

YUKON RECRUITMENT AND RETENTION ACTION PLAN



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The Tourism Industry Association of the Yukon acknowledges that it operates on the traditional territories of the Kwanlin Dün First Nation and the Ta'an Kwäch'än Council, and all Yukon First Nations, without whose generosity, wisdom, and stewardship Yukon tourism would not exist.

TIA Yukon Team

TIA Yukon is grateful for its entire team who participated in one way or another in the development of this action plan.

Participants and stakeholders

The organization is thankful for the involvement and input of all participants and stakeholders who took part in the Taskforce, the survey, the research, and the first initiatives undertaken as part of this action plan.

Yukon Recruitment and Retention Taskforce

TIA Yukon is grateful for the Yukon Recruitment and Retention Taskforce members' active and enthusiastic participation, which contributed to the holistic approach of this plan.

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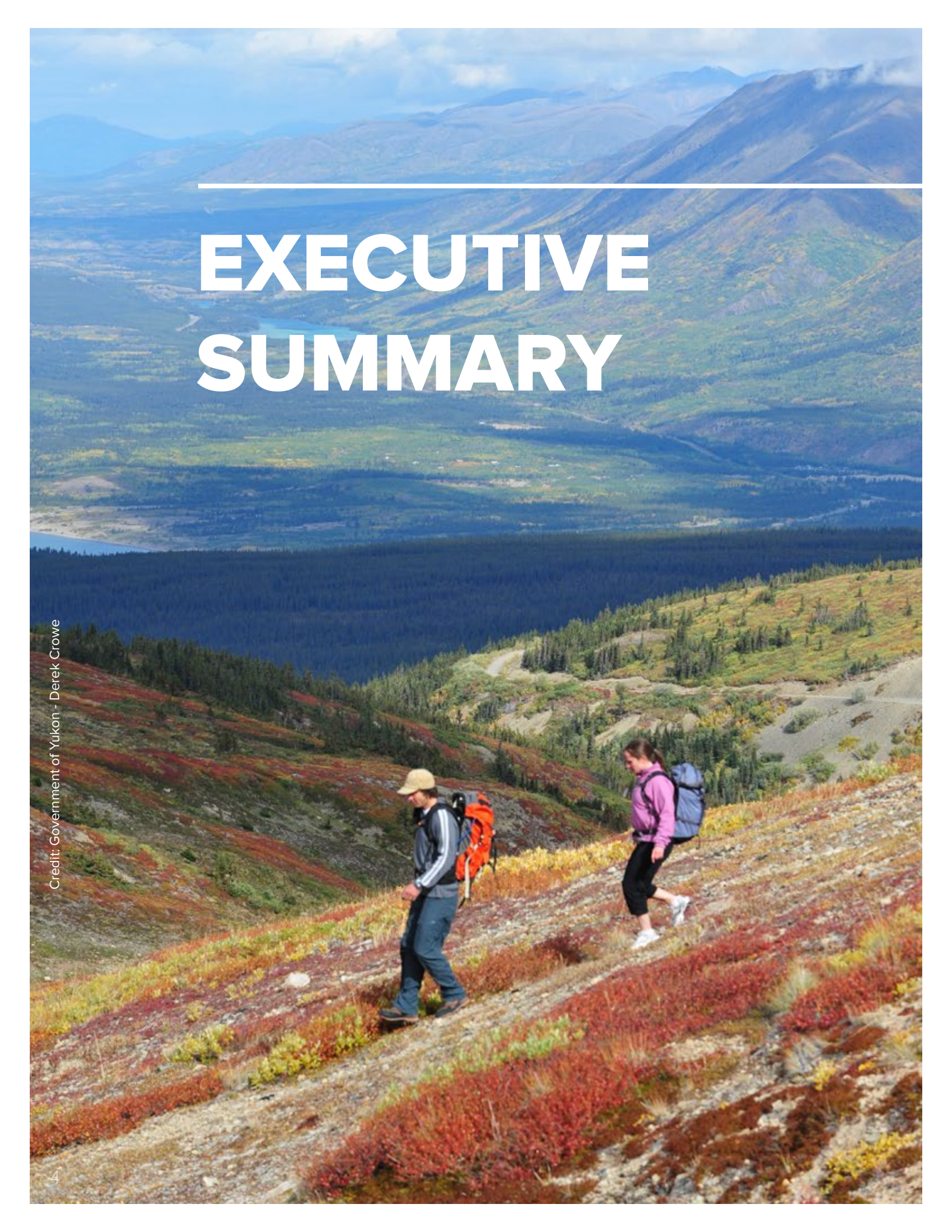
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Julie Dufresne, TIA Yukon

TIA Yukon thanks former Executive Director of TIA Yukon, Blake Rogers, and former acting Executive Director of the Yukon Chamber of Commerce, Denny Kobayashi, who identified a need and created the Yukon Recruitment and Retention Taskforce.

A scenic landscape photograph of a mountain trail. In the foreground, two hikers are walking down a dirt path. The hiker on the left is wearing a tan hat, a dark jacket, and blue pants, carrying a large orange backpack. The hiker on the right is wearing a pink jacket, black pants, and white shoes, carrying a blue backpack. The trail is surrounded by low-lying vegetation in shades of red, orange, and yellow. In the background, a vast valley stretches out, featuring a dense forest of evergreen trees, a winding river, and distant mountain ranges under a blue sky with scattered clouds.

EXECUTIVE SUMMARY

Credit: Government of Yukon - Derek Crowe

The context

Tourism has reliably been the Yukon's largest private sector employer. According to the Yukon Government, the tourism industry was responsible for 9% of all jobs in the Yukon's labour market in 2019.

Tourism businesses across Canada face increased challenges in finding the necessary workers to fill vacant jobs. The Yukon is no exception. In August 2022, the Yukon's unemployment rate hit a record low of 1.7%, significantly lower than the Canadian unemployment rate of 5.4% for that month. In the TIA Yukon Fall Assessment Survey, 69% of the operators surveyed mentioned recruiting and retaining employees as one of the three main challenges that affected their business during the season.

TIA Yukon

The Tourism Industry Association of the Yukon ("TIA Yukon") is a non-governmental organization whose primary mandate is to be an advocate and voice for Yukon's tourism industry. TIA Yukon forges a common voice and undertakes programs and actions that influence, promote, and assist tourism development in the Yukon. TIA Yukon works collaboratively with tourism stakeholders across the territory to promote, grow, and increase the capacity of the Yukon's tourism industry.

Yukon Recruitment and Retention Taskforce

TIA Yukon is committed to helping the Yukon's tourism industry attract reliable, qualified workers to ensure that businesses and organizations are able to operate effectively. To help better support Yukon tourism operations in hiring and keeping the staff they need and ensure that they are equipped with the necessary skills to be effective in their roles, TIA Yukon has created the Yukon Recruitment and Retention Taskforce (YRRT). This joint taskforce is created in collaboration with the Yukon Chamber of Commerce, the Whitehorse Chamber of Commerce, and other Yukon organizations that have a focus on labour-related issues. This tourism-led taskforce will include a broader perspective on Yukon business.



YRRT purpose and methodology

The purpose and mandate of the YRRT is to provide industry perspectives and strategic advice to the Yukon Government, the Yukon's tourism industry, and the larger business community to help inform decision-making and reduce duplication of efforts. Specifically, the YRRT provides industry perspectives and strategic advice.

Survey and key findings

In July 2022, the Manager of Labour Market Development surveyed 31 businesses and HR-related stakeholders to take the pulse of the current labour shortage situation.

Four main findings came out of this survey:

- 1. This labour shortage touches every organization and business in the Yukon**
- 2. Employers lack the capacity, time, skills, and financial resources to recruit and retain staff properly**
- 3. A common ground needs to be found between employer expectations and employee skill sets**
- 4. There is a need for changes in regulations and practices at all levels of government to ease the recruitment and retention of employees**

Taskforce meetings

The Taskforce met five times between September and December 2022: online four times, with the final meeting held in person in December 2022.

The main topics that have been discussed are:

- Recruitment and retention
- Training and talent attraction
- Housing for workers

Many experts have presented at the taskforce meetings to date, including:

- Anton Solomon, Director of Post-Secondary and Labour Market and Sarah Norlin, Labour Market Officer at the Labour Market Development Branch of the Department of Economic Development of the Yukon Government
- Jonathan Parker, Assistant Deputy Minister of Strategic Initiatives at the Tourism and Culture Department at Yukon Government
- Philip Mondor, CEO of Tourism HR Canada
- Carly Carruthers, Manager, Economic Development at Canadian Northern Economic Development Agency (CanNor)
- Coralie Ulyett, Project Manager at TIA Yukon
- Sandy Legge, Executive Director, Wilderness Tourism Association of the Yukon
- Sam Oettli, General Manager, Mt. Sima Alpine Adventure Park

Taskforce subgroups

Four subgroups have been created within the YRRT to research specific topics and ensure a deeper understanding of the current labour shortage and its effects.

Each group has met with stakeholders, shared best practices, identified relevant pilot projects, and made recommendations to the taskforce. Some of the groups have started implementing recommended actions and building collaborations for future developments.

The four subgroups are:

1. Job sharing between Yukon businesses
2. HR best practices and supports for businesses
3. Immigration policies
4. Co-operative education

Research

The Labour Market Development Manager conducted further research/interviews related to:

- Immigration policies
- Youth professional aspirations
- Older workers' professional aspirations
- Professional training and work-integrated learning opportunities (Yukon Literacy Coalition, Training Policy Committee, Yukon University, Association for Co-operative Education and Work-Integrated Learning BC/Yukon)
- Housing strategies for businesses to support their staff

Liaison

The Labour Market Development Manager devoted all of their time to researching best practices, sharing the information gathered, and preparing and organizing the taskforce meetings. Another important part of the work accomplished so far has been identifying and liaising with the different stakeholders and connecting stakeholders showing common interests. This has been crucial to the major advances that TIA Yukon has been able to make in this area.

Participation in national initiatives

The Labour Market Development Manager represents TIA Yukon in the Pan-Canadian Tourism Workforce Recovery & Growth Taskforce led by Tourism HR Canada, launched in September 2022.

Strategic goals

This strategy could be developed thanks to the survey findings, research, and active participation of Taskforce members in all the meetings.

During the last in-person meeting of the Taskforce, a skeleton action plan was created collectively, which led to the definition of these three strategic goals:

- 1. Make Yukon's private sector more attractive - Improve Yukon businesses' capacity and competitiveness**
- 2. Build the capacity of the local workforce - Increase connectivity between industry and educational institutions**
- 3. Attract a reliable supply of outside workers - Increase capacity to recruit nationally and internationally**



STRATEGIC GOALS AND ACTION PLAN

Credit: Government of Yukon Hans G Pfaff

Strategic Roadmap

Goal 1

Make Yukon's private sector more attractive to the workforce

Improve Yukon businesses' capacity and competitiveness

- **Objective 1.1** Modernize Yukon businesses' HR practices and policies
- **Objective 1.2** Improve Yukon businesses' competitiveness in the labour market

- **Objective 2.1** Promote tourism as a career
- **Objective 2.2** Increase co-operative education and work-integrated opportunities in the Yukon
- **Objective 2.3** Develop international opportunities to build capacity for local youth

Goal 2

Build the capacity of the local workforce

Increase connectivity between industry and educational institutions

Goal 3

Attract a reliable supply of outside workers

Increase capacity to recruit nationally and internationally

- **Objective 3.1** Promote the Yukon as a place to live, learn, and work
- **Objective 3.2** Ease Yukon businesses' access to foreign workers
- **Objective 3.3** Develop international opportunities to build capacity for local youth

A scenic landscape photograph of a mountain valley. In the foreground, two hikers are standing on a dark, rocky outcrop. The hiker on the left is wearing a blue jacket and grey pants, pointing towards the valley. The hiker on the right is wearing a dark jacket and grey pants, holding a trekking pole. The valley below is a mix of brown, yellow, and green, with a river winding through it. In the background, there are more mountains and a forested area. The text "STRATEGIC GOAL 1" is overlaid in large, white, bold letters.

STRATEGIC GOAL 1

Credit: Government of Yukon - Robert Postma

Strategic Goal 1

Make Yukon's private sector more attractive to the workforce

Improve Yukon businesses' capacity and competitiveness

Objective 1.1

Modernize Yukon businesses' HR practices and policies

What we heard: In the stakeholders' interview, many mentioned that small tourism business owners could benefit greatly from training themselves on important topics such as HR and financials. Often, these businessmen and women choose this path for the love of the outdoor lifestyle and can lack essential business skills as they need to be "Jack of all trades." Employers could benefit from best practices in terms of recruitment or retention, and most show a great interest in gaining knowledge in these fields, on the condition that it works with their tight agendas. Organizations working with diverse pools of people (Indigenous, youth, older persons, and people with barriers) also recommend supporting businesses and organizations in best practices of recruiting, hiring, training, and effectively retaining a diversity of people.



Credit: Government of Yukon - Cathie Archbould

Action 1 - Provide HR services to Yukon businesses

- a. Provide personalized one-on-one HR services to Yukon private sector employers. Services would include job descriptions/job postings, interview questions and rating forms, orientation packages for new employees, performance management systems, information on current legislation and regulations, and HR policies.
- b. Provide legal aid to businesses to structure labour contracts (ex: signing bonuses to incentivize employees to stay).
- c. Enhance recruitment and retention practices within the industry with a particular focus on the untapped labour pool of talent (First Nations, youth, persons with disabilities, retirees and skilled seniors, etc.) through a series of workshops on recruitment and retention best practices.
- d. List and make information available on existing resources for employees and employers (Training Policy Committee, AFY, CBYF, Employment Central, etc.). Use existing platforms/media to promote HR best practices (Website and social media channels, tables/committees within the industry, promotion of Go2HR and Tourism HR Canada resources, etc.). Identify/create a forum through which businesses could exchange HR best practices.

Action 2 - Support job sharing between businesses

- a. Have an organization/staff coordinate actions to facilitate job-sharing opportunities for businesses (winter/summer season, high flow of visitation) to address the seasonality of the tourism industry.
- b. Create a forum/online bulletin board where businesses inform each other of their staffing needs and the staff they currently have looking for work over the coming season (See example on the Workaway website: www.workaway.info).
- c. Organize two get-togethers per year (shoulder seasons) where tourism businesses could share their info on staff and where employees could meet potential employers for the next season - “match-making.”
- d. Identify summer and winter businesses that could take advantage of job-sharing opportunities. KVA and Triple J, for example, have actioned deliberate employee-sharing scheduling. KVA, Bonanza Market, and Eldorado Hotel also have been approved to hire a shared employee through the Community Pilot Program. Their experience navigating this program can be a precursor for the future hiring of foreign nationals in the Yukon workforce.
- e. Collaborate with the Conseil Québécois des Ressources Humaines en Tourisme (CQRHT), which developed a pilot project on job-sharing in Quebec’s tourism industry.
- f. Professional people could carve off the peak tourism demand times by working for local tourism operators.

Objective 1.2 Improve Yukon businesses' competitiveness in the labour market

What we heard: Several businesses and NGOs participating in our survey mentioned being stepping stones for the Yukon Government, which means they are permanently putting energy into recruiting new staff and training them. Unfair recruitment practices have been identified; government staff has used very direct recruiting tactics with NGOs' workers. This kind of practice isn't fair to the private sector, especially as it can't compete with government wages. The private sector must find ways to compete better with the public sector to retain its staff better.

Action 3 - Level the game between private and public sectors

- a. Advocate for the federal government to increase the northern allowance.
- b. Assess how RRSPs and pension plans could remain with the workers when they go through a professional change and assess how private employers could match employees' contributions or at least participate in it.
- c. YG could fund the private sector to recruit abroad and better retain staff through a "TCMF-like" program.
- d. Support for businesses to identify funding opportunities, such as a Funding Navigator/Concierge (like TIA had during the pandemic), within YG or supported by YG.

Action 4 - Improve the private sector's benefits for workers

- a. Improve the private sector's offer of Pension Plan and Employee Benefit Plans to be more competitive with YG. Government funding/subsidy could support the collective improvement of the plan.
- b. Provide information on SME and other employee ownership options for business owners.
- c. Ask for "Yukon" recognized industry discount card/code that can be used for travel/accommodations/excursions and food and beverages.
- d. Check what health plans are available for seasonal workers.

Action 5 - Identify and fill gaps in data collection on the Yukon business community

- a. Develop data collection on an ongoing basis to support political decision-making related to the labour market. Identify possible gaps in current data collection (Statistics Canada, Statistics Yukon).
- b. Fund a student through Mitacs (<https://www.mitacs.ca/en>) to research the raw data in the Yukon regarding employment and set forward recommendations on how employers can connect/tap into the unemployed in the Yukon and among the First Nations.
- c. Participate actively in Tourism HR Canada's data collection on HR-related topics for the Yukon.
- d. Encourage businesses to participate in surveys/data collection.

Credit: Government of Yukon - Fritz Mueller

STRATEGIC GOAL 2

Credit: Government of Yukon - Fritz Mueller

Strategic Goal 2

Build the capacity of the local workforce

*Increase connectivity between industry
and educational institutions*

Objective 2.1

Promote tourism as a career

What we heard: Through its research, Communities Building Youth Futures (CBYF) discovered that there is a disconnect between the school system and the professional world; there is a need for more career exposure opportunities so that high school students know what their professional options are. Tourism businesses surveyed stated that they hired youth as young as 12 years old, meaning there is a need for career exposure as early as grades 6-7.



Credit: Government of Yukon - Cathie Archbould

Action 6 - Develop and implement an awareness campaign

Develop a campaign using existing tools and assets, such as Tourism HR Canada's Discover Tourism campaign, which will be available in March 2023.

Action 8 - Work with stakeholders to increase the number of tourism programs in high schools and at Yukon University

- a. Promote the Canadian Academy of Travel and Tourism program developed by Tourism HR Canada to Yukon high schools so that it can be implemented all around the Yukon.
- b. Advocate for the development of Yukon University's capacity in hospitality programs so we can keep local students right through the entire educational process.

Action 7 - Visit Yukon high schools and career fairs to raise awareness of jobs and career opportunities in tourism and other related sectors

- a. Visit grades 7-12 classes to inform them about tourism careers. Involve small businesses in these visits, as they could take a chance on youth.
 - b. Organize experiential activities such as cooking contests for children as young as eight years old to get them interested in some professions at an early age.
-

Action 9 - Develop /adapt existing initiatives on sustainable tourism and Indigenous tourism targeting youth in collaboration with partner organizations





Credit: Government of Yukon - J. Kennedy

Objective 2.2

Increase co-operative education and work-integrated opportunities in the Yukon

What we heard: CBYF's report for youth recommends developing more co-op and work-integrated programs so young people can be exposed to new careers and develop their working career skills. Businesses are also keen on welcoming more students in co-op, which is a valuable way to identify future employees.

Action 10 - Work with partners toward developing co-operative education programs in the Yukon

- a. Survey the business community on the careers that are a priority for them and should be considered for developing co-op programs.
- b. Take inspiration from the Statler Hotel (<https://statlerhotel.cornell.edu/careers>), which combines a work experience component for the students as this property is "on campus."
<https://sha.cornell.edu/about/facilities/hotel/students-working/>



Objective 2.3

Develop international opportunities to build capacity for local youth

What we heard: Local students, especially Indigenous youth, need more opportunities to travel out of the territory to broaden their vision of the world and gain perspective on their life in the Yukon. Developing international opportunities such as studies or traineeships would build their capacity and equip them with a better understanding of the world outside the territory.

Action 11 - Identify work-integrated opportunities with stakeholders to allow local youth, especially First Nations youth, to participate more actively in the workforce

Action 10 - Advocate/encourage Yukon University to develop inter-institutional agreements with universities internationally for students' mobility

Take part in co-operative programs and exchange networks such as Erasmus+ with European universities¹ and Calareo with Latin American universities².

STRATEGIC GOAL 3

Credit: Government of Yukon - Peter Mather

Strategic Goal 3

Attract a reliable supply of outside workers

Increase capacity to recruit nationally and internationally

Objective 3.1

Promote the Yukon as a place to live, learn, and work

What we heard: According to research done by Yukon Government's Department of Tourism & Culture, one in three Canadian adults is open to moving to the Yukon, but only 20% are moderately to very familiar with the place. The Yukon has been marketed as a tourism destination for many years by YG, and many are open to coming live here, but know little about the place. (check notes on place branding meeting with T&C)



Credit: Government of Yukon - Robert Postma

Action 13 - Market the Yukon as a desirable place to live and work in collaboration with other stakeholders

- a. Develop a marketing plan that maps out the existing actions of stakeholders and what can be done to complement or improve these actions. Stakeholders include the Association franco-yukonnaise, the Yukon Government, the Yukon Chamber of Commerce, the Whitehorse Chamber of Commerce, the City of Whitehorse, and social-media influencers.

Example: ask influencers to use a hashtag like [#yukonlife](#) to enhance the visibility of the territory. Promote the Yukon and represent Yukon employers (tourism and other sectors) at career and job fairs, colleges, and universities across the country.

- b. Partner with the Association franco-yukonnaise (AFY) for international recruitment.

Action 14 - Create a strategic calendar of job fairs

List all the job fairs and trade shows where staff could be recruited and make this calendar available to businesses.

Action 15 - Facilitate the relationship between outside educational institutions and Yukon businesses

Serve as a connector between outside educational institutions and Yukon businesses to develop work-integrated opportunities (work placements/internships/co-ops) for students from other jurisdictions with Yukon businesses.

Objective 3.2

Ease Yukon businesses' access to foreign workers

What we heard: Training our local workforce will help reduce the labour shortage in the long term, but there is still a need for immediate solutions. The Yukon Recruitment and Retention Taskforce identified easing Yukon businesses' access to foreign workers as one of them.

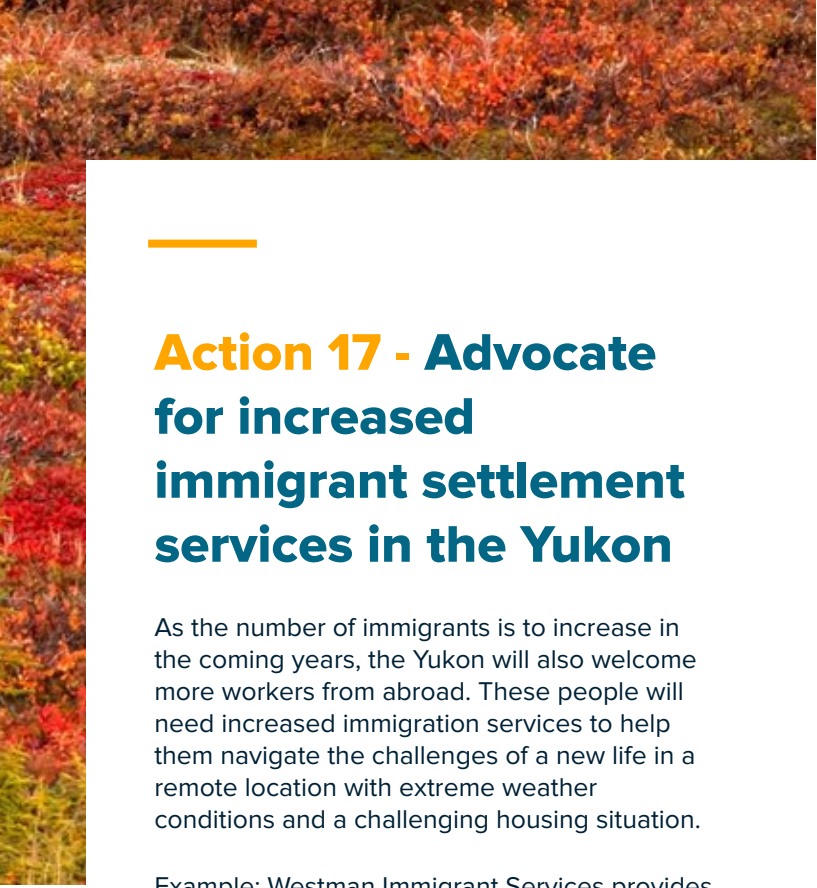
Action 16 - Advocate for the revival of the Yukon Temporary Foreign Worker program

While many existing programs aim to bring foreign workers into Canada's workforce, they have their shortfalls and leave gaps. The federal Temporary Foreign Worker Program expanded this year to include accommodation and food services, but application processing times can be very lengthy.

The International Experience Canada programs, such as the Working Holiday Visa, can also help to alleviate the labour shortage. Still, many countries will be competing for this workforce globally, and it excludes workers over 30 or 35, depending on the country of origin.

The current territorial immigration programs, such as the Yukon Nominee Program, are insufficient to respond to the labour needs of the Yukon, especially when considering the seasonal reality of many Yukon businesses. The Yukon Community Program, designed to provide flexibility to employers in Yukon communities to address the seasonal nature of employment in the territory, is limited to six communities. It can be challenging for eligible businesses to fill the requirements, creating full-time, year-round positions within their businesses or in partnership with other businesses in the same community.

For this reason, there is unanimity within the Yukon Recruitment and Retention Taskforce to reinstate the initial Yukon Temporary Foreign Worker Program, as it would fill a gap in the existing programs. It would also provide the needed flexibility for hiring seasonal workers that the current territorial programs do not have.



Action 17 - Advocate for increased immigrant settlement services in the Yukon

As the number of immigrants is to increase in the coming years, the Yukon will also welcome more workers from abroad. These people will need increased immigration services to help them navigate the challenges of a new life in a remote location with extreme weather conditions and a challenging housing situation.

Example: Westman Immigrant Services provides a broad range of services and programs to newcomers in western Manitoba.

Objective 3.3 Develop international opportunities to build capacity for local youth

What we heard: Yukon's housing situation is one of the main challenges that businesses face when recruiting out of the territory, as many have been in the position of having new hires turn down the job as they are unable to find housing in Whitehorse or the communities. While businesses cannot replace urban planners and development corporations, there are some steps that they can take to ease workers' access to proper housing.

Action 18 - Advocate for better grants and subsidies for affordable housing and housing development on Yukon University's property

- a. Advocate YG for more incentives for developers to build more affordable housing in the territory.
- b. Advocate for Yukon University to develop more housing on its land that could be rented to workers unrelated to the university.
- c. Advocate for Yukon University to rent student housing to both students and workers unrelated to the university if not filled.

Action 19 - Provide information to businesses regarding their options to support workers' housing

Share examples of initiatives in the territory, and available funding to develop housing for workers.



Credit: Government of Yukon - Cathie Arehould

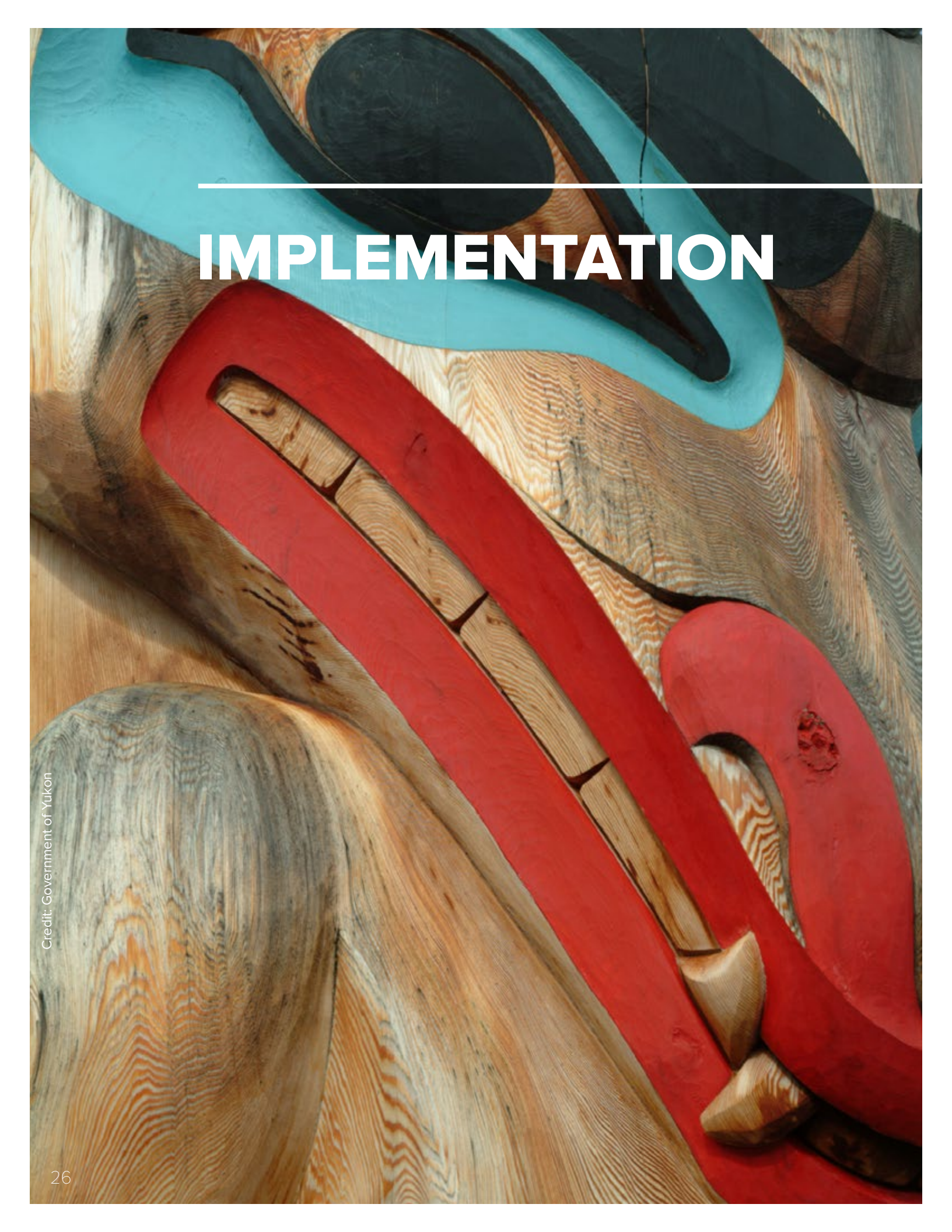
Action 20 - Prepare an information package for newcomers regarding housing

Newcomers need support to know how to navigate the housing context of the Yukon. Such a package should include the contacts of all the organizations facilitating or providing affordable housing, a list of online services where they can look for rentals and house sales, and the main regulations regarding rentals in the Yukon, among other resources.

Action 21 - Create a hosting program for seasonal workers

Create a list/network of community members willing to rent a room or offer room and board to seasonal workers coming to the Yukon, to support newcomers in their housing quest when arriving in the Yukon.

Example: Yukon University's hosting program for international students

An abstract artwork featuring a wooden background with various painted shapes. A large, thick red shape, resembling a stylized letter 'L' or a bracket, is prominent in the lower half. Above it, there are blue and black shapes, including a large black oval and a blue curved shape. The wood grain is visible throughout the composition.

IMPLEMENTATION

IMPLEMENTATION

The implementation of the Yukon Recruitment and Retention Taskforce Action Plan is summarized into three timelines:

Short (S) = less than 1 year,
Medium (M) = 1 to 2 years,
Long (L) = 2 years or more

Strategic Goal 1 - Make Yukon's private sector more attractive to the workforce

Objective	Action	S	M	L
1.1 Modernize Yukon businesses' HR practices and policies	1. Provide HR services to Yukon businesses	X		
	2. Support job sharing between businesses		X	
1.2 Improve Yukon businesses' competitiveness in the labour market	3. Level the game between private and public sectors		X	
	4. Improve the private sector's benefits for workers	X		
	5. Identify and fill gaps in data collection on the Yukon business community		X	

IMPLEMENTATION

Strategic Goal 2 - Build the capacity of the local workforce

Objective	Action	S	M	L
2.1 Promote tourism as a career	6. Develop and implement an awareness campaign		X	
	7. Visit Yukon high schools and career fairs to raise awareness of jobs and career opportunities in tourism and other related sectors		X	
	8. Work with stakeholders to increase the number of tourism programs in high schools			X
	9. Develop/adapt existing sustainable tourism and Indigenous tourism programs targeting youth			X
2.2 Increase co-operative education and work-integrated opportunities in the Yukon	10. Work with partners toward developing co-operative education programs in the Yukon			X
	11. Identify work-integrated opportunities with stakeholders to allow local youth, especially First Nations youth, to participate more actively in the workforce		X	
2.3 Develop international opportunities to build capacity for local youth	12. Advocate/encourage Yukon University to develop inter-institutional agreements with universities internationally for students' mobility			X

IMPLEMENTATION

Strategic Goal 3 - Attract a reliable supply of outside workers

Objective	Action	S	M	L
3.1 Promote the Yukon as a place to live, learn, and work	13. Market the Yukon as a desirable place to live and work in collaboration with other stakeholders		X	
	14. Create a strategic calendar of job fairs	X		
	15. Facilitate the relationship between outside educational institutions and Yukon employers		X	
3.2 Ease Yukon businesses' access to foreign workers	16. Advocate for the revival of the Yukon Temporary Foreign Worker Program	X		
	17. Advocate for increased immigrant settlement services in the Yukon	X		
3.3 Ease workers' access to housing	18. Advocate for better grants and subsidies for affordable housing and housing development on Yukon University's property	X		
	19. Provide information to businesses regarding their options to support workers' housing	X		
	20. Prepare an information package for newcomers regarding housing		X	
	21. Create a hosting program for seasonal workers		X	



Credit: Leonard Laub

Contact

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