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A Tourism Development Program for Northern Ontario

ONTARIO ASSOCIATON OF COMMUNITY FUTURES DEVELOPMENT CORPORATIONS

TOURISM NORTHERN ONTARIO

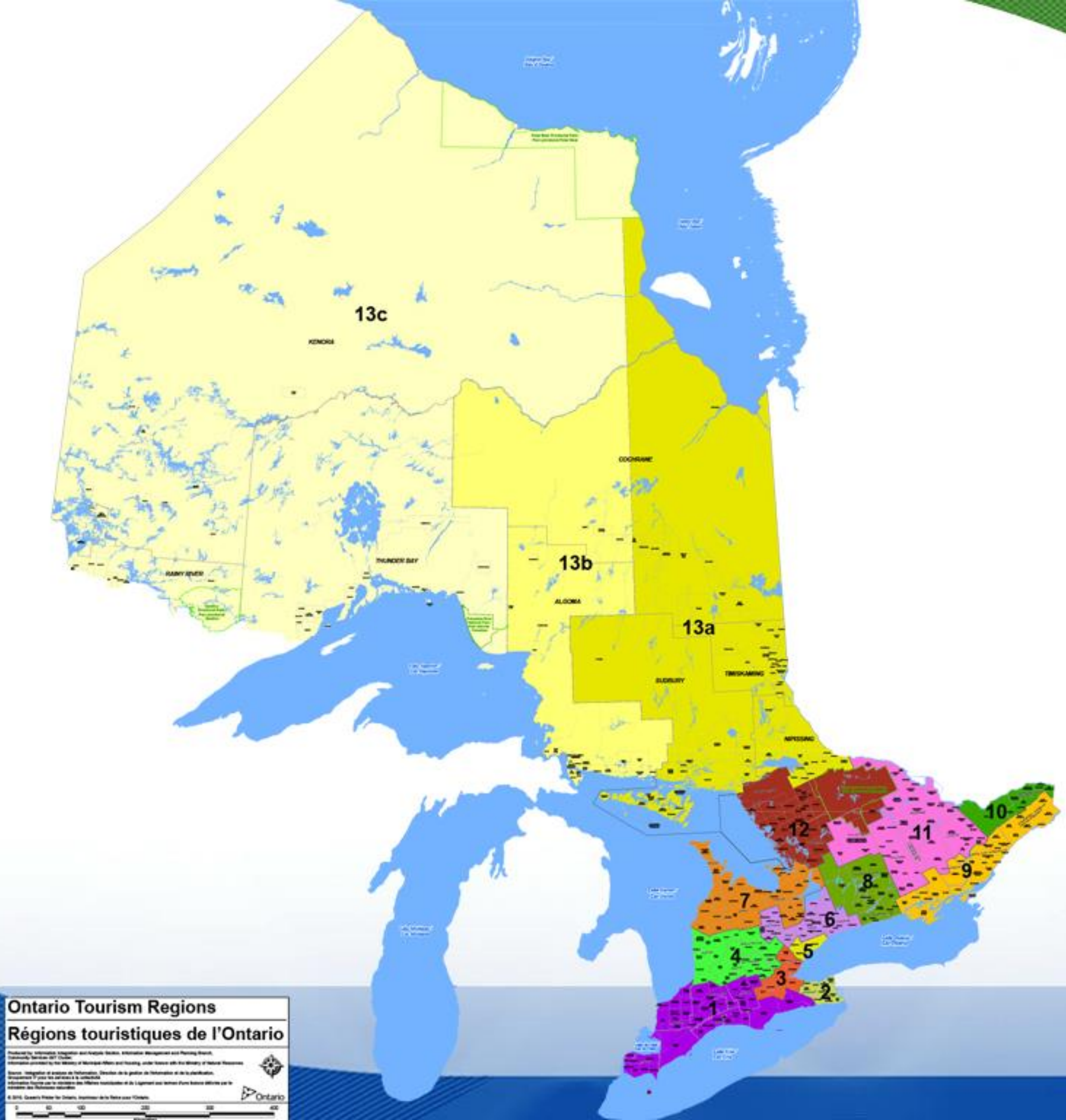
Ontario
Northern Ontario Heritage Fund Corporation
Société de gestion du Fonds du patrimoine du Nord de l'Ontario

Ontario

FedNor

Canada

EXPLORERS' EDGE
Naturally Adventurous


13c
KENORA
COCHRANE
RAINY RIVER
THUNDER BAY
13b
ALGOMA
13a
SUDBURY
TIMISKAMING
NIPISSING
12
10
11
9
8
7
6
5
4
3
2
1
Ontario Tourism Regions
Régions touristiques de l'Ontario
Ontario
0
50
100
200
300
400

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Tourism in Northern Ontario

- 8.1 million visitors spending over $1.5 billion in 2012 in the region;
- 40% of Northern Ontario's workforce is employed in the tourism industry;
- One in four businesses in Northern Ontario are tourism related;
- Northern Ontario's tourism economy is larger than five provincial and three territorial tourism economies.

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Partnerships

Working with Partners to Grow Northern Ontario's Tourism Economy

- Investment of $1.5 million for TEN pilot over the next 2.5 years

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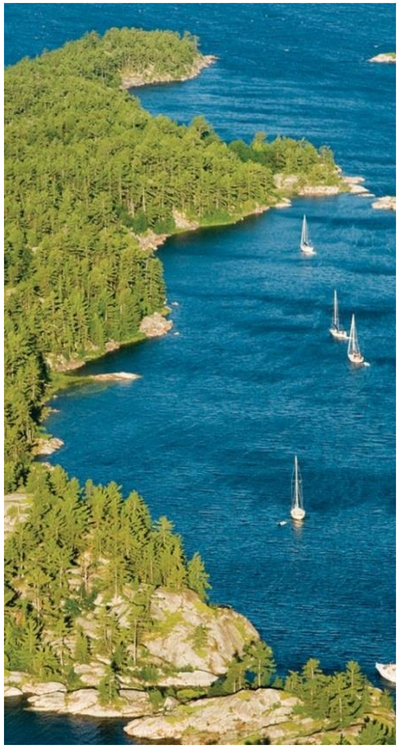
Northern Ontario
Product Development Strategy



- **Experience Shift**
- **Culture Shift**
- **Quality Shift**

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Experience Shift

Focus efforts on product development with the most potential to advance tourism in Northern Ontario.

Priorities: angling, nature and adventure,

touring, gateways and urban communities,

cycling, cultural, international markets,

snowmobiling and wayfinding.

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Culture Shift

Focus on creating a "Culture of Excellence" for the delivery of Northern Ontario tourism products and experiences.

Priority: Programs designed to increase capacity for operators, organizations and communities.

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Quality Shift

Focus on creating a 'Culture of Quality' that generates investment, commitment and support for strategic tourism product development in Northern Ontario.

Priority: Tourism Excellence North

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What is TEN?

1. A suite of training solutions:

- Self-learning
- Group learning
- Personalized Coaching / Mentorship

2. An orientation program

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What will TEN do?

1. Improve and Enhance Operator Quality
2. Ignite Innovation
3. Build Great Visitor Experiences
4. Create Vibrant Tourism Communities
5. Invest in Tourism

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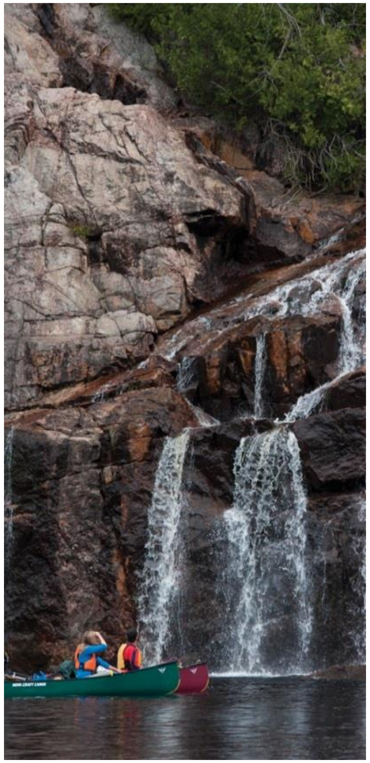
Who is TEN for?



- Operators
- Organizations
- Communities

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TEN for Operators

Self-Assessment for Operators

- Ten Essentials of Successful Travel Products & Experiences
- Visitor Appeal Assessment Tool
- Case Studies

Group Learning for Operators

- Experience Travel Training for Operators
- Best Practices Missions

Personalized Coaching for Operators

- Fast Track to Success

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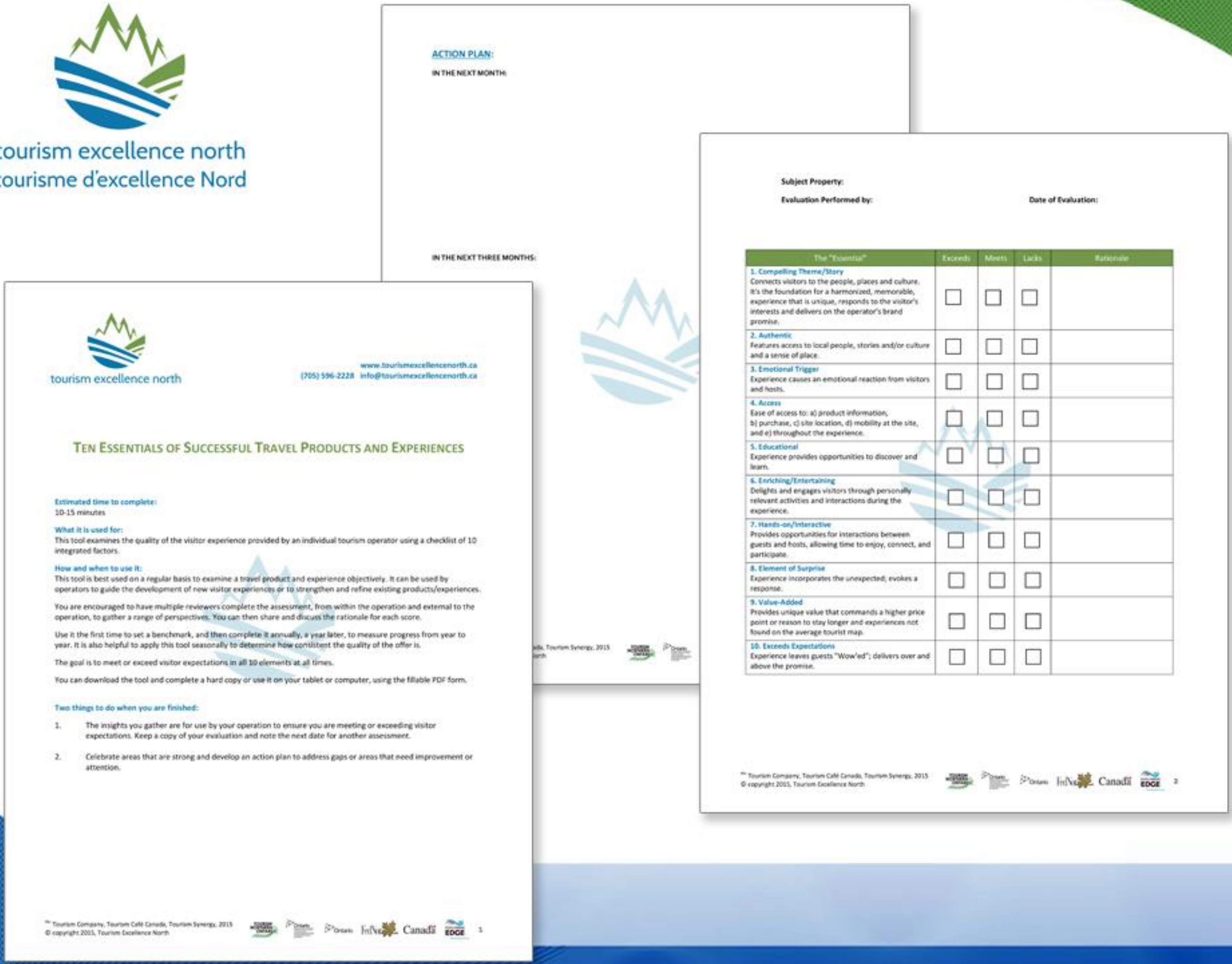

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Ten Essentials of Successful Travel Products and Experiences

Estimated time to complete:
10-15 minutes

What it is used for:
This tool examines the quality of the visitor experience provided by an individual tourism operator using a checklist of 10 integrated factors.

How and when to use it:
This tool is best used on a regular basis to examine a travel product and experience objectively. It can be used by operators to guide the development of new visitor experiences or to strengthen and refine existing products/experiences.

You are encouraged to have multiple reviewers complete the assessment, from within the operation and external to the operation, to gather a range of perspectives. You can then share and discuss the rationale for each score.

Use it the first time to set a benchmark, and then complete it annually, a year later, to measure progress from year to year. It is also helpful to apply this tool seasonally to determine how consistent the quality of the offer is.

The goal is to meet or exceed visitor expectations in all 10 elements at all times.

You can download the tool and complete a hard copy or use it on your tablet or computer, using the fillable PDF form.

Two things to do when you are finished:

1. The insights you gather are for use by your operation to ensure you are meeting or exceeding visitor expectations. Keep a copy of your evaluation and note the next date for another assessment.
2. Celebrate areas that are strong and develop an action plan to address gaps or areas that need improvement or attention.

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Subject Property:

Evaluation Performed by: **Date of Evaluation:**

The "Essential"	Exceeds	Meets	Lacks	Rationale
1. Compelling Theme/Story Connects visitors to the people, places and culture. It's the foundation for a harmonized, memorable, experience that is unique, responds to the visitor's interests and delivers on the operator's brand promise.	☐	☐	☐	
2. Authentic Features access to local people, stories and/or culture and a sense of place.	☐	☐	☐	
3. Emotional Trigger Experience causes an emotional reaction from visitors and hosts.	☐	☐	☐	
4. Access Ease of access to: a) product information, b) purchase, c) site location, d) mobility at the site, and e) throughout the experience.	☐	☐	☐	
5. Educational Experience provides opportunities to discover and learn.	☐	☐	☐	
6. Enriching/Entertaining Delights and engages visitors through personally relevant activities and interactions during the experience.	☐	☐	☐	
7. Hands-on/Interactive Provides opportunities for interactions between guests and hosts, allowing time to enjoy, connect, and participate.	☐	☐	☐	
8. Element of Surprise Experience incorporates the unexpected; evokes a response.	☐	☐	☐	
9. Value-Added Provides unique value that commands a higher price point or reason to stay longer and experiences not found on the average tourist map.	☐	☐	☐	
10. Exceeds Expectations Experience leaves guests "Wow'ed"; delivers over and above the promise.	☐	☐	☐	

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ACTION PLAN:

IN THE NEXT MONTH:

IN THE NEXT THREE MONTHS:

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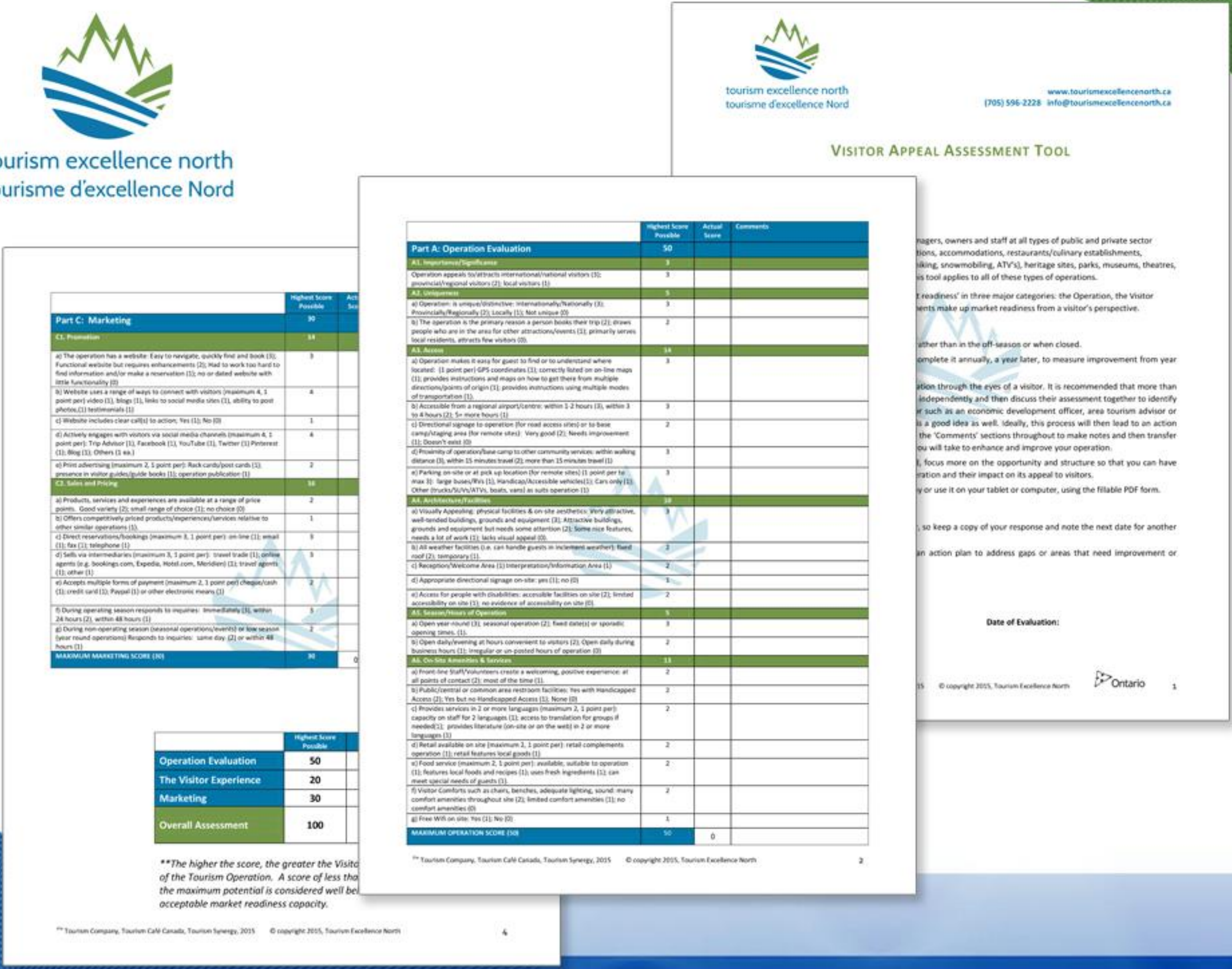

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VISITOR APPEAL ASSESSMENT TOOL

nagers, owners and staff at all types of public and private sector
tions, accommodations, restaurants/culinary establishments,
iking, snowmobiling, ATV's), heritage sites, parks, museums, theatres,
is tool applies to all of these types of operations.

t readiness' in three major categories: the Operation, the Visitor
ents make up market readiness from a visitor's perspective.

ather than in the off-season or when closed.

omplete it annually, a year later, to measure improvement from year

ation through the eyes of a visitor. It is recommended that more than
independently and then discuss their assessment together to identify
r such as an economic development officer, area tourism advisor or
is a good idea as well. Ideally, this process will then lead to an action
the 'Comments' sections throughout to make notes and then transfer
ou will take to enhance and improve your operation.

, focus more on the opportunity and structure so that you can have
ration and their impact on its appeal to visitors.

y or use it on your tablet or computer, using the fillable PDF form.

, so keep a copy of your response and note the next date for another

an action plan to address gaps or areas that need improvement or

Date of Evaluation:

	Highest Score Possible	Actual Score	Comments
Part A: Operation Evaluation	50		
A1. Importance/Significance	3		
Operation appeals to/attracts international/national visitors (3); provincial/regional visitors (2); local visitors (1)	3		
A2. Uniqueness	5		
a) Operation: is unique/distinctive: Internationally/Nationally (3); Provincially/Regionally (2); Locally (1); Not unique (0)	3		
b) The operation is the primary reason a person books their trip (2); draws people who are in the area for other attractions/events (1); primarily serves local residents, attracts few visitors (0).	2		
A3. Access	14		
a) Operation makes it easy for guest to find or to understand where located: (1 point per) GPS coordinates (1); correctly listed on on-line maps (1); provides instructions and maps on how to get there from multiple directions/points of origin (1); provides instructions using multiple modes of transportation (1).	3		
b) Accessible from a regional airport/centre: within 1-2 hours (3), within 3 to 4 hours (2); 5+ more hours (1)	3		
c) Directional signage to operation (for road access sites) or to base camp/staging area (for remote sites): Very good (2); Needs improvement (1); Doesn't exist (0)	2		
d) Proximity of operation/base camp to other community services: within walking distance (3), within 15 minutes travel (2); more than 15 minutes travel (1)	3		
e) Parking on-site or at pick up location (for remote sites) (1 point per to max 3): large buses/RVs (1), Handicap/Accessible vehicles(1); Cars only (1) Other (trucks/SUVs/ATVs, boats, vans) as suits operation (1)	3		
A4. Architecture/Facilities	10		
a) Visually Appealing: physical facilities & on-site aesthetics: Very attractive, well-tended buildings, grounds and equipment (3); Attractive buildings, grounds and equipment but needs some attention (2); Some nice features, needs a lot of work (1); lacks visual appeal (0).	3		
b) All weather facilities (i.e. can handle guests in inclement weather): fixed roof (2); temporary (1).	2		
c) Reception/Welcome Area (1) Interpretation/Information Area (1)	2		
d) Appropriate directional signage on-site: yes (1); no (0)	1		
e) Access for people with disabilities: accessible facilities on site (2); limited accessibility on site (1); no evidence of accessibility on site (0).	2		
A5. Season/Hours of Operation	5		
a) Open year-round (3); seasonal operation (2); fixed date(s) or sporadic opening times. (1).	3		
b) Open daily/evening at hours convenient to visitors (2); Open daily during business hours (1); Irregular or un-posted hours of operation (0)	2		
A6. On-Site Amenities & Services	13		
a) Front-line Staff/Volunteers create a welcoming, positive experience: at all points of contact (2); most of the time (1).	2		
b) Public/central or common area restroom facilities: Yes with Handicapped Access (2); Yes but no Handicapped Access (1); None (0)	2		
c) Provides services in 2 or more languages (maximum 2, 1 point per): capacity on staff for 2 languages (1); access to translation for groups if needed(1); provides literature (on-site or on the web) in 2 or more languages (1)	2		
d) Retail available on site (maximum 2, 1 point per): retail complements operation (1); retail features local goods (1)	2		
e) Food service (maximum 2, 1 point per): available, suitable to operation (1); features local foods and recipes (1); uses fresh ingredients (1); can meet special needs of guests (1).	2		
f) Visitor Comforts such as chairs, benches, adequate lighting, sound: many comfort amenities throughout site (2); limited comfort amenities (1); no comfort amenities (0)	2		
g) Free Wifi on site: Yes (1); No (0)	1		
MAXIMUM OPERATION SCORE (50)	50	0	

	Highest Score Possible	Act Sco
Part C: Marketing	30	
C1. Promotion	14	
a) The operation has a website: Easy to navigate, quickly find and book (3); Functional website but requires enhancements (2); Had to work too hard to find information and/or make a reservation (1); no or dated website with little functionality (0)	3	
b) Website uses a range of ways to connect with visitors (maximum 4, 1 point per) video (1), blogs (1), links to social media sites (1), ability to post photos,(1) testimonials (1)	4	
c) Website includes clear call(s) to action; Yes (1); No (0)	1	
d) Actively engages with visitors via social media channels (maximum 4, 1 point per): Trip Advisor (1), Facebook (1), YouTube (1), Twitter (1) Pinterest (1); Blog (1); Others (1 ea.)	4	
e) Print advertising (maximum 2, 1 point per): Rack cards/post cards (1); presence in visitor guides/guide books (1); operation publication (1)	2	
C2. Sales and Pricing	16	
a) Products, services and experiences are available at a range of price points. Good variety (2); small range of choice (1); no choice (0)	2	
b) Offers competitively priced products/experiences/services relative to other similar operations (1).	1	
c) Direct reservations/bookings (maximum 3, 1 point per): on-line (1); email (1); fax (1); telephone (1)	3	
d) Sells via intermediaries (maximum 3, 1 point per): travel trade (1); online agents (e.g. bookings.com, Expedia, Hotel.com, Meridien) (1); travel agents (1); other (1)	3	
e) Accepts multiple forms of payment (maximum 2, 1 point per) cheque/cash (1); credit card (1); Paypal (1) or other electronic means (1)	2	
f) During operating season responds to inquiries: Immediately (3), within 24 hours (2), within 48 hours (1)	3	
g) During non-operating season (seasonal operations/events) or low season (year round operations) Responds to inquiries: same day (2) or within 48 hours (1)	2	
MAXIMUM MARKETING SCORE (30)	30	0

	Highest Score Possible
Operation Evaluation	50
The Visitor Experience	20
Marketing	30
Overall Assessment	100

***The higher the score, the greater the Visito*
of the Tourism Operation. A score of less tha
the maximum potential is considered well be
acceptable market readiness capacity.

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TEN for Communities & Destinations

Self Assessment for Communities

- Ten Essentials for Successful Touring Routes
- Community Tourism Assessment Index
- Case Studies

Group Learning for Communities

- Enhancing the Visitor Experience for operators in your community
- Best Practices Missions

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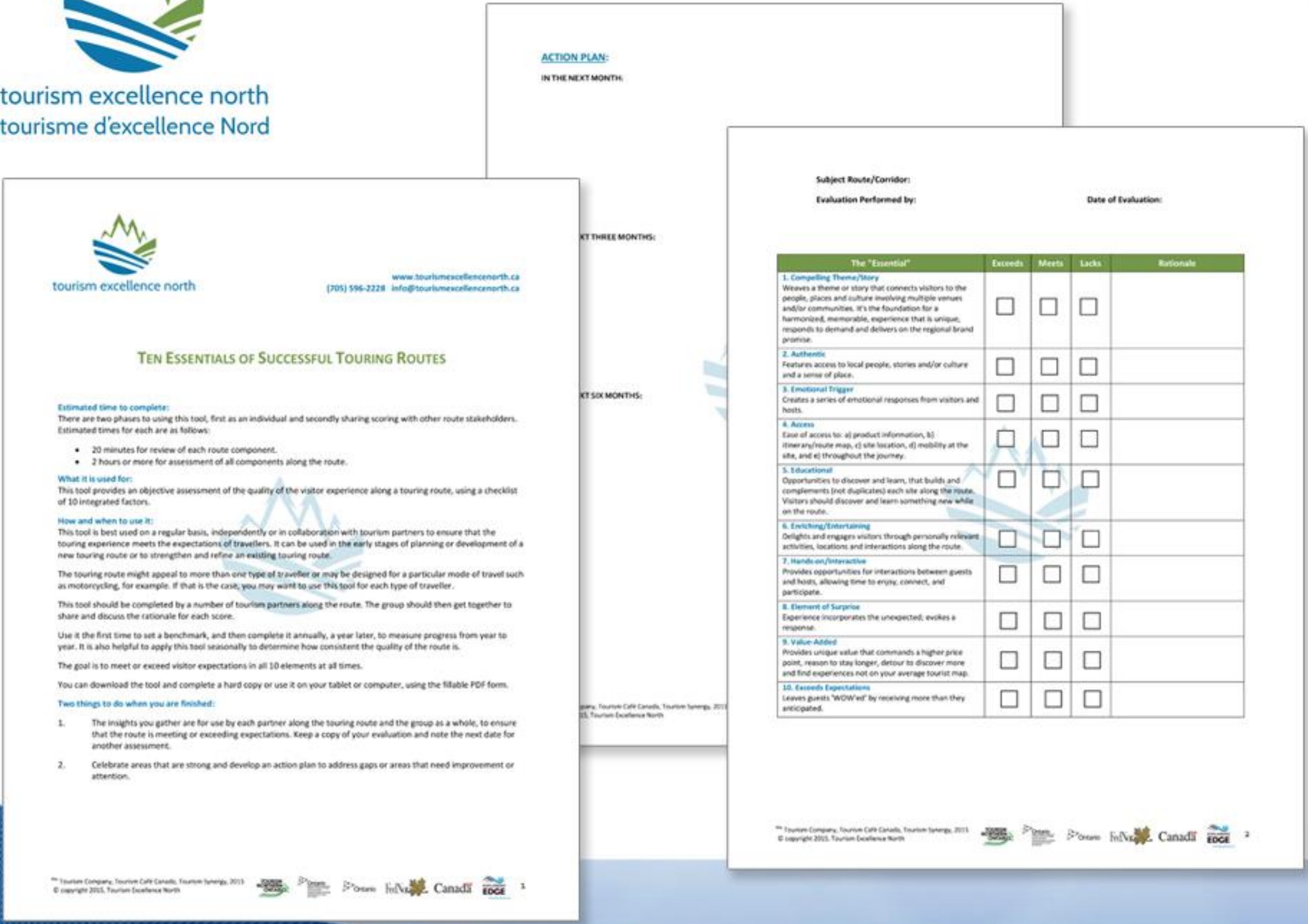

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TEN ESSENTIALS OF SUCCESSFUL TOURING ROUTES

Estimated time to complete:
There are two phases to using this tool, first as an individual and secondly sharing scoring with other route stakeholders. Estimated times for each are as follows:

- 20 minutes for review of each route component.
- 2 hours or more for assessment of all components along the route.

What it is used for:
This tool provides an objective assessment of the quality of the visitor experience along a touring route, using a checklist of 10 integrated factors.

How and when to use it:
This tool is best used on a regular basis, independently or in collaboration with tourism partners to ensure that the touring experience meets the expectations of travellers. It can be used in the early stages of planning or development of a new touring route or to strengthen and refine an existing touring route.

The touring route might appeal to more than one type of traveller or may be designed for a particular mode of travel such as motorcycling, for example. If that is the case, you may want to use this tool for each type of traveller.

This tool should be completed by a number of tourism partners along the route. The group should then get together to share and discuss the rationale for each score.

Use it the first time to set a benchmark, and then complete it annually, a year later, to measure progress from year to year. It is also helpful to apply this tool seasonally to determine how consistent the quality of the route is.

The goal is to meet or exceed visitor expectations in all 10 elements at all times.

You can download the tool and complete a hard copy or use it on your tablet or computer, using the fillable PDF form.

Two things to do when you are finished:

1. The insights you gather are for use by each partner along the touring route and the group as a whole, to ensure that the route is meeting or exceeding expectations. Keep a copy of your evaluation and note the next date for another assessment.
2. Celebrate areas that are strong and develop an action plan to address gaps or areas that need improvement or attention.

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ACTION PLAN:

IN THE NEXT MONTH:

XT THREE MONTHS:

XT SIX MONTHS:

Subject Route/Corridor:

Evaluation Performed by: **Date of Evaluation:**

The "Essential"	Exceeds	Meets	Lacks	Rationale
1. Compelling Theme/Story Weaves a theme or story that connects visitors to the people, places and culture involving multiple venues and/or communities. It's the foundation for a harmonized, memorable, experience that is unique, responds to demand and delivers on the regional brand promise.	☐	☐	☐	
2. Authentic Features access to local people, stories and/or culture and a sense of place.	☐	☐	☐	
3. Emotional Trigger Creates a series of emotional responses from visitors and hosts.	☐	☐	☐	
4. Access Ease of access to: a) product information, b) itinerary/route map, c) site location, d) mobility at the site, and e) throughout the journey.	☐	☐	☐	
5. Educational Opportunities to discover and learn, that builds and complements (not duplicates) each site along the route. Visitors should discover and learn something new while on the route.	☐	☐	☐	
6. Enriching/Entertaining Delights and engages visitors through personally relevant activities, locations and interactions along the route.	☐	☐	☐	
7. Hands-on/Interactive Provides opportunities for interactions between guests and hosts, allowing time to enjoy, connect, and participate.	☐	☐	☐	
8. Element of Surprise Experience incorporates the unexpected; evokes a response.	☐	☐	☐	
9. Value-Added Provides unique value that commands a higher price point, reason to stay longer, detour to discover more and find experiences not on your average tourist map.	☐	☐	☐	
10. Exceeds Expectations Leaves guests "WOW'ed" by receiving more than they anticipated.	☐	☐	☐	

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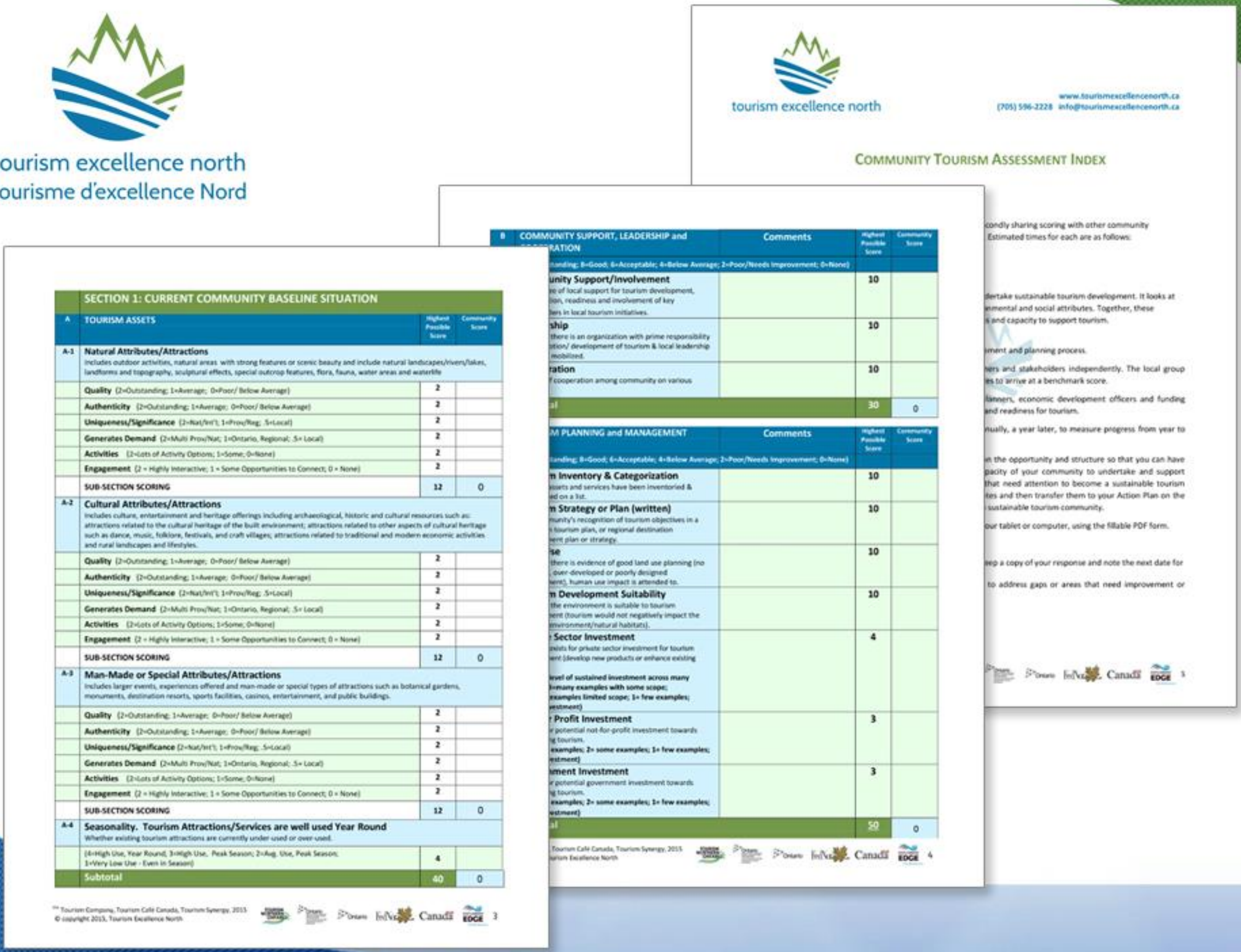

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COMMUNITY TOURISM ASSESSMENT INDEX

condly sharing scoring with other community
Estimated times for each are as follows:

dertake sustainable tourism development. It looks at
nmental and social attributes. Together, these
s and capacity to support tourism.

ment and planning process.

ners and stakeholders independently. The local group
es to arrive at a benchmark score.

lanners, economic development officers and funding
and readiness for tourism.

nually, a year later, to measure progress from year to

n the opportunity and structure so that you can have
pacity of your community to undertake and support
that need attention to become a sustainable tourism
ites and then transfer them to your Action Plan on the
sustainable tourism community.

our tablet or computer, using the fillable PDF form.

eep a copy of your response and note the next date for

to address gaps or areas that need improvement or

SECTION 1: CURRENT COMMUNITY BASELINE SITUATION

A	TOURISM ASSETS	Highest Possible Score	Community Score
A-1	**Natural Attributes/Attractions** Includes outdoor activities, natural areas with strong features or scenic beauty and include natural landscapes/rivers/lakes, landforms and topography, sculptural effects, special outcrop features, flora, fauna, water areas and waterlife		
	Quality (2=Outstanding; 1=Average; 0=Poor/ Below Average)	2	
	Authenticity (2=Outstanding; 1=Average; 0=Poor/ Below Average)	2	
	Uniqueness/Significance (2=Nat/Int'l; 1=Prov/Reg; .5=Local)	2	
	Generates Demand (2=Multi Prov/Nat; 1=Ontario, Regional; .5= Local)	2	
	Activities (2=Lots of Activity Options; 1=Some; 0=None)	2	
	Engagement (2 = Highly Interactive; 1 = Some Opportunities to Connect; 0 = None)	2	
	SUB-SECTION SCORING	12	0
A-2	**Cultural Attributes/Attractions** Includes culture, entertainment and heritage offerings including archaeological, historic and cultural resources such as: attractions related to the cultural heritage of the built environment; attractions related to other aspects of cultural heritage such as dance, music, folklore, festivals, and craft villages; attractions related to traditional and modern economic activities and rural landscapes and lifestyles.		
	Quality (2=Outstanding; 1=Average; 0=Poor/ Below Average)	2	
	Authenticity (2=Outstanding; 1=Average; 0=Poor/ Below Average)	2	
	Uniqueness/Significance (2=Nat/Int'l; 1=Prov/Reg; .5=Local)	2	
	Generates Demand (2=Multi Prov/Nat; 1=Ontario, Regional; .5= Local)	2	
	Activities (2=Lots of Activity Options; 1=Some; 0=None)	2	
	Engagement (2 = Highly Interactive; 1 = Some Opportunities to Connect; 0 = None)	2	
	SUB-SECTION SCORING	12	0
A-3	**Man-Made or Special Attributes/Attractions** Includes larger events, experiences offered and man-made or special types of attractions such as botanical gardens, monuments, destination resorts, sports facilities, casinos, entertainment, and public buildings.		
	Quality (2=Outstanding; 1=Average; 0=Poor/ Below Average)	2	
	Authenticity (2=Outstanding; 1=Average; 0=Poor/ Below Average)	2	
	Uniqueness/Significance (2=Nat/Int'l; 1=Prov/Reg; .5=Local)	2	
	Generates Demand (2=Multi Prov/Nat; 1=Ontario, Regional; .5= Local)	2	
	Activities (2=Lots of Activity Options; 1=Some; 0=None)	2	
	Engagement (2 = Highly Interactive; 1 = Some Opportunities to Connect; 0 = None)	2	
	SUB-SECTION SCORING	12	0
A-4	**Seasonality. Tourism Attractions/Services are well used Year Round** Whether existing tourism attractions are currently under-used or over-used.		
	(4=High Use, Year Round; 3=High Use, Peak Season; 2=Avg. Use, Peak Season; 1=Very Low Use - Even in Season)	4	
	Subtotal	40	0

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B	COMMUNITY SUPPORT, LEADERSHIP and RATION	Comments	Highest Possible Score	Community Score
	tanding; 8=Good; 6=Acceptable; 4=Below Average; 2=Poor/Needs Improvement; 0=None)			
	unity Support/Involvement e of local support for tourism development, ion, readiness and involvement of key ers in local tourism initiatives.		10	
	ship there is an organization with prime responsibility tion/ development of tourism & local leadership mobilized.		10	
	ration f cooperation among community on various		10	
	al		30	0

	M PLANNING and MANAGEMENT	Comments	Highest Possible Score	Community Score
	tanding; 8=Good; 6=Acceptable; 4=Below Average; 2=Poor/Needs Improvement; 0=None)			
	n Inventory & Categorization ssets and services have been inventoried & ed on a list.		10	
	n Strategy or Plan (written) munity's recognition of tourism objectives in a tourism plan, or regional destination ent plan or strategy.		10	
	se there is evidence of good land use planning (no over-developed or poorly designed ent), human use impact is attended to.		10	
	n Development Suitability the environment is suitable to tourism ent (tourism would not negatively impact the environment/natural habitats).		10	
	Sector Investment xists for private sector investment for tourism ent (develop new products or enhance existing **evel of sustained investment across many** **=many examples with some scope;** **examples limited scope; 1= few examples;** **estment)**		4	
	Profit Investment r potential not-for-profit investment towards g tourism. **examples; 2= some examples; 1= few examples;** **estment)**		3	
	ment Investment r potential government investment towards g tourism. **examples; 2= some examples; 1= few examples;** **estment)**		3	
	al		50	0

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TEN for Brokers

Orientation Program Sessions

In person training providing hands-on experience with TEN's priority training.

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Benefits of TEN

- Operators and communities receive practical, useful advice to improve quality and create new, higher yield experiences and ultimately, more revenues.
- Strategically advances product development priorities.
- Operators have opportunities to develop experiential product.
- Long-term advancement of the tourism industry in Northern Ontario.

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