DESTINATIONS INTERNATIONAL
CANADIAN DESTINATION LEADERSHIP COUNCIL

TURNING TOURISM INTO TRADE

THE IMPACT OF THE VISITOR ECONOMY ON CANADIAN EXPORTS

KEY FACTS FOR DESTINATION LEADERS AND POLICYMAKERS

A 1% increase in non-resident visits to Canada generates

$1.06 BILLION

in additional export revenues over a two-year period.


LAKE LOUISE, AB CANADA

FOUR WAYS THE VISITOR ECONOMY DRIVES CANADIAN TRADE

1

COMMERCIAL RELATIONSHIPS & TRADE DIVERSIFICATION
International visitor build relationships that lead to long-term trade agreements and commercial engagement.

2

TRADE CORRIDOR DEVELOPMENT
Air service driven by visitor demand establishes trade corridors that enable export industries.

3

BUSINESS EVENTS
Events bring global decision-makers together, creating opportunities for Canadian businesses to showcase innovation, negotiate deals, and form strategic partnerships across sectors.

4

NATIONAL BRAND
Every international visitor experiences Canadian values, which strengthens trust in Canadian products and services abroad and enhances Canada's reputation in global markets.

KEY MESSAGES FOR DESTINATION STAKEHOLDERS

1	The visitor economy is a key enabler of trade and investment outcomes. Canada is engaged in an ongoing national dialogue about competitiveness, productivity, trade diversification, and evolving global market relationships. Too often, the visitor economy is left out of that conversation.
2	This is the latest in a 15-year research lineage. Keum (2011), Poole (2010), Deloitte (2013), and now EY-Parthenon (2026) have all found that inbound visitation drives subsequent export growth.
3	Destination promotion is trade marketing. Visitors from Japan, South Korea, China, and other key markets build the relationships that mature into trade. The visitor economy directly supports Canada's Indo-Pacific Strategy goal of doubling non-US exports.
4	Air route development is dual-purpose investment. Visitor demand creates new air route development and increases export capacity. For example, WestJet's 2024 transpacific expansion to Tokyo and Seoul produced a 60% year-over-year increase in cargo revenue, carrying Canadian goods to export markets.
5	Business events are reverse trade missions. In 2024, Destination Canada's International Convention Attraction Fund (ICAF) secured 21 major events, expected to bring 51,000 delegates and generate $122M in direct spending and facilitated the trade outcomes that follow.
6	Canadian destinations are already turning visitors into investors. A leisure visitor's connection to Cape Breton became a $500M Czech-led resort investment. The Canadian Hydrogen Convention in Edmonton produced MOUs between Canadian ports and Korean cities. The International Seaweed Symposium opened global markets for Vancouver Island producers.
7	Destination organizations belong in trade and economic development conversations. Destination organizations help build the international relationships every export industry depends on.

THE STUDY IS AVAILABLE FROM DESTINATIONS INTERNATIONAL:
destinationsinternational.org/impact-visitor-economy-canadian-exports