

POLICY BRIEF:

THE IMPORTANCE OF VISITOR BASED ASSESSMENTS TO CANADA'S ECONOMY



Destination organizations are committed to advancing the cause of tourism in their communities. They are enabled by Visitor Based Assessment (VBA) funding mechanisms.

Destination organizations in Canada have a critical role to play in stimulating economies and influencing positive change. They are catalysts to help their communities grow trade and foreign exchange, increase investment in new infrastructure, create jobs, build knowledge and generate earnings. Visitor Based Assessments enable destination organizations to do this work.

1

At least 250 community-based destination organizations exist in every corner of Canada, bringing together stakeholders to grow the visitor economies in their cities, regions and towns and to help their communities succeed in the intensely competitive world of tourism.

2

More than two-thirds of destination organizations are funded, wholly or in part, by Visitor Base Assessments (VBAs) which are collected from visitors as a user-pay system.

3

Community-based destination organizations pool resources including VBA funds to provide the economies of scale and marketing infrastructure required to generate impact.

They are directly responsible for generating a significant portion of tourism GDP and taxes in their regions, supporting small and medium businesses and their employees. VBAs are needed to remain competitive with other destinations globally.

4


Destination organizations invest VBA funds to not only generate economic returns but also stimulate social and cultural benefits, while working to mitigate environmental impacts. They strive to ensure local values are reflected in visitor experiences.

5

VBAs are reliable, success-based models which provide an incentive for destinations to innovate and grow revenues for the benefit of their communities. They can also assist lesser-recognized areas of tourism to access funding opportunities, allowing for growth and development in those areas.



RICHMOND, BC CANADA

 Tourism Richmond

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VBA are used to attract visitors whose spending generates government revenue, thereby reducing the tax burden from residents.

The government revenue helps pay for amenities and improve quality of life. They help achieve community aspirations, such as:

- Tourism jobs for youth to build skills and careers that can stay in the community
- Increase community appeal for attracting new businesses and residents
- Increasing sense of pride in where people live
- Keeping restaurants/businesses open during slower periods of the year
- Increasing community vibrancy and downtown appeal, or protecting cultural sites and natural places, or offsetting the costs for theatres and museums
- Strengthening benefits for Indigenous businesses, entrepreneurs and communities and supporting reconciliation
- Better managing visitors to a destination by proactively responding to local pressures

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In addition to attracting leisure visitors, VBAs are invested by destination organizations to attract business events,

such as regional, national, and international conferences and sports events. Hosting these events delivers community and social benefits leading to long-term legacy impacts such as:

- Improved health care (e.g., cancer research association meeting)
- Enhanced quality of life (e.g., academic education meeting)
- Increased investment (e.g., domestic and international investors and buyers at a trade show)
- Enhanced environmental sustainability (e.g., clean energy conference)
- Improved physical participation (e.g., hosting a sport event)
- Raise profile and reputation of local/national academia (e.g., research learnings from a scientific conference)
- New talent and business attraction (e.g., communities and governments targeting key sectors)

WHO WE ARE



DESTINATIONS INTERNATIONAL (DI)

Destinations International is the global association for destination professionals. We elevate destination organizations by educating, equipping, empowering and connecting our members to better fulfill their missions and achieve positive results around the world.



THE CANADIAN LEADERSHIP COUNCIL (CDLC)

The Canadian Destination Leadership Council is a standing committee of Destinations International that consists of the chief executive of each of DI's Canadian destination members. The CDLC provides a forum for Canadian destination organization executives to meet regularly throughout the year to coordinate on key industry issues including advocacy, resourcing, policy, and marketing. As of 2025, the CDLC represents approximately 70 Canadian destinations across the country.

VIEW THE FULL REPORT



destinationsinternational.org/reports/canadian-visitor-based-assessment-study

VANCOUVER, BC CANADA

Destination Vancouver