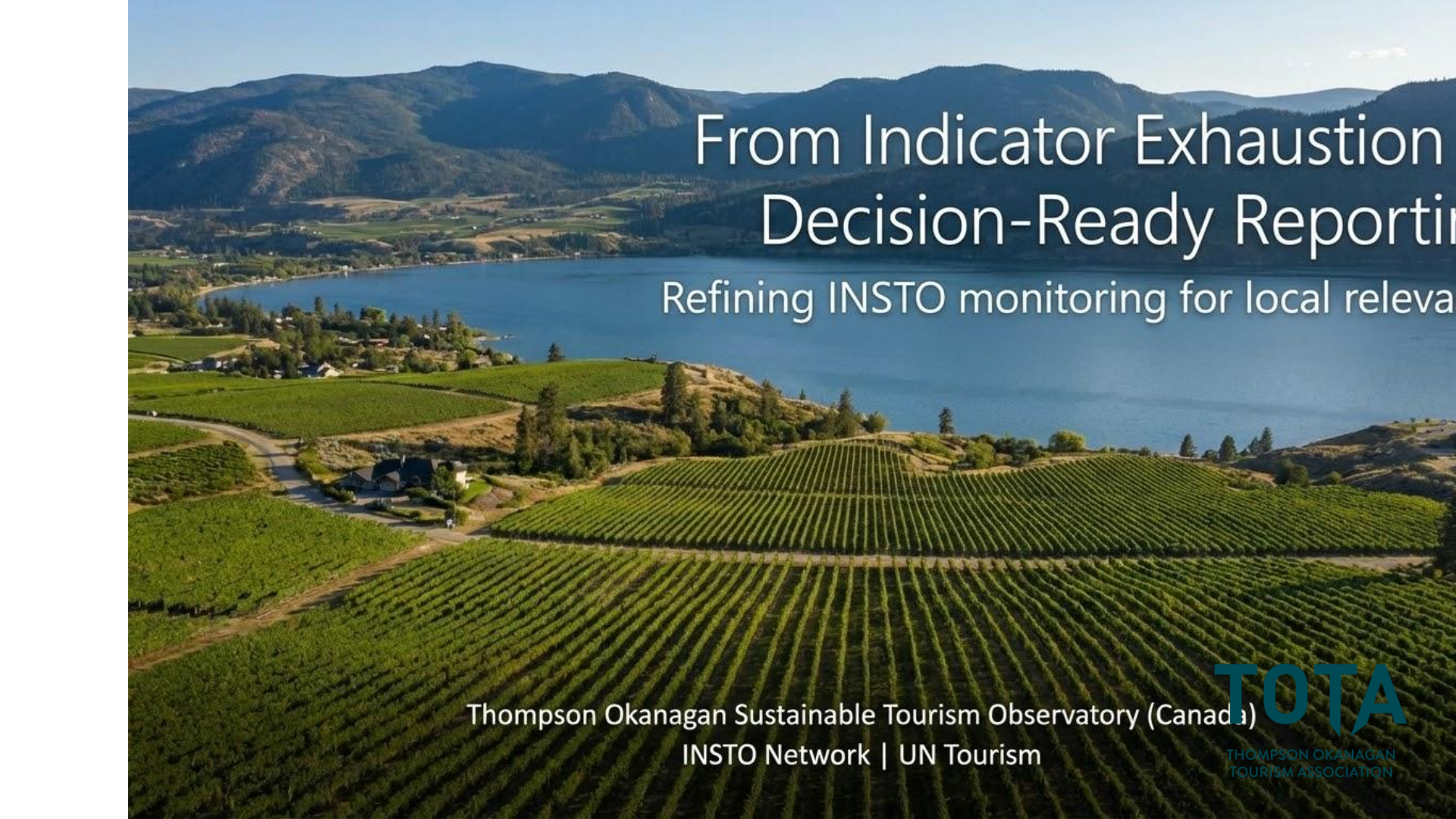




From Indicator Exhaustion Decision-Ready Reporting

Refining INSTO monitoring for local relevance

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TOTA
THOMPSON OKANAGAN
TOURISM ASSOCIATION

About Thompson Okanagan Tourism Association (TOTA)

- Regional Destination Management Organization for the Thompson Okanagan, British Columbia, Canada
- Represents 120+ communities, 37 First Nations, and ~2,100 tourism businesses
- Governed as a not-for-profit society serving regional tourism and community interests

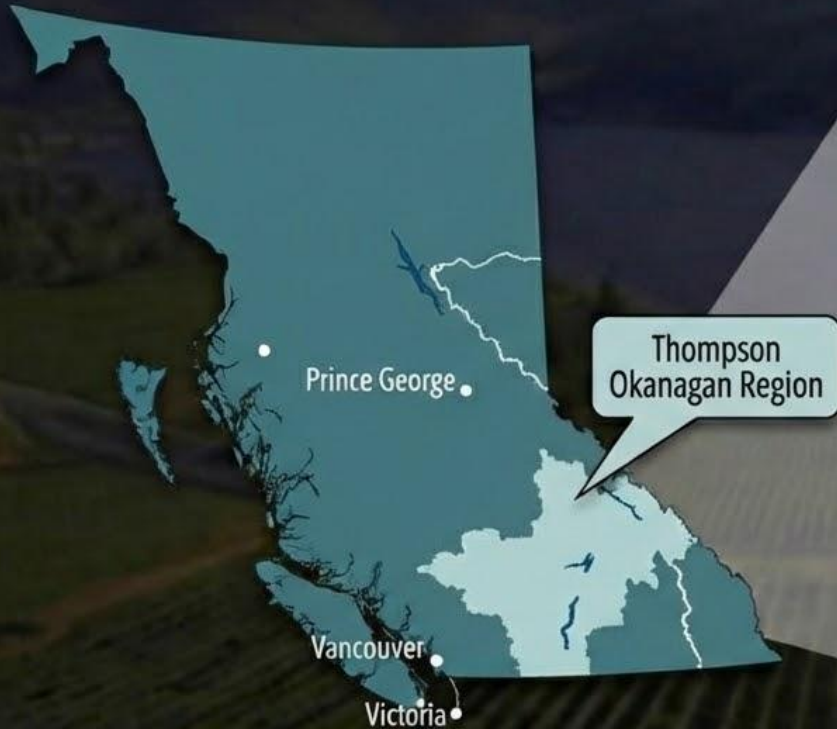
What we do

- Lead destination development and stewardship, not just marketing
- Integrate research, partnerships, and policy advocacy into tourism planning
- Focus on sustainability, climate resilience, accessibility, and Indigenous tourism

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Thompson Okanagan Tourism Region: Location within BC



Region is located in the south-central interior of British Columbia, Canada.



From Indicator Exhaustion to Decision Ready Reporting

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Why This Conversation Matters (INSTO Context)

The shared challenge across INSTO observatories:



Growing
indicator
expectations



Limited
local
capacity



Increasing
demand for
actionable
insights

Key tension:



Global
comparability



local
relevance



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Our Starting Point

TOTA's early INSTO approach:



Broad
coverage
across INSTO
issue areas



Strong
alignment
with SDGs



Comprehensive
annual
reporting

But...



Reports were
increasingly
long



Indicators
were
uneven in
quality



Not all
findings
translated
into decisions

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The Risk We Identified

What happens when we try to monitor everything:



Indicator overload



Thin analysis



Reduced clarity for
stakeholders



Reporting becomes
descriptive, not strategic

Our question became:

Who is this report actually for — and how is it being used?

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The Moment of Reflection

Key realization:

Alignment with global frameworks does not require equal attention to every indicator.

Instead:



Relevance comes from focus



Impact comes from depth



Credibility comes from repeatability

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The Shift in Thinking

From this:

“Can we report on this indicator?”



To this:

“Can we **explain** this indicator — and does it influence **action**?”



This marked the beginning of **methodological refinement**.

What This Looks Like in Practice

Concrete changes:

- Focus on issue areas with most place based relevance
- Fewer indicators per issue area
- Deeper analysis where capacity exists internally or through research partnerships
- Clear acknowledgment of data gaps
 - Evaluate over time the areas where research is sufficiently abundant.
- Stronger narrative connections across sections

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Our Refinement Filter

We began prioritizing indicators that met at least one of these:

- Strong local partnerships behind the data
- Consistent, repeatable data sources
- Clear policy, planning, or management relevance
- Ability to show change over time

Not exclusion — prioritization.

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Example 1: Climate Action & Risk Exposure

Why this indicator is prioritized

- Climate risk is a binding constraint on tourism in Thompson Okanagan
- Strong data partnerships already exist (OBWB, Province, EMCR)
- Clear decision relevance for infrastructure, emergency planning and business disruption

How refinement shows up

Focus on: Mitigation

- Exposure of tourism assets to flood and wildfire risk
- Business exposure to disruptions and revenue loss
- Frequency and severity of extreme events

Less emphasis on:

- Broad regional emissions estimates with limited tourism specificity

Example 2: Indigenous Tourism Indicators

Partnership-led, locally grounded monitoring

Why this matters locally

- Located on the unceded territories of Syilx, Secwépemc, and Nlaka'pamux Nations
- Indigenous tourism supports economic sovereignty, culture, and stewardship

What enables strong measurement

- In-region Indigenous Tourism Specialist
- Partnership with Indigenous Tourism BC (ITBC)
- Alignment with UNDRIP / DRIPA and provincial strategy

Refined indicator focus

- Indigenous-owned tourism businesses
- Business readiness (doors-open → market-ready)
- Employment and economic contribution

Why this works over time

- Trust-based partnerships
- Repeatable data collection
- Long-term trend tracking

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Example 3: Accessibility Indicators

From compliance to lived experience

What enables strong measurement

- Dedicated Access & Inclusion Liaison with lived experience
- Partnerships with adaptive sport, accessibility, and tourism orgs
- Alignment with the Accessible BC Act and 2024 BC Building Code

Refined indicator focus

- Quality of accessible experiences
- Priority access features (mobility, sensory, cognitive)
- On-site audits and consultations

Why this works over time

- Consistent methodology
- Specialist-led assessments
- Measurable improvements across years

What These Examples Have in Common

Our refinement principles in action

Indicators are:



Locally consequential



Supported by partnerships



Capable of informing decisions

Data gaps are:



Explicitly acknowledged



Used to guide future collaboration



Key takeaway for INSTO

Refinement is about choosing where to **go deeper** — not reporting less.



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Maintaining Global Alignment

What we did NOT abandon:



INSTO issue areas



SDG alignment



UN Tourism methodologies



Longitudinal monitoring

What changed:



How intensely each indicator is monitored and communicated.

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Closing Thought: Refinement as a Foundation

Why refinement matters



Focuses monitoring on indicators we can consistently measure over time



Anchors reporting in areas where local relevance and strong partnerships exist



Strengthens our ability to advocate for change that is achievable now

What this enables



Clear, credible trend tracking



Evidence-informed decision-making



Tangible outcomes at the local level

Looking ahead



Refinement creates capacity—not constraint



By focusing on what we can act on today, we build the foundation to expand our monitoring scope in the future.