

## CATO members' meeting February 22<sup>nd</sup> 2023

### Attendees Tour Operator Members

Collette, Brett Walker, GM & Int. Ops  
Collette, Ron Lonsdale, VP  
G Adventures, David Green, VP  
Global Family of B., Stéphanie Bishop. MD  
GOWAY, Peter Lacy, CFO  
GOWAY, Emma Cottis, GM Corp. Affairs  
Hola Sun, Hugo Rocha, Sales Director  
HIS Canada H. Inc, Tony Saunders, CFO  
Sunwing, Joanne Dhue Director, C&C  
Transat, Nicole Bursey, Commercial Director  
Railbookers, Cris David, VP  
RIT, Conor Duffy, VP

### Attendees Supporting Members

GMS, Laura Nesteanu, MVP & MD  
GNTO, Anja Brokjans, Director  
IMOT, Gal Hanna, Consul of Tourism Canada  
Softvoyage, Dan Langevin, COO  
Sri Lanka, Chandima kiriwandala, Consul  
Switzerland T., Oliver Weibel, Director  
Tourism Ireland, Sandra Moffatt, Country  
Manager / ETC Chair  
Turismo de Portugal, Ines Almeida Garrett  
Visit Britain, Lynda Falcone, Travel Trade

### Invited Guests

Dominican. Rep., Cosette Garcia, Director  
Uganda Canada Convention, Ronnie Mayanja

### Meeting began 3:00PM

The Chair acknowledged the commitment and ongoing efforts of CATO Executives: David Green, (Vice Chair), Richard Edwards (Treasurer) Nicole Bursey (TICO Director – CATO appointed) and Joanne Dhue (TICO Director – CATO appointed).

### Financial & Membership update

Chair reviewed current finances including current cash balance, AR and expected cash balance by March 15<sup>th</sup>, the deadline for 2023 fees. CATO's cash position is favourable due to its limited expenses. Other than GST/HST and costs for YE review engagement, there are no significant expenses at the current time.

Chair noted that beginning with the 2022 year CATO fees were reduced from what they were previously. See the comparison in fee schedules below:

Levels	2020	2022	2023
Less than \$5M	\$750	\$800	\$800
5M to \$10M	\$1,600	\$800	\$800
\$10M to \$20M	\$2,400	\$2,000	\$2,000
\$20M to \$50M	\$3,200	\$2,000	\$2,000
\$50M to \$100M	\$5,600	\$2,000	\$2,000
Over \$100M	\$8,000	\$2,000	\$2,000

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### **Executive Director recruitment**

Chair noted the executive team had drafted a job description for Executive Director and posted it on various career boards. Membership in turn amplified the post through LinkedIn and other media.

Nicole Bursesey requested the link to the posting be included in the minutes [click here](#).

Chair noted it is a challenging role to fill in light of the demands of the role and the fact it is a part-time position. Despite these facts, there has been considerable interest in the role and from qualified candidates. The Executive team is still in consideration but the intent is to fill the role by end of April.

### **Economic Impact Assessment & report**

Chair noted that CATO commissioned its first-ever economic impact assessment and report in 2021 and had 100% of committed members respond. The executive summary is publically available on CATO's website and the full report is available to members in the Knowledge Library.

Data from the Economic Impact Assessment & report was critical to CATO's advocacy efforts at the time but its relevance is short-lived. The information, while still interesting, does not reflect the current state of the industry.

USTOA undertakes a similar economic impact survey and report every two years, their last one being completed in 2022 and released at the USTOA conference this past fall. Both the questions and the full report have been shared with CATO executive and will be shared with the committee considering CATO's EIA. The importance is not the questions themselves, but whether any data overlay would better serve CATO's purpose as well as better serving both organizations.

For the 2021 EIA and report, CATO requested ATOQ's data contribution and financial support. The reason being to better represent and reflect the tour operator ecosystem in Canada and combined impact. It's not known whether ATOQ or its membership will be willing to contribute and support financially but consideration will have to be given to the comparative nature of the data sets should ATOQ not take part.

Chair commented on a possible perception problem for CATO and its members. The risk is being viewed as simply 'outbound' companies and in competition with domestic tourism. Organizations like TIAC, Tourism HR Canada, Destination Canada and many others are intensely lobbying government for more funding and more support in the development of the Government's Tourism Growth Strategy. TIAC, in particular, is marshalling its members to "make some noise and drive urgency for a significant investment and meaningful policy changes".

What TIAC views as pillars of a meaningful tourism growth strategy are investments in new tourism assets here in Canada, improving visitor access to Canada and making Canada more competitive in the global marketplace. The expressed aims of these organizations suggest a tourism growth strategy for Canada based exclusively on domestic and inbound travel. In this regard, CATO could be viewed as a pariah. Yet, the 2021 EIA stated the significant contribution that CATO members made, not only to domestic tourism (505,648 travellers in 2018) but more broadly the

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economy with over 4,800 employees and total tax contributions of over \$270 million for 2018. We know that any healthy travel and tourism eco-system requires an ebb and flow of travellers. PR as much as GR will be an important part of this year's EIA and report.

Chair proposed a motion: **To proceed with an Economic Impact Assessment & report near YE 2023, dependent on cost and budget approval?**

Motion was passed without objection.

Peter Lacy (CFO, GOWAY) served on the previous EIA committee and agreed to serve on this year's EIA committee. Cris David (VP Railbookers) also offered to serve. Any other CATO members interested in serving please let any of the CATO executive know.

### **Sustainability Committee**

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Emma Cottis (EC Chair) noted the importance of working together on sustainability which is, perhaps more than any other, a collective issue. She requested member representatives present to consider joining the committee as well as thinking of knowledge experts within their respective organizations that would be willing to serve or contribute.

A survey has been created and deployed to members. It was requested that members share the link with others as the more responses received the greater the value, especially if responses include those closer to the subject matter.

Apart from any insights or direction the committee might provide, Emma noted it would be an opportunity to showcase and celebrate any positive effects and /or impacts a particular member or members are making.

It should be noted that Emma Cottis also Chairs USTOA's Sustainability Committee. In its last YE report, USTOA noted "sustainability, as well as diversity, equity, and inclusion" were all prominently featured in its EIA this past year and are key pillars in USTOA's strategic direction for the next 50 years. To learn more [click here](#) .

For anyone that wishes the link to the CATO survey [click here](#) .

### **TICO updates – Chair / Vice Chair**

Chair noted there has been no further communication from either Optimus SBR (a Toronto-based management consulting firm) or TICO regarding the end-to-end review of TICO's current funding framework and compensation fund.

Several requests for a meeting have been sent to Minister Kaleed Rasheed, Minister of Public & Business Service Delivery, from the CATO executive. Apart from one response from his Communications Branch on October 16<sup>th</sup>, 2022, there has been no other response.

A request was also sent to Dr. Michael Bonner, Director of Policy, Public and Business Service Delivery on January 20<sup>th</sup> 2023 and a follow-up on February 17<sup>th</sup>, 2023 without response.

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A request was also sent to Daniel Gordon, Director, Budget and Fiscal Planning, Policy Dept. on January 20<sup>th</sup> 2023 and a follow-up on February 17<sup>th</sup>, 2023 without response.

Chair has had several conversations with Ted Scaldwell, Director, Caucus Relations - Ont. Govt. Ted has been an important conduit for communication and notes the Government is working through its budget at the current time and he has hinted the budget may include elements of consumer protection for the travel & tourism industry. The Chair's presumption is this may be this year's iteration of the Staycation Tax Credit from 2022.

### **Council of Australian Tour Operators MOU – Chair / Vice Chair**

Chair announced the Council of Australian Tour Operators (CATO) has proposed a Memorandum of Understanding with the Canadian Association of Tour Operators (CATO) on a going forward basis. On LinkedIn yesterday (February 23<sup>rd</sup>) the Council of Australia Tour Operators announced a similar partnership with the New Zealand Outbound Travel Suppliers Association (NZOTSA).

Chair noted the MOU will be posted with the meeting minutes on the member's site for anyone that would like to review. The MOU is non-binding and is simply meant to explore, discuss and develop such areas of mutual benefit for members across each organization and the regions in general.

### **Open forum - All members**

There were no other issues raised.

### **Meeting adjourned at 3:45PM**