

Nova Scotia Tourism Agency
Department of Economic and Rural Development and Tourism
Statement of Mandate 2015-16

Message from the Minister and the CEO

As Nova Scotia's leading source of service sector exports, tourism employs 24,000 people. That's one in twenty employed Nova Scotians in communities across the province. There is no doubt that tourism is a key economic driver in the province and growing this industry is good for everyone.

The Nova Scotia Tourism Agency (NSTA) was created in 2012 as a special operating agency to work with industry to grow tourism in Nova Scotia, and in this short time there has been progress. In 2013 the agency launched a five-year strategy that was supported by government, industry and tourism stakeholders across the province. In fact, the *Now or Never* report released in February 2014 identified this strategy as one of seven exemplary initiatives.

When the *Now or Never* report also recognized the importance of tourism in Nova Scotia and its role in our economy. To this end, a very specific goal for tourism growth was identified – double revenues in 10 years to approximately \$4 billion annually.

In response to this report, and the wishes of the tourism industry, the NSTA will transform into a private-sector-led Crown corporation effective April 1st, 2015. We believe this makes good business sense as it will allow the agency to respond more quickly to the needs of industry and to focus on the things it can do most effectively.

As the agency transitions to a Crown corporation it will continue to implement its long-term tourism strategy to attract more high value visitors to Nova Scotia as well as refine the strategy to meet the challenging oneNS goal. This will mean investing in markets that are farther away, like western and central Canada, northeastern United States and western Europe, as well as newer markets like China. It also means aligning resources with strategic objectives while making evidence-based decisions. The NSTA will continue to implement its strategy, monitor the province's tourism performance and report back to Nova Scotians as it moves forward.

To achieve our goal of growing tourism in Nova Scotia we will all need to work together. Now we need to get started.

Michel P. Samson
Minister
Economic and Rural Development and Tourism

Patrick Sullivan
CEO
Nova Scotia Tourism Agency

Mandate

The NSTA was established to facilitate greater collaboration between industry and government in developing a more innovative and globally competitive approach to tourism.

Vision

In collaboration with industry we will create a vibrant visitor economy, doubling revenues to \$4 billion by 2024. This will be supported by Nova Scotians through increased understanding of the value of tourism and their role in supporting it.

Mission

The NSTA will work with industry to attract more high value visitors who stay longer and spend more. This will lead to increased revenue and industry profitability for the benefit of all Nova Scotians.

Strategic Outcomes and Supporting Government Priorities

Tourism Matters

Tourism in Nova Scotia is a \$2 billion industry, employing 24,000 Nova Scotians in every region of the province. This is about 1 in 20 people who work in Nova Scotia. It is a key source of pride, supporting families and local economies all across Nova Scotia. It plays a particularly significant role in rural economies, and many residents depend on the industry for jobs and the generated revenue to keep their communities strong. Growing this industry is good for the economy. It's good for everyone.

The NSTA was established to facilitate greater collaboration between industry and government. In 2015 it will transition to a Crown corporation. This governance model will enable more strategic decision-making under the direction of an industry-led board guided by the long-term strategy. In 2013 the NSTA launched a 5-year strategy following province-wide consultations. This strategy was endorsed by government, industry and tourism stakeholders, and was identified as one of seven exemplary initiatives in the *Now or Never* report.

The *Now or Never* report also sets out a very specific goal for tourism – double tourism revenues to \$4 billion in 10 years. Our current strategy will get us part of the way there but we must refine our focus if we are to meet this challenging goal.

NSTA Strategic Plan

The NSTA will continue to implement our five-year, long-term tourism strategy to attract more high value visitors to Nova Scotia as well as refine this strategy to meet the challenging oneNS goal. This means clarifying roles and responsibilities, and aligning resources with strategic objectives. The change to a Crown corporation is one step in this process.

To attract more high value visitors who stay longer and spend more we will need to take a hard look at how we do things. In 2015, we will focus on world-class experiences and work with the private sector to support initiatives that attract these visitors. We will need to reduce duplication and re-align our resources against our strategic outcomes. We also have to make strategic investments. By making evidence-based decisions and leveraging existing funds we can grow Nova Scotia's economy.

NSTA Strategic Outcomes

1. Significant growth in tourism revenues by attracting more, higher value visitors.
2. Increased Nova Scotia brand recognition in our key markets.

3. Influence pride in what Nova Scotia offers to visitors resulting in Nova Scotians adopting a more visitor-focused mindset.

All of our efforts will be informed by our five pillars for growth:

1. Leadership and collaboration – We will work to shift the mindset of Nova Scotians to a more visitor-focused approach and to build pride in the value of the visitor economy.
2. Inspirational, strategic marketing – We will develop a compelling Nova Scotia tourism brand and campaign that creates an emotional connection with potential visitors, differentiates Nova Scotia from its competitors, and aligns with the overall provincial brand.
3. Evidence-based decision-making – Research will be at the core of all our strategic decision-making. We will capture and interpret marketing intelligence to invest in the best opportunities for the most profit and economic impact. As we continue to implement our strategy, we will monitor the province's tourism performance and report progress to Nova Scotians as we move forward.
4. Higher-quality product and experiences – To inspire and motivate high value visitors to travel to Nova Scotia while meeting visitor expectations, we will raise the bar on the product and experience offerings. Development will focus resources on enhancing the quality of products and experiences at iconic destinations that attract visitors from our high-yield markets.
5. Improved access to Nova Scotia and throughout the province – We will actively support initiatives that bring new visitors through all modes of transportation and improve the visitor experience while travelling throughout the province.

NSTA Supports Government's Priorities

Through the strategic priorities outlined, and the focus on the pillars for growth, we will achieve our goal of a more vibrant, profitable industry that brings more visitors to the province and allows tourism businesses to thrive on the world stage.

Our success plays an important role in contributing to Government's overall objectives for Nova Scotia. In 2015, Government has identified four areas of focus – fiscal, economy, education and demographics (FEED). NSTA's work in 2015 will primarily impact three of these strategic areas – fiscal, economy and demographics.

The NSTA will support government's **fiscal** strategic priority by realigning its resources to reduce duplication and improve efficiency and return on investment. To do this, NSTA will make evidenced- based decisions.

The NSTA will support government's **economic** strategic priority by working with industry and stakeholders to create a climate for private sector growth. Success in this area will result in more jobs for Nova Scotians all across the province. It will also contribute to government's commitment to grow the value of exports as the majority of tourism revenues are export dollars.

The NSTA will support government's **demographic** strategic priority by growing the economy in communities all across the province. This growth will impact workforce participation and community well-being.

Performance Measures

Outcome

Significant growth in tourism revenues by attracting more, higher value visitors.

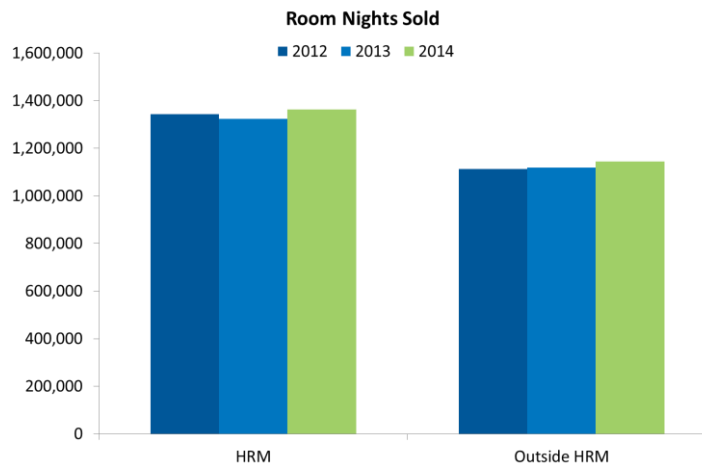
While tourism activity depends on a variety of external factors such as weather, economic conditions, and exchange rates that are outside the control of the NSTA and the tourism industry, the NSTA seeks to attract more high value visitors to Nova Scotia through marketing initiatives in key markets. Once here, the NSTA hopes visitors will travel throughout the province, experiencing iconic attractions and staying in paid accommodations.

The number of visitors and accommodations activity is linked. An increase in visitors is typically positive; however, visitors who spend more money and stay longer are of even greater benefit to the tourism industry.

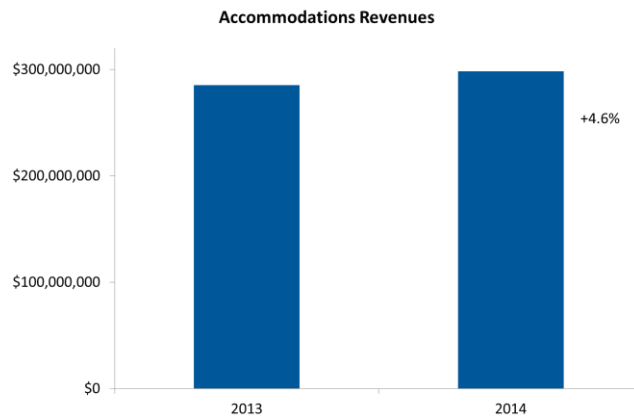
Measure

Accommodations: Room nights sold and accommodations revenue estimates are a proxy for tourism activity/revenue in the regions of the province.

Data



In 2014, the NSTA introduced a new tourism performance indicator, accommodations revenues. In 2014, accommodations revenues increased by 4.6% compared to 2013.



Target

1. Increase revenues by 4% in each year of the strategy.
2. At minimum, maintain room nights sold outside of Halifax to 2012 levels.

**Strategic
Actions to
Achieve
Targets**

Build air access.

Build stronger relationships with the travel trade from our key markets, i.e. attend international trade shows and host the *Canada Specialist Mega Fam* 2015.

Leverage information from the 2015 Visitor Exit Survey to profile visitors with higher revenue potential.

Make iconic product more accessible, and develop and promote more high-quality experiences. Areas of focus for 2015 include culinary, cycling, major events and golf.

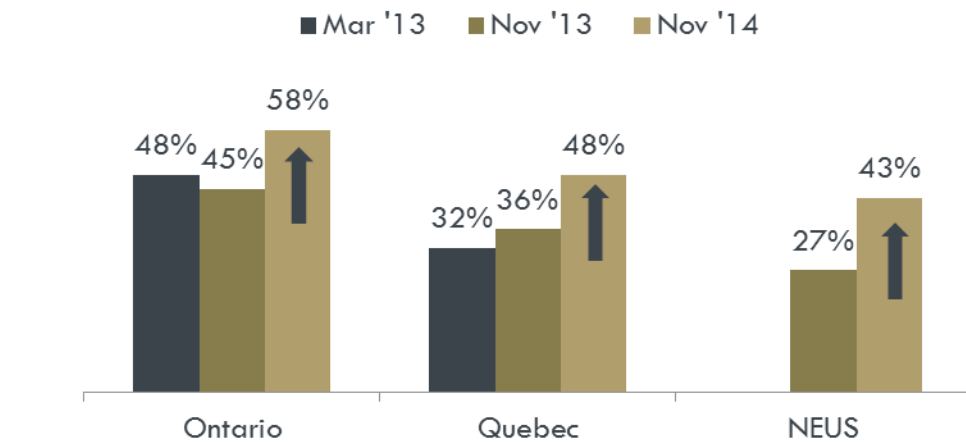
Outcome Increased Nova Scotia brand recognition in our key markets.

The NSTA is monitoring brand health in the key markets of Ontario, Quebec and New England/Mid-Atlantic United States.

Measure The Brand Health Monitor measures awareness and appeal of Nova Scotia as a vacation destination, and key Nova Scotia tourism brand attributes over time. Annual surveys in Ontario and Quebec and New England/Maine are conducted to measure overall Nova Scotia tourism brand health.

Data Rating of Nova Scotia as a Vacation Destination (% offering a rating of 8, 9, or 10 on a 10-point scale).

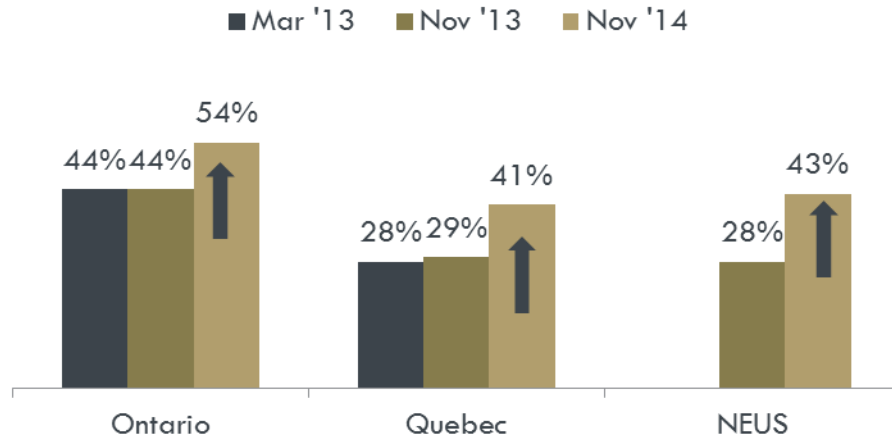
**Nova Scotia as a Vacation Destination
- TOP 3 BOXES (% 8, 9 or 10) BY WAVE -**



Note: NEUS - Northeastern US

Interest in visiting Nova Scotia (% offering rating of 8, 9, or 10 on a 10-point scale)

**Interest in Visiting Nova Scotia
- TOP 3 BOXES (% 8, 9 or 10) BY WAVE -**



Targets

Over time, the NSTA seeks to improve perceptions of the province as a vacation destination, and increase interest in and motivation to travel to Nova Scotia.

**Strategic
Actions to
Achieve Target**

To achieve this, the NSTA will continue to implement a compelling tourism brand and multi-year campaigns (*Take yourself there*) that resonates with leisure travellers from all key markets.

Refine the Nova Scotia brand for consistency and enhancing synergy between our digital media and creative messaging to align with persona-based travel decision journeys.

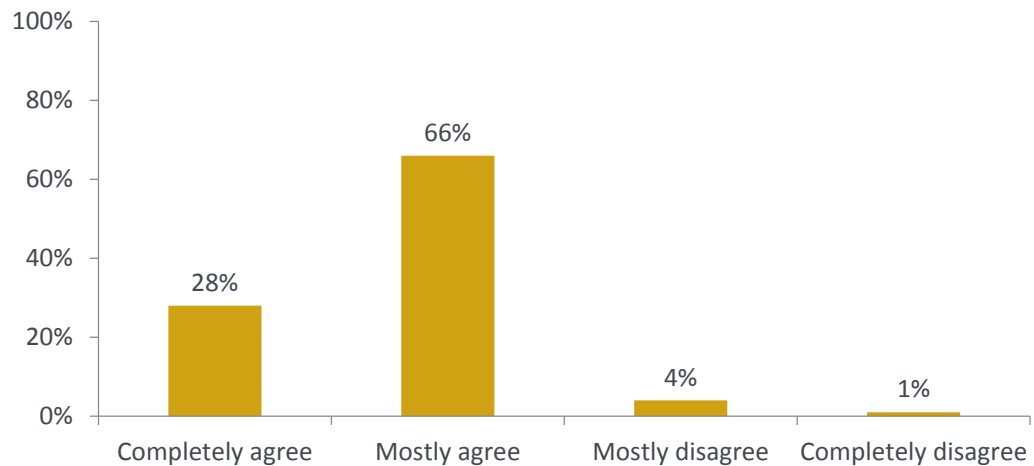
Develop and implement content and digital strategies to continually enhance novascotia.com, the NSTA's core marketing platform. For 2015, the NSTA will form a new strategic partnership with the Canadian Tourism Commission and Google.

Outcome Influence pride in what Nova Scotia offers to visitors resulting in Nova Scotians adopting a more visitor-focused mindset.

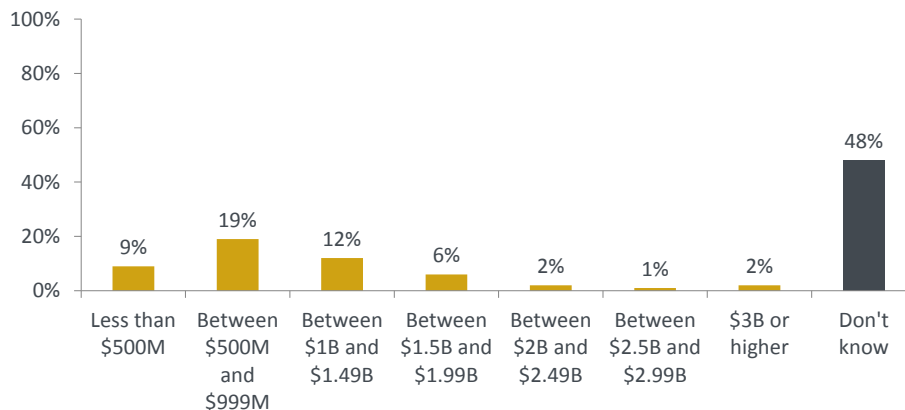
Growing this industry will benefit and impact everyone, and having a supportive population will provide a positive environment for industry growth. As Nova Scotia's leading source of service sector exports there is no doubt tourism is important to our province's economic future. It employs 24,000 people all across the province.

Measure In 2014 we polled Nova Scotians about the importance of tourism to our province. The results will provide a benchmark for moving forward.

Data Level of agreement with statement: I am proud of what Nova Scotia offers to visitors.



To the best of your knowledge, how much does the Nova Scotia tourism industry contribute to the Nova Scotia economy each year? (Response categories provided)



Targets	<ol style="list-style-type: none"> 1. Increase the percentage of Nova Scotians that completely agree they are proud of what Nova Scotia offers to visitors. 2. More Nova Scotians understand the economic contribution of the tourism industry.
Strategic Actions to Achieve Target	<p>Promote the value of tourism through a strong communication plan and thought leadership opportunities.</p> <p>Offer more professional development opportunities for industry. We will take our InnovatioNS Days on the road to five locations across the province and partner with schools like the Nova Scotia Community College and the Bonavista Institute for Cultural Tourism.</p> <p>Deliver consistent, relevant reporting to industry and Nova Scotians such as monthly statistics updates for visitation by mode and origin and accommodations statistics by region.</p> <p>Continue to support product development through our funding programs.</p>

Appendix C

Budget Context Chart Template

The budget for the Nova Scotia Tourism Agency appears under the budget for Economic and Rural Development and Tourism in the department's 2014-15 Statement of Mandate.