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FIRST IMPRESSIONS COMMUNITY EXCHANGE TEAM MEMBER'S GUIDE BOOKLET

for Tourism



“Seeing things in a whole new light”

Ministry of Agriculture, Food and Rural Affairs
Rural Development Division

FIRST IMPRESSIONS – Tourism VISITING TEAM MEMBER INFORMATION

You have volunteered to be a member of your community's Visiting Team in a First Impressions **Tourism** Exchange. Thank you for your commitment.

Along with other team members, you will make a short *incognito* visit to a community you are not familiar with. You will record your first impressions of the tourist attractions and services in the community. You are not expected to offer expert advice – you are simply expected to give an outsider's honest viewpoint based on your visit.

Activities during the Visit

While approaching the exchange community, your team will assess the quality of directional signage and gateways/entrances into the community. Each team member will tour the community, interacting with residents and visiting local establishments, including tourist attractions, restaurants, visitor accommodation, retail stores and government offices. During the tour, you will record your observations in this booklet, using the questions provided and take photos to support your observations.

When interacting with residents, you should consider asking some of the following questions:

- “I’ve never been here before. What is there to do?”
- “We have a couple of hours to fill in the area....what would you suggest we do?”
- “Where would you recommend we go for lunch / dinner?”
- “I might bring my family here on our way to a wedding next month. Are there any good places to stay?”

You need to be **discreet** as you record observations and seek out information about the downtown. Before you leave the community, your team should reconvene to see if any additional photos are needed.

By the time you return to your own community you should have filled in all sections of the Questionnaire booklet for the areas you addressed during the assessment. The Coordinator will either collect all completed booklets or facilitate a team discussion to enable members to share their observations and come to agreement on the key messages to be included in the written report and slide presentation.

You may be asked to attend the presentation of your team’s report to the exchange community. This will involve traveling back to the community a few weeks after

your visit and presenting your team's observations at a public gathering.

Time Commitment

There are preparations you will need to make before the visit as well as follow-up reporting tasks.

The pre-visit preparations may take 2 hours of your time. You will need to review the Questionnaire, maps and checklists, and participate in arranging trip logistics. The Coordinator will give you detailed information on meeting spots, things you need to bring along, and will discuss any arrangements for covering costs such as fuel and meals. You will be provided with any necessary equipment, such as pens, a clipboard, a questionnaire booklet and a camera.

Depending on the distance to your exchange community, travel time by car may take up to 2 1/2 hours each way. Typically, the visit itself will take 6-10 hours. The follow-up report writing could take anywhere from 2 hours to 2 days, depending on the length of the report and the number of photos included.

In addition, one or two members of the team with skills and experience in making presentations will be selected to present the results of the team's work to the exchange community within 4-6 weeks of the visit. Providing constructive criticism and praise always requires some diplomacy. Careful attention to the words and phrases

contained in the report is necessary. Preparing for this presentation and going back to the exchange community to present it could add another ½ day to the time commitment.

Depending on your role on the team, your volunteer commitment may range from 1 to 3 working days.

A Learning Opportunity

The exchange element of the First Impressions program is based on the notion that all communities can learn from their peers. A First Impressions visit can give you new insights about your own community.

Tips

- Ø You'll get better information if residents do not know you are assessing their community.
- Ø Try to discover not only their warts, but also the ways in which they shine!
- Ø Feel free to record additional community strengths and weaknesses not included in the questionnaire booklet.
- Ø Appear to be shopping, conducting business, or making a social visit.
- Ø Strike up casual conversations with residents.
- Ø Be observant.
- Ø Have a good time!

About the Questionnaire

Remember to use this questionnaire as a guide. There may be variations to the questions that are more fitting to the community you are visiting.

Where you are asked to rate something, use the following as a guide:

- 1 Needs urgent attention/action
- 2-4 Needs improvement
- 5 Satisfactory
- 6-9 Good/Very Good
- 10 Excellent! You should be telling others about this!

In the spaces provided, give specific (rather than general) comments on both the positive aspects of the community, and areas where you feel changes/ improvements could be made.

Name of Visiting Team Members: _____

Date(s) of Visit: _____

Weather During Visit: _____

Prior to Your Visit

What is your impression of the community before your visit? What are you expecting to see?

Based on the community's marketing information and website, what is your impression?

The Five Minute Impression

After taking a 5-minute drive through the community, what is your first impression?

Tourism – Information Services

Quality/timeliness of information received prior to visiting the community:

1 2 3 4 5 6 7 8 9 10

Community Website:

1 2 3 4 5 6 7 8 9 10

Tourist Information Facilities: signage, marketing material, maps, customer service, visibility, etc.:

1 2 3 4 5 6 7 8 9 10

Community Entrances & Signage

Road/Highway

Entrance #1 _____

(Road name and direction)

1 2 3 4 5 6 7 8 9 10

Entrance 2 _____

1 2 3 4 5 6 7 8 9 10

Entrance #3 _____

1 2 3 4 5 6 7 8 9 10

Air, Rail and Bus Terminal (if applicable)

Entrance #4 _____

(Air/Rail/Harbour/Bus terminal)

1 2 3 4 5 6 7 8 9 10

Entrance #5 _____

1 2 3 4 5 6 7 8 9 10

Waterfront – harbour, canal locks, etc.

Entrance #6 _____

1 2 3 4 5 6 7 8 9 10

Directional signage:

1 2 3 4 5 6 7 8 9 10

Signage for local attractions (resorts, festivals, waterfront, etc.):

1 2 3 4 5 6 7 8 9 10

Look & Feel

Sidewalks:

1 2 3 4 5 6 7 8 9 10

Streets:

1 2 3 4 5 6 7 8 9 10

Landscaping, flowers, trees:

1 2 3 4 5 6 7 8 9 10

Lighting, banners, signage:

1 2 3 4 5 6 7 8 9 10

Parks / greenspace / trails:

1 2 3 4 5 6 7 8 9 10

Public recreation facilities (arena, pool, splash-pad, beach, playing fields, trails, boat launch etc.):

1 2 3 4 5 6 7 8 9 10

Public buildings:

1 2 3 4 5 6 7 8 9 10

Parking:

1 2 3 4 5 6 7 8 9 10

Public washrooms:

1 2 3 4 5 6 7 8 9 10

Downtown / Mainstreet

***What is your first impression of the community's
downtown or main street?***

1 2 3 4 5 6 7 8 9 10

Mix of facilities and services in the downtown

Appearance of the downtown (signage, visual identity, cleanliness, etc.)

Tourism – Attractions & Events

What type of tourism does this community offer?

What is your impression of the community slogan/brand (if any)?

1 2 3 4 5 6 7 8 9 10

Is the community well known for any particular attraction or event/festival? Which events are held annually?

Which events appear to be successful?

Community events that could be expanded or developed to become tourist attractions:

Quality and appearance of tourist attractions:

1 2 3 4 5 6 7 8 9 10

Are any of the attractions underdeveloped?

Are there sufficient attractions or activities to encourage day-trippers to extend their stay?

Accommodation & Food

Availability, type and quality of visitor accommodation (B&B, hotel, campground, etc.):

1 2 3 4 5 6 7 8 9 10

Are there facilities to accommodate a conference and/or a large number of visitors?

Customer service at local accommodations

1 2 3 4 5 6 7 8 9 10

Where do residents recommend to stay?

Variety/mix of restaurants:

1 2 3 4 5 6 7 8 9 10

Quality of restaurants (food, décor, etc.):

1 2 3 4 5 6 7 8 9 10

Customer Service at local restaurants / cafes:

1 2 3 4 5 6 7 8 9 10

Where do residents recommend to eat?

1 2 3 4 5 6 7 8 9 10

Shopping

Quality/variety of shopping available for tourists:

1 2 3 4 5 6 7 8 9 10

Availability of services such as: ATM, laundromat, supplies, fuel, rentals, etc.

1 2 3 4 5 6 7 8 9 10

Where do residents recommend to shop?

Customer Service at local shops

1 2 3 4 5 6 7 8 9 10

Arts, Culture, Heritage and Faith

Cultural Attractions (library, museum, heritage)

1 2 3 4 5 6 7 8 9 10

Visual Arts (gallery, sculpture, murals, etc.)

Dramatic Arts (theatre, etc.)

Music (concerts, bandstand, etc.)

Religious Buildings (availability & appearance)

Does the community have heritage buildings? Are they well maintained?

1 2 3 4 5 6 7 8 9 10

Other Observations – 4 Senses

Taste – Was there any specialty food item, bakery, restaurant or candy store that you will remember?

Smell – Is there a smell characterizing the community?

Sight – Was there any colourful or striking feature that made an impression on you?

Sound – What sounds did you hear? Noise?

Wrap Up

Most outstanding feature of the community / tourism area?

To what types / groups of people would this community / area appeal, from a tourism perspective (e.g. families, seniors, hiker/bikers, cultural tourists, etc.)

Five POSITIVE things about the community:

1

2

3

4

5

5

Five SHORTCOMINGS (if any) of the community:

1

2

3

4

5

Did you have any strongly negative or positive experiences? Be specific.

Overall environmental health (air quality, litter, pollution)?

Did you feel safe?...would you feel safe at night?

What restaurant, shop or attraction would bring you back to this community in the near future or in another season?

What will you remember most about this community six months from now?

Other comments:

**First Impressions Community Exchange
Photo Log**

Photo #	Description	Location
1		
2		
3		
4		
5		
6		
7		
8		
9		
10		
11		
12		
13		

**First Impressions Community Exchange
Photo Log (Continued)**

Photo #	Description	Location
14		
15		
16		
17		
18		
19		
20		
21		
22		
23		
24		
25		
26		

Notes

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