

## CATEGORY: STRUCTURING THE REGIONAL TOURISM OFFERING

The Outaouais Tourism Development Program 2025-2027 (PDTO 25-27) reflects the shared commitment of the *ministère du Tourisme* (MTO) and Outaouais Tourism (TO) to join forces to provide financial support and guidance to tourism businesses located in their territory with their development and growth, using a responsible and sustainable approach.

### GENERAL OBJECTIVES

Projects must promote the achievement of the following objectives:

- stimulate the regional economy by:
  - developing responsible and sustainable tourism offerings,
  - promoting innovative tourism offerings,
  - developing new niches for tourism businesses that have a positive impact on the region and its community;
- increasing the response capacity of tourism businesses by:
  - implementing actions or adopting best practices, particularly in terms of the social and environmental responsibilities of tourism businesses,
  - the integration of innovative solutions, including digital technologies.

### REGIONAL OBJECTIVES

Projects must contribute to the achievement of the following regional objectives:

- diversifying cultural and heritage offerings;
- the implementation of innovative gourmet experiences that will contribute to the development of a culinary identity;
- structuring cycling offerings that contribute to the recognition of the Outaouais as a destination of choice for cycling;
- the deployment of nature tourism experiences (ecotourism);
- improving experiential accommodation offerings in underserved areas;
- developing attractive infrastructure and state-of-the-art facilities for business tourism;
- the growth of winter offerings that are resilient to climate change;
- supporting projects aimed at universal accessibility and sustainable mobility to promote tourist flows throughout the territory.

### ELIGIBLE CLIENTS

The following types of clients are eligible:

- tourism businesses:
  - profit-oriented organizations (OBL),
  - non-profit organizations (NPO),
  - cooperatives;
- municipal entities<sup>1</sup>;

- Indigenous communities and nations recognized by the National Assembly, as well as Indigenous tourism organizations and businesses;
- any group representing these clienteles.

The business must be legally incorporated under the laws of the Government of Quebec or the Government of Canada and must do business in Quebec.

Eligible organizations must have fulfilled, where applicable, their commitments to partners when a previous grant was awarded.

Businesses and organizations that operate tourist accommodation establishments must comply with the laws and regulations in force concerning this type of establishment and hold a registration number.

Nature and adventure tourism businesses must demonstrate, when required, that they comply with the standards of the *Aventure Écotourisme Québec Quality-Safety Certification*, or that they have taken steps to comply with the standards of this program, or that they are committed to taking such steps.

### INELIGIBLE CLIENTS

- Crown corporations and departments and agencies of the governments of Quebec and Canada;
- Any applicant listed in the Register of Companies Ineligible for Public Contracts
- Companies that do not comply with the francization process of the *Office québécois de la langue française*.

### ELIGIBLE PROJECTS

One-time financial assistance may be granted to projects that are important to the region. The theme must be representative of the region and have an impact on the Outaouais territory. Projects must demonstrate the ability to generate benefits for several partners. They may be coordinated by the ATR or any other entity recognized and accepted by the management committee. They must receive financial support from various organizations or businesses in the territory.

Eligible projects include those related to the implementation of tourist routes and circuits, the development of a thematic product that reflects the region's identity, initiatives to improve access to the territories, intermodality and sustainable mobility for travelers, or any other project that demonstrates the structuring of the tourism offer. The sustainability of the projects must be demonstrated and extend over more than three years.

### INELIGIBLE PROJECTS

The following projects are not eligible:

- tourist lodging;
- hotel condominium (condotels)
- bike paths;

<sup>1</sup> The designation of municipal entities includes municipalities, cities, towns, villages, parishes, townships, united townships, northern villages, unorganized territories, regional county municipalities (RCMs), metropolitan communities, intermunicipal boards, and corporations or agencies for which a municipal

- snowmobile trails;
- the restaurant and retail sectors;
- training content development;
- gambling sector;
- venues dedicated to the sale and consumption of alcohol;
- with most costs related to upgrading, maintaining, or replacing existing infrastructure or equipment;
- already completed or in progress at the time of application;
- fewer than four tourist residences or organizations renting fewer than four tourist residences on the same site after the project is completed. However, these projects may be eligible if they are part of a comprehensive tourist accommodation or activity offering (existing or to be developed as part of the project);
- business acquisition;
- benefiting from non-repayable financial assistance from the Tourism Industry Recovery Assistance Program (PARIT) or any other program set up by the MTO or its partners, if applicable.

Notwithstanding the above, financial assistance may be provided for work related to facilities and equipment required for the sale of products resulting from agrotourism or gourmet tourism projects, as these components are essential to the tourist experience offered to visitors in this area.

Similarly, elements related to restoration may be considered when they form part of an overall project to improve or develop the tourist experience.

#### **PROJECT SELECTION CRITERIA**

- Alignment with the objectives of the PDT 25-27;
- Structural nature (attractiveness, scope of the project, impact, collaboration with other partners, job creation, season extension, etc.);
- Innovative nature;
- Quality in terms of concept, products, and services;
- Financial structure and arrangement;
- Confirmation of funding from a recognized external source;
- Relevance (significant tourist clientele and its diversification, market, competition, quality of the offering, marketing strategy, networking, etc.);
- Feasibility (timeline, marketing strategy, quality of the business plan or study estimate, promoter's expertise);
- Consideration of sustainable development principles;
- Commitment to a concrete approach to climate change adaptation (including the adoption of an internal policy and action plan with mitigation targets and performance indicators).

#### **FINANCING CHARACTERISTICS**

- The financial assistance offered is a non-repayable financial contribution.
- The project must have eligible costs of at least \$100,000.
- The maximum amount of financial assistance is \$90,000.
- The financial assistance may not exceed 25% of eligible costs and must comply with the capital investment and cumulative government assistance requirements for eligible clienteles.
- A maximum bonus of 25% up to \$60,000 may be granted for major structuring projects that promote the achievement of at least three regional objectives.

The following table summarizes the percentages applicable to down payments and accumulation rules according to eligible clienteles.

Eligible Clients	Minimum capital investment by the promoter (% of total project costs)	Maximum cumulation of government assistance (% of eligible project costs)
OBL	50 %	50 %
NPO, cooperative, municipal entities	20 %	80 %
Indigenous community, organization, or nation	10 %	90 %
Client group	20 %	Depending on the type of organization, the lowest % applies

The promoter's capital investment, including that of its partners (community support, private sponsorships), if applicable, may not come from:

- sources considered as cumulative government assistance;
- from a transfer of assets;
- a contribution in goods and services.

The total amount of government financial assistance consists of contributions from municipal entities and all Quebec and federal government departments and agencies.

In cases where a municipal entity is the project promoter, its capital investment is not included in the total government assistance.

#### **ELIGIBLE COSTS**

- Fees for specialized firms or consultants;
- Travel expenses not exceeding the rates in effect in the public services, overhead costs, salaries, and employee benefits, if they are specifically devoted to the completion of the promoter's project;
- Costs related to the purchase and installation of equipment necessary for structuring the offer;
- Net taxes (excluding the reimbursed portion) related to eligible costs.

#### **INELIGIBLE COSTS**

- The costs of acquiring motorized transportation equipment not dedicated to the visitor experience;
- Costs related to working capital, debt service, operating losses, capital losses, and capital redemption;
- Costs related to upgrading to standards, asset maintenance, and regulatory compliance;
- The portion of the Quebec sales tax and the portion of the goods and services tax, as well as costs for which the business (or a third party) is entitled to a refund;
- Donations and contributions in kind or in services;
- Asset transfers;
- Direct or indirect operating, exploitation, or administrative costs;
- Usual maintenance and operating costs;
- Financing costs;
- Remuneration paid to a lobbyist;
- Costs for which the business agreed to contractual commitments prior to submitting the application for financial assistance (except for fees related to project development);
- Promotion, advertising, and marketing costs;
- Cost overruns;
- Legal fees.

## SPECIAL RULES

### RULES CONCERNING THE AWARDING OF CONTRACTS

- Financial assistance granted to a project is subject to the obligation to issue a public call for tenders for the award of a construction contract when it is \$100,000 or more.
- When the beneficiary is a municipal entity, it is subject to the legislative and regulatory provisions governing the awarding of contracts.

### POLICY ON THE INTEGRATION OF ART INTO THE ARCHITECTURE AND ENVIRONMENT OF GOVERNMENT AND PUBLIC BUILDINGS AND SITES

- All construction or expansion projects (costing \$150,000 or more) for a building or site that is open to the public, in whole or in part, for information, recreation, or the procurement of goods or services are subject to the policy.

### EQUAL ACCESS PROGRAM

- Financial assistance of \$100,000 or more granted to an OBL with more than 100 employees must include a requirement for the organization to commit to implementing an equal access program in accordance with the *Charter of Human Rights and Freedoms*.

### CERTIFICATE OF COMPLIANCE FROM THE OFFICE QUÉBÉCOIS DE LA LANGUE FRANÇAISE (OQLF)

- An organization that operates in Quebec and employs 25 or more people for a period of six months is subject to Chapter V of Title II of the Charter of the French Language (Francization of businesses) and must, to be granted a subsidy, attach to its subsidy application the required document certifying compliance with this requirement.
- For more information on this requirement, consult the information document used by government agencies: [Business compliance with the francization process: verification before awarding a contract or grant](#).

### SUSTAINABLE DEVELOPMENT

- Since one of the objectives of EPRTNT 25-27 is to promote the development of responsible and sustainable tourism, projects will be assessed based on their overall approach to sustainable development.

### REQUIRED DOCUMENTS

- Completed and signed form SUBMITTED IN EXCEL;
- Project plan specifying the expected deliverables and impacts over three years, as well as the list of authorizations, attestations, certificates, or permits to be obtained in connection with the project and the status of their progress;
- Detailed marketing plan identifying target markets and including action planning, budget allocation, task distribution, implementation schedule, and key indicators for monitoring and evaluating results;
- Internal policy on sustainable development and responsible purchasing (or contract signed with an external firm to support the development of the policy);
- Sustainable development and climate change adaptation action plan, including mitigation targets and performance indicators (or a contract signed with an external firm to support the development of the action plan);
- Confirmation of capital investment (certification from an accountant or financial institution);
- Financial statements for the last two full years and the most recent interim statements (income statements and balance sheets) for the organization (not required for start-ups, municipal entities, and Indigenous communities);
- Projected financial statements (income statements and balance sheets) for three years following completion of the project (not required for municipal entities and Indigenous communities);

- For municipal entities and Indigenous communities, a document outlining the project or attraction's revenues and expenses and a resolution committing to cover operating costs for five years;
- Resolution of the board of directors (or equivalent) mandating the signatory of the application for financial assistance to this program and any documents relevant to the application;
- For construction projects of \$150,000 or more, an email from the Ministry of Culture and Communications indicating whether the project is subject to the [Policy on the Integration of Arts into the Architecture and Environment of Government and Public Buildings and Sites](#);
- For organizations that operate in Quebec and employ 25 or more people over a six-month period, a certificate or attestation issued by the OQLF confirming compliance with the language requirement;
- Confirmation from financial partners, if available;
- For nature and adventure tourism businesses, a document proving that they comply with the standards of the *Aventure Écotourisme Québec Quality-Safety Certification*, or that they have begun the process of complying with the standards of this program, or that they are committed to undertaking such a process;
- If applicable, an Indigenous certificate or certification recognizing the Indigenous status of the OBL, NPO, or cooperative (this is used to determine the rate of assistance).

### HOW TO APPLY

Complete Form *PDTO 25-27\_Accommodation* and return it, along with the required documents, to: [programmes@tourisme-outaouais.ca](mailto:programmes@tourisme-outaouais.ca)

For more information, contact Jeremy Howard at 819-576-3164 or [jhoward@tourisme-outaouais.ca](mailto:jhoward@tourisme-outaouais.ca).

### DEFINITIONS AND RESOURCES

Sustainable development is "development that meets the needs of the present without compromising the ability of future generations to meet their own needs."

The project must include significant measures for responsible and sustainable development that limit the project's negative impacts on the environment and adapt to climate change. Here are some examples of areas of action that projects can focus on:

**Preservation of the environment and natural resources:** Good waste management, carbon offsetting, water and energy saving measures, sustainable mobility measures, choice of locations with low environmental impact, and restoration of the space after the event.

**Promoting inclusion and social cohesion:** Collaboration with social and cultural organizations, universal accessibility of infrastructure and services, job creation for underrepresented groups, training or public awareness on environmental and social issues, citizen consultation and social acceptability measures.

**Ensuring local economic sustainability:** Demonstrate the organization of local economic benefits in procurement and contracting while integrating circular economy practices. Develop partnerships with other tourism businesses in the region to optimize and structure the offering with a view to slow tourism.

**Certifications:** Have obtained, or be in the process of obtaining, certifications specific to the field of activity or to the holding of eco-responsible events.

The developer must submit measurable and assessable performance indicators based on the UN Sustainable Development Goals, which will enable progress toward achieving the provincial government's GHG reduction target. In

this regard, and to meet future government requirements, it would be appropriate to begin considering the carbon and environmental footprint generated by the business or activity.