

2021-2022 ANNUAL REPORT

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EIT Annual Report

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About EIT

Our History

On August 15, 2007 the Government of Québec granted Regional Tourism Association (RTA) status to the Cree Outfitting and Tourism Association (COTA).

Given the considerable difference between the RTA and COTA in terms of roles and responsibilities, a decision was made to create a separate organization, namely Eeyou Istchee Tourism (EIT) to provide for proper fulfillment of the RTA's mandate.

As set out in the formal agreement between EIT and the Government of Québec, the role of the RTA is to promote tourism and regional operators, support the development of new products, make information more readily available to tourists, and cooperate with other RTAs in creating a Québec-wide tourism policy.

The core objectives of EIT are to:

- ❖ Position and promote Eeyou Istchee as a key destination for cultural tourism, outdoor and adventure tourism, and outfitter services.
- ❖ Support the development of marketable tourism products and the upgrading of existing products with a view to contributing to regional economic growth and development of the tourism industry.
- ❖ Enhance the regional tourism infrastructure by facilitating access to information relating to tourism products and services.
- ❖ Develop a tourism industry based on the principles of sustainable development and designed to have a positive impact on youth, elders and cultural life in the region.

EIT works closely with COTA and their members to make sustainable tourism an economic reality in Eeyou Istchee Baie-James.

Membership

Dues-paying EIT members automatically become members of COTA. Some of the additional benefits for our members offered by EIT include a listing in the Regional Tourism Guide, access to targeted funding and eligibility for the cooperative marketing program.

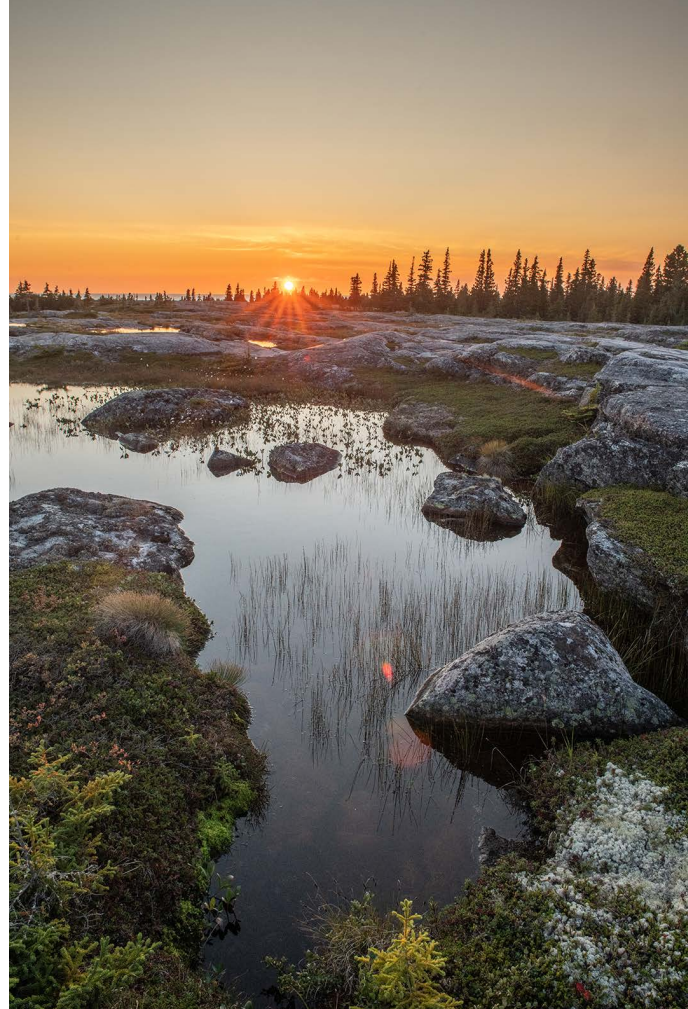
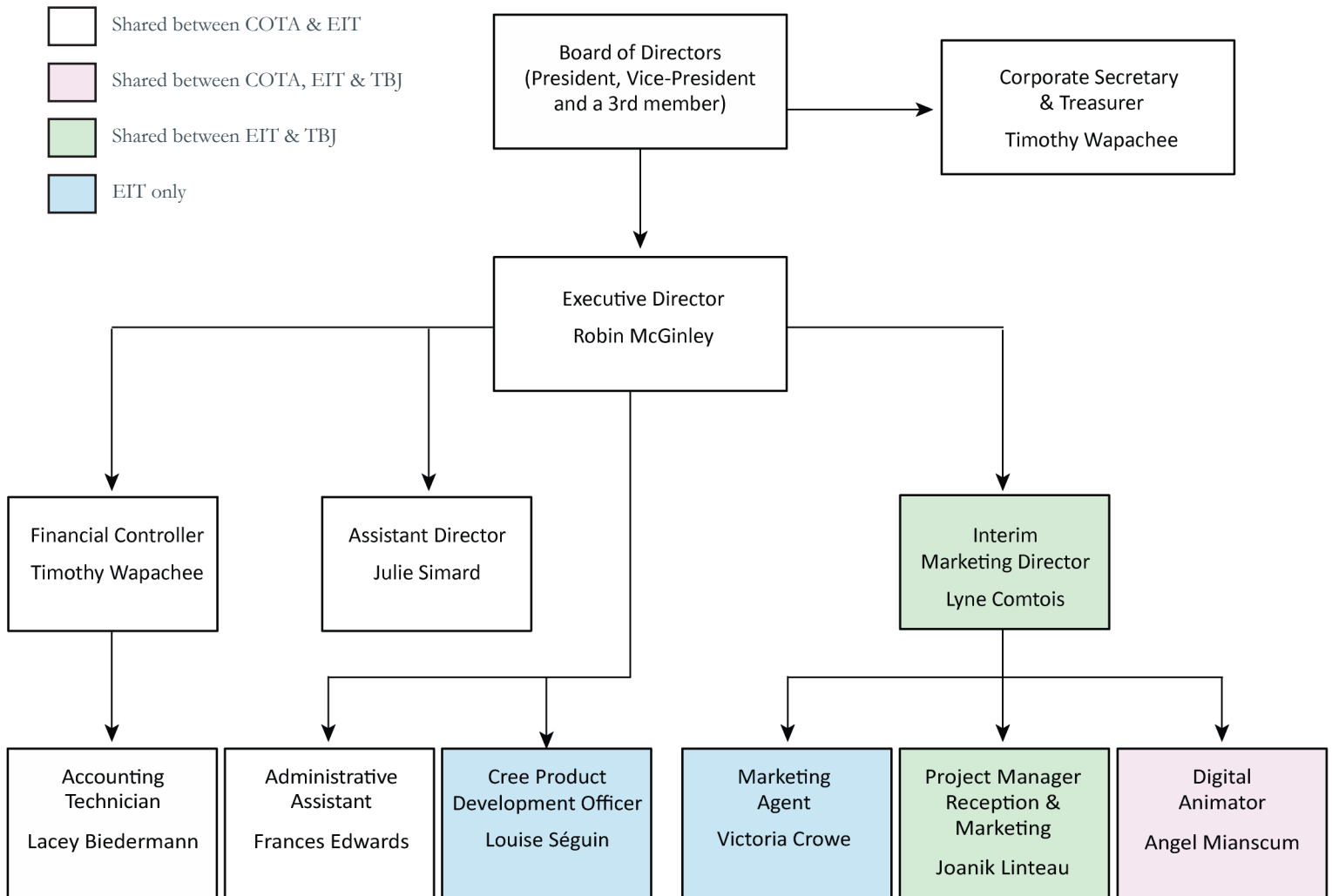


Photo credit: Annie-Claude Roberge

In 2007, COTA created EIT as a separate organization to play the role of a RTA as defined by the Québec government. As an RTA, EIT markets our region and tourism operators, supports the development of a regional tourism offer, makes tourism information more readily available, and works with other RTAs to shape Québec's tourism policy.

Organizational Chart

The chart below illustrates EIT's organizational structure to March 31, 2022



EIT's Current Board of Directors are:

Titus Shecapio – President, Jamie Moses – Vice-President, Ron Simard - Third Member

Our Year in Review

2021-2022 Project Summaries

1. Human Resources Funding: Cree Product Development Officer

The position of Cree Product Development Officer was created in 2013 as part of ongoing efforts to foster regional tourism development. The Officer's mandates and responsibilities are to:

- ❖ Support local tourism officers in the development and promotion of tourism in their respective communities.
- ❖ Promote and initiate partnerships to structure the tourism offer, including creating packages and tours based on customer preferences.
- ❖ Oversee the implementation of both the 2020-2025 Tourism Strategy and the 2020-2025 Action Plan.

Accordingly, in the course of the past year, in her role as Cree Product Development Officer, Louise Séguin has:

- ❖ Regularly attended meetings with tourism officers.
- ❖ Worked closely with Wiinipaakw Tours.
- ❖ Taken part in the development of cultural-tourism and visitor-experience packages.
- ❖ Actively participated in the implementation of Creetopia.
- ❖ Liaised between Canadian Coast Guard Auxiliary and the coastal communities to implement improved safety measures and protocols.
- ❖ Helped in the delivery of a comprehensive marine captain training program.
- ❖ Collaborated with the Eeyou Marine Region on the development of best practices for marine ecotourism and wildlife observation.
- ❖ Communicated with tourism entrepreneurs to keep them informed on the evolving COVID-19 situation.
- ❖ Conducted project analysis and presented recommendations to the management committee with respect to the Regional Tourism Partnership Agreement.

Funding for this position is provided by Tourisme Québec.

In 2021-2022, EIT was granted additional funding for this position, thereby enabling us to extend our range of services. Louise Séguin continues to work closely with tourism entrepreneurs and is active across all communities. This past year, Marc Beaulé was hired on a part-time basis to manage Phase 2 of the Creetopia project, which is specifically devoted to developing, implementing, and marketing the camps. In addition, Houle Conseils was mandated to oversee budgeting and provide support to hotels.

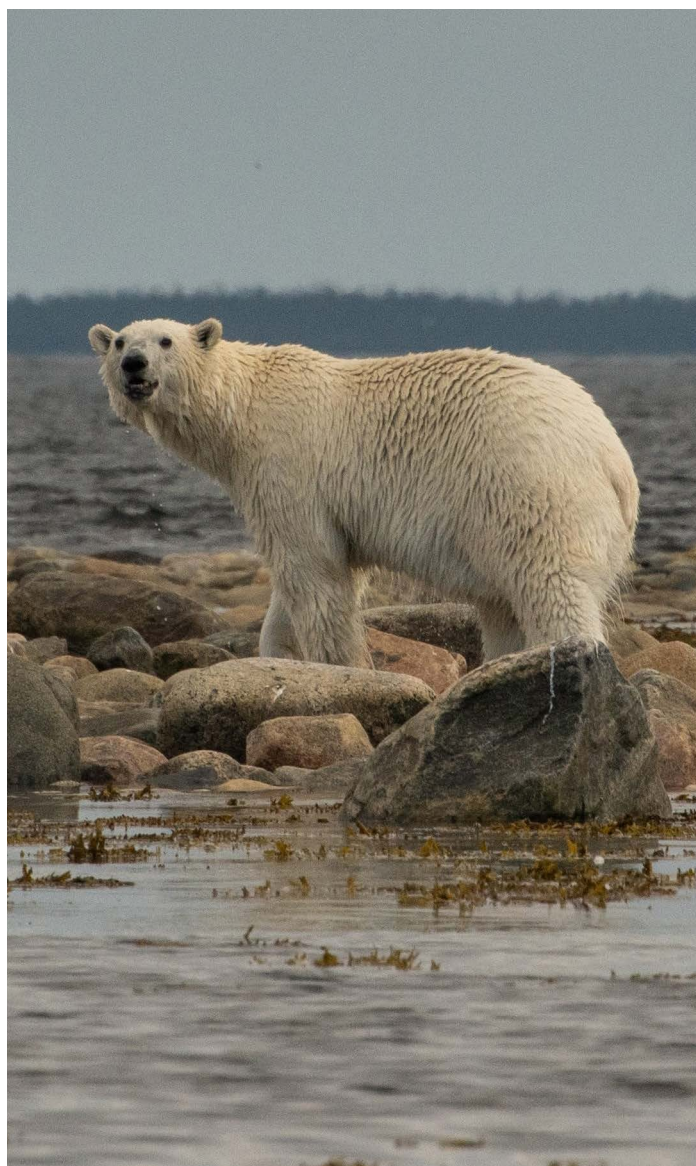


Photo credit: Annie-Claude Roberge

2. Implementing the 2019-2022 Marketing Plan

The 2019-2022 Marketing Plan for the destination of Eeyou Istchee Baie-James is aligned with the orientations set out both in the 2012-2020 Tourism Industry Development Plan and Québec's Tourism Strategy for areas north of the 49th parallel, which aims to make this region a world-class sustainable tourism destination. The Marketing Plan targets the following markets: Québec, Ontario, the Northeastern United States, and France. Eeyou Istchee Baie-James' market positioning and flagship products (Cree culture, nature and adventure, snowmobiling, fishing at outfitting camps) are to be deployed in conjunction with Alliance de l'industrie touristique du Québec, the organization in charge of coordinating, implementing, and gauging the success of promotion and marketing initiatives for the destination beyond the province's borders. We are fortunate to benefit from financial support provided by Canada Economic Development.

2.1 Marketing Initiatives in Partnership with Tourisme Baie-James

2.1.1 Québec à vol d'oiseau

In July 2021, in collaboration with Indigenous Tourism Québec, a film crew visited Pourvoirie Aventure Lac Goéland to film an episode of Québec à vol d'oiseau, a popular Quebec based hunting and fishing show. The episode will air on TVA sports.

2.1.2 Cooperative Marketing Program

The Cooperative Marketing Program (CMP) was introduced in 2013 to provide financial incentives to EIT and TBJ members to form alliances and develop and publicize tourism products and packages. Alliances allow members to promote regional tourism more effectively. The program also strives to promote tourism within and beyond the province. To that end, the CMP encourages and supports participation at travel and tourism trade shows and festivals.

Approved promotional strategies receive a grant covering up to 50% of eligible expenses. To qualify, applicants must be members of EIT or TBJ, and their products must be market-ready.

Two CMP promotional campaigns – both targeting Québec's tourism market due to travel restrictions – were deployed in the past year:

- (1) Nibiischii Corporation's advertising focusing on fishing excursions appeared in Hooké and included promotional videos and a print ad; and
- (2) Mistissini Tourism's ad placements covering one page and two-thirds of a page, respectively, in the Québec Outfitters Association Outfitting Guide.





2.1.3 TV advertisements

A series of short, 90-second video ads promoting the region were created in both English and French. Initially designed for a social media promotional campaign, a shorter version (30 seconds) was produced and broadcast on various specialty channels.

The video ads focus on:

- ❖ **Fishing and Cree Culture:** Airing from July 12 to August 1, 2021, on TVA Sports and Évasion (a channel devoted to travel and adventure).
- ❖ **Fishing:** Airing 86 times from February 7 to March 27, 2022 on TVA Sports, this ad was viewed 821,100 times.
- ❖ **Inspiration:** Airing 80 times from February 7 to March 27, 2022 on Évasion, this ad was viewed 480,000 times.
- ❖ **Inspiration and Fishing:** Airing 21 times in equal rotation from February 7 to March 27, 2022 on Addik (a channel devoted to drama programming), this ad was viewed 435,600 times.

2.1.4 Promoting Eeyou Istchee Baie-James through an inspiring video

This short but impactful promotional video showcases Cree culture and captures the beauty of Eeyou Istchee. The video, which is available in both English and French, is sure to engage and attract travellers. Have a look on YouTube (www.youtube.com/watch?v=8yOf6UPeqew).

2.1.5 Regional Tourism Guide

As part of its partnership agreement with the Ministère du Tourisme, EIT must undertake to develop a regional tourism guide in accordance with the provincial guidelines and standards. The guide, which is produced jointly with Tourisme Baie-James, is an essential source of information for travellers to the region. In addition to providing information about accommodations and restaurants, the full-colour guide highlights the many tourism attractions and activities available throughout Eeyou Istchee Baie-James and includes a profile of each Cree community.

Due to COVID 19, we will be using the current edition of the guide until 2023.

2.1.6 Facebook contests

Two contests were launched on the Eeyou Istchee Baie-James tourism region Facebook page so as to raise awareness of the region, attract new subscribers to the page, and publicize Eeyou Istchee Baie-James Travel and participating members. The “Gagnez votre forfait Saveurs jamésiennes” (“Win a James Bay flavours package”) contest ran from July 8 to 15, 2021, attracting 11,440 likes, 217 clicks, and 60 shares. The “Gagnez votre Aventure hivernale à Nibischi!” (“Win a winter adventure in Nibischi!”) contest ran from February 7 to 17, 2022, attracting 45,886 likes, 332 clicks, and 107 shares.

2.1.7 Québec Motorcycle Guide

The Québec Motorcycle Guide features travel opportunities in Eeyou Istchee Baie-James and highlights travel along the Billy-Diamond Highway (formerly the James Bay highway), the Trans-Taiga Route, and Routes 113 and 167. The Guide’s promotional campaign includes visibility on the “Québec à Moto” web site, posts on the organization’s Facebook page, and inclusion in its newsletter, which is sent to all Québec à Moto subscribers. This year, due to the COVID-19 pandemic, the guide was available by mail only.

2.1.8 ON SNOW Magazine and Snowmobiler TV

From February 13th to 15, 2022 we had an opportunity to host a press tour for ON SNOW magazine (OSM) and SnowmobilerTV (STV). OSM and STV are largely considered to be Canada's premiere resource for snowmobile enthusiasts from across Canada and the United States.

The purpose of this tour was to promote the vast array of snowmobile trails and snowmobile packages available in the region. As a result of their visit, Eeyou Istchee Baie-James was featured in an episode of STV in the winter of 2022. Additionally, two advertisements were placed in the On Snow magazine.

2.1.9 Snowmobile trail map

The snowmobile trail map creates visibility for the region's extensive snowmobile-tourism offering. Due to the COVID-19 pandemic, the 2021-2022 edition of the map has no print version and is available online only from the Fédération des Clubs de Motoneigistes du Québec (FCMQ) and Alliance de l'industrie touristique du Québec web sites.

Information about the region's snowmobile trails can also be found at escapelikeneverbefore.com, the FCMQ web site, and snowmobileinquebec.com (which is managed by Alliance de l'industrie touristique du Québec). Our regional trails also appear



on the Imotoneige app, which offers quick and easy access to all of the province's snowmobile trails and current information on snowmobiling conditions. All of this provides optimized visibility to service points across EIBJ and our snowmobile trails.

A large promotional banner for snowmobiling in Eeyou Istchee Baie-James. The background is a snowy forest path with several snowmobiles riding away. The text "WELCOME TO A LAND OF SNOW" is prominently displayed in large, bold, black letters. Below it, in smaller text, are the phrases "OVER 1100 KM OF PERFECTLY GROOMED TRAILS", "ONE OF THE LONGEST SNOWMOBILE SEASONS", and "A WORLD OF DISCOVERY". In the top right corner, there is a logo featuring a stylized bird in a red circle, with the text "EYYOU ISTCHEE BAIE-JAMES" and "ESCAPE LIKE NEVER BEFORE" below it. In the bottom right corner, there is a logo for "Wachiya!" with the tagline "Experience it all!".

**WELCOME TO
A LAND OF SNOW**

OVER 1100 KM OF PERFECTLY GROOMED TRAILS
ONE OF THE LONGEST SNOWMOBILE SEASONS
A WORLD OF DISCOVERY

**EYYOU ISTCHEE
BAIE-JAMES**
ESCAPE LIKE NEVER BEFORE

Wachiya!
Experience it all!

2.2 Performance Indicators

While the number of repeat visitors to our tourism website at escapelikeneverbefore.com decreased from 2020-2021 to 2021-2022, there was a significant rise in the number new visitors.

Platform	2020-2021	2021-2022	Change
Number of visits	88,600	84,189	-5.0%
Average number of page views	2.3	4.6	+100%
New visitors	80%	98%	+22.5%
Repeat visitors	20%	2%	-90.0%

Despite the challenges we faced again this year, thanks to our innovative marketing campaigns such as the “Win a James Bay flavours package” and “Win a winter adventure in Nibischii!” facebook contests, our social-media platforms attracted more interest from the public, as shown by the figures below:

Platform	2020-2021	2021-2022	Change
Facebook*	17,962	21,661	+20.6%
Facebook**	2,036	4,654	+128.6%
Instagram	4,972	5,787	+16.4%
YouTube	215	273	+27.0%

* Eeyou Istchee Baie-James’s promotional Facebook page

** Eeyou Istchee Baie-James’s “Your Adventure” Facebook page

2.3 Marketing Initiatives in Partnership with Alliance de l’industrie touristique du Québec (AITQ)

2.3.1 La Presse +

In collaboration with AITQ, in the October 30, 2021 edition of La Presse +, the region of Eeyou Istchee Baie-James and nine of our members were showcased. These nine members were divided into three tourism categories, namely, not-to-be-missed attractions, off-the-beaten-track activities, and local secrets.

2.3.2 Article on the web site of the magazine, L’actualité

In partnership with AITQ and Tourisme Autochtone Québec, in November 2021 a web article was published on the L’Actualité web site to promote Cree aboriginal culture. Two banners were also featured on the site.

The article can be found at <https://lactualite.com/de-notre-partenaire/decouvrir-la-richeesse-de-la-culture-cree/>.



2.3.3 Tour du Québec

Though this project was initially planned for the summer of 2020, in August 2021, we welcomed journalist Simon Jodoin from Tour du Québec. The project was designed to create content to be used by tourism associations and by AITQ itself.

During his visit, Simon Jodoin wrote a travelogue describing his road trip, which led him through Chibougamau, Oujé-Bougoumou, Chapais, and Lebel-sur-Quévillon. Business profiles were also drafted as part of this project, namely, for the microbrewery Microbrasserie Maître Renard, FaunENord, and Nibiischii Corporation. A video and photos were also produced to accompany the texts. All of these contents are to be released in spring 2022 and later shared on AITQ's platforms.

Read Simon's travelogue at escapelikeneverbefore.com/en/blog/2022/03/29/simon-s-travelogue/

2.3.4 Salut Bonjour Weekend (TVA television network)

The segment featured an interview with Stéphane Modat to promote the KWE indigenous festival (which took place in Quebec city from June 18 to July 4, 2021) and the Northern Flavours cookbook. The interview was planned and coordinated in collaboration with AITQ and Tourisme Autochtone Québec.



2.4 Marketing Initiatives Specific to Eeyou Istchee

Eeyou Istchee Tourism secured three years of funding from 2019 to 2022 from Canada Economic Development to employ a Marketing Agent to promote Cree culture and undertake strategic marketing actions beyond Quebec.

An important role of the Marketing Agent is participation in trade shows, conferences, festivals, and other promotional events. This past year, however, the ongoing COVID-19 pandemic led to the cancellation of many public events, including the International Indigenous Tourism Conference which we last attended in 2020. This year, Rendez-Vous Canada (RVC) which is a significant event for the Canadian tourism sector hosted the event on an online virtual platform.

We look forward to attending these and other promotional events on an annual basis again soon.

3. Northern Tourism Cluster by ACCORD/Créneau d'excellence en tourisme nordique par ACCORD

In an effort to support northern tourism development within the ACCORD Niche of Excellence and in partnership with TBJ, the position of ACCORD Director was established in 2012.

The ACCORD Director provides project management expertise in support of promoters and businesses operating within the niche of excellence as well as projects designed to deploy the niche's 2022-2027 strategy and action plan. Additionally, the ACCORD Director meets with tourism stakeholders in the region and assists tourism entrepreneurs in locating appropriate funding sources for their tourism-related projects.

The ACCORD Director actively participates in the development of regional tourism in Eeyou Istchee Baie-James by carrying out all required studies, developing action plans and strategies, and implementing all potential means of fostering partnership and cooperation in collaboration with EIT, COTA and TBJ as well as with Cree entrepreneurs.

The project is led by TBJ and EIT is a partner. Partial funding for this position is provided by the Ministère de l'Économie, et de l'Innovation (MEI).



Photo credit: Annie-Claude Roberge

