

TOURISME OUTAOUAIS

AGRI-SHOWCASE 2023–2024

SUPPORT FOR THE DEVELOPMENT OF AGRITOURISM AND FOOD TOURISM IN THE OUTAOUAIS

For several years now, Outaouais Tourism (OT) has been actively involved in developing agritourism and food tourism. To ensure a factual basis for these initiatives, OT invested in business intelligence in this activity sector. In December 2019, a survey was conducted by Léger to gauge, among other things, public enthusiasm in the Outaouais and Ottawa regions for local products. In 2020, we mandated the Société du réseau Économusée (SRÉ) to conduct a study and a consensus-building exercise to define our regional identity and inform the development of an action plan to promote and structure our food tourism offering. In 2022, we hired RCGT Consulting to distil a regional profile from the provincial study on the socioeconomic and tourism benefits of agritourism and food tourism.

Agritourism and food tourism invite residents and visitors to discover a region through its terroir, its agritourism or bio-food activities, and its culinary experiences. Those experiences range widely (tasting products, visiting a farm, participating in a workshop, etc.) and are offered by various agencies and organizations, including producers, artisan-processors, shops, festivals and restaurants. In all, this sector comprises more than 2,000 Outaouais businesses and organizations. Studies carried out over the last ten years clearly show that agritourism and food tourism, long seen as complementary to the tourism offering, are a major draw in themselves and a dynamic sector that generates tourist stays and significant economic spinoffs.

OBJECTIVES

1. Develop an attractive offer in the agritourism and food tourism sector.
2. Position the Outaouais as a prime destination for food tourism enthusiasts.
3. Promote tourism that benefits individuals and respects communities.
4. Strengthen the competitiveness of agritourism businesses.
5. Contribute to the development and strengthening of local supply chains.

CLIENTS ELIGIBLE FOR PROGRAM FUNDING

To be eligible, applicants must contribute to the development of agritourism and food tourism.

The following types of clients are eligible:

- Businesses operating in the agritourism and food tourism sector:¹
 - For-profit organizations (FPOs)
 - Non-profit organizations (NPOs)
 - Cooperatives

¹ Including restaurants wishing to enhance the visitor experience, use local products and highlight local produce

- Indigenous communities and nations recognized by the Quebec National Assembly, and Indigenous tourism businesses and organizations
- Any combination or grouping of the above

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

Where applicable, eligible organizations must have fulfilled their commitments to the partners with respect to previous funding.

The following are *not* eligible for funding:

- Crown corporations and departments and agencies of the governments of Quebec and Canada
- Municipal entities²
- Companies controlled directly or indirectly by a government (provincial or federal)
- Companies that are majority owned by a Crown corporation; companies under the protection of the *Companies' Creditors Arrangement Act* or the *Bankruptcy and Insolvency Act*
- Companies listed in the Registre des entreprises non admissibles aux contrats publics (RENA) (Quebec register of companies not eligible for public contracts)
- Companies that, in the two years preceding the application for financial assistance, have failed to meet their obligations after having been duly given formal notice in connection with financial assistance previously provided by MTO.

IMPLEMENTATION OF AGRITOURISM AND FOOD TOURISM PROJECTS

Maximum funding amount: 50% of eligible costs to a maximum of \$50,000

The proposed project must be designed to implement the recommendations of the agritourism and food tourism assessment or action plan developed by an external firm.

The project must reflect sustainable development principles based on [the UN's Sustainable Development Goals](#) (SDGs).

ELIGIBLE PROJECTS

The following types of projects are eligible for program funding:

- Projects designed to set up or enhance an attraction, facility, activity or service in the agritourism and food tourism sector, or a digital solution based on the external firm's recommendations.

NON-ELIGIBLE PROJECTS

The following types of projects are not eligible for program funding:

- Project whose sole purpose consist in the:
 - Replacement of equipment
 - Acquisition of a business
- Projects whose sole purpose is to develop or add to the supply of, in particular:
 - general tourist accommodation establishments such as bed and breakfasts and tourist residences
 - golf courses and docks
 - tourist signage (blue signboards)
 - retail outlets (excluding local product stands)
 - tourist information offices
 - advertising placements
 - activities in the gaming sector
 - the sale or consumption of alcohol or cannabis

² The term *municipal entity* includes municipalities, cities, towns, villages, parishes, townships, united townships, northern villages, unorganized areas, regional county municipalities (RCMs), metropolitan areas, intermunicipal boards, businesses or organizations where a municipal entity appoints the majority of the members or provides more than half of the business or organization's funding, and any group or association of such municipalities, businesses or organizations.

- Projects in the gaming sector
- Projects in the food service sector (except those that extend or promote the use of local products)
- Projects already completed at the time of application
- Projects with a majority of costs related to upgrading, maintaining or replacing existing infrastructure or equipment

ELIGIBLE COSTS

- Costs incurred to carry out eligible projects (construction, reconstruction, expansion, development, adaptation or conversion, replacement of infrastructure or equipment, and introduction of a new tourism experience).
- Professional fees and honoraria paid to expert consultants or firms, particularly for design and engineering, to technical personnel, to consultants retained to oversee and manage the eligible project, or reporting fees.
- Costs related to the development, management and improvement of land and trails.
- Costs related to the purchase and installation of specialized equipment and furniture.
- Costs of acquiring boats or rolling stock to improve the customer experience.
- Costs of land acquisition, easements and rights of way and other related costs, to the extent that such land is required for the project. However, such costs may not be incurred with a related company or where the asset in question is owned, in whole or in part, by a shareholder or shareholders of the company.
- Site survey costs.
- Quality control costs at the construction site.
- The non-refundable portion of taxes on eligible costs.
- Costs related to the integration of a work of art into a building or site, as per the Quebec government's *Politique d'intégration des arts à l'architecture et à l'environnement des bâtiments et des sites gouvernementaux et publics* (policy to integrate art into the architecture and environment of government and public buildings and spaces).

NON-ELIGIBLE COSTS

- Costs of acquiring a business and its infrastructure.
- Promotion and marketing costs, including website redesign.
- Costs of acquiring animals.
- Costs of administrative equipment and materials.
- Costs of leasing land, buildings and other facilities (emphyteutic lease).
- Costs of acquiring motorized transport equipment not dedicated to the visitor experience.
- The cost of services or work normally provided by a funding recipient or any other agent of the recipient (e.g., regular maintenance, housekeeping).
- Costs related to working capital, debt service, operating losses, capital losses or redemption of capital
- Costs of facility upgrades (other than those required by health protocols issued by the Quebec government or one of its partners), asset maintenance or regulatory compliance.
- The portion of the Quebec sales tax and the portion of the goods and services tax and other costs for which the business (or a third party) is entitled to a refund.
- Transfers of assets and donations and contributions in kind or in services.
- Normal maintenance and operating costs.
- Financing costs.

FUNDING CHARACTERISTICS

A business may receive funding for only one project under each component.

Stacked government funding and applicant's contribution

Stacked government funding includes contributions from municipal entities and from Quebec and federal government departments and agencies.

Stacked government funding must not exceed 80%³ of the total eligible project costs. Maximum allowable stacked government funding refers to the total amount received from Quebec and federal government departments and agencies, their Crown corporations, and municipal entities. However, funding from municipal entities for projects for which they are project sponsors is not included in this calculation when those entities act as applicants for the project.

³ Except in the case of Indigenous communities or nations (including FPOs and NPOs), where the maximum allowable stacked government funding can be up to 90% of the total eligible costs.

The table below shows the percentages that apply to the promoter's contribution and to stacked funding, according to the eligible applicant category, for Components 1 and 2 of the funding program:

Eligible applicant category	Promoter's minimum contribution	Maximum allowable stacked government funding
FPO	50%	50%
NPO, cooperative or municipal entity	20%	80%
Indigenous community, organization or nation	10%	90%
Group application	20%	Depending on the category/ies of the organizations applying, the lowest percentage applies

Project funding

Funding for each project must include a contribution from non-government sources. **The promoter has 6 months to secure the funding.**

Funding increase

Under no circumstances will funding for approved projects be increased to cover cost overruns.

Memorandum of agreement

Projects selected for funding will be subject to a memorandum of understanding (MOU) between the funder and the promoter. The MOU will define the terms of payment and the obligations of the parties. A sample MOU is available on request.

Project duration

Maximum duration of two years, starting on the date of the letter confirming the granting of project funding.

SPECIFIC RULES

ACT RESPECTING FRENCH, THE OFFICIAL AND COMMON LANGUAGE OF QUEBEC

On June 1, 2022, the *Act respecting French, the official and common language of Quebec* came into force. All businesses operating in Quebec, regardless of their size, must comply with its terms.

SUPPORTING DOCUMENTS REQUIRED

- Completed and signed application form SUBMITTED AS AN EXCEL FILE.
- Analysis and recommendations provided by a specialized external firm.
- Proof of promoter's contribution.
- Resolution of the board of directors (or equivalent body) authorizing the signatory of the program funding application and any document relevant to the application.
- Detailed marketing plan identifying target markets and including action planning, budget allocation, task distribution, implementation schedule, and key indicators for monitoring and evaluating results.
- List of authorizations, certifications and/or permits required for the project.
- Letters of support for the project, if applicable.
- Confirmation of financial partners, if available.
- Proof of membership or commitment to become a member should funding be approved.
- Project promoter's financial statements for the two (2) fiscal periods preceding the funding application. For municipal entities and Indigenous communities, a statement of the revenues and expenses of the project or attraction (not required for startups).
- Projected financial statements for the three (3) fiscal periods following project completion.
- 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).
- Email from the Ministère de la Culture et des Communications indicating whether the project is subject to the *Politique d'intégration des arts à l'architecture et à l'environnement des bâtiments et des sites gouvernementaux et publics*.

PROJECT SELECTION CRITERIA

Eligible projects will be assessed according to the following criteria:

- Extent to which the project supports the objectives of the Agri-Showcase 2023–2024 program.
- Structuring potential (capacity to attract new visitors to the region; local, regional and sectoral scope; quantifiable spinoffs; participation of other partners; impact on job creation; extension of the tourist season; etc.).
- Innovative character of the project (new dimension to existing tourism offer, new trends not offered by the competition).
- Quality of project concept, product(s) and services.
- Financial structure and viability (promoter's contribution, thorough search for funding, relevance of assistance requested, financial health of the company or promoter, reliable and realistic financial data, self-financing prospects, community support, etc.).
- Relevance (size and diversity of tourism clientele, size of project's target market, competition, quality of the offer, marketing strategy, significant spinoffs, networking, etc.).
- Feasibility (timeframe, marketing strategy, quality of business plan or study, promoter's expertise);
- Integration of sustainable development principles based on [the UN's Sustainable Development Goals](#) (SDGs).

HOW TO APPLY

Complete the form titled *Demande d'aide financière VITRINEAGRO 23-26* and submit it, together with the required supporting material, to programmes@tourisme-outaouais.ca.

For more information, please contact:

Jeremy Howard
Tourism Development Advisor
819 576-3164
jhoward@tourisme-outaouais.ca