

OUTAOUAIS TOURISM REGION

**SUSTAINABLE TRANSITION
SUPPORT MEASURE (STSM)
FOR OUTAOUAIS TOURISM
BUSINESSES**

2022–2023

PROMOTER'S GUIDE



Table of Contents

1.	INTRODUCTION	3
2.	APPLICATION FRAMEWORK	3
3.	OBJECTIVES	3
3.1	EXPECTED OUTCOMES AND BENEFITS	3
4.	PRIORITY TOURISM SECTORS	4
5.	CLIENTS ELIGIBLE FOR FUNDING	4
6.	THE PROGRAM'S TWO COMPONENTS	5
6.1	COMPONENT 1 : PROJECT PLANNING	5
6.2	COMPONENT 2 : PROJECT IMPLEMENTATION	5
6.3	NON-ELIGIBLE PROJECTS AND COSTS	6
7.	MINIMUM PROJECT REQUIREMENTS	6
7.1	PROMOTER'S CONTRIBUTION	7
7.2	STACKED GOVERNMENT FUNDING	7
8.	MEMORANDUM OF AGREEMENT AND UNDERTAKING	7
9.	SELECTION CRITERIA	8
10.	HOW TO APPLY	8
11.	SUPPORTING DOCUMENTS REQUIRED	8
11.1	FOR ALL PROJECTS	8
12.	PROJECT ASSESSMENT TIMELINE	9
13.	HELP WITH YOUR APPLICATION	9

1. INTRODUCTION

In partnership with the region's tourism partners, Outaouais Tourism is working on a diagnostic of the region in terms of sustainable tourism. The approach aims to unite all stakeholders around a new vision and a major industry transition.

To meet market expectations and encourage a responsible transition to more sustainable operations, Outaouais Tourism is implementing a financial assistance program Sustainable Transition Support Measure (STSM) to partner with the region's tourism businesses in the implementation of framing and structuring projects that target sustainable development.

This call for projects is in line with the priorities identified in the Plan d'action pour un tourisme responsable et durable (Responsible and Sustainable Tourism Action Plan) issued by the Ministère du Tourisme du Québec, and in line with the report entitled État de la situation du tourisme durable en Outaouais et recommandations (State of Sustainable Tourism in the Outaouais, and Recommendations).

2. APPLICATION FRAMEWORK

The present document contains the rules and guidelines for the project application and evaluation process. Project promoters are encouraged to read this information carefully.

3. OBJECTIVES

The *Sustainable Transition Support Measure (STSM) for Outaouais Tourism Businesses* reflects Outaouais Tourism's desire to support the transition of the regional tourism industry, and is based on the five elements put forward by the Ministry of Tourism:

- Supporting the transition to a circular economy;
- Promoting sustainable means of transport;
- Developing nature and adventure tourism using an ecotourism approach;
- Promoting tourism that is beneficial to individuals and respectful of communities;
- Supporting businesses in adapting and innovating in the face of climate change.

3.1 EXPECTED OUTCOMES AND BENEFITS

Program funding is intended to support tourism industry partners to ensure that they initiate the transition to responsible tourism.

Examples of expected benefits:

- Better management of waste materials;
- Reduced energy consumption;
- More responsible procurement;
- Reduced water consumption;
- Reduced greenhouse gas (GHG) emissions.

4. PRIORITY TOURISM SECTORS

The following have been identified as priority sectors:

- Culture;
- Agritourism;
- Boating;
- Outdoor activities;
- Unusual accommodations;
- Winter.

PROGRAM ELIGIBILITY REQUIREMENTS

5. CLIENTS ELIGIBLE FOR FUNDING

All activity sectors are eligible except the restaurant and retail sectors. However, businesses operating in the gourmet tourism sector¹ and groups or associations of restaurants submitting a joint application are eligible.

For the purposes of sustainable transition, the aforementioned sectors, businesses and restaurant groups are defined as tourist attractions or tourist accommodation establishments.

They must be legally constituted in Quebec in one of the following forms:

- For-profit organizations (FPOs) legally constituted in Quebec;
- Non-profit organizations (NPOs) legally constituted in Quebec;
- Cooperatives legally constituted in Quebec;
- Municipal entities²;
- Indigenous communities, organizations and nations recognized by the Quebec National Assembly;
- Any combination or grouping of the above.

A project's eligibility does not constitute a guarantee of funding or any obligation under the *Sustainable Transition Support Measure for Outaouais Tourism Businesses*.

If applicable, eligible organizations must have fulfilled their obligations to the Regional Tourism Association (RTA) with regard to the award of a previous grant.

¹ Gourmet tourism includes visits, activities and tastings offered by agricultural growers and producers; meals at restaurants promoting regional products; visits to public markets; participation in circuits, routes or events of a gourmet nature; and participation in culinary workshops with chefs.

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.

Non-eligible clients:

The following are **not** eligible for funding under the STSM: Crown corporations, departments and agencies of the Government of Quebec and the Government of Canada, and applicants listed on the register of enterprises ineligible for public contracts.

6. THE PROGRAM'S TWO COMPONENTS

Projects should aim to identify the strengths, weaknesses, issues and challenges facing the business. They should propose solutions for adapting to climate change, developing a strategy, or implementing initiatives that are consistent with a sustainable development approach. Funding in the form of a non-repayable grant will be available for projects in the following categories:

- Component 1: Project Planning;
- Component 2: Project Implementation.

6.1 COMPONENT 1 : PROJECT PLANNING

This category refers to studies that require specific expertise to support sustainable development, mitigation or adaptation to climate change. The work must be performed by a consultant or organization with recognized expertise in the sustainable development field.

Maximum funding amount per project: 75% of eligible costs, to a maximum of \$10,000.

Examples of eligible projects:

- Strategic approach to sustainable development (diagnosis, action plan and support);
- Energy consumption audit and review;
- Waste materials management plan;
- Feasibility study for the implementation of clean technologies (heat recovery system, geothermal system, solar panels, biomass boiler, etc.).

Eligible costs:

- Professional fees paid to expert consultants or firms to conduct a targeted sustainable development study;
- Project-related travel costs incurred by the consultant or firm;
- The non-refundable portion of taxes applicable to eligible costs.

6.2 COMPONENT 2 : PROJECT IMPLEMENTATION

This category refers to the implementation of green economy, climate change mitigation, and adaptation projects that support the transition to more sustainable operations (acquisition and implementation of clean technologies).

Maximum funding amount per project: 50% of eligible costs, to a maximum of \$80,000.

Examples of eligible projects:

Acquisition and implementation of clean technologies (e.g., heat recovery system, geothermal system, solar panels, biomass boiler, charging stations, digital development).

Eligible costs:

- Professional fees for assistance with implementing the proposed solution(s);
- Purchase and installation of technological or specialized equipment needed to implement the solution(s);
- Travel expenses (comparable to the RTA's), general expenses, wages and benefits of the promoter's employees working exclusively on the project;
- Costs of training or developing the staff responsible for or assigned to the implementation of clean technology;
- The non-refundable portion of taxes applicable to eligible costs.

6.3 NON-ELIGIBLE PROJECTS AND COSTS

Non-eligible projects:

- Projects in the retail, hospitality or gaming sectors, or projects associated with the sale and consumption of alcohol;
- Projects related to debt financing, loan repayment, or financing of a project already completed;
- Projects in progress or already completed at the time of application to the RTA.

Non-eligible costs:

- Costs related to working capital, debt service, operating losses, capital losses or redemption of capital;
- Costs of facility upgrades, asset maintenance or regulatory compliance;
- Salaries, operating costs and administrative expenses normally paid by the promoter;
- Costs of buying or renting land, buildings or facilities;
- Purchase of automobile(s) or motorized rolling stock;
- Donations and contributions in kind or in services;
- Asset transfers;
- Cost overruns;
- Legal fees;
- Expenses incurred by the promoter prior to the time of application to the RTA.

FUNDING CHARACTERISTICS

7. MINIMUM PROJECT REQUIREMENTS

- The project must be located within the Outaouais tourism region.
- The project's target clientele must consist primarily of tourists.
- The project must comply with all laws and regulations in force in the Province of Quebec.
- The project must comply with the criteria and requirements set out in this Guide.

7.1 PROMOTER'S CONTRIBUTION

At least 20% of the total eligible project costs (10% for Indigenous communities or nations, including FPOs and NPOs) must be funded by non-government (private-sector) sources.

The promoter's contribution, including funding from partners (community, city or town, private sponsorships, etc.), if applicable, cannot come from:

- Sources included in stacked government funding, as defined below;
- A transfer of assets;
- A contribution of goods or services.

7.2 STACKED GOVERNMENT FUNDING

Stacked government funding includes contributions from municipal entities and from departments and agencies of the Government of Quebec and the Government of Canada, including repayable grants calculated at 50% of their value specifically allocated to the project. In this context, STSM funding is considered a grant and must be included in the calculation of stacked government funding.

The table below shows the percentages that apply to the promoter's contribution and to stacked funding, according to applicant category.

Applicant category	Minimum contribution	Maximum allowable stacked government funding
FPO	20%	80%
NPO	20%	80%
Cooperative	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.

8. MEMORANDUM OF AGREEMENT AND UNDERTAKING

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.

The parties agree and undertake that:

- The project cannot be completed until the funding agreement has been ratified. Costs are eligible from the filing date of the application;
- The funded project must be completed and the final payment made **by March 31, 2023**;
- The promoter must submit a project report at the end of the project period.

9. SELECTION CRITERIA

Eligible projects must be aligned with the priority areas targeted by this program, i.e.:

- Supporting the transition to a green and circular economy;
- Promoting sustainable means of transport;
- Developing nature and adventure tourism using an ecotourism approach;
- Promoting tourism that is beneficial to individuals and respectful of communities; and/or
- Supporting businesses in adapting, mitigating and innovating with regard to climate change.

FUNDING APPLICATION PROCESS

10. HOW TO APPLY

To apply for funding under the STSM program, you must:

1. Contact the program coordinator to confirm your project's eligibility and request a copy of the application form.
2. Submit electronic copies of your project proposal form³ and supporting documents (see Section 11) by email to bchaireswences@tourisme-outaouais.ca.

11. SUPPORTING DOCUMENTS REQUIRED

11.1 FOR ALL PROJECTS

- A copy of the completed application form⁴ signed by the authorized project representative.
- A copy of the organization's articles of incorporation or certificate of registration.
- Evidence of financial commitments, e.g., proof of support from project partners (letters of support, partnership agreements, confirmation email, etc.).
- A motion passed by the organization or business authorizing the person signing the funding application to act as the organization's designated representative in matters relating to the program and project.
- A copy of the financial statements of the organization or business for the previous two (2) complete fiscal years, approved by the board of directors (if applicable).
- A copy of the most recent interim financial statements.

³ In the case of a group application for a joint project, one business in the group should complete the application, specifying the other members of the group and attaching a letter of commitment from each one. All members must meet the STSM eligibility criteria.

⁴ The application form will be distributed to the members of the selection committee and will serve as the basis for their evaluation. Therefore, please pay special attention when completing the form. The supporting documents will be forwarded to the person responsible for evaluating project proposals. Promoters can be sure that the documents and data requested as part of their application will be given limited distribution and will be kept secure and confidential.

- A copy of all calls for tenders or requests for proposals issued to consultants, firms or other service providers, if applicable, and including the following elements:
 - Description of the issue;
 - Nature and objectives of the study;
 - Proposed methodology;
 - Project schedule and budget;
 - Deliverables;
 - Copies of at least two (2) offers of professional services.

12. PROJECT ASSESSMENT TIMELINE

1. Promoter submits project proposal and application (anytime between June 13, 2022 and September 12, 2022).
2. RTA assesses the eligibility of the applicant and the project.
3. If necessary, RTA requests additional information from the promoter.
4. Selection committee evaluates the project proposal and makes its recommendations.
5. STSM administration decides whether to accept or reject the application and notifies the promoter/applicant accordingly.
6. If the application is accepted, promoter signs a funding MOU under the STSM.

13. HELP WITH YOUR APPLICATION

For more information about the *Sustainable Transition Support Measure for Outaouais Tourism Businesses*, please contact:

Betsabe Elena Chaires Wences
Advisor, Tourism Development
Outaouais Tourism
819-778-2530 ext. 220
819-576-3166
bchaireswences@tourisme-outaouais.ca