

Business Accomplishments 2023/2024

Consumer Protection

Goal: To administer and enforce the legislation by which the Ontario travelling public can be confident in their travel purchases from registered professionals, including working collaboratively with stakeholders for regulatory enhancement.

BUSINESS OBJECTIVE	PERFORMANCE MEASURE 2023/2024	ACTIVITIES AND ACCOMPLISHMENTS
FY 2023/2024	Following the funding framework consultations, determine the appropriate changes to policies, processes, and systems to support implementation of the new fee model.	<p>The recommendations for the new funding framework were approved by the Board, and consultation sessions with registrants and stakeholders were completed in Q3.</p> <p>The final Notice of Fee change for the revised registration renewal fees and new late filing fees, effective April 1, 2024, was issued in Q4 as planned.</p>
	Based on the agreed outcomes from the Compensation Fund consultations, determine the appropriate changes to policies, processes, and systems to support the change(s) to the Compensation Fund.	<p>Following an actuary study, the recommended change to decrease Compensation Fund payments was approved by the Board, and consultation sessions with registrants and stakeholders were completed in Q3.</p> <p>The final Notice of Fee change for the reduced Compensation Fund payments, effective April 1, 2024, was issued in Q4 as planned.</p> <p>There were two proposals associated with the Compensation Fund that did not take effect on April 1, 2024 as they are subject to government consideration and decision-making, and are not within TICO's authority to implement. The proposals were: removing end-supplier coverage (airlines and cruise lines) from the Compensation Fund, and doubling the maximum Compensation Fund payment per person from \$5,000 to \$10,000.</p>
	Identify and address the opportunities for modernization in the <i>Travel Industry Act, 2002</i> and its regulation.	<p>Provide recommendations to the Ministry to update and modernize the legislation.</p> <p>Management provided meaningful insights to the Ministry for legislative and regulatory reform. Following dialogue with the Ministry, management recommended the expiration of two temporary regulatory provisions established during the pandemic to assist consumers and registrants. The first provision relating to the temporary expanded coverage under the Compensation Fund for unredeemed vouchers or similar documents, in certain cases, expired on April 1, 2024. The second provision relating to the temporary exemption for registrants, with annual Ontario gross sales of \$2 million or greater, from filing an annual financial statement with a review engagement report or audit opinion, will expire on December 1, 2024.</p> <p>TICO recognizes that the Ministry has indicated to the Auditor General that it is prioritizing consideration of recommendation 16 from the OAGO value-for-money audit report, which calls for a comprehensive review of the <i>Travel Industry Act, 2002</i> and TICO. Other recommendations that require legislative and/or regulatory changes would be assessed for consideration and decision-making, as appropriate, pending the outcome of the government's contemplation of recommendation 16.</p>
	Operationalize efficiencies and initiatives identified from an internal review of TICO's compliance model to effectively reduce high-risk registrants and unregistered sellers of travel services to enhance consumer protection.	<p>Complete implementation of the new compliance efficiencies to enhance TICO's compliance model.</p> <p>The OAGO value-for-money audit included a review of TICO's compliance policies and processes resulting in recommendations to enhance its risk-based framework, including its risk rating system, inspections, and risk assessment processes. While some process efficiencies have already been implemented during the year, management is committed to the modernization of its risk based model and related best practices.</p>



Awareness and Education

Goal: Consumers and registrants are aware of TICO and understand the benefits of purchasing travel services through a registered travel agency or travel wholesaler.

BUSINESS OBJECTIVE	PERFORMANCE MEASURE 2023/2024	ACTIVITIES AND ACCOMPLISHMENTS
<p>FY 2023/2024</p> <p>Uphold consumer awareness of TICO's role and the consumer protection in Ontario and revisit campaign strategy and messaging in response to the recovery of the global travel industry to build consumer confidence.</p>	<p>Maintain overall awareness and understanding of TICO and the consumer protection available by continuing to engage consumers by executing a modest digital media strategy.</p> <p>Conduct a consumer survey to gauge overall consumer awareness and knowledge of TICO.</p> <p>Produce and distribute various editorial and media releases to secure coverage in consumer publications to enhance education and awareness.</p>	<p>TICO maintained its digital 'always on' consumer awareness campaign throughout the fiscal year. By combining social media posts and advertising, Google search ads via the not-for-profit grant, and targeted advertising/collaboration opportunities, TICO's messaging was seen more than 3.8 million times in FY2023-24.</p> <p>TICO's consumer awareness survey showed improved metrics over the prior fiscal year, including 57% awareness of TICO (up from 41% last year).</p> <p>During FY2023-24, TICO responded to 21 mainstream media interviews/information requests, which resulted in 141 media hits. TICO saw coverage in top-tier media, including CTV Toronto, CP24, Global News, Toronto Star and Newstalk 1010.</p>
<p>In partnership with TICO's Education service provider, finalize development of a new interactive e-learning course of the education standards curriculum and testing to include adult learning principles and study tools.</p>	<p>Finalize and implement a new modernized online interactive e-learning course with new study tools and continuing education opportunities for TICO's Education Standards Program.</p>	<p>Curriculum development of TICO's new interactive e-Learning Program is underway with knowledge checks and case study development. Nine modules have been completed and delivered to Olivers for production and another three are being finalized. A number of modules are in the final stages of production with Olivers and are ready to be translated into French.</p>
<p>Provide registrants opportunities for engagement by leveraging technology for the purpose of education around various regulatory requirements.</p>	<p>Various online initiatives and engagement opportunities conducted with registrants and industry stakeholders to refresh and familiarize themselves with the regulatory requirements to operate and sell travel services in Ontario.</p>	<p>During 2023/2024, a total of 56 live webinars were held on various compliance topics. This includes 10 new registrant orientation sessions to familiarize them with TICO's role in the industry and to provide an in-depth focus on compliance related obligations as well as resources available to them. TICO also provided 10 work shops to travel and hospitality students at various community colleges in Ontario.</p>
<p>Through continuous and meaningful engagement of stakeholders, including TICO's Consumer and Industry Advisory Committee, develop opportunities and initiatives to identify challenges with the recovery of the travel industry and address issues impacting consumer confidence.</p>	<p>Proactively create opportunities to advance meaningful consumer and registrant engagement to support the economic viability and recovery of the travel industry and restore consumer confidence.</p>	<p>TICO proactively engaged consumers and other stakeholders throughout FY23-24. For consumers, an ongoing digital awareness campaign, an online consumer newsletter coupled with strategic advertising opportunities and media appearances, yielded more than 3.8 million impressions.</p> <p>For registrants, TICO conducted a comprehensive funding framework and fee review in FY23-24 that provided many opportunities to hear directly from registrants. The TICO Talk newsletter provided an additional touchpoint with registrants.</p> <p>The registrant survey indicated that there is more work to be done on registrant engagement, which will be a focus in FY24-25.</p>

Organizational Resiliency

Goal: TICO is committed to its consumer protection mandate through innovation, creativity and lifelong learning within an environment that is safe and secure and is resolved to enhance diversity, equity, and inclusion throughout.

BUSINESS OBJECTIVE		PERFORMANCE MEASURE 2023/2024	ACTIVITIES AND ACCOMPLISHMENTS
FY 2023/2024	Enhance overall value proposition to stakeholders through a focus on core services (registration, compliance, complaints, claims, enforcement) leveraging technology and further opportunities for continuous improvement in service delivery.	Review, analyze and implement process improvements for core service deliverables including setting measurable service delivery targets.	Following the recent OAGO value-for-money audit report, management developed a detailed internal action plan addressing various core service delivery enhancements. These recommendations have planned implementation dates over the next two fiscal years, with some enhancements expected to be completed during fiscal year 2024-2025.
	Implement a data management policy and procedures to ensure all data is collected, maintained, retrieved, and stored according to defined standards and best practices.	Complete implementation of a data management policy, procedures, and process to ensure data meets business needs.	The development of a data classification policy is in progress. This policy will ensure that all documents are classified for public or internal use as appropriate. System setup to accommodate for data classification has also begun. Work on this specific initiative is set to be completed by the end of Q1 of FY 2024-25. As part of the broader Auditor General recommendations, other data management initiatives will be carried forward to FY2024-25 as identified in TICO's OAGO implementation plans.
	Enhance consumer protection by leveraging a resilient and calibrated workforce that embraces, adapts, and thrives in new work environments and evolving skills, reflecting life-long learning principles, increased agility, and enhanced productivity.	Empower and optimize TICO's workforce through an innovative work environment and execution of enhanced skills, performance management and competencies supported by a culture of life-long learning. A new and innovative workplace policy and learning maps will be delivered for all employees.	Implementation of professional development plans continued to be supported and encouraged for all employees. The majority of employees were able to engage in professional development through the year. Following an employee survey and continuous feedback, management implemented an updated hybrid work policy to support the organization in delivering its mandate. These revised work environment practices assist employees with finding the optimal balance between work/family demands and increased stresses impacting mental health/well-being. Further plans for leadership development, life-long learning and competency development remains a key focus.



Balanced Scorecard

TICO's 2023/2024 Business Plan included the following Balanced Scorecard. TICO deployed this balanced scorecard throughout its fiscal year to monitor and gauge ongoing efforts and achievement of its strategic objectives. This Balanced Scorecard is shared with stakeholders to ensure transparency and accountability consistent with the Business Plan.

CONSUMER PROTECTION			
OBJECTIVE	MEASURE	FISCAL YEAR 2023/2024 TARGET	ACTIVITIES AND ACCOMPLISHMENTS
Mitigate Risk and Enhance Consumer Protection	Overall pass rate of financial filing bench reviews based on established financial criteria per the Regulation.	Achieve a financial filing bench review pass rate of a minimum of 90%.	A pass rate of 92% was achieved for the bench reviews completed in 2023/2024.
	Complete financial bench reviews on a timely basis.	Completion of bench reviews within an average of 30 days of receipt.	The average turnaround time to complete bench reviews was 15 days from the date of receipt.
	Percentage of compliance achieved for the number of identified unregistered sellers of travel operating in contravention of the Act and Regulation.	Achieve a compliance rate of 95% from 94% of all unregistered sellers of travel identified and processed.	A compliance rate of 90% was achieved working with unregistered sellers of travel for the fiscal year 2023/24.
Enhance Engagement with Consumers	<p>Actively interact with consumers and maintain our social media engagement rate (defined as likes, comments, and shares).</p> <p>Provide timely information to consumers who are searching for consumer protection travel information online and enhance our Google Ad Grants metrics.</p>	<p>Seek opportunities to enhance consumer engagement on social media by maintaining an engagement rate of 3.5% on Facebook.</p> <p>Routinely update keywords and messaging to drive consumers to the TICO website. Aim for a click-through rate of 10% and a conversion rate (more than 1 minute on site) of 25%.</p>	<p>TICO saw continued growth in its social media engagement rates, including 7% engagement on Facebook. This suggests TICO's content is timely, relevant, and useful for travel consumers.</p> <p>We concluded the year with a click-through rate of 19% on our Google search ads, surpassing industry benchmarks. We are no longer able to measure the conversion rate of time on site due to changes with Google Analytics, however we can see that on average, people who land on the website from our Google search ads spend 1 minute and 23 seconds on the website.</p>
Improve Service Delivery	Improve service delivery of TICO's core mandate including the areas of registration, compliance, and complaints.	<p>Registration application process completed within 30 days from receipt of all required documentation.</p> <p>Complete termination compliance review within 30 days of the closing date.</p> <p>Completion of financial inspections, representing a minimum 10% of the number of registrants in the year.</p> <p>Complaints processing completed within 30 days from receipt of all required information and supporting documentation.</p>	<p>A total of 76 new registration applications were processed with an average turnaround time of 23 days from receipt of all required documentation.</p> <p>Termination compliance reviews were fulfilled for 64% of terminated registrations. Reviews were completed in an average of 35 days of the registration closing date.</p> <p>A total of 122 financial inspections were completed during the fiscal year, which represents 8% of the year-end registrant base head offices.</p> <p>A total of 281 complaint files were processed within an average of 15 days from receipt of all required information and supporting documentation.</p>



EDUCATION AND AWARENESS

OBJECTIVE	MEASURE	FISCAL YEAR 2023/2024 TARGET	ACTIVITIES AND ACCOMPLISHMENTS
Support an Informed Travel Marketplace	Measure Ontarians' awareness of the existence of a regulated marketplace and TICO as a regulator when purchasing travel services from Ontario registered travel agencies and websites.	Maintain awareness of TICO at post-pandemic baseline of 4-in-10 consumers, based on current economic projections, consumer confidence, and continued travel recovery expectations.	TICO's consumer survey found 57% of respondents were aware of TICO, an increase from 41% the prior year. Across the board, the consumer survey results were more favourable this year and more in-line with historic levels.
		Maintain awareness of regulated marketplace at post pandemic baseline of 5-in-10 consumers by continuing to provide timely and credible information, while acknowledging that the broader travel environment and federal regulations may cause some confusion in the marketplace.	TICO's consumer survey found 62% of respondents were aware that travel agencies in Ontario are regulated, an increase from 53% the prior year.
Measure Overall Consumer Value	Measure consumers' value of TICO's services and the consumer protection available in the province.	Maintain that 7-in-10 consumers value TICO and its services.	TICO's consumer survey found that 75% of respondents value TICO and its services, up from 71% the prior year.
Enhance TICO's Education Standards Program	Update and provide new study tools to assist individuals to meet the legislated Educational Standard to sell travel services in Ontario.	Improve the satisfaction rate from 71% to 75% for TICO's Education Standards Program and educational resources.	The overall satisfaction rate was 69% for TICO's Education Standards Program in 2023/2024.
Enhance Education Opportunities for Registrants	Develop educational webinars and online continuing education resources to engage and revitalize the knowledge of registrants and their travel counsellors.	Maintain a minimum 91% satisfaction rate of TICO's educational initiatives with registrants.	The overall satisfaction rate was 90% for TICO's educational initiatives in 2023/2024.

ORGANIZATIONAL RESILIENCY

OBJECTIVE	MEASURE	FISCAL YEAR 2023/2024 TARGET	ACTIVITIES AND ACCOMPLISHMENTS
Enhance TICO Value Proposition to Registrants	Develop and implement a survey tool that provides a comprehensive measure of registrant value of TICO and its services.	Maintain 67% for registrant value of TICO and its services as a basis for future enhancement strategies.	TICO's registrant survey found 54% of respondents value TICO, a decrease from 67% the prior year. It should be noted that the results are now consistent with the value levels reported in 2021. The survey results may have been impacted by the broader business environment, including the funding framework and fee review consultation and a period of intense stakeholder advocacy.

FINANCIAL PERFORMANCE

OBJECTIVE	MEASURE	FISCAL YEAR 2023/2024 TARGET	ACTIVITIES AND ACCOMPLISHMENTS
Deliver Budget Operating Expenses	Operating expenses, excluding extraordinary items.	Achieve operating expenses within a range of +/- 5% of annual budget.	Operating expenses achieved a 5% favourable variation to the annual budget.



Additional Business Accomplishments in 2023/2024

- Successfully returned to a post-pandemic cost-recovery model, concluding temporary funding arrangements with the Ontario government that ended on March 31, 2023.
- Completed supporting the OAGO in its audit process, resulting in a total of 16 recommendations with nine of those directed at TICO, six directed at both TICO and the Ministry, and one directed at the Ministry.
- Substantially completed work towards finalizing TICO's Public Action Plan, which outlines TICO's progress in addressing the recommendations of the OAGO.
- Reconstituted TICO's Board of Directors to align with the Minister's Orders received on August 11, 2023.
- Established the Industry Advisory Council and Consumer Advisory Council, both of which will provide guidance and advice to the TICO Board of Directors on issues pertaining to TICO's consumer protection mandate.
- Continued to seek operational efficiencies and a secure infrastructure through enhanced IT tools and processes.
- Conducted an employee engagement survey resulting in an employee engagement score of 82%.
- Maintained eligibility with Google to continue funding from their not-for-profit Google Ad Grants program, up to \$10,000 USD per month.
- Published TICO Talk e-newsletter on TICO's website and distributed by email to all registrants.
- TICO's Joint Health and Safety Committee, composed of employee and management representatives, continued its work to maintain and enhance the health and safety conditions in the workplace.
- Shared best practices and other updates through ongoing collaboration with other Ontario delegated administrative authorities.