



Introducing the Regional 5-Year Tourism Product & Experience Development Framework (2026–2030)

RTO3 - Hamilton Halton Brant is pleased to share the launch of its Regional Tourism Product & Experience Development Framework and Action Plan, a five-year roadmap designed to strengthen tourism experiences, support industry partners, and grow our competitiveness that strengthens the visitor economy across the region.

As the regional tourism organization, Hamilton Halton Brant plays a key role in leading, coordinating, and supporting tourism growth, driving increased visitation, economic activity, and job creation. This work aligns with RTO3's five core tourism pillars: Product Development, Investment Attraction, Workforce Development, Marketing, and Partnerships Funding.

At the heart of this framework is a commitment to enhancing the visitor experience through well-designed, market-ready tourism products that respond to evolving traveller expectations. To support this work, Hamilton Halton Brant engaged BC Hughes Tourism Development, Management, and Marketing, a Canadian tourism consultancy with expertise in destination development, stakeholder engagement, and experience design, to guide the development of the framework through industry research and situational analysis; and in collaboration with regional DMOs and RTO3 staff. Their approach combines industry insight, facilitation expertise, and strategic planning to support actionable, industry-informed outcomes.

A Clear Path Forward

Developed as a priority action from the 2024–2026 RTO3 Regional Tourism Strategy, this framework sets a clear direction for product and experience development from 2026 to 2030. It reflects both the current tourism environment and the unique strengths of Hamilton Halton Brant's diverse destinations.

The framework also aligns with provincial direction outlined in Forward Motion: Ontario's Strategic Playbook - 2025–2030, which emphasizes the importance of product development, capacity building, and investment to support a competitive and sustainable tourism industry.

By aligning with these provincial priorities, Hamilton Halton Brant is positioned to support industry growth through coordinated regional efforts, enhanced collaboration, and the development of market-ready tourism experiences that meet evolving visitor expectations.

Key Goals

The framework is guided by a set of shared goals to:

- Provide focus and direction for regional product development efforts
- Leverage opportunities and address challenges across the region
- Strengthen collaboration between DMOs, operators, and partners
- Build capacity to attract and welcome visitors, as a visitor-ready destination
- Position the region as a leader in innovative tourism experiences

Built with Industry, for Industry

This framework was developed through a collaborative, industry-led process with regional partners to ensure it reflects the needs and opportunities of Hamilton Halton Brant's tourism sector.

Key elements of the process included:

- Interviews with 12 DMO leaders across the region
- Post-interview surveys to capture stakeholder insights on opportunities and challenges
- Interviews with 3 RTO3 staff
- Review of regional, provincial, and national tourism strategies
- Compilation of stakeholder input summaries
- Production of a situation analysis and research summary
- Evaluation of current tourism trends and the regional tourism environment
- Review of DMO strategic documents, focus areas, and ongoing initiatives
- Examination of HHB strategic documentation and product/experience development efforts

The insights gathered through this comprehensive process directly informed the recommendations and actions outlined in the framework, ensuring a plan that is actionable, relevant, and aligned with the region's tourism priorities.

Key Actions for Regional Tourism Development

The framework outlines a clear set of actions to guide implementation and support industry growth:

Strengthening Regional Tourism Assets

- Highlight signature natural assets such as the Grand River and Niagara Escarpment
- Expand cycle activity-based tourism and destination positioning in outdoor adventure
- Grow authentic arts, culture, heritage, culinary, and agritourism experiences
- Foster cross-community collaboration to enhance regional experiences and events

Sustained Investment in Product Development

- Establish annual planning and priority setting for tourism initiatives
- Dedicate resources and funding to support long-term development
- Implement annual work plans with measurable outcomes
- Provide partnership funding to support industry-led initiatives

Collaboration & Partnerships

- Strengthen coordination across DMOs, municipalities, and operators
- Advance key product areas through regional and cross-regional partnerships
- Support ongoing communication and joint planning
- Develop a regional operator database to guide targeted support and growth

Training & Mentorship - Building Industry Capacity

RTO3 - Hamilton Halton Brant is committed to supporting tourism operators through targeted, multi-level training programs designed to meet the needs of businesses at all stages of development. The framework provides one-on-one mentorship to guide the creation and enhancement of market-ready, high-quality visitor experiences, while building industry capacity in sustainability, regenerative tourism, accessibility, and inclusive experience design. Operators will also receive support in strengthening storytelling, packaging, and experience delivery to align with evolving visitor expectations.

Ongoing engagement with industry partners ensures collaboration, trust, and alignment with regional priorities, fostering a stronger, more resilient tourism sector.

What This Means for Regional Partners, Operators, Stakeholders

The Regional Tourism Product & Experience Development Framework provides stronger regional alignment to support collaboration and reduce duplication across DMOs and industry partners. It offers access to dedicated capacity building initiatives, and resources to help operators develop and grow market-ready tourism experiences, while creating new opportunities to collaborate on regional products, itineraries, and events.

Partners will also benefit from better access to data and insights, supporting informed planning, investment decisions, and strategic growth. By providing a clear, coordinated path forward, the framework helps strengthen a sustainable, year-round visitor economy across Hamilton Halton Brant, Six Nations of the Grand River, and Mississaugas of the Credit First Nation.

Supporting Future Growth

The framework reflects a shared vision for the future of tourism in Hamilton Halton Brant, one that is collaborative, experience-driven, and aligned with industry needs. By working together, the region is well positioned to develop compelling tourism experiences that support local businesses, strengthen communities, and attract visitors year-round.

Stay tuned for updates on implementation and ways to participate in the region's tourism development initiatives. For more information on Product and Experience Development programs, reach out to Bev Scott, Manager, Business and Visitor Experience Development at bev.scott@theheartofontario.com