

NEWS RELEASE

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Better practices needed for Travel Manitoba to achieve tourism goals

WINNIPEG – Travel Manitoba does not have adequate systems and practices in place to help achieve its tourism goals and objectives, says Auditor General Norm Ricard. These findings are contained in a new report, *Management of Provincial Tourism*, released today.

“The tourism sector is a strong contributor to Manitoba's economy,” said Ricard. “Travel Manitoba has developed a number of plans and strategies to support and grow this sector. It now needs to focus on implementing these plans and strategies, and reporting on the results.”

Travel Manitoba is a Crown agency, and has been the lead marketing and development body for tourism in Manitoba since 2017. The agency's plans and strategies include its three-year business plan (2019-22), the Provincial Tourism Strategy (2019), the Northern Manitoba Tourism Strategy (2017), and the Manitoba Indigenous Tourism Strategy (2019).

The Auditor General found that while the plans and strategies had goals and objectives, they did not fully consider the risks that could affect tourism. For example, Ricard noted that Churchill is one of the main drivers of tourism to Manitoba, and a centerpiece of Travel Manitoba's marketing, yet the business plan identifies climate change as a low risk to tourism. “The loss of the polar bear's environment due to climate change would have a significant impact on tourism,” Ricard said. As well, Travel Manitoba's tourism plans and strategies do not have implementation plans, with clear steps, milestones and required resources. “Implementation plans are important because they set out the steps required to achieve overall goals,” Ricard said.

The audit found that while Travel Manitoba consulted with the business community and incorporated this feedback into the plans and strategies, there were no separate consultations with key government departments early on in the process. “By not having key stakeholders in the provincial government involved earlier in the process, barriers to achievement or other information not previously identified may have been overlooked or omitted,” Ricard said.

The audit found that monitoring of some of strategies is at the early stages. For example, there are key performance indicators in place for the recently released Provincial Tourism Strategy. However, for strategies that have been in place for several years, like the Northern Tourism Strategy, only limited monitoring has occurred. “Monitoring is an important management practice to ensure continued progress towards goals, and the achievement of desired results,” Ricard said.

The Auditor General also noted that Travel Manitoba reports annually on progress implementing its business plan. “Public reporting is important, as it demonstrates how resources are being used for the taxpayer’s benefit,” Ricard said.

Tourism is the province’s third largest revenue generator, after agriculture and mining. Nearly 11.4 million visitors spent over \$1.6 billion in Manitoba in 2017. Travel Manitoba’s goal is to reach 12.6 million visitors and \$2.2 billion in tourism spending by 2022.

Ricard’s report contains four recommendations. **To view the report, please visit**

<https://www.oag.mb.ca/reports>.

ABOUT THE AUDITOR GENERAL OF MANITOBA

The Auditor General is an officer of the Legislative Assembly mandated to provide independent assurance and advice to Members of the Legislative Assembly. Through its audits, the Office of the Auditor General seeks to identify opportunities to strengthen government operations and enhance performance management and reporting. For more information visit <http://www.oag.mb.ca/>

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