

# SWOTC Strategic Recovery Plan 2020 - 2023

The SWOTC Strategic Plan has been developed in a highly variable and unpredictable environment, the midst of the global COVID-19 pandemic which initially brought tourism to a standstill. While business restrictions slowly begin to ease, tourism operations face major impacts. Some will be changed forever, disappear or re-emerge in totally new formats.

SWOTC's vision and mission have remained constant. Core values have been enhanced. The actions to achieve the vision must adapt as the tourism sector, DMOs and operators evolve and respond to changing consumer and industry needs, as a result of the pandemic.

**Vision** – Ontario's Southwest is a vibrant and prosperous tourism region.

**Mission** — To build tourism's contribution to the economic and social vitality in Southwestern Ontario.

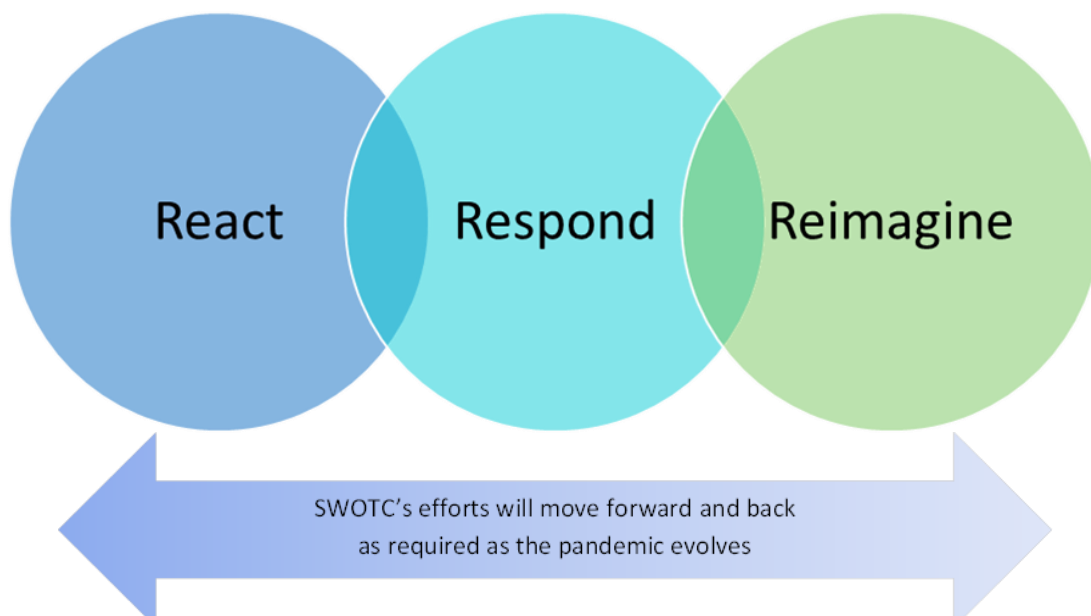
## Core Values

- **Sustainable growth:** The protection and enhancement of our environment, economy and communities.
- **Safe and responsible growth:** Patient, safe practices per public health guidelines
- **Inclusivity:** We are committed to approaching our work with inclusiveness, respect, integrity and honesty, practicing open dialogue, listening and responding in the best interests of our stakeholders.
- **Partnership:** Working collaboratively with accountability for our actions.

This strategic plan is designed to span three years. It does recognize, however, the dynamic nature of the tourism economy during these challenging times. Its emphasis is therefore on the early stages of the plan. SWOTC recognizes the need to conduct regular reviews and updates of the plan to respond to the changing status of the pandemic and its impact on the tourism industry.

The most recent revision of this document was led by the Planning & Evaluation Committee, with participation from the Board, which took place September 2021.

The Strategic Recovery Plan is divided into **three phases**:



**Phase 1: React: Immediate actions to support DMOs and operators during the crisis.**

This phase focuses on ensuring tourism operations and assets remain viable. We expect several iterations of this phase, responding to the easing and tightening of restrictions, from the original wave and possible subsequent waves of COVID-19.

**Phase 2: Respond: Support to restabilize tourism stakeholders**

This phase considers the actions required to adapt to the new environment (consumer demand/concerns, regulations and other changes). This phase may be re-visited several times as the pandemic unfolds, visitor and operator needs evolve and funding is allocated and reallocated.

**Phase 3: Reimagine: Establish a medium to long-term vision of recovering and building the tourism sector for the future**

This phase of the recovery plan considers strategies needed to move toward SWOTC’s vision in the new state of the tourism sector.

## Strategic Priorities

1. **Workforce & Labour Development support for tourism stakeholders**
2. **Communication & Collaboration**
3. **Recover and build the tourism sector through product and destination development and marketing**
4. **Evidence-based decision making**

## Goals and Objectives

<b>Goal 1</b>	<b>Workforce &amp; Labour Development</b>
Objective	Provide the training and other resources tourism stakeholders need to survive, compete, and thrive
Actions	<ol style="list-style-type: none"> <li>1. Consult &amp; communicate with tourism operators and stakeholders on workforce development needs and available resources</li> <li>2. Provide opportunities to network, learn, and share industry best practices with tourism stakeholders</li> <li>3. Contribute to improving the reputation of the tourism industry as an employment sector</li> <li>4. Establish SWOTC as an industry leader and information source including government programs, guidelines and tourism trends</li> <li>5. Develop/access and provide training and other supports to engage and educate the regional tourism workforce</li> </ol>
<b>Goal 2</b>	<b>Communication &amp; Collaboration</b>
Objective	Leverage regional strengths and activity through partnership and two-way information sharing with public and private stakeholders
Actions	<ol style="list-style-type: none"> <li>6. Provide tourism stakeholders with relevant updates on SWOTC activities, performance, provincial programs, tourism trends and opportunities</li> <li>7. Actively engage in national, provincial, RTO network and regional programs and initiatives</li> <li>8. Consult with tourism operators and DMOs on their experiences and insights to regularly inform SWOTC planning and initiatives, and help inform provincial and regional stakeholders</li> <li>9. Establish open and regular communications with industry associations and sector organizations to ensure regional stakeholder needs are recognized</li> </ol>

<b>Goal 3</b>	<b>Recover and build the tourism sector in Southwest Ontario</b>
Objective	Lead the recovery of Southwest Ontario’s tourism sector through product/workforce development and marketing programs that address tourism operator/DMO needs to rebuild tourism operator business capability, adapting to consumer demand, evolving pandemic response measures and tourist activity and spend.
Actions	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> <li>10. Establish priorities that align local strength and provincial directives</li> <li>11. Support responsible tourism product development and marketing that prioritizes positive economic, environmental and community impact</li> <li>12. Focus marketing messages on safety, positivity, visitor dispersion, pride of place, diversity, equity, inclusion and personal connections with individual operators and experiences</li> <li>13. Monitor and adapt to DMO, regional, provincial, and federal plans and relevant funding opportunities that support the industry</li> </ul>

<b>Goal 4</b>	<b>Evidence-based decision making</b>
Objective	Compile and share relevant data to support SWOTC board and staff, DMOs and operators to make informed decisions
Actions	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> <li>14. Study traveller markets and drivers for travel to Ontario’s Southwest</li> <li>15. Track traveller and community sentiment</li> <li>16. Track sector performance provincially and regionally</li> <li>17. Provide regular updates to tourism stakeholders and policy makers on tourism data</li> <li>18. Educate local DMOs and operators on available tourism data and opportunities to apply the information to their efforts</li> </ul>

**Note: Action details for each goal are contained in operational business plan.**