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Product Development Strategy & Implementation Plan 2015

*Northeastern
Ontario*
CANADA



Photo: Ontario Tourism Marketing Partnership Corporation





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Introduction

Northeastern Ontario is an independent, industry-led, not for profit organization that supports the tourism sector in the north east portion of Northern Ontario. Referred to as Region 13A, Northeastern Ontario (NeONT) is a sub-region to Regional Tourism Organization 13 (known as Tourism Northern Ontario) which is made up of three regions.

Northeastern Ontario is taking steps to adapt to competitive tourism market challenges, by taking control of their tourism offerings and embracing product development as an important step in the marketing process.

As with any initiative that Northeastern Ontario undertakes, product development must fit within the vision and mission of the organization.

Vision

Northeastern Ontario is a key influencer in developing a thriving and sustainable tourism sector in Northeastern Ontario, which is recognized as a key economic driver for the region.

Mission

To build partnerships, increase visitor awareness, and develop strong connections with sector stakeholders to increase tourism within Northeastern Ontario.



Building the Framework for Tourism Product Development in Northeastern Ontario

Outlining the framework for product development in Northeastern Ontario will assist in future product development initiatives undertaken by the region and will help to outline the framework for the current *Strategy & Implementation Plan*.

Vision for Product Development in Northeastern Ontario

Northeastern Ontario and its tourism stakeholders will work together to strategically develop tourism experiences in Northeastern Ontario that will, when fully developed and taken to market, attract visitors and encourage tourism spending.

Guiding Principles for Product Development in Northeastern Ontario

Northeastern Ontario will support this vision by:

- Leveraging and building off of knowledge learned and strategic recommendations contained in current strategic research surrounding tourism in the region,
- Ensuring product development initiatives support Northeastern Ontario's overall strategic focus,
- Ensuring product development initiatives support and ultimately feed into Northeastern Ontario's best bet pillars and marketing focus,
- Ensuring product development initiatives leverage and build upon Northern Ontario's product development approach as well as Northern Ontario's product development priorities,
- Ensuring product development initiatives align and cascade with Northern Ontario's marketing strategy and tactics, and
- Ensuring product development projects undertaken by Northeastern Ontario fit the defined criteria for acceptance that supports the above principals.



Building the Product Development Plan 2015 - The Process

The *Product Development Strategy and Implementation Plan 2015* focuses on five strategic product development initiatives. Guided by the project committee which included the Northeastern Ontario Product Development Committee (PDC) and supported by the Northeastern Ontario Marketing Committee (M5) and staff, the process followed three phases to reach the final *Strategy & Implementation Plan*.

The first phase of the project involved looking at the key strategic research that has been recently completed for Northeastern Ontario and for Northern Ontario as a whole. The research looked at the key facts from the following reports and their implications for product development in NeONT.

- *Northeastern Ontario Tourism Three Year Strategic Plan & Marketing Plan and Addendum by the Board, 2014*
- *Northeastern Ontario branding, 2014*
- *Northern Ontario Tourism Product Development Strategy, 2014*
- *Northern Ontario Wayfinding Strategy, 2014*
- *Tourism Northern Ontario Business Plan (draft) 2015/16*
- *Tourism Northern Ontario Implementation Plan 2015*
- *Tourism Northern Ontario Marketing Plan 2015/16*
- *Tourism Excellence North, A Tourism Development Program for Northern Ontario, 2015 (TEN)*

From this research a list of 17 possible product development initiatives were outlined (nine experiences and eight tactics), which were presented to the committee for review and comment.

The second phase of the project was formulated to determine which initiatives to further develop as part of the current implementation plan. Designed to ensure that the process fit the vision and guiding principles, the justification looked at the research that has been completed recently for both Northeastern Ontario and Tourism Northern Ontario and determined how the initiatives fit with the recommendations of this research. Additionally each initiative was scored against the criteria for product development which had been previously developed by the Product Development Committee and which was augmented as part of this process (see Appendix 1).

The justification report, which was presented to the project committee, outlined the overall fit of each of the 17 initiatives (see Appendix 2) and recommended five experiences and three tactics or activities to move forward to implementation including the following:



Experiences:

1. Top 5 BIG
2. Experience Fishing Program
3. Cluster of Best Bet Lodge Experiences
4. Fully Develop Temiskaming Loop
5. Group of Seven

Foundational Tactics:

1. Embrace the TEN program
2. Product Development Budget Augmentation
3. Participate in TNO Product Development Groups

These recommendations were presented to and approved by the Board of Directors for implementation.

Foundations for Product Development in Northeastern Ontario

The foundational tactics or activities with the best fit assist us in beginning to outline the foundations for product development in Northern Ontario. All of the foundations that follow represent overarching activities or fundamental ideas that assist and guide Northeastern Ontario as the implementation plans for the five experiences begin to take shape.

Embrace the Tourism Excellence North (TEN) Program as one means to increase the quality of experiences in the region.

The *Northern Ontario Tourism Product Development Strategy* recommended the development of a program to spearhead a quality shift for experiences and offers in the North. Tourism Excellence North (TEN) provides a suite of training solutions, customized for Northern Ontario, inspired in part by the success and impact of similar programs used in Atlantic Canada and elsewhere. TEN is designed to increase the quality and number of the tourism offers in Northern Ontario and is set to launch in 2015/16. NeONT should embrace the program to the fullest extent, encouraging participation by its operators and communities to ensure the experiences developed as part of this implementation plan are best in class. Of particular relevance in the short term are a number of free self-administered tools for operators and communities/destinations, available in both French and English.



Support shifts in budget and resources to ensure that product development takes a more prominent role in tourism activities in the region, honoring the notion that product development is the first pillar of marketing and that high quality experiences are needed to take to market.

The *Northern Ontario Tourism Product Development Strategy* recommends that the region “Adjust budgets at the TNO, sub-regional and DMO levels to reflect a strategic Northern Ontario product development focus.” While funds may not always be directly under the control of NeONT, there are several ways that the sub-region can support this notion.

- Support should be articulated at the board level for a culture shift that allocates more funds to product development at a regional level through Tourism Northern Ontario and the allocation of their budgets on an annual basis.
- Support should also be indicated at the board level for a culture shift that supports the allocation of service agreement payments to the sub-regions which include not only marketing funds, but also product development funds starting in 2016/17. NeONT business planning for the 2016/17 year should take this re-allocation into account.
- Where possible, NeONT internal funds raised through partnership fees should be used to leverage further funding that supports product development.
- NeONT should commit time and energy to securing further external funding needed to support product development initiatives and to allow leveraging of funds and a shift in overall budgets to a larger percentage of funds being spent on product development.
- Northeastern Ontario should embrace a role in administering product development projects, and provide resources including staff time to administer initiatives effectively where it is beneficial to have initiatives lead at the sub-regional level.

Participate in Northern Ontario Product Development Groups.

Tourism Northern Ontario is moving forward with setting up Product Development teams to explore opportunities and undertake initiatives in the priority pillars including fishing, nature & adventure, auto/rv touring and gateways & urban communities as well as the tertiary product, snowmobiling. NeONT should participate in these product development groups since:

- the product groups fit the current focus area for NeONT and Northern Ontario as a whole shares many of its best bet pillars,
- leveraging opportunities on a pan-northern basis is in some instances beneficial and can ensure a stronger product, as Northern Ontario as a whole shares many of its best bet pillars and the end consumer does not understand or care about geographic boundaries, and



- aligning NeONT activities with TNO initiatives follows the sub-regional business planning model supported by the Region.

NeONT participation will be supported by:

- having product development staff and/or Product Development Committee representation on the teams,
- encouraging the participation of relevant NeONT DMO/municipal representatives where there is a fit, and
- encouraging and providing suggestions for the inclusion of leading or visionary operator involvement where possible.

Ensure the experiences developed are best in class, by supporting best bet products through alignment with best bet market ready operators, while providing other operators with the tools needed to meet and exceed expectations to become a part of the program.

Working with best bet market ready operators has the ability to elevate the product offering in Northeastern Ontario. It also has the ability to motivate others to adapt and to undertake changes to become involved. Using a criteria based, formalized approach will solidify the reasoning surrounding who has the best fit with an experience and will give others details on changes that they can adopt to fit the program. Best in class experiences will ultimately lead to happy consumers who also visit ancillary services and attractions.

Undertake product development initiatives in partnership, with a leader appointed to drive the initiative forward.

Northeastern Ontario recognizes that partners are needed not only to fund product development projects, but that each partner provides different skills and knowledge that can, when effectively leveraged create a stronger product that is embraced by the region and its stakeholders. Northeastern Ontario also recognizes that current staff capacity is limited and partner time and resources are stretched, and that therefore outside resources may be needed to lead certain initiatives forward.

Recognizes that product development takes time, and invest the time and resources needed to ensure that products are fully and adequately developed before taking them to market. The process, in some instances, may take years to complete.



Experience Implementation Plans

The implementation plans for each of the five experiences have been outlined below, building on the foundations for product development. The details include the current situation surrounding products that are being enhanced, and case studies in the instance of new product developments. Timelines and budgets have been estimated and are based on the best information available at the current time. Possible project partners are indicated and a project lead has been recommended.





Experience Fishing Program

Case Study

Learn to Camp at Ontario Parks

<http://www.ontarioparks.com/learntocamp>

Initiated by Ontario Parks in 2011, the Learn to Camp program has been wildly successful at getting the reluctant audience to try camping. The program which provides a campsite at an Ontario Park, camping gear, knowledge and instruction, attempts to remove the barriers surrounding participant's knowledge, skills and the confidence needed to try camping. Focused on the urban southern Ontario market (particularly the Greater Toronto area) with an interest in the outdoors, estimates are that 70% of the program participants are made up of the New Canadian market.

The pilot program in 2011 had 800 participants at three Parks located close to the GTA. The program has grown to serve approximately 4,000 participants (1,000 families) at nine different Ontario Parks in 2014. Park locations reach as far north as Grundy Lake Provincial Park.

In a previous year, the program attempted to expand to Parks located in Northern Ontario and targeted the Northern Ontario market. The initiative was not successful as the market felt they already had camping knowledge and did not need to 'learn to camp'. The expansion did not attempt to target the southern Ontario market and draw them to Northern Ontario.

Learn to Camp takes place on most weekends and a few weekday dates from June to September and boasts a 95% capacity for weekend dates with the 5% deficiency due to cancellations. The program operates with a waiting list for participants. Transportation is not deemed to be a problem for participants, although a small portion of the program runs in conjunction with the Park Bus program as a way to target those GTA residents who do not drive or have access to a car.

Learn to Fish at Ontario Parks

<http://www.ontarioparks.com/learntocamp/learntofish>

In its third year, the Learn to Fish Program targets new fishers in urban southern Ontario. A collaborative program between the Ministry of Natural Resources & Forestry Fish & Wildlife Service and Ontario Parks, Learn to Fish began as a way to link Learn to Camp participants to the outdoor activity of fishing. Participants take part in a free two hour hands-on experience that provides instruction, equipment, bait and a promotional license. When launched in 2013, the program saw just over 2,000 people and took place at 4 Ontario Parks. In 2014 just over 4,000 people took part at six Ontario Parks including locations as far north as Grundy Lake Provincial Park. There was noticeable participation from the Chinese market and approximately 50% of the participants were from outside of the Learn to Camp program. 2015 will see the expansion to include a mobile program which will visit festivals and communities as well as Ontario Parks. Surveys suggest participants are eager to take part in more fishing activities.



OTMPC Motorsports Program Encourages New Riders

One of the current goals for the fishing industry is garnering new growth and interest in the sport. The fishing demographic is aging, and without renewed interest by a younger audience, could see declining numbers in future years.

The OTMPC motorsports program has taken an active role in attracting the interest of new motorcycle riders. To achieve this goal, OTMPC supports capacity building by raising awareness and interest in becoming a new motorcycle rider and in communicating with new riders. The Planet D/Motorsoul Riding School campaign targeted two well-known bloggers and followed them through the process of getting their license and taking their first rides.

Website: <http://www.motorsoul.ca/easy-steps-to-become-a-touring-motorcyclist-one-couples-journey-from-motorcycle-school-to-lake-superior-circle-tour/>

The Initiative

Fishing is an important niche experience for NeONT, supporting numerous businesses, and drawing a large percentage of the visitors to the area. The fishing demographic is aging and could benefit from an influx of new interest.

The *Experience Fishing* program would target new fishermen and women and the new Canadian market. The initiative follows the recommendation of the *Northern Ontario Product Development Strategy* which outlines the merits of considering creating such a program.

Similar to the *Learn to Camp* program and augmenting the *Learn to Fish* program that has been undertaken by the Ministry of Natural Resources & Forestry Ontario Parks and Fish & Wildlife Service, Experience Fishing is proposed to be an extension of the current Learn to Fish at Ontario Parks program, giving participants a multi-stepped program that allow them to learn more about fishing and to partake in more fishing activities.

NeONT is in the perfect position to be the leader/owner of the Northern Ontario portion of this program, due to their proximity to and ease of travel between Southern Ontario. Consideration would need to be given to the distance from market and research should be done to determine at what stage of the program participants would be willing to drive to selected Northeastern Ontario locations, due to distance.

As noted in the *Northeastern Ontario Tourism Three Year Strategic Plan & Marketing Plan*, Ontario Parks has indicated an interest in working with Northeastern Ontario and its tourism stakeholders to assist in delivering programs. Ontario Parks is interested in boosting visitation to Northern Ontario Parks, and is currently attracted to experience development opportunities that support their business model.



Possible Conceptualization of an Expanded 4 Step Learn to Fish Program with ties to Northeastern Ontario

- Step 1 – Participant A takes part in the current Learn to Fish program at a current program location.
- Step 2 – Participant A is invited and takes part in a half day or full day assisted fishing program at an Ontario Parks location near a Northeastern Ontario urban centre within the closest possible proximity to the southern Ontario market (Sudbury or North Bay). All gear and fishing instruction are supplied. The experience is packaged with a stay at a local accommodator to boost the safe and easy feel of the experience.
- Step 3 – Participant A is invited and takes part in a Northeastern Ontario drive-in lodge fishing experience.
- Step 4 – Participant A is invited and takes part in a Northern Ontario fly-in lodge fishing experience.

Partners

- Lead: NeONT Product development specialist or contracted product development services
- Ontario Parks Learn to Camp/Learn to Fish program representative – Jeff Brown
- Ministry of Natural Resources & Forestry Fish & Wildlife representative – Evan Hall
- Ontario Parks representative from Northeast zone
- Admin Lead: Northeastern Ontario product development representative
- OTMPC Fishing Specialist – Jim Grayston
- Municipal representative(s)
- Drive-in fishing lodge representative
- Fly-in fishing lodge representative

Implementation

Action	Timing												Partners	
	Y1 - 2015/16				Y2 - 2016/17				Y3 - 2017/18					
	Q1	Q2	Q3	Q4	Q1	Q2	Q3	Q4	Q1	Q2	Q3	Q4		
Secure FedNor Funds to support the program development.	✓													NeONT
Apply for TNO partnership funds to support the program funding.	✓													NeONT
Appoint lead staff or hire external product development expert to assist in developing the program.		✓												NeONT
Initial discussions with Ministry of Natural Resources/Ontario Parks.		✓												Lead



Action	Timing												Partners
	Y1 - 2015/16				Y2 - 2016/17				Y3 - 2017/18				
	Q1	Q2	Q3	Q4	Q1	Q2	Q3	Q4	Q1	Q2	Q3	Q4	
Convene partners for meeting to discuss opportunities, challenges, program details.		✓											All Partners
Survey 2015 Learn to Fish participants to determine propensity to travel further distance for more fishing experiences and stage in learning where participant may purchase gear.		✓											Lead & Ontario Parks/MNR
Based on response, determine ability to hold step 2 in Sudbury/North Bay vs other near north city outside of NeONT. (May need to engage another region as a partner).			✓										Lead with Partners
Create criteria for accommodation/lodge operator inclusion in each stage of the program. Ensure criteria includes operator's ability to serve the New Canadian market.		✓											Lead
Solidify expanded Step 2 program details with Ontario Parks including Parks to be involved, use of equipment, guides and dates.			✓										Lead with Ontario Parks
Solidify expanded Step 2 program details with select urban centre accommodators. Negotiate package details and dates for 2016 program.			✓										Lead with Municipal
Consider inclusion of other supporting diversion attractions that may appeal to the market and package offers.			✓										Lead with Municipal
Outline detailed itinerary for Step 2 weekend.			✓										Lead
Engage best bet market ready lodge operators to support step 3 and step 4 of program.			✓										Lead with Lodges
Host OTEC <i>Service Excellence for Diverse Cultures</i> courses or similar, and ensure all step 2 operator front line staff have participated.				✓									NeONT, Accom, Lodges
Encourage operator participation in TEN program.			✓	✓	✓								Accomm, Lodges
Begin marketing tactics with MNR & Ontario Parks. Build expanded program details into the website, and provide booking ability.					✓								Lead with MNR/ Ontario Parks and AOR
Launch pilot Step 2 program targeting a limited number of dates and locations.						✓							
Survey participants for feedback.						✓							Lead



Action	Timing												Partners
	Y1 - 2015/16				Y2 - 2016/17				Y3 - 2017/18				
	Q1	Q2	Q3	Q4	Q1	Q2	Q3	Q4	Q1	Q2	Q3	Q4	
Gauge program uptake and results and consider any necessary adjustments/modifications. Start planning for 2017 program as justified.							✓						Lead & NeONT with Partners
Negotiate expanded corporate sponsorship to support steps 3 & 4 of program and negotiate new corporate sponsorships as needed.							✓						Lead with MNR & Ontario Parks
Work with lodges to outline program, itineraries and packages as needed for step 3 & 4 visitors.							✓						Lead & Lodges
Host OTEC <i>Service Excellence for Diverse Cultures</i> courses or similar, and ensure all step 2 operator front line staff and step 3 & 4 lodges have participated.								✓					NeONT, Accommm, Lodges
Encourage operator participation in TEN program.							✓	✓	✓				Accomm, Lodges
Continue step 2 of program and launch step 3 & 4.										✓			Lead
Survey participants for feedback.										✓			Lead
Gauge program uptake and results and consider any necessary adjustments/modifications. Continue program as justified.											✓		Lead & NeONT with Partners

Budget Estimate for Product Development Activities¹

- Y1 2015/16 – \$40,000
- Y2 2016/17 – \$25,000
- Y3 2017/18 - \$10,000

Possible Funding Partners

- Ontario Parks
- Ministry of Natural Resources & Forestry Fish & Wildlife
- Ontario Tourism Marketing Partnership
- Tourism Northern Ontario Partnership Funding
- Northeastern Ontario
- Corporate partnership (for gear)



Marketing Opportunity

Consider documenting the process of a participant going through each of the four steps of the program, similar to the OTMPC motorsports program’s work with Planet D.

¹ Estimate does not include marketing tactics or website



Group of Seven Experiences in Northeastern Ontario

Current Situation

Northern Ontario's Group of Seven (Gof7) initiative is gaining traction and has the ability to attract cultural tourists from nearby and far afield. This initiative links Northern Ontario communities with the rural landscape in a new way.

Product development work has been underway in both Algoma and the North Shore of Lake Superior as well as in Northeastern Ontario for the past several years. The Group of Seven stories, while complimentary are distinct in each of these regions. Algoma is most closely associated with J.E.H. MacDonald and is the where the Group first painted together, riding the Algoma Central Railway to access the wilderness. The North Shore of Lake Superior including the ghost towns of Coldwell and Jackfish as well as Rossport and Nipigon areas is considered Lawren Harris country where Pic Island is located, now accessible to the general public through Neys Provincial Park. The white mountains of La Cloche/Killarney accessible through both Manitoulin Island, Killarney Provincial Park and the North Channel is where Franklin Carmichael and others produced the iconic works at both Grace and Nellie Lakes. Members of the Group were also active around Sudbury and in Cobalt during its heyday as a silver mining town. This rich history provides a strong foundation for product development in NeONT.

The Group of Seven product development initiative began in Algoma as a pilot project in 2013 and saw the extensive research into the Group of Seven activity in the region, culminating in the following detailed reports that guide the initiative for the region:

- *Canada's Group of Seven Tourism Product – Algoma Pilot Phase Foundations,*
- *Canada's Group of Seven Tourism Product – Algoma Pilot Phase Detailed Product Assessment,*
- *Canada's Group of Seven Tourism Product – Algoma Pilot Phase Master Plan,*
- *Canada's Group of Seven Tourism Product – A Handbook to Develop and Deliver Group of Seven Experiences in Algoma and North Shore, Lake Superior.*

As the potential for the experience was building, it became more apparent that this product is one that reaches across Northern Ontario and ultimately throughout Ontario as a whole. As such, the second phase of the development was supported in Northeastern Ontario. This phase of the project, undertaken in 2014 again focussed on research surrounding Group of Seven activity in the region and outlined in the following detailed documents:

- *Canada's Group of Seven Tourism Product – Northeastern Ontario Foundations,*
- *Canada's Group of Seven Tourism Product – A Handbook to Develop and Deliver Group of Seven Tourism Experiences in Northeastern Ontario, and*
- *Canada's Group of Seven Tourism Product – A Master Plan to Develop and Launch Group of Seven Tourism Experiences in Northeastern Ontario.*



These documents provide historical facts and significance of the Group's work in NeONT, inspiration and examples to stimulate new and improved experiences, tools and a road map to get it done. Additional effort focused on Group of Seven product development is required before marketing efforts can be fully implemented.

Recent Group of Seven advancements in Northeastern Ontario included the hosting of a Group of Seven Opportunities workshop resulting in partnerships on Group of Seven product development initiatives. Marketing developments include the creation of a brand toolkit to support the program.

Efforts in the coming year span Northern Ontario and are anticipated to include the creation of a pan-northern working group, the completion of the pan-northern marketing plan and parent brand and initial investments into setting the stage for marketing with website creation and photo/video asset gathering.

The interpretation and training programs currently underway in Algoma lays the groundwork for similar initiatives in Northeastern Ontario. Further, the White Pine Pictures documentary and the fully renovated boxcar that depicts the one used by the Group in the region further elevate the appeal of the Group of Seven story and product in Northern Ontario.

The Initiative

Based on the potential of this experience in terms of its alignment across Northern Ontario, and the interest of the Province in supporting it, as well as the size and potential reach of the market, Group of Seven initiatives are recommended as one of the key initiatives for continued implementation.

Product development efforts should continue in Northeastern Ontario, with the building of itineraries, and by providing ongoing opportunities to tell the story of this landscape. Further developing and packaging the experience and presenting them in a way that is easy for the consumer to find and book is needed. While Northeastern Ontario should plan to take a more active role in providing direct support for Group of Seven product development, it is important for key operators to also take an active role in developing the experience and ownership of the product.

Northeastern Ontario will also have a role to play at the pan-northern level, as the Northern Ontario Group of Seven product begins to move into the marketing phase. A pan-northern product development and marketing group will be created to spearhead moving the project forward as a unified regional initiative.

This does not take the responsibility off of Algoma and Northeastern Ontario, which still have work to do getting the product ready for market, as well as making connections between stakeholders to allow opportunities to be seized.



In the coming year, marketing will start at the pan-northern level, creating the platform and gathering the assets needed to market to the public. At the sub-regional level, planning will also start for local in-market tactics, gauged toward informing local residents about the Group of Seven and engaging the market of visiting friends and relatives with an appreciation for art. But first, more products must be developed.

Partners

- Art Gallery of Sudbury
- Killarney Provincial Park
- Friend of Killarney Provincial park
- Sudbury Tourism
- Manitoulin Tourism Association
- Temiskaming Shores representative
- Operators delivering Gof7 products across the region
- NeONT staff representative
- NeONT PD committee representative

Implementation

Action	Timing												Partner(s)	
	Y1 - 2015/16				Y2 - 2016/17				Y3 - 2017/18					
	Q1	Q2	Q3	Q4	Q1	Q2	Q3	Q4	Q1	Q2	Q3	Q4		
Northeastern Ontario Actions														
Participate in pan-northern Group of Seven Product Development & Marketing Group meetings.	✓	✓	✓											NeONT
Apply for TNO Partnership funding and FedNor funding.	✓													Lead: NeONT
Connect NeONT Group of Seven working group with the NeONT Product Development Committee, the M5 Marketing Committee and the NeONT Board to bring the group up to date on all Gof7 developments pan-Northern. OTMPC should be invited to the meeting. Consider including a presentation by the Gof7 consulting team and a presentation from a Gof7 expert.		✓												Lead: NeONT with NeONT Gof7 working group, PDC, M5 & Board



Action	Timing												Partner(s)
	Y1 - 2015/16				Y2 - 2016/17				Y3 - 2017/18				
	Q1	Q2	Q3	Q4	Q1	Q2	Q3	Q4	Q1	Q2	Q3	Q4	
Have regular check-in meetings for the working group and leads to share of regional initiatives.			✓	✓	✓	✓	✓	✓	✓	✓	✓	✓	Lead: NeONT
Outline touring route concept and suggested locations and outline interpretive installation concept.			✓										Lead: Contracted Services with NeONT Gof7 partners
Apply for TNO Partnership, FedNor and Trillium funding.					✓								Lead: NeONT
Expand touring route interpretation installations to NeONT. Consider a multi-dimensional style format.						✓	✓						Lead: Contracted Services with NeONT Gof7 partners
Create Gof 7 itineraries for NeONT following pan-northern format (see master plan for anticipated locations.)						✓	✓						Lead: Contracted Services with NeONT Gof7 partners
Adopt and adapt Gof7 Algoma training program for implementation in NeONT to ensure educated front line staff and stakeholders (2 sessions beginner, 2 sessions advanced +1 train the trainer)						✓	✓						Lead: Contracted Services
Cobalt Area Actions													
Define champions who will work together to create the story and experiences for the region.	✓												Lead: Temiskaming Shores cultural staff
Ensure the Gof7 Cobalt story is overlaid with the Temiskaming Loop product development initiative.			✓										Lead: Temiskaming Loop Staff with Cultural Staff
PoeArtry Festival – Debrief this year’s event and identify opportunities, gaps and action plan to grow in future years.			✓										Lead: Temiskaming Shores cultural staff
Killarney/Manitoulin /Sudbury Actions													
Link existing Gof7 activities/ attractions (Festival of the Seven, Killarney Provincial Park Group of Seven Festival) to fixed roof accommodators and create package offers to appeal to travellers who prefer to stay in this type of accommodation.		✓	✓										Lead: Sudbury Tourism



Action	Timing												Partner(s)
	Y1 - 2015/16				Y2 - 2016/17				Y3 - 2017/18				
	Q1	Q2	Q3	Q4	Q1	Q2	Q3	Q4	Q1	Q2	Q3	Q4	
Reach out to new owners of Charlton Lake Lodge and Killarney Mountain Lodge to inform about the Gof7 opportunities and how they can get involved.	✓												Lead: Contracted Services & NeONT
Capture the NeONT Gof7 audio/video story featuring the history as told by Jon Butler.					✓	✓							Lead: NeONT using contracted services

Budget Estimate for Product Development Activities

- Y1 2015/16 – \$25,000
- Y2 2016/17 – \$235,000
- Y3 2017/18 - \$0

Possible Funding Partners

- OTMPC
- TNO Partnership Funds
- FedNor
- Trillium



Best-in-Class Cluster of Northeastern Ontario Lodge Experiences

Case Study

Ontario's Finest Hotels, Inns, Spas

<http://www.ontariosfinestinns.com>

Ontario's Finest Hotels, Inns, Spas provides an example of a cluster of best-in-class experiences. The program has clustered 34 smaller, independent, quality accommodators throughout Ontario, by ensuring they meet criteria for inclusion. The program promises customers "the finest hospitality found anywhere in our beautiful province" and strives for "exceptional hospitality for guests". The initiative ensures all properties included in the program meet this standard by providing criteria for membership which assess esthetics, standards and service as well as vision and regional fit. Properties are mystery shopped by independent evaluators to ensure that they do in fact meet the criteria. Operators use the program to elevate the standing of their property in the eyes of the consumer. Consumers trust the program to present the finest boutique places to stay in Ontario.

Clayoquot Wilderness Resort & Magnificent Luxury Wilderness Lodges of Canada

<http://www.wildretreat.com/>

<http://luxurywildernesslodges.com/>

Clayoquot Wilderness Resort provides an example of an operator striving to provide an amazing experience for its guests. Visitors to this fly or boat-in access resort stay in lavishly appointed glamping tents at the resort located 40 minutes by boat from Tofino, British Columbia. Each night the resort's activities director meets with each guest to plan their next day's adventure from a list of 18 possible options including remote experiences such as bear and whale watching as well as hiking and fishing.

Clayoquot Wilderness Resort is one of seven amazing remote western Canada experiences that have paired up as the Magnificent Luxury Wilderness Lodges of Canada. This group of wilderness adventure accommodators work together to promote each other, booking as individual experiences or as packages featuring more than one resort.

The Initiative

Northeastern Ontario benefits from a wealth of fishing, hunting and outdoors lodge, resort and camp experiences. Defining a product cluster of signature, best-in-class lodge experiences could benefit the region by attracting high yield long distance visitors who will be guaranteed a high quality experience.

To ensure the quality of the experience, operators would be chosen based on criteria for market readiness, and all would be encouraged to participate in the TEN program.



Developing the initial pilot program from a handful of market ready operators will allow the region to elevate the experience for the consumer. Beginning to cluster the best experiences will help to set the bar for other similar operations to upgrade their experiences. Expanding the program through initiatives meant to assist operators in upgrading their experiences will allow the program to expand in the future while encouraging a quality shift in the lodge experiences available in Northeastern Ontario.

Once a pilot program has been established and proven in Northeastern Ontario, it could be expanded across Northern Ontario.

Partners

- Lead: Product development specialist or contracted product development services
- OTMPC Go Fish program– Jim Grayston
- OTMPC Outdoors program– Steve Bruno
- Admin Lead: Northeastern Ontario product development representative
- NOTO

Implementation

Action	Timing												Partners
	Y1 - 2015/16				Y2 - 2016/17				Y3 - 2017/18				
	Q1	Q2	Q3	Q4	Q1	Q2	Q3	Q4	Q1	Q2	Q3	Q4	
Initial Program Development													
Champion in-person meeting to discuss: <ul style="list-style-type: none"> • opportunities of the initiative and how to capitalize on them • challenges of the program and how to overcome them • what is needed to assist in selling the Northern Ontario lodge experience to consumers • which operators are best in class and may be ready to participate in the program • which operators have potential to be a part of the program in the future 		✓											Lead, OTMPC, NeONT, NOTO
Create criteria for assessing the experience in terms of its fit with the program and the ability of the operator to deliver a best-in-class experience to the consumer. This sets the bar for operator inclusion and gives others something to strive to meet.		✓											Lead
Create Pilot Program													
Hand-select a small sample of market ready lodges for possible inclusion in the pilot program.		✓											Lead with NeONT, NOTO, OTMPC



Action	Timing												Partners
	Y1 - 2015/16				Y2 - 2016/17				Y3 - 2017/18				
	Q1	Q2	Q3	Q4	Q1	Q2	Q3	Q4	Q1	Q2	Q3	Q4	
Assess all operators who may be ready to participate against criteria to ensure they meet standards. Target lead program with having 3-5 of the best lodge-based experiences.		✓											Lead
Have all chosen operators participate in relevant TEN initiatives.			✓	✓									Lead
Consider learning opportunities for the lead program operators, with the intention of inspiring greatness. Opportunities such as visiting similar best in class experiences elsewhere, customer services training, mentor one-on-one coaching, experience expert coaching and professional design expertise are all possibilities that could be considered. Consider allowing each of the properties to participate in a suite of learning opportunities as they fit their business situation.			✓	✓									Lead
Consider creating and negotiating a purchasing program to facilitate operator purchase of better quality product for the businesses involved in the program. Discuss the possibility with operator participants and negotiate a program with possible corporate sponsors. (ie upgrade mattresses, towels , etc program)			✓	✓	✓								TBD
Consider inclusion of the lead properties in the Top 5 BIG. (See Top 5 BIG initiative implementation plan.)					✓								Lead with Top 5 BIG Lead
Launch lead program to market. ²							✓						NeONT, OTMPC
Create Expanded Program													
Provide additional interested operators with the qualifications/criteria that they need to strive to meet to become a part of the program.				✓	✓	✓	✓	✓	✓	✓	✓	✓	Lead
Encourage participation in TEN.							✓	✓					Lead

² Estimate does not include marketing tactics



Action	Timing												Partners
	Y1 - 2015/16				Y2 - 2016/17				Y3 - 2017/18				
	Q1	Q2	Q3	Q4	Q1	Q2	Q3	Q4	Q1	Q2	Q3	Q4	
Consider creating learning opportunities for those operators interested in striving to be a part of the program. Possible formats could include mentorship via workshops, newsletters, web-based learning etc provided by: <ul style="list-style-type: none"> the lead program operators experience experts 							✓	✓					Lead
Add additional/new best-in-class operators who meet the qualifications, to the program on an annual basis. Consider restricting the program to a maximum number of participants, and adjusting the participants based on the quality of their experience annually.									✓				NeONT, OTMPC

Budget Estimate for Product Development Activities

Budget estimates include funds required for product development only. Additional marketing dollars will be needed when the program is ready to launch. Proponents may wish to consider if the marketing funds should be added to the funding application for the second year of the program to allow for the ease of project continuation.

- Y1 2015/16 – \$80,000
- Y2 2016/17 – \$30,000
- Y3 2017/18 - \$5,000

Funding Partners

- OTMPC Northern Office – Fishing & Outdoors portfolios
- Tourism Northern Ontario Partnership Funding
- FedNor



Temiskaming Loop

Case Study

Georgian Bay Coastal Route

www.visitgeorgianbay.com

Destination Marketing Organizations around Georgian Bay united to form the Georgian Bay Destination Development Partnership (GBDDP) in 2006. Operating under an MOU, the group works together to leverage knowledge and funds with the goal of creating an iconic tourism experience of the Georgian Bay region.

The Georgian Bay Coastal Route (GBCR), the consumer named experience supported by the GBDDP, currently has 11 experiential touring routes, with market ready operators associated with each route. Operators associated with a touring experience are assessed based on criteria for market readiness, based on a series of questions and an understanding of the typical consumer that the tour is trying to attract. The criteria templates help to ensure that the target market is understood and being catered to, ultimately guaranteeing the best possible customer service experience for the consumer.

Current Situation

Efforts have begun to create a touring loop around Lake Temiskaming. The Lake Temiskaming Loop Tour has been mapped and a partnership of tourism organizations in the area has been creating a guidebook for the past five years. Currently organized by community, the guidebook is an inclusive tactic that is undertaken by tourism staff of the Quebec partners.

Challenges faced by the group have limited the amount of experience and product development that has taken place as part of the initiative. Time and resources of partners are limited and therefore have been focused on marketing tasks. Language barriers make partnership efforts challenging as some partners only speak French, and others only English.

Past efforts in the region with the motorcycle market have seen the creation of a themed motorcycle tour around Lake Temiskaming, complete with motorcycle friendly accommodations, restaurants and attractions. Inclusion for this route, which is part of the Ride the North program, is based on meeting defined criteria for market readiness based on the provincially supported standards.

Current efforts on the Quebec side of the Lake have a new National Park being developed. Opémican National Park, a 304 km² park along the shores of Lake Temiskaming will open in 2017, and become a



signature asset of the route. Estimates show that the park will attract 40,000 visitors per year, creating 160 direct and indirect jobs and \$7.5 million in economic benefit annually³.

The Initiative

Creating clusters or destination regions is an effective way to give visitors more to do while in the area, thereby extending stays. The Lake Temiskaming Loop Tour is scenic, partners are engaged and marketing has begun. Limited product development has been done, other than creating the loop around the lake, and identifying a list of operators in the region.

Fully developing the route from a product development point of view would require ensuring it is best in class, expanding the offering to include themed routes or itineraries and supporting the development of signature assets. Resources are required to support these developments.

Criteria for inclusion of market ready assets that support themed touring routes or itineraries will ensure that the experience fits the targeted visitor. Encouraging operators to participate in TEN will further ensure that they are best in class. Ensuring that the experience is memorable will entice visitors to travel further distances and stay longer.

Some key assets of the loop could benefit from further development.

- First Nations in the region are active in economic development and starting to explore tourism opportunities.
- The Cobalt Mining District was designated as a National Historic site in 2002, and has a rich story waiting to be told through tourism experiences development.
- The Cobalt area also has ties to the Group of Seven, and a story to be told through itinerary and package development to fit with the Group of Seven experience that is being undertaken by Northern Ontario.
- Devil's Rock, a site along the Lake Temiskaming shore with stunning views and cliffs has hiking trails but little infrastructure to support the tourist's visit. The site, if fully developed, has the ability to become a signature asset of the Loop.

Future initiatives once the current project has been completed could include focusing on the communities along the tour. Destination development efforts in towns and cities along the route could include everything from experience development, wayfinding, community branding and downtown revitalization, small business coaching, refinement and enhancement efforts.

³ Information Bulletin on the Opémican National Park Project, <http://opemican.com/wp-content/uploads/2012/01/bulletin-opemican-english.pdf>



Partners

- Lead: Contract Product Development Services
- Admin Lead: Staff (under FedNor Contract) Temiskaming Shores and Area Chamber of Commerce
- Temiskaming Shores
- Cobalt
- City of North Bay
- Mattawa Bonfield Economic Development Corporation
- Société de Développement du Témiscamingue
- Northeastern Ontario product development representative

Implementation

Action	Timing												Partner
	Y1 - 2015/16				Y2 - 2016/17				Y3 - 2017/18				
	Q1	Q2	Q3	Q4	Q1	Q2	Q3	Q4	Q1	Q2	Q3	Q4	
FedNor funding previously approved.													Temiskaming Chamber of Commerce
Partner meeting to discuss product development tactics to be undertaken and partner financial commitment to the project.	✓												All partners
Apply for TNO Partnership Funding.	✓												Temiskaming Chamber of Commerce
Apply for Canada Economic Development for Quebec Regions Funding if needed to support the cross border portion of the deliverables.	✓												Société de Développement du Témiscamingue
Create a Memorandum of Understanding (MOU) to be signed by all partners.		✓											TBD
Arrange quarterly in-person meetings of the partners to advance partner relations, discuss product development opportunities, vision, and leverage knowledge.		✓	✓	✓	✓	✓	✓	✓	✓	✓	✓	✓	All partners



Action	Timing												Partner
	Y1 - 2015/16				Y2 - 2016/17				Y3 - 2017/18				
	Q1	Q2	Q3	Q4	Q1	Q2	Q3	Q4	Q1	Q2	Q3	Q4	
Enhance the current loop experience by: <ul style="list-style-type: none"> • Considering themed loops that talk to specific market segments or themed itineraries. • Creating criteria for inclusion of market ready operators. • Working with partners to determine and assess to find operators who fit the themes and criteria. • Ensure all operators included in the Loop are best-in-class by encouraging participation in the TEN program. • Overlay the region's story related to the Group of Seven with the themed route development to support a Group of Seven itinerary and packages. (See Group of Seven Implementation Plan). 		✓	✓	✓	✓								Lead: Contracted Services
Create a consumer website, which can house the database of Loop operators. (Consider fit with and adoption of web formats already operating for themed routes in the region ie. Ride the North.)			✓	✓									Contracted services working with staff
Support the development of Devil's Rock as a signature asset of the Loop. <ul style="list-style-type: none"> • Facilitate partnerships and discussions aimed at advancing the development of the property. • Where possible, lend support in the creation of a plan for the development of the property. • Where possible, lend support in the creation of funding applications to support implementing the plan. 					✓	✓	✓	✓	✓	✓	✓	Ontario partners with Contracted Services for facilitation	



Action	Timing												Partner
	Y1 - 2015/16				Y2 - 2016/17				Y3 - 2017/18				
	Q1	Q2	Q3	Q4	Q1	Q2	Q3	Q4	Q1	Q2	Q3	Q4	
Develop targeted side routes to the main loop that fit the themed Loop and augment the experience for the visitor. <ul style="list-style-type: none"> Consider loops that have already been created and how they fit with and compliment the expansion. (ie Ride the North and Group of Seven (See Group of Seven Implementation Plan above)). Use criteria to choose and assess operators for the side routes. Encourage operators to participate in the TEN program. Enhance the website content to include these additional routes. 							✓	✓					Contracted Services
Support the development of the Cobalt Mining District National Historic Site story and experience by facilitating partner discussions aimed at advancing the development of the story/experience. Hold meetings to outline opportunities and gaps in the interest of moving toward an experience based product development project.					✓	✓	✓	✓					Ontario partners with Contracted Services for facilitation
Support the development of First Nations tourism product by participating in discussions aimed at advancing the initiatives. Once experiences are developed, First Nations product will become a themed itinerary of the Loop Tour.					✓	✓	✓	✓	✓	✓	✓	✓	Ontario partners with Contracted Services for facilitation

Budget Estimate for Product Development Activities

Budget estimates include only product development related expenditures.

- Y1 2015/16 – \$70,000
- Y2 2016/17 – \$40,000
- Y3 2017/18 - \$15,000

Funding Partners

A FedNor grant has already been approved to support tourism and business partnerships between the communities on the Ontario side of Lake Temiskaming and the Quebec side. The \$333,500 project has a three year term which will run from 2015 to 2018. Tasks under the grant will support hiring a bilingual staff person to assist with communication between partners as well as activities aimed at achieving a



stronger and larger regional brand by encompassing more territory on either side of the border. A regional database of businesses will be created, as well as a bilingual tourism guide for marketing purposes.

- FedNor - Phase 1 grant already approved for 3 year term - total project cost \$333,500
- Tourism Northern Ontario Partnership Funding
- Temiskaming Chamber of Commerce (In-kind)
- Temiskaming Shores
- Cobalt
- City of North Bay
- Mattawa Bonfield Economic Development Corporation
- Société de développement du Témiscamingue
- Canada Economic Development for Quebec Regions (if required)





Develop the Top 5 BIG

Case Study

Ontario's Signature Experiences

http://www.tourismpartners.com/publications/PartnershipOpportunities/SignatureExperiences_EN.pdf

OTMPC launched Ontario's Signature Experiences in 2014, as a stepping stone for Ontario businesses that seek to be considered for the Canadian Tourism Commission's Signature Experiences Collection. The Ontario Signature Experiences collection (OSE) seeks to "promote and market must-see travel experiences that will appeal to global target markets. The program is designed to showcase the best and most unique tourism experiences in the province that will motivate more people to visit Ontario."⁴ Businesses must apply to be a part of the program. Inclusion is based on meeting criteria and evaluation of the property against a scoring system that determines if it is a fit for the program. The benefits of being included are many, but ultimately include prestige and consumer credibility.

The Initiative

Building on the BIG brand, and the key marketing pillars for Northeastern Ontario, the region should develop the top 5 BIG experiences for each category of the BIG campaign. The focus should be placed on the priority areas – Nature & Adventure, Fishing and Festivals & Attractions (ie Top 5 BIG breathtaking views and Top 5 BIG backcountry daytrips).

The goal of the initiative is not to create as many lists as possible, or to include the majority of NeONT attractions, but to be selective with the purpose of ultimately marketing NeONT's gems. The program will be built under the understanding that these top 5's are the demand generators that have potential to draw people to Northeastern Ontario and to provide a great experience while they are there. Once visitors arrive, they will look for and visit diversion attractions, stay at accommodations and eat in restaurants.

Selection of the top 5 should be based on pre-determined criteria in order to make the top 5 into best in class, market ready experiences and to remove any bias in selecting the attractions to be included. In some cases, development work will be needed before a top 5 list is ready to market, or before an attraction is able to be added to the list. For example, in determining the best breathtaking view, it's not only imperative to assess the view, but also the infrastructure that supports the view. Is there adequate parking, is there signage directing visitors and is their safe trail access to the site are all important questions to be considered, among many others. Where upgrades are needed, infrastructure or additional project funding may be required to assist in the process and time may be necessary to make

⁴ OTMPC, http://www.tourismpartners.com/publications/PartnershipOpportunities/SignatureExperiences_EN.pdf



required changes. Providing support or assistance to this process when needed may be helpful in some cases.

Overall, the selection process will start to set the bar for operators, providing structure as they implementation changes needed to become one of the best.

This product development project has the potential to link some key Ontario Parks experiences, opening the door for Parks partnership possibilities. It also directly ties into two other product development projects; the best in class lodge experience and the Temiskaming Loop as well as its support for the further development of Devil's Rock.

The key benefit of this initiative is that it will allow for product development that is directly related to Northeastern Ontario's marketing tactics. The Top 5 BIG will become a major component of the NeONT marketing program.

Suggested Top 5 BIG List to develop first:

It is important to start the program by focusing on a limited number of categories of the Top 5 BIG. Working on one list in the next year, and ensuring that the 5 assets are fully developed or have a list of things they need to do to become fully developed would be a major accomplishment for NeONT.

To tie directly with the NeONT BIG brand and marketing focus of Nature & Adventure, and to capitalize on some of Northern Ontario's key attractions, the category that should be considered for development first is the Top 5 BIG Breathtaking Views.

Sample criteria for assessment:

In creating the Top 5, it is imperative to assess each site. An example of some of the questions which could be included in the criteria is as follows:

Sample questions for evaluating the site attraction value:

- Does the site have a compelling and breathtaking view?
- Is the view one that it unique to Northeastern Ontario?
- Does the site attract tourists?
- Is the site open to the public?

Sample questions for evaluating site access/infrastructure:

- Is the site easy to find and well signed?
- Does the site have a designated parking area and is it easily accessed, well defined and of adequate size?
- Are public washrooms available?



Sample questions for evaluating the availability of site supporting facilities:

- Are there accommodations located near the site?
- Are there restaurants near the site?

Partners

- Lead: NeONT Product development specialist or contracted product development services
- Admin Lead: Northeastern Ontario
- NeONT Product Development Committee

Implementation

Action	Timing												Partner	
	Y1 - 2015/16				Y2 - 2016/17				Y3 - 2017/18					
	Q1	Q2	Q3	Q4	Q1	Q2	Q3	Q4	Q1	Q2	Q3	Q4		
Secure FedNor Funds to support the program development.	✓													NeONT
Apply for TNO partnership funds to support the program funding.	✓													NeONT
Appoint lead staff or hire external product development expert to assist in developing the program.	✓													NeONT
Convene partners for meeting to discuss: <ul style="list-style-type: none"> • Program details, opportunities and challenges • Determine Top 5 BIG categories to be developed <ul style="list-style-type: none"> ○ Ensure categories fit the marketing pillars ○ Consider starting with a small number of categories (ideally 1 category in 2015/16 – suggest Top 5 BIG Breathtaking Views) with the intention of expanding the program the following year 		✓												Lead + PDC + NeONT Staff



Action	Timing												Partner
	Y1 - 2015/16				Y2 - 2016/17				Y3 - 2017/18				
	Q1	Q2	Q3	Q4	Q1	Q2	Q3	Q4	Q1	Q2	Q3	Q4	
Outline criteria for inclusion for each category including infrastructure required to support the experience. <ul style="list-style-type: none"> Consider including some criteria that if not met, exclude an attraction/operator from being a part of the list. (For example, if visitor safety needs are not met, or if public washrooms are not available on-site, the attraction should not be excluded from the list.) 		✓											Lead
Brainstorm possible attractions/operators to be included on each list.		✓											Lead + PDC & NeONT Staff
Assess each operator against the criteria, noting gaps in requirements. Site visits may be required to adequately assess the experience.		✓											Lead
Work with the top 5 attractions/operators in each category to make them aware of the gaps, and how they might be rectified.			✓										Lead
Encourage the top 5 attractions/operators in each category to take part in the TEN program.			✓										Lead
Make the criteria for inclusion for each category including infrastructure required to support the experience public information, to allow other attractions/operators to strive to make the list.			✓										NeONT
Expand the program by: <ul style="list-style-type: none"> Adding additional categories Adding the best in class lodge experience when it is fully developed Consider including a list that targets lesser known locations with potential to resonate with visitors (ie Top 5 BIG Hidden Gems etc.) Reassess items included in the first categories and determine if new attractions exist and if the lists should be adjusted. Assess all possible attractions with potential to be included on each list, and provide assessment including gaps to operators.					✓								Lead



Action	Timing												Partner
	Y1 - 2015/16				Y2 - 2016/17				Y3 - 2017/18				
	Q1	Q2	Q3	Q4	Q1	Q2	Q3	Q4	Q1	Q2	Q3	Q4	
Market the categories as they become ready, ensuring that development is completed before marketing begins.					✓	✓							NeONT

Budget Estimate for Product Development Activities

Budget estimates do not include the funds required to market the program once it is fully developed. This initiative will become a major part of the marketing program.

- Y1 2015/16 – \$25,000 – 40,000 depending on number of categories developed
- Y2 2016/17 – \$15,000 – 25,000 depending on targeted size of expansion
- Y3 2017/18 - \$0

Funding Partners

- Tourism Northern Ontario
- FedNor



Photo: Ontario Tourism Marketing Partnership Corporation



Appendix 1 – Criteria for Assessment of Product Development Initiatives

The Product Development Committee outlined the criteria for projects to be weighed against. A possible maximum score of 4 represents the most important factors and a possible maximum score of 2 represents the least important of the criteria. In the additional section below, suggested additional assessment criteria have been outlined and are recommended for inclusion in project assessment procedures moving forward.

Potential to increase yield, visitation or night stays /4

- The product development project has the ability to increase tourism yield (dollars spent), tourism visitors or overnight stays in Northeastern Ontario.

Job creation /4

- The product development project has the ability to create and sustain jobs in Northeastern Ontario.

Fits with TNO & NeONT missions /4

- The product development project fits with Tourism Northern Ontario's mission as follows
"In partnership with industry, Tourism Northern Ontario seeks to increase tourism, build tourism capacity and advocate on behalf of Northern Ontario tourism."
AND NeONT's mission
"To build partnerships, increase visitor awareness and develop strong connections with sector stakeholders to increase tourism within Northeastern Ontario."

Potential to leverage partners / \$ /4

- The potential product development project leverages or has the potential to leverage partners and partnership dollars to support it.

Sustainability /3

- The proposed product development project has the ability to sustain itself financially in the long term and is a long term investment in destination development for the area.



Builds Capacity /3

- The proposed product development project provides support for tourism organizations, municipalities and operators to ensure that the tourism industry is well positioned to address future strategic decisions, issues and opportunities and to improve tourism's image as an economic driver for the region.

Fills a gap /3

- The product development project fills a previously identified gap or adequately documented and researched gap.

Cost to implement /2

- The product development project is cost effective and the cost to achieve the desired outcome is reasonable (ie the project displays a positive return on investment).

Northeastern Ontario Reach /2

- The product development project benefits a large and/or significant geographic area of Northeastern Ontario OR has the ability to be expanded and implemented in other areas or communities throughout the region over the long term.

As the project has progressed the need to ensure that current tactics fit with valuable research that has been recently completed has been highlighted. This research, completed by both NeONT and TNO, looks at current trends, markets, opportunities and challenges for tourism in Northern Ontario. Using this research to assess product development initiatives is valuable as it ensures that NeONT is not 'recreating the wheel' each time a project is proposed. This process will also align NeONT with TNO's approach of ensuring that research is grounded in research.

The following criteria are recommended for addition to the above list:

Grounded in Research /4

- The product development project is grounded in research and builds off of knowledge learned and strategic recommendations contained in current strategic research surrounding tourism in the region.

Supports NeONT Strategic Focus /4

- The product development project supports the current NeONT strategic focus.



Supports NeONT Marketing Focus /4

- The product development project fits the current NeONT best bet pillars and supports the marketing focus.

Supports TNO Product Development Approach & Priorities /4

- The product development project leverages and builds upon Northern Ontario's product development approach as well as Northern Ontario's product development priorities.

Supports TNO Marketing Focus /4

- The product development project aligns and cascades with Northern Ontario's marketing strategy and tactics



Appendix 2 - Determining the FIT of Each Initiative

As outlined in the guiding principles, it is important to ensure the experience and tactic initiatives fit the product development criteria as well as the strategic research that has previously been completed.

The following chart attempts to visualize and quantify the FIT of each initiative as follows:

- How does the initiative fit the *Northeastern Ontario Tourism Three Year Strategic Plan & Marketing Plan* recommendations?
- How does the initiative fit the *Northern Ontario Product Development Strategy* recommendations?
If it relates to an experience, how does it fit the primary/secondary/tertiary product breakdown?
- How does the initiative fit the criteria developed by the Product Development Committee? (ie how does it score?)
- Any other current extraneous factors that should be considered.

Legend

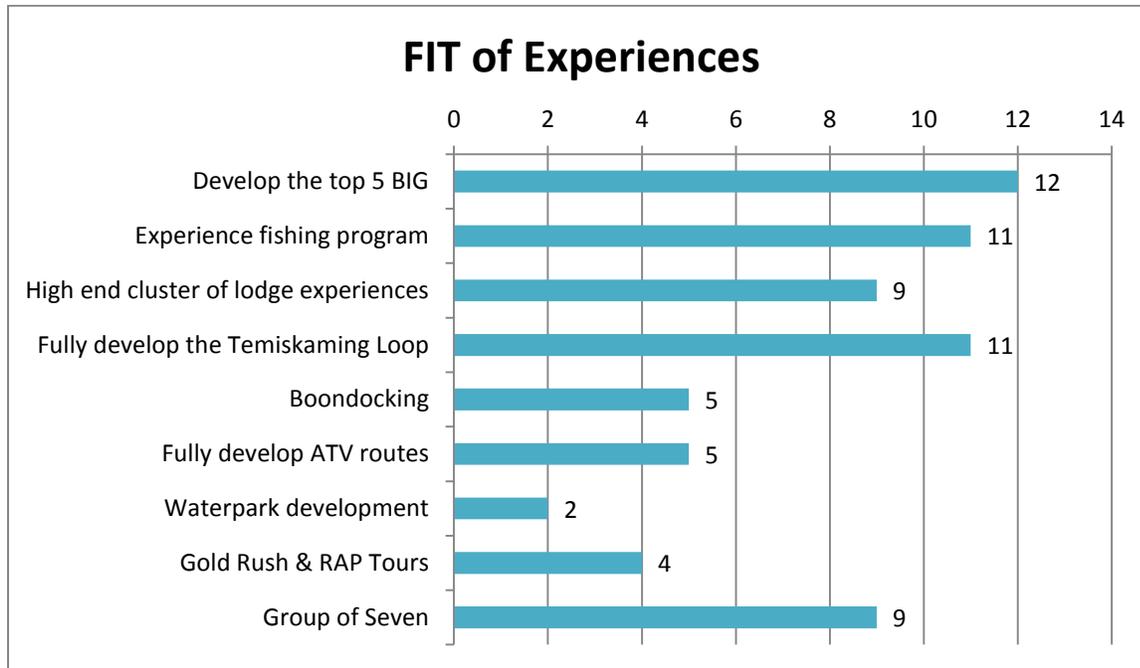
✓✓✓	Good FIT
✓✓	Medium FIT
✓	Limited FIT
	No FIT



FIT of Experiences	Develop the top 5 BIG.	Experience fishing program	High end cluster of lodge experiences	Fully develop Temiskaming Loop	Boondocking	Fully develop ATV routes	Waterpark development	Gold Rush & RAP Tours	Group of Seven
<p>How does the initiative fit the NeONT Strategic Goals?</p>	<p>+ fits premier product marketing focus +could be developed as themed routes/ itineraries +will work toward best bet clusters of market ready products ✓✓✓</p>	<p>+ fits premier product marketing focus +can link urban and rural ✓✓</p>	<p>+fits premier product marketing focus +will work toward best bet cluster of market ready experience +identifies best bet regional cluster of market ready products ✓✓✓</p>	<p>+fits secondary marketing focus item +facilitate development of itinerary based themed routes +fits best bet regional cluster of strong products ✓✓✓</p>	<p>+fits secondary marketing focus item +explore new tourism trends ✓✓</p>	<p>+fits secondary marketing focus item +itinerary based themed routes ✓✓</p>	<p>+explore new tourism trends ✓</p>	<p>+fits secondary marketing focus item +itinerary based themed routes ✓✓</p>	<p>+ fits premier product marketing focus (nature & outdoors) +leverages commitment of TNO +supports itinerary based themed routes ✓✓✓</p>
<p>How does the initiative fit the NO PD Strategy? If it is an experience, how is it primary, secondary or tertiary?</p>	<p>+primary, medium term. Develop nature & adventure products surrounding signature landscapes that have distinction with travellers and that differentiate No from other areas. ✓✓✓</p>	<p>+primary focus, medium term. Develop experience fishing program. Strengthen relationship with outfitters/ parks. Develop experiences to embrace new demand from new types of anglers. ✓✓✓</p>	<p>+primary, medium term Develop experiences to embrace new demand from new types of anglers. Develop a collection of bucket list high quality lodge based signature outdoor experiences. ✓✓✓</p>	<p>+ primary focus, medium term. Focus touring route PD to 2 areas with most opportunity– Temiskaming Loop is included. ✓✓✓</p>	<p>+secondary focus, medium term. Investigate market for off-main-road motorcycle routes and undertake proper route/ operator development if market exists. Study potential for off-trail experiences for near market destinations that can compete with Western Canada (Investigation has not been completed) ✓</p>	<p>+tertiary focus, long term. Where economically beneficial, fully develop a limited number of ATV routes in NO. ✓</p>		<p>+tertiary focus, long term. Monitor developments in the snowmobile industry – if OFSC /club issues resolved and trails available, develop limited number of signature loops and recognize highway 400 & 11 opportunity. ✓</p>	<p>+primary focus, short term and medium term. Continue to link outdoors to culture Continue investment in Gof7. ✓✓✓</p>



FIT of Experiences	Develop the top 5 BIG.	Experience fishing program	High end cluster of lodge experiences	Fully develop Temiskaming Loop	Boondocking	Fully develop ATV routes	Waterpark development	Gold Rush & RAP Tours	Group of Seven
How does the initiative fit the criteria developed by the PD committee (ie. how does it score)?	Scored the highest of all the initiatives ✓✓✓	Scored third highest ✓✓✓	Scored fifth highest ✓✓✓	Scored 6 th ✓✓	Scored 7 th ✓✓	Scored 9 th ✓✓	Scored 10 th ✓	Scored 11 th ✓	Scored the lowest
Are there other extraneous factors that affect the fit?	+ supports the NeONT brand ✓✓✓	+fishing market/spend is largest in Northern Ontario ✓✓✓		+ active group has started PD – already has engaged partners ✓✓✓					+Large amount of product development completed to date. +Larger Northern Ontario and Ontario fit. +Ministry very interested in program and will support with marketing budget ✓✓✓
Total checkmarks	✓✓✓✓✓✓✓✓✓✓ ✓✓✓ (12)	✓✓✓✓✓✓✓✓✓✓ (11)	✓✓✓✓✓✓✓✓✓✓ (9)	✓✓✓✓✓✓✓✓✓✓ (11)	✓✓✓✓✓ (5)	✓✓✓✓✓ (5)	✓✓ (2)	✓✓✓✓✓ (4)	✓✓✓✓✓✓✓✓✓✓ (9)

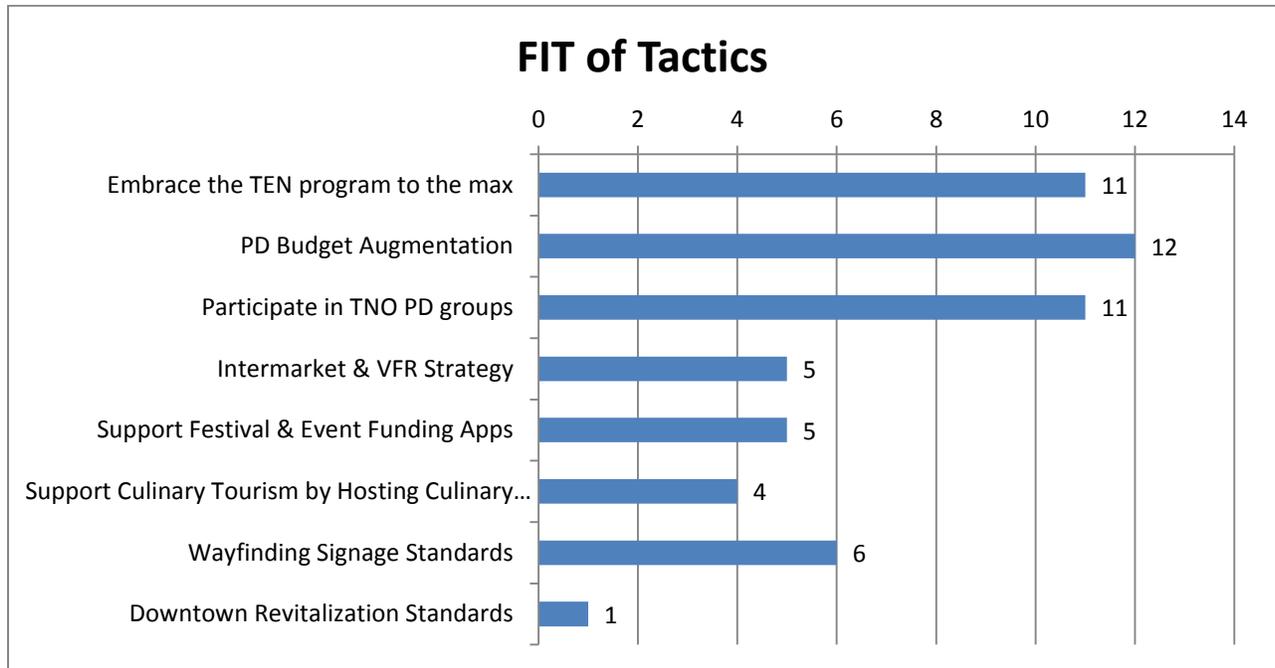


Based on the summary above, the ranking of the experiences for consideration is as follows:

1. Develop the top 5 BIG
2. Experience fishing program
3. Fully develop the Temiskaming Loop
4. High end cluster of lodge experiences
5. Group of Seven
6. Boondocking
7. Fully develop ATV routes
8. Gold Rush & RAP tours
9. Waterpark development



FIT of Tactics	Embrace the TEN program to the max	PD Budget augmentation	Participate in TNO PD groups	Intermarket & VFR Strategy	Support Festival & Event Funding Apps	Support Culinary Tourism by hosting Culinary Workshops	Wayfinding Signage standards	Downtown Revitalization Standards
How does the initiative fit the NeONT Strategic Goals?	+ fits premier product marketing focus +identifies and supports best bet market ready products ✓✓	+supports product development in general ✓✓✓	+supports product development in general +identifies best bet regional clusters of market ready products ✓✓✓	+supports TNO 2015/16 initiative ✓	+fits secondary marketing focus item ✓	+supports regional clusters of market ready product +support new tourism trend ✓✓	+fits secondary marketing focus item (touring) +leverages work of TNO +supports itinerary based themed routes ✓✓✓	+supports regional clusters of market ready product ✓
How does the initiative fit the NO PD Strategy? If it is an experience, how is it primary, secondary or tertiary?	+short tem Facilitate peer to peer mentoring for tourism businesses. Deliver customized one-on-one business improvement and enhancement advice and mentoring. ✓✓✓	+short term Adjust budgets to reflect a PD focus. ✓✓✓	+primary focus, medium term. Create fishing, nature & adventure and auto/RV touring PD team ✓✓✓	+primary, medium term. Recognize the importance and economic activity of VFR, inter and intra-regional travellers. ✓✓✓	+primary, medium term. Recognize the importance and economic activity of VFR, inter and intra-regional travellers. ✓✓✓	+primary, long term. Support development and enhancement of buyable supporting experience. ✓✓	+primary, medium term. Support the recommendations surrounding tour route and Byways program ✓✓	
How does the initiative fit the criteria developed by the PD committee (ie. how does it score)?	Scored second highest ✓✓✓	Scored fourth highest ✓✓✓	Scored 8 th ✓✓	Scored 12 th ✓	Scored 13 th ✓	Scored 14 th	Scored third last	Scored second last
Are there other extraneous factors that affect the fit?	+ TEN program is about to be launched. +fits with most experiences being considered ✓✓✓	+fits all experiences being considered ✓✓✓	+TNO is moving forward with these groups. +fits several experiences being considered ✓✓✓				+fits touring experiences being considered ✓	
Total checkmarks	✓✓✓✓✓✓✓✓✓✓ (11)	✓✓✓✓✓✓✓✓✓✓ ✓ (12)	✓✓✓✓✓✓✓✓✓✓ (11)	✓✓✓✓✓ (5)	✓✓✓✓✓ (5)	✓✓✓✓ (4)	✓✓✓✓✓✓ (6)	✓ (1)



Based on the summary above, the ranking of the activities or tactics for consideration when developing the experiences includes:

1. Product Development Budget Augmentation
2. Embrace the TEN program to the max
3. Participate in TNO Product Development Groups
4. Wayfinding Signage Standards
5. Intermarket & VFR Strategy
6. Support Festival & Event Funding Apps
7. Support Culinary Tourism by Hosting Culinary Workshops
8. Downtown Revitalization Standards