economic development in the region	■ Website
49	**Victoria's Chefs' Initiative**	British Colombia, Canada	■ Collaboration between chefs and farmers to stimulate agricultural production and quality on the island	■ Website ■ Strategic sales and marketing plan 2012
50	**Diablo Canyon Rural Planning Area**	Arizona, USA	■ Land trust created as result of lobbying by landowners ■ Effectively transferred control of planning and permitting process ■ Aim: to protect traditional agriculture by preserving farmland and developing options for value-adding products, tourism, and alternative land uses	■ Carlson, J., and D. Edwards. (2007). "Case 2: Diablo Canyon Rural Planning Area," *BestEN*
51	**Tasting Arizona**	Arizona, USA	■ Consortium of tourism, farming, indigenous, nongovernment, education, community, festival, and food organizations that aims to provide local flavour to customers ■ Preserves traditional farming practices, conserves areas for wildlife, educates youth, maintains biodiversity, and protects cultural traditions	■ Carlson & Edwards (2007)
52	**California-Napa Valley Tourism Business Improvement**	California, USA	■ Lead organization promoting the Napa Valley as a premiere wine destination in North America ■ Extensive use of mobile technology	■ Website ■ Journal articles

No	Case Name	Place	Key Features	Sources
53	**Minnesota Tourism Initiative**	Minnesota, USA	■ University-industry partnership: College of Food, Agricultural & Natural Resource Sciences and University of Minnesota Extension support industry by providing research and training services ■ The centre works with industry leaders to develop new, or evolve existing, ideas to improve marketing, management, and operations	■ Website ■ Agritourism in Minnesota report ■ Farm stay manual (2011) ■ Marketing research for Minnesota
54	**Old West Country (OWC)**	New Mexico, USA	■ Destination marketing consortium of seven counties ■ Cooperative branding to market region under one name ■ Creates consistent perceptions of the attributes image component for the regional entity and member communities	■ Cai, L.A. (2002). "Cooperative Branding for Rural Destinations." *Annals of Tourism Research*, 29(3), 720-742
55	**New York-Finger Lakes Wine Country Tourism Marketing Association**	New York, USA	■ Governing authority that promotes economic development ■ Aim: to build a strong tourism industry that benefits the community ■ Capitalizes on benefits from a community rich in history, culture, and scenic beauty	■ Website ■ Journal articles
56	**Queensland**	Australia	■ Government-led strategic development initiative that provides technical assistance for non-tourism entrepreneurs interested in participating in rural tourism ■ Learning community program implemented by the Department of Employment, Economic Development and Innovation ■ Primary focus: education and training	■ Website ■ Case studies ■ Strategic planning and industry reports

No	Case Name	Place	Key Features	Sources
57	**Weberland (Weavers Land)**	Austria	■ Transformation of local mills into high end niche producers of quality textiles using a mix of contemporary and heritage designs ■ One producer specializes in heritage products ■ Supported by trails, festivals, and self-help group ■ Backed financially by local and regional councils and the European Union	■ Lane et al. (2013). *Industrial Heritage and Agri/Rural Tourism in Europe: A Review of Their Development, Socioeconomic Systems and Future Policy Issues.* Brussels: Publications Office ■ Website
58	**Cornwall**	England, UK	■ Food is perceived to be one of the most tangible characteristics associated with 'Cornishness' ■ Genuine commitment to local food ■ *Eat the View* strategy aims to link consumers with the countryside	■ Everett, S., and C. Aitchison. (2008). "The Role of Food Tourism in Sustaining Regional Identity: A Case Study of Cornwall, South West England." *Journal of Sustainable Tourism*, 16(2), 150-167
59	**West Somerset Railway**	England, UK	■ Operating branch line with historic steam locomotives, coaches, wagons, and buildings at ten unique stations ■ Complex partnership between county, shareholders, and a large number of volunteers	■ Lane et al. (2013) ■ Website
60	**Tourism and Conservation Partnership**	Lake District, England, UK	■ Public-private partnership maintains countryside capital by adopting projects of public partners that are offered to participating members and matched to their target market ■ Tourism operators can either adopt a project on their own or do so jointly with other operators	■ Garrod, B., E. Wornell, and R. Youell. (2006). "Reconceptualising Rural Resources as Countryside Capital: The Case of Rural Tourism." *Journal of Rural Studies*, 22(1), 117-128

No	Case Name	Place	Key Features	Sources
61	**Scotland**	Scotland, UK	■ Emphasis on the close working relationships among individual businesses, public agencies, local authorities, and other tourism stakeholders to maximize the economic benefits of tourism ■ Joint marketing through VisitScotland	■ Websites ■ Journal articles ■ Case studies
62	**Sunart Oakwoods Initiative**	Scotland, UK	■ Reestablishment of native woodlands for walking, cycling, wildlife hikes, canoeing, and other activities ■ Trains, employs, and houses local people ■ Managed by local people in collaboration with the Forestry Commission, Scottish Natural Heritage, Highland Council, Lochaber Enterprise, and special interest groups	■ Website
63	**The Big Pit**	Wales, UK	■ Major attraction that is part of an industrial heritage complex ■ Although relatively remote, the site is well financed, marketed, and interpreted ■ Shop, restaurant, multimedia virtual gallery, blacksmith's shop, interpretive centre, and underground tours guided by trained and experienced ex-miners	■ Lane et al. (2013)
64	**Burren and Cliffs of Moher**	Ireland	■ Working with over 45 tourism enterprises to achieve certification, the geopark has its own sustainable tourism criteria and strategy aimed at conservation and providing benefits to the community	■ Website
65	**Foxford**	County Mayo, Ireland	■ Redevelopment of the woollen mills with a restaurant and visitor centre ■ Public-private partnership and funding	■ Kneafsey, M. (2000). "Tourism, Place Identities and Social Relations in the European Rural Periphery." *European Urban and Regional Studies*, 7(1), 35-50

No	Case Name	Place	Key Features	Sources
66	**Ireland's Learning Communities**	Ireland	■ Government's tourism policy and legislation facilitated Fáilte Ireland to guide and promote tourism as a significant driver of the Irish economy ■ Provides strategic and practical support through learning networks, including business support, enterprise development, training and education, research, marketing, and regional development, to develop and sustain Ireland as a high quality competitive tourist destination ■ Provides access to information on food tourism in Ireland, the *Place on a Plate* concept, food tourism research and statistics, and food business support by Fáilte Ireland	■ Website ■ Brochures ■ National Food Tourism framework ■ Tourism Learning Network website
67	**Cinque Terra**	Italy	■ Established an Environmental Quality Brand for accommodation facilities, guidelines for tourists, and public information about conservation ■ The *Cinque Terra Card* provides access to all paths, nature observation centres, picnic areas, and bird watching sites ■ Can be purchased as a one-, three-, or seven-day card which also provides unlimited access to the train and bus between villages	■ Website
68	**Schist Villages Network Program (SVN)**	Portugal	■ Preservation of traditional buildings and distinctive streetscapes based on schist building material ■ Conservation of techniques, job creation, local pride, heritage conservation, and retention of authenticity	■ Lane et al. (2013) ■ Website

No	Case Name	Place	Key Features	Sources
69	**Foundation Conservation Carpathia**	Romania	■ Privately owned and managed national park that aims to restore the natural ecosystems of the Carpathians for the benefit of biodiversity and local communities, and be large enough to maintain Europe's last remaining major group of large carnivores ■ Cofinanced by the European Union	■ Lane et al. (2013) ■ Website
70	**Hotel Torre del Visco**	Spain	■ Lifestyle entrepreneurs redeveloped a near derelict farm/manor house into a high quality boutique hotel/restaurant ■ Offers trails, mountain biking, horseback riding, and hunting	■ Lane et al. (2013) ■ Website

Appendix 5. Focal Case Studies

Appendix 5.1	Outdoor Capital of the UK: Fort William and Lochaber, Northwest Scotland
Appendix 5.2	Bruce County: Governance to Revitalize Downtowns
Appendix 5.3	Island Chefs Collaborative: Connecting the Farmer and the Chef – A Driver for Rural Development
Appendix 5.4	Township of Wellington North: The Butter Tart Trail™
Appendix 5.5	Finger Lakes Culinary Bounty and Ontario Culinary Tourism Alliance
Appendix 5.6	Stratford Tourism Alliance: Culinary Tourism Initiatives
Appendix 5.7	Norfolk County and the Ontario Culinary Alliance
Appendix 5.8	Rural Tourism: St. Jacobs Country
Appendix 5.9	The Townships Trail, Quebec: Place Branding the Rural Landscape
Appendix 5.10	Queensland, Australia and Ireland: Building Capacity to Foster Partnership and Entrepreneurship Through Learning Communities
Appendix 5.11	Osoyoos First Nations: Partnerships for Economic Development

Appendix 5.1. Outdoor Capital of the UK: Fort William and Lochaber, Northwest Scotland

Kerry Godfrey

The *Outdoor Capital of the UK* (OCUK) is a community-focussed not-for-profit membership organization which promotes Fort William and Lochaber in northwest Scotland as "the best place in the UK for everyone to experience the outdoors" (Outdoor Capital of the UK [OCUK], n.d.). A self-declared label or brand, OCUK is an example of rural place-based or destination branding and marketing. While places may be considered the world's largest brands (Morgan, Pritchard, & Pride, 2004), this has not traditionally been as true for rural areas in Scotland, particularly when compared to more urban locations (Boyne & Hall, 2004) such as the gateway cities of Glasgow and Edinburgh. The *Outdoor Capital of the UK* brand, however, is very much a geographically and activity-focussed attempt to create a unique and compelling tourism identity for this rural part of Scotland.

The Setting

Fort William and Lochaber is located in the West Highlands of Scotland approximately 150 kilometres, or a 2.5-hour drive, northwest of Glasgow, at the terminus of the West Highland Railway. Hosting some of Britain's most spectacular natural landscapes and covering about 4,450 square kilometres, it stretches from the Isles of Rum and Eigg of the Inner Hebrides in the west to the western edge of the Cairngorm Mountains and the Cairngorms National Park in the east. Possessing a rural and rugged landscape, the region's topography ranges from the deepest and longest sea lochs in the British Isles to its highest peak, Ben Nevis, which stands 1,344 metres above the town of Fort William. It has a population of approximately 19,000, about half of which lives in the main town of Fort William.

The area is rich in both cultural and natural history, with significant geological features such as Glen Coe and Rannoch Moor as well as the southern reaches of the Great Glen and Loch Ness. In 2007, the region was designated a European and Global Geopark (North West Highlands Geopark, n.d.).

Loch Sheil in the west is the location of the Glenfinnan Monument commemorating Bonnie Prince Charlie and the Jacobite Rising of 1745. More recent exposure has been generated through serving as the setting for movies such as James Bond's *Skyfall,* parts of the *Harry Potter* series*, Highlander, Rob Roy,* and *Braveheart.*

Like many rural areas, no single attraction or facility acts as the main visitor draw. However, in combination, the diversity of the natural environment and the variety of activities represent a potentially significant resource and probably the most important feature for tourism in the region. The physical environment around Fort William supports an extensive range of water and snow sports, field and country sports, motor sports, and mountain sports in addition to cycling, mountain biking, golfing, and other recreational and cultural activities. It is also home to what is considered the world's largest indoor ice climbing arena, the Ice Factor (Ice Factor Kinlochleven, n.d.).

Further underpinning the self-declared *outdoor capital* label are Ben Nevis, which boasts a World Cup Mountain Bike course, and the surrounding mountains. Around 400,000 people visit Glen Nevis annually, of which approximately 110,000 make the ascent to the summit of Ben Nevis (OCUK, n.d.). The outdoor tourism industry in Fort William and Lochaber represents the largest employment sector in the region, accounting for over 4,000 jobs, and a significant revenue generator, earning over £175 million from overnight visitors and a further £12 million through day visitor spending (Highland Council, August 2013).

The *Outdoor Capital* Initiative

The notion for identifying this northwest region of Scotland as the *Outdoor Capital of the UK* was conceived by several business and community groups in the wider Lochaber region around the turn of the millennium. Lochaber had been (and remains) a significant activity/nature-based rural tourist destination, with visitation dating from the Victorian era. Today, the area's reputation has been reinforced by the presence of a World Cup Mountain Bike course, the development of the Ice Factor, and the existence of two downhill skiing facilities as well as extensive and diverse mountaineering and water sports opportunities that cater to all skill levels.

Although the outdoor tourism industry was perceived to be significant, it was also somewhat organizationally fractured, with no real or effective coordinating voice.[1] Reorganization of Scotland's national and regional tourism infrastructure resulted in the loss of the local tourist

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[1] *This issue is still present with multiple groups and organizations discussing, funding, and debating tourism. These include, but are not limited to, The Highland Council, VisitScotland, the Highlands and Islands Enterprise, the Scottish National Heritage, the Forestry Commission Scotland, the National Trust for Scotland, British Waterways, Historic Scotland, the Fort William Chamber of Commerce, and the Outdoor Capital of the UK (OCUK).*

board. Further, the impact of foot-and-mouth disease was considered to have had significant costs to the UK's outdoor industry ("FMD Costs," 2001), and the inconsistent quality of the local tourism product, particularly in terms of accommodation facilities and customer service, was seen as a weakness.[2] Something had to be done.

As some local operators contemplated what to do, the idea of place branding emerged. A series of public meetings and discussions was held, and a consultant was commissioned circa 2003 to assist in determining future directions for tourism in the region, more specifically, to help in defining a destination management concept focussing on nature tourism. The regional development agency (Highlands and Islands Enterprise [HIE]), the European Commission (European Regional Development Fund [ERDF]), VisitScotland (the national tourist board), and the Highland Council (the regional government) provided significant financial support for these efforts, which culminated in the advent of the OCUK (Outdoor Capital of the UK) concept. Incorporated as a not-for-profit limited company with members in 2004, the OCUK employed 2 full-time-equivalent (FTE) staff and had 14 volunteer directors as well as approximately 110 members, including 80 businesses and 30 individuals in 2013 (OCUK, n.d.).

View of Ben Nevis

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[2] *Variability in product quality has not been eliminated (see Highland Council, August 2013).*

Mountain Biking and Ice Climbing at the Ice Factor

OCUK Objectives

The creation and launch of the OCUK coincided with a major drive by VisitScotland to boost the value of Scottish tourism by 50% by 2015 (Mullen, 2007). Building on what was perceived to be increasing interest in green tourism, the national tourist board believed that tourism growth would come from short-break holidays and demand for health, wellbeing, unique experiences, and personal development – consumer needs which the tourism resources of the Lochaber region were aptly suited to satisfy.

Nature-based tourism has continuously represented a significant component of Scotland's tourism product, especially outside the iconic cultural destinations of Glasgow and Edinburgh. In 2010, nature tourism was estimated to be worth £1.4 billion annually, generating some 39,000 FTE jobs across a broad range of activities including wildlife watching, field sports, hillwalking and mountaineering, snow sports, cycling, water sports, horseback riding, and other adventure activities (Bryden, Westbrook, Burns, Taylor, & Anderson, 2010). This, combined with a national drive to encourage better capacity utilization of Scotland's existing tourism infrastructure (Mullen, 2007), led to relatively widespread support for the initiative and subsequent growth in awareness of Lochaber's tourism potential.

The overall objective of the OCUK was to establish Fort William and Lochaber as the best place to experience the outdoors. To this end, its key priorities were defined as being to (OCUK, n.d.):

- Increase the net value of tourism.
- Expand the numbers employed in the outdoor economy.
- Increase the number of businesses involved in the outdoors.

- Support and advise businesses.

- Establish the *Outdoor Capital* as one of Europe's leading outdoor activity destinations.

- Establish a sustainable high profile year-round events program.

Initial funding for the OCUK came in the form of a two-year financial package from public agencies (e.g., HIE, ERDF, VisitScotland, Highland Council) covering the start-up period. HIE subsequently extended its support through 2008, and ERDF provided extension funds to 2010 (Trafford, n.d.). ERDF required the OCUK to raise private capital of £25,000 per annum to support the initiative.

Target markets for the OCUK product were initially defined as people who were <u>not</u> expert outdoor enthusiasts because most in the region believed experts already knew about Fort William and Ben Nevis, particularly given the regular staging of the Mountain Bike World Cup, the success of the Ice Factor, and the region's access to lochs, mountains, and the sea. Instead, the primary target markets were identified as outdoor novices and occasional or weekend enthusiasts since these were perceived as representing the greatest potential for visitor growth.

These targets were further segmented into socioeconomic clusters: DINKs (dual income, no kids), empty nesters, yuppies (young urban professionals), and families with young teenage children. Previous market research in the region had apparently identified these groups as being occasional users of the outdoor environment who enjoyed walking, mountain biking, hillwalking, and climbing. These groupings were also considered more likely to be repeat visitors (with 81% supposedly visiting more than once and 61% indicating they would return). The majority lived in England, particularly the south of England, and perhaps not surprisingly, the vast majority thought the area was excellent or good for outdoor activities (OCUK, n.d.).

The collective efforts of the OCUK staff and volunteers were focussed primarily on raising awareness of the region and the OCUK brand through print advertising, event promotion, and a corporate website. Brand imagery and promotional material were created, and the power of the group was used to generate news, produce material, and attend trade shows that were beyond the reach of most businesses and tourism operators on their own. The principal function of the OCUK was destination marketing and not destination management as originally conceived. The focus was very much on promoting the OCUK outside the region, not on industry development or management within the region.

Analysis: Competition and Stalemate

Similar to the experience of many innovative and enterprising tourism and revenue-generating initiatives, it was not long before other outdoor regions in the UK began to challenge Fort William and Lochaber's positioning as the *Outdoor Capital of the UK*. Competition intensified despite the OCUK's aggressive promotional activities, its unique branding concept, and its relative advantages of being first to market.

In 2008, the Lake District region of Cumbria began to emulate the OCUK with its own brand of activity/nature-based tourism, calling itself the *UK's Adventure Capital* (Cumbria Tourism, 2010). While not necessarily having the same range of outdoor activities as is available in the OCUK region, the English Lake District has similar features and, most importantly, is closer to major UK population centres and the OCUK's core target market of southern England. Although the lakes are much smaller, the mountains are not as high, and there are no ski hills, the Lake District, as the *Adventure Capital,* became a significant intervening opportunity for the English population. This region also sits astride the most significant north-south motorway in northern Britain, thereby placing the *Adventure Capital* about a 4.5-hour drive further south than the OCUK. Its travel time to the south is similar to the OCUK's travel time to the north for the majority of the population living in south-central Scotland.

The Highland resort town of Aviemore, which sits in the heart of the Cairngorms National Park, has emerged as another activity/nature-based Scottish tourist destination. Located approximately 100 kilometres to the east of Fort William, Aviemore and the Cairngorms are about the same travel distance north of Glasgow and Edinburgh as the OCUK.

Following several years of neglect and a lack of reinvestment during the 1980s and 1990s, this area began to regenerate during the early part of the twenty-first century (Walker, 2005). A new funicular railway was opened on CairnGorm Mountain; the once popular, but dilapidated, Aviemore Highland Resort, was completely renovated (including a 650-seat auditorium); the Highland Estate of the Clan Grant and its ancient Caledonian Pine Forest were returned to prominence;[3] and

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[3] *Rothiemurchus. See* http://www.rothiemurchus.net/

significant improvements were made to the main highway (A9) through the Highlands, rendering Aviemore and the Cairngorms much more accessible to the majority of the Scottish population.

While copycat destinations are in one sense the ultimate compliment, the additional competition together with several poor ski seasons in Scotland (Bolger, 2007), the comparatively low cost of both winter and summer holidays in Europe, a shift in holiday patterns from week-long vacations to multiple short-break holidays, the European economic crisis post-2008, an increased emphasis on value and quality of the visitor experience (Northrop, 2010), and mass holiday cancellations in 2010[4] all played havoc with the initial success achieved by the OCUK brand.

Although overall visitation to Scotland had not actually declined due to a general increase in domestic tourism, the value of tourism in the country had remained relatively flat since 2005 (Northrop, 2010). In the Highlands, however, UK domestic tourism decreased by 2% with an 18% decline in overnight stays, resulting in a 12% decrease in the received value of domestic tourism for the three years between 2008 and 2010 (Stevens & Associates, 2012). These figures suggested that key challenges remained and were exacerbated by the relative isolation of the region from the rest of the UK, especially when measured in drive time.

The region also suffered from a skills gap, including a paucity of young people to fill seasonal hospitality and tourism positions;[5] a proclivity of lifestyle operations, many with imperfect business experience or appreciation for the service quality and value demanded by contemporary tourists; and a general lack of training and/or professional qualifications in outdoor management. In addition, since the primary emphasis of the OCUK had been on destination promotion without a commensurate focus on product development, quality enhancement, and organization building, issues relating to equity and the distribution of benefits, organizational transparency and corporate democracy, and quality control of the tourism product (Highland Council, August 2013) hampered progress in this relatively small community.

Unfortunately, the combination of these factors led to a stalemate for tourism in the region. The local tourism system remained fragmented and perhaps had even reverted to its original state prior to the launch of the OCUK in 2004. In 2012, the OCUK, together with other local tourism associations, represented only about 25% to 30% of the region's tourism business community. Hence, the organization's revenue model, which was based on membership income matched by

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[4] *Volcanic eruption in Iceland closed much of European airspace for an extended period during the summer of 2010.*

[5] *The demographic profile of the Scottish Highlands and Islands has shown a deficit of some 10,000 people in the 18- to 30-year age band compared to the rest of Scotland. Young people have tended to leave the area to seek employment or post-secondary education, and have not returned quickly.*

public sector funding, was no longer considered sustainable[6] (Stevens & Associates, 2012). As many of these businesses were considered lifestyle enterprises and further defined as microbusinesses, it is perhaps not surprising that membership in the OCUK, alongside membership in the chamber of commerce and other local tourism associations, had not grown significantly, and tourism product development and enhancement had not matched initial expectations. While many tourism businesses had apparently benefited from local tourism growth, it was evident that few were actively engaged in a collective effort to further develop and improve the tourism product.

Beyond the challenging skills gap, concern over the level of buy in from the local business community remained, especially with respect to the promised distribution of benefits that would accrue to the area from engaging in tourism. Managing expectations had presumably not been at the forefront of OCUK activities. In addition, the longstanding reliance on ERDF and the relatively continuous pump-priming by the regional development agency and other public bodies led some to question whether the region actually had the innovative capacity necessary to render the initiative sustainable (Trafford, n.d.).

Given the foregoing, the consultant who was commissioned to advise on the creation of the OCUK brand was brought back in 2011-2012 to help reignite the original concept and address the various challenges. Following a period of public consultation, a new vision and strategy for tourism development in the OCUK was published in April 2012, which highlighted several key issues, including how best to (Stevens & Associates, 2012):

- Position Fort William/Lochaber as a market-focussed destination of choice and place it at the heart of achieving Scotland's strategy for growing tourism.

- Realize the potential of the OCUK as a compelling brand capable of enhancing Scotland's appeal to UK and international visitors.

- Create an environment to stimulate collaboration and innovation as well as attract investment in innovative product development to provide quality that is relevant to emerging markets.

- Secure support and commitment from the local population, the business community, and all public and nongovernmental organizations involved in the area.

- Generate increased value and benefits from touristic activity for the whole community.

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[6] *The Highlands and Islands area of Scotland has for many years relied heavily on European Social Funds and European Regional Development Funds for base funding with limited evidence or prospect of initiatives in this area realistically becoming self-sustaining.*

In response to concerns raised by the business community relating to the OCUK as an organization and the overall management of tourism in the area, the report suggested that by the end of the new strategy period (2016), key measurements of success for the OCUK and its new vision and strategy should include (Stevens & Associates, 2012):

■ Uniting the local tourism industry through involving increased numbers of businesses (from the base of 110 to 500) in the strategic process. This was to be achieved through the integration of tourism associations with the chamber of commerce.

■ Formulating a successful Tourism BID (business improvement district) application to generate a more sustainable revenue stream and investment fund for local tourism-related projects.

■ Creating a strong and supported events strategy for the region.

■ Generating widespread support for the OCUK brand as well as creating awareness and understanding of the role that tourism plays in the wider local economy beyond the direct impact on tourism businesses in the region.

Perhaps foreshadowing the challenge that lay ahead, the report concluded that this would only happen if:

> ... innovative, fresh thinking is applied to create an environment for change supported by enlightened, energised, [and] inspirational industry leadership ... backed by a committed, integrated public-private sector approach (Stevens & Associates, 2012).

As of December 2013, the continued success of the OCUK and the new vision and strategy did not look bright. Subsequent to the release of the strategy document, a group called *Living Lochaber* began to prepare an application for a Tourism Business Improvement District (BID) for Lochaber. Originating in Canada in the 1970s and arriving in Scotland in 2007, BIDs are public-private sector partnerships designed to develop projects and services that will benefit the business community in clearly defined geographic/commercial areas over and above those that are provided by the public sector. They are developed, managed, and paid for by the business community through an additional levy based on business tax rates. For BID proposals to be successful in Scotland, at least 25% of businesses to be affected must vote, and at least 50% of the votes cast must be in favour. If passed, all eligible businesses are required to pay the additional levy.

The Lochaber Tourism BID was launched in November 2012 followed by a year of consultation and business plan development. The justification for a tourism BID, as opposed to a more generic business BID, was the belief that all businesses and the community as a whole would benefit if the

number of visitors, their length of stay, and their spending in the region were increased. The BID suggested this would be achieved through effective marketing, infrastructure improvements, additional local events, and a better local business environment (Living Lochaber, 2013). The BID would build on the OCUK brand, which apparently many in the community supported but in which relatively few had invested. Despite the efforts of a core team of ten local business leaders, in December 2013, the Lochaber Tourism BID was resoundingly rejected by a vote of 418 (against) to 135 (in favour) based on a 58.1% turnout of eligible voters (Highland Council, December 2013).

Subsequent local media reports highlighted the reputed widespread concern in the local business community with a number of the actual proposals in the BID plan, the membership of the BID steering committee and their potential vested interest in the proposals, and a general lack of detail on how the revenue raised through the additional levy would ultimately improve tourism to the benefit of all tourism businesses in the region.[7] Consequently, it has been suggested that since the results were published, the business community in Fort William and Lochaber is more divided than it was before the tourism BID. The OCUK, which was a key player in developing the BID, will most likely suffer—at least in the short term, if not longer.

Conclusion

The idea of place branding using a theme such as the OCUK has much merit, particularly when the concept of the brand is well reflected in the actual tourism opportunity and expected visitor experience as was the case in Fort William and Lochaber. Therefore, the OCUK's primary challenge lies not in the concept, but rather in the organizational structure and capacity of the company to engage the wider business community and local tourism industry to achieve a realistic and sustained interest in the initiative. Notwithstanding the competition generated by Aviemore (where the business community is reportedly working very well together), the new *Adventure Capital* in the English Lake District, and reports of yet another outdoor destination concept in North Wales (Stevens & Associates, 2012), the OCUK's future depends largely on addressing internal problems relating to structure and leadership.

The funding model for the OCUK, which is based on membership dues and matching funds from the public sector, has proven to be unsustainable. Although the payment of membership dues demonstrates some willingness on the part of local businesses to invest in their industry, this is simply not enough. Ideally, the OCUK's organizational model, structure, funding mechanisms, and governance should have been defined at the outset as part of the original proposals for the

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[7]See http://www.obantimes.co.uk/2013/12/19/lochaber-bid-rejected-by-voters/; http://www.lochaber-news.co.uk/News/Lochaber-BID-proposal-resoundingly-rejected-in-ballot-13122013.htm ; http://www.bbc.com/news/uk-scotland-highlands-islands-25368792, *for example.*

destination management organization. Unfortunately, the original business plan for the OCUK was either unrealistic in its assumptions about potential revenue, ignored by the volunteer directors, or simply did not address the long-term sustainability of the business against its objectives.

Subscription-based or membership companies located in rural environments tend to have difficulty remaining viable primarily because they have fewer potential members upon which sustainable business plans can be built. Business models that may be successful in urban environments are not necessarily transferable to rural environments, simply based on numbers. Moreover, each location, whether rural or urban, is unique and differs in terms of physical resources available, access to markets, and sociodemographic and economic structures that represent the foundations of communities. These points render the transferability of ideas from one location to another somewhat more complex than is often appreciated or anticipated.

This complexity underscores the second aspect of the OCUK's challenge going forward—the issue of leadership. Fort William and Lochaber has many business leaders. Each of the local tourism organizations, individual company directors, and the numerous tourism business owners are leaders in their own right. Although the idea to create the OCUK as a unifying brand for tourism showed creativity and leadership, this has been insufficient to sustain the initiative beyond its start-up phase. Many of those engaged in the OCUK, particularly those at the heart of the organization, have been and continue to be relatively successful entrepreneurs. Indeed, most tourism businesses in the OCUK area can be considered to be entrepreneurial and successful, but are for the most part SMEs or more likely microenterprises – promising but small operations with relatively few employees where the tasks of a CEO, COO, and CFO are often performed by the same person.

Although not decrying their entrepreneurial skills and abilities, this highlights that what makes a business effective in the start-up phase does not necessarily apply or translate to success when that business seeks to expand and move forward. The OCUK team knew what it needed to do to get started, but it is now floundering as it tries to take the tourism destination to the next level. In this case, as is perhaps exemplified in the failure of the tourism BID, the innovation pipeline in the OCUK seems to have dried up. Although this is a common challenge in rural areas where fewer people often means fewer ideas, the problem is likely further exacerbated in the OCUK region where, as noted previously, the population demographic of the community is significantly unrepresentative of the rest of the Scottish population, and lifestyle businesses prevail, so business growth is not always the primary concern of all those involved.

The future of the OCUK as an organization was uncertain at the close of 2013, particularly given the wider business community's ostensive disavowal of the new vision and strategy by virtue of their

rejection of the Lochaber Tourism BID. Much of what appeared in the strategy documents formed the core content of the tourism BID. Thus, while rural nature-based tourism in Fort William and Lochaber will undoubtedly continue as it has for over 100 years, the value of that tourism to the community and the pursuit of overall quality enhancement and further product development will inevitably change. Whether this will prove positive for the OCUK remains elusive.

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Appendix 5.2. Bruce County: Governance to Revitalize Downtowns

Marion Joppe

Successful governance for rural tourism, whether in the form of partnerships among stakeholders or through vested tourism authorities, has become increasingly dependent on effective tourism planning and management (Sharpley, 2003). Moreover, governance is now considered to be an important basis upon which destinations can achieve sustainable development (de Bruyn & Fernández Alonso, 2012, 2012). The diversity of stakeholders, often referred to as the fragmentation of the tourism industry (Jamal & Getz, 1995), is seen as a challenge to good governance (de Bruyn & Fernández Alonso, 2012, p. 225) and the collaboration between the public and private sectors and civil society.

Because governance can be a pitfall to effective collaboration in destination management, one of the strategic decisions that must be made is the form of governance and coordinating activities among collaborators (Fyall, Garrod, & Wang, 2012). Jamal and Getz (1995) suggested there is a role for a convener of collaboration who is responsible for identifying and bringing legitimate stakeholders to the table. Local government is often considered a suitable convener because the public goods of the destination are typically at stake, and local government is usually the authority for issues that evolve around facilitating growth and development (Jamal & Getz, 1995).

Bruce County, Ontario

Situated in Southwestern Ontario, Bruce County contains Bruce Peninsula, which lies between Georgian Bay and the main basin of Lake Huron, as well as the western portion of Tourism Region 7 (Figure 1). Ancient reef structures and fossils are still visible and contribute to the beauty of Bruce Peninsula, the geography of which was shaped by ice ages and semitropical seas. Located in the northern portion of the county, Bruce Peninsula includes part of the 900-kilometre Niagara Escarpment World Biosphere Reserve and the Bruce Trail that runs from the Ontario/US border to Tobermory. Two national parks (including Canada's first national marine conservation area, Fathom Five), eight Ontario provincial parks, and four Ontario Nature reserves are located within the Bruce Peninsula. The region is also an important flyway for migrating birds.

Figure 1. Tourism Region 7

Figure 1. Tourism Region 7

Source:
http://www.brucecounty.on.
ca/
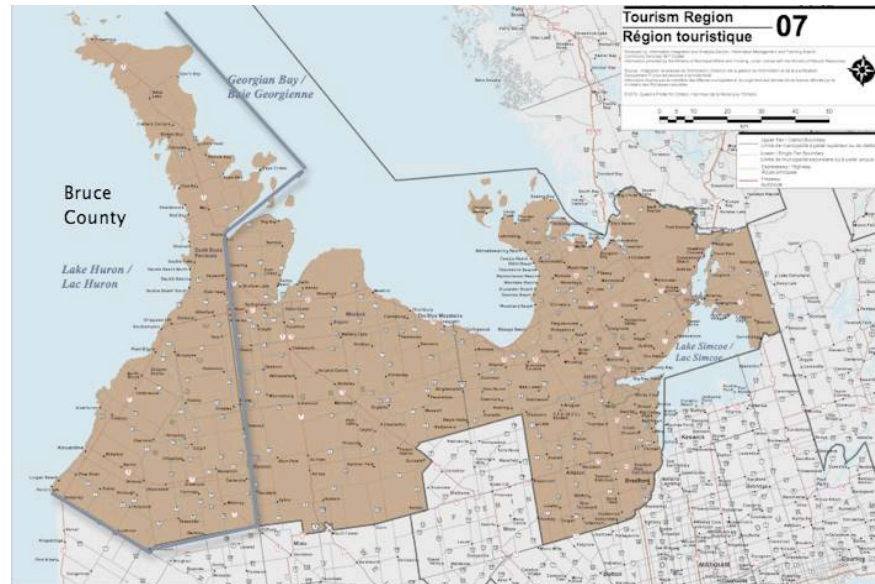
The richness of the land combined with abundant fishing, clear water, and secure refuge attracted the Saugeen Ojibway Nations, the first settlers in the area, to hunt and trade. However, it was not until 1850 that the oldest townships were surveyed into farm lots and opened to settlers, notwithstanding the area's poor agricultural potential. Although fisheries and timber compensated for the deficiencies in agriculture, rapid logging and devastation of the fish supply by the lamprey eel started a steady decline in population in the 1930s, which lasted until the 1970s. Left behind were many unique features including a number of lighthouses and shipwrecks, and despite the logging, the largest remaining area of forest and natural habitat in Southern Ontario.

The diversity of resources has drawn an increasing number of cottagers to the county during the last four decades, and seasonal residents currently outnumber the 67,000 permanent residents. Moreover, the permanent populations in northern and southern Bruce Peninsula as well as Saugeen Shores have grown, largely due to amenity migrants (i.e., people from larger cities who are enticed to relocate by the scenery and amenities that small communities in rural and waterfront areas offer). Many of these migrants have started small businesses that cater to tourists and seasonal residents, thereby enriching the product of the region.

Bruce County Tourism

In 2006-2007, Bruce County undertook a premier-ranked tourist destination (PRTD) assessment, a high-order approach to tourism planning and development in Ontario. Essentially a self-assessment tool focussing on comprehensive SWOT and inventory analyses, the PRTD provides a

tourist destination with a strategic process to take stock of itself and a means to identify actions necessary for future planning. The assessment concluded that Bruce County could be considered a premier-ranked <u>outdoor</u> destination only. Its range of products was deemed insufficient to serve a broad spectrum of tourists from the lower end/masses to the higher end. However, limited data are available to indicate how well operators actually serve their diverse clientele.

Visitation to Bruce County is heavily skewed toward Ontario residents, with 95% of all visitors and 92% of all overnight visitors coming from within the province (Table 1). Almost 57% of visitors stay overnight; the average length of stay of these visitors is 2.6 nights. However, as is typical, spending by Ontarians – about 90% of the total – is somewhat less than its share of visitation would suggest. Overnight visitors account for 71% of total spending.

Table 1. Bruce County Visitation 2011

	Origin					
	Total	**Canada**	**Ontario**	**Other Canada**	**US**	**Overseas**
Total Person Visits	2,044,037	1,967,037	1,941,400	25,638	59,911	17,089
Overnight	1,154,832	1,092,467	1,066,830	25,638	48,672	13,692
Same-Day	889,205	874,570	874,570	-	11,239	3,397
Visitor Spending in Region						
Total Visitor Spending	225,208,386	207,341,019	202,225,655	5,115,364	12,351,859	5,515,509
Overnight Visitor Spending	159,861,328	142,413,847	137,298,484	5,115,364	12,009,568	5,437,913
Same-Day Visitor Spending	65,347,058	64,927,171	64,927,171	-	342,291	77,596

Source: Statistics Canada, 2011

Approximately 55.5% of overnight person visits are spent in private homes and cottages. Roofed commercial accommodation and camping/RV facilities account for most of the remaining overnight person visits at 25% and 18%, respectively.

Development History

According to Bruce County's Official Plan, tourism is an important economic driver. The county is intent on promoting a four season industry that includes both private and public facilities and stimulating its growth by encouraging the improvement of existing services and facilities as well as identifying and promoting natural resources that have recreation and tourism potential.

The most recognizable place names among Bruce County visitors are Tobermory; the Lake Huron beach towns of Port Elgin, Sauble Beach, Kincardine, and Southampton; Wiarton; and Walkerton

(Longwoods International, 2012). These and other downtown commercial areas comprise more than two-thirds of the total commercial assessment base in the county. However, considering the rural nature of Bruce County, the limited resources available to municipalities to enhance these core areas, and the fact that most visitation is to waterfront and other outdoor attractions, downtowns have faced significant challenges including aging infrastructure, limited adaptability to new accessibility standards, small building footprints, and increasing competition from large-scale retailers (Bruce County Planning & Economic Development, 2011).

In response to this situation and the initial results from implementing a local service improvement plan, several municipalities indicated a desire to undertake strategic initiatives aimed at revitalizing existing downtowns and/or dealing with growth pressure in emerging commercial areas. Saugeen Shores was selected as the pilot location, and Bruce County staff worked with the municipality in 2008 and 2009, starting with the formulation of urban design guidelines and a signage strategy. Given the limited resources available to municipalities to support such endeavours, moving the economic development agenda forward proved to be a struggle. Hence, it was quickly acknowledged that both financial and professional assistance from the county were required.

In 2010, the *Spruce the Bruce* (STB) program was launched to assist municipalities using a variety of programs aimed at supporting and enhancing the economic health of downtown areas, including:

- *Community branding***:** continued support for community toolkit development within municipalities.

- *Local policy development:* planning assistance to update or create the local policy framework required to support the program.

- *Grant program:* grants to directly fund capital investments in streetscapes, infrastructure, building facades, signs and awnings, and community signage (Figure 2).

Figure 2. The Patch in Sauble Beach before (left) and after (right) receiving a facelift through Spruce the Bruce

Governance

When evaluating the STB program, Bruce County staff noted greater success among municipalities where the organizational capacity to focus on revitalization efforts had been established. Consequently, staff made organization a stringent requirement (Figure 3) and adopted the Ontario Ministry of Agriculture, Food and Rural Affairs (OMAFRA) diagnostic tool of the characteristics of a well-functioning downtown which include:

- Municipal interest and support for downtown initiatives.

- A strong business group (e.g., business improvement area [BIA], chamber of commerce).

- A coordinating body or coordinator position for downtown initiatives.

- Regular communication vehicles for dialogue within the community.

- Strong supporting bodies/service clubs.

- All parties working together toward a common goal or vision.
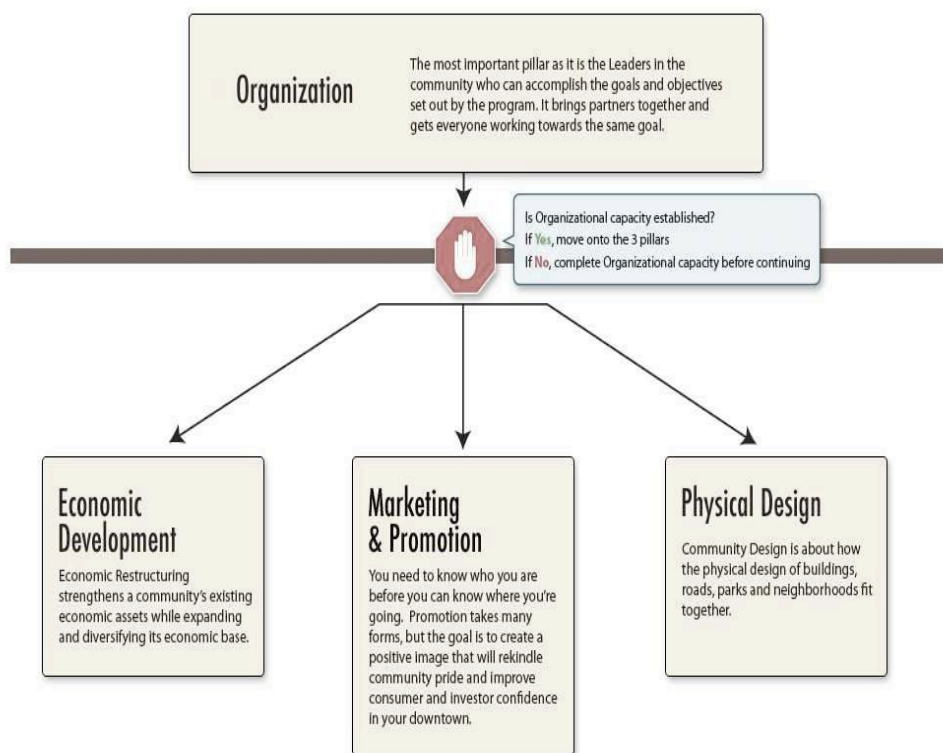
Figure 3. Modified "Four Point Approach" for Use in Spruce the Bruce

Marketing Activities

Supported by a user-friendly website (http://www.explorethebruce.com; Figure 4), Bruce County has developed an effective approach to branding itself with *Explore the Bruce.*

Figure 4. Explore the Bruce Logo and Website

The website provides a one stop source for everything a tourist needs to know, from attractions and events to accommodations and eateries as well as a trip planning function that allows visitors to create an easy-to-print list of all they might want to do in Bruce County. It highlights all towns, niche products, and events; directs visitors to maps and brochures; and has a very active social media presence on Twitter, Facebook, Flickr, and YouTube. Constant updates of various weather and trail conditions as well as activities, events, and contests keep the site fresh. Although focussed largely on Bruce County, the must-see list of activities includes Grey County. There are also well-identified links to Grey County and the whole of the Georgian Bay region, thereby demonstrating supportive relationships with other marketing bodies.

Bruce County has long worked on linking its rural resources and commercial centres to create themed trails, often in collaboration with the neighbouring Grey County. These niche products are marketed through maps highlighting various loops, passports, and/or web support. Perhaps one of the most successful initiatives has been the mountain bike trail development. About 130 kilometres of trails have been built with the assistance of a full-time trails manager and a part-time trail builder since 2001 for non-motorized multi-use. Branded under *MTB the Bruce* (Figure 5) and supported by a website (http://www.mtbthebruce.com/) and map distribution in bike stores in

Southern Ontario every two years, the trails have experienced increased use, with about 40% repeat visitation, although precise numbers are difficult to obtain since trail use is free and flexible.

Figure 5. Mountain Bike the Bruce

Figure 6. Explore the Bruce Adventure Passport

Another very successful packaging endeavour is the Explore the Bruce Adventure Passport (Figure 6). The list of stops on the geocaching checklist includes greenhouses, a nuclear power site, and cave exploration, among others. Passport holders are encouraged to take and submit photos, with a chance of winning a fairly large number of prizes. Many sponsors, such as local radio stations, downtown stores, and major corporations, support this initiative.

Other niche packages and trails include the *Huron-Kinloss Ice Cream Trail*, the *Rural Gardens of Grey and Bruce Counties*, *Ride Grey Bruce,* beaches, paddling routes, cycling routes, waterfall hiking trails, and lighthouse tours.

These marketing endeavours have generated high visitor satisfaction levels, with 74% of county visitors indicating they plan to return, a much higher rate than for the region as a whole (Bruce Grey Simcoe = 50%). This above-average intent is evident for both day and overnight visitors, and interest is comparatively high for both winter and summer (Longwoods International, 2012).

Analysis

Bruce County has clearly recognized that product alignment is difficult in this diverse region and that its commercial downtown cores play a vital role in encouraging visitor length of stay and spending. Its *Spruce the Bruce* initiative is assisting municipalities with improvements that render their downtowns more attractive, pedestrian friendly, and distinctive. The fact that tourism is in the same county department as agriculture, planning, economic development, and forestry is particularly effective for downtown planning. Moreover, by demanding that organizational capacity is established prior to allowing communities to proceed with funding requests, the county not only reinforces the grassroots element of community development, but also ensures that a

focus on common community goals – not the availability of funding – is the driving force. This is vital for fostering a community's sustainability and liveability (Joppe, 1996).

The successful development of these downtowns has been enhanced by their linkage with dispersed rural products, excellent wayfinding including tourism signage (Figure 7), and collaboration in all of these initiatives with Grey County.

Figure 7. Examples of Signage

Signage has been supported through a grant program of matching cash contributions up to $5,000 that aims to improve visitor experiences in and around the downtown area. The stringent application process has ensured that community support and partnerships are in place prior to applying. Progressively better wayfinding signage has also been incorporated into the road infrastructure budget, although the Ministry of Transportation controls provincial highways and has its own restrictive regulations regarding sidewalks and signage that at times conflict with community development goals.

Conclusion

Without a doubt, thriving and appealing commercial cores are of critical importance to anchor dispersed rural products. These areas should essentially be treated like resorts (C. Hughes, personal communication, September 6, 2012) in that they should provide many offerings, visual appeal, interesting shopping and dining opportunities, a focus on local food and artistic offerings, and different animations in the form of events throughout the year to entice a variety of consumer segments – approaches that have been confirmed by numerous organizations celebrating successful small communities (Barry, 2012).

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Framework Components

Innovation Factors Contributing to the Success of the Rural Tourism Initiative

Investment	**Yes:** The County allocated $125,000 in both its 2012 and 2013 budgets for the *Spruce the Bruce* initiative. This was in addition to an $800,328 budget for tourism, up 4.7% from 2012. In its first three years, the initiative had already supported 134 projects with $302,000 of county investment leveraging over $1,000,000 in direct additional investment in Bruce County communities.
Coordination	**Yes:** A dedicated *Spruce the Bruce* team exists under the leadership of the senior planner. Good collaboration exists with Community Futures Development Corporations that provide administrative assistance and a loan program to assist businesses in funding façade projects as well as expansion and upgrading initiatives. Loans of up to $250,000 can be made to new and existing businesses within Bruce County that directly aid in the creation of new jobs and/or the preservation of existing jobs for residents of the area. Significant funding support is also derived from OMAFRA's Rural Economic Development (RED) program.
Marketing	**Yes:** A dedicated Internet site, guide, map, as well as PR and integrated marketing for Bruce County and in cooperation with the region's campaign are in place. The County allocated $8,000 for media relations, $31,600 for promotional items, and $4,000 for travel and outdoor shows for a total of $43,600. These amounts are unchanged from 2012.
Governance	**Yes:** A dedicated not-for-profit organization has been established with a board of directors that represents the eight regional municipalities, tourism, industry, culture, and the Anglophone community.
Human Resources	**Yes:** A strong director of planning with vision and responsibility for agriculture, tourism, and planning is in place.
Communication	**Yes:** A program plan for *Spruce the Bruce* was developed and circulated to each municipality for comment and consideration.
Research	**Yes:** Research and studies for the local municipalities throughout the three-year project will enable municipalities wishing to further invest in their downtowns to access additional provincial and federal funding.

What's Wrong With Rural Tourism? Factors That May Have Weakened the Initiative

Infrastructure	No major infrastructure investment was made; roads and services exist, but they are in need of maintenance and repair
Policy	Must adhere to Ministry of Transport signage and sidewalk policies
Marketing	Realizing the potential of small communities linked through trails is challenging in the highly competitive marketplace
Demand	Primarily domestic, near-market demand, with limited potential for long haul demand
Funding	Three-year project; no definitive project after 2013
Product Development	No major product developed as a primary draw; reliant upon the appeal of linking small, existing attractions together
Collaboration	County funds must be resecured as of 2014
Research	A deeper understanding of the impacts of revitalization investments on the community, jobs, and attractiveness of towns for amenity migrants and businesses is required

SWOT Analysis for Bruce County

Strengths	Weaknesses
■ Funding available for the planning phase	■ No major attractions or new products
■ Good leadership by Bruce County	■ Limited cultural attractions
■ Municipal/stakeholder engagement	■ Limited to short haul market appeal
■ Well-funded planning and tourism departments	■ No long-term partner funding
■ Well-known core attractions	■ No bike lanes along the road network
■ Strong outdoors product	
Opportunities	**Threats**
■ Market factors: proximity of major city populations; baby boomers with disposable income; appeal of cultural tourism; short haul market	■ Highly competitive tourism market
■ Potential for shoulder season development	■ American visitation has fallen
■ Expansion of tourism products to attract a broader tourist base (natural, heritage, cultural)	■ Must work within policy boundaries
■ Hosting small- and medium-size conferences and seminars	■ Carrying capacity limits are not well understood
	■ Global warming will likely threaten unique Bruce ecosystems

Where is the Initiative in the Product Life Cycle?

Growth stage: Beyond the introductory stage and realizing a positive return on investment, but not yet at the maturity stage since the travel market is far from saturated and there are opportunities for shoulder season expansion

Best Practices and Lessons Learned

The *Spruce the Bruce* program illustrates that effective organizational capacity and buy in into community strategic directions are critical to the success of revitalizing commercial centres. County professional staff invested a significant amount of time guiding municipalities to build organizational capacity where it was lacking, so they would be in a stronger position to access project funding in subsequent years. In addition, the program demonstrates that commercial cores can be linked with other dispersed attractions and trails to create an appealing offering capable of attracting diverse markets. Further, it highlights the importance of tourism signage for facilitating convenient access throughout the county.

Appendix 5.3. Island Chefs Collaborative: Connecting the Farmer and the Chef – A Driver for Rural Development

Tanya MacLaurin

Connecting the Farmer and the Chef is a rural development initiative on Vancouver Island, British Columbia (B.C.), Canada. The case begins with information about farmland in Canada and then focusses more specifically on B.C. and Vancouver Island where the Island Chefs Collaborative (ICC) has operated for approximately 15 years. The purpose of this case is to learn more about the ICC and its activities relating to food security, the preservation of farmland, and the development of local food systems on Vancouver Island.

Canada and the Protection of Agricultural Land

Two methods of classifying farmland are employed to indicate production potential in Canada. The *Canada Land Inventory* (CLI) categorizes land based on soil quality and limitations (e.g., slope, topography, stoniness), and the *Agroclimatic Resource Index* (ARI) uses climate effects on crop production (e.g., frost-free period, degree day information, level of moisture limitation) (Dufferin Federation of Agriculture, 2011).

Although often seen as a vast underpopulated country with extensive farm acreage, only about 5% of Canada's massive land base is classified as prime agricultural land (Classes 1 to 3 according to the CLI) (Dufferin Federation of Agriculture, 2011; Oliver, 1999 as cited in Watkins, Hilts, & Brockie, 2003). This precious resource is being lost on a daily basis to factors such as urbanization, severances, and nonagricultural activities. Only two provinces in Canada have legislated centralized protection systems in place for farmland: B.C.'s *Agricultural Land Reserve* (ALR) and Quebec's *Act to Preserve Agricultural Land*, both of which benchmark planning policies designed to protect the provinces' small amounts of prime farmland (Brouwers, 2009; Watkins et al., 2003).

The Province of British Columbia

B.C., the westernmost of Canada's ten provinces, had a population of about 4.6 million as of April 2014 (B.C. Stats, 2014). The province abounds with vast geographic richness, towering mountain peaks, deep blue lakes, and productive farmland (Destination B.C., 2014a). Agrifoods, forestry, international education, mining, natural gas, technology, tourism, and transportation are the key economic sectors (B.C. Jobs Plan, 2014; B.C. Government, 2014). The agrifood and tourism sectors have been identified as important contributors and hold potential for future growth. In 2013,

Destination British Columbia, a new tourism marketing Crown corporation, was established to ensure a strong and sustainable tourism sector (B.C. Ministry of Jobs, Tourism and Skills Training and Minister Responsible for Labour, 2013).

Overarching Attitude to Conserve and Protect

B.C. has 1,030 provincial parks and protected areas. Approximately 14.7% of B.C., or more than 13.9 million hectares, is protected – more than any other province in Canada (B.C. Government, 2014). An attitude focussing on conserving and protecting its natural beauty, elements of which are part of B.C.'s tourism product, pervades the legislated provincial protection systems.

Agricultural Land in B.C.

Farmland is scarce in B.C., accounting for slightly less than 3% of the provincial land base (Canadian Encyclopedia, 2014a; Statistics Canada, 2012). This precious resource is vulnerable to urban development and degradation (B.C. Food Systems Network [BCFSN], 2013). Approximately 48% of B.C.'s food is produced in-province, while 52% comes from other Canadian provinces or international sources (Connell, 2013). Farm cash receipts were estimated at $2.8 billion in 2012 (Canadian Encyclopedia, 2014a). If fisheries and the processing sectors are added, B.C.'s agrifood sector is estimated to provide almost 62,000 jobs and $11.7 billion in annual revenue. Hence, agrifoods are believed to be an important driver of the provincial economy (BCFSN, 2013).

Of interest is the trend of direct sales to consumers at farmers' markets. In just over five years (2006-2012), such sales grew from $46 million to $113 million, a 147% increase (BCFSN, 2013). This trend can be linked to consumers' desires to purchase locally and directly from the farmer. MacKinnon and Smith wrote a book about their decision to eat locally within a 100-mile radius of their Vancouver apartment, which helped to bring attention to eating locally, the local farming community, and food security issues in North America (Tancock, 2014). Nowhere did this message resonate more throughout both traditional and social media channels than in B.C.

Agricultural Land Commission Act

The B.C. *Agricultural Land Commission Act* (ALCA) was introduced on April 18, 1973 in response to concerns over the erosion of the agricultural land base (Agricultural Land Commission [ALC], 2015). The ALCA provided the legislative framework for the establishment of the province's Agricultural Land Commission (ALC) and outlines the objectives, powers, application processes, and use of land in the Agricultural Land Reserve (ALR) as well as the ALC's relationships with local governments (B.C. Government, 2002; B.C. Ministry of Agriculture, 2014b). Established in 1973 as an independent provincial agency dedicated to protecting agricultural land and encouraging

farming in B.C., the ALC administers the ALCA and works closely with landowners, local governments, the farming community, and the general public to ensure the limited agricultural land is used for food production and protected for future generations (ALC, 2014b). The ALC reports directly to the B.C. Minister of Agriculture (ALC, 2014b).

Agricultural Land Reserve (ALR)

The Agricultural Land Reserve (ALR) is a provincial zone in which agriculture is recognized as the priority use. Farming is encouraged and nonagricultural uses are restricted (ALC, 2014a). The ALR, which was established through the cooperative efforts of regional districts and municipalities during the period from 1973 to 1976, covers about 5% (approximately 4.7 million hectares) of the land in B.C., much of which is in close proximity to B.C.'s expanding cities and towns (ALC, 2014b). ALR land includes private and public land currently being farmed as well as land with agricultural potential. Perceived as an effective planning tool to prevent farmland loss, the greatest contribution of the ALR to the long-term viability of B.C. agriculture and food security has been the protection of agricultural land from urban development.

Changes to the ALR

Bill 24, which passed the B.C. Legislature on May 29, 2014 and brought into force on September 5, 2014, created two ALC administered zones: Zone 1 which includes the Vancouver Island, South Coast, and Okanagan panel regions and Zone 2 which encompasses the Interior, Kootenay, and North panel regions. According to the Minister of Agriculture, "This was done in recognition of the regional differences that exist … with some areas facing pressures related to urban growth while other regions, for example, experiencing [*sic*] climate and geographic challenges" (B.C. Ministry of Agriculture, 2014c). Oversight of the ALR was also devolved to six regional panels (BCFSN, 2014).

Reaction to Bill 24 has been mixed. Farmland advocates fear changes from Bill 24 will increase the price of farmland for young farmers as well as increase the removal of viable farmland for commercial, industrial, and real estate development. This would result in reduced capacity for provincial food security in the face of climate change as well as increased reliance on imported food, concerns over safe and sustainable agricultural practices in other jurisdictions, and higher food prices due to rising transportation costs (BCFSN, 2014).

Farm Practices Protection (Right to Farm) Act

The *Farm Practices Protection (Right to Farm) Act* (FPPA) applies to farmers operating within the ALR, other areas where farming is permitted by local zoning bylaws, and areas licensed for aquaculture (B.C. Ministry of Agriculture, 2014a). The FPPA protects farmers from nuisance

actions and court injunctions arising from normal farming operations, such as odours, noise, and dust (B.C. Ministry of Agriculture, 2014a), and is especially important to farmers located close to urban areas. Recognizing that a farmer's urban neighbours may not understand or have been exposed to natural elements of farming (e.g., a rooster crowing at 4:30 a.m., a smelly barnyard, the spreading of manure on farm fields in the spring, dust), the B.C. government developed informative brochures to educate non-farm folk about normal farming activities and their by-products (B.C. Ministry of Agriculture and Food, 1998). Nowhere is this more important than on Vancouver Island where the farms are small and often situated proximate to urban areas.

Vancouver Island, British Columbia

Vancouver Island is located off the southwestern portion of B.C., west of the city of Vancouver (Figure 1). With a population of population of over 780,000, it is the largest island on the Pacific Coast of North America (Vancouver Island Economic Alliance, n.d.). The island was discovered by Captain James Cook in 1778, surveyed by George Vancouver in 1792, and owned by the Hudson's Bay Company until 1849 when it became a British Crown colony. It was united with B.C.'s mainland in 1866. In 1871, B.C. entered the Dominion of Canada as a province, and Victoria, Vancouver Island's most important city, became the provincial capital (Encyclopedia Britannica, 2014).

Figure 1. Vancouver Island, British Columbia

Source: http://gosalmonfishing.net/vancouver-island/map-of-vancouver-island.html

With an area of 31,285 square kilometres, Vancouver Island averages 80 kilometres in width. The island, which is the top of the partially submerged Western Cordillera Mountains, contains forests, mountains, and coastal plains. Lumbering, fishing, mining (coal, iron ore, and copper), agriculture (dairy products, fruits, and vegetables), and tourism are the key industries (Canadian Encyclopedia,

2014b; Encyclopedia Britannica, 2014). Vancouver Island consists of six regional areas (Alberniclayoquot, the capital regional district of Victoria, Comox-Strathcona, Cowichan Valley, Mount Waddington, and Nanaimo) and 35 municipalities (B.C. Ministry of Agriculture, Food and Fisheries, 2001).

Vancouver Island is a unique place with people who care deeply about the environment, their community, and their quality of life. Living on an island instills an attitude of resourcefulness and cooperation (G. Schack, personal communication, January 15, 2014). A foodie culture is pervasive and manifests through celebrating local food and beverages on restaurant menus, at food festivals, and on numerous culinary tourism tours that take visitors directly to Vancouver Island farms.

According to 2006 Statistics Canada data, about 13% of B.C.'s farms are located on Vancouver Island, equivalent to about 2,738 farms (Ostry & Morrison, 2008). Although this appears to be a considerable number of farms for the island, the farms tend to be small. The average size of farm in the Comox Valley, for example, is 30 hectares (Agrifood Comox Valley, 2014). Most of the fertile agricultural land is in the southern half of the island, with the most productive agricultural regions situated in the Comox Valley, the Cowichan Valley, and the Saanich Peninsula (MacNair, 2004).

Agriculture on Vancouver Island

Vancouver Island grows only approximately 5% of its total food consumed (MacNair, 2004), so food security is a concern because food supplies from the mainland and elsewhere could be cut off during an environmental disaster or emergency. These factors have helped drive the development of a food policy with a local food production focus. Figure 2 (see page 94) shows areas of agricultural production on Vancouver Island (yellow). When provided an opportunity to actually observe the location of the agricultural land and the amount of it on the island, the need to conserve and protect is obvious.

The Rural Development Initiative: Island Chefs Collaborative on Vancouver Island

The Island Chefs Collaborative (ICC) is a not-for-profit organization, the membership of which includes approximately 50 chefs, restaurateurs, food artisans, and farmers with a shared interest in regional food security, the preservation of farmland, and the development of local food systems on Vancouver Island and the Gulf Islands (ICC, 2014e; ICC, 2014j). The eight members of the board of directors comprise a representative sample of the membership (ICC, 2014e).

Figure 2. Land Use Designation on Vancouver Island
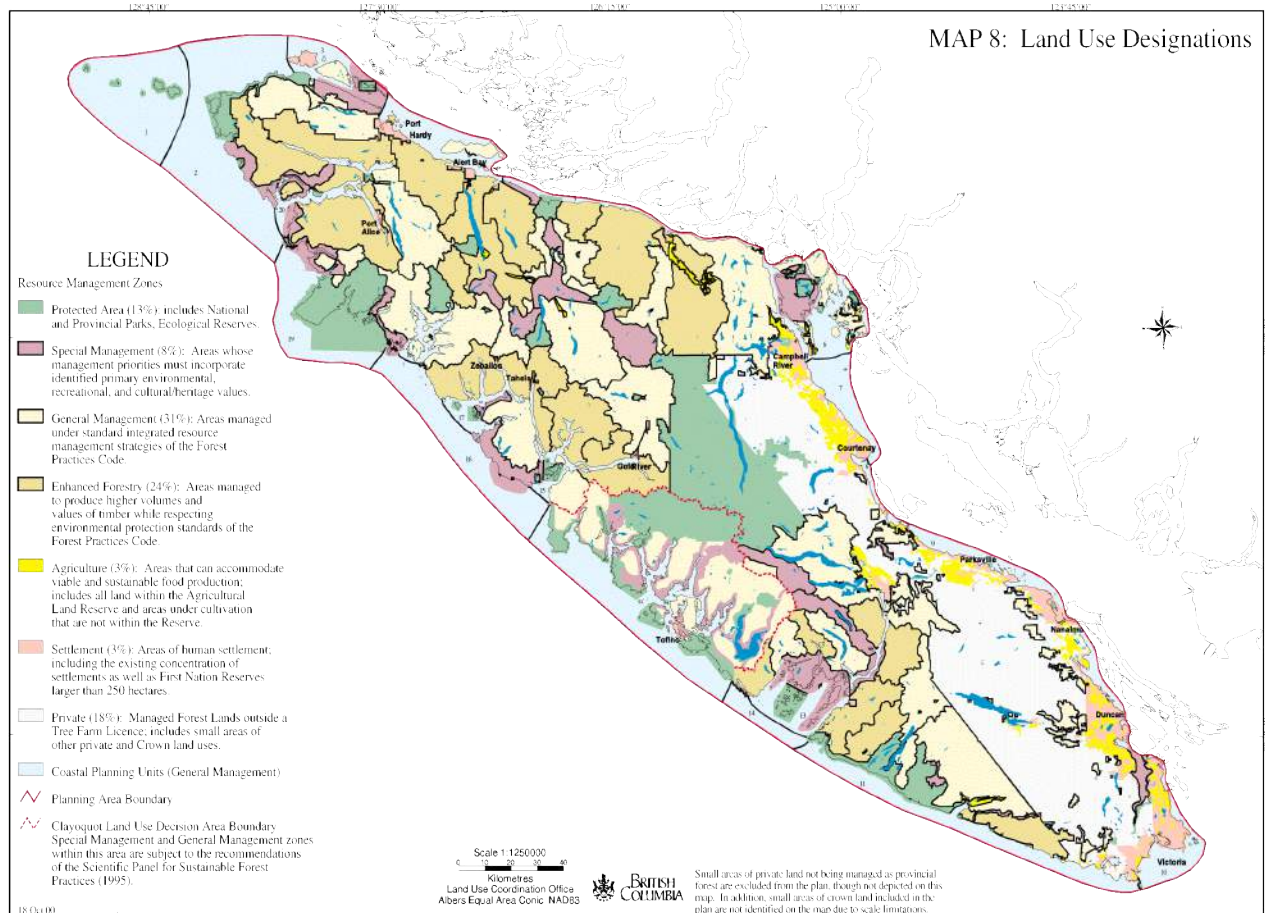
Source:
http://www.for.gov.bc.ca/tasb/slrp/lrmp/nanaimo/vancouver_island/plan/summary_lup/images/plans-lg.gif

History

Four Victoria chefs founded the ICC in 1999 without any public or private sector funding. Their dream was to establish a connection between chefs and farmers; more specifically, to work with local farmers to secure fresh local ingredients for use in their restaurants in an effort to create a stronger farming sector (G. Schack, personal communication, January 15, 2014). Their willingness to do whatever was needed to have this network organization succeed can only be characterized as extreme volunteerism. Even though the champions of the ICC have come and gone, someone has always been in place to move it forward (G. Schack, personal communication, January 15, 2014).

Membership in the ICC, which is on an individual basis and not by organization or association, has grown steadily over the last fifteen years. Not unlike the foodservice industry itself, membership is fluid, but there are about 50 dedicated core members and many non-member chefs who contribute to fundraising events (G. Schack, personal communication, January 15, 2014). Although annual membership fees are only $50, there is an expectation of active involvement on the part of all members (ICC, 2014c). Members often wear the ICC logo on their chef's jackets (Figure 3).

Figure 3. Island Chefs Collaborative Logo

Initially, chefs and farmers met annually to strategize for the coming growing season. Chefs shared their requirements with farmers; farmers agreed to produce these products; and chefs committed to buying them. From this single annual meeting, the ICC now meets monthly to plan and engage in a variety of activities that support the local farming community (G. Schack, personal communication, January 15, 2014).

Vision and Purpose

The ICC's vision and purpose are elaborated in Tables 1 and 2, respectively.

Table 1. The ICC's Vision

The ICC's vision is a local and sustainable food and agriculture system
■ *Local.* Activities of the ICC are focussed within the boundaries of Vancouver Island and the Gulf Islands
■ *Sustainable.* The ability of the region to provide food for present needs without compromising the ability of future generations to meet their food needs
■ *System.* All providers, distributors, and consumers of agriculture, food products, and services

Source: ICC, 2014g

Table 2. The ICC's Purpose

To help create an environment where independent local food producers can prosper
■ Actively purchase from local suppliers
■ Aid suppliers' efforts with funds raised through ICC events
■ Bring chefs and farmers together as partners
■ Increase consumer awareness of locally produced foodstuffs by featuring them on menus and promoting them in members' businesses
■ Educate the public about the ecological and economic benefits of buying locally
To act as an open and inclusive organization
■ Focus on local needs and local action
■ Maintain a broadly based membership of chefs, food industry professionals, and individuals who share the ICC's values and concerns
■ Use a collaborative working style giving all points of view a full voice
■ Commit to actively accomplishing the goals set out in the ICC's mission statement
■ Take a thoughtful, balanced approach to the issues based on economic concerns and the practical experience of ICC members

Source: ICC, 2014g

Strategy

The ICC's strategy to fulfill its vision and purpose is outlined in Table 3.

Table 3. The ICC Strategy

Bring People Together. Maintain and expand the ICC's network of contacts between chefs and farmers through ICC's message system, and between the ICC and the public through press releases, media contacts, and events. Actively spread the ICC's message and purpose to schools, businesses, and government agencies.
Fund Projects. Each year the ICC will financially support at least one project that increases the viability of farming. The ICC is currently administering a $100,000 zero interest microloan fund.
Fundraise. The ICC will plan and execute at least one fundraising activity during each fiscal year to provide working capital for the next year's initiatives.
Advocacy. The ICC will use the influence and prestige it has as a group to affect public policy and address initiatives that could impact its mission statement.

Source: ICC, 2014h

Fundraising

Fundraising activities provide working capital for the next year's initiatives. These events, which usually occur three to four times each year, celebrate local food, beer, wine, and the farmers/producers. Examples include the *Invasion Dinner*, *Christmas Shaker*, *Beer Week*, *Spot Prawn Festival,* and *Long Table Dinners* (G. Schack, personal communication, January 15, 2014; ICC, 2014a). A cookbook published in 2013, *On the Flavour Trail*, edited by Christabel Padmore, which is filled with recipes prepared by ICC members, provides an additional source of funds.
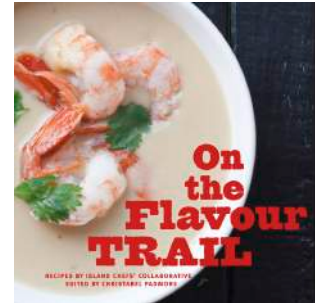
Long Table Fundraising Dinners: Freedom to Farm

Proceeds from the ICC's *Long Table Dinners* have provided financial assistance to local farmers who have faced challenges concerning their rights to farm and keep animals on ALR land. One or two *Long Table Dinners* are organized each year depending on need (G. Schack, personal communication, January 15, 2014). Prepared by ICC chefs, the dinners comprise multiple courses using locally grown food products.

The first farmers to benefit from a *Long Table Dinner* were Darrel and Anthea Archer. The Canadian Food Inspection Agency (CFIA) euthanized the Archer's water buffalo breeding animals because it feared the emergence of bovine spongeform encephalopathy (BSE) (CBC News, 2002). Money raised assisted the Archers in purchasing new breeding stock.

Dan and Regan Ferguson, owners of Dragonfly Farm, also benefited from a *Long Table Dinner*. Funds raised provided assistance with legal fees brought by a complaint from a neighbour who claimed that the noise made by a rooster on their farm created an unbearable burden and further asserted this animal diminished his property's value. When the Farm Industry Review Board asked the Fergusons to prove they had upheld normal farming practices according to the FPPA, the District A Agricultural Institute and the Cowichan Agricultural Society intervened, affirming that animal noises are natural to basic farming practices, not just for the Fergusons, but also for all B.C. farmers. Ultimately, the Fergusons, who were the first farmers in B.C. to prove noises from farm animals are a natural phenomenon for all farms and, therefore, to reinforce everyone's right to farm and keep animals on provincially reserved land, were faced with legal fees in excess of $43,000 (ICC, 2014d; Vancouver Island Beyond Victoria, 2014).

Partnerships

The ICC also works with other organizations and stakeholders to support local food activities, deliver educational programs, and undertake advocacy work. The following provides an overview of some of the ICC's partnership activities.

LifeCycles Fruit Tree Project

The *Fruit Tree Project* harvests apples, cherries, pears, and other fruit from privately owned trees that would otherwise go to waste. The picked fruit is shared among homeowners, volunteers, food banks, and community organizations within Victoria. A portion of the harvest is set aside to make value-added products that help defray costs (LifeCycles, 2014). ICC members volunteer their time to pick fruit and produce value-added products that are served and sold in their restaurants.

FarmFolk CityFolk

Established in 1993, FarmFolk CityFolk (FFCF) is a not-for-profit society that works to cultivate local sustainable food systems. Their projects provide access to, and protection of, farmland; support local growers and producers; and engage communities in the celebration of local food (FFCF, 2014c). The ICC partners with FFCF to sponsor the annual *Meet Your Maker Vancouver Island* event which brings together local farmers and buyers for a day featuring guest speakers, workshops, a networking product display floor, and a fabulous local food lunch (FFCF, 2014b). The January 27, 2014 *Meet Your Maker Vancouver Island* event hosted Corky Evans, former B.C. Minister of Agriculture, as the keynote speaker. He spoke about the importance of the ALR and its future challenges. FFCF raises funds at its annual *Feast of Fields* events, an idea crafted by renowned Ontario chefs Michael Standlandter and Jamie Kennedy to enhance the connections between farmers and chefs as well as farm and city folks (FFCF, 2014a). B.C. FarmFolk CityFolk was given permission to use the *Feast of Fields* name in 1995.

Vancity

The ICC and FFCF have partnered with Vancity, a cooperative bank that is owned and controlled by its 18,300,000 members, to offer a zero interest microloan fund which provides a pool of funds for growers, harvesters, and processors to invest in equipment and material that allow them to increase the supply of food in the region (ICC, 2014f).

Vancity, named one of Canada's top corporate citizens (Vancity, 2014) given its commitment to help build healthy communities, has provided a $100,000 capital pool for Vancouver Island and the Gulf Islands for loans brought forward by the ICC and FFCF. Loans between $1,000 and $10,000 are awarded for a term of up to 24 months. The ICC board and FFCF review each loan application to assess need, the soundness of business practices, and the viability of the farm before the loan is awarded. During the term of the loan, payments including interest (prime + 4%) are made via a Vancity account. Once the loan is successfully repaid, the ICC and FFCF rebate the interest from funds generated by the two organizations' respective fundraising activities (ICC, 2014f). Requirements and selection criteria for the microloans are summarized in Table 4.

Table 4. Vancity Microloan Requirements and Selection Criteria

Vancity Microloan Requirements

- Open to farmers, fishers, growers, and processors on Vancouver Island and the Gulf Islands
- Must demonstrate how the funds will increase local food production
- Funds must be used for equipment or materials, not for travel, education, or wages
- Must provide written quotes for materials
- Must have been involved in either FarmFolk CityFolk's *Feast of Fields* or the *Island Chef Food Fest* (or must commit to doing so during the time the loan remains unpaid)
- Must include a payment plan indicating the source of funds for repayment
- Must supply a description and photo of the project for use on ICC and FFCF websites for program promotion
- Must open a Vancity account through which the loan and repayment will be administered

Vancity Microloan Selection Criteria

- Potential impact on the supply of local food
- Demonstration of ability to repay the loan
- Potential to create a greater impact on the local economy beyond the loan itself
- Ability to fill a gap in food production

Source: ICC, 2014f

Victoria Community Food Hub Society

The ICC has provided funds to support the Victoria Community Food Hub Society's[1] plans to build a facility for local food producers, food entrepreneurs, and food providers. Proposed as a multi-stakeholder facility to foster the development of a sustainable local food system on Vancouver

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[1] *https://www.facebook.com/VictoriaCommunityFoodHub*

Island, the overarching goal of the *Victoria Community Food Hub* will be to increase the production of island-grown food by providing the necessary physical infrastructure to store and process food while incubating social enterprises. The Victoria Community Food Hub Society, a registered charity, will run the food hub which will include a 3,000 square foot processing facility, 5,000 square feet of shared office space, and a 4,000 square foot food aggregation warehouse for food banks, local farmers, and distributors (ICC, 2014i). The project is valued at approximately $4 million (ICC, 2014i). Vancity committed an initial $20,000 toward the feasibility study and preliminary business plan, and the ICC contributed $5,000 toward the charitable status application. Other funding for the facility, which is proposed to open in 2015, is being sought from the United Way, the Victoria Foundation, the Vancity Community Foundation, Investment Agriculture, the B.C. Gaming Foundation, the Real Estate Foundation, and ICC fundraising efforts (ICC, 2014i).

Growing Chefs! Chefs for Children's Urban Agriculture

Growing Chefs! Chefs for Children's Urban Agriculture has been a registered not-for-profit society based in Vancouver since September 2005 and a registered charity since June 2014 (Growing Chefs, 2014). Its vision is a world with healthy sustainable food practices, and its mission is to educate children, families, and community members about healthy eating and healthy food systems by providing seminars, workshops, and other programs (Growing Chefs, 2014; ICC, 2014 b).

ICC members Ceri Barlow and Andrew Paumier took the lead in bringing this program to Vancouver Island, with funding provided by the ICC. ICC members donate their time to deliver this elementary school classroom gardening and cooking initiative that is aimed at exciting children about growing, cooking, and eating good healthy local food. ICC chefs visit the classroom every two weeks to engage students in activities such as planting, harvesting, preparing, and eating what they have grown (Figure 4). The children are also taught about local and urban culture, sustainability, and nutrition. A waiting list of schools that would like the ICC to bring this program to their students underscores the success of this endeavour (ICC, 2014b).

Slow Food Vancouver Island and Gulf Islands Convivium

Slow Food, a global grassroots organization involving millions of people in over 150 countries, was founded in 1989 to prevent the loss of local food cultures and traditions; mitigate the rise of fast life; and combat dwindling interest in the food people eat, its origin, and how food choices

Figure 4. ICC Chefs in the Classroom - Growing Chefs! Chefs for Children's Urban Agriculture

Source: https://www.facebook.com/notes/island-chefs-collaborative/icc-chefs-volunteer-to-bring-growing-chefs-into-local-classroom/756994744333741

affect the world. Slow Food believes food is tied to many other aspects of life (e.g., culture, politics, agriculture, and the environment), and the food choices people make can collectively influence how food is cultivated, produced, and distributed, thereby resulting in significant change with respect to ensuring everyone has access to good, clean, and fair food (Slow Food International, 2014).

The Slow Food Vancouver Island and Gulf Islands Convivium supports the efforts of farmers, breeders, and artisan food producers to link with the consumer and to safeguard the right to food sovereignty. *Island Slow Food*, as islanders refer to the organization, encourages a sustainable model of agrifood production and promotes collaboration

among producers, chefs/cooks, and the general public. Through hosting tasting seminars, dinners, and other events, it strives to educate islanders and visitors about the importance of good, clean, and fair food as well as encourage them to purchase and enjoy local foods (Slow Food Vancouver Island and Gulf Islands, 2014). The ICC and *Island Slow Food* share a number of common goals, and many ICC members also belong to *Island Slow Food*. In addition, FarmFolk CityFolk partners with both, so the three organizations often collaborate on projects that support local food (G. Schack, personal communication, January 15, 2014).

Future Partnerships

Notwithstanding its extensive efforts to achieve a local sustainable food and agriculture system on Vancouver Island and the Gulf Islands, additional opportunities exist for the ICC to connect with farmers, especially where the ICC is less well known due to geographic distance, as well as to connect with other like minded-organizations with similar goals to foster an even more robust network for the common good of the agrifood sector.

Island Farmers' Alliance

The Island Farmers' Alliance (IFA), which owns the *Fresh from the Island* logo and slogan that can be used by farmers and local food processors, is exploring ways to increase recognition of its logo among grocers, agritourism promoters, and consumers (IFA, 2014). Although the IFA believes the logo symbolizes the fresh, authentic, sustainable food and farm products produced on Vancouver Island and the Gulf Islands, some farmers have expressed concern that the rooster image may confuse consumers because it is not representative of all products grown (e.g., vegetables) locally. Therefore, they are reluctant to use the IFA logo.

Cittaslow

Inspired by Slow Food, Cittaslow (literally Slow Cities) is a movement founded in Italy in October 1999 that seeks to improve the quality of life in towns by promoting the use of technology aimed at enhancing the quality of the environment and the urban fabric as well as safeguarding the unique food and drink that contribute to the character of communities (Cittaslow, 2014).

To be approved for membership, which is open to towns with populations under 50,000, the community must commit to achieving approximately 50 goals and principles. The close to 200 Cittalsow communities globally are "… characterized by people who take time to build community relationships, celebrate the community's unique history and traditions, promote craftsmanship and

environmental stewardship, maintain the community's distinct character, and engage residents and visitors by sharing in high quality living" (Cittaslow Cowichan Bay, n.d.).

With an emphasis on food, heritage, being pedestrian-friendly, and the environment, in July 2009, Cowichan Bay became the first Cittaslow community in North America. Cowichan Bay produces "… local food, drink and products that are rooted in local culture and tradition" and protects "traditional ways of making things, including First Nations art, culinary traditions, and culture. Residents and visitors are encouraged to be in direct contact with and purchase goods from local farmers, fishers, producers, artists and artisans at the farm gate, the fishermen's wharf, and at local shops, markets, fairs and activities in and around the community" (Cittaslow Cowichan Bay, n.d.).

FarmFolk Cityfolk and Slow Food Vancouver Island commissioned the Cowichan Bay food map as a way to raise awareness about the importance and biodiversity of food that is produced in and around the Cowichan Valley.

ÉCONOMUSÉE® British Columbia

ÉCONOMUSÉE® British Columbia promotes artisan businesses that use authentic and innovative production processes. An économusée® is a for-profit craft or agrifood business that provides a living environment showcasing artisans who open their venues to the public and provide a unique and genuine learning experience. Each économusée® operates a boutique that sells quality products representative of the business and its region (Économusée British Columbia, 2014). Over 55 économusées® exist in Canada, including three on Vancouver Island: Hazelwood Herb Farm, Merridale Ciderworks, and Tugwell Honey Farm & Meadery (Économusée British Columbia, 2014). The concept has also spread to Europe where there are about 30 économusées®.

Wineries and Vineyards

Opportunities to work with the more than two dozen wineries and vineyards on Vancouver Island and the Gulf Islands, which already promote themselves as complementing the thriving farms, breweries, cideries, and dining scene, also exist (Destination B.C., 2014b).

Analysis

Although records of farmers who have been assisted by ICC activities are kept, no research on the ICC's impact on rural development or the farming community has been undertaken (G. Schack, personal communication, January 15, 2014). Nonetheless, with 15 years of continuous operation, solid partnerships with like-minded organizations, and numerous events fulfilling its purpose, it is apparent that the ICC is a successful organization supporting rural development, food security, and agriculture on Vancouver Island.

This case demonstrates best practices of community partnerships. The ICC has many passionate members, partner organizations, and potential partners working toward the same purpose – support our farmers and save our farmland. Progress has been made because of grassroots efforts in support of rural viability and sustainability. Vancouver Island is a remote island location that benefits from these synergistic relationships.

Conclusion

As the ICC has been busy fulfilling its vision and purpose, the number and type of fundraising events and partnerships have grown, as has membership. The future of the ICC is likely to yield more of the same, particularly given increased consumer and industry awareness of the need for sustainable local agriculture. ICC members' restaurant patrons and the general public (through attendance at events) have been provided with the opportunity to experience the flavour of local island foods and food culture due to the efforts of the ICC and its partners. The experience is authentic. Local ingredients are identified on menus by name and producer. Value-added items created from local products are also sold to locals and visitors. Innovation by the ICC has tended to be incremental, with slow and steady changes and development over time.

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Framework Components

Innovation Factors Contributing to the Success of the Rural Tourism Initiative

Investment	**Yes:** Chefs invest their time in ICC and partner organizations' activities. Farmers attend ICC networking events. Farmers commit to grow what the chefs identify they need in their restaurants. Chefs commit to buy what the farmers produce. Farmers' products are served in the island's restaurants and provided recognition by name on the menu.
Coordination	**Yes:** The farmers and chefs work together to coordinate products, quality, supply, processing, and delivery.
Marketing	**Yes:** Chefs place the name of the farmer/farm on their menus, thereby creating a situation for the farmer's products to become known and for consumers to seek out the products.
Governance	**Yes:** Elected executive and board of directors
Human Resources	**Yes:** Dedicated membership and farmers
Communication	**Yes:** ICC events, Facebook, message centre
Demand	**Yes:** Based on chefs' needs
Product Development	**Yes:** Consultation between chefs and farmers
Policy	**Yes:** The ALR is in place to protect and conserve farmland in B.C.

What's Wrong With Rural Tourism? Factors That May Have Weakened the Initiative

Infrastructure	No dedicated infrastructure or staff; tasks are done by the executive and board of directors
Marketing	Could benefit from more structured marketing to chefs, farmers, and agrifood partners
Demand	Farmers' demand exceeds the needs of the participating chefs; geographic distance is too far
Funding	No funding for the administration of the organization
Collaboration	Considerable collaboration is required, which may exceed time available for this all-volunteer organization
Research	No research has been conducted on the impact of the ICC or farmers' educational needs
Education	No tertiary agriculture education is available on Vancouver Island; limited training opportunities for farmers

SWOT Analysis for the Island Chefs Collaborative

Strengths	Weaknesses
■ Dedicated, passionate, and virtually tireless membership ■ Active engagement with key stakeholders ■ Strong and effective partnerships with other organizations ■ Contributes to partners' programs ■ Access to partners' capital (e.g., zero interest microloans from Vancity)	■ All activities are based on volunteerism; there is a lack of statistics on the impact of this ■ Desire to stay small and connected to farmers which limits expansion to all parts of the island ■ Logo needs to show the link to local farmers, so farmers can use the logo on their farms ■ No dedicated infrastructure ■ No tertiary agriculture education on the island
Opportunities	**Threats**
■ Development of more value-added products with farmers' ingredients to be sold in the ICC members' restaurants ■ Develop an ICC marketplace within visitor information centres to sell value-added farmers' products (partnership between the ICC and farmers) ■ Sell an ICC model toolkit for other provinces, states, or countries to follow ■ Create and display signage that brings the farmer and chef together; new logo development ■ Potential for more partnerships – Island Farm Alliance, Cittaslow, Économusée® British Columbia and Vancouver Island, and more wineries and vineyards ■ Raise awareness of the ICC, island farmers, and ICC partners through Destination B.C. ■ Start ICC chapters in different parts of the island and link local farmers to chefs in those areas	■ Volunteerism may diminish ■ Potential food safety incidents related to local products ■ Potential loss of the ICC's reputation among farmers and consumers ■ Ecological factors or natural disasters could threaten the farming sector ■ Potential changes to the ALR or ALRC

Where is the Island Chefs Collaborative in the Product Life Cycle?

Growth phase

Best Practices and Lessons Learned from the Island Chefs Collaborative

1. The establishment of a dedicated organization that connects chefs and farmers is critical. The organization contributes to the development of local sustainable agriculture.

2. Partnering with like-minded organizations enhances the potential impact and benefits to the local farming community.

3. Opportunities for farmers to network with chefs, other farmers, agrifood professionals, and government officials are critical to achieving a sustainable food system.

4. Educational workshops for farmers and food producers should be provided.

Could the ICC Work in Ontario?

Factors That May Limit Success in Ontario

- Ontario lacks a central farmland protection policy

- Ontario has a larger number of chefs, many with their own established networks of local producers

- Ontario contains more farmland

- Ontario is not an island and, therefore, is less likely to feel a sense of urgency to work together for economic viability and food security

**Factors That May Contribute to Success in Ontario**

- No organization like the ICC exists in Ontario to help establish the chef-farmer connection. *Feast of Fields* involves chefs connecting to and promoting organic farming and products.

- The FarmFolk CityFolk organization, one of the ICC's partners, is known in Ontario. In 1995, with permission to use the *Feast of Fields* name in B.C., FarmFolk CityFolk began organizing *Feast of Fields* events, an event created by renowned chefs Michael Standlandter and Jamie Kennedy to encourage urbanites to visit Ontario farms (FarmFolk CityFolk, 2014a). Standlandter and Kennedy formed a not-for-profit group called *Knives and Forks* in 1989 to promote the connection between chefs and organic farmers. The organization, which is now called *Feast of Fields*, has been in operation for 25 years. Their mandate is to promote awareness of the environmental and human benefits of organic agriculture; to increase both cooperation and market relationships between organic producers, interested food professionals, and consumers; to establish links with other environmental organizations with the intention of furthering public awareness of the importance of organic agriculture; and to support organic projects and events (Feast of Fields, 2014a).

- A multitude of chefs who could benefit from the ICC model in their regions exists.

- A champion to start the organization and obtain seed funding is required.

Appendix 5.4. Township of Wellington North: The Butter Tart Trail[TM]

Iain Murray

The Butter Tart Trail[TM] was launched in 2006 as a trademarked tourist attraction in the Township of Wellington North, which occupies the northeastern portion of Wellington County in the province of Ontario, Canada. The Village of Arthur in the south and the Town of Mount Forest in the north (Figure 1) border the township, which has a population of just under 12,000 residents.

Figure 1. Township of Wellington North and The Butter Tart Trail
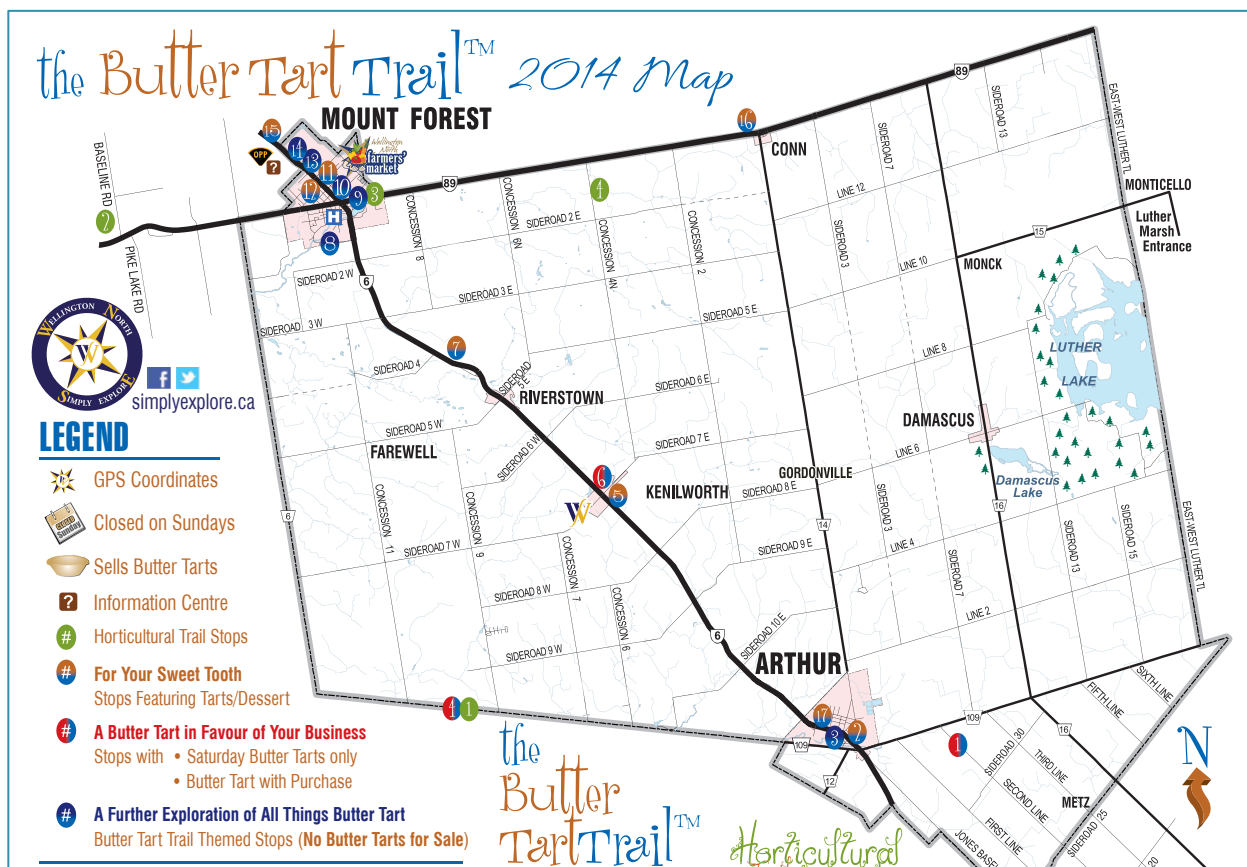
Since its inception, *The Butter Tart Trail*™ has won several provincial and national awards, including an Economic Development Council (EDCO) Award in 2007 and three Economic Developers Association of Canada (EDAC) Marketing Canada Awards. In its *Simply Explore* promotional campaign, Wellington North touts the trail as being an integral part of the township.[1] Nonetheless, *The Butter Tart Trail*™ has had its ups and downs.

Although, as is so often the case with rural tourism initiatives, the trail has suffered from changes in participating businesses, changes in individuals within businesses, and changes in the champion for tourism promotion in the township, it has survived. In 2014, the trail consisted of 18 stops (Figure 1), an increase from the only six stops April Marshall, Tourism, Marketing, and Promotion Manager for the Township of Wellington North, inherited in 2011. Included were not only businesses selling butter tarts, but also variations on the theme, such as butter tart muffins, butter tart pies, butter tart ice cream and milkshakes, butter tart waffles, butter tart flavour dog treats, official *Butter Tart Trail*™ pottery, an antique store which serves butter tarts to browsing patrons, and butter tart inspired soaps and body lotions.

In 2013, the Region of Kawartha, about 200 kilometres east of the township, launched a *Butter Tart Tour*. This was problematic for Wellington North. April Marshall became aware of the direct competitor in April 2013 when she stumbled across a Facebook newsfeed that mentioned a butter tart tour. Her assumption that it was about her *Butter Tart Trail*™ was false. An Internet search revealed that a Toronto newspaper had published a story about the new butter tart trail in the Kawarthas. Remember, *The Butter Tart Trail*™ is trademarked, a decision that was taken to protect the name because the trail represented years of hard work to draw visitors to the township, a rural area that was trying to attract tourists from beyond its borders.[2]

Identifying the appropriate person in the Kawartha Region to talk to about this issue proved to be challenging. At every turn, Ms. Marshall was informed that the region did not perceive its *Butter Tart Tour* to be an infringement on the township's trademark. Although a cease and desist order was initially issued requiring the name *Butter Tart Tour* not be used because it could create confusion in the marketplace, it was ultimately decided that Wellington North could not afford a legal battle to protect its trademark.

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[1] Svela, K. (May 2013). "Butter Tart Advocates Seek 'Cease and Desist Order' for Trademark Infringement." *The Wellington Advertiser, 46(22).* http://www.wellingtonadvertiser.com/index.cfm?page=detail&itmno=17007.

[2] "Misunderstanding Over Butter Tarts Could Turn into Sweet Success for City Bakeries: A Dispute Over a Name Turns into an Invitation to Find the Best Butter Tarts in Ontario. (July 2013). My Kawarta.com . http://www.mykawartha.com/news-story/3885882-misunderstanding-over-butter-tarts-could-turn-into-sweet-success-for-city-bakeries/.

Both OCTA (the Ontario Culinary Tourism Alliance) and RTO4 (Regional Tourism Organization 4) have been involved in promoting *The Butter Tart Trail*™. The *Butter Tart Tour* was an initiative led by RTO8 (Regional Tourism Organization 8). While the RTOs are purely regionally focussed, OCTA operates throughout the province.

OCTA approached Wellington North in an effort to build cooperation between *The Butter Tart Trail*™ and the *Butter Tart Tour,* and this appears to have created the best possible compromise. In the end, the *Butter Tart Tour* was renamed as the *Kawartha-Northumberland Butter Tart Tour*, thereby creating a geographical distinction between the two tourism products.

OCTA, with its provincial mandate, is ideally suited to assist in developing and promoting culinary tourism within Ontario and to identify potential conflicts as regions develop their culinary tourism products. Indeed, significant potential for tourism-related conflict exists between regions, as some are more prosperous than others. Not surprisingly, given its location in a more highly populated region, the *Kawartha-Northumberland Butter Tart Tour* has at least 22 bakeries on its map.

OCTA is uniquely positioned to promote optimal outcomes for culinary tourism in the province. Since each RTO receives some provincial funding, funds may be more wisely used if an organization such as OCTA intervenes to preclude two or more regions from developing similar products. Additionally, OCTA may be able to provide guidance for differentiating the various RTOs' culinary products and promoting those differences in a positive way.

Appendix 5.5. Finger Lakes Culinary Bounty and the Ontario Culinary Tourism Alliance

Iain Murray

Whether they engage in culinary experiences deliberately or incidentally, the number of culinary tourists is growing globally. The popularity of food shows and celebrity chefs; interest in healthy lifestyles that include eating fresh nutritious local foods; the proliferation of wineries and breweries; and rural economic development strategies that embrace agritourism have propelled the growth of culinary tourism as a robust niche market. Although increasing numbers of communities are investigating ways to capitalize on these trends, optimizing the potential benefits of culinary tourism requires generating consumer awareness of, and facilitating access to, the available opportunities. To this end, industry organization, collaboration, coordination, communication, and cooperation are vital. This case study compares approaches to culinary tourism in the Finger Lakes Region of upstate New York and Ontario.

The Two Regions

The Finger Lakes Region, New York

One of the largest tourism regions in New York, U.S.A., the Finger Lakes is an area comprising 15 counties (or part thereof) and occupying roughly 8,500 square miles (22,000 square kilometres) from the southern shores of Lake Ontario to the Pennsylvania border. Eleven parallel glacial lakes that resemble fingers span the centre of New York State. Within this region, there are no fewer than 69 wineries, 21 breweries, 10 cheese manufacturers, and numerous destination-type restaurants that attract visitors who are willing to travel a significant distance because the restaurants, many of which are part of a winery, are themselves attractions. The region is also blessed with a geography that makes touring by car relatively easy and methodical as well as visually stunning.

The Province of Ontario

At best, any comparison must be limited to southern Ontario. The Finger Lakes Region would fit into a rectangular area of Ontario bounded by a line from Port Elgin east to Collingwood, south to Port Dover, west to Glencoe, then north to Grand Bend and up the shoreline to Port Elgin. Although meaningful comparisons are difficult to make, it may be reasonable to examine how these two geographic regions approach culinary tourism as a demand generator.

The Respective Approaches to Culinary Tourism

The Finger Lakes Region, New York

Travellers in the Finger Lakes Region are likely to quickly discern that no single authoritative source exists to assist them with planning a culinary (i.e., food, wine, beer) itinerary. The plethora of free glossy and newspaper-type printed material seems helpful initially, but eventually becomes a confusing and voluminous mass of information. No fewer than a dozen different free guides were found during a single day's travel in the region. Among the larger ones were *Spring/Summer Wine and Dine*, *Finger Lakes Wine Gazette*, *Finger Lakes Vacationer*, *Explore! Finger Lakes Times Vacation Guide*, *Guide to the Finger Lakes*, and *Life in the Finger Lakes Travel Guide*. Newspaper companies published several of these, and all relied on advertising for a portion of their cost recovery. None was government funded. In addition, many of the 15 counties publish their own travel guides. While most include some advertising, it is evident that taxpayers covered at least a portion of the cost of these publications. The result is information overload, and travellers are unlikely to remember where they saw a reference to a specific attraction or item of interest.

Finger Lakes Culinary Bounty[1] (FLCB) is the primary organization responsible for things culinary in the Finger Lakes Region. However, its focus is on networking to connect farmers with restaurateurs. *Culinary Bounty* does not package culinary tourism products and is not directed at travellers. The exceptions are *Finger Lakes Restaurant Week*, which held its inaugural event in July 2012, and the *Annual Summer Harvest Dinner*.

According to Monica Roth, Agriculture Program Director, Cornell Cooperative Extension of Tompkins County, "*Culinary Bounty* is now 11 years old, is underfunded, and has too little impact; it could fade into oblivion" (personal communication, July 12, 2012). Ms. Roth also noted some frustration with the fact that counties tend to want to "go it alone" regarding tourism, although she acknowledged that many of the counties are reasonably strong on their own.

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[1] http://www.flcb.org/

Culinary tourism in the Finger Lakes is primarily dealt with on a county-by-county basis (M. Roth, personal communication, July 12, 2012), with relatively minor coverage by the Finger Lakes Tourism Alliance[2] (FLTA). A single paragraph about the wineries, but no mention of food, appears on the FLTA's homepage. However, links to both dining and agriculture can be found on the *What to Do* page. Although the dining page focusses more on the visual beauty of where one can dine than on the local food, it states that many restaurants "… are members of *Finger Lakes Culinary Bounty* and *Pride of New York*, working to ensure that they bring … the best of what our region has to offer."[3] The reference to agriculture indicates, "Many farms lead tours or allow visitors to pick their own produce for a truly fresh experience." Visitors to the agriculture page are invited to download *Farm Connections in the Finger Lakes* for information that was prepared by the FLTA and FLCB on agritourism, which is actually limited to a listing of U-pick farms. *Finger Lakes Feasting*,[4] the personal blog of Celia Clement, a self-described thinker about, lover of, shopper for, preparer of, and reader about food provides recipes, photographs, and links to restaurants in the region.

The *Finger Lakes Wine Country* website[5] has a potentially interesting *Build a Trip* feature, but it is not very intuitive and, in fact, does not seem to work as intended. As a concept, however, it has significant potential for encouraging travellers to explore based on their interest in local foods and wines. Ms. Roth noted that although both the wine alliance and the *Finger Lakes Cheese Trail* association,[6] which she initiated, have been very supportive, culinary tourism is not the focus of either group (personal communication, July 12, 2012).

Pride of New York[7] is a program (*Buy Local. Buy Pride of New York*) that was developed to promote and support the sale of agricultural products grown and food products processed within New York State. The program's growing membership includes over 3,000 farmers and processors, retailers, distributors, restaurants, and related culinary and support associations that work together to bring consumers, buyers, and tourists wholesome, quality New York State products. Website visitors can select a region of the state and then choose a product from an extensive list, but the resulting information is purely a listing of businesses that sell a given product. It is certainly not designed for culinary tourism purposes.

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[2] http://www.fingerlakes.org/

[3] http://www.fingerlakes.org/things-to-do/dining

[4] www.fingerlakesfeasting.com

[5] http://www.fingerlakeswinecountry.com/FingerLakesWineTrails.aspx

[6] http://www.flcheesetrail.com/

[7] http://www.prideofny.com/PONY/consumer/viewHome.do

According to Ms. Roth, no equivalent to the *Ontario Culinary Tourism Alliance* (OCTA) exists in New York State. Indeed, it was her impression that the state perceives culinary tourism as being a small priority and just a loose part of "I Love New York." Moreover, most of the state's focus on culinary tourism is aimed at New York City. In her opinion, this is not an optimal approach (M. Roth, personal communication, July 12, 2012).

The Province of Ontario

The *Ontario Culinary Tourism Alliance*[8] (OCTA), which is charged with, and dedicated to, promoting culinary tourism in Ontario, stands in stark contrast to the Finger Lakes Region where there is no comparable organization. OCTA has positioned itself as the "meeting place for growers, chefs, and people who love fresh food." Interestingly, however, a preliminary meeting[9] of the research team and stakeholders for the subject project revealed limited awareness and understanding of OCTA. This suggests that communication channels need to be opened between OCTA, Ontario's Ministry of Tourism, Culture and Sport, and OMAFRA. Table 1 outlines concerns relating to tourism in rural Ontario cited by members of the research team and stakeholders, many of which could be effectively addressed through collaboration with a robust OCTA.

Table 1. Ontario Rural Tourism Concerns

■ Lack of collaboration, too much competition, and too many players with no overall plan

■ Too much individualism and too much focus on boundaries

■ Inadequate province-wide strategy regarding tourism, and what exists tends to focus on large urban centres

■ Signage and wayfinding are problematic

■ A lack of product in rural areas makes it difficult to attract visitors from urban centres

■ No business clusters

■ Star players tend to cannibalize others

■ Governance issues: lack of a champion, lack of strategic planning, lack of strategy, and lack of leadership

■ Financial challenges: lack of sufficient and *sustainable* funding

■ Seasonality challenges

■ A focus on chasing program dollars as opposed to developing programs that support innovation

■ A lack of interdisciplinary projects to help break down silos

[8] http://ontarioculinary.com/

[9] *The meeting was held on December 7, 2012. See Appendix 3.*

Established in 2006 to implement the *10-Year Culinary Tourism Strategy and Action Plan,*[10] OCTA began as an industry-led alliance and operated as a not-for-profit under the administrative and legal umbrella of the Ontario Restaurant, Hotel and Motel Association (ORHMA). In 2011, it became an incorporated not-for-profit organization. In addition to well-defined vision, mission, and values statements (Table 2), OCTA has a clearly articulated strategy.[11]

Table 2. OCTA Mission, Values, and Vision

Ontario Culinary Tourism Alliance Mission
1.   Help build and sustain regional identities, agricultural resources, and food supplies
2.   Provide opportunities to develop new tourism products and experiences
3.   Become a way in which we share our stories and tell them with pride
Ontario Culinary Tourism Alliance Values
■   Commitment, Collaboration, Communication
Ontario Culinary Tourism Alliance Vision
1.   By 2015, culinary tourism is valued as a leading contributor to a vibrant and sustainable tourism economy in Ontario
2.   For Ontario to become the destination of choice for travellers seeking to enrich their understanding of diverse regions and cultures through authentic culinary tourism experiences

The four-year strategy and action plan includes nine outcomes, each of which is supported by a clear strategy and action. Several outcomes call for collaboration with other organizations in the province. The following example is relevant to OMAFRA:

■ *Outcome Seven:* "There are stronger linkages to [OMAFRA] for a more coordinated and integrated promotion of local food and culinary tourism experiences." Supported by Action 1: "Create an ADM working group within MTC (Ministry of Tourism and Culture) and OMAFRA to share information, generate ideas and create opportunities for cross-pollination that benefits the agri-food value chain."

OCTA also recognizes the need to measure performance and outcomes:

■ *Outcome Eight:* "Ontario has a culinary presence across each region of the province that is dedicated to continued improvement and the measurement of its performance." Supported by

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[10] *Commissioned by the Ontario Ministry of Tourism in 2005*

[11] *https://ontarioculinary.com/ontarios-four%E2%80%90year-culinary-tourism-strategy-and-action-plan-2011-2015/*

Action 1: "Work with specialists in performance metrics to develop a Culinary Tourism Scorecard with performance indicators that can be tracked over time."

The OCTA website is extremely well developed, professional, comprehensive, inviting, and easy to use. Prominently featured on its home page is a link to *Create Your Own Culinary Tourism Adventure,* a trip planner that aims to connect travellers and locals with the many wonderful and talented farmers, producers, restaurateurs, hoteliers, and events Ontario communities provide. Nothing that covers food, wines, ales, and all things culinary in a format that is aimed at tourists/tourism exists in the Finger Lakes Region.

The OCTA team in 2014 comprised six funded positions: an Executive Director, Director of Product Development, Communications & Membership Manager, Ontario Foodservice Designation Program Coordinator, Product Development Coordinator, and Special Projects Developer. The OCTA board of directors was composed of eight OCTA members representing destination marketing organizations, sector organizations, commodity groups, and independent businesses.

Despite OCTA's mandate to promote culinary tourism in the entire province, several regions have created their own culinary tourism organizations, including *Savour Ottawa*[12] and *Savour Stratford*,[13] both of which have been actively involved with OCTA, and *Savour Muskoka*.[14] Without the existence of a strong OCTA, Ontario risks the same individualism and fragmentation that frustrate the Finger Lakes Region. Although a single organization that is the top-of-mind go-to location for culinary tourism has compelling merit (M. Roth, personal communication, July 12, 2012), OCTA unfortunately struggles with sustainability issues because funding has never been assured. To address this, it began to offer fee-for-service consulting and strategy services as well as workshops. Nonetheless, OCTA's future is not guaranteed.

OCTA-Identified Challenges for Culinary Tourism

An OCTA membership survey cited, among other issues, a number of deterrents to realizing the full potential of culinary tourism in Ontario (Table 3). OCTA also noted that there is limited research on the return on investment (ROI) of culinary tourism and that this needs to be explored. With a long-term mandate and assured and adequate long-term financial support, many of these challenges could be addressed efficiently and effectively by OCTA.

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[12] http://www.savourottawa.ca/
[13] http://www.visitstratford.ca/culinaryfestival/
[14] http://www.savourmuskoka.ca/

Table 3. OCTA-Identified Challenges for Culinary Tourism

Lack of stable funding and resources to develop culinary tourism products in each region
Other attractors continue to be seen as the priority
Weak and nonexistent distribution channels for local food products
Lack of organization and clear roles among different groups
Lack of education among partners and producers
A need to engage agriculture
Lack of signage
Lack of product development
Inconsistent delivery of products
The fragmentation of ministries involved in some aspect of economic development, culinary tourism, and agritourism

OCTA's Current Status

Membership objectives were exceeded by 300% by the midpoint of the original ten-year strategy and action plan. OCTA has provided consultation, facilitation and assessment, product development (i.e., packaging, pricing, promotion, and placement), tool kit development, workshops, and research results to industry. A product development cycle tool (EAT™), which includes an inventory of current culinary tourism products, a culinary tourism gap analysis, and an assessment of new culinary tourism product opportunities, has been developed. Perhaps most significantly, OMAFRA has funded OCTA to implement an Ontario Foodservice Designation Program.

Summary

Ontario has taken valuable steps to promote culinary tourism by initially formulating the *10-Year Culinary Tourism Strategy and Action Plan* and subsequently creating OCTA. It would be a shame to allow this promising start to wither and die. In the considered opinion of this author, Ontario has, in OCTA, a valuable organization that should be secured and built upon. Its continued existence would enhance the ability to address many of the concerns expressed by the subject project's Steering Committee and stakeholders, such as lack of focus, lack of leadership, lack of a champion, and a need to break down silos and facilitate coordination. Fortified by a sustainable funding model, OCTA has the potential to create and follow through on longer-term strategies. The Finger Lakes Region of New York has no such powerfully focussed organization.

Rural tourism in Ontario has so many things to "get on with" as opposed to merely researching further. It is evident that the people in the field know what needs to be done; the key now is to provide the necessary resources, oversight, and measurement criteria. OCTA is well positioned and sufficiently strong to meet these demands, but it requires long-term security so that it can focus on its culinary tourism mandate as opposed to its survival as an organization. There is a reasonable analogy between good consistent wayfinder signage (a frequently heard complaint) and having a strong single entity to promote culinary tourism in Ontario.

Appendix 5.6. Stratford Tourism Alliance: Culinary Tourism Initiatives

Iain Murray

The Stratford Tourism Alliance (STA), which was incorporated in 2006 as a not-for-profit destination marketing organization (DMO), began operations in 2007 as a membership driven entity with a 15-member board of directors comprising private and public sector representatives. At the beginning of 2014, the STA had over 220 members from the culinary, retail, accommodations, and cultural sectors as well as a number of not-for-profit associations and organizations. Membership fees, advertising and partnership funds, and the City of Stratford are its principal revenue sources. Any government funding received takes the form of matching grants.

The Ontario Culinary Tourism Alliance (OCTA) was established in 2006, about one year prior to the STA. Hence, both organizations were finding their way at about the same time. The STA, however, had the advantage of being significantly more focussed in terms of geography, membership, and direction. Among the STA's initial activities was the preparation of a profile of past visitors to Stratford using a variety of sources. The result was a clear sense that the STA should focus on cultural tourism – theatre, dining, authentic heritage, quality of life, and European-style escapes.

In 2008, Stratford was featured on *Food Network* television, which substantially boosted the STA's confidence to proceed with culinary tourism. According to Mr. Eugene Zakreski, Executive Director of the STA, although OCTA was in its developmental stages at that time, as a member of OCTA, the STA had access to OCTA's information resources and services. Subsequently, the STA hired a full-time person who ostensibly collaborated with OCTA to develop the *Savour Stratford* brand. The STA, however, believed it was proceeding pretty much on its own.

Concurrently, OMAFRA was offering investment grants, so the STA formulated an in-depth multiyear proposal to be funded based on a dollar-for-dollar matching grant. The STA recruited several partners, including the City of Stratford, the Stratford Business Improvement Area (BIA), producers, and retailers. This resulted in investment funds of close to $175,000 from OMAFRA. One of the initiatives embarked upon by the STA with the available funds was the development of the *Savour Stratford Perth County Culinary Festival,* which has grown from attendance of about 5,000 in the fall of 2008

to approximately 30,000 during a two-day event in 2014. Heralded as one of Ontario's largest culinary festivals, this award-winning event features over 150 chefs, farmers, producers, Ontario wineries and craft brewers, cheesemakers, and culinary personalities.

Recognizing that a single annual festival was insufficient to effectively drive culinary tourism, the STA initiated Saturday afternoon events in the months of October to December and February to June (e.g., informative tastings led by experts, demonstration-style cooking classes). Additionally, it introduced self-guided trails (e.g., *Stratford Chocolate Trail*, *Stratford Bacon & Ale Trail*, *Savour Stratford Maple Trail*). Individuals pay $25, which entitles them to stop at six of the locations along the trail (five in the case of the *Bacon & Ale Trail*) to sample products relating to the trail's theme. More recently, the STA added *Foraging for Wild Edibles* where individuals search for wild edible plants and mushrooms along Southwestern Ontario's Avon and Thames River Trails with a seasoned forager and learn to identify, harvest, and cook the wild delicacies.

According to Mr. Zakreski, the foregoing endeavours were developed in-house, although he credits OCTA with generating some ideas that led, or contributed, to their development. Since the STA and OCTA were evolving to some degree in unison, it is conceivable that OCTA helped to develop the STA's culinary product and, contemporaneously, the STA facilitated OCTA's development. For example, Mr. Zakreski acknowledged that OCTA, which quickly became well connected with chefs and food writers, was instrumental in providing editorial coverage and media exposure.

Speaking on behalf of the STA, Mr. Zakreski does not favour a province-wide culinary strategy given regional competitive pressures for the culinary tourism market (e.g., Prince Edward County and Muskoka are key sources of competition for Stratford). He believes OCTA is more useful to smaller and/or emerging DMOs and RTOs that have limited resources. To this end, and consistent with OMAFRA's aim of increasing the number of urban Ontarians who visit Ontario's rural communities (which the subject research project is intended to facilitate), OCTA represents a reasonably efficient way for smaller communities to develop a critical mass of tourism product, one piece of which may be their culinary offerings.

However, Mr. Zakreski advised that once the consulting phase is completed, considerable talent, money, time, effort, and leadership will be required to implement the recommendations, a task for which OCTA is understandably not ideally suited. He further commented, "OCTA can provide *how to* examples, but not the *what to do* to follow through." Hence, the underlying message is that destinations must not only understand the assistance OCTA can provide, but also what they, themselves, need to do to bring the recommendations to fruition.

Appendix 5.7. Norfolk County and the Ontario Culinary Tourism Alliance

Iain Murray

Norfolk County comprises about 1,608 square kilometres (163,455 hectares) on the north shore of Lake Erie. The Town of Simcoe serves as the county seat. The population of the county is relatively small at 63,175 (2011 census) and a population density of just 39 people per square kilometre compared to an average of 551 for all municipalities in Southwestern Ontario.[1] Given its low population density, it is not surprising that the county bills itself as *Ontario's Garden*, stating, "The agricultural industry continues to be a driving force behind our local economy. Norfolk is … the most diversified agricultural region in Canada."[2] More specifically, "Norfolk County farmers are Canada's Number One growers of asparagus, cabbage, sour cherries, ginseng, other specialty vegetables, peppers, pumpkin, squash, zucchini, strawberries, sweet corn and sweet potatoes. Norfolk County is also Ontario's Number One grower of blueberries, rye and Saskatoon berries."[3]
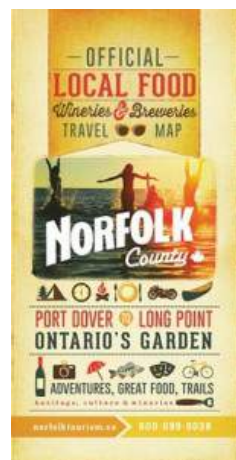
The Ontario Culinary Alliance (OCTA) was invited to speak at the Norfolk County Economic Development Symposium in January 2008. Acknowledging OCTA's potential value, Norfolk County applied for membership in February 2008, and annual fees were paid in 2008, 2009, 2010, and 2011 during which time Norfolk made an effort to take advice and direction from OCTA. Norfolk County created a Culinary Tourism Committee and invited OCTA to attend its meetings. However, within one year, the committee began to express concerns about its relationship with OCTA.

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[1] *Norfolk County 2012 BMA Municipal Study*
https://norfolk.civicweb.net/document/122210/2012%20BMA.pdf?handle=9A84DDD6F19D4C058F616090C94336CF

[2] *http://www.norfolkbusiness.ca/*

[3] *http://norfolkfarms.com/about-us/*

Desiring to resolve the issues, OCTA continued to attend the meetings, and Norfolk retained its membership. While Norfolk County hosted OCTA-led media and culinary tourism workshops, including one relating to social media in March 2011, attendees believed the workshops focussed too much on the achievements of several other member regions, particularly Prince Edward County, and too little on helping Norfolk. These concerns were expressed on an ongoing basis to OCTA, and after four years, Norfolk County decided not to renew its membership.

The first *FlavourFest,* a partnership between Norfolk County Tourism & Economic Development and the Norfolk County Fair & Horse Show which continues to the present, was launched in 2004. This culinary festival is promoted as an opportunity for tourists, visitors, and locals to "Taste the flavours of Norfolk County's farms … and take some food home …"[4] The tenth anniversary of *FlavourFest* in 2014 included an expanded *Eat & Drink Norfolk* section featuring local wineries, breweries, and restaurants using local ingredients. *FlavourFest* has grown steadily and currently attracts a large percentage of the more than 100,000 attendees at the Norfolk County Fair. Hence, although it seems incongruous that OCTA would not have been interested in promoting culinary tourism in the county, the collective opinion of Norfolk staff was that OCTA was dedicating a disproportionately large amount of time and energy expounding its successes as opposed to providing assistance and guidance. Staff believed there was an inadequate sense of shared ownership with OCTA, whereas with RTO1 (Regional Tourism Organization 1), in which the county falls, there is a greater sense of collaboration, participation, and support. Given that *FlavourFest* began with a grant from the Ontario Ministry of Tourism, followed a few years later by a grant from OMAFRA, and ultimately in 2013 and 2014, assistance from the Ministry of Tourism, Culture and Sport's Celebrate Ontario Fund,[5] the evidence suggests that Norfolk County has been progressing quite well without OCTA.

Feast ON, a criteria-based program recognizing businesses that are committed to showcasing Ontario's unique tastes of place,[6] recently attracted the attention of Norfolk County, which recognized its potential value for raising the profile of the county's culinary tourism. Although OCTA, supported province-wide by partners and stakeholders, is responsible for developing and implementing *Feast ON*, membership is not required. Prospective designees (i.e., those wishing to earn the *Feast ON: Certified Taste of Ontario* designation) must adopt the *Feast On Manifesto* (Table 1).

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[4] http://norfolkfarms.com/flavourfest/
[5] http://norfolkfarms.com/flavourfest/
[6] https://feaston.ontarioculinary.com/learn-more/

Table 1. The Feast ON Manifesto

- To **_procure_** Ontario food and drink whenever possible
- To **_track_** and **_trace_** Ontario food and drink purchases as close to the point of origin as possible
- To identify the **_provenance_** of Ontario food and drink on the menu
- To develop Ontario's culinary identity by **_celebrating_** regional tastes and **_championing_** local seasonal tastes
- To **_educate_** the public about Ontario food and drink and to bring further awareness to its strong agricultural sectors

They must also adhere to three criteria, each of which appears to be relatively easy for restaurants in *Ontario's Garden* to satisfy (Table 2).

Table 2. Feast ON Designation Criteria

Procuring. Food produced or harvested in Ontario, or food and drink made in Ontario if they include ingredients produced or harvested in the province

- 25% of total annual food receipts reflect Ontario food purchases
- 25% of total annual beverage receipts reflect Ontario beverage purchases (or 25 Ontario beverages are on offer at any given time)

Partnering. Being part of a local, regional, provincial, or national program that supports and showcases Ontario food and drink, its agricultural sectors, and best practices in the industry

- Active membership or participation in a complementary designation program at the local, regional, provincial, or national level

Participating. Community-based initiatives and experiences as well as innovative and creative ways of building awareness of Ontario food and drink

- Identification or record of involvement, support, or activity

By the end of 2014, *Feast ON* had around 75 members across the province, seven of which were located in Norfolk County (three in Port Dover and four in Simcoe). The Combine in Simcoe was the first in Norfolk County and one of the initial 20 restaurants provincially to earn the designation.

In this case, OCTA appears to have failed to satisfactorily connect with a member despite that member's efforts to develop a mutually beneficial partnership. Although a number of reasons could explain this, the underlying message for OCTA is that it should reexamine whether its services benefit municipal local food networks equitably. If OCTA agrees that it fell short in providing value for Norfolk, then it should learn from this experience and make the necessary improvements. From the perspective of communities wishing to develop rural and/or culinary tourism, it is vital that they select their partnerships carefully as well as communicate their needs to ensure value and mutual benefits, especially given the limited resources available to small communities.

Appendix 5.8. Rural Tourism: St. Jacobs Country

Mike von Massow, Kimberly Thomas-Francois, and Alison Crerar

*S*t. *Jacobs Country* is a privately-held brand that promotes the attractions in and around St. Jacobs, Ontario. Although others have contributed to the development and promotion of the area, Mercedes Corporation, a family business that owns much of the infrastructure, has been the primary force behind *St. Jacobs Country* which features a small charming historic village, Mennonite culture and heritage, a large farmers' market, and retail shops, including a factory outlet mall. The brand is well recognized and the area has become a popular destination among locals and tourists, largely due its location, the St. Jacobs Farmers' Market, and the Mennonite experience.

St. Jacobs – The Setting

Originally a settlement area for the Mennonites located in Southwestern Ontario north of the Waterloo Region, St. Jacobs became a rural service centre along the Conestogo River in 1848, and by the 1880s, it had become a thriving community catering to the needs of Old Order Mennonites (Dahms, 1991). The service centre, developed for the benefit of the unique agrarian population, started with just three businesses: a bakery, a family-style restaurant, and a facility for the reproduction of pine furniture which had been converted from the Snider flour mill (now a heritage building) (Mitchell & de Waal, 2009).

Today, St. Jacobs is a tourist destination and home to several businesses such as Home Hardware (head office and warehouse) and Quarry Integrated Communications (a marketing communications firm). The community, which comprises commuters and long-term residents, must constantly balance the needs of those who live and work there with those who visit.

St. Jacobs is located at the end of a major expressway, the Conestoga Parkway, which provides ready access to Highway 401 (the McDonald Cartier Freeway), an important transportation route in Southwestern Ontario. Its proximity to a substantial population base of over half a million people in Waterloo, Kitchener, Cambridge, and Guelph provides a significant local (non-tourist) market. Moreover, its immediacy to larger population centres in the Greater Toronto Area; the Golden Horseshoe area; Niagara Region; and Buffalo, New York (all of which are located within 100-kilometres of St. Jacobs) and the sound transportation infrastructure provide significant advantages to St. Jacobs in its quest to attract a critical mass of visitors and tourists.
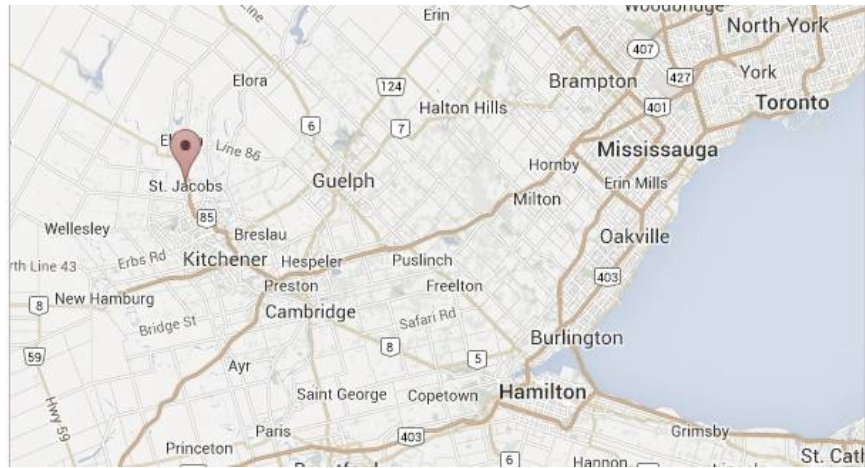
St. Jacobs – A Rural Tourism Destination

Its location at a dam site, port, and major junction of neighbouring regions, together with its history and Mennonite people, rendered St. Jacobs a place of visitor interest even in its early years (Dahms, 1991). The opportunity to glimpse the 16th century lifestyle practiced by Old Order Mennonites was, and continues to be, a captivating draw (Mitchell & de Waal, 2009).

St. Jacobs is now a rural destination providing access to shopping, dining, family fun, and accommodations in addition to the rich cultural heritage of the Mennonites. The development of the village as a rural tourism destination was essentially an opportunity to satisfy the curiosity of visitors about the Mennonite community. A priority for initial development in the area was to reduce the pressure of tourism on the Old Order Mennonites who shun attention. Consequently, the Mennonite Story interpretive centre, which serves the dual purposes of minimizing exploitation of the Mennonites while simultaneously educating tourists and visitors about the lifestyle of the Mennonites, history of the area, and architecture of historical buildings, was developed.

Located just south of the village and featuring fresh food from local farms as well as imported produce, processed foods, art, crafts, a flea market, and a petting farm, the St. Jacobs Farmers' Market is another important attraction (Mitchell & de Waal, 2009). A livestock exchange, an artifact in the history of the Farmers' Market, operates on the site but is not an essential component as its market differs. Subsequent development has included an outlet mall, furniture stores, numerous

high-end fashion boutiques, market-style restaurants, reproductions of pine furniture, baked goods, meat and cheese, and a coffee and donut shop. Innovation has tended to be liminal, with the dominant product being the commodification of Mennonite heritage. Relatively recent investments in the market district include 119 accommodation units with another establishment about to open, a visitor information centre operated by the Township of Woolwich, a theatre, a vintage rail service, and a giant retail store (Walmart) (Mitchell & de Waal, 2009).

History and Development of St. Jacobs

Several academic studies have investigated the transformation and evolution of St. Jacobs as a rural tourism product and have focussed on, for example, the community's rise to touristic prominence following its decline (Dahms, 1991), the application of creative destruction models (Mitchell, 1998; Mitchell & de Waal, 2009), and the use of the countryside capital framework (McClinchey & Carmichael, 2010).

As mentioned previously, following the settlement of the Mennonites in the area in 1819, a rural service centre evolved to support the livelihoods of Old Order Mennonites. Throughout this period, the village was gradually transformed into a tourist community with 37 businesses that covered a variety of industries (Dahms, 1991). Many buildings, which are now referred to as heritage buildings, were constructed during this era (Dahms, 1991). Today, New Order Mennonites have

continued to develop and commodify St. Jacobs in an attempt to meet the needs of the community while simultaneously pursuing economic growth by attracting tourists and visitors. They face the challenge of educating visitors and tourists about Mennonite culture without sensationalizing it.

The initial generation of tourism benefits spurred further investment, resulting in the rather serendipitous evolution of St. Jacobs as a tourist destination. Its market positioning changed from *Mennonite Country* to *St. Jacobs Country* (McClinchey & Carmichael, 2010), perhaps reflecting broader community involvement. Although St. Jacobs has been blessed from its earliest days with settlers having vision, capital, and ambition (Dahms, 1991, p. 3), Jacob C. Snider, a charismatic and dynamic leader who got things done, is often heralded as the visionary responsible for the original planning and development of the community.

The genesis of more recent developments in St. Jacobs was a Kitchener-based livestock exchange. Starting in the 1960s, many Mennonite farmers who bought and sold cattle at the exchange also sold produce in the parking lot, thereby creating a farmers' market. When the livestock exchange outgrew its urban location, both the farmers' market and livestock exchange were relocated to St. Jacobs. Milo Shantz, the owner of the livestock exchange and a local Mennonite leader, not only recognized the opportunity for growth of the Farmers' Market, but he also acknowledged the increasing tension caused by the visitors' curiosity about the traditional Mennonites. Hence, he conceived the Mennonite Story interpretive centre in an effort to deflect some of the direct tourist and visitor interaction away from the pious Mennonites. As traffic to the Farmers' Market and the beautiful village grew, additional tourism opportunities have been identified and implemented.

Mercedes Corporation, a property management company founded by Milo Shantz in the early 1980s, six years after he and his wife created the Stonecrock Restaurant, one of the initial developments in the modern iteration of St. Jacobs, has been the main impetus for the recent exponential growth in the community's development. In addition to owning 50% of the commercial real estate in the village, Mercedes Corporation has 50% interest in the outlet mall, which it also operates in addition to the Farmers' Market. Although the mandate of Mercedes Corporation is property management, Milo Shantz's family has a strong connection to the community, which influences development and operations decisions and ensures that they remain sensitive to local residents and the Old Order Mennonites who live and farm in the surrounding area.

Developments in the village of St. Jacobs have spawned commercial business growth in peripheral areas, including accommodation facilities and a giant retail store (Walmart). Accommodations range from luxurious hotels and inns to numerous countryside bed and breakfast establishments. The motivation of many bed and breakfast operators, even those not oriented to farm vacations, was the opportunity to escape to the country and operate a business in a relaxed rural setting featuring rich natural and cultural resources (McClinchey & Carmichael, 2010). Investors who have developed supporting businesses in St. Jacobs and vicinity are primary stakeholders who have contributed to the growth and development of *St. Jacobs Country*. Mercedes Corporation envisions the development of a hotel cluster in the area, perhaps in recognition of the role comfortable accommodations play in tourist destinations.

Although the corporation has not been particularly selective in the type of development that has occurred, heritage products such as the Mennonite Story interpretive centre were intentionally instituted as part of a strategic plan to conserve the history of the people, respect the rural townscape, and minimize the intrusiveness of tourist traffic to the villagers. Not all of the initiatives have been a resounding success. For example, while the development of the outlet mall next to the

Farmers' Market was an attempt to expand the offering for visitors, dramatic growth of similar retail outlets across Southwestern Ontario and the increasing popularity of online shopping have presented significant challenges, and sales have consistently been below expectations.

The entrepreneurial spirit, leadership, and vision of Milo Shantz are generally perceived as having been critical to the development of St. Jacobs as it currently exists. He is credited with having been the driving force behind economic development in St. Jacobs that respects the needs of the residents (not entirely without conflict) and the surrounding Mennonite farming community.

Marketing of St. Jacobs

While satisfying the needs of the Mennonites remains a core value, the targeted consumer has been formally extended to include tourists and visitors, whether from neighbouring cities or outside of Canada. Mercedes Corporation recognizes the approximately half million people in the Kitchener, Waterloo, Cambridge, and Guelph areas as representing an immediate target market. Packages specifically aimed at the Greater Toronto Area (GTA) have also been developed.

St. Jacobs Country's website is a vital promotional tool. *Ontario's favourite rural destination's* selling proposition is the opportunity to shop, play, dine, and enjoy a comfortable stay in a community that has been enriched by the history and lifestyle of the Mennonites. To combat its primary competitors, including Niagara Wine Country and Stratford, a differentiation strategy has been employed that focuses on the uniqueness of the Farmers' Market, the charm of the village, and the heritage of the Mennonites. Although Mercedes Corporation owns the *St. Jacobs Country* brand, six active partners in addition to community members are involved in branding and promoting the area.

Leveraging a single brand to promote the overall offering is a strength of *St. Jacobs Country*. Road signage and a single web presence enhance potential visitors' abilities to identify, find, and explore the diverse options available. The website provides a one stop shopping experience which enables prospective tourists and visitors to bundle products. Because Mercedes Corporation controls so much of the infrastructure, it can drive and control marketing efforts with

its partners, resulting in the virtual absence of the conflicting interests and muddled messages common to many destinations with multiple stakeholders.

As stated previously, its location and relative ease of access facilitated by strong transportation infrastructure have provided St. Jacobs the opportunity to target both local and tourist markets (from the GTA to Buffalo, New York). This has strengthened Mercedes Corporation's ability to attract a significant volume of tourist traffic to its own interests as well as to other products in the village and surrounding area. Further, cooperation and collaboration among stakeholders have permitted the development of a more substantial tourism offering than would have been possible by an individual entity on its own.

Current Status of *St. Jacobs Country*

St. Jacobs Country has evolved into a diversified product featuring both modern (e.g., accommodations, retail establishments) and traditional elements (e.g., historic buildings, Mennonite culture). Although investment in an outlet mall was initially considered a valuable product addition, due to market factors (e.g., intervening retail opportunities in Southwestern Ontario, the advent of online shopping), the outlet mall has not proven to be a significant pull factor.

Continuous changes to designated retail areas in the village have occurred in an effort to adapt to different market conditions. With the onset of economic recession and the consequent decreases in spending, some retail spaces (e.g., the Riverworks area) were transformed into offices in the belief that employees of, and visitors to, these offices could subsequently be converted into tourist visits that included other family members and friends. The business and meetings market is a source of revenue for restaurants and hotels during the week and in tourism shoulder periods. Although products such as The Mill have been flagged as unprofitable, the historical information provided there is believed to be of value to tourists and visitors.

Because Mercedes Corporation is the largest owner of retail space in St. Jacobs, *St. Jacobs Country* has been able to retain a strategic grounding consistent with the vision even during challenging periods. Rather than underscoring the struggles, empty retail spaces have become venues to showcase local artists' works or museums to enhance the visitor experience. This is less likely to have happened had there been multiple stakeholders with significant holdings who required cash flow. Hence, ownership and coordination have been critical to success during difficult times.

The Farmers' Market has been identified as a major pull factor due to its spirit and ambiance, which are attributed to both the consumers and merchants. Indeed, it is considered to be an interesting product that has made significant contributions to the success of *St. Jacobs Country*. Although no systematic market research has been undertaken, observations at the Farmers' Market and in the village using a vehicle license plate extrapolation technique suggest visitation of approximately 40,000 visitors/consumers during peak times. The Farmers' Market and village are complementary products, with many tourists and visitors enjoying both. Some, however, patronize only one of the sites because a considerable distance separates the two experiences. Although the corporation acknowledges that more visits to both areas would be facilitated if they were located in closer proximity to each other, a decision has been taken not to make radical changes to the Farmers' Market in this regard.

The *St. Jacobs Country* brand is vibrant, and the area continues to draw both locals and tourists. Economic downturns and the appreciation of the Canadian dollar (since partially reversed) have presented challenges, but Mercedes Corporation and its partners have weathered the storms and continue to move forward. While individual initiatives may not have been as successful as anticipated, the vision of Milo Shantz has survived and continues to thrive.

A significant success factor has been residents' acceptance (especially non-Mennonites) of the growth and changes in their rural community. Their supportive participation in buying and selling at the Farmers' Market as well as investing in accommodation and other support services and facilities cannot be ignored. Although Dahms (1991) highlighted residents' resentment of the tourist influx and indicated that the primary target for the service centre (i.e., Mennonite people) started to shop elsewhere, Mercedes Corporation believes current residents understand the conditions and are satisfied with the benefits of employment for their families.

Dahms (1991) also acknowledged the economic benefits stemming from participation in tourism, citing entrepreneurial efforts, heritage, amenities, and access as major factors underpinning success. McClinchey and Carmichael (2010), however, raised concerns about the rapid rate of residential and commercial development in the area and its sustainability, including the possibility

of dissatisfaction among the Mennonite people. Mercedes Corporation respects and holds the view, probably due its founder's strong belief in community building, that the economic imperative should not undermine social, cultural, heritage, and environmental responsibilities.

Analysis

The evolution and success of *St. Jacobs Country* are attributed to a number of key factors.

Leveraging but Respecting Local Resources

In addition to the Farmers' Market and other attractions, the appeal of *St. Jacobs Country* is predicated on its culture, heritage, and natural beauty. Balancing the potential for the Old Order Mennonite culture to entice visitation with the need to respect the privacy of Mennonites has been key to maintaining a peaceful coexistence that enhances the attractiveness of the locale.   The Farmers' Market provides an alternative outlet for production (both food and other items such as furniture) for Mennonites and other local producers. The vistas along the Conestogo River have been maintained and historic buildings have been repurposed (e.g., the Riverworks building has evolved from a felt factory to a retail centre to offices for a marketing communications company). Adapting to the changes has not always been seamless. Tensions emerged as traffic, parking, and crowds became issues for local residents. However, the operators and community have worked together to resolve the issues.

Strong Leadership and Vision

The vision and passion of Milo Shantz, who developed the Farmers' Market and the original Mennonite Story interpretive centre, were vital ingredients. Adamant about protecting the character of the village and respecting the Mennonite culture, Milo Shantz also understood that providing an opportunity to sell produce would add value. Maintaining an ownership share in most of the development facilitated his continued influence. The strategic vision conceived by Milo Shantz is not only his legacy, but it also served as the guiding vision for Mercedes Corporation (now led by his daughter) and the *St. Jacobs Country* brand.

Governance and Coordination

Because Mercedes Corporation controls at least 50% of the key infrastructure within the product offering of *St. Jacobs Country*, conflicting priorities that dilute the brand message are less likely. Destinations with more fragmented ownership and control of key attractions are often fraught with

discordant stakeholder interests that render branding, communications, and revenue management bundles difficult to achieve. Mercedes Corporation owns the brand but encourages input and participation from its partners, although some may choose not to participate. Consequently, a single compelling and consistent brand message is delivered. Effective coordination and a consistent message are best practices evident in St. Jacobs primarily due to ownership control. Communities characterized by more fragmented ownership and control must identify other governance structures that enable consistent goals and objectives among stakeholders.

Critical Mass for Risk Pooling

A significant strength of *St. Jacobs Country* is the critical mass within ownership that serves as a buffer against risks associated with poor decisions, weak markets, or disasters, all of which have been experienced by Mercedes Corporation. When a strong Canadian dollar and weak economy reduced demand, several retail stores closed. In some communities, this would have resulted in empty storefronts that compromised the visitor experience. However, because the space in St. Jacobs was controlled to a large degree by a single entity, reduced cash flow from rents hurt, but was not fatal. Motivated to provide a complete experience, Mercedes Corporation turned vacant retail space into display space and museums to maintain the appearance of full utilization. Further, its diversified portfolio provided the cash flow necessary to convert the Riverworks building to office space when retail demand diminished. Similarly, while a less robust company may have closed the poorly performing outlet mall, thereby diminishing the visitor experience (even if only by virtue of an empty building), Mercedes Corporation has been able to maintain the operation.

In early September 2013, the Farmers' Market suffered a devastating fire that destroyed a significant portion of the vendor space. Within a week of the fire, the responsiveness of Mercedes Corporation coupled with its portfolio of diverse holdings, enabled the corporation to restructure the adjacent Peddler's Village building to temporarily accommodate most of the vendors who had lost their booths, thereby allowing vendors to continue earning a livelihood. Approximately three months after the fire, the Harvest Barn was reopened, a feat that was accomplished primarily due to the strong community spirit rooted within Mennonite history. A new permanent main building is slated for completion in 2015. One of the keys to innovation is the ability to take risks and fail. The safety net available to *St. Jacobs Country* has been a positive influence in its evolution and development.

Location

An element of success in *St. Jacobs Country* that cannot be easily replicated is its prime location. The area is blessed with the natural beauty of the Conestogo River and the rolling farmland that

produces bounty for the Farmers' Market. *St. Jacobs Country* is also home to Old Order Mennonites who add to the charm and appeal of the area. While vital to the success of *St. Jacobs Country*, these elements cannot be replicated as best practices. Likewise, its location close to a major urban conglomeration with easy access to the GTA by major highway is also serendipitous and difficult to imitate. The lesson to be learned, however, is to leverage the assets available and to be realistic about what may not exist. Strategic innovation is critical and must be based on a solid foundation of a pragmatic evaluation of attributes, opportunities, and constraints.

Conclusion

St. Jacobs Country is an excellent example of successful rural tourism initiative. Blessed with a unique set of attributes, the area has continually evolved based on leveraging the strength of those assets while balancing respect for the residents, although progress has not been without challenges. The ownership and governance of *St. Jacobs Country* and the ever-present strong leadership and vision have been critical to sustaining the success of this rural tourism community.

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Appendix 5.9. The Townships Trail, Quebec: Place Branding the Rural Landscape

Statia Elliot

The concept of branding has experienced a remarkable evolution from its origins as a mark of cattle ownership, to fashion statement, to national and city slogan! Perhaps it has come full circle, moving back to the country, but now with trail markers and route signage weaving through rural landscapes marking paths like deer through the woods. While much has been written about destination branding, little has focussed on its application in rural settings, particularly in terms of themed routes, despite rural tourism's expansion in this direction and the unique implications it raises. A popular concept for over a decade, the themed touring route is promoted for benefits of regional connectivity, demand diffusion, and economic development (Hardy, 2003), and it is often favoured as a relatively low cost option. With a basic road network in the environs of an appealing landscape, a route may be possible through planning and community involvement more so than through infrastructure development, and with more human resource effort than financial capital. The purpose of this case study is to evaluate a rural themed route and explore the phenomenon of place branding the rural landscape.

## The Townships Trail, Eastern Townships, Quebec

The *Townships Trail*, one of fifteen trails promoted by Tourisme Québec,[1] was selected as a suitable case because it can be considered a best practice given its reputation for excellence in the province of Quebec and its measured results that indicate positive economic impact. Moreover, unlike many trails that establish in iconic locations (e.g., *Pacific Coast Way*, Australia) or connect a strong product cluster (e.g., *Wine Road*, California), the *Townships Trail* represents idyllic rural features that can be found down many a country road – its 415 kilometres of scenic views, picturesque villages, round barns, factories, and schools are signs of a former era (Eastern Townships, 2012).

The Eastern Townships is a region in Quebec beginning approximately 80 kilometres east of Montreal and extending over 13,100 square kilometres (Figure 1), with a population of 425,000. Officially created by government decree in 1792 following a wave of immigration resulting from the American War of Independence, the Eastern Townships has a long history that reflects the patterns of Canadian settlement. The second wave of immigrants came from Great Britain during the 19th century and was followed by French Canadian settlement throughout the 20th century. The result is

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[1] *http://www.bonjourquebec.com/qc-en/routescircuits0.html*

a unique legacy of built heritage and panoramas that blend Victorian homes with Catholic churches, and rich farmland with picturesque villages.

Figure 1. The Townships Trail, Eastern Townships, Quebec

Source: http://www.chemindescantons.qc.ca/en/explorez
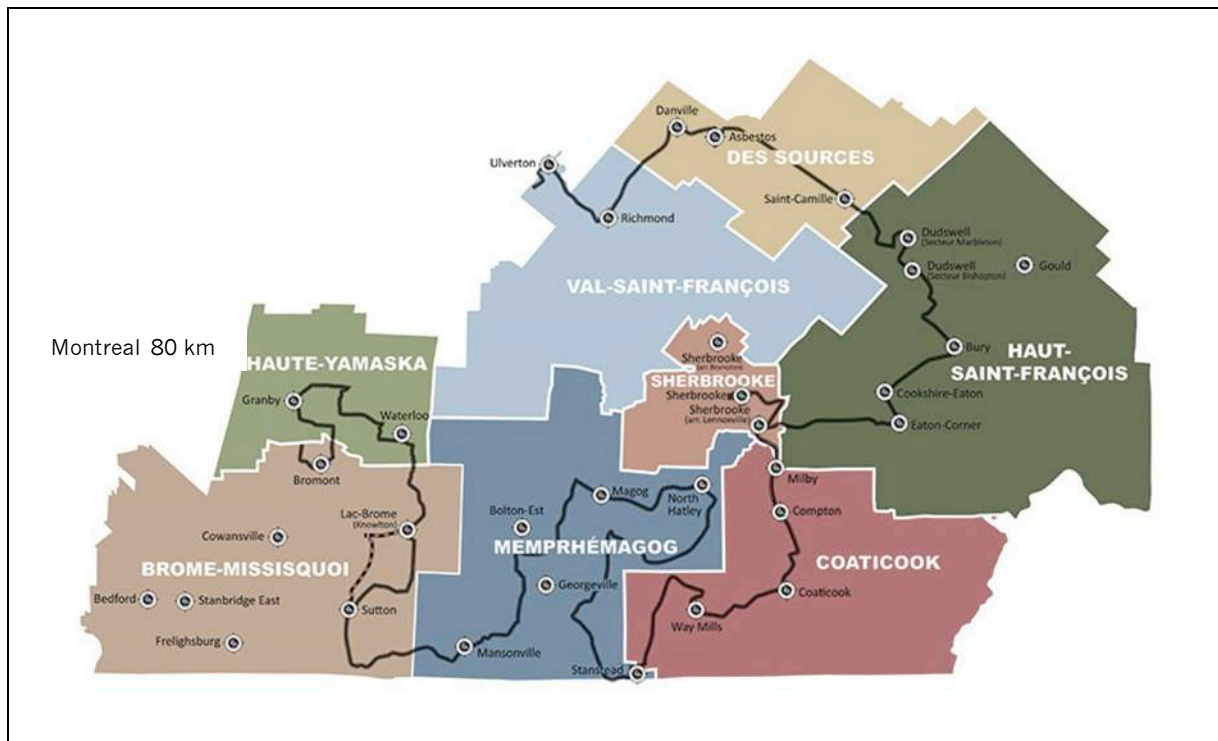
The Eastern Townships is also one of 22 regional tourism associations that are funded largely through a provincial accommodation tax of $2.00 per night per room that was introduced in 1997 and provides approximately $1 million annually to support the tourism region's promotion and development (Quebec Ministry of Tourism, 2010). Harkening the region's history of immigration and agriculture, promotions feature its heritage and culture, local produce and wines, and landscape of mountain ranges and lakes. Lacking a singular major tourist draw, the region comprises several small attractions, many with four season appeal, including cycling and swimming in summer, skiing and snowshoeing in winter, and sightseeing, museums, and dining year round.

Development History

Plans for the *Townships Trail* began in 2004 initiated by the Eastern Townships Tourism Association, the Quebec Ministry of Culture and Communications, and the nine local community development offices (*centres locale de developpement*) located within the region. A mandate to

create a concept for a culturally themed tourist trail, in part to help boost attendance at the numerous small museums throughout the Eastern Townships, was established. The regional tourism association ($45,000), the Regional Development Fund ($80,000), and the Quebec Ministry of Culture and Communication ($30,000) provided initial funding to support the feasibility and planning phase. Mr. Alain Larouche, Director of the Eastern Townships Tourism Association and an early champion of the trail concept, believed that by linking the region's many small attractions, the sum would be greater than the individual parts. A consulting firm experienced in cultural and tourism planning was hired to:

■ Conduct an inventory of culturally themed events and attractions.

■ Develop an evaluation framework for route selection.

■ Determine the route.

■ Develop an implementation strategy and organizational structure.

■ Develop a five-year budget and management plan.

Following a public presentation of the study results to regional stakeholders in September 2005, agreement was reached to move forward. The consulting firm was given a second mandate to help plan trail implementation through the establishment of a management corporation and the creation of a tourism signage plan. After much research and consultation, a comprehensive development plan was released in September 2006 that established the overarching common direction for the trail's development and delineated (Eastern Townships, 2006):

■ The initiative's vision, values, and objectives.

■ Strategies for planning, interpreting, and animating the trail.

■ Strategies for trail marketing and identification of target markets.

■ Municipal and sector partnership agreements.

■ Implementation and operational costs.

■ Product inventory (i.e., hours of operation, parking availability, complementary services).

■ Proposals for municipal guides to support local trail development.

■ The economic, social, cultural, and tourism impacts of the project.

■ Partner responsibilities and financial implications.

After two years of planning and one year of development, the 415-kilometre themed and marked trail opened in June 2007 featuring 35 stops and crossing 8 of the 9 regional municipalities (Eastern Townships, 2011). The theme – history, culture, and pastoral landscapes – is visually captured in the trail's signage and slogan[2] that are presented consistently throughout the route (Figure 2).

Figure 2. The Townships Trail Route Signage and Slogan

Planning and Organizing Process

Key to the successful implementation and management of the trail was the establishment of The Townships Trail Management Corporation (*La Corporation de gestion du Chemin des Cantons*), an independent not-for-profit organization with its own budget, a dedicated coordinator, and a board comprising 13 directors: one from each of the eight regional municipalities of the trail; representatives of the tourism sector, the cultural sector, and the Anglophone community; and two ad hoc members. With a detailed development plan and organizational structure in place, the *Townships Trail* project had four main objectives:

- To create a new tourism product with distinctive appeal for the Eastern Townships.
- To increase visitation to the region's historical and cultural attractions.
- To consolidate and enhance the cultural activities in the region.
- To promote the preservation of cultural and natural sites in the region.

Ongoing Operations

To achieve the desired objectives, a five-year budget was developed based on a shared funding formula (i.e., population, length of local trail section) by which the eight participating municipalities would collectively contribute a total of $70,000 a year. Individual attractions, sites, restaurants,

[2] *The Townships Trail's slogan may be translated as "Two centuries of life-size history."*

stores, and other businesses could also participate as "Friends of the Trail" for $500 annually, the proceeds of which were to be directed to *Townships Trail* promotions. Additional monies would come largely from the province and the region, for a total budget of $233,000 in the first year. The single largest expense was for signage, at $60,000 annually for each of the first five years.

The trail could not succeed without the involvement of many private and public stakeholders. The development plan identified roles and responsibilities for each proposed activity. For example, tourism signage would be managed through a Quebec Ministry of Transportation program, and promotion and coordination would be undertaken primarily by a trail coordinator. An individual champion of the *Townships Trail*, Ms. Paule Rochette was the first coordinator and a strong advocate for participation (P. Rochette, personal communication, May 30, 2012). A critical role of the coordinator was promoting the value of the trail to secure funding. The cycle of sustainability requires seed funding to generate measureable returns for partners to encourage repeat funding.

Marketing

Market research suggests that while trails or scenic drives play a role in destination selection, they are not necessarily the primary motivation for a long haul vacation, but they are very likely an activity of choice. A majority of travellers take scenic drives at a destination, and scenic drives account for approximately 52% of the decision to visit a particular destination (University of Prince Edward Island, 2009). Realistically, non-iconic trails are more suited to the domestic market. Thus, the primary target for the *Townships Trail* is Quebecers, particularly from Montreal and area. Near-market Americans represent a secondary target, while francophone Europeans are a market to pursue in the longer term.

To be successful, the *Townships Trail* needs to appeal to excursionists traveling by car for short haul vacations as well as baby-boomers with disposable income and an interest in history and culture. A positive market trend supporting the trail's cultural and heritage theme was the significant growth of cultural tourism on a global scale – growth that was forecast to continue in the foreseeable future (World Tourism Organization, 2000).

Dedicated promotional tools created for the trail included an Internet site,[3] an official tourist guide (Eastern Townships, 2012), a map, a CD, and a public relations campaign. Additionally, promotion of the *Townships Trail* is integrated into the broader Eastern Townships campaign, resulting in an annual marketing budget totalling $50,000.

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[3] http://www.easterntownships.org/touristRoute/2/townships-trail

Performance

Because the *Townships Trail* is a community development initiative, its performance has been measured broadly to capture economic, social, cultural, and tourism impacts. A total of 107 projects was undertaken during the first three years of the trail (2007-2010), representing an investment of $67 million. The approximately $6.6 million that was directly attributed to the trail was estimated to have stimulated an economic impact of $20 million (Eastern Townships, 2011). Projects included capital construction and/or building renovations (17); installation of street furniture and/or historic plaques (41); cultural entertainment activities such as exhibitions and/or heritage interpretations (37); as well as voluntary activities and/or human resource training (12). Notably, the projects were developed across 30 municipalities. Additionally, media coverage of the trail was valued at $1.2 million. Further, intangible returns that are not easily measured included community pride, heritage preservation, village spirit, and regional engagement. Anecdotally, museum managers claimed increases in visitation as a result of the trail.

During the summer of 2010, a survey of *Townships Trail* visitors (n=218) was undertaken as part of a larger assessment of the impact and return of the trail (Eastern Townships, 2011) and to assess visitor behaviour and satisfaction. Results were encouraging, including:

- 45% stated the trail was their primary reason for visiting.

- 20% modified their trip and 11% stayed longer because of the trail.

- The countryside (90%), villages (68%), and heritage (35%) were the most popular attractions.

- Each of the 35 stops was visited by a minimum of 8% of visitors.

- 89% intended to visit again, and 98% would recommend the trail to friends.

- Trail visitors came from farther away than region visitors, stayed longer (2.0 vs. 0.81 nights), were more likely to use roofed accommodation (38% vs. 7%), and spent $570 more per visit.

In summary, the *Townships Trail* is fulfilling its objective to increase visitation by enhancing its heritage, cultural, and natural attractions for economic and social gain in communities throughout the region. Visitor satisfaction is high, a range of stakeholders is engaged, and a sustainable organizational structure is in place. Perhaps the principal indicator of success is the claim that the experience of the *Townships Trail* reflects the region's unique lifestyle or *l'Art de vivre*. This underscores the importance of authenticity when branding the rural landscape as well as developing from a natural foundation that strengthens prevailing roots rather than covering them.

Analysis

A list of features identified as important to the success of themed tourist routes (Hardy, 2003) was used to undertake a point-by-point assessment of the performance of the *Townships Trail*. The results are presented as evaluative pyramids (Figure 3).

Figure 3. Townships Trail Evaluation Against Themed Tourist Route Success Factors
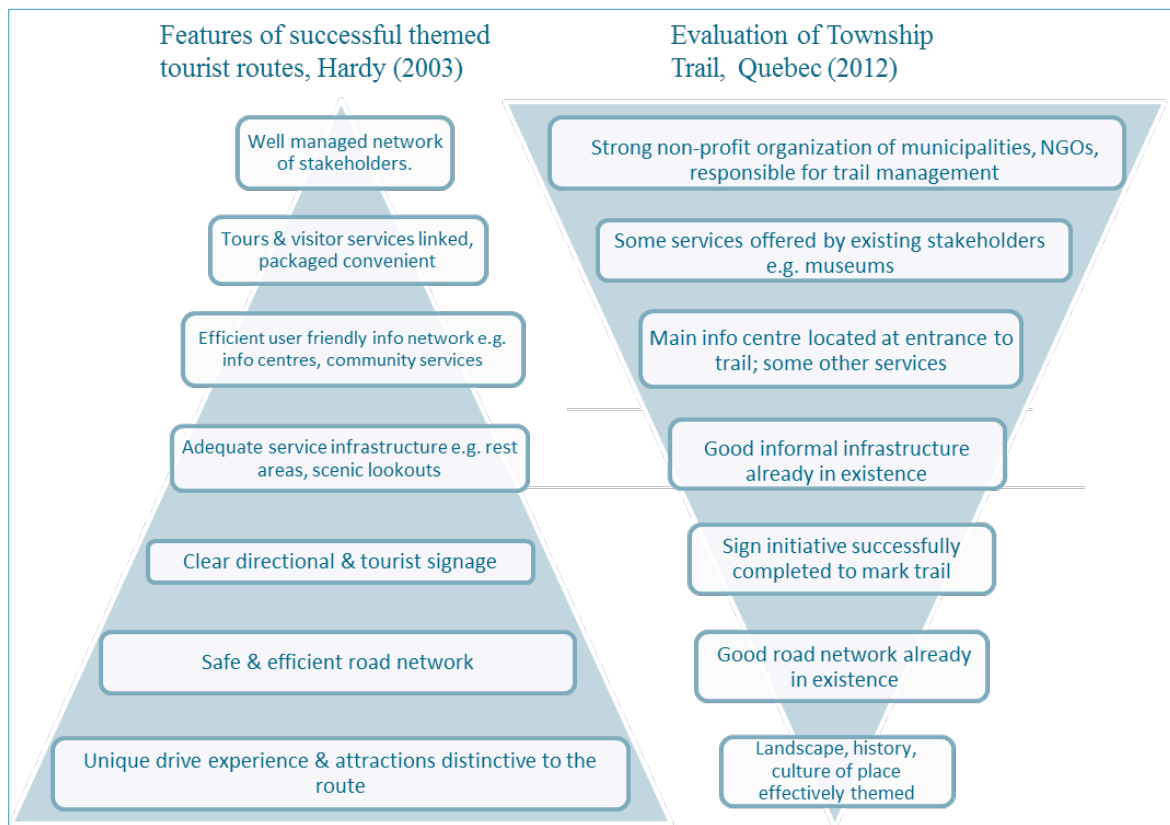
Source: Expanded by author from Hardy (2003)

The success of the *Townships Trail* is largely attributable to its focussed heritage theme and strong governance structure. An independent not-for-profit organization was established with a dedicated coordinator and a board of directors representing the regional municipalities. Municipalities as well as 38 "Friends of the Trail" provide operational funding to support the organization's sustainability.[4] In addition to a good supply of accommodations and restaurants, the region has a number of tourism information centres, including at the west end of the *Townships Trail* to serve drivers from Montreal, the closest city. An inventory of heritage attractions identified 20 historic

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[4] http://www.chemindescantons.qc.ca/amis

villages featuring churches, mills, schools, and other historically significant buildings, as well as 15 museums or interpretive centres, for a total of 35 interpretive stops. Initially, 45 themed signs were strategically placed along the route, which encompasses quality highways and regional roads. In sum, all six elements of the evaluation pyramid were achieved.

However, true success is best measured through actual performance. In this regard, surveys show that visitors to the *Townships Trail* stay longer and spend more than other regional visitors, and are highly satisfied (89% intend to return; 98% will recommend the trail to friends). The trail has stimulated $1.2 million in media coverage, and the development of 107 projects worth $67 million, ranging from new buildings to animated historic performances. Notably, all 35 stops have realized incremental visitation, supporting rural development's goal of demand diffusion.

Conclusion

Based on the evaluated criteria and its own performance measures, the *Townships Trail* is a success. Theming and packaging the product in addition to organizing community participation have stimulated significant economic returns. Moreover, less measurable but important enhancements to community wellbeing and quality of life have been realized through local job creation and a greater sense of community pride (Eastern Townships, 2011). Place branding the rural landscape has become an almost art-like process to capture the unique essence of place. The case of the *Townships Trail* illustrates the potential of branding in a rural context.

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Framework Components

Innovation Factors Contributing to the Success of the Rural Tourism Initiative

Investment	**Yes:** <u>Seed funding</u>: regional tourism association ($45,000), Regional Development Fund ($80,000), and Quebec Ministry of Culture and Communication ($30,000); <u>Operational funding</u>: $70,000 from eight regional municipalities and $500 per each "Friends of the Trail"
Coordination	**Yes:** Dedicated coordinator is in place to promote and gain financial support for the trail
Marketing	**Yes:** Dedicated Internet site, guide, map, CD, PR, and integrated marketing with the region's campaign; annual marketing budget of $50,000.
Governance	**Yes:** Dedicated not-for-profit organization established with a board of directors representing the eight regional municipalities, tourism, industry, culture, and the Anglophone community
Human Resources	**Yes:** A strong director with vision is in place
Communication	**Yes:** Community meetings during the feasibility and planning stages; "Friends of the Trail" enables broad participation by many stakeholders as well as the public and private sectors
Research	**Yes:** Two years of study including feasibility assessment, market research, and detailed development of a plan based on research and extensive consultation

What's Wrong With Rural Tourism? Factors That May Have Weakened the Initiative

Infrastructure	No major infrastructure investment; roads and services are in need of maintenance and repair
Policy	Must adhere to Ministry of Transport signage policies
Marketing	Potential for the trail to be lost in the highly competitive marketplace
Demand	Primarily domestic, near-market demand, with limited potential for long haul demand
Funding	Funding available, but competing priorities present a constant challenge
Product Development	No major product has been developed as a primary draw; reliant upon the appeal of small, existing attractions linked together
Collaboration	Municipal funds must be resecured every two years
Research	No impact assessment model for signed tourist routes in Quebec to measure ROI

SWOT Analysis for the Townships Trail

Strengths	Weaknesses
■ Funding available for the planning phase ■ Leadership and stakeholder engagement ■ Dedicated trail organization and coordinator ■ Geographic location ■ Existing products and services with four season appeal	■ No major attractions ■ Low museum attendance ■ No major infrastructure investment ■ Limited to short haul market appeal ■ No long-term partner funding
Opportunities	**Threats**
■ Market factors: proximity of major city population; baby boomers with disposable income; appeal of cultural tourism; short haul market	■ Highly competitive tourism marketplace ■ American visitation has fallen ■ Must work within policy boundaries

Where is the Initiative in the Product Life Cycle?

Growth stage: Beyond the introductory stage and realizing a positive return on investment, but not yet at the maturity stage since the travel market is far from saturated.

Best Practices and Lessons Learned

The *Townships Trail* illustrates how a new product initiative can succeed with a balanced approach that addresses multiple factors including services, signage, communication, and governance. A significant amount of time was invested during the planning phase to ensure the initiative started off right. Key stakeholders committed financially and conceptually, to the trail. The detailed development plan included economic and social performance measurements, not only to provide a return on investment to partners, but also to improve and continue to grow this initiative.

Appendix 5.10. Queensland, Australia and Ireland: Building Capacity to Foster Partnership and Entrepreneurship Through Learning Communities

Marion Joppe

Although the development of capacity can be aimed at a country's societal and institutional levels, community capacity building (CCB) at the individual level (i.e., providing individual stakeholders with the necessary knowledge and skills to take advantage of, and contribute to, opportunities) is the focus of this case. Dominated by small and micro businesses (MSMEs) that often have low entry thresholds in terms of capital and skills, tourism attracts a wide range of lifestyle operators (Ateljevic & Doorne, 2000) as well as a significant part-time, seasonal, and casual workforce. Hence, both employers and employees tend to be reluctant to upgrade their skills (Joppe, 2012) with the concomitant effect that there is resistance to becoming actively engaged in community development initiatives. Seen as an essential element of sustainable and people-centred development, CCB "places the creation or enhancement of a tourism knowledge base before decisions are made about tourism" (Moscardo, 2008, p. 1). Tourism is also assessed against other types of development options. This case examines two approaches to building capacity at the individual entrepreneur and worker levels drawn from Queensland (Australia) and Ireland.

The Tropical North Queensland Tourism Development Project (TNQTDP)

As part of the Australian federal government's commitment to Tropical North Queensland following Qantas's decision to cease international air passenger services to Cairns, the Department of Resources, Energy and Tourism (DRET) contracted Southern Cross University (SCU) to help the region's food and agritourism enterprises create a supportive business and regulatory environment (Joppe, 2011a).

Using a two-tiered method of engagement, SCU focussed on building capacity and fostering a collaborative or cluster approach to achieve common goals. At the enterprise level, a series of business development programs was offered to emerging and existing enterprises that were either not part, or did not perceive themselves as being part, of the tourism sector, including farmers, food producers, and rural landholders with potential to value add or diversify their agriculture-based businesses or land. Often seen as a lifestyle business, particularly by new entrants, tourism attracts many underskilled and inexperienced operators, which can negatively impact visitor experiences and undermine the long-term viability of the sector.

Two separate, but related, tourism business development programs focussing on skills, capacity building, and networking were designed to assist MSMEs with increasing productivity, yield, customer service, and viability. To lay the foundation and provide operators with a basic understanding of the tourism sector, consumer trends, and consumer expectations, SCU undertook field trips, which resulted in a fairly large number of expressions of interest. On-site assessments and interviews were then conducted, and participants were invited to attend a series of workshops for new enterprises or existing ones, depending on their circumstances (Table 1).

Table 1. Tourism Business Development Workshops

New Enterprise Workshops	Existing Enterprises Workshops
Workshop One: You and Your Idea - An Internal Review **Proponent Assessment Framework** ■ Starting out: Goals and Resources ■ Personal Goals ■ Analysis of Your Capabilities ■ Your Resources ■ Business Goals	*Workshop One: The Consumer Experience* ■ Product or Service ■ Competitor Profiling ■ Target Markets and Consumer Trends ■ Moments of Truth
Workshop Two: You and Your Environment - An External Review **Magnetism of Your Property, Product, and Region** ■ Natural and Cultural Environment ■ Commercial and Regulatory Environment ■ Accessibility and Transportation ■ Property and Product Assessment	*Workshop Two: Marketing* ■ Industry Best Practice ■ SMART Objectives ■ The Marketing Mix ■ Distribution, Packaging, Bundling ■ Account Management
Workshop Three: The Product **If You Build It, Bake It, Grow It ...?** ■ The Product and Its Possibilities ■ The Customer ■ Pricing and Packaging ■ Distribution ■ Risk Management ■ Making Sustainable Decisions	*Workshop Three: Business Planning and Mentoring* ■ Strategic Planning Essentials ■ Useful Performance Measures ■ Risk Management and Crisis Planning ■ Financial Analysis Tools
Workshop Four: Marketing and Communications **Will They Buy It ...?** ■ Marketing Communications ■ Online Presence ■ Customer Satisfaction and Delight	
Workshop Five: Show Me the Money **Does It Stack Up: Financial Assessment** ■ Summarizing Your Business ■ Assessing the Financial Feasibility ■ Making Your Decision	

These workshops were supported with electronic financial management tools, workbooks, and handouts to encourage cluster development. Entrepreneurs new to tourism also visited successful agritourism ventures. Of particular note was a mystery shopper exercise conducted by a member of the SCU team who was unknown to the participants. Workshop attendees were told they would receive their reports at the end of the first day, which not only galvanized their attention, but also changed the dynamic in terms of how participants interacted with each other and the SCU team. Even more innovative than the workshops were the ongoing support and mentoring provided during the crucial start-up years of new concepts, including individual support (e.g., facilitated meetings with local government as well as regular phone and e-mail contact); online support through a dedicated forum to expedite ongoing cluster development and networking; and educational development during biannual workshops, the content of which was identified by the participants and/or other stakeholders.

Fáilte Ireland's Tourism Learning Network (TLN)

There has long been a realization in tourism that MSMEs, which are very often owner-operated, have limited opportunities for professional development and, in many instances, face barriers to access due to their distance from where training programs are offered, lack of resources, and/or ties to the workplace (Hussey, Lynch, Holden, & Foley, 2010; Joppe, 2011b). Nonetheless, professionalism is key to both innovation (Jones & Tilley, 2003) and productivity gains (Joppe, 2011b). Indeed, Hjalager (2003) argued, "closer links between stakeholders and educational institutions is a step toward the professionalisation of the entire sector and to improving the knowledge base and innovative and economic capabilities" (pp. 33-34).

Recognizing the need to facilitate tourism providers' efforts to develop their skills and deliver sustainable business results both individually and as a group, Fáilte Ireland launched a number of initiatives to professionalize MSME entrepreneurs: County-Based Tourism Learning Networks (Foley, Frampton, Kelliher, Lally, & Whelan, 2007), a three-year Bachelor of Science degree in small enterprise management (Hussey et al., 2010), and the *Optimus* program (Joppe 2011a).

Critical to each is an action-learning ethos involving MSME operators and support agencies that incorporates local learning sets, a web community, and learning interventions. By encouraging individual operators to take control of the learning activity and apply it directly to their firms, MSMEs should experience enhanced organizational performance (Foley et al., 2007). As Peters (1996) noted, "People learn best about work, at work and through work, within a structure which encourages learning" (p. 6). Furthermore, Johnson (2002) found that each MSME has specific training and learning requirements due to the vastly divergent business sizes, sectors in which they operate, structure, and attributes of the owners/managers.

County-Based Tourism Learning Networks (CBTLN)

Fáilte Ireland's *Human Resource Development Strategy for Irish Tourism 2005-2010* called for, " ... 'coordinated collaboration' between all the stakeholder groups in Irish tourism to achieve the optimum level of HR support for operators, including representative bodies, education and training providers, and public sector bodies, along with the tourism enterprises" (as cited in Foley et al., 2007, p. 9). In 2006, over 140 small tourism businesses became members of this network, which was led by the Waterford Institute of Technology in the southern part of Ireland. Within such a learning network, capacity building is achieved through working with the network partners and the participant enterprises to identify key organizational capabilities that are then assessed in the context of the target market and ultimately embedded through network activity. The facilitating agency – here the Waterford Institute of Technology – plays a crucial role since small firms rarely have the capacity to determine market needs, and the facilitator can draw on the research and industry expertise of the network to develop an informed market position for each enterprise.
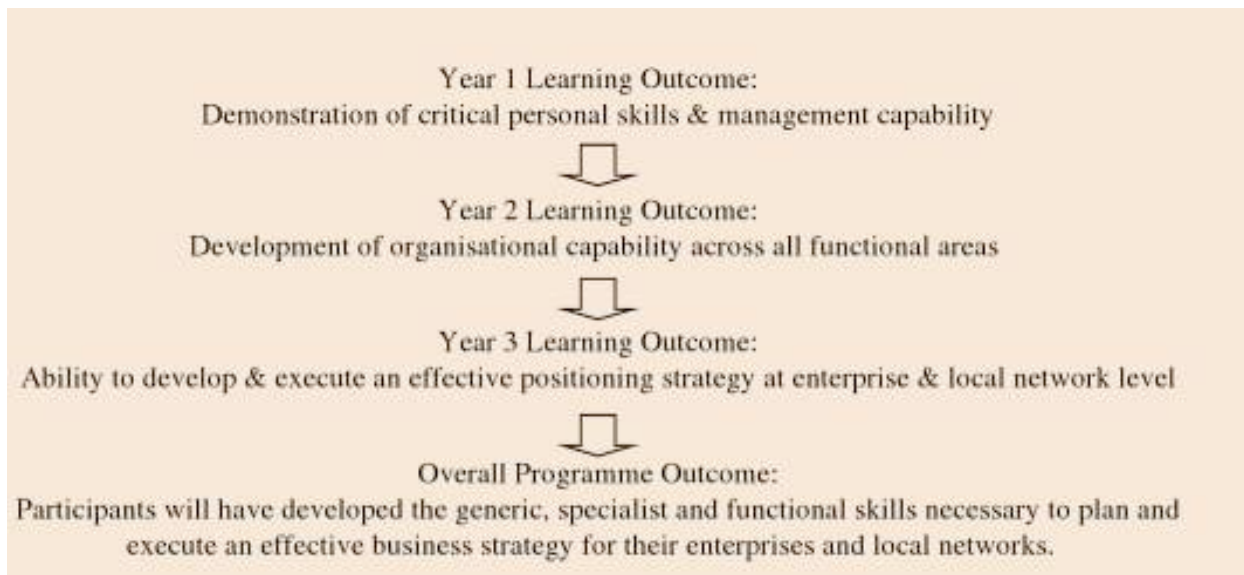
Initially, each participant completed a learning needs analysis (LNA), which provided tangible statements of existing levels of capacity in a number of functional areas and facilitated the process of setting action-oriented objectives to enhance key capabilities. The learning network employed flexible and accessible learning interventions based on the identified needs of individual enterprises. The learning set, web community, residential seminars, and facilitation assisted in realizing the objectives and implementing the action plans each participant had established based on his/her respective LNA. The learning set comprised up to 12 entrepreneurs based on geography or product theme, whereas the web community provided an online forum for discussing topics of interest and a record of participant requests for information and responses to these requests, as well as served as host for the individual action plans. Two residential networking events, at which all tourism businesses in a region congregated for two days of interactive workshops, covered a range of business development issues across different functional areas identified by participants, including marketing, managing the regulatory environment, IT as a business tool, tourism enterprise development, and human resource management.

It is vital that the network be anchored by a skilled facilitator who has the ability and resources to take a strategic perspective on the issues facing small firms as well as ensure that the composition of the learning network and the learning methodologies are optimized. Government agencies are critical partners in this context, and a close working relationship with national development bodies is essential to enhance network success (Foley et al., 2007, p. 6).

Bachelor of Science in Small Enterprise Management

A lack of formal education among MSME owners and operators and their inability to take advantage of executive development that is often offered to those in larger enterprises led Fáilte Ireland to call for the targeted education of MSME owners/managers through a degree-level program. The Waterford Institute of Technology's BSc in Small Enterprise Management was developed following extensive discussions with Fáilte Ireland (to ascertain guiding themes) and practitioners (to identify issues and challenges). Problem-based learning was deemed most conducive to satisfying the needs of practitioner-students in terms of relevance, practice, and theory. A blended learning approach, accredited induction, and recognition of prior learning were determined to be other critical elements. The multidisciplinary nature of real life problems faced by the owners/managers presented its own issues to ensure the progressive development of skills and knowledge over the course of the three years. Ultimately, program outcomes were determined as presented in Figure 1.

Figure 1. Progression in Program Outcomes

Year 1 Learning Outcome:
Demonstration of critical personal skills & management capability

Year 2 Learning Outcome:
Development of organisational capability across all functional areas

Year 3 Learning Outcome:
Ability to develop & execute an effective positioning strategy at enterprise & local network level

Overall Programme Outcome:
Participants will have developed the generic, specialist and functional skills necessary to plan and execute an effective business strategy for their enterprises and local networks.

Source: Lynch, Holden, Foley, Harrington, & Hussey, 2013

The Optimus Program

Working with tourism MSME owners/managers, Fáilte Ireland also developed a program to support efforts to improve productivity, strengthen competitiveness, increase customer loyalty and repeat business, lower staff turnover, reduce costs, and increase profitability. *Optimus* focusses on achieving excellence in all areas of a business using

a process of continuous improvement. Participation follows a structured approach wherein a mentor is appointed to support the management team, which receives training, mentoring, consultancy support, and program material, and an independent auditor assesses business achievements. *Optimus* comprises three levels, each of which is assessed, accredited, and branded so businesses can progress and build their capacities (Joppe 2011b) (Table 2).

Table 2. Optimus Program Levels

Level One: Service Excellence (Focus on the Customer)

Service excellence forms the foundation of the *Optimus* approach and is aligned with the customer service elements of the European Foundation for Quality Management. *Optimus* offers management and staff training in key concepts such as the Service Journey and Moments of Truth. It also supports management teams in setting, implementing, monitoring, and measuring service standards.

Level Two: Best Practice (Focus on the Operation)

This is an operational improvement program level that enables organizations to compare their operational processes against the best in industry, identify what makes the leading companies successful, and apply best practices to their respective businesses. It emphasizes key management aspects of the business under the headings of management, operations, and standards. This level also incorporates an annual independent assessment after which businesses receive a management report that helps them better understand what is working well and on what they should be focussing their improvement efforts.

Level Three: Business Excellence (Focus on the Business)

Business excellence is an evolving concept that changes and develops in response to the competitive environment and requires that businesses not only have a strong commitment to continual improvement and superior performance, but also a proactive attitude to the changing social, economic, and market conditions in which they operate. Companies that achieve sustainable excellence display a strong results orientation, a passionate customer focus, a commitment to management by processes, and sound performance measures as well as an abiding enthusiasm for continual learning and innovation based on rigorous benchmarking.

Conclusion

Although low capital and skills entry thresholds and the appeal of a certain lifestyle entice many entrepreneurs to launch or acquire MSMEs in one of the tourism industries, these factors often preclude them from engaging and contributing fully to the sector's growth. Consequently, many approaches to capacity building have been tested with significant investments, particularly by the public sector, in conferences, workshops, documentation and tools, consulting services, and research. Too often, however, these are short-term initiatives with minimal emphasis on mentoring operators over longer periods. The success of the Australian Tropical North Queensland Tourism Development Project and the Fáilte Ireland initiatives lies in the willingness of government to

identify partners with the ability to guide businesses in their journey from the inception of a concept to its maturity while enhancing the skills of operators so they may deliver high quality products, services, and experiences.

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Appendix 5.11. Osoyoos First Nations: Partnerships for Economic Development

Marion Joppe

Partnerships, defined as "the voluntary pooling of resources (labor, money, information, etc.) between two or more parties to accomplish collaborative goals" (Gray, 1985 as cited in Selin & Chavez, 1995, p. 845), have long been emphasized as a management strategy to leverage scarce resources and expertise. Selin and Chavez's (1995) evolutionary partnership model systematically outlines the steps in this process. Crucial to partnership success is a strong leader who acts as a catalyst to bring various interests together. Each partner must perceive that the benefits of collaboration outweigh the costs of participation. Although partnerships seldom lead to radical innovation since establishing common goals requires consensus and compromise, they do encourage creative improvements to existing market structures through liminal innovation (Brooker & Joppe, 2014).

Strong leaders tend to be engaged entrepreneurs who intermittently introduce new products and services, lifting, shifting, and adapting ideas that have been observed or experienced in different contexts. They focus not only on their own situations, but also those of the broader sector, seeking to enhance its ability to survive downturns and thrive during positive environmental circumstances. These entrepreneurs understand the potential significance of change based on their periodic, but often weak, connections with the market and other organizations and businesses. Hence, they are usually the first to introduce new ideas while ensuring they respect existing boundaries. Although they want to be different, they are not interested in radical revisions. Indeed, consistent with Rogers' (1995) model of innovation diffusion, they do not want to be the only entity taking an innovative approach. Instead, they prefer that their peers also adopt the novelty.

Osoyoos First Nations, British Columbia

The Osoyoos Indian Band (OIB) is a First Nations government located in the town of Osoyoos in the Okanagan Valley in the province of British Columbia, approximately four kilometres north of the international border (Figure 1). Formed in 1877, it is one of six bands that constitute the Okanagan Nation Alliance. The OIB controls about 32,000 acres of land that is dedicated to agriculture and ecotourism as well as commercial, industrial, and residential uses in the vicinity of Osoyoos (Figure 2). Of the 460 members, about 370 live on reserve (Centre for First Nations Governance, 2013). The southern end of the Osoyoos Reservation is referred to as *Nk'Mip* (pronounced *in-Ka-meep*).

Figure 1. Okanagan Valley   **Figure 2. Osoyoos Indian Band Lands**
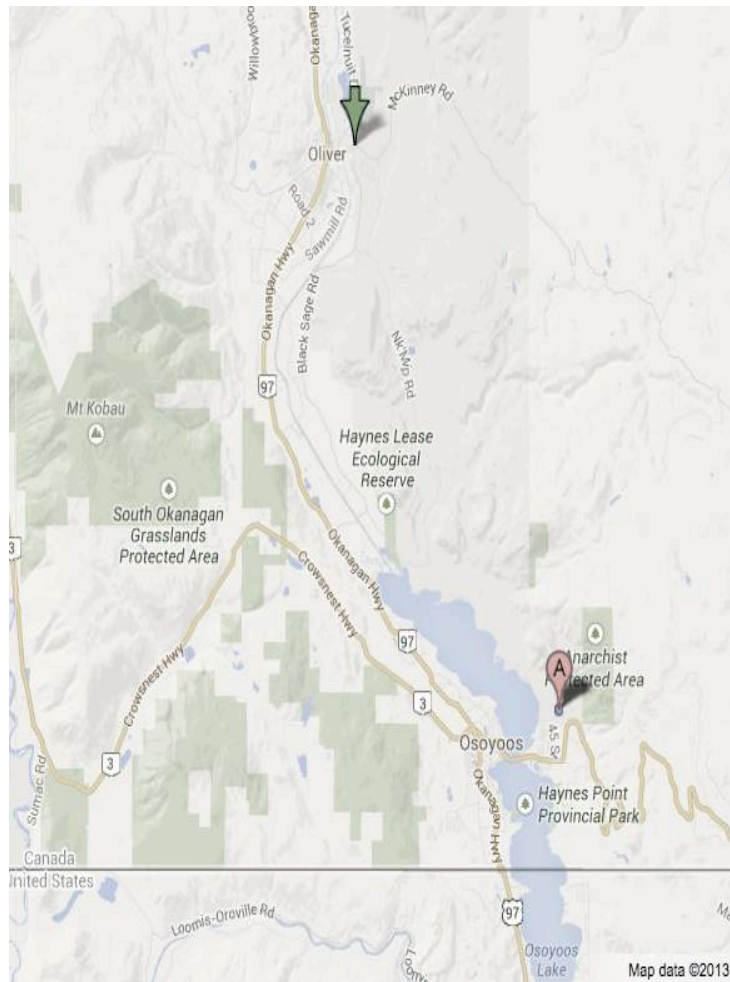
The region is known for its dry, sunny climate; arid landscapes; lakeshore communities; and particular lifestyle. The economy is retirement and commercial-recreation based, with outdoor activities such as boating and watersports, snow skiing, and hiking. Agriculture has traditionally focussed on fruit orchards, with a recent shift to vineyards and wine. The Osoyoos Indian Reserve includes relatively large non-native populations because of the band-governed residential and commercial development on their lands, including the lease of substantial swaths of land to commercial vineyards that produce 40% of the wine grapes used in the Okanagan Valley.

Osoyoos Indian Band Development Corporation

The OIB's goal is to transition from a position of dependency to a sustainable economy similar to what the Aboriginal people enjoyed before contact. Chief Clarence Louie, a strong supporter of

native and economic independence and the recipient of many entrepreneurial, leadership, and development accolades, has led the OIB since 1985. The Osoyoos Indian Band Development Corporation (OIBDC) was established in 1988 under the presidency of Chief Clarence Louie with the vision to preserve First Nations' culture through economic development for present and future generations and the following mission statement: "Through being entrepreneurial, prudent investing, education and mentorship of the business community, the Osoyoos plan to be one of the major economic generators in South Okanagan by increasing its self-generated revenue by 50% to $27-30 million/year" (Centre for First Nations Governance, 2013).

The OIBDC employs approximately 700 people and contributes about $40 million annually to the local economy. This has been accomplished through leases and joint ventures with non-native businesses that have created social and employment opportunities for both natives and non-natives in the South Okanagan. Established leases include Vincor International, Spirit Ridge Vineyard Resort and Spa, Sonora Dunes Golf Course, and Cherry Grove Modular Home Park as well as agricultural leases in excess of 1,000 acres in partnership with Vincor International (Winery), Mission Hill Winery, and Burrowing Owl Vineyards. OIB Holdings Corporation has handled all land leases since 1962. Key examples of OIBDC businesses include (OIBDC, 2013):

- The Nk'Mip Resort, which has a number of businesses:
  - Spirit Ridge Vineyard Resort and Spa which includes 226 luxurious suites and villas
  - Mica Restaurant at Spirit Ridge
  - Solstice Spa at Spirit Ridge
  - Nk'Mip Conference Centre which offers 6,000 square feet of space
  - Sonora Dunes Golf Course
  - Nk'Mip Cellars which includes an outdoor restaurant, The Patio
- Nk'Mip RV Park (1966)
- Mt. Baldy Ski Corporation (1968)
- NK'Mip Vineyards (1968)
- Nk'Mip Construction which renovates and constructs homes and commercial buildings on and off the reserve (1986)
- Nk'Mip Gas and Convenience Store (1997)
- Nk'Mip Canyon Desert Golf Course (2000)

- Nk'Mip Desert Cultural Centre (2001)

- Oliver Readi-Mix LP which is a full-service concrete and aggregate company that started in 2000 and opened a new modern facility and batch plant on band lands in 2002

- Senkulmen Business Park which is a 112-acre environmentally sustainable business and light industrial park (2012)

Among the projects planned by the OIBDC are (OIBDC, 2013):

- Phase II of the Spirit Ridge Vineyard Resort.

- The five-phase development of Canyon Desert Resort, a fully integrated destination resort in the Oliver area, with 450 residences, villas, and suites to be located around the existing Nk'Mip Canyon Desert Golf Course. The second phase of the project will include the Canyon Desert Inn, a full-service suites hotel with conference facilities, pool, spa, restaurant, and wine bar.

- Further expansion of the Senkulmen Business Park.

The OIBDC has also negotiated the building of the new 378-cell Okanagan Correctional Centre on its reserve lands. The $200-million project is expected to generate some 500 direct and 500 indirect jobs during construction. The high-security prison, proposed to open in 2016, will employ 240 staff and create many more spin-off jobs. While the band will not operate the facility, it will reap significant revenue from the initial 60-year lease and grants in lieu of taxes.

Although the developments were determined by market wants of the primarily Caucasian Canadian and American visitors in the case of the resorts and golf courses, or serendipity in the case of the correctional centre, the funds generated are reinvested in the community in a number of ways:

- In employment by keeping seasonal businesses open longer or even year round although this may not be supported by the financial viability of the business

- Sharing bonuses with all employees

- Providing access to training to all band members and sending them to the best training providers available

The OIBDC's board of directors comprises 12 members, 6 of which represent the major partners who provide their expertise to guide future expansion of the various endeavours.

Development Tools

The land owned by the OIB is among the most desirable urban industrial commercial land in the South Okanagan. Since Aboriginal title is a communal right, the OIBDC is able to plan holistically and take advantage of the fact that much of the non-reserve land in the southern Okanagan Valley is zoned as agricultural land reserve (ALR),[1] a provincial zone in which agriculture is recognized as the priority use and nonagricultural uses are strictly controlled. Since Aboriginal reserve lands are not subject to municipal bylaws or provincial legislation, the OIBDC's commercial developments do not face the restrictions surrounding landowners encounter. Further, the OIBDC is able to purchase ALR lands and convert them into commercially zoned lands (e.g., Senkulmen Business Park).

In 2001, the chief and council of the OIB enacted tax jurisdiction over their reserve lands, which represented an important step toward self-reliance. The *First Nations Fiscal and Statistical Management Act* (renamed the *First Nations Fiscal Management Act* in 2013) was passed in 2006 permitting First Nations to be the taxing authority of reserves. The OIB taxation department is responsible for collecting property taxes from lands leased by non-band members. The OIB sets aside 10% of taxes each year for future capital infrastructure needs, which has allowed the OIBDC to take partial ownership positions in a number of projects (e.g., Spirit Ridge Vineyard Resort & Spa). Hence, it is able to leverage private investments.

The OIBDC also levies a 2% resort tax (3% at Spirit Ridge Vineyard Resort & Spa) that generates over $100,000 to support marketing initiatives and partnerships since the OIBDC works closely with the Thomson Okanagan Tourism Association (TOTA). The Nk'Mip Resort Association was represented on the Steering Committee for the 10-year regional strategy that was released in 2013 and, although not currently on the TOTA board, it has had representation on this board in the past.

Importance of An Engaged Entrepreneur

The Nk'Mip RV Park, Mt. Baldy Ski Corporation, and Nk'Mip Vineyards have been owned and operated by the OIB since the mid- to late-1960s, although none had been particularly successful. Nk'Mip Vineyards was the first to recognize the need for outside capital and expertise and partnered with T.G. Bright & Co. (now Vincor International) in 1979. However, it was not until the election of Chief Clarence Louie that a clear vision for OIB lands was articulated. Vehemently focussed on creating self-reliance for the OIB through encouraging strong, diversified economic development while preserving traditions and building on lessons of the past, Chief Clarence Louie embodies the leadership qualities of courage, vision, balance, and drive. All initiatives since his election, whether business-, jobs-, or culturally oriented, have been driven by him.

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[1] *See Appendix 5.3 for more details concerning the ALR.*

The signing of the North American Free Trade Act in 1989 threatened the bulk wine industry and, in an attempt to remain competitive by improving quality, governments implemented pullout schemes. Taking advantage of the available incentives, the OIB, in partnership with T.G. Bright, gradually began to produce award-winning wines. Recognized as one of the top wineries in B.C. and Canada's first Aboriginal-owned and operated winery, Nk'Mip Cellars (Figure 3) is the backbone of the $25 million Nk'Mip Resort development, attracting large numbers of day visitors to the southern tip of the Okanagan Valley.

Figure 3. Entrance to Nk'Mip Cellars

Ostensibly, the Nk'Mip Resort is the culmination of the OIB's efforts to achieve its "goals to build a sustainable destination as a platform for sharing their history and culture with visitors, to create more respect for the unique Canadian desert environment, and to create additional employment opportunities for band members" (Chief Clarence Louie, personal communication, February 20, 2013). To this end, the Nk'Mip Desert Cultural Centre (Figure 4) was built in 2001 as an interpretive centre to showcase the stories of Canada's only desert, its legends, and its people.

Figure 4. Nk'Mip Desert Cultural Centre

Analysis

The OIBDC has the vision, plan, and tools to develop its reserve lands in a manner that optimizes the creation of jobs and sources of revenue to sustain the social and cultural aims of the community as a whole. Both on- and off-reserve members of the OIB and on- and off-reserve non-members have benefited from the economic development that has taken place. However, although the enthusiasm and drive of its chief were instrumental and indispensible, OIB gains were derived largely from what could be perceived as an unfair advantage insofar as provincial planning restrictions did not apply to its reserve lands.

While the OIB is doing much to protect and preserve the land and its resources, the economic imperative overshadows all other considerations. This is particularly evident in the leasing agreements with companies such as Bellstar Hotels & Resorts which prides itself on creating properties that are "unique, with its own name, flavour and personality" (Bellstar Hotels & Resorts, n.d.), but has chosen an architecture more reminiscent of Arizona than traditional Okanagan native heritage (Figures 5 and 6).

Figure 5. Spirit Ridge Vineyard Resort & Spa Entrance   *Figure 6. Hotel Suites*

Similarly, neither the spa nor the hotel restaurant, each of which is leased to different entrepreneurs, reflects the fact that they are located on Aboriginal lands. Moreover, while the cultural centre gift store sells a number of creams and other beauty items made locally by natives using ingredients found in the Okanagan Valley, only products that can be found in any spa setting are used in the Solterra Desert Spa. Further, the menus featured in the Restaurant at Spirit Ridge suggest the dishes are made with fresh, regional ingredients, but no mention is made of an Aboriginal influence. Any elements of native art, whether a sculpture placed on top of a building or paintings exhibited in a hallway of the hotel, create the impression of having been an afterthought

rather than an integral component of the original plans. Nonetheless, some Aboriginal symbols have been adopted as part of the brand identity by various businesses, including the warrior at the Nk'Mip Desert Cultural Centre (Figure 7), the turtle at Nk'Mip Cellars (Figure 8), and the tipi and howling wolf at Nk'Mip RV Park (Figure 9).
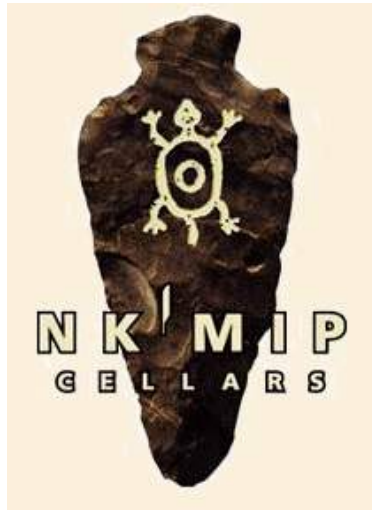

Figure 7. The Warrior   *Figure 8. The Turtle*   *Figure 9. The Tipi and Howling Wolf*

In contrast, the Hôtel-Musée Premières Nations in Québec City, Québec, built by the Huron-Wendat tribe, not only evokes its traditional architecture (Figure 10), but blends native art and artifacts with the tastefully modern décor of the hotel (Figure 11). Moreover, while the menu features many ingredients not sourced locally, it draws on foods of other Aboriginal and Inuit people (Figure 12).

Figure 10. Hôtel-Musée Premières Nations

Figure 11. Lobby (left) and a Bedroom (right) at the Hôtel-Musée Premières Nations

Conclusion

There can be no question that the OIB has created significant economic opportunities and jobs for both its members and non-natives by forming strong partnerships with leading corporations in the areas of winemaking, hotel and restaurant development and management, and golf, ski, and residential development. In less than fifteen years, what had been a neglected and poor region of British Columbia with limited job opportunities has been transformed into a major tourist destination. However, little thought has been given to ensuring these developments are truly distinct and reflect the local heritage, although the architecture in many cases attempts to blend with the surrounding landscape. This is slowly being addressed by incorporating Aboriginal symbols into logos and wordmarks, adding artistic elements to various sites (e.g., the warrior), and creating more experiences that incorporate the ancient culture and history.

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Figure 12. Dinner Menu at the Hôtel-Musée Premières Nations

Table des Nations

* Premier service - Les entrées

Végétarien assidu — Salade de betteraves marinées et tiges d'artichauts, vinaigrette au miel de Corse
Marinated beet and artichoke stem salad, Corse honey vinaigrette

Saint-Férréol-les-Neiges — Pâté d'oie, émulsion aux racines de céleri sauvage, pain de campagne
Goose pâté, wild celery root emulsion and country bread

Grand cervidé — Saucisson de wapiti, tartinade de bleuets, rituel de banique chaude grillée
Wapiti sausage, blueberry tapenade, grilled bannock bread

Des eaux côtières — Buccins et pétoncle, coulis de crustacés à l'ail noir confit
Whelks and scallops, crustacean coulis with black preserved garlic

Saison froide — Gravlax de saumon, beurre de pommes, méli-mélo de pommes à huile de noisette
Salmon gravlax, apple butter, apple with hazelnut oil

** 2e service - Touche chaude

Sagamité — Soupe des trois soeurs
Three sisters' soup

Racine de vie — Potage réconfortant du soir
Our soothing evening soup

*** 3e service - Plats de résistance

L'ovo-lacto - végétarien — Tarte fine aux tomates et oignons confits, houmous aux arômes de thé du Labrador
Tomato and preserved onion fine pie, Labrador tea humus

Ferme des bois — Médaillon de sanglier, sauce demi-glace des sous bois aux girolles
Boar medallion, demi-glace sauce with girolles

Des eaux froides du Nord — Omble chevalier rôti avec des noisettes et des petits fruits séchés
Roasted Arctic char with hazelnuts and dried berries

Nordique — Cerf rouge, mousse fondante de foie gras et son jus dense de gibier
Red deer, foie gras mousse and thick game meat cooking juice

Aborigène — Faisan rôti parfumé d'armoise, jus de cuisson aux noix du Brésil
Mugwort roasted pheasant, cooking juice with Brazil nuts

**** Carte des desserts / *Dessert menu*

Café, thé et tisanes inuits / *Coffee and Inuit herbal teas*

50 $ par personne / *$ 50 per person*

Framework Components

Innovation Factors for Rural Tourism Contributing to the Success of the Rural Tourism Initiative

Investment	**Yes:** The OIBDC regularly sets aside 10% of revenues for future investments and has a strong record of leveraging partnerships for its major capital-intensive developments.
Coordination	**Yes:** Chief Clarence Louie and his band council make major policy decisions and determine overall development directions as well as how profits will be reinvested in the community. The chief is also the president of the OIBDC and, thus, able to ensure coordination between policy and implementation.
Marketing	**Yes:** Through the resort taxes generated, extensive marketing efforts are undertaken in partnership with key regional, provincial, and national bodies. Nk'Mip Cellars is also part of the Canadian Signature Experience Collection's *Great Estate Winery Tour Experience*.
Governance	**Yes:** See coordination above.
Policy	**Yes:** Provincial legislation does not apply to reserve lands or to lands bought by on-reserve Aboriginal people.
Human Resources	**Yes:** There is a strong focus on the training of youth and employees, but hiring the best for the job, whether a band member or not, is the policy.
Demand	**Yes:** Excellent penetration of the UK, German, and Dutch markets (39%, 57% and 68% of B.C.'s share in these markets, respectively) has been achieved.
Product Development	**Yes:** By providing commercial opportunities not available on the surrounding land, there is constant demand for additional phases to the major resort and attraction developments.

What's Wrong With Rural Tourism? Factors That May Have Weakened the Initiative

Infrastructure	Limited signage and no sense of the whole
Marketing	Since each of the businesses is managed by a different entity, there is no unified branded look and feel to the promotional materials and websites
Demand	Primarily domestic, with only 7% from the U.S.A.
Funding	Reliant on partnership funding for developments and leasing arrangements, so there is little control over messaging
Research	Reliant on the Thomson Okanagan Tourism Association

SWOT Analysis for the OIBDC

Strengths	Weaknesses
■ Strong and consistent leadership ■ Partner and band member engagement ■ Access to partner capital ■ Well-recognized core attractions ■ Strong and unique outdoors product ■ Not subject to provincial and municipal regulations	■ Limited control over messaging and experience communication ■ Limited cultural attractions ■ Dispersed attractions (i.e., no clear sense of being an Aboriginal destination) ■ Poor signage ■ Not "on the way" to anything
Opportunities	**Threats**
■ Unusually high appeal with overseas visitors keenly interested in Aboriginal culture ■ Better penetration into the Vancouver and Seattle markets ■ Potential for shoulder season development due to the benign climate and the employment philosophy of the OIB	■ Limited American visitation; no major source markets in the near border region ■ Limited attention paid to the environmental sustainability of developments ■ Global warming could further threaten the desert ecosystem

Where is the Initiative in the Product Life Cycle?

Growth stage: Beyond the introductory stage and realizing a positive return on investment, but not yet at the maturity stage, as the travel market is far from saturated and there are opportunities for shoulder season expansion.

Best Practices and Lessons Learned

The strong visionary leadership by Chief Clarence Louie, his ability to build consensus for the vision with the OIBDC for the goals to be achieved, and the willingness to work with outside partners while keeping control over the vision for development are the secrets to the success of this case.