



Online Tourism Operators Forum – Friday May 15, 2020 (12pm)

Format:

The forum will take place online using Zoom as the platform. All participants must be registered in advance of the meeting and use the password and link provided.

During the video-conference, all participants will be muted except the featured presenters.

Throughout the forum, participants can raise general questions using Slido. To access Slido, open another window on your computer or your phone and enter <https://www.sli.do>. The passcode for the meeting is 67233. Once this is entered it will take you to the video-conference question centre where you can type in your question and/or vote for other people's questions. The most popular questions get raised to the top and will be the ones that are featured during the Q&A portion.

Meeting Agenda

86 attendees

12pm – Welcome and Overview:

TIA Yukon Executive Director, Blake Rogers

- We put slido information in the chat bar.
- I anticipate joining the call at 4pm with Minister Dendys and Pillaj. Ministers are talking about the reopening plan and a Q&A session after.
- Today's agenda:
- new funding support CanNor
- updates from Parks Canada
- updates from the industry
- Q&A

12:05pm – TIA Yukon Status Report

TIA Yukon Chair, Neil Hartling

- thanks for attending our web forum # 9.
- So far this week we conducted 5 of six zoom industry focus groups on reopening. We are receiving great input from these sessions and it will be very helpful in executing reopening plans

- one more to go for the transportation sector next week. Time has yet to be announced, if you are in the sector, get in touch with us.
- we received new tools for best practices from ACMG, and RCABC. We will put the links on our website.
- we continue collecting best practices for industry as they become available
- Reminder: buy local., please pass that on
- Lastly, we invite anyone to join our update bulletins. Please spread the word.

12:10pm – Government of Canada Update

Yukon MP and Parliamentary Secretary for CanNor, Hon. Larry Bagnell

- Great week federally for tourism
- Rent relief program no longer requires mortgage
- Low income seniors receive another \$500
- today first day for emergency student benefits, students can apply through CRA
- some student jobs got approved, rest will hear next week from me
- Research today got another \$460 million more
- Exciting for tourism sector, regional recovery and relief program, announced on Wednesday, It's the biggest federal program with \$34.3 million through CanNor
- it's for relief and recovery, this money is for both.
- \$22.5million goes directly to territories \$11.8million for interest free loans. 25% forgivable
- The objective is to get businesses that fall thru the cracks of all other programs. Tourism being seasonal, quite a few are falling through the cracks.
- Minister made it clear, Tourism is a priority sector. Money has to go to northern companies, money stays in the north
- The idea is to leave no one behind
- Wage subsidy program is now extended to August 29, 2020
- First Nations are eligible now as well.
- The Prime Minister talked to the Premier this morning and liquidity for Yukon has been doubled from \$400 million to \$800 million.

12:15pm – Update from Yukon Department of Tourism & Culture

Director of Tourism, Pierre Germain

- really happy with Relief Fund with CanNor
- final TCMF guidelines will be released today
- minor changes due to industry input
- online application will follow in next little bit
- critical today is the press conference at 2pm on Yukon Reopening Plan
- all log in at 2 o'clock on yukon gov facebook page or cbc facebook
- followed by 4 pm zoom meeting will let them speak more (Minister Dendys and Minister Pillai)

12:20pm – Update from Parks Canada

External Relations Manager, Parks Canada - Yukon Field Unit, Jackie Zinger

- The Prime Minister announced gradual reopening of Parks Canada sites starting June 1. That means:
- Parking Lot at SS Klondike will be open
- green spaces will be accessible
- Chilkoot trail remains closed at least until July 5
- same with train service
- Dawson: Closure will stay remain in place, no access to buildings or interpretive services
- SSK won't be open to public
- Visitor centres remain closed
- Vuntut VIC will remain closed
- Kluane National Park: Some trails will reopen and access to day use areas.
- As of next week, website and social media will be updated
- Gradual approach to reopening right now. As weeks go on Parks Canada will be assessing safety for staff and visitors and you will see things reopen.

Blake Rogers, TIAY Executive Director:

- We did numerous focus group sessions this week, to get your input on what your needs are and when you need them.
- We did collect quite a bit of info, we are doing one more focus group on TRANSPORTATION next week, the date tbd.
- We do have a questionnaire on our website and are inviting people to provide input by writing or video.
- We are creating a summary document and giving the info to the government, and to shape advocacy initiatives

Peter Turner / Yukon Chamber of Commerce

- mentioned: we're getting hold of PPE supplies for Yukon businesses
- We've reached out to Yukon Brewing to get hand sanitizer, still to be nailed down
- We're expecting all PPE to arrive next week.
- Yukon Chamber is working with Community Chambers to distribute it through their organizations and we will work with TIAY.
- Want to make listeners aware: we are facilitating a life online marketplace next Wednesday, May 20, 2 pm. A B2B matchmaking event to discuss business services.

Blake Rogers, TIAY Executive Director:

Q&A - Question that came in earlier for YG.

Maybe Pierre Germain you have some information on this: A campground is inquiring about the printed maps that went out at the border. They would like their campground listed on these maps if they.

Comment Pierre Germain / Tourism & Culture :

Don't have info but will find out and send message forward

Peter Turner / Yukon Chamber of Commerce

- @ Blake: 've send you email with copy of recent map
- Contact that sends us these is the appropriate contact to add onto the maps

12:25pm – Q&A

Question 1:

As the pandemic will likely last for month and international travel will probably not open until there is a vaccine, are there plans for long term help?

Comment Larry Bagnell:

Forgot to say - Allocation for the new emergency fund- it's open to all 3 territories. If there is a need for more money in that fund we can shift money. This fund is for relief and recovery. Projects that are helping companies to start up again into recovery are eligible under this new CanNor program.

Comment Pierre Germain:

As the reopening plans become more clear, Yukon Gov like Fed Gov will look for ways for short medium and long term help for businesses on this. Long term will be determined by when these restrictions will get relaxed. It's on our radar, just need more info on when restrictions will be relaxed so we know where the gaps are.

Question 2:

Any opportunity to move the money from the Temporary Event Support - from cancelled events, to supporting new events to bolster in Territory tourism?

Comment Pierre Germain:

Best to be asked at the 4pm session - it is an Ec.Dev. program, I don't know the intricacies around the ability of transfer money over. I'll have a talk with Ec.Dev and see what kind of information I can share with you Blake and you can distribute that.

Question 3:

We keep hearing "tourism" is part of the re-opening plans, but who/what is "tourism" in that context?

Comment Neil Hartling:

Question could use some context. Probably more than one definition on who is a tourist and who is an operator.

Later/ Comment Blake Rogers:

Different sectors in tourism: Just that people know how we have divided the focus group is reflective of the TIAY board and what the members voted. In terms of elected seats we have Accommodations, Tours & Attractions, Food & Beverage, Travel Services, Transportation and Arts, Sports & Events. Also have a number of

designated organizations on our board as well., representing different sectors; including Wilderness, Meeting, Incentives, & Events, First Nation Association, Outfitters Association, KVA, Yukon Historical Museums Association.

Question 4:

Is there a plan for distributing PPE for Tourism? any details?

Comment Neil Hartling:

TIA has ordered a limited amount of PPE equipment, masks and gloves, available to members as long as it lasts, and then open to others. It will be on a cost recovery basis, no mark up on it. Should add: Steve Hahn at Tundra Medical is stocking PPE, encouraging you to contact him. Once TIA inventory is gone, he is a good source.

Question 5:

Question regarding TCMF: What happens, if we already decided to commit to certain magazines etc. can we still get funding for things we committed to already?

Comment Pierre Germain:

New TCMF guidelines have provision that as long as it's an eligible activity, you'll get reimbursed retroactive back to April 1st. You will be allowed to claim that.

Question 5:

Self-employed fishermen will be allowed to file for unemployment. How about tour operators?

Comment Larry Bagnell:

I don't think I can answer the question. Fishermen are under different EI, different program based on catch not on hours. Because they may not be able to go out, they are allowed to use their catch from last summer on EI this summer.

Question 6:

For Pierre, When are the marketing plans for 2021/22 going to come out as the 2020 season is not going to happen. Will the TCMF guidelines revert to 2019?

Comment Pierre Germain:

We are in the process to revamp the current program, the Tourism Recovery Plan, that will help industry understand the direction that the department is going. This year is a special year for TCMF because of the additional resources we've created a program especially for Covid 19. Question is if in 2021 will the TCMF resort back to 2019 guidelines or is current Covid program going to continue. I do not have the answer. We hope to work on that in the coming months and by fall I hope we have a much better idea how things will look moving forward.

Question 7:

What happens to seasonal staff which we can employ (for a shorter season) is there different requirements for them to apply for EI at the end of season if they don't have enough hours (as in previous years) .

Comment Larry Bagnell:

Contact Service Canada: 1-877-631-2657.

Comment Blake Rogers:

If you can't find answers there, please follow up with us. Info@tiayukon.com.

Question 8:

Can you please answer question from last meetings

Comment Blake Rogers:

Yes, we will try to answer all your questions and find some answers for you. There are a lot of questions right now, so we're dealing with a lot of volume, but we do our best to get answers for you.

A comment from Zoom Chat bar for everyone banking with CIBC:

Their business services have been down for close to 3 weeks, which meant we couldn't access our online accounts or apply for the business loan. As of today they're seeing some movement, and it looks like things may be resolved soon (fingers crossed).

Question 9:

Where are these tourists staying that are "visiting" from outside. If they are in RVs they would be very obvious at the border check - no?

Comment Pierre Germain:

To my knowledge there should be no visitors. Only people allowed: Yukoners returning home, Yukoners visiting family or transiting through Yukon to Alaska. They have 24h to get through the territory with a map and routine that they have to follow. Some individuals come here for work and are required to quarantine for 14 days. Some stay in hotels that provide it. People have to provide their isolation plan and give their contact information at the border.

Blake: Good point to underline there should not be visitors to cruise around.

Question 10:

Operators need to have some sort of a TCMF guideline as most of the print publications will be contacting them soon and next fall does not work.

Comment Pierre Germain:

I understand that most of the sales that businesses publications do occurs in the fall for the next summer season. I know it has been easy in the past 16 years due to no to little change to TCMF - good note for us to flag. We will see in the future.

Question 11: *Question from chat*** (Blake)**

Is there funding available retroactively for shows that we have done this year as opposed to next year?

Comment Pierre Germain:

Answer would be no. You would have had to apply for TCMF last fiscal year, to get approved and funding for shows this year.

Question 12:

Are there efforts underway to track impact on independent contractors, i.e. the only paid employee is themselves?

Comment Peter Turner / Yukon Chamber of Commerce:
no, sorry, not aware of anything at this point.

Comment Pierre Germain:
I don't have info unfortunately.

Comment Neil Hartling:
Person who is asking can address this at the 4pm meeting.

Question 13:

If a business had not fully used last fiscal TCMF, can the amount due back to YG be deferred?

Comment Pierre Germain:
Would have to look into that, but would guess the answer is no - given the financial administration act. I will get info and let Blake now.

Question 14:

Has anyone received the Wage Subsidy?
Yes, as per chat from various people

Comment Blake Rogers:
Email us if you are into issues (inof@tiayukon.com) we will try to help and also good idea to follow up with people from the chat who have received it.

Question 15:

Canada Summer jobs: Can we confirm we aren't going to have to pay payroll tax/deductions on these jobs? Can age be increased to rehire laid off tourism staff?

Comment Larry Bagnell:
I forgot to mention that in the new program if an NGO is helping businesses though Covid, it might be eligible too. They should contact CanNor directly.
On Wage Subsidy: before, a person had to be working for you this spring since Christmas to be eligible. With the new rules they are opening that up a bit.

Related to the summer students: if you are approved, you receive a call from me and Service Canada sends you the contract. you can ask about deductions and how that works. On the age (which is between 15 and 30) we have about 3x as many applications than jobs, so I haven't heard of wanting to increase the age. Just ask when you sign the letter of contract with Service Canada. Information on approval will come out in groups.

Question 16:

Our liability insurance needs renewing soon. We may cancel it until we start guiding again. Possible to keep wilderness tourism license issued already?

Comment Neil Hartling:

I believe WT is looking into that.

Comment Kalin Pallett:

We have asked the Dep of Environment and are waiting to hear back on some leniency in that regard. They said it has been put forward - no response as of yet. We keep you updated.

Comment Neil Harting:

Maybe Pierre can pass it along in the Government: People need the license to apply for TCMF. Right now insurances are a very costly entry to TCMF if they not going to operate.

Comment Pierre Germain:

Best focussed towards Environment. We will have confirmation with Environment.

Question 17:

Larry: Can Fed consider a remunerated volunteer initiative for older/senior volunteer as the youth one? Could be beneficial in communities' cultural spaces.

Comment Larry Bagnell: I think that's a great idea, the person asking: please send me an email, I will pass it on to the Minister of Seniors. We did announce \$500 million for NGO's that are helping people. It will be delivered to the Yukon Red Cross and United Way. We did a bunch of funding though the United Way, there should be good opportunities for projects there. Could be one way to get the idea there.

Question 18:

Are there any provisions for the delivery of Tourism related goods from BC to the Yukon and transiting to Alaska?

Comment Blake Rogers:

We will follow up on this one.

Question 19:

Given the possibility of a protracted outbreak in the US, is YG looking to support businesses transform and innovate their way out of business failure?

Kalin Pallett:

Pivot Program through the College. Still intake going on through the Department of Innovation and Entrepreneurship. There are several Tour Operators coming thru the program right now. Initial application, then you get matched with a coach which can clarify your pivot. Example: Yukon Brewing pivoted from beer to hand sanitizer.

For the Tourism sector: What can operators do with the infrastructure they have to change direction or to reinvent themselves somehow. You can receive up to \$5000 business assistance for mentoring, finances, marketing, branding

Comment Peter, Chamber of Commerce:

Chamber is sending out surveys to identify subject matter where businesses can use guidance, counselling, advice, legal actions etc. We'll be looking to facilitate some session on a subject by subject basis. Stay tuned on that.

Question 20:

France, Germany, Austria and Switzerland will open up their borders on June 15th, listening to Dr. Hanley on the radio on Tuesday, I could not detect any willingness to excelerate things here in the Yukon. He even said that we should not expect any Condor flight this summer. I don't think he is aware of the economic consequences of his actions. Somebody needs to tell him that everybody in the Yukon works for Government and his actions may destroy businesses and bring a ot of financial hardship to Yukon families.

Comment Neil Hartling:

Sounds like a statement more than a question. I would encourage the writer to voice their opinion to exercise their democratic right. There would be a direct opportunity to do that on the 4pm meeting.

Comment Larry Bagnell:

Not all Yukon's fault, International border is federal : Condor flights: federal gov has only allowed flights to Calgary and Edmonton. Illegal for Condor to land anywhere else.

Question 21:

Some businesses don't start until Jun/Aug before we can show a loss. Is there any way that we can access any of the funding programs beforehand as Jun/Jul are a right off for us.

Comment Pierre Germain:

I encourage them to reach out to EC DEV, or CanNor for their Business Relief Program to see what support might be available.

Comment Larry Bagnell:

The first 2 emergency programs by YG end at the moment in June and ours ends at the end of July. but the one we announced today does not have a time frame on it. They should definitely talk to CanNor about that. And as mentioned, the Wage Subsidy has been extended to August 29.

Question 22:

As many of the publications do their sales in the Yukon normally in May June and July. When will you let us know what the TCMF guidelines will be for 2021/22.

Comment Pierre Germain:

In the past we did let people know a month before the fiscal date. Because this is an abnormal year, all I can say is stay tuned. Hopefully we are able to provide some clarity for you, but it's gonna be a while.

Question 23:

Will NGOs who have leverage contributions still receive the leverage contribution amounts should they fall short of the deliverables outlined in their TPAs?

Comment Pierre Germain:

YG is looking into this right now. We are aware that NGOs that rely on this community & fundraisers, and receive sponsorships. We know that those \$ amounts are drying up right now. Stay tuned, another week or so for an answer on this.

Question 24:

If the YCB revision of estimates is overestimated, will penalties apply at year end, if the actual earnings amount exceeds the revised estimate?

Comment Peter Turner / Yukon Chamber of Commerce:

I don't have an answer as we speak, but from conversations with WCB I sense they are looking to provide the maximum amount of flexibility. They understand it's pretty unpredictable what your payroll will look like this year. Guess personal guess is that they will not be penalizing people.

My idea: the person asking, please email advisor@yukonchamber.com, and we can pursue that question and others.

From chat bar: from John Loreto to Everyone: (1:05 PM)

I asked the question a couple of weeks ago and we were told that no penalties will be applied in such cases.

Any closing comments:

Comment Larry Bagnell:

2 questions about foreign workers:

You are eligible for CERB if you are legally working in Canada. In new Wage subsidy rules, there's a bit more ability to hire new hires.

On Slido, it would be great if people would put in their names so we can get back to people with answers.

12:45pm – Adjourn