



**2025-2028**

# **Strategic Plan**

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Approved by the Board of Directors on November 12, 2024.

# ACKNOWLEDGEMENTS



# Land Acknowledgement

We would like to acknowledge that the land we identify as Southeastern Ontario (Region 9) is situated on the traditional territory of the Haudenosaunee, Anishinaabe, and Huron-Wendat Peoples.

Region 9 Regional Tourism Organization (hereinafter RTO 9) honours and respects the land, the water, and the treaties that cover the region. We are eternally grateful to the Indigenous peoples who have inhabited the place we call home since time immemorial, and we have the privilege to live with now. All those who reside, work, and play on these lands are treaty people, and we are committed to honouring the treaties in a mutually beneficial and equitable manner.

With one in five Indigenous people in Canada living in Ontario and Ontario having one of the largest Indigenous tourism sectors, we believe that working together through the joint development of tourism will help all Ontarians prosper.

As an ally to Indigenous people and a partner in this effort, we are committed to improving the socio-economic conditions of Indigenous people through tourism by creating space for Indigenous people to share their stories on their terms.



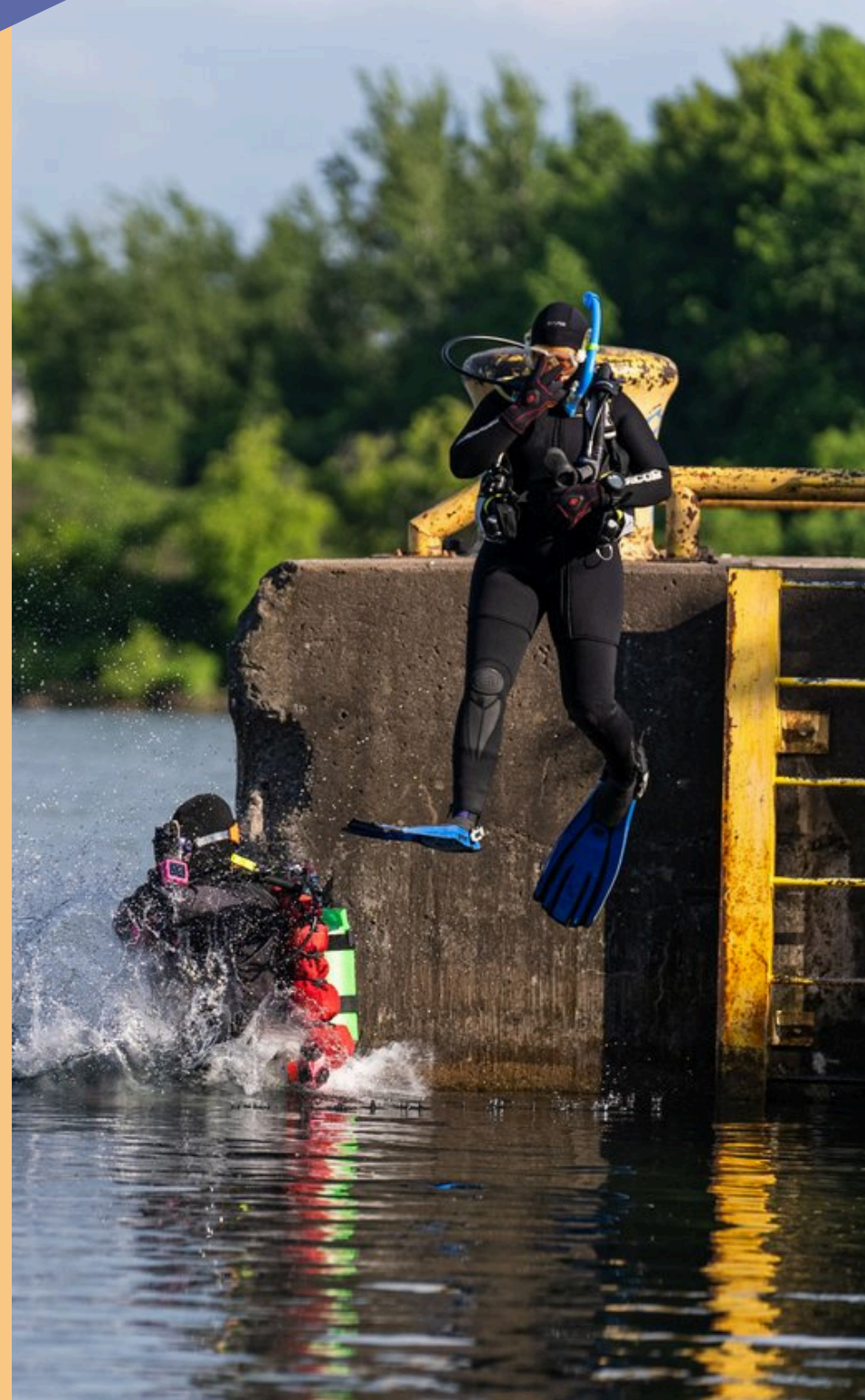


# Contributors



The research and development of this strategic plan was a collaborative process that could not have been made possible without the dedicated support of the RTO 9 Board of Directors, strategic partners from across the region, our Regional Development Advisors from the Ontario Ministry of Tourism, Culture and Gaming (MTCG) and amazing RTO 9 team.

Thank you to everyone who contributed time, energy, and effort to this important process, and who contributed their insight, input, and feedback. Thank you also to the team at Bannikin, who facilitated the important conversations and gathered the information necessary for this plan to be evidence-based and actionable.



# Executive Summary



Regional Tourism Organizations (RTOs) are independent not-for-profit organizations established to provide leadership and support to specific regions across the province. RTO 9 is focussed exclusively on Southeastern Ontario, which is made up of 11 destinations. The organization markets this region through its “South Eastern Ontario” brand.

This strategic plan is the outcome of an information gathering and decision-making process that took seriously the insight and input provided by the organization’s internal and external partners, including its Board of Directors, staff, Regional Development Advisors, and various individuals, businesses, and organizations.

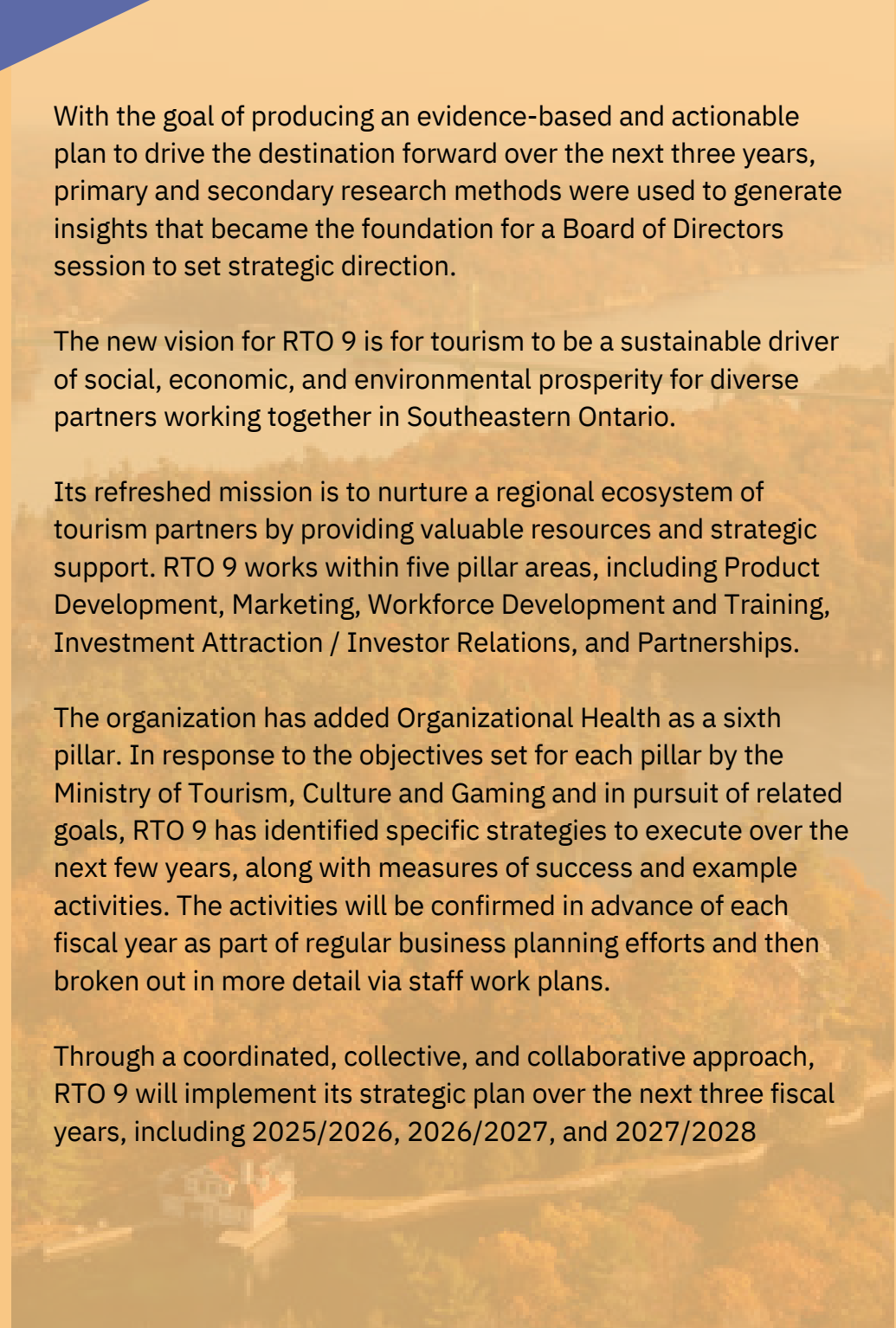
With the goal of producing an evidence-based and actionable plan to drive the destination forward over the next three years, primary and secondary research methods were used to generate insights that became the foundation for a Board of Directors session to set strategic direction.

The new vision for RTO 9 is for tourism to be a sustainable driver of social, economic, and environmental prosperity for diverse partners working together in Southeastern Ontario.

Its refreshed mission is to nurture a regional ecosystem of tourism partners by providing valuable resources and strategic support. RTO 9 works within five pillar areas, including Product Development, Marketing, Workforce Development and Training, Investment Attraction / Investor Relations, and Partnerships.

The organization has added Organizational Health as a sixth pillar. In response to the objectives set for each pillar by the Ministry of Tourism, Culture and Gaming and in pursuit of related goals, RTO 9 has identified specific strategies to execute over the next few years, along with measures of success and example activities. The activities will be confirmed in advance of each fiscal year as part of regular business planning efforts and then broken out in more detail via staff work plans.

Through a coordinated, collective, and collaborative approach, RTO 9 will implement its strategic plan over the next three fiscal years, including 2025/2026, 2026/2027, and 2027/2028



**WHAT?**





# Overview



In March 2024, RTO 9 embarked on a new and important project to co-develop with its Board of Directors and partners a strategic plan that will guide the work of the organization over the next three years.

At the onset of the project the following goal and objectives were established:

## Goal:

**By the end of October 2024, RTO 9 has an evidence-based and actionable strategic plan to guide the good work of the organization over the next three years.**

## Objectives:

- 1 To refresh and refine the organization's foundational statements.**
- 2 To meaningfully engage partners of RTO 9.**
- 3 To determine the internal and external factors affecting the organization.**
- 4 To establish a clear and strategic direction to inform the work of RTO 9.**





# Methodology



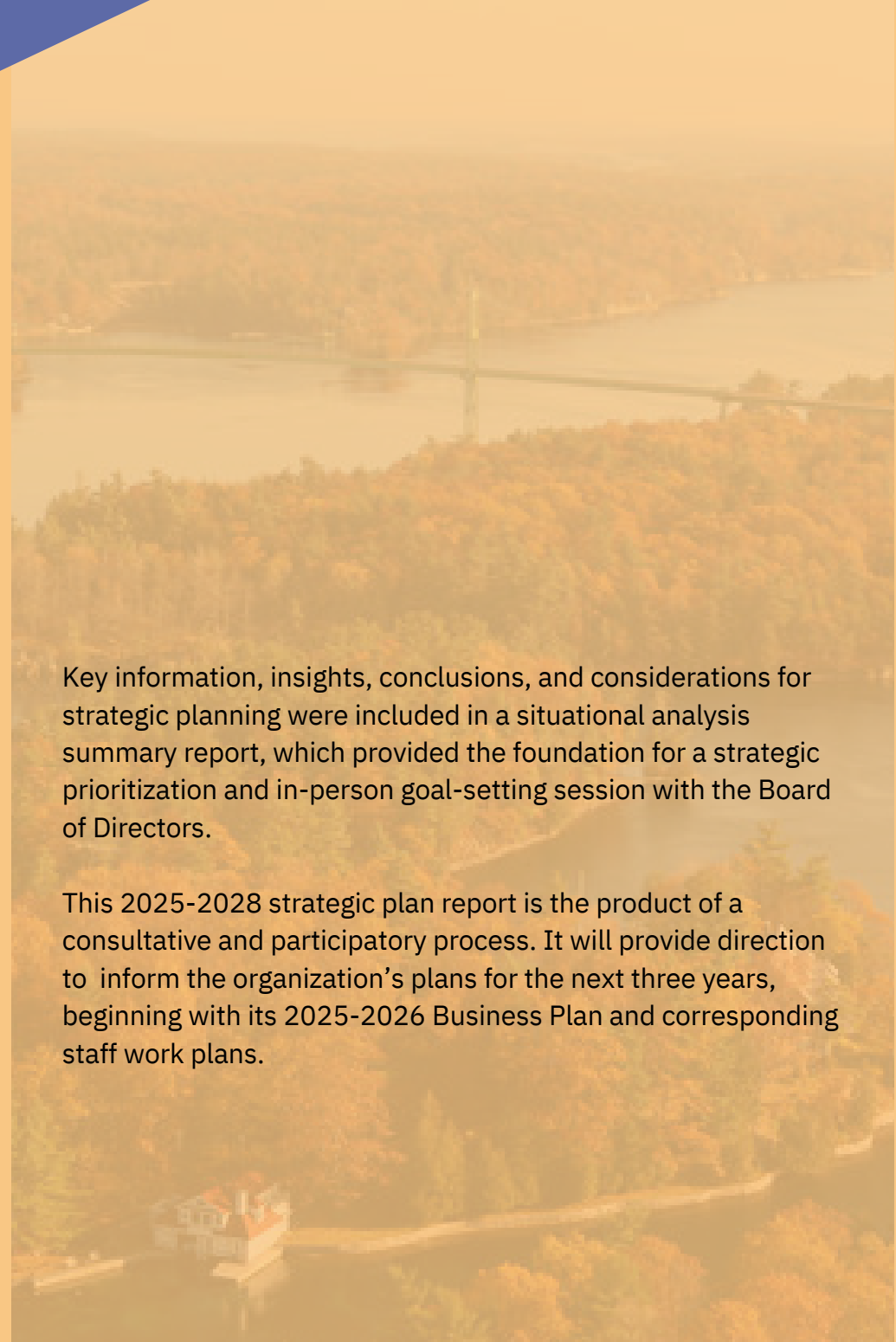
Over three months, both primary and secondary research methods informed strategic direction decisions.

Primary research included Board of Directors surveys (two questionnaires and an interview), an industry and resident survey, key informant interviews, and a questionnaire for strategic partners.

Secondary research reviewed recent materials and documentation from RTO 9, including regional tourism research, destination strategies and plans, and desk research on macro factors influencing RTO 9's future, such as political, economic, social, technological, legal, and environmental considerations.

Key information, insights, conclusions, and considerations for strategic planning were included in a situational analysis summary report, which provided the foundation for a strategic prioritization and in-person goal-setting session with the Board of Directors.

This 2025-2028 strategic plan report is the product of a consultative and participatory process. It will provide direction to inform the organization's plans for the next three years, beginning with its 2025-2026 Business Plan and corresponding staff work plans.



# Regional Tourism Organizations



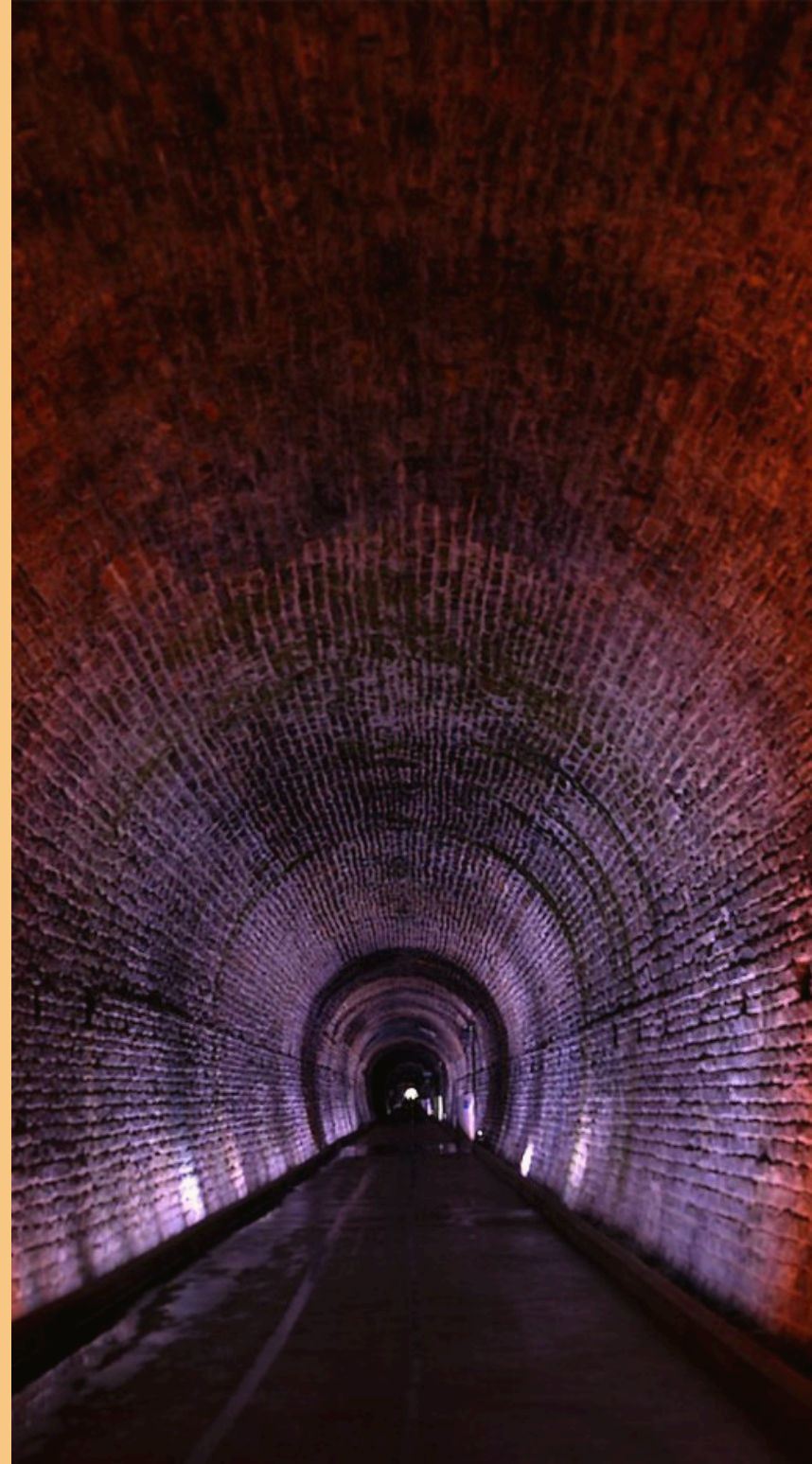
Regional Tourism Organizations (RTOs) are independent not-for-profit organizations established to provide leadership and support to specific regions across the province through facilitating coordinated and collaborative efforts to enhance tourism.

RTOs are expected to develop and implement strategies at the regional level that meet objectives set within five destination management pillars:

- **Product Development**
- **Marketing**
- **Workforce Development and Training**
- **Training Investment Attraction / Investor Relations**
- **Partnerships**

RTO 9 has added an important additional pillar:

- **Organizational Health**



# Purpose



This 2025-2028 strategic plan report is the product of a consultative and participatory process.

Through its new vision statement, RTO 9 has a horizon to look towards, and its refreshed mission statement clarifies “why” the organization exists.

The purpose of this report is to answer the **what, who, where, why, how, and when** questions about the RTO. Together, these questions provide the strategic direction for the organization to follow over the next three years.

This direction will inform the organization’s annual plans, beginning with its 2025-2026 Business Plan and related staff work plans.





**WHO?**





# Governance Structure



As per the Ontario Not-for-Profit Act, 2010 and as a condition of funding from MTCG RTO 9, like all Regional Tourism Organizations, maintains a Board of Directors.

The Board of Directors is made up of 12 individuals from the private sector and partner organizations who have extensive experience, to inform the development and implementation of strategies that will grow tourism in the region.

The eastern, central, and western parts of the region are reflected in the composition of the Board of Directors, which also has members at large.





**Cheri Kemp-Long, Chair (EAST)**

Cheri Kemp-Long has worked in tourism, business development, and community economic development for over forty years. Her experience and training include all facets of tourism marketing and operations, training and development, business management, and public sector policy and contribution management. Thirty-one years of her work was while living in Canada’s northern Territories (Nunavut, NWT, and Yukon); during that time, Cheri served as President of the Iqaluit and Baffin Regional Chambers of Commerce, Chair of the Conference Committee of the Nunavut Trade Show and Conference, Co-chair of the Conference Committee of the Northern Lights Conference and Trade Show, a major trade show, conference and cultural event held in Ottawa that features Nunavut, Labrador and Nunavik, Executive member of the Nunavut Economic Developers Association Board, and Member and executive member of the Economic Developers Association of Canada culminating her time with them as National President in 2013. Cheri and her husband retired from their respective government jobs in 2015 and moved to Ontario, where they have enjoyed sailing on the St Lawrence and Lake Ontario for years; now, in Merrickville, they are boating on the Rideau. Time is also spent volunteering locally, doing some business consulting in Nunavut, and keeping in touch with family and friends.



**Cale Fair, Vice Chair (WEST)**

Cale is a people person who’s spent his career business-building with some of the world’s most exciting creators and brands. Currently, he is the Vice President of Black Bear Ridge Golf + Resort in Belleville, a burgeoning four-season resort, anchored by one of Canada’s 59 Top Public Golf Courses. He brings deep experience directing sales, partnerships, and operations at successful manufacturing, e-commerce, and retail companies. Cale has managed product development, sales, and partnerships with 100’s of SME’s and several Fortune 500 brands, including NIKE, Microsoft, Red Bull, and Hudson’s Bay Co. He’s developed omni-channel commerce partnerships with respected global organizations, as well next-generation entrepreneurs in the creator, influencer and social enterprise space. In 2018, Cale co-founded the Leslieville Residents Association in Toronto’s lower east side.



**Karina Belanger, Treasurer (EAST)**

Karina Belanger is the Tourism Coordinator, serving The United Counties of Stormont, Dundas, and Glengarry (SDG Tourism). With a focus on enhancing the region’s appeal as a premier visitor destination, Karina oversees the development, implementation, and management of various programs and services, for both visitors and tourism stakeholders. Her notable achievements include spearheading a successful video series and visitor guide that showcases the beauty and attractions of SDG Counties, effectively raising awareness and interest among potential visitors. Furthermore, Karina is responsible for the operations of the Historic SDG Jail, which provides engaging guided tours and special events throughout the year, ensuring a memorable visitor experience. Prior to her role as the Tourism Coordinator, Karina was the Administrative Assistant for the Economic Development and Communications team. Karina holds a major in marketing from Concordia University’s John Molson School of Business and a college diploma in Business Administration, a testament to her commitment to professional growth. Karina’s academic achievements, combined with her passion for the tourism industry, have been pivotal in shaping her career.

EAST



Scott Lambert

Scott Lambert is the owner of Vankleek Hill Vineyard in Ontario. Scott believes in the transformative power of positivity and hard work. His ability to elevate experiences, engage, and inspire others seems to fit within the community-oriented town of Vankleek Hill, Ontario. The 55-acre property today boasts over 27,000 mature trees, allowing a natural habitat for all wildlife. He is an ambitious hand-crafted vintner who brings families and the community together with great wine.

CENTRAL



Heather Robertson

Heather resides in Napanee and works in downtown Kingston as a Front Office Manager at The Residence Inn by Marriott Kingston’s Waters Edge. She is passionate about travel and tourism in the region, and beyond! Prior to joining the hotel industry in Kingston, she was the Registrar for the Canadian Cheese Awards, organizer of cheese events, and a cheesemaker!



Krista LeClair

Krista LeClair was appointed Executive Director at Kingston Accommodation Partners in December 2019 following nine- years in the charitable sector at Easter Seals Ontario. Krista has held Board positions as an Executive at the Greater Kingston Chamber of Commerce, President of the Association of Fundraising Professionals South Eastern Ontario, and Director for the Rotary Club of Kingston. Krista is now serving on the Ontario Hotel Council through ORHMA, on the Policy Advisory Committee through TIAO and on the Program Advisory Committee for the Tourism program at SLC. Krista is a community tourism development professional with a focus on sector associations, advocacy and government relations, revenue management, and stakeholder and partnership relations. Krista has experience in the areas of fundraising and event planning, leadership, media, and public relations, and budgeting.



Liam Karry

Liam’s in his eighth season with the Kick & Push Festival and brings his array of talent to the RTO 9 Board of Directors. Liam is the founding and current artistic director of the Single Thread Theatre Company. He was a founding member of the Kingston Theatre Alliance and currently serves on the board of an ARC theatre. Recent directing credits include: Unless, a site-specific immersive experience produced in Bangkok, Thailand, and Collider, a live VR performance, which was co-produced by foldA, and the rEvolver festival in June 2021. His next project is PXR2023: a national conference on live performance within extended reality.



WEST



Eleanor Cook

Eleanor is the Executive Director of Prince Edward County’s new Destination Marketing and Management Organization, Visit The County. With over twelve years of experience supporting the industry at the municipal, regional, and provincial levels of tourism, her passion lies in driving community-led tourism planning. In her former role with a Regional Tourism Organization, Eleanor focused on a regionally-aligned approach to strategy, tourism wayfinding planning, and award-winning experience development. Destination development has been a journey from the boardroom to the classroom, from field-professional to Professor, allowing Eleanor to shape Ontario’s tourism growth by mentoring graduates as future leaders in regenerative destination development, responsible tourism marketing, and niche product development. Eleanor’s approach to tourism begins with a welcoming host community that embraces ownership of the visitor economy for its sociocultural benefit, economic sustainability and vibrant quality of life.



Jacob Murray

With 35 years’ experience working with sheep and wool, Jacob is in charge of Topsy Farms’ social media which has grown from 4.5 k followers in 2018 (Twitter, Instagram, Facebook, TikTok, Pinterest, etc.) to 75k currently. He is the creator of Topsy’s “Connect to the Land” agri-tourism program; bringing visitors to the farm for entertainment, education, and relaxation. In Spring 2020, Jacob helps Kubota Canada create the award-winning #GrowStronger gardening campaign (TIAO 3 awards) and leads the building of 20 free gardens in 30 days during the early pandemic that spawns a national gardening movement. In 2021, Jacob and Topsy “ReWilded” 800m of farmland for the exclusive use of nature (goal of 1 linear km by 2025). Topsy’s mission statement is to keep the farmland as a farm. Through daily blogs, videos, and stories, Topsy now reaches 3 million people per month and employs 10 full and part-time workers. Jacob serves his community as a volunteer firefighter and medical first responder (19 years and counting). Jacob serves his industry by serving as the Ontario Chair for The Canadian Wool Council.





AT LARGE



**Karen Best**

Karen Best has more than 20 years of experience working within Canadian destination marketing organizations. As the Director of Membership for Ottawa Tourism, Karen was responsible for increasing membership by 40% in three years by planning and executing a membership recruitment strategy that involved leading a committee to generate new ideas, targeting new market sectors, and developing a value proposition for members. With exceptional planning, organizational and people skills, she is focused on building consensus and generating results that benefit all parties. Her impressive track record of creating, managing, and enhancing special events has involved cultivating a wide range of contacts across multiple disciplines throughout eastern Ontario and beyond. Karen has a wide range of Board governance, human resource, administrative, and financial management experience in the private, public, and non-profit sectors. A lifelong volunteer, Karen’s experience has spanned educational institutions, sporting organizations, support for military families and economic development opportunities.



**Loren Christie**

With over 25 years of experience in the tourism industry, 15 of which have been in leadership roles in hotels and with a Destination Marketing Organization, Loren brings his creative, energetic, enthusiastic, and inspiring leadership skills to RTO 9. Loren has had numerous successes in re-imagining businesses and process improvement. With 20 years of on-air TV presence including a regular segment on CTV’s Canada AM and Your Morning as well as 20 years of spokesperson, moderator, and panelist experience, Loren brings many perspectives to the RTO9 board position.



**Michelle Caron**

A returning RTO 9 board member and with a full spectrum of 28 years of experience in all aspects of tourism, Michelle is a knowledgeable and keen representative for Eastern Ontario stakeholders. Her career background prior also includes a strong business acumen that she acquired in her capacity as a business owner and President of Sales for 14 years. Currently, she also serves as a Director for the 1000 Islands Regional Tourism Development Corporation Board. Her genuine enthusiasm and interest in people have been key ingredients to her success, and she looks forward to sharing her lifetime of experience with others every day and in every way.

# Regional Development Advisors



The Ontario Ministry of Tourism, Culture and Gaming has a Regional Tourism Unit made up of advisors who use local connections to help businesses, communities, and not-for-profit organizations in the tourism, culture, gaming sectors.

Advisors link organizations to government initiatives and funding opportunities as well as broker new supportive partnerships with the voluntary and private sector, which generate revenue to help organizations deliver quality community services.

RTO 9 works with three Regional Development Advisors that each support a specific part of the region based on the territory they cover.





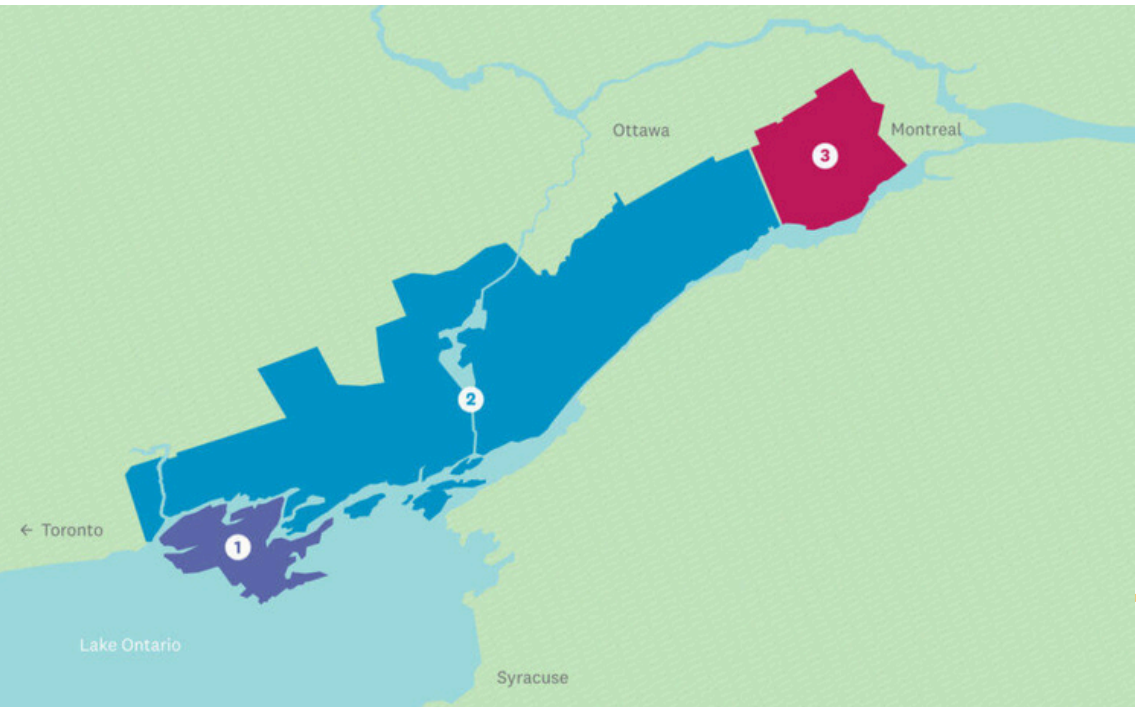
**Katie Crowley**

Regional Development Advisor – Tourism,  
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**Mia Robertson (she/they)**

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Representing Area 2 (Blue)  
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**Louis Bedard**

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Representing Area 3 (Red)  
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**The RTO 9 team is currently made up of four individuals, who are dedicated to supporting the sustainable growth and development of tourism across the region.**



### **Bonnie Ruddock, Executive Director**

Bonnie has been with the RTO 9 since the inception of the Regional Tourism Organization in 2011. Bonnie was appointed to Executive Director in 2017 after 6 years as Operations Manager for RTO9. With a background in finance and a passion for the tourism industry, Bonnie is a true leader. In 2020 Bonnie completed her MBA in Community Economic Development. Prior to her career with RTO 9, Bonnie was Executive Director for the 1000 Islands Gananoque Chamber of Commerce where she was instrumental in growing membership and launching the official Bi-lingual Visitor Guide for her destination.



### **Meg Dabros, Operations Manager**

Despite growing up in a military family and moving around the country at a young age before settling in Kingston, Meg has always considered South Eastern Ontario home. After graduating from the Sprott School of Business at Carleton University in Ottawa with a Bachelor of Commerce with Honours, she returned to the area, settling in Gananoque ON, and taking on a marketing role with Kouri's Kopters Inc. This is where her love for local businesses, the region and the tourism industry ignited. In early 2018, Meg began working part-time as the digital media coordinator for 1000 Islands Tourism in conjunction with her role at Kouri's Kopters Inc. before moving full-time into the Executive Director role with 1000 Islands Tourism in 2021. In addition to getting to market the Thousand Islands region, the role also provided her the opportunity to work closely with the local business community and build partnerships with local organizations. When she's not working, Meg enjoys spending time with her family and friends, travelling, and exploring different spots in the region.



**Steve Weir, Senior Marketing Manager**

With over 30 years of experience in marketing regions, cities and sites in Eastern Ontario, Steve brings a personal connection and knowledge of local history and culture to his position here at RTO 9. The achievement of which Steve is most proud was being part of the Rideau Canal’s inscription on the UNESCO World Heritage List. Steve, along with the Rideau Canal Nomination Team, received a Parks Canada CEO award in recognition as well as on June 30th, 2007, Steve was a delegate for Canada and attended the UNESCO World Heritage Meeting in Christchurch, New Zealand when the Rideau Canal was inscribed on the World Heritage List.



**Lesley McDougall, Digital Marketing Manager**

Lesley is a dedicated professional with over 20 years of experience in the tourism and travel sector. Her journey has taken her to work in various roles in renowned destinations such as Banff, Alberta, several European locations, and Bermuda. For over six years, Lesley served as a travel advisor, contributing to the success of a family-owned tour operator and a national brand travel agency. During this time, she played a key role in developing social media efforts and integrated marketing campaigns. Lesley holds two UK hospitality diplomas (operations and management) and a certificate with honours from Sault College of Applied Art & Technology – Marketing Specialist Program (2022).



# Organizational Chart



## Level 1

Board of Directors  
Governance and Nominations Committee  
Finance and Audit Committee

## Level 2

Executive Director

## Level 3

Operations Manager  
Senior Marketing Manager  
Digital Marketing Manager

## Level 4

Advisors and Partners





# Tourism Partners



RTO 9 counts any individual, business, or organization that is interested, able, and willing to contribute to the sustainable growth and development of tourism in the region as a partner. RTO 9 has a strong network of partners who are able to co-create value through coordinated efforts and collaboration.

## **Tourism Businesses**

The breadth and diversity of businesses in the regional tourism sector, which is made up of businesses operating in the food and beverage, recreation and entertainment, including attractions, accommodation, transportation, and travel service industries.

## **Destination Organizations and Local Municipalities**

All of the destination marketing organizations (DMOs) and destination marketing programs (DMPs) nested within local municipalities, as well as directly with municipalities, who are all working hard to develop and showcase to the world the amazing destinations that make up the region.

## **Residents and Visitors**

Every individual who calls Southeastern Ontario home, and who has the privilege to live, work, and play within the region. Everyone who is attracted to what the region has to offer and chooses to visit, including visitors from the region, local, domestic and international markets.

## **Industry Associations and Organizations**

Local, provincial, and national organizations who are working hard to ensure that the tourism sector is valued, supported, developed, marketed, and sustainably grown.

## **Federal and Provincial Governments**

Federal Minister of Tourism, Honourable Soraya Martinez Ferrada, Innovation, Science and Economic Development Canada, and its Regional Development Agencies. Ontario Minister of Tourism, Culture and Gaming, Honourable Stan Cho, MTCG, and its Regional Tourism Units.

## **Regional Tourism Organizations**

All the other Regional Tourism Organizations, who RTO 9 has the pleasure of counting as peers and collaborators.

**WHERE?**



# Where?



RTO 9 is focussed exclusively on Southeastern Ontario, which it markets to the visitor via its “South Eastern Ontario” regional destination brand name and identity.

The region is made up of 11 destinations, each bringing unique and important value to the region and its visitors.

## Destinations

- 1 Prince Edward County
- 2 Bay of Quinte
- 3 Lennox & Addington
- 4 Frontenac County
- 5 Kingston
- 6 1000 Islands Rideau Canal Waterways
- 7 1000 Islands Gananoque
- 8 Brockville
- 9 Cornwall
- 10 SDG Counties
- 11 Prescott & Russell





**WHY?**



# Vision & Mission



## Vision

**Tourism is a sustainable driver of social, economic, and environmental prosperity for diverse partners working together in Southeastern Ontario.**

## Mission

**To nurture a regional ecosystem of tourism partners by providing valuable resources and strategic supports.**

# Guiding Principles



**1.** Every destination has an opportunity to prosper because of a collaborative and collective approach to tourism destination development and marketing.

**2.** Recognizing that not all destinations have been created equally and do not have the same needs, decisions will be based on what derives the most value for the collective.

**3.** Engagement with and input from tourism partners will drive the activities of RTO 9.

**4.** Tourism partners play an important role, and RTO 9 will count on them to contribute to its collective efforts.

**5.** Recognizing the importance of the accommodations sector, RTO 9 will strive to develop initiatives that stimulate overnight visitation.

**6.** RTO 9 embraces the principle of balanced representation, where no one destination, organization, or sector influences the organization for its own purpose or gain.

**7.** RTO 9 is committed to exceeding visitors' expectations, including those who visit for pleasure or business for a day or for overnight, through the delivery of excellent products, experiences, and superior customer service.

**8.** RTO 9 will maintain and support existing tourism brands and commitments within the region, which have established levels of awareness because of demonstrated past investments in destination marketing and product development, and, in reasonable practice as exercised by the Board of Directors, from time to time allocate its resources in a prioritized manner using these criteria:

- Resources directed to existing brands where a destination marketing fee was in place (as defined by the Ministry of Tourism, Culture, and Gaming)
- Resources directed to brands that can demonstrate reasonable levels of tourism business and/or a core group of tourism businesses that generate the majority of their revenue from the visitor market
- Resources directed to emerging destinations that offer the potential to become more established tourism destinations.



# Pillars & Goals



MTCG has set specific objectives for all RTOs to pursue within each of its destination management pillars. Additionally, RTO 9 has set an objective for its Organizational Health pillar. Importantly, RTO 9 has a perspective on and understanding of each pillar, and these have informed its goals for 2028.

## Product Development

### MTCG Objective

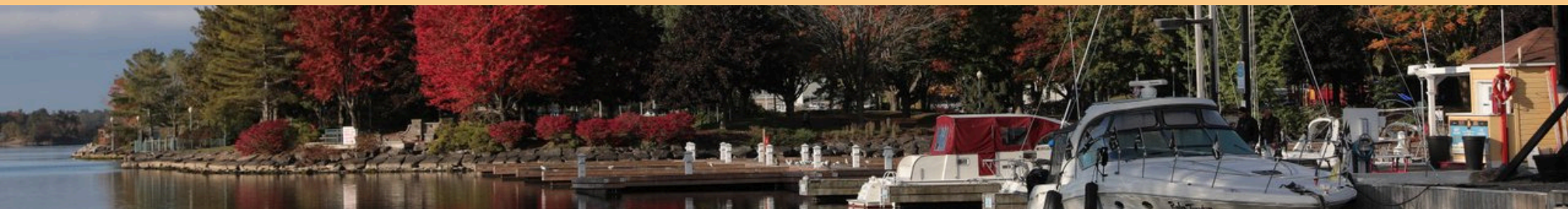
To enhance visitor experience through well-designed tourism products that meet current and future visitor demand.

### Description

For RTO 9, Product Development is the enhancing of capabilities within partners to develop assets that can be leveraged to attract visitors to the region.

### 2028 Goal

All corners of the region are home to high quality tourism products that exceed the expectations of visitors to the region.



# Pillars & Goals



## Marketing

### MTCG Objective

To increase awareness of Ontario as a travel destination and increase conversion in target markets.

### Description

For RTO 9, Marketing is a collaborative effort to showcase South Eastern Ontario's tourism products and services.

### 2028 Goal

The marketing of Southeastern Ontario as a region of complementary destinations is targeted, cooperative, and streamlined.



# Pillars & Goals



## Workforce Development & Training

### MTCG Objective

To facilitate and support the attraction, development, and retention of a tourism workforce to enhance the visitor experience.

### Description

For RTO 9, Workforce Development and Training is the constructive response to the changing labour needs of the tourism industry within the region.

### 2028 Goal

A sustainable workforce is the backbone of tourism across the region.





# Pillars & Goals



## Investment Attraction/Investor Relations

### MTCG Objective

To increase investment in the tourism industry to enhance visitor experience.

### Description

For RTO 9, Investment Attraction / Investor Relations is the supply of insights and information to and building of relationships with partners seeking to develop the regional tourism industry.

### 2028 Goal

Tourism partners are equipped with the intelligence needed to make informed decisions about the sustainable development and expansion of tourism.





# Pillars & Goals



## Partnerships

### MTCG Objective

To become a catalyst in building strategic alignment and promoting collaboration within the industry.

### Description

For RTO 9, Partnerships is the cultivation of relationships and co-creation of tourism value with partners through the sharing of information and resources.

### 2028 Goal

Tourism value is being co-created across the region through a strong network of partners.



# Pillars & Goals



## Organizational Health

### RTO 9 Objective

To ensure the organization is efficiently and effectively utilizing its resources to achieve the other pillar objectives.

### Description

For RTO 9, Organizational Health is the implementation of initiatives that will contribute to the good governance and sustainability of the organization.

### 2028 Goal

RTO 9 is well positioned to advance the organization into the foreseeable future.



**HOW?**





# How?



Toward achieving its objectives and in pursuit of the related goals, RTO 9 has identified two strategies for each pillar to execute over the next three years. These strategies will inform the activities, including projects and initiatives, that the organization will implement each year. Activities are confirmed in advance of each fiscal year and included in the organization's annual business plan.

Annual business plans are supported by corresponding staff work plans, which detail the steps associated with the implementation of each project or initiative.

A measure of success has also been established for each strategy. Activity-specific targets and key performance indicators are used to determine whether the strategy has been successfully executed.





<b>2028 Goal</b>	<b>All corners of the region are home to high quality tourism products that exceed the expectations of visitors to the region.</b>	
<b>Strategy</b>	<b>Measure of Success</b>	<b>Example Activity</b>
<b>To identify and close any gaps in partner capacity to develop product.</b>	<b>Partners are well equipped to develop high-value and competitive tourism product.</b>	<b>Conduct and/or supplement research</b>
		<b>Assess partner needs</b>
		<b>Develop partner capacity</b>
<b>Support partners across the region in their pursuit of product development opportunities.</b>	<b>Partners are capitalizing on opportunities to enhance or develop new tourism product.</b>	<b>Communicate product development opportunities</b>
		<b>Direct-connect industry partners to supports</b>

2028 Goal	The marketing of Southeastern Ontario as a region of complementary destinations is targeted, cooperative, and streamlined.		
Strategy	Measure of Success	Example Activity	
Integrate the South Eastern Ontario regional tourism brand with destination brands.	South Eastern Ontario is fully integrated with destination brands.	Develop brand integration strategy	
		Implement brand integration initiatives	
Collaborate with sub-regional destination partners in targeting visitors to specific areas of Southeastern Ontario.	More visitors are experiencing more of what Southeastern Ontario has to offer.	Assess partner capacity to host media	
		Align destination marketing priorities	
		Co-curate destination content	
		Implement collaborative and targeted marketing campaigns	
		Cultivate media relations	

# Workforce Development & Training

<b>2028 Goal</b>	<b>A sustainable workforce is the backbone of tourism across the region.</b>	
<b>Strategy</b>	<b>Measure of Success</b>	<b>Example Activity</b>
<b>Position tourism as a career of choice in Southeastern Ontario.</b>	<b>The tourism sector is valued and supported across the region.</b>	<b>Communicate the value of tourism</b>
		<b>Involve community partners in tourism sentiment</b>
<b>Increase industry access to valuable workforce development tools, resources, and training.</b>	<b>Industry feels empowered to make decisions about its workforce.</b>	<b>Source and share relevant tools and resources</b>
		<b>Direct-connect industry partners to training and supports</b>
		<b>Participate in workforce development initiatives</b>

<b>2028 Goal</b>			Tourism partners are equipped with the intelligence needed to make informed decisions about the sustainable development and expansion of tourism.		
Strategy		Measure of Success		Example Activity	
Connect tourism partners with existing sources of relevant data and research.		Partners have access to information that will inform their investment decisions.		Source and share investment-related research	
Collaborate with partners on high-value and high-utility research projects.		Insights generated through collaborative research projects have been well-received and acted upon by partners.		Conduct market research	



# Partnerships

2028 Goal	Tourism value is being co-created across the region through a strong network of partners.	
Strategy	Measure of Success	Example Activity
Provide targeted support to partners in Southeastern Ontario.	RTO 9 and its partners are co-creating value through collaboration.	Partnership Fund
		Engage in special projects with key strategic partners
Foster strong relationships with partners through regular and open communication.	RTO 9 has a strong and active network of tourism partners.	Maintain positive partner relations
		Assess and expand network of partners

2028 Goal	RTO 9 is well positioned to advance the organization into the foreseeable future.	
Strategy	Measure of Success	Example Activity
Cultivate a culture of shared ownership amongst the Board of Directors and staff.	RTO 9 Board of Directors and staff are the organization's biggest champions.	Build stronger internal relations
		Build internal capacity
Ensure that the financial viability of the organization is secured for years to come.	RTO 9 has a business model that both leverages and maximizes resources.	Assess and optimize business model

# Collaboration



RTO 9 is inspired by the sustainable tourism growth potential of the region.

With a new vision and refreshed mission, the organization is ready to harness this potential in collaboration with its partners.

RTO 9 recognizes the value that can be co-created with others, and it knows from experience that the successful implementation of the activities informed by the strategies within this plan requires collaboration.

A coordinated, collective, and collaborative approach will ensure resources are maximized, synergies are created, and partners of RTO 9 benefit from the efforts of the organization.



**WHEN?**





# When?



## Now.

Region 9 Regional Tourism Organization's 2025-2028 Strategic Plan will be implemented over the next three fiscal years, including 2025/2026, 2026/2027, and 2027/2028.

The activities informed by the strategies contained within this plan will be confirmed in advance of each fiscal year as part of regular business planning efforts.

The timeline associated with the implementation of specific activities will be indicated in the business plan for each year, beginning with the 2025-2026 fiscal year, noting that some activities may be implemented over more than one year.



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