

Resort Development Strategy 2022/23 – 2024/25

Guide for Communities

Resort Municipality Initiative
Ministry of Tourism, Arts, Culture & Sport



Preface

The purpose of this guide is to provide a description of the components that must be included in a Resort Development Strategy (RDS). The RDS is a requirement of the Resort Municipality Initiative (RMI). All RMI communities must develop and receive Ministry approval of a three-year RDS for the 2022/23 - 2024/25 program term.

The objectives of the RMI are to:

- support small tourism-based resort communities build and diversify their tourism infrastructure;
- deliver exceptional visitor experiences; and
- incorporate sustainable tourism practices and products.

The RMI supports resort communities in proactively planning for tourism development and long-term resiliency to ensure they are equipped with the necessary tools to meet the unique demands they face. The RMI supports sustainable growth practices that respect the environment, honour community members and showcase B.C.'s rich cultural history.

A community's RDS must identify the long-term vision for the community and what they plan to do to achieve the RMI outcomes. The intended outcomes of the program are to:

- Extend or diversify communities' tourism season;
- Increase visitation;
- Improve the sustainability of the tourism sector; and
- Enhance the visitor experience.

The RDS should have strong community support and outline how RMI projects align with the community's overall development goals. Consultation with community and tourism partners is required in the development of the RDS and identification of RMI projects. Local tourism partners must have an opportunity to influence and agree on priorities and the projects that are included in the RDS. All projects identified in the RDS must align with the RMI program's spending parameters and the broader BC Government priorities including:

- [Strategic Framework for Tourism in BC 2022-2024](#)
- [Local and Regional Destination Development Strategies](#)
- [StrongerBC Economic Plan](#)
- [CleanBC](#)
- [Diversity & Inclusion](#)

The Province is committed to support Indigenous tourism development as a vehicle for Indigenous community and Provincial development in the spirit of reconciliation as outlined in the [Indigenous Tourism Accord](#).

Each RMI community must clearly demonstrate how they are supporting reconciliation through the projects and goals outlined in their RDS.

RDS Overview – Checklist:

The RDS should be a concise and succinct document, no longer than 20 pages in length, relative to the size of the municipality, the number of projects and community’s goals.

Your RDS must include the following components, each of which are described in this guide:

| | |
|---|---|
| ✓ | Background Section |
| ✓ | Community’s tourism-related vision and goals |
| ✓ | Details of community consultation |
| ✓ | Letters of support from key community partners |
| ✓ | Linkages to other community plans |
| ✓ | RMI Project Overview |
| ✓ | Three-year RMI Financial Plan |
| ✓ | Performance Measurement Approach |

Background

In this section, please provide a brief context for your municipality (approximately one page). This can include a short overview of the community, geographic description, population information, and a summary of the main attractions, activities, and other high-level tourism supports (e.g., airport, highway, substantial accommodation providers, etc.). The background section can also include a short assessment of external trends that provide context for interpreting impacts of the RMI, such as the strengths, weaknesses, opportunities, and challenges confronting the community in developing the resort economy. If applicable, the community should include a summary of previous RMI investments and what has been achieved.

1. Vision

This section must identify a long-term tourism vision for the development of the resort community. A vision is focused on the future and is something to be pursued. What will your community’s tourism sector look like in the future?

2. Goals

Goals must be included in the RDS, as they are critical in achieving a vision. Goals should be specific, measurable, and realistic, and they should connect to the outcomes of the program.

Examples of goals that could be used in an RDS include:

- Extend tourism season by x
- Increase visitor traffic by x
- Increase repeat visitation by x
- Increase employment in community by x
- Increase number of accessible/barrier free amenities by x
- Increase sustainable tourism practices by x
- Increase visitor satisfaction by x

Goals should be assessed on a regular basis (at least annually in annual reports) to ensure that the RDS is on track. **Performance measurement is a key component of program evaluation and reporting for the RMI. Progress on these goals will need to be included in the community’s annual RMI report.**

3. Community Consultation

Consultation with community and tourism partners is required in the development of the RDS and identification of RMI projects. The RDS must provide the details of the consultations and demonstrate strong community and partner support. Please attach letters of support as an appendix to your RDS.

Community and partner consultations must include:

- Local governments, First Nations and/or Tribal Councils;
- Destination Marketing Organizations (DMO) – DMOs are a key resource in identifying projects that will increase visitation and enhance the visitor experience. A strong connection between the RMI and MRDT program is of strategic benefit. Communities should look for opportunities to collaborate with their DMO's on a regular basis;
- Residents (example: Town hall Meeting or making draft RMI plans available online);
- Emergency service providers (when proposing emergency and disaster preparedness projects);
- Landowner (if private land is to be used, land acquisition/access must be obtained prior to inclusion of the project in the RDS); and
- Environmental/conservation groups or organizations.

Where appropriate, consultations should also include:

- Ski resort(s), major attraction(s) and outdoor recreation organizations;
- Hospitality sector; and
- Local chamber of commerce.

4. Linkages to Other Plans

Wherever possible, the RDS should identify linkages to, and be consistent with, key municipal, regional and provincial policy, and planning documents. These plans include, but are not limited to:

- Official Community Plan
- MRDT Tactical plans (RMI and MRDT should be complimentary, not duplicative)
- [Strategic Framework for Tourism in BC 2022-2024](#)
- [Local and Regional Destination Development Strategies](#)
- [Indigenous Tourism Accord](#)
- [CleanBC: Roadmap to 2030](#)
- [Diversity & Inclusion](#)

5. RMI Objectives

The RMI supports three program objectives (below). These objectives should guide a community's use of RMI funds and offer communities the flexibility to use funding to address the specific challenges in their communities.

The RMI is primarily a tourism infrastructure program; however, communities are also able to undertake tourism-related services, programs, or events. Communities should incorporate accessibility and sustainable tourism products and/or practices and support local Indigenous tourism development, where possible. Sustainable tourism supports year-round destination development and forward-looking practices, assists the community in recovering from natural events, supports socio-cultural development and

considers visitor impact on the destination.

1. Develop and/or enhance tourism infrastructure and amenities

- › Develop, enhance, or diversify tourism-related infrastructure and amenities to attract visitors, encourage longer stays or broaden the appeal of the resort community beyond its main draw or season to support year-round visitation.
- › Ensure or improve accessibility to tourism infrastructure and amenities (barrier free access for visitors of all ages and abilities).

2. Deliver remarkable visitor experiences

- › Deliver accessible tourism-related services, programs or events that will contribute to a positive visitor experience and/or showcase local and Indigenous cultural tourism.
- › Develop and deliver programs to attract and retain labour to improve tourism businesses' operations and the visitor experience.

3. Implement sustainable tourism projects and initiatives

- › Implement sustainability projects that minimize tourism impacts, mitigate climate change, and strengthen or restore our natural environment and communities.
- › Increase awareness of sustainable practices and influence responsible tourism from visitors.
- › Develop plans and mechanisms to ensure the local tourism industry is well positioned to respond to and recover from natural events, such as floods and fires.

6. RMI Project Overview

1. Eligible Use of RMI Funds

Communities must ensure all RMI funded projects meet the following criteria:

- The project must have a direct connection to tourism (i.e., spending should contribute to an increase in local tourism revenue and visitation, encourage year-round visitation, improve visitor experience and or support long term resiliency of community tourism);
- The program or project must be predominantly targeted to or used by visitors, not residents;
- The program or project must be supported by the community (i.e., tourism industry partners and residents);
- The project must be within the program's spending limits (Section 6.2); and,
- The program or project should not be a general municipal expense (e.g., maintenance of municipal facilities or lands, transit services, policing services, etc.).

Projects will be deemed ineligible if:

- The project primarily benefits community residents rather than visitors to the community;
- The project is part of regular community servicing such as policing, fire, water or community recreation facilities for resident use;
- The project is primarily tourism marketing that could be undertaken with MRDT funding;
- The project is not linked to some aspect of the RMI program objectives;
- The project is not supported by tourism industry partners; and,
- The project is primarily comprised of preliminary project activities (i.e., project bids, strategy development, design, or planning).

2. RMI Spending Limits

Communities must ensure all RMI funded projects meet the following spending limits:

| RMI Category | Spending Limit |
|---|------------------------------|
| Tourism Infrastructure, Capital, or Amenities | Minimum 70% over three years |
| Tourism Programs, Services, or Events | Maximum 30% over three years |
| Program Administration | Up to \$20,000 per year |

3. RMI Core Projects

Communities should ensure the following core RMI projects are considered and included in the RDS.

The table provides details on core eligible RMI projects within each category. These core projects include the main elements that are typically expected in a resort destination. Communities should identify projects, plan, and prioritize spending based on these main elements.

| Core RMI Projects |
|--|
| <p>Tourism Infrastructure, Amenities, or Capital</p> <p>Infrastructure projects may include the construction or modification of tourism facilities and amenities such as buildings, trails, beaches, streetscape improvements, signs, or parks. This may include enhancement, accessibility upgrades or restorative maintenance such as renewal, repairs, or updates. All projects must be visitor-focused and should include accessibility and sustainability elements wherever possible.</p> <p>Note: Up to 15% of project RMI spending can be allocated to preliminary project activities (i.e., project bids, strategy development, design or planning).</p> |
| <p>Core projects are:</p> <ol style="list-style-type: none"> 1. Tourism amenities, infrastructure, or capital purchases 2. Beautification and streetscape improvements 3. Visitor signage 4. Visitor-related accessibility improvements 5. Climate mitigation projects (i.e., electric vehicle charging station, low energy lighting, biodegradable products, etc.) 6. Emergency preparedness capital projects (i.e., evacuation routes, signage, safety kiosks, etc.) 7. Visitor impact mitigation or restoration projects |
| <p>Tourism-related Programs, Services, or Events</p> <ol style="list-style-type: none"> 1. Programs (i.e., tourism employment attraction/retention projects, Good Host/tourism ambassador programs, arts & culture tours) 2. Services (i.e., tourist shuttle, beach cleaner, trail groomer) 3. Events and Festivals |

4. Visitor awareness initiatives (i.e., “dos and don’ts” guide to encourage/influence responsible visitor behaviour etc.)
5. Emergency preparedness programs (i.e., evacuation planning and information, workshops, education, and training for tourism operators etc.)

Program Administration

1. Program Administration (salaries related to the management of RMI funds)
2. Travel to the Spring Resort Collaborative Committee meeting
3. Performance Measurement (data collection to monitor community support, visitor satisfaction, and tourism growth)

4. RMI Project Overview

The RDS must include a Project Overview for each project. A Project Overview template will be included in the RDS Package provided.

The Project Overview must include:

- Details on how the project supports to the objectives and outcomes of the RMI
- Links to the community’s goals and vision
- Estimated project costs and detailed project works
- Project lead and timelines
- A list of other funding sources such as municipal funding, other provincial funding, etc.

Each project overview must also identify what performance metric will be used and reported on to measure the project’s achievement of RMI outcomes.

Note:

- Projects must meet the program’s eligibility criteria and the RMI spending parameters outlined in subsections 1 & 2 of Section 6
- Wherever possible, communities should incorporate accessibility and sustainable tourism products and/or practices and support local Indigenous tourism development.
- Where applicable, projects from a community’s previous RDS may continue into the new RDS; however, a Project Overview with detailed project works is required for each continued project.
- No new projects utilizing RMI funds should be started until approved by the Ministry.

5. RMI Carry-Over Projects

The completed Project Overview documents must also clearly indicate all projects that are being carried over from the previous RDS. Any project that was not marked as completed in the 2021 Q4 Financial Report must be included here.

As per the section below, all RMI funds must be expended within 2 years of being issued. Likewise, all projects listed in the 2021-2023 RDS must be completed within 2 years, by the end of 2023. Please reflect these timelines in your project outlines.

7. Three-Year Financial Plan

A Three-Year Financial Plan must be submitted with the RDS. A Three-Year Financial Plan template has been included within the RDS package provided.

The Three-Year Financial Plan must include the following:

- Projected RMI funding allocations for each proposed project (note – costs should be net of any rebate the community may receive such as a GST rebate);
- Carryover from the previous RDS (where applicable);
- Carryover from year to year; and,
- Interest earned on carryover.

Note – Carryover:

- The Ministry requires that **RMI funding be expended within two calendar years of being issued.** Any funds being carried over from the 2019-2021 cycle must be identified as carry-over in the financial plan and listed separately from the 2022-2024 funds.
- Any projects identified in your previous 2019-2021 RDS that were not completed must be completed no later than December 31, 2023.
- Interest earned on any carryover must be accounted for and included in the subsequent year's available RMI funding.

8. Performance Measurement Approach

As the RDS is developed, consideration must be given to performance measurement. Each Project Overview must link to at least one of the program's outcomes and include details on performance measurement for the project. Below are the RMI program outcomes and examples of possible performance measurements that can be used.

| RMI Outcome | Performance Measurement |
|--|---|
| Extend and/or diversify communities' tourism season | Changes in MRDT revenues, room stays or tax revenues that demonstrate growth in the shoulder or off season; increased employment in the shoulder/off seasons. |
| Increase new visitation and/or return visitation | Visitation numbers by community, visitor centre, hotel reporting etc.; average length of stay data; visitor spending data. |
| Improve accessibility, sustainability, and/or Indigenous Tourism | Number of environmental certifications for tourism businesses; waste reduction data; carbon footprint data. |
| Enhance visitor experience | Visitor survey data; tourism employment data. |

Note:

- RMI program staff will be contacting those communities who receive annual allocations of \$500,000 or more, to provide more robust data to support program performance metrics, such as resident sentiment, visitation, and visitor spending.

- All communities will be required to track progress by submitting bi-annual financial reports and a detailed annual report. Assessing progress annually will ensure that the RDS is on track and RMI funding is being put to best use in the community.
- A community may allocate up to \$20,000 in RMI funding per year for Program Administration (including performance measurement).
- Additionally, communities will each be responsible for providing their own metrics that align with their specific goals.

9. Funding Requirements

To continue participating in the RMI, a community commits to several conditions including:

- RMI funds may only be used for approved projects in the RDS or Project Amendment;
- The community must continue to levy the MRDT for marketing and promotion purposes and review RMI and MRDT spending plans to ensure they are complementary, not duplicative;
- The community must continue to involve the tourism sector in planning and development processes;
- Bi-annual Financial Reports and an Annual Report must be submitted; and,
- The community must adhere to contractual program communication requirements by ensuring the Province is aware of and involved in project announcements and communication products such as press releases, websites, or promotional material; acknowledging the Province's support of RMI-funded projects; and ensuring signage at physical locations of RMI projects.

Full details of these requirements are stipulated in the annual Shared Cost Arrangement (contract) that each community signs with the Province.

10. Approval Process and Timelines

Approval Process:

1. In late March 2022, the Ministry will provide finalized RMI allocations for 2022 to each community.
2. By April 30, 2022, please send your draft RDS to Dawn Rueckl, Ministry of Tourism, Arts, Culture & Sport at dawn.rueckl@gov.bc.ca.
3. The Ministry will review the draft RDS and provide feedback to the community.
4. Once the RDS satisfies RMI program requirements, the Ministry will notify the community.
5. Local council approval (as required).
6. Final RDS submitted to the Ministry.

Timelines:

- The Ministry will provide 2022 RMI allocations in **late March 2022**.
- A draft RDS, with your projected RMI allocations, must be submitted to the Ministry no later than **April 30, 2022** (note: drafts are encouraged before this date if available).
- The Ministry will review and provide comments in **May 2022**.
- Your RDS should be complete, reviewed and approved by the Ministry by **June 30, 2022**.
- Funding allocations for the 2022/23 year will be distributed in **July 2022**.