

2023 TACTICAL PLAN (MRDT)

Designated Recipient:	Southern Gulf Islands Tourism Partnership Society
Designated Accommodation Area:	Southern Gulf Islands: Galiano, Mayne, Pender, Salt Spring, Saturna
Date Submitted:	November 30, 2022
MRDT Repeal Date:	September 1, 2024
Five Year Period:	2019–2024

1) Overview and Update to Five-Year Strategic Business Plan

The 2022 Tactical Plan and Budget was submitted to Destination BC (DBC) in late 2021 and subsequently approved. The plan set forth the Southern Gulf Islands Tourism Partnership Society's expectations for the 2022 calendar year respecting the Municipal and Regional District Tax (MRDT). Those seeking more context to the 2022 plan can read the original [Experience the Southern Gulf Islands Concept Plan](#) and the [Five-Year Community Destination Management Organization Strategy](#).

a) Strategic Direction (from 5-year Business Plan)

Vision Statement

An accessible, interconnected archipelago of living, working communities in the Salish Sea, where exceptional visitor experiences that reflect our natural and cultural uniqueness are in balance with sound destination management based on sustainability, seasonal diversity and equitable participation by all the islands.

Mission Statement

The Southern Gulf Islands Tourism Partnership works with the tourism industry, community stakeholders, local government, First Nations and residents to develop and promote year-round destination experiences that enhance a local economic base that contributes to the quality of life in the Southern Gulf Islands region.

- ✓ *Community*
- ✓ *Nature*
- ✓ *Destination management*
- ✓ *Sustainability has evolved to regeneration*
- ✓ *All islands involved*
- ✓ *Quality of life as a purpose*
- ✓ *Industry, community, and local government collaboration*
- ✓ *Aspiring co-leadership with First Nations*

Strategies

- 1) Strategic advertising and marketing campaigns that promote the Southern Gulf Islands region in its core target markets, particularly during the shoulder and off-season.
- 2) Work with local operators and regional partners to improve market and export readiness so that industry is able to provide new experiences, especially in the shoulder and off-season.
- 3) Undertake content gathering, creation, and promotion,

- ✓ *Markets: Authentic Experience, Cultural Explorers, Free Spirits*
- ✓ *Travel invitations shoulder and off-season only*
- ✓ *Lack of available work force challenges industry's ability to provide new experiences*
- ✓ *Implementation of promotion*

production and distribution of collateral, digital media, and conventional advertising.

- 4) Attract new visitors through strategic advertising and marketing plans in target markets by encouraging local operators to increase outreach to consumers through travel media and trade.
- 5) Raise social media activity and conversations to expand off-peak visitation and outreach to millennials.
- 6) Attend industry conferences to understand the progression of tourism nationally and provincially, identify new and emerging market opportunities, and learn about advances in the application of technology and innovations in tourism.
- 7) Attend trade shows in cooperation with Tourism Vancouver Island and offer packages that will help develop a tour operator network.
- 8) Continue to work with BC Ferries and transportation service providers to enhance inter-island mobility and increase promotion of fly/drive/ferry packages featuring core activities.
- 9) Continue to program and build on a successful roster of festivals, focusing on live music, arts and crafts, culinary tradition and food, adventure tourism, and cultural events.

campaigns has accelerated

- ✓ *Visitation to the Southern Gulf Islands is strong and has grown*
- ✓ *Travel media has been active with Southern Gulf Islands organically with some paid.*
- ✓ *Travel Trade is not a priority for the Southern Gulf Islands*
- ✓ *Social media activity and outreach continues to increase @southerngulfislands*
- ✓ *Participate in all available online conferences during 2022*
- ✓ *No trade shows in 2022 but plans underway for early 2023*
- ✓ *Partnered with DBC for Cozy Season Guide content*
- ✓ *Events are rallying post-covid but the challenge remains of broad awareness and coordination.*

b) **Key Learnings and Conclusions**

2022 was the third year of Southern Gulf Islands Tourism active operation under its third One-Year Tactical Plan. Southern Gulf Islands Tourism made progress in 2022 in the following ways as it emerged from the pandemic with its first marketing activity:

- Publication and distribution of the **Cozy Season Guide** in late 2021 finally revealed the true nature and texture of the parent brand identity moving into 2022. This led to a digital re-focus on the theme in late 2022.
- The first effort to bring **regenerative travel** visually to the website, with a landing page as the Plan page, gave a focal point for organic and paid social media through the busy months. Feedback later in the year included kudos for the authentic effort to find this voice and express it respectfully and artfully and also a desire to bring more fun to the message in order to better engage target audiences.

- 2022 marked the first year of **paid digital advertising** through Google Ads and Meta. We were approved for Non-Profit AdGrants and continue to work to mobilize this additional investment.
- **Social community management** through local marketing talent and local brand ambassadors focused more on digital visitor services across the five islands in 2022. See our [Social Media](#) here. This was a useful test to transition the focus more to destination development, but primary focus may return to marketing in 2023 by engaging the island ambassadors to help small local businesses develop a digital presence in order to take advantage of the planned increase in digital marketing efforts. CrowdRiff becomes an increasingly useful tool as we learn how to engage with the DBC Story Network.
- Brand-aligned **photo, video, and written assets** ([blogs](#) here) continued to be created and used to drive traffic to the website and local partners. We ventured into the creation of our first set of [video assets, posted on a basic YouTube channel](#) to support brand subjects (food, nature, and art).
- **Island brochures** provided increased brand-alignment of local printed collateral. The Mayne Island brochure has been printed and distributed. Those for Pender Island and Saturna Island are being finalized now.
- **Print advertising** was limited to small ads in *Edible VanIsle*, *BC Go Camping*, *Suncruiser West Coast Magazine*, *Vancouver Island Visitors Guide*, and *BC's Guide to Arts and Culture*. We also tried a print page and advertorial with *Discover 2022 Magazine (Times Colonist)* but the quality was not well received by all partners. Some print effort supports local partnerships, but focus will evolve to digital for 2023.
- Southern Gulf Islands Tourism engaged a contractor to support ongoing work with Mobilescapes data to track and regularly report on travel patterns comparison with the collected 2019 and 2020 data as well as 2021 and 2022 data (not yet available). This effort was delayed due to data issues at Environics but is expected to be underway this month. Mobilescapes data will be used along with BC Ferries data to get a better understanding of those visiting the islands. We initiated Accommodator Performance Surveys in fall of 2022 to collect meaningful occupancy data and trends. In 2023, we plan to increase efforts through a Visitor survey to enhance **research, evaluation and analytics**.
- Southern Gulf Islands Tourism worked with several non-profit housing societies from the islands to successfully access Canadian Mortgage and Housing Corporation seed funding to undertake broader stakeholder engagement about how to support development of more workforce housing. The project did not receive third-stage funding but the strong relationship building efforts provided some direction to connect in new initiatives for 2023.

Some planned activities did not progress as anticipated in 2022 due to the pandemic and other reasons:

- Southern Gulf Islands Tourism was most excited to begin work with Tourism Vancouver Island (now 4VI) on a Territorial Acknowledgement Initiative in 2021 but that organization was unable to fulfill its commitment to the project.
- Overall, great ideas for **destination development** did not make as much progress in 2022 as anticipated due to lack of capacity of volunteers to move projects forward. This included projects to advance the strategy for promotion of food and agriculture as it relates to the visitor economy and coordination of island events. New approaches are included in the 2023 Tactical Plan.

c) **Goals and Objectives**

- 1) Increase revenues overall by expanding travel into

✓ *Early indication from the*

shoulder seasons and more broadly across all islands, increasing overnight stays by 10% by 2024.

- 2) Diversify seasonal travel by promoting the shoulder months so operators can stretch their season and offer more sustained employment, increasing off-season stays by 25% by 2024.
- 3) Diversify travel experiences to the Southern Gulf Islands by supporting local operators to achieve export readiness and increase fly-drive European markets.

Southern Gulf Islands Accommodators' Performance surveys indicate high rates of overnight stays in 2022.

- ✓ *MRDT collection was twice as much in 2021 than 2020 and trending toward an additional 40% increase in 2022 over 2021.*
- ✓ *MRDT collection increased Off-Season as portion of Summer:*
2020 38%
2021 65%
2022 74% YTD (missing Oct-Dec)
- ✓ *Marketing continues to focus on BC, Alberta, and Washington*

d) **Strategies**

Strategies remain consistent with previous tactical plans:

- a consortium-based approach to tourism promotion for each community
- a focus on shoulder-season visitation by value-matched consumers
- improved travel trade readiness by working with local operators and regional partners, e.g., Destination Greater Victoria

2023 content themes:

- ✓ *Nothing is the New Something / Art of Doing Nothing*
- ✓ *Cozy Season*
- ✓ *Regenerative Travel (Nurture our Nature)*
- ✓ *Experience Life in Bold Taste*
- ✓ *Hibernate & Create*

e) **Target Markets**

Southern Gulf Islands Tourism will focus on attracting travelers who tend to align with the following EQ Types:

Authentic Experiencers (40%)

Seeking the “local experience” with an openness to adapting to the destination’s pace and offerings without being challenged by inconveniences. The Authentic Experiencer is at home in natural and cultural environments and is likely to embrace learning and personal development opportunities.

- ✓ *No change*

Cultural Explorers (40%)

This traveller seeks to immerse themselves in the entire experience of the destination; they are open-minded explorers at home in a bed and breakfast as it provides a more authentic experience of the destination.

- ✓ *No change*

Free Spirits (20%)

Free Spirits are spontaneous and adventure-seeking travelers looking to experience the best and brightest in travel, including not being afraid to indulge in getting the perfect experience. As laid-back travellers, they are likely unfazed by the travel requirements of their destination and are seeking bucket list opportunities to share with others.

✓ No change

2) One-Year Tactical Plans

Major Category	Marketing: Media Advertising and Production																
Activity	Cozy Season & Regenerative Travel Promotion																
Tactics	Print Email Marketing Paid Search/Search Engine Marketing Paid Social Media Display Ads Native Advertising																
	Implementation Plan																
Short Description	Our Cozy Season efforts promote off-season (October through April) travel to the Southern Gulf Islands by creating and sharing compelling content through various media. <table><tr><td>January</td><td> • Hibernate and Create (arts focus) • Nothing is the New Something • ArtBC.com partnership—digital. </td></tr><tr><td>February</td><td> • “February Flavours”—<i>Experience Life in Bold Taste</i> • Nothing is the New Something • Edible Vancouver Island digital </td></tr><tr><td>March and April</td><td> • Reflect. Rewaken. Renew. </td></tr><tr><td>May–August</td><td> • Regenerative Travel—“Let Nature be Your Guide” • “Safe Travels” (cycling, walking, hiking, kayaking, boating) • “Giving Back” (conservancies) </td></tr><tr><td>August–September</td><td> • harvest • Edible Vancouver Island digital • fall festival lineup </td></tr><tr><td>August–October</td><td> • Invitation to Cozy Season—Plan Your Fall Escape • The Art of Doing Nothing </td></tr><tr><td>November–December</td><td> • Rest. Relax. Rejuvenate. </td></tr><tr><td>December</td><td> • holiday island shopping </td></tr></table>	January	• Hibernate and Create (arts focus) • Nothing is the New Something • ArtBC.com partnership—digital.	February	• “February Flavours”—<i>Experience Life in Bold Taste</i> • Nothing is the New Something • Edible Vancouver Island digital	March and April	• Reflect. Rewaken. Renew.	May–August	• Regenerative Travel—“Let Nature be Your Guide” • “Safe Travels” (cycling, walking, hiking, kayaking, boating) • “Giving Back” (conservancies)	August–September	• harvest • Edible Vancouver Island digital • fall festival lineup	August–October	• Invitation to Cozy Season—Plan Your Fall Escape • The Art of Doing Nothing	November–December	• Rest. Relax. Rejuvenate.	December	• holiday island shopping
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December	• holiday island shopping																
Quantifiable Objectives	▪ increase overnight stays October through May ▪ increase conversions to accommodations’ booking sites ▪ increase referrals to SouthernGulfIslands.com ▪ maximize reach and impressions per dollar spent ▪ achieve an above average engagement rate/click through rate and use learnings to continue to																

	excel in this area ▪ increase value of the editorial provided as part of the content partnership ▪ deliver more inclusive advertising materials
Rationale	Inviting travellers for Cozy Season increases off-season business thereby increasing viability of local businesses, longer-term local employment, and increased year-round community services for locals. Using a broad range of advertising with a focus on digital reaches consumers with captivating content toward increased brand awareness and compelling content about off-season travel. Increased investment in digital promotions provides a dynamic medium for learning and refining strategy.
Action Steps	1. create advertisements using photo, video, and written assets for each of the campaigns that captivate and motivate conversion to the southerngulfislands.com website and accommodators' booking sites 2. program advertisements and continue to monitor, learn, and refine
Partnerships	Partners include accommodators, tour operators, local tourism organizations (Chambers of Commerce), and FOLKLIFE Magazine. Sector partnerships include: Paddle BC (\$5,000), BC Bird Trail (\$6,000), BC Ale Trail (\$1,500), Flavour Trail (\$2,000). These Sector contributions are matched with Coop Funding by applications and agreements through the each recognized Sector Organization. BC Wellness (\$500) is not yet a DBC-recognized Sector organization but an emerging partnership.
Resources	▪ Marketing Coordinator ▪ Digital Marketing Agency ▪ Creative direction
Funding Sources	▪ Municipal Regional District Tax (MRDT) ▪ Destination BC (DBC) Co-operative Marketing Partnership Program (Co-op) funding ▪ private sector ad partnerships
Timeframe	Ongoing

Major Category	Marketing: Website Hosting, Development & Maintenance
Activity	Website Evolution and Improvements
Tactics	Consortium/Sector Microsite Landing Page Stories/logs Google Maps Integration
	Implementation Plan
Short Description	Our website, southerngulfislands.com, is the home of our digital presence. This project will provide ongoing website improvements to increase engagement and host compelling content that invites off-season travelers with island-shared values to stay and shop in our communities. We will improve website useability by focusing on evolving travel itineraries on the Plan page. This, and the event page, will be more interactive with integration of Google Maps into the website platform. Stories should be more diverse (from all islands and different island voices) and complement events and itineraries for easy amplification through social media.
Quantifiable Objectives	▪ increased page views, time on site, and conversions to stakeholder websites ▪ decreased bounce rate ▪ improved Regenerative Travel landing page with incorporation of fun communication device

	management of <i>Nothing is the New Something</i> microsite to draw attention to Cozy Season
Rationale	A more interactive and engaging website will ensure the consumer continues toward purchase, finding the inspiration and information for booking and trip planning. Advertising will generate interest in the southerngulfislands.com website. Improvements are required to better engage consumers in trip planning and booking. Nurturing the depth and tone of the brand will entice travellers who share island values.
Action Steps	- engage additional support for web content creation and Google Maps integration - assign tasks, monitor progress and website quality - continue to monitor website analytics, reporting quarterly results
Partnerships	Partners include stakeholders and Local Tourism Organizations
Resources	Marketing coordinator
Funding Sources	MRDT, DBC Co-op funding
Timeframe	Ongoing

Major Category	Marketing: Social Media
Activity	Community Management (Social Media)
Tactics	Social Community Management (Organic) CrowdRiff
	Implementation Plan
Short Description	Engage an active and growing digital community via social media with a focus on brand-aligned photography, user-generated content (UGC), with a goal of “killer content.”
Quantifiable Objectives	- improvements to size of social media community - increased engagement rates with organic content - number of uses of the hashtag #southerngulfislands and @southerngulfislands tagging - number of uses of the hashtag #ExploreBC - number of active island ambassadors representing each island
Rationale	Posting fresh and captivating content organically on social media channels is a cost-effective way of developing and amplifying brand ambassadors for the Southern Gulf Islands and spreading “social proof” that the Southern Gulf Islands are a desirable vacation destination.
Action Steps	- revisit the Social Playbook for any updated messaging - refocus island ambassadors on partner stories and Instagram setup for small businesses (business reels, Instagram cafés or pop-ins) - prepare monthly social calendars based on Social Playbook content - use UGC to create regular stories to contribute to Destination BC’s (DBC’s) Story Network and Southern Gulf Islands’ Member Social Resource Platform - report monthly on social analytics - monitor for improvements
Partnerships	Stakeholders, DBC, HelloBC
Resources	- Marketing Coordinator - Island Ambassadors - CrowdRiff (\$12,500) – includes upgrade to Media Hub
Funding Sources	MRDT

Timeframe	• DBC Co-op funding Ongoing
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Major Category	Marketing: Media and Travel Trade
Activity	Media
Tactics	Travel Media Relations
	Implementation Plan
Short Description	Travel media have taken an interest in writing about the Southern Gulf Islands and the communities have benefited from this earned media. Southern Gulf Islands Tourism will support unique and targeted opportunities to support travel media on the islands in partnership with DBC's Travelling Journalist Program and Destination Greater Victoria's partnership with MMGY Global that includes off-season content, value-aligned stories, regenerative travel, addressing the myth of off-season inactivity. A media page on our website would reduce unsolicited engagements.
Quantifiable Objectives	▪ broadening awareness of off-season life on the islands ▪ working with value-aligned media ▪ aligning with strategic partners
Rationale	Working with travel media will increase knowledge and understanding of the Southern Gulf Island Tourism and the Southern Gulf Islands' brand story.
Action Steps	1. meet with Destination Victoria to explore partnership opportunities with MMYG buy 2. include a media page link on the website with travel media information to satisfy ordinary enquiries and reduce unsolicited engagements
Partnerships	Accommodation Members, Destination Greater Victoria
Resources	• stakeholders • Local Tourism Organizations (Chambers of Commerce) • Destination Greater Victoria
Funding Sources	• MRDT • DBC Co-op funding • stakeholder partnerships
Timeframe	Mid-October through mid-April

Major Category	Marketing: Consumer Focused Asset Development
Activity	Assets
Tactics	Photography Videography Written Materials (Blogs and Copy)
	Implementation Plan
Short Description	Develop a hero video for the Southern Gulf Islands focusing on regenerative travel and, ideally, with Indigenous leadership and involvement. The video scope will be developed in collaboration with DBC's brand team. Southern Gulf Islands Tourism will continue to develop captivating images and video vignettes in alignment with the Southern Gulf Islands Tourism Brand Guidelines (which have been developed in alignment with the DBC brand) that communicate the unique identity and value proposition of the Southern Gulf Islands. These images will build upon themed Salt Spring images and brand textures

	captured in 2021 and 2022 by focussing on Galiano, Mayne, Pender and Saturna. Themes to fulfill include passion projects, outdoor recreation, wellness, food and beverage, creative pursuits and island artisans, island heritage and culture, shopping spots, speciality stores, lodging, transportation, architecture, and seasonal experiences. We will seek opportunities to invest in Indigenous creators, businesses, and operators. We will require the necessary model releases and third-party rights purchases so the b-roll can be contributed to the Content Commonwealth for BC-focused images produced at the provincial or regional level. Content will focus on itineraries, events, regenerative travel, and “preserve and protect.” This could also include a backlinking arrangement which improves SEO for both partners.
Quantifiable Objectives	- number of Southern Gulf Islands Tourism brand-aligned images added to the Southern Gulf Islands Tourism image database and provided to Tourism Vancouver Island (now 4VI) and DBC for global and content marketing at the regional and provincial level - number of videos, minutes of b-roll - appeal of the resulting content as measured by video views and social shares, and page views for written content
Rationale	All marketing activities will need to be supported by captivating content in the form of images, videos, and written content.
Action Steps	- identify specific photo/video shoot programs to align with planned calls to action and campaigns (e.g., <i>Let Nature be Your Guide</i> and <i>Cozy Season</i>) and themes (e.g., outdoor recreation and gastronomy) - develop a photo and a video brief and contract creative professionals to deliver finished products - using keyword strategy (SEM tactic), develop written content that increases site relevancy and searchability - develop a procedure for soliciting and sharing professional written content
Partnerships	Partners include Local Tourism Organizations (Chambers of Commerce) and BC Ferries.
Resources	- local photographers (prioritizing Galiano and Saturna) - videographer - local writers
Funding Sources	- stakeholders - MRDT - DBC Co-op funding
Timeframe	Ongoing

Major Category	Marketing: Consumer Focused Asset Development
Activity	Promotional Products
Tactics	Merchandise
	Implementation Plan
Short Description	Two merchandise projects are planned for 2023—a t-shirt and a hat. A sales protocol will include distribution through local retailers and contribute a portion of sales to a local ecological cause (e.g., island conservancies and the Saturna Island Marine Research and Education Society) will create action to align with our values.
Quantifiable Objectives	- Sale of 1000 branded shirts and 500 branded hats - Generation of interest by local residents in buying into the brand values (as expressed by the apparel)

Rationale	Branded apparel can provide a significant boost to Southern Gulf Islands Tourism image, representation, and general awareness, and boost some local identity opportunities for locals with whom the brand resonates.
Action Steps	1. continue work with SALT to source eco-friendly shirts and hats 2. provide graphics as identified in the Brand Guidelines 3. write partnership protocol for sales (set price) and contribution to cause 4. identify and engage potential retail partners from each island 5. prepare kick-off with social media contest
Partnerships	Partners include SALT, island visitor centres, and ecological and reconciliatory organizations
Resources	• local interested retailers
Funding Sources	• MRDT funding • sales
Timeframe	Spring 2023

Major Category	Marketing: Collateral Production and Distribution
Activity	Travel Guides—Printed Collateral
Tactics	Southern Gulf Islands Cozy Season Guide Island Brochures/Maps—Brand format Southern Gulf Islands Regional Travel Map/Regenerative Poster
	Implementation Plan
Short Description	To create and distribute a brand-aligned travel guide to the Southern Gulf Islands that serves as the 'quilt' that knits the islands (and their brochures) together. The guide will be updated by theme and island with overarching messages focusing on Cozy Season—nature, art, and food.
Quantifiable Objectives	▪ number of guides and maps distributed ▪ number of brand-aligned island brochure maps
Rationale	A printed visitor guide and island brochures distributed at key locations when travellers are seeking additional trip planning information encourages repeat and extended stays, and additional visits.
Action Steps	Island Brochure / Maps (\$50,000) 1. create, publish, and distribute brand-aligned island brochure/maps for each island with a preference for working with local stakeholders for content 2. print (locally if capacity) and distribute at local visitor centres and Southern Gulf Islands ferries Cozy Season Guide version three (digital and print) (\$50,000) 1. reflect on Cozy Season Guide for improvement and approach 2. update content themes and contract any required brand-aligned photography according to themes. 3. confirm Cozy Season businesses that are open and inviting visitors 4. write content and engage creative direction agency to assemble (including specify paper requirements and order paper) to print ready 5. get printing quotes and contract printing 6. distribute via Certified Folder to BC, Edmonton and Calgary, and Washington and Oregon

Partnerships	Regional Map (\$50,000) reprint Southern Gulf Islands Regional Map with Hul'qumi'num and SENĆOTEN place names Partners include Southern Gulf Islands members, island stakeholders, Local Tourism Organizations (Chambers of Commerce), BC Ferries, BC Marine Trails, WSANEC Leadership Group, Cowichan, and Penelakut.
Resources	- creative agency - participating communities
Funding Sources	- MRDT - DBC Co-op funding - feature advertisers
Timeframe	Island Maps—Spring 2023 distribution Cozy Season Guide—September 2023 distribution

Major Category	Destination & Product Experience Development
Activity	Coordination of Festivals and Events
Tactics	Local Events
	Implementation Plan
Short Description	Art, music, food, and harvest events offer tremendous opportunity to invite visitors to share island life and for visitors to support island life. The economy related to the events supports the creatives and makers who are the subjects of the events. The events should be associated with extending visits into Cozy Season and require a coordinated calendar to avoid planning events for one island on top of events on another.
Quantifiable Objectives	- number of festivals and events listed in a southerngulfislands.com calendar - number of attendees at each festival and event - number of overlapping events (negative indicator)
Rationale	Festivals and events that focus on the cultural identity of the Southern Gulf Islands are an important part of the destination's product offering. Investment in marketing of important products like music concerts, art shows, food and harvest festivals, and ecological education programs supports regenerative travel and provides more opportunity for visitors to choose the Southern Gulf Islands.
Action Steps	- engage an events coordinator (ideally) from the local arts/music community - inventory all island events with contact information - create a coordinated calendar of events and review monthly with local event leaders for updates and opportunities to organize events at complementary days and times - identify investment opportunities for Southern Gulf Islands Tourism marketing at least six weeks in advance of the events in order to capture the attention of travel planners - measure results of the investment based on attendance growth
Partnerships	Partners include Southern Gulf Islands and Salt Spring Island Art Societies, Ptarmigan Arts, Yellow House Arts, agricultural societies, conservancies, Aqualink, tour operators.
Resources	- Event Coordinator - Aqualink (inter-island mobility coordinator) - Local Tourism Organizations (Chambers of Commerce) - visitor centres - tourism operators

Funding Sources	• MRDT
Timeframe	Ongoing

Major Category	Destination & Product Experience Development
Activity	Product Experience Enhancement: Gulf Island Gastronomy
Tactics	Itinerary Development Content Development Key Experience Development
	Implementation Plan
Short Description	Islanders are working on agriculture, harvest, farm tours, farm stays, farm stands, food forests, gleaning, edu-travel and food guides. Responsible, thoughtful, sustainable (moving to regenerative) ideas about food are key to this Activity. This Activity represents local climate action and invites visitors to engage as part of regenerative travel.
Quantifiable Objectives	▪ efforts align with the regional food/agriculture strategy ▪ focus remains on on-island products and processes ▪ ecogastronomy (UVic) market (natural, forages, of the sea, of the land, organic farmers) ▪ fall festivals, fowl suppers “back to the future” are highlighted ▪ more workers interested in a career in the industry
Rationale	Our Southern Gulf Islands travel themes revolve around nature, the arts, wellness, and food, so culinary themes that focus on local sustainable food resonate with the brand. More thoughtful travel and longer stays would be less disruptive to the islands and would provide a better return on effort for visitors than day trips, which can feel a bit too frantic due to the travel requirements of the islands and leave limited benefit in their wake. See below for an excerpt from the Southern Gulf Islands Food Strategy: <i>2.3.3 Work with restaurants, the Southern Gulf Islands Tourism Partnership Society and The Culinary Tourism Alliance to develop and promote culinary tourism during the shoulder and winter season.</i> <i>2.3.2. Continue to support Southern Gulf Islands food related festivals and other annual community events and look for opportunities to collaborate or coordinate such as an annual Southern Gulf Islands Festivals Calendar. (Tyler – calendar, arts societies/Ptarmigan Arts – events listing, https://islandfarmstands.com/)</i>
Action Steps	1. partner with Destination Greater Victoria as part of the Flavour Trail 2. engage with local culinary leaders to learn itinerary opportunities and explore ideas around a Southern Gulf Islands YouTube “food channel” (to focus Southern Gulf Islands content for the Flavour Trail) 3. explore partnership with creators of https://islandfarmstands.com/ to add more island farm stands 4. explore islands as a unique food region with UVic Ecogastronomy researchers 5. create content and collect photography and video for those features 6. prepare Gulf Islands Gastronomy Guide and Itineraries
Partnerships	Partners include chefs, farm stand operators, those working along the farm-to-table chain.
Resources	▪ Agricultural Societies ▪ Local Chambers of Commerce

Funding Sources	MRDT
Timeframe	Ongoing (with off-season focus)

Major Category	Destination & Product Experience Development
Activity	Research, Evaluation and Analytics
Tactics	Mobilescapes (DBC) PRIZM Segmentation Visitor Study Accommodator Surveys
Short Description	Implementation Plan Local tourism and hospitality businesses require local market information to support their business and manage the local travel economy. Market information will also support Southern Gulf Islands Tourism tactical plans. Hesitancy exists regarding local information sharing, and broader market studies of the Greater Victoria area and Vancouver Island rarely provide accurate insight about the activity on the islands. DBC generously worked with Southern Gulf Islands Tourism collecting and analyzing Mobilescapes data and we engaged Align Consulting in 2022 to develop an ongoing tracking system using the data and to conduct a PRIZM Segmentation Study. This will be included with data from BC Ferries to monitor traffic to the islands over time. We began collecting data from local accommodators through a monthly survey which gives some insight into occupancy rates. This information will provide a local baseline for performance metrics over time. Information gathered by Southern Gulf Islands Tourism is summarized and shared back to all participating members for their own use. We will partner with Destination Greater Victoria to undertake a comprehensive Visitor Survey in 2023 resulting in a Study Report in 2024, when Southern Gulf Islands Tourism will be applying for renewal of its Five-Year Agreement with DBC. This research tactic is partnered with members of Southern Gulf Islands Tourism. Data from BC Ferries can be included in reports to monitor traffic to the islands over time.
Quantifiable Objectives	- completion of studies - data available and shared with participants - key learnings derived from the data
Rationale	Research is essential to advising ongoing marketing strategy.
Action Steps	- continue work with Align Consulting to update and report Mobilescapes data, including PRISM segmentation (\$20,000) - continue to issue and report on monthly accommodator occupancy surveys - partner with Destination Greater Victoria to undertake a comprehensive 2023 Visitors Survey (\$25,000) - report findings to Southern Gulf Islands Tourism Board and industry members
Partnerships	Partners include accommodators who are Southern Gulf Islands Tourism members (and provide monthly survey data), other accommodators, and Destination Greater Victoria.
Resources	- Align Consulting—Mobilescapes and PRIZM - Destination Victoria—Visitor Study

Funding Sources	▪ MRDT ▪ Coop funding
Timeframe	Ongoing

Major Category	Destination and Product Experience
Activity	Industry Development and Training
Tactics	Ambassador Program—Instagram sign-up
	Implementation Plan
Short Description	This tactic is an evolution of the brand ambassador program under Social Media/Community Management. The island ambassadors may have greater value as a point of contact via social media to local small tourism businesses.
Quantifiable Objectives	▪ monthly reported points of contact with local business operators ▪ number of new local businesses actively engaged on Instagram
Rationale	Each island needs a local resource and contact that relates to the broader digital tourism marketing effort and to local hospitality businesses who are not present digitally
Action Steps	1. engage interested local community ambassadors with an additional task to host a monthly “Instagram Café” time at a local establishment 2. book cafés 3. advertise date/time/location locally and directly invite small businesses who are not currently present and active on social media 4. ambassador sets up attendees on Instagram and advises/encourages ongoing and active engagement with the Southern Gulf Islands Tourism Instagram account
Partnerships	Partners include Southern Gulf Islands Tourism Ambassadors, Local Tourism Organizations (Chambers of Commerce), and stakeholders.
Resources	▪ social media platforms ▪ UCG (including CrowdRiff)
Funding Sources	▪ MRDT
Timeframe	Ongoing

Major Category	Destination and Product Experience
Activity	Wayfinding (ON-HOLD)
Tactics	Phase 1—Relationship-building with First Nations (see previous) Phase 2—Signage (with QR codes?) Phase 3—Visitor Information Kiosks
	Implementation Plan
Short Description	Any wayfinding program relates directly to places, spaces, and land which invites the islands into a reconciliation effort to support First Nations’ efforts to return their language to the lands within their traditional territories. Southern Gulf Islands Tourism began working with Tourism Vancouver Island (now 4VI) in 2021 to begin and effort to build relationships and find opportunities for Indigenous leadership to oversee naming of places and stories about the land.

	A high-level wayfinding strategy was completed in early 2021 that included an assessment and signage concept for Mayne Island (as a pilot). This tactic is to complete wayfinding assessments and signage placement plans on Galiano, Pender, Saturna and SSI and then to complete the pilot wayfinding sign development and installation project on Mayne. As a response to the lack of wayfinding and severe worker shortage on islands, Tourism and its stakeholders also identified non-staff service and messaging technology like electronic kiosks to as a means of providing information welcoming visitors with key messages and providing experience opportunities on the island being visited.
Quantifiable Objectives	▪ relationships established between First Nations and Southern Gulf Islands ▪ ease of navigation around the islands ▪ use of digital technology with kiosks, with the possibility of centralized off-side information management for visitors at kiosks
Rationale	Wayfinding is essential to visitors' orientation into and around an unknown place. These places are the traditional unceded territories of several First Nations and Southern Gulf Islands desires to build relationships and learn a better way forward in the spirit of reconciliation.
Action Steps	This Activity is on hold pending leadership or co-leadership by or with local First Nations.
Partnerships	Partners include First Nations, Island Chambers of Commerce, Mayne Island Recreation and Parks Commission (for Miner's Bay), Mayne Island Museum Board, BC Highways, Islands Trust, and BC Ferries.
Resources	▪ Southern Gulf Islands / CRD ▪ Transition Salt Spring ▪ Islands Trustees ▪ Stakeholders ▪ Trail groups ▪ Chambers of Commerce
Funding Sources	▪ Tourism Experience fund
Timeframe	TBD

3) Performance Measures

	Output	Outcome
	We know we are on the right track when...	We have succeeded when there is an increase in...
Effective Tourism Marketing, Programs, and Projects	- all marketing and projects are built on a brand concept, which is seen through all tactics, and each tactic, where possible, is continually refined to maximize referrals - we see positive metrics resulting from social ads, search engine ads, and programmatic digital (display) ads. - print advertising content partnerships result in greater impressions - Website Improvements (Measured in #referrals, Pageviews, Sessions, Reduced Bounce Rate) - Southern Gulf Islands Tourism experiences organic social media community growth and increased engagements with content - email marketing campaigns receive greater engagement and generate higher quantities of qualified leads - printed collateral experiences greater distribution numbers	- visitor volume when and where it is desired - length of stay - average daily room rate - approximate return on investment - transportation numbers (BC Ferries traffic)
Marketing efforts are coordinated and complementary to provincial marketing strategies and tactics	- content production efforts result in a greater volume of image, video and written content developed that is BC-brand aligned and can be contributed to the Content Commonwealth - there is growth in the number of articles/earned media that come through Global Marketing (DBC) and the Travel Media team (4VI) - Southern Gulf Islands Tourism and the Southern Gulf Islands' experience shoulder season product enhancement through festival and event investment	- the number of new tourism businesses in the Southern Gulf Islands region - the number of attendees at festivals and events
Effective local-level stakeholder support, and inter-community collaboration	- there is increased local advertising and adoption of the Southern Gulf Islands Travel brand - consortium websites arrive at brand-alignment and see an increase in referral to stakeholder websites	- visitor volume in the off-season - dispersion across the Southern Gulf Islands of visitor volume - dispersion across seasons of visitor volume
Metrics for regenerative tourism	- destination development ideas and additional ideas to be generated are integrated into a coherent whole - product and service gaps are identified - strategies to manage peak demand are identified (perhaps the Marketing Committee should be doing this) - priority actions/projects for funding are recommended	