



Tourism Small Business Assistance Project



With the support of Canada Economic
Development for Quebec Regions.

PRESS RELEASE
For immediate release

The FCCQ and the Réseau des SADC et CAE obtain \$40 million to help tourism small businesses seize the opportunities of the recovery

Orford, January 11, 2023 – During her visit to the Mont-Orford ski resort for the launch of the *Tourism Small Business Assistance Project*, the Honourable Pascale St-Onge, Minister of Sports and Minister responsible for Canada Economic Development for Quebec Regions (CED), announced investments totalling \$40 million granted to the Fédération des chambres de commerce du Québec (FCCQ) and the Réseau des SADC et CAE.

This recovery assistance project is designed to provide non-repayable contributions to tourism small businesses. CED's financial assistance will enable them to carry out investment projects to adapt or develop their products and services to meet customer needs.

Building on the strengths of two regional economic development partners

Through the two non-repayable contributions of \$20 million to the FCCQ and the SADC and CAE respectively under CED's Tourism Assistance Fund, this assistance project will be deployed throughout Quebec as a result of the combined strengths of these two regional economic development partners. This collaboration is already well underway, notably with the delivery of the Canadian Digital Adoption Program. The two partners will administer the \$40 million project to invest in tourism small businesses as follows: SADCs and CAEs will benefit from \$20 million in rural areas and \$20 million will be allocated to chambers of commerce for urban areas.

This project complements the interventions of other partners to support a tourism industry that has been heavily affected by the consequences of the pandemic.

"Tourism businesses and organizations are key players in the economic vitality of our regions and local workers. Thanks to the \$40 million in assistance announced today, the FCCQ and the Réseau des SADC et CAE will enable small businesses in the industry to better equip themselves and improve their offerings for the upcoming tourism seasons. Our support is an important step in the recovery efforts to attract tourists from Canada and around the world so that everyone can discover the best tourism experiences that Quebec and Canada have to offer," said the Honourable Pascale St-Onge, MP for Brome-Missisquoi, Minister of Sports and Minister responsible for CED.

"The 123 affiliated chambers of commerce and the FCCQ are at the service of the success of Quebec businesses and cover the entire territory. They have unique know-how in bringing together economic development stakeholders and mobilizing them to support recovery projects in all sectors of activity. It is a strength to have this network to carry out recovery projects like the one we are carrying out with small tourism businesses. With this project, we hope to help more than 1,000 businesses with our partner, the Réseau des SADC et CAE," explains Charles Milliard, CEO of the FCCQ.

SADC and CAE have solid experience in the field of financing and business support. "For more than 40 years, we have been acting locally, in the regions of Quebec. Over the past 12 years alone, we have invested nearly \$800 million in Quebec businesses through our network. We would like to thank Minister Ste-Onge and Canada Economic Development for Quebec Regions for the support that will enable us to carry out this new project, which we are very enthusiastic about deploying in collaboration with the FCCQ," added Vallier Daigle, President of the Réseau des SADC et CAE.

Quick and timely assistance

This project comes at the right time and considers the needs of the community, since the assistance can be granted before the peak tourist season. The funds will be allocated in cohesion with the players in the tourism industry ecosystem to promote regional economic benefits. The needs expressed in the field are great and promising projects have already been targeted, since the deadline for submitting is coming up very quickly, i.e., March 31, 2023.

"Herbes Orford is pleased to benefit from the *Tourism Small Business Assistance Project*. The financial assistance will allow us to carry out our outdoor landscaping project which will make the visit of our gardens even more enriching for our visitors. We will be able to add, among other things, additional plants, set up awareness stations, produce an information booklet and create a new fun and educational activity for families for the next summer season," explains Mélissa Mercier, owner of Herbes Orford.

PANEL - A committed ecosystem

Following the press conference, several players in the tourism ecosystem participated in a panel. These experts came to paint a realistic picture of this resilient industry that is resolutely focused on recovery despite the vast challenges it faces. These personalities will be ambassadors for the *Tourism Small Business Assistance Project* in their communities:

- Mr. Jacques Demers, Mayor of Ste-Catherine de Hatley, Reeve of the Memphremagog MRC and President of the Fédération québécoise des municipalités, and member of the Board of Directors of the Federation of Canadian Municipalities. In the Memphrémagog region, he is notably the president of the Corporation Ski & Golf Mont-Orford.
- Mr. Dave Laveau, General Manager, Indigenous Quebec Tourism
- Ms. Annie Langevin, General Manager, Tourisme Cantons-de-l'Est
- Ms. Mélissa Mercier, owner, Herbes Orford
- Mr. Nicolas Roy, co-founder and artistic director, Mont VR
- Mrs. Geneviève Vallières, Director of Mine Capelton
- Mr. David Martel, Marketing Director, Voyages Mercedes
- Ms. Louise Bourgault, Executive Vice President and General Manager, Sherbrooke Chamber of Commerce and Industry
- Mr. Réal Desautels, General Manager, CAE Memphrémagog

About the Fédération des chambres de commerce du Québec

Thanks to its vast network of nearly 123 chambers of commerce and 1,100 corporate members, the Fédération des chambres de commerce du Québec (FCCQ) represents more than 45,000 businesses operating in all sectors of the economy throughout Quebec. The FCCQ is the largest network of businesspeople and companies in Quebec and is both a federation of chambers of commerce and a provincial chamber of commerce. Its members, whether they are chambers or businesses, all pursue the same goal: to foster an innovative and competitive business environment.

About the SADC and CAE Network

SADCs and CAEs are non-profit organizations that have been working for more than 40 years on the economic development of Quebec's regions. The Network includes 57 SADC (Sociétés d'aide au développement des collectivités) and 10 CAE (Centres d'aide aux entreprises). They have over 400 professionals and 600 volunteers who support innovative projects and businesses for prosperous communities. Each year, they help and finance more than 10,000 businesses and over 1,500 local projects.

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Media contact :

Laurent Corbeil

Communications advisor and Press Secretary

laurent.corbeil@fccq.ca

514 844-9571 p. 3206

Christine Pilote

Director of Communications

Réseau des SADC et CAE

cpilote@sadc-cae.ca

Office : 581 999-6363