

Trade distribution

for Aboriginal cultural tourism

TOURISM & EVENTS NORTHERN TERRITORY

Acknowledgement

We respectfully acknowledge and honour the Aboriginal people of the Northern Territory and recognise the continuation of culture, connection to lands, water and country. We pay our respects to Elders past, present and future.

About this guide

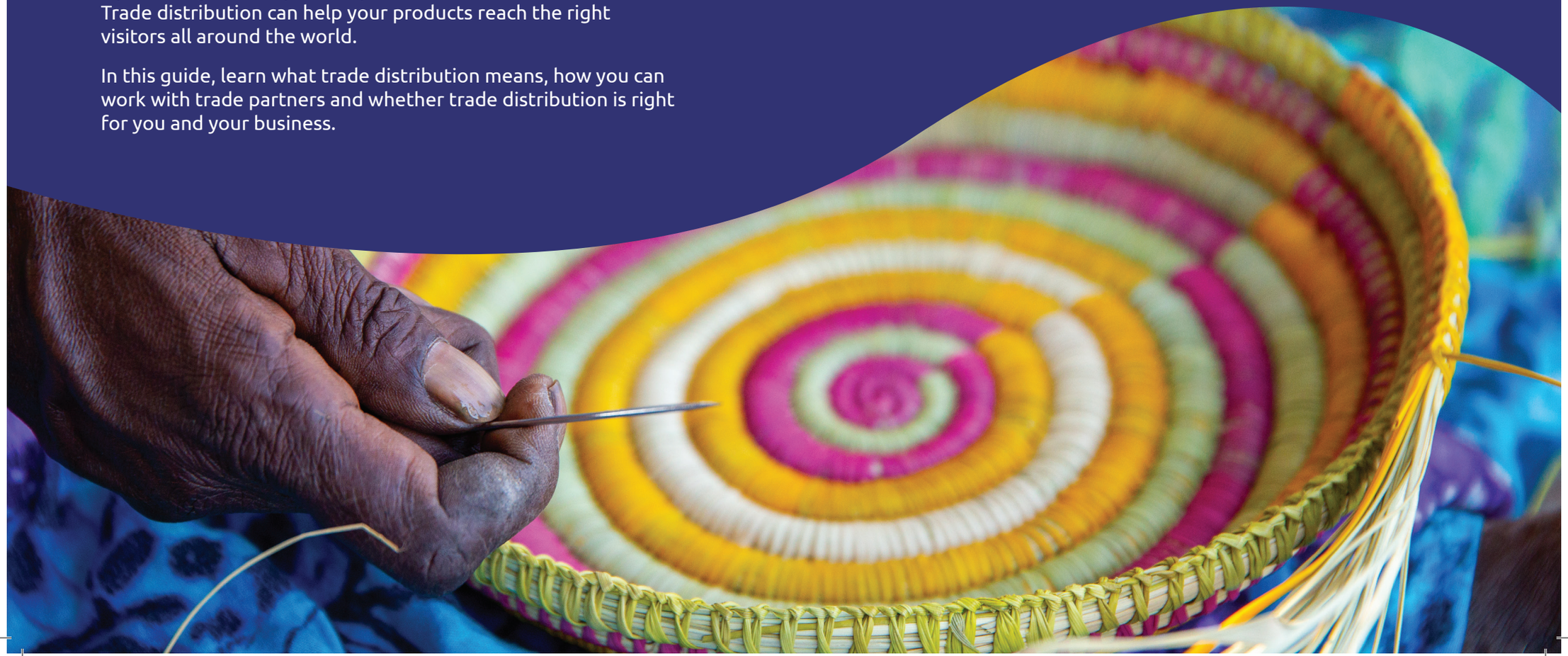
Aboriginal people have been trading ‘cultural way’ for generations. ‘Business way’ trade distribution is when we work with a trade partner who promotes and sells our tourism products and experiences and in return we pay them a percentage of our product price - this is called commission. Trade distribution can help your products reach the right visitors all around the world.

In this guide, learn what trade distribution means, how you can work with trade partners and whether trade distribution is right for you and your business.

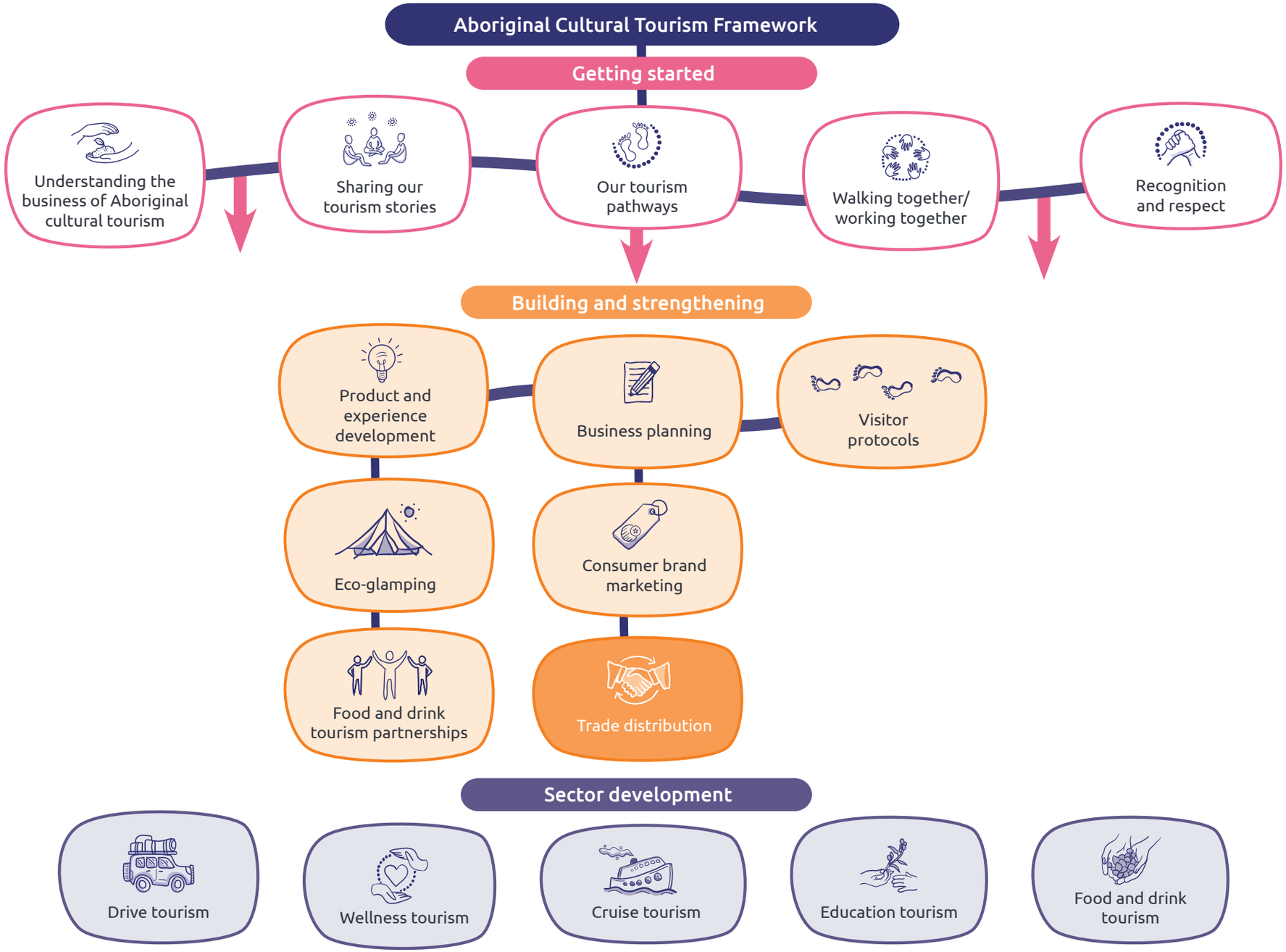
More information

For more information and access to other Aboriginal Cultural Tourism Framework resources visit www.tourismandeventsnt.com.au
or contact Tourism and Events NT’s Aboriginal tourism team today.

PH: 08 8999 7420 **E:** Aboriginal.tourismeventsnt@nt.gov.au



Tools to help you



Understanding trade distribution

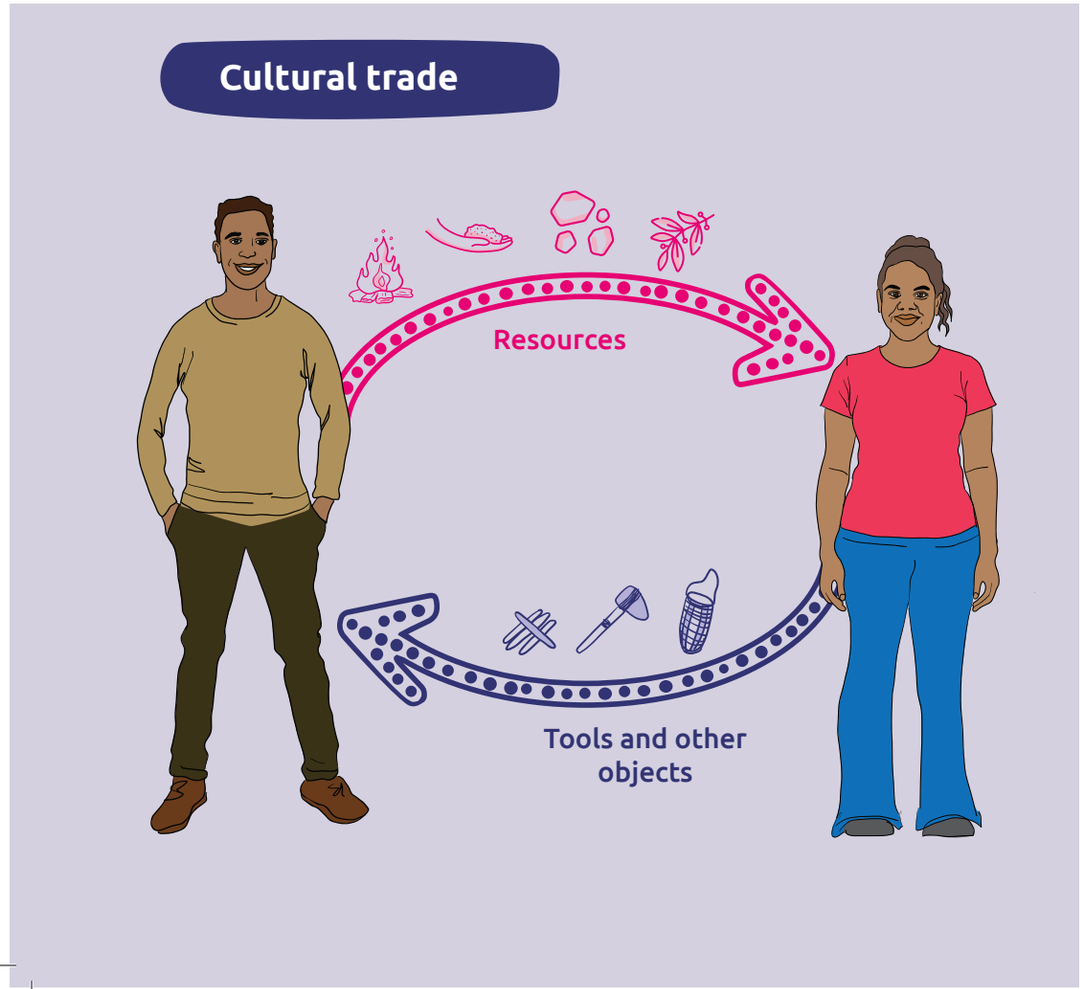
What does ‘trade distribution’ mean?

For Aboriginal people, trading is a way of life - for generations we have been trading our tools, ochres, rocks, wood, jewellery, bushfood and medicines. Even when non-Aboriginal people arrived, we would trade our goods and services for new items.

Business way, trade distribution:

1. Is an agreement you make with a trade partner like a travel agent
2. Your trade partner markets, promotes and sells your tourism products and experiences to visitors all over the world
3. You pay a percentage of your product price, called a commission in return for your trade partners work.

Without trade distribution partnerships, you will have to do all the marketing, promoting and sales of your tourism products by yourself.





Why is trade distribution important?

Trade distribution can help Northern Territory's Aboriginal tourism businesses gain global exposure, attract more customers and secure regular bookings.

Working with trade partners such as travel agents, wholesalers and online travel platforms allows businesses to:

- Market your products domestically across Australia and overseas to the right markets.
- Sell your product and get consistent and reliable bookings with long term bookings from 12 months to 2 years.
- Build brand awareness and trust.



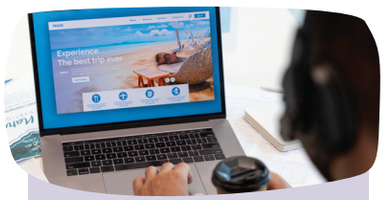
It helps new and growing businesses gain visibility, build strong reputations, and attract a steady flow of customers.

To learn more about brand awareness, read Tourism and Events NT's Consumer brand marketing guide.

How does trade distribution work?

Understanding the different ways your tourism product can be sold is essential to building a strong distribution strategy. Each channel or way of marketing, selling and 'trade' plays a different role in helping you reach domestic and international travellers. You can choose the best trade partners to work with to market and sell your product to the right visitors.

Ways of marketing and selling your products



1. Direct Sales

- Bookings made directly with your business through your website, social media, email, phone or in person.
- No commission is paid. As visitors are booking directly with you, you get 100% of the product price.
- You are responsible for all marketing, promotion, sales and customer service.



2. Retail Travel Agents

- Work face-to-face with customers to recommend and book travel.
- Take 10–15% commission from your product price on all bookings.
- Often work with wholesalers to access a range of products.

For example: Darwin, Katherine and Alice Springs Visitor Centres are retail travel agents.



3. Wholesalers

- Buy a range of products including transport and accommodation and then develop their own packages for sale to travel agents.
- Help you reach large networks of agents domestically and internationally.
- Take 20–25% commission from your product price.

For example: Flight Centre and Helloworld.



4. Inbound Tour Operators (ITOs)

- Create Australian holiday packages and itineraries to sell to overseas travel distributors and travel agents.
- Require 25–30% commission.
- Strong access to international markets.

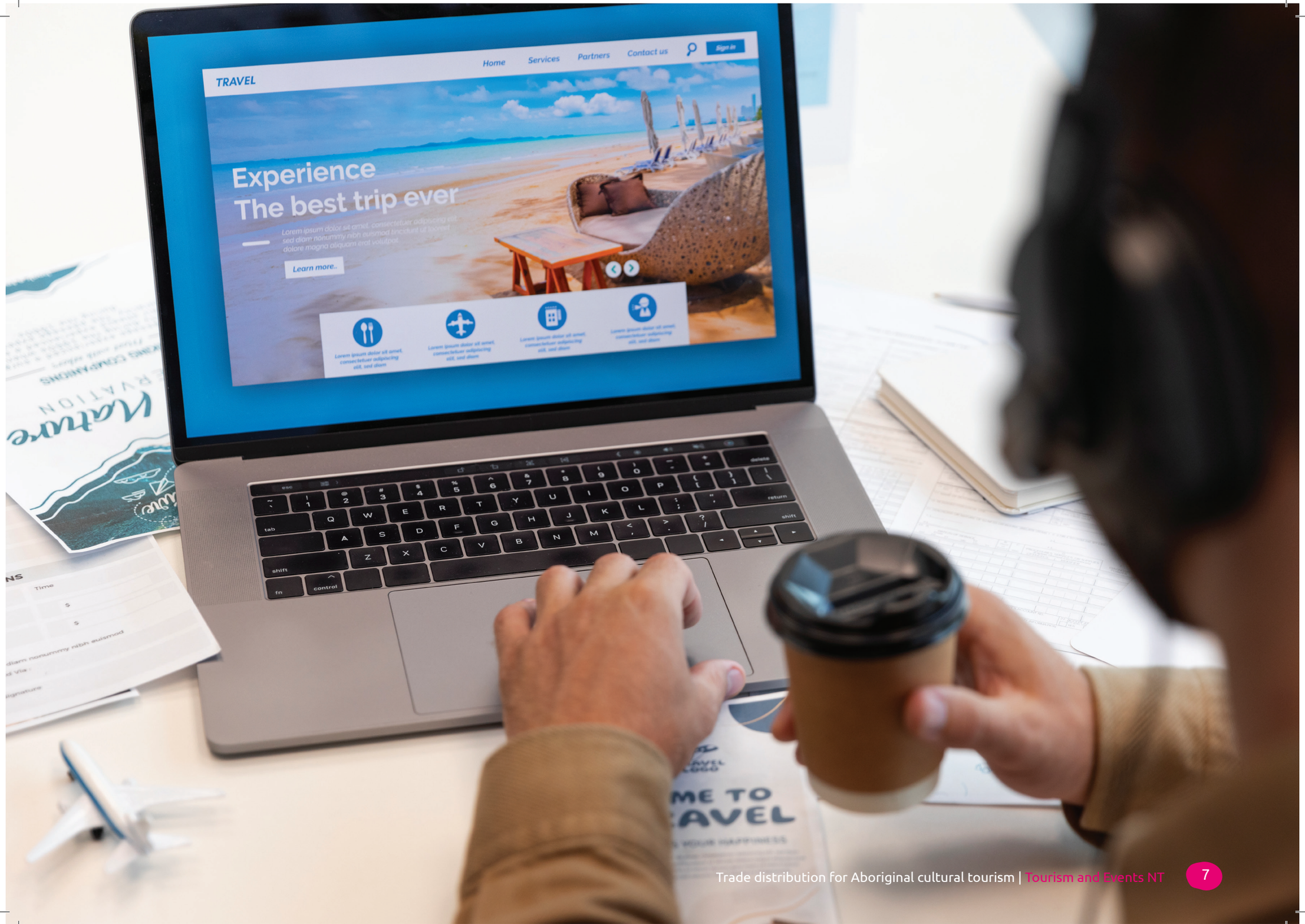
For example: Goway Inbound or AOT Inbound.



5. Online Travel Agencies (OTAs)

- Online platforms like Booking.com, Big Red Group, TripAdvisor, Viator and Expedia.
- Offer instant online bookings visitors all over the world.
- Charge 20–25% commission but are easy to find, use and convenient.

To learn more about trade distribution and the different types of trade partners, see Tourism and Events NT's Distribution fact sheet.


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Understanding pricing and rates

Setting the right price for your products will help you attract the right target markets, while covering all of your operational costs and making a profit so your business is strong and can continue to grow.

How to set the right price

When setting the price for your products, you need to consider:

1. **Fixed costs:** Ongoing costs to run your business. Your wages, power, water, phone, insurance.
2. **Variable costs:** Costs that can change and you pay for as you need it. Vehicle, building and equipment repairs, fuel, cleaning, uniforms.
3. **Profit margin:** The extra money you aim to make from your sales that can be used to improve, strengthen and build your business.
4. **Commission**: The percentage of your product price (usually between 15-30%) that you pay to trade partners to market and sell your products.
5. **GST:** Good and services tax you pay to the Government on top of your product price. To learn more about GST and if you need to include it on your product prices see GST - Goods and Services Tax | Australian Taxation Office.

Net and retail rates

When working with trade partners, you will often be asked for your 'net rate' and 'retail rate':

Product net rate

The **base price** you want to sell your product that includes your fixed and variable costs and desired profit margin.

Product retail rate

The **net rate plus the average trade partner commission** (for example: 20%). This is the advertised sale price visitors pay to buy your product.

Example:



Rate sheets

To share your net and retail rates, your trade partners will ask for your Rate Sheet. This lists all of your products, your location, when they are available, how long it goes for, what is included and what the net and retail rates are. The rate sheet shows your trade partners how much commission they will receive to promote, market and sell your products.

Rate sheet example

Product	Locations	Departures	Departs From	Duration	Inclusions	Retail adult	Net adult	Retail child (5-15yrs)	Net child (5-15yrs)
Guided walking tour in a national park	Trephina Gorge Nature Park	Twice per week Wed and Sat April – Oct	Meet onsite at Trephina Gorge car park	1.5 hours	• Welcome to Country • Cultural walking tour at Trephina Gorge • Creation stories • Native plant and animal knowledge • Learning about cultural artefacts, bushfoods and bush medicines	Sales / advertised price Includes 20% commission for trade partners **$72**	Our base tour price to cover our costs and still make a profit **$60**	With 20% commission **$48**	Base price **$40**

To learn more about pricing your product, see Tourism and Events NT's How to price your product checklist.



Working with trade partners

Trade partners work hard to promote your product through many different platforms such as websites, social media, sales networks and relationships with international buyers. They take on the risk and effort of promoting and selling your product to markets that may be difficult for you to reach directly - particularly international ones.

The trade partner covers the costs of marketing, promoting and selling your product. You don't pay any commission unless they make a sale.

What's the deal?

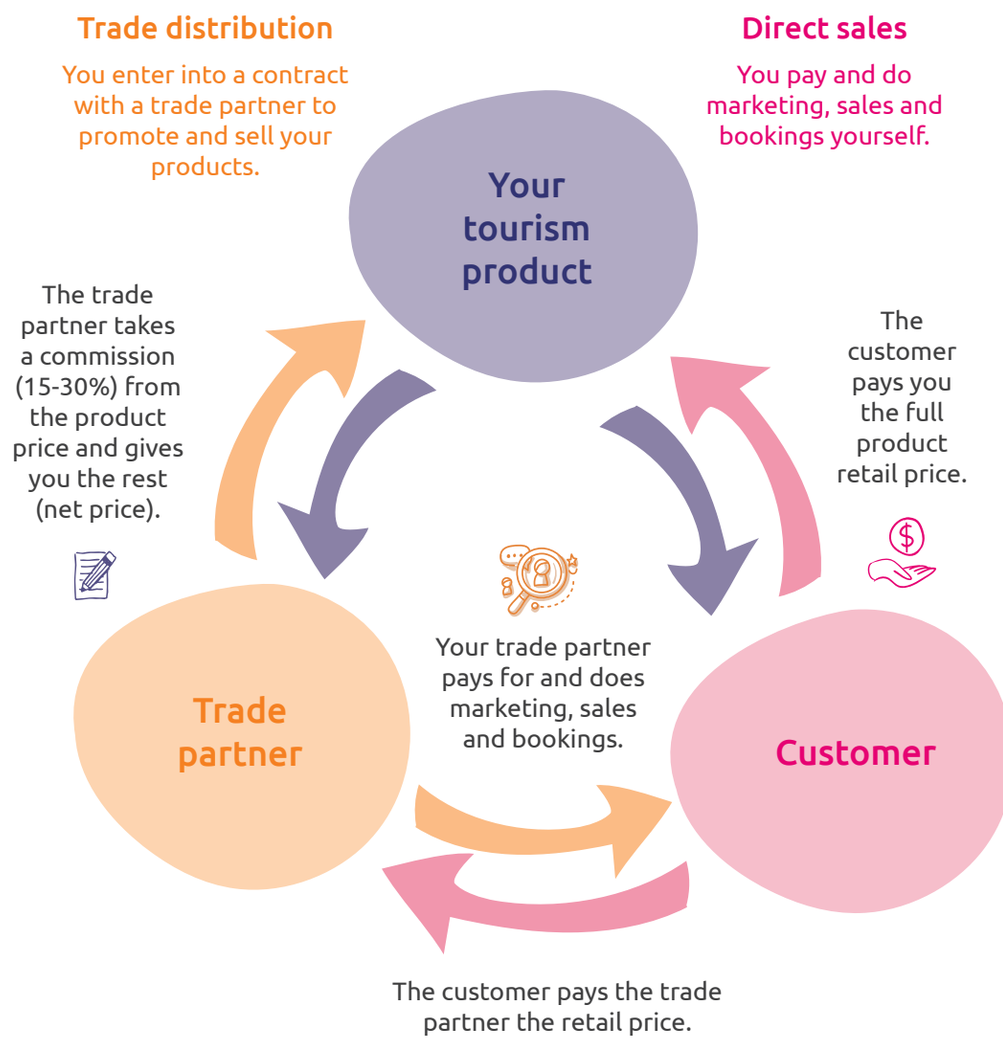
Trade partners are looking for trustworthy and reliable products to sell.

Your trade partner will enter into a contract with you – this is a legally binding commitment that:

- Your product will be available for your trade partner to sell
- Your product will be delivered with consistent quality with good customer feedback
- Your price and commission are agreed upon and set for up to 2 years – no changes.



Trade distribution cycle




ABORIGINAL
BUSH TRADERS

Checklist – how to become trade ready

Trade ready checklist for Aboriginal tourism businesses

1. Confirm you are visitor ready

Make sure your business has the basics: registration, insurance, bank account, contact details, and a bookable product. Learn more about the steps to take to become visitor ready in the Our tourism pathways guide.

2. List Your Product on the Australian Tourism Data Warehouse (ATDW)

Connect to online tourism platforms via the Australian Tourism Data Warehouse (ATDW). atdw.com.au

3. Build partnerships with Regional Tourism Organisations (RTOs)

Get mentoring and promotion through Tourism Top End or Tourism Central Australia which includes the Darwin, Katherine, Tennant Creek and Alice Springs visitor centres.

tourismtopend.com.au | discovercentralaustralia.com

4. Set pricing and rates

Get started with our sample rate sheet in this guide or use Tourism and Events NT's pricing guide and rate sheet to detail your products and inclusions and set your prices and profit margins with commissions in mind. How to price your product checklist.

5. Implement a booking system

Use Rezdy, FareHarbor, CloudBeds or Little Hotelier to automate and manage availability.

rezdy.com | fareharbor.com | cloudbeds.com | littlehotelier.com

6. Identify your target markets so you can find the right trade partner

Learn more about different visitor markets, visitor needs and interests in the Understanding the business of Aboriginal cultural tourism guide.

7. Complete the Australian Tourism Export Council's (ATEC) Trade Ready Program

A nationally recognised training program to help you learn more about commissions, trade relationships, and international readiness.

atec.net.au/trade-ready/

8. Attend trade shows and host familiarisations

Register for the yearly Australian Tourism Exchange (ATE) and other Tourism and Events NT networking events. Invite agents to experience your product firsthand. www.tourismandeventsnt.com.au

9. Join the Discover Aboriginal Experiences Signature Program

Discover Aboriginal Experiences is a group of over 160 quality Aboriginal guided tourism products across Australia, promoted internationally as part of Tourism Australia's Signature Experiences program. To be included, businesses must be international market ready for trade distribution and recommended by Tourism and Events NT. Discover Aboriginal Experiences

Contact the Aboriginal tourism team and download the Aboriginal Cultural Tourism Framework tools and resources to help you on your tourism journey.

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Build your product pricing

Use the example on page 8 to guide you with preparing your own product rate sheet to share details and price of your product with sales agents and trade distribution partners.

Product	Locations	Departures	Duration	Inclusions	Retail adult	Net adult	Retail child (5-15yrs)	Net child (5-15yrs)

Extra information – Example

Transport	Children	Fitness	What to bring
All guests require independent transport to meet the tour onsite	Children under 5 years are welcome on this tour, parents must be responsible for their children at all times. Some walking is required. Children's price applies for children aged 5-15 inclusive, under 5 years is free.	Tours require the ability to walk a moderate distance including uneven ground and stairs. Sturdy walking shoes are required.	All tours require comfortable walking shoes and weather appropriate clothing. Hat, sunscreen and insect repellent is recommended. Plus of course your camera!



References

Photo credits

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Page 2 – Injalak Arts Centre, Gunbalanya – Tourism and Events NT/Felix Baker

Page 6 – Left – Image by Freepik

Page 6 – Second from left – Alice Springs Visitor Centre – Tourism Central Australia

Page 6 – Middle – Helloworld

Page 6 – Second from right – NT Campaign – Flight Centre

Page 6 – Right – Image by Freepik

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Page 9 – Bush Balm – Tourism and Events NT/Oliver Eclipse

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