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# Executive Summary

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## A. Sector Profile

Outfitting is a sub-sector of the Saskatchewan Tourism Industry and is the largest single source of export dollars in the industry. The sector consists primarily of small owner-operated businesses, which are responsible for providing equipment, guides and accommodations for hunting, angling and touring experiences throughout the province. There are approximately 550 registered outfitters in the province. The direct income, from the industry, is approximately 80 million dollars.

The industry relies heavily on strong partnerships with provincial regulatory and environment and resource management bodies. Outfitters have an inherent interest in the sustained management of Saskatchewan's natural environment and have been leaders in this area.

Over the last few years, the industry has identified the service component as being critical to maintaining its competitiveness. The industry deals in a world market with the majority of clients coming from the United States and Europe. Various other areas of Canada, the United States, Mexico, Russia and South Africa offer products similar to that found in Saskatchewan. Providing superior services and fostering value-added product are essential for the continued success of the industry.

The regulatory environment, in which the industry presently operates, does not recognize or encourage the quality of the outfitting experience. The industry and the public sector have taken some initiatives to address this situation. To date, discussions have centered around separating the wildlife management component from the business component with the latter to be more reflective of industry needs. It is proposed that a new "Licensing Commission" be established which would reflect service standards and other business ethics.

In October of 1996, the Executive of the Saskatchewan Outfitters Association met with the Provincial Cabinet. Being acknowledged as the industry's representative, the Saskatchewan Outfitters Association received an endorsement to become more involved in establishing standards and accreditation of the industry and to participate in the administration of outfitter licensing.

The Minister of Saskatchewan Environment and Resource Management named a committee to proceed with this matter. This committee included representation from the Saskatchewan Outfitters Association, Saskatchewan Environment and Resource Management, Tourism Saskatchewan and Saskatchewan Economic Development. The mandate of this group is to review the implications and make recommendations

on establishing an industry licensing commission and to develop a set of professional industry standards.

In this regard, the committee held a series of meetings throughout the province during 1998-1999 to discuss an industry licensing commission. The Committee has made recommendations to cabinet to proceed with this commission.

The Committee, through the Saskatchewan Outfitters Association, has also approached Saskatchewan Post Secondary Education and Skills Training through the JobStart/Future Skills Sector Partnership Component for assistance in developing a set of professional standards for the outfitting industry.

This report outlines the process and results of standards development.

## **B. Objectives**

The goals of this project are summarized as follows:

- A. Identify, develop and validate a set of industry standards.
- B. Identify existing industry training programs and other strategies recognizing partnership with existing training providers and including First Nations and Metis.

## **C. Methodology**

A Steering Committee was established and mandated to provide a variety of perspectives and to foster a climate to achieve stated project objectives. The committee included representatives from the Saskatchewan Outfitters Association, Saskatchewan Environment and Resource Management, Saskatchewan Economic and Co-operative Development, Tourism Saskatchewan, Saskatchewan Tourism Education Council, and Saskatchewan Post Secondary Education and Skills Training. First Nations and Metis participation were included through the Saskatchewan Tourism Education Council.

The Saskatchewan Outfitters Association, under the direction of the Steering Committee undertook the overall management of this project. The model used for standards development was based on that of the Tourism Standards Consortium which is a national initiative of the Canadian Tourism Human Resource Council. This process involved participation of industry members in a process that described the skills and knowledge needed to be considered competent in an occupation.

The training phase of the project involved the following steps:

1. Researched provinces and territories of Canada to determine existing outfitter training programs and their application to identified Saskatchewan standards.
2. Examined existing tourism and other industry programs that might have had associated training adaptable to outfitting standards.
3. Consulted with existing outfitting industry participants to determine expectations for training program development and delivery.
4. Consulted with existing agencies to determine options for program development and delivery.

## **D. Results**

As a result of this project, the following has been identified:

### **1. *Standards Development***

A document has been created called “Professional Outfitting Standards” which defines eight professional standards needed for the outfitting industry.

- i) Professionalism
  - Exhibit Industry Knowledge
  - Be Professional
- ii) Business Planning
  - Describe Feasibility Study
  - Develop Business Plan
  - Make Arrangements for Business Start-up/Expansions
  - Develop Business Tools
- iii) Financial Management
  - Access Funding
  - Prepare and Use Budget
  - Manage Finances
- iv) Legislation and Regulations
  - Comply with Legislation
- v) Marketing
  - Prepare Marketing Plan
  - Use Marketing Tools
  - Sell Product
  - Evaluate Marketing Activities
  - Conduct Ongoing Product Promotion

- vi) Operations Management
  - Manage Resource
  - Oversee Operations
  
- vii) Human Resource Management
  - Develop Human Resource Plan
  - Hire Staff
  - Train Staff
  - Supervise Staff
  
- viii) Public Relations
  - Implement Public Relations Strategy

These standards have been defined, validated and ratified by a broad cross section of the industry. They describe the skills and knowledge industry participants should have or acquire to be considered competent in the industry.

## 2. ***Training***

### 2.1 Identification of Training

Presently no training is required for entry into the industry and consequently no training programs exist.

Training requirements will be dependent on the type of licenses that will eventually be defined. This project has identified possible types of licenses, purpose of licenses, duration, training needs of each, training development required and appropriate delivery mechanism.

### 2.2 Training Strategies

Training strategies must address the following:

#### a. *Remoteness and accessibility of some outfitters*

Training delivery must recognize the geographic limitations of Saskatchewan. The northern regional colleges can provide expertise in distance learning. There is a need to identify the type and amount of funding that is available from various agencies in order to advance training initiatives.

#### b. *Special Needs*

The industry association has actively pursued activities that encourage participation of First Nations and Metis. In particular, discussions have been held on joint venture programs. The industry guide training program recognized the need to develop programming that is applicable to First

Nations and Metis groups. The association has provided assistance to various bands and tribal councils in regard to business start-ups.

From guide training programs delivered on the West Side of the province it is apparent that having a local instructor or someone experienced in cross-cultural education would be important to the success of the training. Another avenue to be explored is the concept of mentoring. This would be especially effective in a joint venture situation where the trainee would eventually become camp owner or manager. Certainly, First Nations and other government/administrative groups would be instrumental in the success of such a program.

c. *Advent of Licensing Commission*

The proposed Licensing Commission will determine the various criteria for training requirements that must be met prior to the issuance of any license. There will be a need for training to address certification, remedial action, and professional development.

d. *On going Training Needs*

Training needs for the outfitting industry must be looked on as on going and not limited to qualifying for licensing. Rules and regulations change, the marketplace changes, the operations and services side changes. It is important that an on going system be in place to insure the continued professional development of the industry.

As with other professional groups, this is best addressed for outfitting through an industry publication and on going workshops.

e. *Recommendations for Training Delivery*

- i. Curriculum be devised using a self-study approach. The training should be modular in nature based on the industry standards outlined by this project.
- ii. The Saskatchewan Outfitters Association work closely with the Outfitter Licensing Commission to determine areas of industry need and provide short courses, seminars and orientation to enhance industry standards.
- iii. Saskatchewan Tourism Education Council, regional colleges, the Saskatchewan Institute of Applied Science and Technology, the Dumont Technical Institute, and the Saskatchewan Indian Institute of Technology can provide expertise in developing and facilitating remote training delivery and special needs situations.
- iv. The outfitting industry through the Saskatchewan Outfitters Association work in conjunction with the Licensing Commission to develop an industry publication directed at providing current information to outfitters in regards to all areas of Professional Outfitting Standards.
- v. With the advent of an industry Licensing Commission, a training component be included to address licensing requirements and the professional development of the industry.

### 3. ***Participation of First Nations and Metis***

Participation of First Nations and Metis is critical to the success of providing quality product delivery in the province.

- A series of regional meetings were established in the northwest and central areas to discuss training initiatives. Meetings encompassed areas including: Buffalo Narrows, Dillon, La Loche, Beauval, Green Lake, Meadow Lake, and Spiritwood Tribal Council bands.
- Also included in discussions were representatives of the Federation of Saskatchewan Indian Nations. Individual operators were involved with the sessions required to develop the Professional Outfitting Standards and random mailings were made to First Nations/Metis for the validation of the standards.

### 4. ***Industry Partnership***

Enhance and strengthen an industry partnership that fosters long term human resource planning and the delivery of accessible training to meeting the needs of the outfitting industry.

Organizations that have become involved in this project and which can be partnered in the future include:

- Saskatchewan Tourism and Education Council/Tourism Saskatchewan
- Saskatchewan Outfitters Association
- Regional Colleges
- Private Trainers
- Tribal Councils
- Metis Nations of Saskatchewan
- Federation of Saskatchewan Indian Nations
- Saskatchewan Economic and Co-operative Development
- Saskatchewan Environment and Resource Management
- Saskatchewan Post Secondary Education and Skills Training
- Saskatchewan Institute of Applied Science and Technology

## **E. Strategies**

The following strategies have been identified to assist in the development of training and delivery.

### *a. Prior Learning Assessment*

In order to facilitate training and training development a reliable process will be developed to determine the knowledge and skills that have been learned through non-formal education/training or experience. The S.I.A.S.T./Woodlands Campus in Prince Albert has expertise in this area and should be considered for partnership.

b. *Licensing Commission*

The proposed licensing commission will determine the various criteria for training requirements that must be addressed prior to the issuance of any license. There is a need for training development to address certification, remedial action and professional development. Development of training programs should start immediately.

c. *On Going Training Needs*

Training needs for the outfitting industry must be viewed as continuous and not limited to qualifying for licensing. Rules and regulations, the marketplace, operations and services are constantly changing. It is important that ongoing systems be in place to insure the professional development of the industry.

d. *Participation of First Nations and Metis*

First Nations and Metis participants in the industry are presently estimated to be between 5-10 percent. This is expected to significantly increase in the near future. Issues surrounding cross-cultural training must be addressed in program development. Processes such as mentoring and joint ventures will be explored to meet special needs.

e. *Industry Partnerships*

It is necessary to enhance and strengthen the industry partnerships that foster long term human resource planning and the delivery of accessible training to meet the needs of the outfitting industry.

## **F. Next Steps**

As a result of the project and the development of outfitting standards the following “next steps” should be implemented.

1. An “Outfitter Licensing Commission” be established that will reflect industry standards in the licensing process. It should include an educational component utilizing partnerships to ensure training for certification requirements, remedial actions and professional development.

The proposed Commission will be industry dominated and accommodate provincial regions, tourism, First Nations and Metis and the public interest. New legislation will be required to establish an Outfitter Licensing Board.

2. A “Prior Learning Assessment” process be developed that can be used in assessing knowledge and skills learned through non-formal education/training or experience.

This exercise should:

- Create a profile of learning outcomes

- Develop a measurement tool
- Establish criteria to evaluate compliance to outcome
- Develop strategies for assessment

This has application to program development addressing both new and existing outfitters.

To accomplish this, a partnership can be formed that includes the Saskatchewan Outfitters Association, S.I.A.S.T./Woodlands Campus, Saskatchewan Post Secondary Education and Skills Training and the Standards and Licensing Committee.

3. Training programs be developed based on Professional Outfitting Standards particular to Saskatchewan. These training programs be modular in nature, addressing needs of both existing and new outfitters and enhancing a self-study approach to learning. These programs recognize special needs situations particularly those of First Nations and Metis.

Both the Saskatchewan Outfitters Association and Saskatchewan Tourism Education Council have experience with program development and training delivery. (Hunting Guide and Fresh Water Angling Guide). These lead agencies can partner with the Standards and Licensing Committee, regional colleges, Saskatchewan Post Secondary Education and Skills Training and the Department of Northern Affairs.

4. Consideration be given to the development of a trade publication emphasizing the components of the Professional Outfitting standards and aimed at the professional development of the industry.

The Saskatchewan Outfitters Association views this as part of its mandate and will work in conjunction with the Licensing Commission in developing a publication for the industry.