



DESTINATION EASTERN & NORTHUMBERLAND SHORES

D E A N S

EVENT STRATEGY



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ABOUT GM EVENT INC.

GM Event Inc. is a consultancy specializing in the development of sound strategy and industry best practices in major event attraction, execution and measurement. GM Event Inc. works with host cities, destination organizations, host venues and event rights holders to identify new ways of doing business and charting a clear path to success.

PLANNING CONTEXT

The region that is covered by DEANS (Destination Eastern and Northumberland Shores) and this event strategy includes Pictou County, Antigonish County and Guysborough. At the eastern end of mainland Nova Scotia, the region has hosted some significant sport events and has an annual calendar of festivals and events that provide great experiences for event attendees and residents that are delivered by dedicated volunteers and event professionals.

There is a wide range of stakeholders in the region who are active in events and have an interest in future growth. Among them are municipal councils and staff, venue operators, tourism industry organizations and event professionals. In comparison with other jurisdictions, the DEANS region is well positioned from a facility and volunteer perspective.

In 2019, DEANS identified the need to develop a strategy retained the services of GM Event Inc to help facilitate a consultation process and the development of an event strategy.



NOVA SCOTIA EVENT STRATEGY

Nova Scotia is one of very few provinces that have a provincial event strategy. There has been a shift to a more proactive approach to developing and bidding for events and hosting them to deliver specific outcomes. As a result, the DEANS region can achieve a greater degree of alignment with all levels of government by developing events that fit with local and regional outcomes while matching up with the strategic priorities of the Province of Nova Scotia, including:

- Funding to drive increased legacy for sport, communities and culture
- Event friendly environment
- Education and capacity building
- Destination positioning with experiences and funding
- Legacy
- Measurement

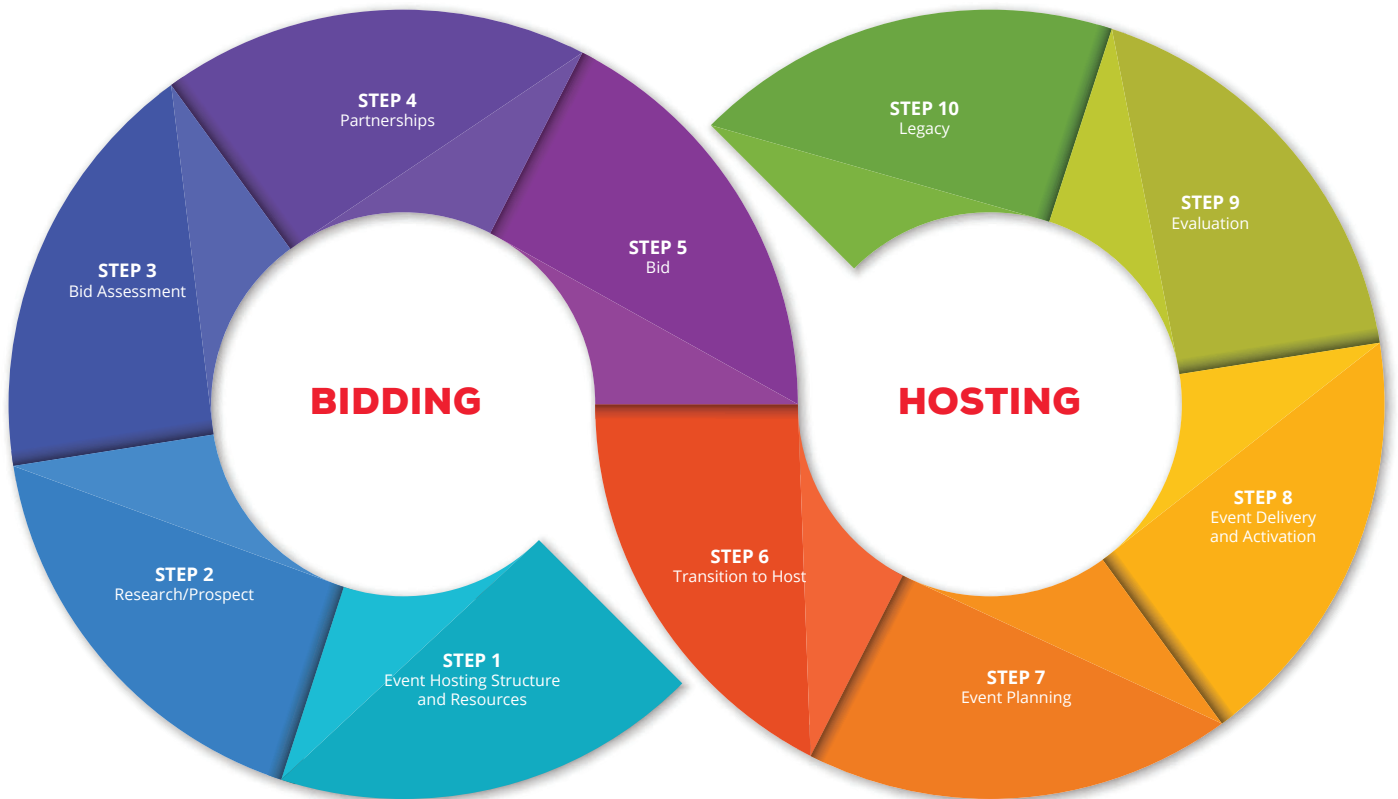


EVENT ROADMAP

It is recommended that the region adopt a “path” to ensure consistency in event attraction or development and hosting. This will allow for planned and proactive success and enable the community to repeat the process well into the future.

The following process was developed by the Canadian Sport Tourism Alliance for the sport tourism sector however it does apply to all events, including sport, culture and festivals.

CSTA SPORT TOURISM ROADMAP ©



SWOT

As part of the development of the strategic approach for the DEANS region, the following chart represents the SWOT analysis as of September 2019:

	POSITIVE	NEGATIVE
Internal	Strengths	Weaknesses
	Staff and Council vision and support	Lack of event-ready infrastructure
	Location	Lack of structure
	Population growth in Summer	Local "silos"
	Facility assets	Accommodation capacity
	Coordinated effort on events	
	Local sport/culture organizations	
	Multipurpose centres	
Volunteer and community spirit		
External	Opportunities	Threats
	Business community	Volunteer fatigue
	Coordinated effort on opportunities from events	Facility dislocation
	Work with neighbouring communities (Truro, Port Hawkesbury)	Competition between municipalities in region
	Culinary	Financial capacity and funding
	Tourism experiences	Event equipment inventory
	Events outside peak season	Marketing events and region
	Non-traditional sports/events	Lack of coordination
Outcome-based events		
Partnership approach (municipal, community, St FX)		



STAKEHOLDER CONSULTATION

A stakeholder mapping exercise was completed as part of the discovery phase for the project. Using a Power/Interest grid, stakeholders for events in the DEANS region were categorized according to their degree of power and interest they have related to events. The initial stakeholder mapping process is a baseline and provides a starting point for future annual re-assessments.

As part of the event policy and strategy project, on August 14, 2019, DEANS hosted two sessions for key stakeholder groups.

The purpose of the consultation sessions was to provide an opportunity for stakeholders, partners and industry to engage in the development of strategy for the development and hosting of events in the region. The process was designed to be inclusive and capture a wide range of perspectives to inform the vision for events in the DEANS region and how they can build business and improve the quality of life for residents.

REGIONAL EVENT STRATEGY



VISION

Events in the DEANS Region will be developed or attracted in a planned and strategic way to provide year-round business to the region that showcase our culture, sport and history and deliver exceptional experiences for all customers and attendees.



MISSION

The region will provide support, transfer of knowledge and resources to attract/develop, organize, plan, promote, deliver and measure events within the region.



COMPETITIVE ADVANTAGE

The region is well-positioned to develop and attract events that showcase the communities, culture, sport, experiences and heritage in the event-ready venues of the region. The commitment of volunteers, people working in events and residents helps to deliver the highest standards of hosting and customer service while striving for increased impacts that are measured by event and annually.



STRATEGIC AREAS OF FOCUS

- **Financial** – invest to provide one stop solution for customers
- **People** – build knowledge and capacity
- **Alignment** – connect region and assets to opportunities and customers
- **Marketing** – capture and tell story in purposeful way
- **Development** – build existing events while attracting business for strategic outcomes



Financial – invest to provide one stop solution for customers

KEY ACTION	SHORT-TERM (2019-20)	LONG-TERM (2021-2024)
Secure funding for human resources required to ensure implementation of this strategy and associated actions	•	
Develop event policies that cover funding, municipal services and consistency of service throughout the region	•	
Evaluate potential revenue models that allow for sustainable funding to support a regional event model	•	
Evaluate the human resource requirements to ensure sustainability with increased activity	•	
Determine, in consultation with all stakeholders, the best model to address the financial risk associated with hosting events and not requiring the local sport organizations to assume 100% of that risk	•	
Develop and implement accountability steps for each event including a pre-event forecast of economic and other impacts and a post event analysis of the outcomes from each event		•
Develop regional event budget to support the one-stop shop for event development and sustainable and consistent event planning and delivery		•
Develop an event assessment process that enables sport and cultural groups, staff and Council to determine the feasibility of each event based on established criteria		•



People – build knowledge and capacity

KEY ACTION	SHORT-TERM (2019-20)	LONG-TERM (2021-2024)
Establish a steering committee or task force to lead the review, recommendations and implementation of key actions.	•	
Identify a lead agency or governance model to serve as the coordination role and to implement event strategy region-wide	•	
Develop and maintain a regional event roles and responsibilities matrix for all key stakeholders	•	
Determine optimal governance structure for event needs and based on stakeholder input	•	
Host training sessions for STEAM (Sport Tourism Economic Assessment Model) forecasting economic impact model and STEAM Pro post event processes and best practices	•	
Host semi-annual event-themed sessions to engage accommodations, culinary, retail, attraction and facility operators to discuss lessons learned and future opportunities around events	•	
Develop a region-wide volunteer strategy that includes registration, communication and recognition standards	•	
Develop and implement a transfer of knowledge program for the region that includes, bids, plans and documents for the benefit of future events	•	
Hold quarterly meetings with surrounding communities about past events and future shared event opportunities	•	
Develop ambassador program for all residents to engage in events hosted in the region and enhance the experience for all participants and spectators	•	
Examine the potential for an event leadership/training program through NSCC, St. Francis Xavier University and other post-secondary institutions		•

Alignment – connect region and assets to opportunities and customers

KEY ACTION	SHORT-TERM (2019-20)	LONG-TERM (2021-2024)
Develop a program to inform local business of upcoming events so they can prepare and benefit from the increased activity (be open for business)	•	
Work with staff of all venues to develop a dislocation approach to manage those user groups that will not have access to facilities due to increased event activity	•	
Create a shared calendar solution for all event stakeholders to manage venues, accommodations and other business	•	
Develop event hosting standards that can be applied region-wide and adapted by community or municipality	•	
Ensure alignment of each bid and event with the Nova Scotia Event Strategy	•	
Develop an event toolkit that is available online for all bid and host organizations		•
Develop consistent actions for event hosting to activate cultural and tourism experiences directly through events		•
Develop region-wide approach to inform future recreation and cultural facility master planning with event hosting as a key consideration		•



Marketing – capture and tell story in purposeful way

KEY ACTION	SHORT-TERM (2019-20)	LONG-TERM (2021-2024)
Create an image library of events, community and experiences	•	
Develop a social media strategy that allows communities, venues and host organizations to tell unique stories while connecting them together in a standard way for the benefit of the entire region	•	
Establish a web presence that tells the event story for the region and includes key information for event rights holders and organizers	•	
Development a regional hosting brand the unites the region as one for event attraction and hosting, is progressive and forward looking and is in the best interests of the customer and the public good		•
Develop event collateral and content consistent with tourism brands of DEANS and the Province of Nova Scotia		•
Develop attendance building tools and channels to attract visitors to events and connect them with other experiences in the region		•

Development – build existing events while attracting business for strategic outcomes

KEY ACTION	SHORT-TERM (2019-20)	LONG-TERM (2021-2024)
Conduct venue assessment based on school sport, provincial and national hosting standards	•	
Create event evaluation model to assess performance of existing and new events against impact criteria	•	
Develop and implement event impact criteria to define event success for the region	•	
Develop event bid tools for bid organizations to access to help win business for the region		•
Develop a legacy program that begins in the event bid/development phase to ensure consistency		•



WHAT SUCCESS LOOKS LIKE

For this event strategy to be a successful driver for the region and its other priorities and objectives, a triple bottom line approach is recommended. While a purely quantitative measurement of success would be optimal, there is a degree of qualitative success that there is no quick way to measure. Therefore, a mix of both quantitative and qualitative are recommended, including:

KEY ACTION	SHORT-TERM (2019-20)
Economic Outcomes	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> • Event Indicators (# Events, Attendance, Event Days) • Economic Impact (Gross Domestic Product, Employment, Business Health, Housing Sales) • Tourism (Room Nights, Length of Stay, Average Spend)
Social/Cultural Outcomes	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> • Volunteers (Number of Volunteers, Volunteer Hours) • Community Pride (Public Engagement, Event Awareness, Satisfaction Index) • Culture (Local Performers/Animators, Local Culinary, Under-Represented Groups)
Sustainability Outcomes (Meeting the needs of the present with positive impacts on the future)	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> • Local Leadership (Governance, Management, Transfer of Knowledge) • Venues (Existing Venues, Temporary Venues) • Logistics (Local Accommodation, Transportation Reduction, Local Food Service) • Legacy (Financial, Culture, Sport) • Marketing (Attendance Building, Communication, Social Inclusion) • Environmental (Reduce Climate Impact, Air, Water, Waste, Biodiversity)

The establishment of specific targets in each of these areas will require a review and assessment as part of the implementation of this strategy.





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