

2024 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, 2023
MRDT Repeal Date:	September 1, 2024
Five Year Period:	2019–2024

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

This is the final Tactical Plan of the Five-Year Strategic Business Plan and no updates are anticipated. The 2023 Tactical Plan and Budget was submitted to Destination BC (DBC) in late 2022 and subsequently approved. The plan set forth the Southern Gulf Islands Tourism Partnership Society's expectations for the 2023 calendar year respecting the Municipal and Regional District Tax (MRDT). Those seeking more context to the 2023 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.
 - ✓ *Markets: Authentic Experience, Cultural Explorers, Free Spirits*
 - ✓ *Travel invitations shoulder and off-season only*
 - ✓ *Busy season focus on relating responsible travel to visitors*
- 2) Work with local operators and regional partners to improve market and export readiness so that industry can provide new experiences, especially in the shoulder and off-season.
 - ✓ *Lack of available work force challenges industry's ability to provide new experiences*

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| <p>3) Undertake content gathering, creation, and promotion, production and distribution of collateral, digital media, and conventional advertising.</p> | <p>✓ <i>Implementation of promotion campaigns has accelerated</i></p> |
| <p>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.</p> | <p>✓ <i>Visitation to the Southern Gulf Islands is strong and has grown</i></p> <p>✓ <i>Travel media has been active with Southern Gulf Islands organically with increasing paid.</i></p> <p>✓ <i>Travel Trade is not a priority for the Southern Gulf Islands</i></p> |
| <p>5) Raise social media activity and conversations to expand off-peak visitation and outreach to millennials.</p> | <p>✓ <i>Social media activity and outreach continues to increase @southerngulfislands</i></p> |
| <p>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.</p> | <p>✓ <i>Participated in available in-person & online conferences during 2023</i></p> |
| <p>7) Attend trade shows in cooperation with Tourism Vancouver Island and offer packages that will help develop a tour operator network.</p> | <p>✓ <i>Vancouver Outdoor Show and 4VI Travel Trade Show participation in 2023</i></p> |
| <p>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.</p> | <p>✓ <i>Continued discussions with BC Ferries respecting marketing partnerships and on-board marketing opportunities</i></p> |
| <p>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.</p> | <p>✓ <i>Aqualink covered summer events while SGITP sponsored STOKED.</i></p> |

b) Key Learnings and Conclusions

2023 was the fourth year of Southern Gulf Islands Tourism active operation under its fourth One-Year Tactical Plan. Southern Gulf Islands Tourism made progress in 2023 in the following ways:

- Completed the Travel Foundation Workshops in May – June 2023 to strengthen collective awareness of **Sustainability and Resilience Planning** for Destination Management Organizations.
- Completed training and a **Crisis Communications** Plan, approved by the Board in June 2023.
- Continued partnership with Folklife Magazine (Spring and Fall editions) including advertising and content.
- Transformed Edible VanIsle food marketing campaigns from print to Spring and Fall digital campaigns.
- Partnered with several **sector organizations** to feature the Southern Gulf Islands region, including Paddle BC, BC Bird Trail, BC Ale Trail, and Flavour Trail. We created and contributed local assets and itineraries for each sector. Other supported sectors organizations, not yet supported by DBC, included BC Marine Trail and Wellness Travel BC.

- The **Summer regenerative campaign** took more concrete form in 2023 with ad carousels including *Light Up The Night*, *Garbage In Garbage Out*, *Savour every mmmminute*, *Befriend Water*, and *Be an Animal Person*.
- The **Cozy Season Campaign** made significant media inroads with deliver of the *Make Something out of Nothing* Campaign in early 2023 using short form video, social, and a microsite. Fall of 2023 sees the evolution of the Make Something Out of Nothing campaign with distinct social media, sponsorship of the Vancouver East Side Culture Crawl, and a Gallery Pop-up media event in November.
- Local advertorials in mid-late 2023 were placed in local newspaper to engage in a broader dialogue about the impact of tourism and a **local vision for tourism** that supports nature.
- By Fall 2023, 22 regenerative themed landing pages were created on the website with **written content** and images on topics featuring important local features, including wellness, hiking, retail, nature, cycling, boating, picnics, water conservations, and events.
- Established a **booking referral site** on southerngulflands.com for member accommodations, launched in August 2023.
- Resurrected our first corporate URL - sgitourismpartnership.ca - and assembled content to build a second website for local information and interaction in support of **tourism management**.
- SGITP upgraded our CrowdRiff license to include **Media Hub**, providing direct and easy access to brand-aligned photo and video assets for local tourism organizations (chambers of commerce and the Saturna Island Tourism Association). SGITP also participated in the BC Story Network.
- **Organic social media** (@southerngulflands) continued with the support of local community ambassadors engaged on Instagram. Programming follows the Social Playbook with monthly content calendars provided for all interested partners.
- SGITP created **branded merchandise** that includes t-shirts, hats, and *Better Than You Found It* stickers used for prizes at events, and bike flags that were distributed at a Bike Day event.
- SGITP created, printed, and distributed the brand-aligned **Regional Map** and brand-aligned **island map brochures** for Saturna Island and Galiano Island in 2023.
- SGITP contracted AirDNA to provide **monthly accommodation data**, as a more accurate and comprehensive source of information for the region, in the absence of reliable information from Mobilescapes (Environics).
- A partnership with Southern Gulf Islands Community Resource Centre resulted in a completed **resident and visitor sentiment survey**, with publication by year-end 2023 for use in developing the application for MRDT renewal in early 2024.
- SGITP had an **inclusivity audit** undertaken of marketing materials including a training video for board and members to support more inclusive marketing materials for tourism in the region.

Some planned activities did not progress as anticipated in 2023:

- **Event coordination** – In spite of a continued demand for better coordination and communication of events throughout the region and beyond, we did not successfully engage an event coordinator, and this will be a priority for 2024 aided by strengthened partnership with local arts societies. We did experience additional effort to reach out to local summer season events through Aqualink which provides an interesting opportunity if funding for the continuation of Aqualink is successful.
- **Merchandise** – Though well-sourced, SGITP did not have plans for broader distribution of the merchandise. This will be included in the strategy for 2024.
- **Island brochures** – SGITP continues to be challenged to achieve island map brochures that serve both travellers and the requirements of local chambers of commerce. Going forward SGITP will invest in marketing materials targeted to visitors.
- SGITP began work on the **Fall campaign** in late June but continues to be challenged by last minute resource demands on the organization by current service providers. We will seek other service providers in 2024 to improve our ability to deliver without unnecessary pressure and unrealistic expectations on staff.
- **Research and analytics** – we did not continue accommodator surveys in 2023 due to an inconsistent response from members that resulted in a small sample that was not relatable for the region.
- Anticipated **partnerships** with local conservancies were not realized and this is a concept that needs to

be reconsidered through more dialogue with conservancy leaders.

- Great ideas for **destination development** continued lack progress in 2023 (as also happened in 2022) due to lack of capacity of volunteers to lead projects and staff to support the work. 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 again included in the 2024 Tactical Plan, best realized by dedicated staff person who works closely with the Manager of Communications and Marketing.

c) Goals and Objectives

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| <ol style="list-style-type: none">1) Increase revenues overall by expanding travel into 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. | <ul style="list-style-type: none">✓ <i>Data suggests that 2023 will meet or exceed 2022 levels for most indicators.</i>✓ <i>The largest decline since 2018 has been during the peak season with a 36% decline from 147,728 overnight visitors to 94,761.</i>✓ <i>Off-season overnight visitors are estimated to have increased 28% to 153,276. (AirDNA). Combining shoulder and off seasons, we see a 7% increase in 2022 compared to 2018.</i>✓ <i>Marketing continues to focus on BC, Alberta, and Washington</i> |
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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

2024 content themes:

- ✓ *Nothing is the New Something / Make Something from Nothing*
- ✓ *Regenerative Travel (Garbage Souvenir, SGI Adoption)*
- ✓ *Gulf Island Gastronomy*
- ✓ *Island Artists*

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

- ✓ *No change*

embrace learning and personal development opportunities.

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 Plan

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. Jan Make Something out of Nothing and The Art of Food – Video Storytelling Feb “February Flavours”—Experience Life in Bold Taste Mar-Apr Reflect. Rewaken. Renew. (Re: BC) May–Aug Regenerative Travel— “Visit ‘Island Style’”, “Get Your Tickets”, and “Better Than You Found It”, Visitor Education Marketing Aug–Sep Harvest – food focus and Fall festival lineup - events Aug-Oct Invitation to Cozy Season–Plan Your Fall Escape Nov–Dec “Nothing is the New Something” and “Make Something from Nothing” – Phase 3 Dec Holiday island shop local
Quantifiable Objectives	▪ increase overnight stays October through May ▪ increase conversions to accommodations’ booking sites through booking referral site ▪ increase referrals to southerngulfislands.com ▪ maximize reach and impressions per dollar spent ▪ maintain an above average engagement rate/click through rate and continuously improve ▪ 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 via the Southern Gulf Islands Tourism booking referral platform 2. program advertisements and continue to monitor, learn, and refine 3. Execute campaign-focussed paid search engine marketing, paid social media, and image / video display ads 4. Create and distribute quarterly visitor (and industry) e-newsletters
Partnerships	Partners include accommodators, tour operators, event coordinators, and art groups. Sector partnerships include: Paddle BC, includes photo/video add-on), BC Bird Trail, BC Ale Trail, Flavour Trail, Ahoy BC, Re:BC (REjuvenate, REgenerate, and REvitalize Travel in BC). Other unofficial sector organizations we support are: BC Marine Trails and Wellness Travel BC. These Sector contributions are matched with Coop Funding by applications and agreements through each recognized Sector Organization and our participation uses MRDT funding only.
Resources	▪ Marketing Coordinator ▪ Digital Marketing Agency

Funding Sources	▪ Creative Direction ▪ Municipal Regional District Tax (MRDT) ▪ Destination BC (DBC) Co-operative Marketing Partnership Program (except Coop-supported sector partnerships) ▪ 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 Booking Referral Platform Google Maps Integration
	Implementation Plan
Short Description	Our website, southerngulflislands.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 focussed on each targeted market segment 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 ▪ new <i>Collage Collective: Creative Tourism</i> landing page with interactive art map ▪ 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 southerngulflislands.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	1. <i>Collage Collective: Creative Tourism as Regeneration</i> landing page, including interactive digital art map (\$30,000) 2. engage additional support for itinerary creation and Google Maps integration (\$6,000) 3. assign tasks, monitor progress and website quality 4. Ripe booking referral site a (\$750/mo x 12 = \$9,000) 5. continue to monitor website analytics, including booking referral details, reporting quarterly results
Partnerships	Partners include Members, Arts Societies, and Local Tourism Organizations
Resources	Marketing coordinator Art Groups CRD (art mapping) RIPE Imagine That Graphics

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 (and improved analytics from each)
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	1. revisit the Social Playbook for any updated messaging 2. refocus island ambassadors on partner stories and Instagram setup for small businesses (business reels, Instagram cafés or pop-ins) 3. prepare monthly social calendars based on Social Playbook content 4. use UGC to create regular stories to contribute to Destination BC’s (DBC’s) Story Network and Southern Gulf Islands’ Member Social Resource Platform 5. report monthly on social analytics 6. monitor for improvements
Partnerships	Stakeholders, DBC, HelloBC
Resources	• Marketing Coordinator (\$20,000) • Island Ambassadors (\$ 20,000) • CrowdRiff basic and Media Hub (\$12,500)
Funding Sources	• MRDT • DBC Co-op funding
Timeframe	Ongoing

Major Category	Marketing: Consumer Shows
Activity	Vancouver Outdoor Show and East Side Culture Crawl
Tactics	Consumer Shows
	Implementation Plan
Short Description	Attending values-aligned consumer shows to engage potential travellers in our primary markets through an additional, impactful channel

Quantifiable Objectives	▪ broadening awareness of off-season life on the islands ▪ collecting followers and newsletter sign-ups at the trade show ▪ aligning with strategic partners
Rationale	The Vancouver Outdoor Show offers motivated travellers who value nature and unique outdoor experiences, a ferry-ride away from our islands.
Action Steps	1. book Vancouver Outdoor Show 2. prepare print and video display materials 3. prepare sign-up survey and contact information collector (Constant Contact & tablets) 4. engage Ambassadors to staff event
Partnerships	Accommodation Members, Outdoor Recreation Partners
Resources	• Maps • Bike flags, t-shirts, hats • “Better Than You Found It” stickers • Event calendars • Art (rack) Cards • Trade show island banner flags • Ambassadors for staffing show
Funding Sources	• MRDT • DBC Co-op funding • Member Partnerships
Timeframe	March 2024

Major Category	Marketing: Collateral Production and Distribution
Activity	Travel Guides—Printed Collateral
Tactics	Southern Gulf Islands Cozy Season Arts Guide Island Maps Art (<i>and Music and Food Rack</i>) Cards Southern Gulf Islands Regional Travel Map/Regenerative Poster
	Implementation Plan
Short Description	To create and distribute a family of brand-aligned travel guide resources to the Southern Gulf Islands that serves as the ‘quilt’ that knits the islands 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 collateral
Rationale	A printed visitor guide and island maps distributed at key locations when travellers are seeking additional trip planning information encourages repeat and extended stays, and additional visits. To support inter-island travel, island maps for each island will be presented as a family on each island.
Action Steps	Island Maps (\$50,000) 1. create, publish, and distribute brand-aligned island maps for each island with a preference for working with local stakeholders for content 2. enter into a memorandum of understanding with Local Tourism Organizations (Chambers of Commerce and SITA) for services including but not limited to: a) racking full island family set of branded brochures b) liaison with, and confirmation of details for, local businesses Potential contract value up to \$10,000 for SSI and up to \$5,000 for each of Galiano, Mayne, Pender, Saturna

	Cozy Season Guide – the Arts edition (digital and print) (\$50,000) 1. reflect on Cozy Season Guide for improvement and approach 2. update content themes to focus on <i>Collage Collective: Creative Tourism</i> and contract any required brand-aligned photography and creative stories. 3. confirm Cozy Season businesses, artists, and events 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 Regional Map (\$20,000) 1. reprint Southern Gulf Islands Regional Map with Hul'qumi'num and SENĆOTEN place names Art Rack Cards (\$20,000) 1. partner with Art Societies to produce artistic event-focussed rack cards, one side SGITP “ad” and one side art society event promotion (\$6,000 each 50/50 partnership). Create, print, distribute.
Partnerships	Partners include Southern Gulf Islands members, Arts Groups, Local Tourism Organizations (Chambers of Commerce), BC Ferries, BC Marine Trails, WSA NEC Leadership Group, Cowichan, and Penelakut.
Resources	▪ creative agency ▪ participating communities
Funding Sources	▪ MRDT ▪ DBC Co-op funding ▪ feature advertisers
Timeframe	Island Maps—Spring 2024 distribution Regional Map – Summer 2024 distribution Cozy Season Guide—September 2024 distribution

Major Category	Marketing: Media and Travel Trade
Activity	Travel Media
Tactics	Travel Media Relations effort
	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 that includes off-season content, value-aligned stories, regenerative travel, addressing the myth and opportunity of off-season inactivity. This tactic will provide a particular focus on arts events on each island in the off-season: Arts on Mayne, Pender Fall Crawl, Salt Spring National Art Prize, etc. A media page on our website will 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 travel and the Southern Gulf Islands’ brand story.

Action Steps	1. create compelling <i>Collage Collective: Creative Tourism</i> (summer) and Cozy Season - the Arts Edition campaigns 2. engage value-aligned travel media to create and share stories 3. include a media page link on the website with travel media information to satisfy ordinary enquiries and reduce unsolicited engagements 4. templates for local groups to reach out to media, pitches
Partnerships	Accommodation Members, Arts Societies, Media Partners
Resources	• Creative PR • Creative Marketing Team
Funding Sources	• MRDT • DBC Co-op funding • Member 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 several series of short-form videos for each island for use by the consortium focusing on itineraries, events, the arts, island life, regenerative travel and Cozy Season travel. Southern Gulf Islands Tourism will continue to develop stories, 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 a brand-aligned content for use via Media Hub representing experiences and businesses for each island - Galiano, Mayne, Pender, Salt Spring, 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 creation, for all to use, focus more on activities so people know what to do (i.e. trail running, cycling, low-impact) ... using Media Hub as portal for partner access
Quantifiable Objectives	▪ number of Southern Gulf Islands Tourism brand-aligned assets added to the Southern Gulf Islands Tourism Media Hub and provided to 4VI and DBC for global and content marketing at the regional and provincial level. Specific focus in 2024 is to let travellers know what to do and how to do it on the islands, i.e. trail running, cycling safely, low-impact forest and beach walks. ▪ 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	1. identify specific photo/video shoot programs to align with planned calls to action and campaigns (e.g., <i>Collage Collective: Creative Tourism</i> and Cozy Season) and themes (e.g., outdoor recreation and local foodie experiences)

	2. Creating video and storytelling related food creators – Gulf Islands destination as they grow the food (see Destination Development – Product Experience Development) 3. develop a photo and a video brief and contract CrowdRiff Creator to source and deliver finished products 4. partnering with local organizations (arts, chambers) for brand-aligned photo shoots that also meet local needs 5. using keyword strategy (SEM tactic), develop written content that increases site relevancy and searchability
Partnerships	Partners include Local Tourism Organizations (Chambers of Commerce), Arts Groups, and BC Ferries.
Resources	• CrowdRiff Creator (\$50,000) • Photographers (\$20,000) • Videographer (\$20,000) • local writers (\$5,000)
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	Merchandise projects will continue for 2024, building upon 2023's t-shirt, hats, bike flags, and stickers. This year, the priority is to create a business strategy for distribution, through local partners and retailers.
Quantifiable Objectives	• Sale of 300 branded shirts and 50 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. Prepare business plan for creation, storage, tracking, and distribution of merchandise a) partners could sell at their locations b) consider co-branding with partner members c) consider shirt for each island – with map of each island 2. write partnership protocol for sales (set price) and contribution to cause 3. work with local providers to source eco-friendly products 4. provide graphics as identified in the Brand Guidelines 5. identify and engage potential retail partners from each island 6. prepare kick-off with social media contest
Partnerships	Partners include SALT, island visitor centres, and ecological and reconciliatory organizations
Resources	• local interested retailers or organization • Potential partnership - Local Tourism Organizations
Funding Sources	• MRDT funding • sales
Timeframe	Spring 2024

Major Category	Destination & Product Experience Development
Activity	Product Experience Enhancement: Gulf Island Gastronomy
Tactics	Itinerary Development Content Development – video and storytelling 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	- alignment 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	- continue partner with Destination Greater Victoria as part of the Flavour Trail - 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) - creating video and food stories telling moulding a narrative around the Gulf Islands as an authentic destination where food is grown, created, and plated - explore partnership with creators of https://islandfarmstands.com/ to add more island farm stands - explore islands as a unique food region with UVic Ecogastronomy researchers - create content and collect photography, video, and stories for features - prepare Gulf Islands Gastronomy Guide and Itineraries
Partnerships	Partners include chefs, farm stand operators, those working along the farm-to-table chain.
Resources	- Videographer - Storyteller - Local food leaders - Agricultural Societies

Funding Sources	▪ MRDT ▪ Coop Marketing Program
Timeframe	Ongoing (with off-season focus)

Major Category	Destination & Product Experience Development
Activity	Research, Evaluation and Analytics
Tactics	Quarterly Industry Reports Annual Performance Report Digital Analytics, including outcomes of paid and organic social as well as programmatic
	Implementation Plan
Short Description	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 through 2023 to develop an ongoing tracking system using the data and to conduct a PRIZM Segmentation Study. Unfortunately, the Environics data use for Mobilescapes was deemed unreliable in mid-2023 due to incongruencies with BC Ferry traffic data, particularly at Vesuvius. We understand DBC continues to work with Environics to clarify the useability of this data, but it leaves us dependent upon data from BC Ferries to monitor traffic to the islands over time. We have now purchased data from AirDNA and we receive monthly reports. With the growing portion of local accommodators, including commercial businesses, using Airbnb and VRBP, this data has provided some insight which has been analysed against BC Ferries data by Align Consulting to produce meaningful insight about overnight stays in the region. SGITP will continue working with this information. The new booking referral platform provided by RIPE will provide more useful data on referrals to accommodators including quantified value of referrals monthly over time.
Quantifiable Objectives	▪ completion of studies ▪ data available and shared with participants ▪ quarterly data summaries shared in local industry e-news ▪ key learnings derived from the data
Rationale	Research is essential to advising ongoing marketing strategy.
Action Steps	1. continue work with Align Consulting to update the AirDNA (\$12,000) / BC Ferries data semi-annually, and report Mobilescapes data, including PRISM segmentation, if it becomes available in the future 2. continue with Ripe booking referral site and pull data quarterly for analysis and reporting back to industry members via industry newsletters 3. 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—AirDNA, BC Ferries (future potential - Mobilescapes and PRIZM)

Funding Sources	▪ RIPE Booking Platform analytics ▪ MRDT
Timeframe	Ongoing

Major Category	Destination & Product Experience Development
Activity	Collage Collective: Creative Tourism - Coordination of Festivals and Events
Tactics	Local Events Digital Readiness – Community Cultural Calendar & Interactive Art Map
	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. Communication about local events and coordination of local events to avoid booking on the same weekend have elevated the need for a regional Community Cultural Calendar that is grounded within each of the islands' key arts group. 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. Summer efforts will promote to existing visitors and islanders from other islands. Visitors will be actively invited in the cozy season.
Quantifiable Objectives	▪ number of islands actively sharing and using the Community Cultural Calendar ▪ number of festivals and events listed in a regional online Community Cultural 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. This is the "creative heart of BC"
Action Steps	1. engage an events coordinator (ideally) from the local arts/music community (\$25,000) 2. inventory all island events with contact information 3. 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 (\$15,000) 4. create an interactive digital art map for the region (\$20,000) 5. 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 6. 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) • Website developer • Art Groups • Local Tourism Organizations (Chambers of Commerce) • Tourism operators
Funding Sources	• MRDT • DBC Coop Funding • Salt Spring Arts Society partnership (\$15,000) for calendar development (pending)

Timeframe	Ongoing
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Major Category	Destination and Product Experience
Activity	Visitor Services
Tactics	Mobile Visitor Service Digital App On-Island Transit Promotion
	Implementation Plan
Short Description	This tactic responds to direction from the Five-Year Business Strategy to create a mobile visitor service capable of serving the five-island region.
Quantifiable Objectives	- prepare and communicate a viable business case for mobile visitor services - create a Southern Gulf Island Visitor App - promote on-island public transportation (with transit vehicle display ads) that can also serve as a point of contact for additional visitors service - monthly reported points of contact with local business operators - quarterly point of contact with visitors, by island location - number of new local businesses actively engaged digitally
Rationale	Each of the five islands requires reliable sources of information for visitors to support their experience during the pre-planning phase, when arriving on-island, with the potential of post-visit follow-up. The communities, separated by water, are not easily accessed from another. The larger islands have multiple points of interest and the overall strategy is to distribute travel away from the overly busy locations (like Ganges) to better manage travel. In addition to the need to serve five, relatively remote, islands, we found success in 2023 taking our 'islands' on the road by sponsoring and participating in Vancouver's East Side Culture Crawl leading up to a Nothing is Everything Gallery Pop-Up in Mount Pleasant. Initial reports include great response and media. A mobile visitor services vehicle would have been the perfect addition to our resources as we worked to manage supplies and props without anywhere to put our stuff!
Action Steps	- gain advice and support from VIU Recreation and Tourism Management - engage a third part to prepare a business plan for mobile and digital visitor services for the Southern Gulf Islands, including Salt Spring. - gather options for digital and mobile hard costs - Build App that serves region and all island (Tofino, Parksville/Qualicum, Campbell River)
Partnerships	Partners include members, Local Tourism Organizations (Chambers of Commerce).
Resources	Recreation and Tourism Management VIU (Jenn Houtby-Ferguson)
Funding Sources	- MRDT - Coop Program
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?)

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	