



Travel Industry Council of Ontario

# 2024

# BUSINESS PLAN

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APRIL 1, 2024 – MARCH 31, 2027

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# MESSAGE FROM THE CHAIR

March 1, 2024

Honourable Todd McCarthy  
Minister of Public and Business Service Delivery  
777 Bay Street, 5th floor  
Toronto, Ontario  
M5B 2H7

Dear Minister McCarthy,

On behalf of the Board of Directors of the Travel Industry Council of Ontario (TICO), I am pleased to present TICO's 2024 business plan.

This business plan reflects a period of renewal within Ontario's travel industry, with strong consumer demand for travel driving a resurging industry. At the same time, TICO is experiencing its own renewal, with operational enhancements planned for the year ahead to better serve Ontario's travellers and travel businesses.

## TRAVEL INDUSTRY GROWTH AND RECOVERY

Ontario's travel industry has demonstrated remarkable resilience, rebounding from the adversities of the pandemic years. Consumers' enthusiasm for travel remains strong, setting the stage for TICO registrants to flourish in the year ahead. At the time of publication, TICO's registrants recovered close to 95% of pre-pandemic sales and are gaining momentum with each month. While we continue to closely monitor economic pressures and consumer confidence, Ontarians' need to recharge and reconnect with loved ones is seeing no signs of slowing down. While business travel tends to lag leisure travel, we are also encouraged to see growth within this segment as well.

Our business plan is anchored in seeing Ontario's travel businesses flourish, while ensuring consumers are protected in a safe and fair marketplace.

## NEW BOARD GOVERNANCE WITH ENHANCED REPRESENTATION AND INSIGHTS

We acknowledge the necessity for TICO's Board to reflect the stakeholders and communities we serve. Embracing this principle, we implemented a new governance structure last year that brings fresh perspectives and insights to our decision-making processes. Our commitment to good governance ensures broad representation and the inclusion of different voices and viewpoints at the Board level.

## SEIZING OPPORTUNITIES FOR INNOVATION

In a rapidly evolving travel and regulatory landscape, we see challenges not as obstacles but as opportunities. Our role as a regulator demands nimbleness and a proactive approach.

We are committed to fostering innovation, embracing technology and collaborating with industry stakeholders to shape a regulatory framework that anticipates and adapts to emerging trends. Concurrently, TICO remains committed to strong service for consumers, registrants and other stakeholders.

## OVERSIGHT OF RISK MANAGEMENT

While embracing change, we also recognize the importance of strong risk management. Through rigorous oversight, we will continue to assess and mitigate risks in an ever-changing travel landscape.

## IN CLOSING

In closing, the entire Board is excited about the journey ahead and the ambitious priorities presented in this strategic business plan.

I want to extend my sincere gratitude to fellow Board members for their continued support and ongoing commitment to enhancing TICO's governance. Equally, I'd like to recognize the TICO team for their professionalism and unwavering commitment to fulfilling TICO's consumer protection mandate.

Yours truly,  
Travel Industry Council of Ontario



Michael Levinson,  
Chair of the Board of Directors



# MESSAGE DU PRÉSIDENT DU CONSEIL D'ADMINISTRATION

Le 1<sup>er</sup> mars 2024

L'honorable Todd McCarthy  
Ministre des Services au public et aux entreprises  
777, rue Bay, 5<sup>e</sup> étage  
Toronto (Ontario)  
M5B 2H7

Monsieur le Ministre,

Au nom du, l'organisme de régulation de voyage de l'Ontario (TICO) j'ai le plaisir de vous présenter le plan d'affaires 2024 du TICO.

Ce plan d'affaires reflète une période de renouveau au sein du secteur du voyage de l'Ontario. En effet, la forte demande des consommateurs pour les voyages stimule ce secteur en plein essor. Parallèlement, TICO connaît son propre renouveau : l'apport d'améliorations opérationnelles prévues pour l'année à venir permettra de mieux servir les voyageurs et les entreprises de voyages de l'Ontario.

## CROISSANCE ET REPRISE DU SECTEUR DU VOYAGE

Le secteur du voyage de l'Ontario a fait preuve d'une résilience remarquable, rebondissant après les adversités des années de pandémie. L'enthousiasme des consommateurs pour les voyages reste ardent, préparant le terrain pour que les inscrits au TICO prospèrent au cours de l'année à venir. Au moment de la publication, les inscrits du TICO ont récupéré près de 95 % des ventes d'avant la pandémie et elles prennent de l'ampleur chaque mois. Bien que nous continuions de surveiller de près les pressions économiques et la confiance des consommateurs, le besoin des Ontariens de se ressourcer et de renouer avec leurs proches ne voit aucun signe de ralentissement. Bien que les voyages d'affaires aient tendance à accuser du retard par rapport aux voyages d'agrément, nous sommes toutefois encouragés de voir une croissance dans ce segment également.

Notre plan d'affaires s'appuie sur notre soutien à la prospérité des entreprises de voyages de l'Ontario, ainsi que sur la protection des consommateurs dans un marché sûr et équitable.

## NOUVELLE GOUVERNANCE DU CONSEIL D'ADMINISTRATION AVEC UNE REPRÉSENTATION ET DES PERSPECTIVES AMÉLIORÉES

Nous reconnaissons la nécessité que le conseil d'administration du TICO reflète les parties prenantes et les communautés que nous servons. En partant de ce principe, nous avons mis en place

une nouvelle structure de gouvernance l'année dernière qui apporte de nouvelles perspectives à nos processus décisionnels. Notre engagement en faveur d'une bonne gouvernance garantit une large représentation et l'inclusion de différentes voix et de divers points de vue au conseil d'administration.

## SAISIR LES OCCASIONS D'INNOVATION

Dans un paysage où les voyages et la réglementation évoluent rapidement, nous considérons les défis non pas comme des obstacles, mais plutôt comme des occasions. Notre rôle d'organisme de réglementation exige de l'agilité et une approche proactive.

Nous nous engageons à favoriser l'innovation, à adopter la technologie et à collaborer avec les parties prenantes du secteur pour façonner un cadre réglementaire qui anticipe les tendances émergentes et s'y adapte. Simultanément, le TICO demeure engagé à fournir un service vigoureux pour les consommateurs, les inscrits et les autres parties prenantes.

## SURVEILLANCE DE LA GESTION DES RISQUES

Tout en acceptant le changement, nous reconnaissons également l'importance d'une solide gestion des risques. Grâce à une surveillance rigoureuse, nous continuerons d'évaluer et d'atténuer les risques dans un contexte touristique en constante évolution.

## EN CONCLUSION

En conclusion, l'ensemble du conseil d'administration est enthousiasmé de parcourir le chemin qui nous attend et les priorités ambitieuses présentées dans ce plan d'affaires stratégique.

Je tiens à exprimer ma sincère gratitude envers les autres membres du conseil d'administration pour leur soutien et leur engagement indéfectibles à améliorer la gouvernance du TICO. De même, je tiens à remercier l'équipe du TICO pour son professionnalisme et son engagement résolu à remplir le mandat de protection des consommateurs du TICO.

Cordialement,  
l'organisme de régulation de voyage  
de l'Ontario



Michael Levinson  
Président du conseil d'administration



# CHIEF EXECUTIVE OFFICER'S REPORT

## Finally, travel returns and more ...

While there are very real challenges facing travellers around the globe and closer to home, I am encouraged by the accelerated return to travel experienced this past year.

Consumers are once again taking to the skies, sea and roads to spend time with family and friends or to conduct business, unfettered by a computer screen.

Some of the more significant challenges posed by the economy, wars, climate change, technology, and changing social dynamics will continue to have direct implications on consumers' travel choices.

With the above headwinds however, travel has rebounded from the lows of the pandemic and is once again on a trajectory that may soon outpace the records of years past.

It is with this outlook in mind that TICO's business plan has been developed. Looking over the next three years, the first two will be transition years for TICO as we continue our journey to becoming a modern regulator of consumer protection.

## TRAVEL RECOVERY

By the end of 2023, travel had all but rebounded to sales levels not seen since before the pandemic.

We live in a country and province where travel is sometimes considered a luxury but is more often seen as a necessity given our climate, interests and interconnectedness with other cultures and economies.

While many economists expect the first half of 2024 to be a slow-growth environment, there is optimism for a rebound later in the year and beyond.

TICO's business plan has assumed a more conservative trajectory over its planning period, as we focus on transitional goals resulting from the prior year's business plan initiatives.

## OFFICE OF THE AUDITOR GENERAL OF ONTARIO (OAGO)

In 2023, the OAGO completed a value-for-money audit, encompassing TICO's end-to-end operations. Along with the Board of Directors, management is carefully reviewing all 16 recommendations, in the Acting Auditor General's report, and our path forward. We appreciate the recommendations from the OAGO to be a more effective and efficient regulator and are committed to implementing the recommendations in the report.

While some recommendations are under the direct control of TICO, others require ongoing collaboration and support from the government. We look forward to providing all stakeholders with a public action plan and regular progress reports.

## A NEW FUNDING MODEL

TICO completed a comprehensive review of its funding model last year. This review considered all of TICO's fees with the goal of achieving a more modern, fair and efficient system for recovering TICO's operational costs, while providing the necessary funds for future eligible claims by consumers.

Effective April 1, 2024, this new funding model will be implemented, addressing many long-standing concerns raised by registrants and other stakeholders.

This business plan reflects TICO's ongoing commitment to evolving to a more risk-based fee framework. We will continue to work collaboratively with stakeholders towards this goal over this planning horizon.

## CONSUMER PROTECTION

Consumer protection is at the heart of TICO's mandate. We consistently hear that consumers continue to see value in ensuring their travel purchases are supported through a regulated marketplace.

Our most recent surveys indicate consumer trust is returning to the marketplace and the majority of consumers see the value and importance of a regulated marketplace and the travel agents they interact with.

We are looking forward to establishing new consumer and industry advisory councils to hear directly from our two largest stakeholder groups.

These two councils will bring together knowledgeable people around the table to provide advice and perspective on the changing travel landscape and how TICO's consumer protection framework and services may evolve. TICO is committed to ensuring that its consumer protection framework remains fair, effective and responsive to the changing travel marketplace.

In closing, it is worth repeating that we are fortunate to live and work in a province where consumers can be confident in purchasing from a fair and safe marketplace, while seeing travel businesses grow, innovate and experience success.

While 2024 will present new risks and opportunities, I am confident that this business plan reflects the strategies to ensure TICO achieves its consumer protection mandate.

Yours truly,  
Travel Industry Council of Ontario



Richard Smart  
President & C.E.O.



# RAPPORT DU DIRECTEUR GÉNÉRAL

## **Enfin, la reprise des voyages et plus encore...**

Bien qu'il existe des défis très réels auxquels sont confrontés les voyageurs canadiens et du monde entier, je suis encouragé par la reprise accélérée des voyages au cours de l'année écoulée.

Les consommateurs empruntent à nouveau les airs, la mer et les routes pour passer du temps avec leur famille et leurs amis ou pour faire des affaires, sans être entravés par un écran d'ordinateur.

Certains des défis les plus importants posés par l'économie, les guerres, le changement climatique, la technologie et l'évolution des dynamiques sociales continueront d'avoir des répercussions directes sur les choix de voyage des consommateurs.

En dépit de ces turbulences, le secteur du voyage a rebondi après les creux de la pandémie et se trouve à nouveau sur une trajectoire bientôt en voie de dépasser les records des années pré-pandémie.

C'est dans cette optique que le plan d'affaires du TICO a été élaboré. Des trois prochaines années, les deux premières seront des années de transition pour le TICO alors que nous poursuivons notre parcours pour devenir un organisme de réglementation moderne de protection des consommateurs.

## **REPRISE DES VOYAGES**

À la fin de 2023, les voyages avaient pratiquement rebondi à des niveaux de ventes jamais vus depuis avant la pandémie.

Nous vivons dans un pays et une province où les voyages sont parfois considérés comme un luxe, mais plus souvent envisagés comme une nécessité compte tenu de notre climat, de nos intérêts et de notre interconnexion avec d'autres cultures et économies.

Alors que de nombreux économistes s'attendent à ce que le premier semestre de 2024 connaisse une croissance lente, on s'attend tout de même à un rebond plus tard dans l'année et au-delà.

Le plan d'affaires du TICO a adopté une trajectoire plus prudente au cours de sa période de planification, car nous nous concentrons sur les objectifs de transition résultant des initiatives du plan d'affaires de l'année précédente.

## **BUREAU DU VÉRIFICATEUR GÉNÉRAL DE L'ONTARIO (BVGO)**

En 2023, le BVGO a réalisé une vérification de l'optimisation des ressources, englobant le budget d'exploitation de bout en bout du TICO. En collaboration avec le conseil d'administration, la direction examine attentivement les 16 recommandations contenues dans le rapport du vérificateur général par intérim et trace la voie à suivre. Nous sommes reconnaissants de ces recommandations visant à faire du TICO un organisme de réglementation plus efficace et efficient et nous nous engageons à les mettre en œuvre.

Alors que certaines recommandations relèvent directement de l'autorité du TICO, d'autres nécessitent une collaboration et un soutien continu du gouvernement. Nous sommes impatients de fournir à toutes les parties prenantes un plan d'action public et des rapports d'étape réguliers.

## **UN NOUVEAU MODÈLE DE FINANCEMENT**

L'année dernière, le TICO a terminé un examen complet de son modèle de financement. Cet examen a pris en compte tous nos frais dans le but de mettre en place un système plus moderne, équitable et efficace de recouvrement des coûts opérationnels du TICO, tout en fournissant les fonds nécessaires pour les futures réclamations admissibles des consommateurs.

À compter du 1<sup>er</sup> avril 2024, ce nouveau modèle de financement sera mis en œuvre, répondant ainsi à de nombreuses préoccupations de longue date soulevées par les inscrits et d'autres parties prenantes.

Ce plan d'affaires reflète l'engagement continu du TICO à évoluer vers un cadre de frais davantage axé sur le risque. Nous continuerons à travailler en collaboration avec les parties prenantes pour atteindre cet objectif au cours de cet horizon de planification.

## **PROTECTION DES CONSOMMATEURS**

La protection des consommateurs est au cœur du mandat du TICO. Nous entendons constamment dire que les consommateurs continuent de reconnaître la valeur liée au fait de s'assurer que leurs achats de voyages sont protégés grâce à un marché réglementé.

Nos plus récents sondages indiquent qu'il y a un regain de confiance des consommateurs envers ce marché et que la majorité d'entre eux perçoivent la valeur et l'importance d'un marché réglementé et des agents de voyages avec lesquels ils interagissent.

Nous sommes impatients d'établir de nouveaux conseils consultatifs auprès des consommateurs et du secteur du voyage pour entendre de vive voix les opinions de nos deux principaux groupes de parties prenantes.

Ces deux conseils réuniront autour de la table des personnes compétentes qui formuleront des conseils et offriront leurs perspectives sur l'évolution du paysage du voyage et sur la manière dont le cadre de protection des consommateurs du TICO et ses services pourraient évoluer. Le TICO s'engage à veiller à ce que son cadre de protection des consommateurs reste équitable, efficace et adapté à l'évolution du marché du voyage.

En terminant, il convient de réitérer que nous avons la chance de vivre et de travailler dans une province où les consommateurs peuvent acheter en toute confiance sur un marché équitable et sûr, tout en constatant que les entreprises de voyages prennent de l'ampleur, innovent et connaissent le succès.

L'année 2024 présentera de nouveaux risques et de nouvelles occasions, mais je suis convaincu que ce plan d'affaires reflète les stratégies visant à garantir que le TICO réalise son mandat de protection des consommateurs.

Cordialement,  
l'organisme de régulation de voyage  
de l'ontario



Richard Smart  
Président et C.E.O.



# MANDATE

For the purposes of this Business Plan, the following definitions apply:

**Registrant:** A registrant is defined as a travel agent or a travel wholesaler who is registered as a travel agent or a travel wholesaler or as both, under the *Travel Industry Act, 2002*.

**Travel Agent:** A travel agent is defined as a person who sells to consumers, travel services provided by another person.

**Travel Wholesaler:** A travel wholesaler is defined as a person who acquires rights to a travel service for the purpose of resale to a travel agent or who carries on the business of dealing with travel agents or travel wholesalers for the sale of travel services provided by another person.

**The *Travel Industry Act, 2002* (the Act) and Ontario Regulation 26/05 (the Regulation):** Ontario's consumer protection legislation that governs travel agents (travel retailers) and travel wholesalers operating in the province, which TICO administers and enforces on behalf of the Ministry of Public and Business Service Delivery.

**The Ministry of Public and Business Service Delivery (the Ministry):** is the department of the Government of Ontario that is responsible for the delivery and management of government operations, and consumer protection in the Canadian province of Ontario. The Ministry has oversight of TICO and is responsible for policy for the *Travel Industry Act, 2002*.

**Non-Registrant:** An organization which supplies travel services, but is not registered in Ontario including (but not limited to):

- Travel wholesalers and travel agents not located in Ontario.
- Companies that sell to clients in Ontario by means of advertising, the internet or toll-free phone line, but where the home base or call centre is not located in Ontario.
- End suppliers (e.g., airlines, hotels, rail services, cruise lines), which may or may not be located in Ontario.

**Travel Services:** Transportation or sleeping accommodation for the use of a traveler, tourist or sightseer or other services combined with that transportation or sleeping accommodation.

## MANDATE

TICO's mandate is to support the Ministry of Public and Business Service Delivery's mission of maintaining a fair, safe and informed marketplace as it relates to Ontario's *Travel Industry Act, 2002*. This mandate is accomplished by developing and fostering high standards in:

- Consumer protection.
- Registration, inspection, supervision and discipline of registrants.
- Consumer education and awareness.
- Investigating and mediating disputes between consumers and registrants.

In addition, programs will serve to support this mandate by:

- Promoting fair and ethical competition within the industry.
- Supporting a voluntary registrant Code of Ethics.
- Maintaining and enforcing programs that provide for consumer compensation in specific circumstances.
- Promoting an expected level of education as a criterion for registration.
- Encouraging legislative and regulatory amendments aimed at enhancing industry professionalism and consumer confidence.



# VISION & MISSION

## VISION STATEMENT

To be a progressive regulator advancing consumer protection, ethical business practices and a trusted marketplace where consumers are confident purchasing travel from registered professionals.

## MISSION STATEMENT

To regulate consumer protection by promoting awareness, education and compliance as part of the efficient and effective regulation of Ontario's travel industry.



**Regulation**



**Monitoring**



**Refunds**



**Complaints**



**Education**

# VALUES

## EFFICIENCY

We drive value through continuous improvement and cost effectiveness.

## LEADERSHIP

We demonstrate courage, integrity, and transparency in building stakeholder confidence.

## ACCOUNTABILITY

We are committed to high standards, taking responsibility for our actions and results.

## SERVICE EXCELLENCE

We are a fair and firm regulator responsive to stakeholder needs.

## TEAMWORK

We are one team, passionate, knowledgeable, and greater working together.

## INNOVATION

We embrace change and ingenuity in advancing as a regulatory leader.

## COMMUNICATION

We build trusting relationships by listening well and embracing effective conversations which are open, clear, direct, and honest.

## OPENNESS

We are welcoming of all cultures and embrace diversity through inclusivity, equality, and fairness for all.

*Above all, we envision that Consumer Protection is stronger through a workplace built on honesty, respect and trust that leverages our strengths in diversity and strong business ethics in all that we do.*

## STAKEHOLDERS

TICO works with stakeholder groups including:

**Consumers:** to increase awareness of their rights and responsibilities, and those of the Ontario travel industry under the Act. TICO deploys various ways to reach consumers including consumer trade shows, consumer surveys, consumer inquiries and through regular monitoring of social media. TICO's website also provides consumers with helpful information with respect to the consumer protections available when purchasing travel services from TICO registrants.

### TICO Registrants (Ontario travel agent / travel wholesalers):

While TICO activities are focused on consumer protection, its clients also include the Ontario-registered travel agents and wholesalers who fund TICO through registration fees and who pay contributions into the Compensation Fund.

TICO serves its registrants by justifying consumer confidence in purchasing from the Ontario travel industry. This is accomplished through:

- Ongoing services and initiatives aimed at monitoring and ensuring compliance with the Act and Regulation.
- Making consumers aware of the benefits of dealing with Ontario Registrants.
- Enhancing industry professionalism.
- Providing consumer compensation and recourse in specific circumstances.
- Striving to ensure the Act and Regulation remain relevant to emerging issues.

**Industry Associations:** to harness their knowledge and commitment to ethical and open competition. The associations include but are not limited to:

- The Canadian Association of Tour Operators (CATO)
- The Association of Canadian Travel Agencies and Travel Advisors (ACTA)
- The Ontario Motor Coach Association (OMCA)

**Government:** which has delegated to TICO the responsibility for administering and enforcing the Act, provides oversight of TICO and is responsible for policy for the *Travel Industry Act, 2002*.

## SERVICES

The services delegated to TICO to provide are detailed below.

### Registration

- Processing new applications – ensuring criteria and standards are met.
- Processing registration renewals – ensuring criteria and standards continue to be met, for example:
  - financial viability, including compliance with financial criteria under the Act and Regulation.
  - supervisor / manager qualifications.
  - other compliance issues.
- Registrant inquiries.

## Consumer protection

- Administering the Ontario Travel Industry Compensation Fund.
- Financial Inspections:
  - financial compliance reviews of registrants to minimize risk to consumers.
  - site inspections to identify registrants that pose a financial risk.
- Compliance: utilizing administrative compliance measures to ensure that registrants correct deficiencies that have been identified in areas such as advertising regulations, terms and conditions of registration and disclosure to consumers (e.g., conditions of booking). Identify and bring into compliance unregistered travel sellers operating in Ontario and selling travel services to consumers in contravention of the *Travel Industry Act, 2002*.
- Investigations: investigating instances of suspected breaches of the Act, which could result in prosecution.
- Enforcement: suspensions, proposals to revoke registrations, laying charges under provincial statutes and referrals to criminal authorities.
- Consumer inquiries.
- Consumer education.

## Complaint resolution

- Resolving complaints:
  - between consumers and registrants.
  - between consumers and TICO.
  - between registrants and TICO.

## Complaint handling process

TICO provides complaint handling for consumer-to-registrant disputes. After encouraging consumers to pursue all avenues with the registrant, TICO staff will assist with the goal of reaching a mutually acceptable solution. However, TICO does not have the authority to settle a dispute, or to impose a settlement, and it does not have the authority or mandate to act as an arbitrator in any complaint matter. When a complaint involves allegations of non-compliance with the Act, the Registrar will undertake the necessary compliance and enforcement activities. If such is the case, this will be dealt with separately from assisting with resolution of the complaint.

When TICO receives a complaint, the length of time to achieve a resolution varies depending on the complexity of the issues, the availability of feedback and documentation required, and the level of cooperation of those involved. TICO strives to complete its process within 30 days of receiving all the necessary information and supporting documentation required based on the complaint issue(s) involved.

When a mutual solution is not reached, complainants are provided with information regarding options to pursue matters.

TICO also has a policy and procedures for addressing complaints involving the manner in which TICO provides customer service and other related programs separate from its regulatory role. These matters are subject to resolution by management, and if unresolved have an appropriate escalation process.

## Education standards

Administering a legislated Education Standards Program for individuals to obtain their TICO Certification. By law, TICO Certification is required for every person in Ontario who is working for a retail travel agency and is selling travel services and/or providing travel advice to the public. This includes Supervisors and Managers on a registrant's registration record with TICO.

## Government liaison

The Ministry provides oversight of TICO and is responsible for policy for the *Travel Industry Act, 2002*. TICO provides feedback to the Ministry on items relating to issues management, regulatory reform and matters of public interest.

## Additional responsibilities

In addition to the delegated responsibilities, TICO intends to increase the following:

- Consumer education and awareness on the benefits of purchasing travel services from Ontario registrants and the inherent risks of dealing with non-registrants.
- Consumer awareness and useful tips with respect to purchasing travel services online.

## ACCESSIBILITY FOR ONTARIANS WITH DISABILITIES

TICO is committed to providing services that are accessible to people with disabilities in accordance with the *Accessibility for Ontarians with Disabilities Act* (AODA). TICO strives to ensure the provision of customer service in a manner that reflects the AODA core principles: Dignity, Independence, Integration and Equal Opportunity. All TICO stakeholders can make an accessibility accommodation request by telephone, mail, e-mail or in person. TICO's Accessibility Policy is available online on [TICO's website](#).

## FRENCH LANGUAGE SERVICES

TICO strives to respond to all inquiries received in the French language within a reasonable timeframe, whether oral or written. Communications received in French are responded to in French and TICO will provide all stakeholders with timely, courteous and quality responses to all French language enquiries whenever a request is received.

Currently, TICO provides the following information/services in French:

- TICO's core services and information on a French microsite.
- Education Standards Program information and online registration process on TICO's website.
- Education Standards Materials (Study Manual, quizzes, etc.).
- TICO Exams.
- Complaint Forms and Compensation Fund Claim Forms.
- Informational materials promoting awareness of TICO and its services.



# 2024 BUSINESS PLAN

In assuming the delegation from the Ontario Government for administering the *Travel Industry Act, 2002*, which governs approximately 2,000 travel agents and wholesalers registered in Ontario, TICO established an initial agenda not just to administer its delegated responsibilities in the public interest, but also to elevate the travel industry to new levels in consumer protection, professional standards, and regulatory compliance.

TICO's mission, vision and values will serve as guiding principles to staff and Board members and against which all initiatives will be measured.

The 27th year Business Plan which follows, outlines:

- The context for the Business Plan.
- The operating environment established to support it.
- The specific objectives, actions, and performance measures for accomplishing the mandate in an ongoing three-year planning period.

## Business Plan Context and the Auditor General Value-for-Money Audit



Office of the  
Auditor General of Ontario

During 2023, the Office of the Auditor General of Ontario (OAGO) conducted a value-for-money audit of TICO and the Acting Auditor General's report was released in December. The report identified opportunities for TICO to enhance its policies and procedures, risk-based decision-making processes and more effective collection and analysis of data to enhance business intelligence of the travel marketplace and registrants.

The report also identified areas where further regulatory enhancements may assist TICO in the fulfilment of its mandate, and broader policy considerations for the government. TICO is committed to addressing the Auditor General's recommendations in a timely manner, although some recommendations may require additional time as the Ministry of Public and Business Service Delivery (Ministry) considers a key recommendation to undertake a comprehensive review of the Act and TICO's mandate.

In total, there were 16 recommendations in the report, including 9 directed at TICO, 6 directed at both the Ministry and TICO, and 1 directed at the Ministry, with 32 action items. This three-year Business Plan includes initiatives to begin implementation while certain recommendations may extend beyond this plan. TICO remains committed to prudent financial management of expenses and has prioritized initiatives where existing resources and systems can be leveraged. Some initiatives may require a longer planning horizon and further consultation with stakeholders before further investments and implementation begins.

Prior to implementation, TICO will establish a strong project management framework and process to ensure the Auditor General's recommendations are effectively managed. This process will require Board approval and Ministry oversight, both of which will be reflected in our Public Action Plan. TICO is committed to providing stakeholders with regular updates throughout the implementation timeline, beginning in early 2024.

# ENVIRONMENT

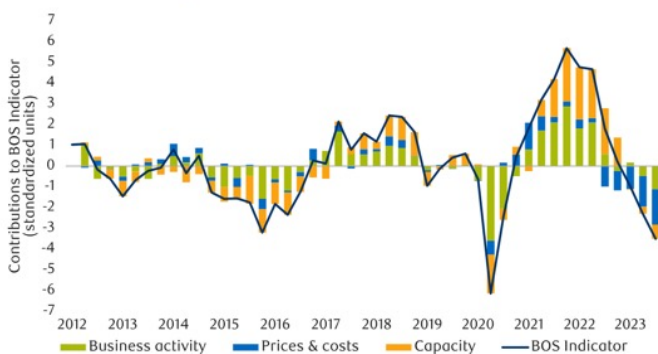
What a difference a year makes. Since the beginning of 2023, the travel sector has demonstrated its resilience with growth that has exceeded even the most optimistic projections from a year ago. With the pandemic squarely in the rear-view mirror, travellers have once again returned to the air, motorcoaches, and other modes of travel to satisfy years of pent-up demand. While leisure travel has surged, there are now signs that business travel is also gaining momentum as the new world emerges. Businesses across the travel supply chain have worked diligently to address many issues that emerged a year ago, resulting in a much-improved travel experience.

Despite strong year-to-date performance (at the time of writing), there remain various clouds on the horizon, any one of which could derail the momentum of the current travel recovery.

## ECONOMY

A lot has already been said about the economy across various economic projections and media channels. What is clear is that travel operates within an interconnected, global marketplace that is under constant challenge from global economic pressures, high interest rates combined with high leverage (debts), climate change, and unfortunately, wars in various regions of the world. Here, closer to home, high inflation has led to interest rates not seen in decades, which, in turn, has led to downward pressure on consumer demand and ultimately a softening economy. Projections for 2024 are mixed at best, but most economic pundits predict a very slow growth environment.

### Business Outlook Survey Indicator deteriorates further

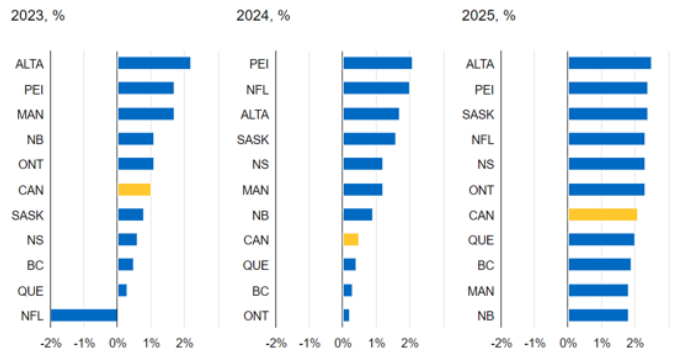


As of Q3 2023. Sources: Bank of Canada Business Outlook Survey, Macrobond, RBC GAM

Canadian businesses believe the pain from higher interest rates is only beginning, as highlighted in the above graph, reflecting the downward lag that typically follows elevated interest rates.

The above business outlook survey is one of the key attributes contributing to the following modest GDP projections for 2023 through 2025.

### Real GDP Growth



Source: Statistics Canada, RBC Economics

The 2024 projections for real GDP in Canada and Ontario are 0.5% and 0.2%, respectively. RBC predicts a 70% probability of a technical recession during 2024, more likely during the first half of the year followed by a slower recovery as the year unfolds. On a more positive note, inflation is expected, on average, to return around the 2.0% level both nationally and in Ontario. While consumer prices will likely remain elevated for the foreseeable future (especially travel), overall affordability will begin to stabilize, contributing to a return of confidence for many consumers.

## CONSUMER CONFIDENCE

Travel is considered by some as a luxury item, discretionary at best. Consumer sentiment and confidence remain key attributes for a healthy travel marketplace. Throughout the pandemic, we experienced peaks and valleys as new strains emerged, and vaccine adoption grew.

For the third consecutive month this year, the Index of Consumer Confidence dropped across Canada and in Ontario. Nationally, an index score of 58 (52 for Ontario) represents the lowest consumer confidence levels in more than a decade and the second lowest compared to the start of the pandemic (March 2020). While the economy, in general, is weighing on the minds of many consumers, the aggregate concerns for continued employment, housing and mortgage refinancing, political uncertainty, and other macro factors continue to dampen the outlook for improved consumer confidence.

Index of Consumer Confidence  
(2014 = 100)

Source: The Index of Consumer Confidence is created by The Conference Board of Canada.

For major purchases, like travel, the majority of consumers as reported by the Conference Board of Canada (70%) see this as a “bad” time for major purchases. However, the percentage of those consumers who saw this period as improving for major purchases reflected a slight improvement to just under 9%. Clearly, there is a long way to go before the recent surge in demand can be considered sustainable.

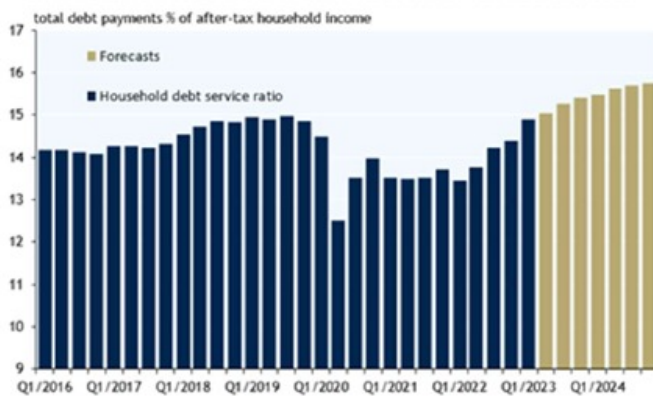
## TRAVEL INDUSTRY AND RECOVERY

The combined and continued impact of declining consumer confidence, a slowing economy, and high levels of debt will have an ongoing impact on the pace of the travel sector recovery.

Earlier in the pandemic, most national experts were projecting a return to pre-pandemic travel patterns in late 2024. These same experts are now suggesting that travel may take well into 2025 before we see travel patterns sustainable or even better than 2019. With less overall capacity and inflated prices, revenues are now approximately equal to 2019 levels. However, the concerns noted above give pause as to the overall health and sustainability of the travel recovery.

Of particular concern is the level of debt held by Canadians and Canadian businesses. Increased debt levels have impeded many smaller travel businesses from needed investment and innovation as they struggle under high debt loads and repayment schedules.

### Canada Household Debt Service Ratio to rise further



Source: Statistics Canada, RBC Economics Research

The amount Canadians are paying to cover the costs of debt rose to a record in the third quarter of 2023, with the household debt service ratio increasing to 15.2 per cent in Q2, according to Statistics Canada. In total, household credit is at or near a record high of 182% of disposable income, meaning many consumers will need to direct available after-tax income to service debt as opposed to other discretionary spending like travel. Similarly, small businesses, including registrants, are feeling the pressures of increased debt incurred over the pandemic years, higher interest rates, and decreased liquidity.

The resulting impact of elevated debt levels on a sustainable travel recovery is yet to be fully seen. However, it is very likely that the accelerated growth experienced in the current recovery is at risk in the year ahead.

## CONSUMER PROTECTION AND TICO

We are fortunate that Ontario continues as an economic engine of Canada and is considered by consumers and businesses as a fair and open market where consumers can be fully informed and confident with their travel purchases. In a recent TICO survey, 4-in-5 respondents feel it is “critical” or “important” that the travel agency they are booking through is regulated, including more than one-third who feel it is “critical.” Furthermore, consumers increasingly are seeing the value of travel advisors in their purchase decisions. While consumers continue to value the regulatory oversight provided by TICO, we must continue to embrace feedback from all stakeholders to be more efficient and effective in the years ahead. In December, the Auditor General of Ontario released a value-for-money report and provided recommendations for improving the execution of our mandate. TICO welcomes the Auditor General’s report and looks forward to working collaboratively with the Ministry and other stakeholders in enhancing its overall value proposition to the Ontario public and stakeholders.

## IN CONCLUSION

As we entered 2023, there was considerable optimism for the travel sector as the post-pandemic era emerged. So far, we have not been disappointed. Travel is back, and consumers are spending — for now. As many surveys have demonstrated, travel is considered vital to Ontarians as we benefit from a demographic and society largely favourable to travel. While there may be clouds on the horizon, the long-term outlook for growth in the travel marketplace remains strong. This optimism is supported by the industry’s track record of growth, innovation and customer-centric approaches.

We have always found a balance between this entrepreneurial spirit and a fair, balanced regulatory model. This is why Ontario remains a preferred place to live, grow and conduct business. At TICO, we remain committed to our vision and mission and look forward to working together towards a healthier and brighter travel industry for all.

# THREE-YEAR BUSINESS PLAN FY 2024/2025 TO FY 2026/2027

This Business Plan contains forward-looking information that reflects management’s current expectations related to matters such as strategic goals and priorities, projected future financial performance and operating results of TICO. Forward-looking statements are provided for the purposes of providing information about management’s current expectations and plans and allowing stakeholders and others to get a better understanding of TICO’s financial position, projections, and operating environment. Readers are cautioned that such information may not be appropriate for other circumstances. By their very nature, forward-looking statements require management to make assumptions and are subject to inherent risks and uncertainties, which give rise to the possibility that TICO’s assumptions, estimates, analyses, beliefs and opinions may not be correct, and that TICO’s expectations and plans will not be achieved.

TICO’s three-year Business Plan applies a systematic approach to delivering its mandate from the Ministry of Public and Business Service Delivery (“Ministry”). This approach is illustrated in the model below and forms the basis of this Business Plan.

## OUR COMMITMENT

Consistent with TICO’s mandate and vision, strong consumer awareness and protection for the Ontario traveller is TICO’s ultimate goal. Consumer awareness, protection and tourism are important foundations for Ontario’s economy, and it is therefore vital a comprehensive consumer protection framework is aligned with sound business practice across the province. While the Ontario traveller is the end consumer, TICO’s Business Plan must be achieved through engaging in strong partnerships with industry (“registrants”), industry associations and the Ontario government.

This Business Plan framework is squarely aimed at addressing the key risks facing TICO in the achievement of its mandate. This framework must benefit all stakeholders, but in particular, it needs to consider the vulnerable, indebted and less informed travellers who may be at greater risk due to fraud and other circumstances beyond their control. Indeed, consumer protection is a key focus for the Ontario Government. Of course, it is also our view that a consumer protection framework be fiscally prudent and delivered in a manner that is supportive of current and emerging business models. TICO is committed to all these goals, and in evolving its own business model to meet both current demands and emerging future challenges. TICO remains committed to prudent financial management of expenses and has prioritized initiatives where existing resources and systems can be leveraged. Our Business Plan is best illustrated in the model shown below.

A summary of three over-arching strategic priorities over the next three years is provided below. Within each priority, a number of specific initiatives have been identified. Year 1 strategic initiatives are the basis for TICO’s annual budget which is approved separately by TICO’s Board of Directors. Years 2 and 3 reflect future planned initiatives but which also may commence during the first year of this plan through pilot(s), planning document(s) and/ or other exploratory activity. With some initiatives, the business risk may already be present and activity underway, but may also be subject to increasing threats, emerging new delivery models, technology changes or alternative solutions, which are captured beyond the initial year of this business plan.

## TICO’S STRATEGIC PLANNING MODEL



## ENTERPRISE RISK MANAGEMENT

In accordance with its Enterprise Risk Management Policy, the Board of Directors (Board) and TICO’s Leadership Team strive to identify, assess, and manage risks that may affect TICO’s ability to achieve its goals. The Board is responsible for determining the overall risk appetite of the organization. Risk appetite is defined as the total financial exposure that TICO, as an enterprise, will accept based on a risk-return trade-off in relation to its strategic goals. The Audit, Technology and Risk Management Committee of the Board has responsibility for the oversight of the Enterprise Risk Management Policy and makes recommendations to the Board of Directors. TICO’s Risk Management Framework and risk mitigation initiatives are reviewed throughout the year with the Board.



Risks are classified into a number of different categories, including operational and financial risks, and are calculated and ranked in accordance with impact and the likelihood of occurrence. Risk champions within the organization are responsible for overseeing these risks and taking appropriate action. Priority risks are regularly monitored by assigned Committees of the Board as part of the governance framework. Various risk mitigation strategies are considered and implemented by management to mitigate risks accordingly. Strategic initiatives presented in this business plan address high priority risks.

The Board is satisfied that TICO's risk management framework and practices are effectively implemented and facilitating the organization with achieving its mandate.



# STRATEGIC PRIORITIES FOR 2024/2025 TO 2026/2027

## STRATEGY 1: CONSUMER PROTECTION\*

\*TICO's strategic priorities, corresponding initiatives, and targets set out in its Business Plan may be subject to change due to the Ministry's and TICO's consideration and potential future implementation of the Auditor General's recommendations.

### GOAL

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

The core of TICO's existence is to administer and enforce the consumer protection legislation that regulates the sale of travel services through registered travel agents and wholesalers operating in Ontario. TICO does this by supporting its vision and values, which includes being fair, but firm in its conduct with registrants and consumers as Ontario's Travel Regulator. TICO will continue to work collaboratively with the Ontario Government to support legislative or regulatory changes to meet the challenges of providing effective consumer protection in a rapidly changing marketplace.

TICO will also continue to develop and improve its processes and procedures around enforcement of the legislation, which includes financial inspections and compliance activities to ensure it protects the interests of the travelling public. This includes having effective mechanisms in place for registrants, individuals or companies that choose to contravene the consumer protection laws in Ontario. This is vital to ensure a level playing field in the industry as well as maintaining and building consumer confidence.

TICO's strategic priorities in this area will include:

FY	INITIATIVE(S)	DESCRIPTION	TARGET
2024/2025	Begin implementation of enhanced TICO disclosures about its registrants to stakeholders.	Develop principles for an enhanced registrant disclosures policy that will build consumer confidence, establish a more informed travel marketplace, and instill public confidence in travel purchases from TICO registered travel professionals.	Finalize policy and commence implementation of registrant disclosures.  Modernize TICO public directory to facilitate easier access to registrant information.
	Promote and advance legislative and regulatory reform.	Continue to identify and address the opportunities for modernization in the <i>Travel Industry Act, 2002</i> and its regulation.	Identify new opportunities and continue to provide recommendations to the Ministry to update and modernize the legislation.
	Continue to mitigate risk and enhance consumer protection.	Operationalize efficiencies and initiatives identified from an internal review of core processes to improve core regulatory services and operating systems.	Advance key internal policies and processes to mitigate consumer protection risks.
2025/2026 – 2026/2027	Continue to enhance TICO disclosures about its registrants to stakeholders.	Using principles and policy for enhanced registrant disclosures, implement initiatives to build consumer confidence, establish a more informed travel marketplace, and instill public confidence in travel purchases from TICO registered travel professionals.	Complete enhancements to registrant disclosures.
	Continue to mitigate risk and enhance consumer protection.	Operationalize initiatives identified from the review of TICO's compliance model to effectively reduce high-risk registrants including implementation of risk-based decision systems, processes and pricing models.	Develop an enhanced risk-based module to regulate high-risk registrants more effectively, reducing consumer harm by incentivizing compliant behaviors through risk-based decision frameworks, which encompass risk-based fee models.

## STRATEGY 2: AWARENESS & EDUCATION\*

\*TICO's strategic priorities, corresponding initiatives, and targets set out in its Business Plan may be subject to change due to the Ministry's and TICO's consideration and potential future implementation of the Auditor General's recommendations.

### GOAL

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

Consumers who purchase travel services in Ontario should be aware that travel agents and wholesalers operating in Ontario are regulated and that there is consumer protection in place to protect their travel purchases. Each year, TICO strives to increase consumer awareness to ensure that more and more consumers are aware of the existence of TICO and the benefits of purchasing their travel services whether in person or online from registered Ontario travel agencies. The initiatives below support TICO's Mission Statement "To regulate consumer protection by promoting awareness, education and compliance as part of the efficient and effective regulation of Ontario's travel industry." TICO achieves this goal by planning and executing a comprehensive consumer awareness campaign that involves various forms of communications including social media and innovative digital strategies, speaking engagements with consumers and distribution of informational materials.

TICO also administers and enforces a legislated Education Standards Program, which requires every travel agent selling travel services on behalf of a registered Ontario travel agency to be knowledgeable of legislated requirements that regulate the sale of travel services in Ontario. It is imperative that the knowledge and professionalism of Ontario travel agents continues to be enhanced with ongoing education to support compliance and improved consumer protection. This initiative also includes activities to promote registrant engagement in TICO's consumer awareness campaign as well as fostering relationships not only to achieve a better understanding but also to understand the challenges faced in the marketplace. Together, TICO along with its stakeholders can build a stronger industry where consumer confidence and protection is recognized as being paramount.

TICO's strategic priorities in this area will include:

FY	INITIATIVE(S)	DESCRIPTION	TARGET
2024/2025	Support an informed marketplace.	Maintain consumer awareness of TICO's role and the consumer protection in Ontario.	<p>Maintain overall awareness and understanding of TICO and the consumer protection available by further leveraging a digital media strategy.</p> <p>Conduct a consumer survey to measure overall consumer awareness and knowledge of TICO.</p> <p>Consider TICO's consumer audiences and the most impactful ways to reach them, including social media, media relations, advertising and digital collaborations.</p> <p>Engage registrants to promote consumer protection. Consider creative, helpful and shareable information registrants can provide to consumers to help build confidence with travel purchases.</p>
	Enhance TICO's online Education Standards Program with a modern online interactive e-learning course and testing including new study tools and continuing education opportunities.	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, study tools.	Finalize and commence implementation of a new modernized online interactive e-learning course with new study tools and continuing education opportunities for TICO's Education Standards Program.
	Provide opportunities to industry and registrants to participate in education and familiarization opportunities.	Provide registrants opportunities for engagement by leveraging technology for the purpose of education around various regulatory requirements.	Engage registrants through online initiatives and other engagement opportunities to refresh and familiarize themselves with the regulatory requirements to operate and sell travel services in Ontario.
	Foster collaboration and engagement with stakeholders to promote activities in support of improved consumer confidence in their travel purchases.	Through continuous and meaningful engagement of stakeholders, including TICO's Consumer Advisory Committee and Industry Advisory Committee, develop opportunities and initiatives to address issues impacting consumer confidence.	Proactively create opportunities to advance meaningful consumer and registrant engagement to support consumer confidence in their travel purchases.

FY	INITIATIVE(S)	DESCRIPTION	TARGET
2025/2026 – 2026/2027	Continue to build and enhance consumer awareness in Ontario.	Continue to build and increase consumer awareness of TICO’s role and the consumer protection in Ontario.	Improve overall awareness and understanding of TICO and the consumer protection available by engaging consumers and leveraging social and digital media.
	Continue to enhance the Education Standards Program with new education opportunities.	Leveraging the technology and tools available on TICO’s online education platform, develop and introduce new educational opportunities and study tools on various topics beneficial to professional development.	Finalize implementation and continue enhancements to online educational opportunities and initiatives extended to registrants and stakeholders wishing to enter the travel industry.
	Continue to engage registrants with education and familiarization opportunities.	Offer opportunities to provide refresher and familiarization webinars around regulatory requirements.	Various online initiatives and engagement opportunities conducted with registrants and industry stakeholders.
	Continue to foster collaboration and engagement with stakeholders to address key industry concerns.	Develop opportunities and initiatives to address key challenges in the travel industry, mitigate issues impacting consumer confidence and enhance the TICO value proposition.	Proactively create opportunities to enhance meaningful engagement with consumers and registrants, supporting the viability of the Ontario travel industry and promoting an understanding of the benefits of purchasing travel services through TICO registrants.



## STRATEGY 3: ORGANIZATIONAL RESILIENCY\*

\*TICO's strategic priorities, corresponding initiatives, and targets set out in its Business Plan may be subject to change due to the Ministry's and TICO's consideration and potential future implementation of the Auditor General's recommendations.

### GOAL

**TICO is committed to our 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.**

At the heart of TICO and its operations is a resolute team of individuals committed to excellence in everything we do and by taking pride in the way we address the needs of all stakeholders. Through a strategic and risk-based approach, a focus on digitizing all internal and external facing core processes, and the journey towards a digital workforce, our goals are one of a modern and effective regulator delivering value as we focus on our core consumer protection mandate. This journey is predicated on service delivery excellence, risk-based decision-making, and leveraging business intelligence through advanced data analytics and change management principles.

TICO's strategic priorities in this area will include:

FY	INITIATIVE(S)	DESCRIPTION	TARGET
2024/2025	Complete implementation of TICO's new funding model framework.	Execute the appropriate changes to policies, processes, and systems to support the implementation of the new funding model.	Completion of overall operational policies, processes and systems to support and execute TICO's new funding framework and fee model.
	Based on the outcome of the Compensation Fund review and consultations, complete operationalizing an enhanced Compensation Fund model, recognizing that some proposals are subject to the government's consideration and decision-making.	Execute the appropriate changes to policies, processes, and systems to support the implementation of the new funding model.	Completion of the implementation of the non-legislative components, systems and processes associated with the Compensation Fund.
	Address the Auditor General's recommendations as reported in the December 2023 Value-for-Money Audit report, recognizing that some proposals are subject to the government's consideration and decision-making.	Utilizing a disciplined project management approach and working in collaboration with the Ministry on joint recommendations, develop and commence implementation of action plans to enhance policies, systems and processes. This involves reflecting a risk-based approach to compliance and other regulatory processes, including a more robust data management framework.	A post-audit action plan will be delivered to stakeholders and posted on TICO's website, including targets and timelines for each recommendation. Periodic progress reports will be provided to stakeholders and the Ministry and posted on TICO's website.
	Drive continuous improvement in core service delivery.	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.
	Enhanced data governance framework.	Continue delivery of data management procedures and capacity to ensure all data is collected, maintained, retrieved, and stored according to defined standards and best practices.	Complete data collection study to assess, identify and establish a means to ensure underlying data requirements are met while also achieving data management compliance.
	Build a more resilient workforce to increase agility, raise productivity and further empower workers.	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.

FY	INITIATIVE(S)	DESCRIPTION	TARGET
2025/2026 – 2026/2027	Continue to address the Auditor General’s recommendations as reported in the December 2023 Value-for-Money Audit report.	Subject to the government’s consideration and decision-making on some proposals, continue implementation of the Auditor General’s value for money audit recommendations and a post-audit review to ensure TICO has delivered on its commitment to be a modern, effective, and efficient regulator.	Subject to the government’s consideration and decision-making on some proposals, and any future public consultations, continue to provide stakeholders and the Ministry regular periodic progress reports, which will also be posted on TICO’s website, with the goal of completing the implementation of the Auditor General’s recommendations.
	Continue to enhance data governance capabilities.	Refine data management processes to ensure all data collected is appropriate and meaningful for business intelligence and operations.	Complete implementation of enhanced data management and reporting to ensure that all data collected meets TICO’s business needs and predictive risk analysis.
	Continue to enhance organizational resiliency linked to the organization’s mandate and the overall value proposition to stakeholders.	Continue to seek innovative solutions aimed at enhancing resiliency through a focus on people and underlying systems and processes.	Continue to evolve and drive high performance through enhancements to competency models, performance management, professional development and other core people processes while ensuring employee engagement remains strong.
	Effective Board governance enhancements reflecting best practices akin to a modern and progressive regulator.	Based on governance best practices, consider governance enhancements to support an effective Board of Directors.	Develop and implement a prioritized action plan for governance improvements and best practices to support effective Board of Directors operations and processes.



# BALANCED SCORECARD FOR FISCAL YEAR 2024/2025

TICO's Balanced Scorecard has been developed to monitor and gauge ongoing efforts and achievements of its organizational effectiveness. The Balanced Scorecard will be included in the 2024 Annual Report and will include the performance measure activities and accomplishments achieved during the prior year to ensure transparency and accountability consistent with the Business Plan.

CONSUMER PROTECTION		
OBJECTIVE	MEASURE	FISCAL YEAR 2024/25 TARGET
<b>Mitigate Risk and Enhance Consumer Protection</b>	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%.
	Complete financial bench reviews on a timely basis.	Completion of bench reviews within an average of 30 days 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% of all unregistered sellers of travel identified and processed during the year.
<b>Enhance Engagement with Consumers</b>	Actively interact with consumers and maintain social media engagement rate (defined as likes, comments, and shares).	Seek opportunities to enhance consumer engagement on social media by maintaining an engagement rate of 3.5% on Facebook.
	Provide timely information to consumers who are searching for consumer protection travel information online to maximize use of Google Ad Grants metrics.	Routinely update keywords and messaging to drive consumers to the TICO website. Aim for a click-through rate of 10% or greater.
<b>Improve Service Delivery</b>	Improve service delivery of TICO's core mandate including the areas of registration, compliance and complaints.	100% of registration applications processed within 30 days from receipt of all required documentation. 100% of termination compliance reviews completed within 30 days of the closing date. With a focus on high-risk registrants, complete financial inspections representing a minimum 10% of the number of registrants in the year. 100% of complaints processed within 30 days from receipt of all required information and supporting documentation.
<b>Encourage Registrants to Share Consumer Protection Message</b>	Review and enhance content found in the digital Registrant Toolkit, with helpful and shareable resources for consumers.	Achieve a minimum access rate of 4-in-10 for registrant uptake of the Registrant Toolkit materials.

## EDUCATION AND AWARENESS

OBJECTIVE	MEASURE	FISCAL YEAR 2024/25 TARGET
<b>Support an Informed Travel Marketplace</b>	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 5-in-10 consumers, based on current economic projections, consumer confidence, and continued travel recovery expectations.
		Maintain awareness of regulated marketplace at 6-in-10 consumers by continuing to provide timely and credible information to Ontario travellers.
<b>Measure Overall Consumer Value</b>	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.
<b>Enhance TICO's Education Standards Program</b>	Update and provide new study tools to assist individuals to meet the legislated Educational Standard to sell travel services in Ontario.	Maintain satisfaction rate of 75% for TICO's Education Standards Program and educational resources in 2024/2025.
<b>Enhance Education Opportunities for Registrants</b>	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 in 2024/2025.

## ORGANIZATIONAL RESILIENCY

OBJECTIVE	MEASURE	FISCAL YEAR 2024/25 TARGET
<b>Enhance TICO Value Proposition to Registrants</b>	Measure registrants' perceived value of TICO and its services.	Maintain that 5-in-10 registrants value TICO and its services as a basis for future enhancement strategies.
<b>Enhance Employee Engagement</b>	Conduct an employee engagement survey including review of outcomes and address opportunities via the involvement of all staff.	Ensure strong employee engagement by achieving an 8-in-10 engagement score.

## FINANCIAL PERFORMANCE

OBJECTIVE	MEASURE	FISCAL YEAR 2024/25 TARGET
<b>Deliver Budget Operating Expenses</b>	Operating expenses, excluding extraordinary items.	Achieve operating expenses within a range of +/- 5% of annual budget.
<b>Deliver Budget</b>	Achieve equal to or greater than budgeted Net Excess Revenues over Expenses after adjusting for the exclusion of the Provision for Gross Claims against the Compensation Fund.	Achieve Net Excess Revenues over Expenses within a range of +/- 5% of annual budget.



# FINANCIAL PROJECTIONS

## THREE-YEAR PROJECTIONS

	Fiscal Year 2024/2025 (Budget) \$	Fiscal Year 2025/2026 (Projection) \$	Fiscal Year 2026/2027 (Projection) \$
<b>Revenues:</b>	<b>6,356,365</b>	<b>6,631,683</b>	<b>7,075,282</b>
Consisting of:			
- Renewals	4,494,433	4,719,155	5,084,889
- Compensation Fund Assessments	861,932	905,028	975,168
- New Registrations	250,000	257,500	265,225
- Late Filing Fees	100,000	100,000	100,000
- Investment Income	650,000	650,000	650,000
<b>Claims against Compensation Fund, net</b>	<b>589,000</b>	<b>669,000</b>	<b>668,000</b>
<b>Operating Expenses:</b>	<b>6,170,101</b>	<b>6,219,889</b>	<b>6,363,413</b>
Consisting of:			
- Salaries & Benefits	4,240,426	4,274,939	4,403,187
- General & Administrative	1,085,675	1,091,950	1,098,226
- Occupancy	280,000	280,000	280,000
- Ontario Government Oversight Fee	369,000	378,000	387,000
- Consumer and Registrant Awareness	100,000	100,000	100,000
- Amortization	95,000	95,000	95,000
<b>Excess (Deficiency) of Revenues over Expenses</b>	<b>(402,736)</b>	<b>(257,206)</b>	<b>43,869</b>
<b>Excess of Revenues over Expenses Before Compensation Fund Claims</b>	<b>186,264</b>	<b>411,794</b>	<b>711,869</b>
<b>Compensation Fund, end of year</b>	<b>22,337,385</b>	<b>23,439,000</b>	<b>23,843,000</b>
Number of Resources	36	36	36

### Key Assumptions:

1. Year one reflects approved annual budget.
2. Projections reflect new funding model as of April 1, 2024 and current regulatory framework.
3. Revenues reflect full travel industry recovery effective fiscal year 2025/26 compared to 2018/19 fiscal year.
4. Compensation Fund claims supported by 2023/24 updated actuary study.
5. Compensation Fund balances for years 2 and 3 reflect current actuary study including approximately \$1 million recovery of regulatory operating expenses for administering, managing and protecting the Fund.

# GOVERNANCE

The TICO Board of Directors consists of nine members. Following Minister Orders, issued on August 11, 2023, and TICO's 2023 Annual General Meeting, the Board now consists of three Ministerial appointees and three members from each of the travel industry and general public. Director terms are generally for up to three years and reflect the desired skills based on a competency matrix. More information regarding these competencies can be found on TICO's website.



Back row: Heather Colquhoun, Zaid Lama, Andrew Dawson, Christopher Warren, Douglas Ellison  
Middle row: Archana Gupta-Harit, Angella Blanas  
Front row: Richard Smart (President & CEO), Michael Levinson, Robert Townshend

## TICO BOARD OF DIRECTORS 2024-2025 (AS OF MARCH 1, 2024)

### Elected industry representatives

**Douglas Ellison**

President, Ellison Travel & Tours Ltd., Exeter, ON

**Robert Townshend, Vice-Chair**

President, Total Advantage Travel & Tours Inc., Toronto, ON

**Andrew Dawson**

Chief Operating Officer/President, Sunwing Vacations, Toronto, ON

### Elected public representatives

**Archana Gupta-Harit**

Director of Financial Services/Treasurer, Municipality of Central Elgin

**Heather Colquhoun**

Vice President, People & Culture, StarTech.com, London, ON

**Christopher Warren**

Partner and Director, Bletchingdon Capital

### Ministerial appointments

**Michael Levinson, Chair**

Chief Strategist, YouNeedaStrategy.com, Toronto, ON

**Angella Blanas**

Senior Consultant, Architecture & Urban Planning, Toronto, ON

**Zaid Lama**

Partner, Evolv Capital Partners, Oakville, ON

## STATUTORY APPOINTMENTS (AS OF MARCH 1, 2024)

**Dorian Werda**

Statutory Registrar, *Travel Industry Act, 2002*

**Michael Pepper**

Statutory Director, *Travel Industry Act, 2002*

## TICO LEADERSHIP TEAM

**Richard Smart, CPA, CA, ICD.D**

President & Chief Executive Officer

**Sanja Skrbic, CPA, CA**

Chief Financial & Administrative Officer

**Dorian Werda**

Chief Operating Officer and Registrar

**Antoine (Tony) Aramouni**

Chief Information Officer

**Tracey McKiernan, LL.B.**

General Counsel & Corporate Secretary



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