

CATEGORY: DIGITAL BUSINESS DEVELOPMENT

The Outaouais Region Tourism Development Program 2022–2025 (ORTDP 22–25) reflects the joint desire of Quebec’s Ministry of Tourism (MTO) and Outaouais Tourism to join forces to fund and support the development and growth of local tourism partners and businesses, in a responsible and sustainable way.

OBJECTIVES

Projects must be designed to meet the following objectives:

- Stimulate the regional economy by:
 - Developing an attractive and distinctive tourism offer;
 - Presenting an innovative tourism offer;
 - Developing new niches for tourism businesses.
- Promote the development of a responsible and sustainable tourism offer by:
 - Adopting socially responsible practices for tourism enterprises;
 - Integrating innovative, environmentally friendly solutions.

CLIENTS ELIGIBLE FOR PROGRAM FUNDING

The following types of clients are eligible for funding under the ORDTP:

- Tourism enterprises
 - For-profit organizations (FPOs)
 - Non-profit organizations (NPOs)
 - Cooperatives
- Municipal entities¹
- 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.

Businesses and organizations operating a tourist accommodation establishment must comply with the laws and regulations in force for that type of establishment, and must have a registration number.

Businesses offering ecotourism and guided adventure activities must have the “[Quality/Safety Certification](#)” or “[Quality/Safety Attestation](#)” seal from Aventure Écotourisme Québec, have begun the process of obtaining it, or commit to obtaining it.

The following are *not* eligible for program funding:

- Crown corporations and departments and agencies of the governments of Quebec and Canada
- Companies listed in the Registre des entreprises non admissibles aux contrats publics (RENA) (Quebec register of companies not eligible for public contracts)
- Companies that do not comply with the francization process of the Office québécois de la langue française

Notwithstanding the foregoing, funding will not be granted to a business if the Ministère du tourisme is funding a similar project coordinated by a group of sectorial businesses (e.g., an Association touristique sectorielle [ATS]).

ELIGIBLE PROJECTS

Funding may be granted for the digital development of a business to increase virtual or digital interaction with customers while continuing to offer a quality customer experience.

This category supports the implementation of digital features (payment terminal, virtual card, reservation system, self-service kiosk, delivery robot, etc.).

This category targets the implementation of business solutions in an organization. For a digital attraction project, please refer to the *Attractions, Activities and Equipment* category. For a digital needs analysis project, refer to the *Studies and Consulting Services* category.

Notwithstanding the foregoing, funding will not be granted to a business if the Ministère du tourisme is funding a similar project coordinated by a group of sectorial businesses (e.g., an Association touristique sectorielle [ATS]).

NON-ELIGIBLE PROJECTS

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

- Bed and breakfast projects
- Hotel condominium projects (condotels)
- Projects involving bicycle paths, snowmobile trails, golf courses and/or wharf repairs
- Projects in the restaurant and retail sectors
- Visitor centres and signage
- Training materials development
- Projects in the gaming sector and/or associated with the sale and consumption of alcohol
- Projects with a majority of costs related to upgrading, maintaining or replacing existing infrastructure or equipment
- Projects in progress or already completed at the time of application
- Projects receiving non-repayable funding from the *Programme d’aide à la relance de l’industrie touristique* (PARIT) or the *Programme d’appui au développement des attraits touristiques* (PADAT)

PROJECT SELECTION CRITERIA

- Extent to which the project supports the objectives of the Regional Partnership and Digital Transformation Agreement for Tourism (RPDTAT).
- Alignment with the destination’s strategic priorities in terms of culture, agritourism, outdoor activities, business tourism and experiential accommodation.
- Structuring potential (capacity to attract new visitors to the region, project scope, spinoffs, participation of other partners, impact on job creation, preservation or transformation, extension of the tourist season, etc.).
- Innovative character.
- Quality of project concept, product(s) and services.
- Financial structure and viability.
- Relevance (size and diversity of tourism clientele, size of project’s target market, competition, quality of the offer, marketing strategy, networking, etc.).
- Feasibility (timeframe, marketing strategy, quality of business plan or study, promoter’s expertise).
- Observance of sustainable development principles based on the UN’s [Sustainable Development Goals](#) (SDGs).

¹ 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.

FUNDING CHARACTERISTICS

- Funding is provided as a non-repayable grant.
- The project must have eligible costs of at least \$5,000.
- The maximum funding amount is \$30,000, and may not exceed 50% of eligible costs for FPOs and 80% for NPOs.

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

Eligible applicant category	Promoter's minimum contribution	Maximum allowable stacked government funding
FPO	50%	50%
NPO or 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.

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

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

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

ELIGIBLE COSTS

- Professional fees for the support and implementation of the proposed solutions.
- Purchase of technological or other equipment allowing the use of the solution.
- An initial subscription (maximum 24 months) to cloud computing services if the solution uses that technology.
- Purchase of hardware, software or mobile applications to increase the degree of customer interaction.
- Purchase of enterprise resource planning (ERP) software.
- Purchase of e-commerce software.
- Travel expenses (comparable to the ATR's), overhead, salaries and benefits for human resources specifically assigned to the promoter's project.
- Professional fees related to the training or development of human resources responsible for the implementation of the digital development project.
- The non-refundable portion of taxes on eligible costs.

NON-ELIGIBLE COSTS

- The promoter's ongoing salaries and operating and management costs.
- Costs of leasing land, buildings and other facilities.
- Capital expenditures related to the acquisition of equipment.
- Bandwidth purchase costs.
- Costs related to a sales commission on online sales or booking platforms.
- Recurring operating costs of the business solution.
- Development costs of video games and technological infrastructure.
- Server room setup costs.
- 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.
- Direct or indirect operating or administrative expenses.
- Normal maintenance and operating costs.
- Financing costs.
- Remuneration paid to a lobbyist.
- Costs for which the recipient has made contractual commitments prior to submitting the funding application (except for project development fees).
- Promotion, publicity and marketing costs.
- Cost overruns.
- Legal fees.

SPECIFIC RULES

EQUAL ACCESS TO EMPLOYMENT PROGRAM

- Funding of \$100,000 or more granted to an FPO with more than 100 employees includes the obligation for the organization to commit to implementing an equal access to employment program in accordance with the *Charter of Human Rights and Freedoms*.

ACT RESPECTING FRENCH, THE OFFICIAL AND COMMON LANGUAGE OF QUÉBEC

- 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.

SUSTAINABLE DEVELOPMENT

- As one of the objectives of the RPDTAT is to promote the development of a responsible and sustainable tourism offer, project assessment will take into account the overall approach proposed in terms of sustainable development.

REQUIRED DOCUMENTS

- Completed and signed application form SUBMITTED AS AN EXCEL FILE.
- A copy of the tender documents specifying the issue, the objectives of the process, the methodology (if applicable), the deadline and the expected deliverables.
- Two offers of professional services.
- Complete business plan for the project.
- Financial statements for the organization's two (2) most recent fiscal periods, and current interim statements. Not required for startups, municipal entities or Indigenous communities or nations.
- Projected financial statements for the three (3) fiscal periods following project completion (according to project scope).
- Resolution of the board of directors (or equivalent body) authorizing the signatory of the program funding application and any document relevant to the application.
- Confirmation of financial partners, if available.
- For adventure tourism businesses, proof of Quality-Safety certification or attestation from Aventure Écotourisme Québec OR a copy of an email exchange indicating that the process to obtain such certification or attestation has been undertaken;
- If applicable, an Indigenous certificate or accreditation recognizing the Indigenous status of the FPO, NPO or cooperative (this will determine the funding rate).

HOW TO APPLY

Complete the form titled *Demande d'aide financière PDTO 22-25_Numérique* and return it, together with the required supporting material, to programmes@tourisme-outaouais.ca.

For more information, please contact Charlene Raby by telephone at 819 576-3166 or by email at craby@tourisme-outaouais.ca.