

CATEGORY: DIGITAL BUSINESS DEVELOPMENT

The 2022–2025 *Entente de partenariat régional et de transformation numérique en tourisme* (EPRTNT) reflects the shared desire of the Ministère du Tourisme (MTO) and Eeyou Istchee Tourism (EIT) to join forces to provide guidance and financial support to tourism businesses in their area so that these businesses can develop and grow in a responsible and sustainable way.

OBJECTIVES

Projects must help achieve the following objectives:

- Stimulate the regional economy by:
 - Developing a unique, enticing tourism offering
 - Promoting an innovative tourism offering
 - Developing new niches for tourism businesses
- Develop a responsible and sustainable tourism offering by:
 - Getting tourism businesses to follow corporate social responsibility practices
 - Integrating innovative, eco-friendly solutions

ELIGIBLE CLIENTS

The following types of organizations are eligible for this program:

- Tourism businesses:
 - For-profit organizations
 - Non-profit organizations
 - Cooperatives
- Municipal entities¹
- Indigenous communities and nations recognized by the National Assembly, as well as Indigenous tourism organizations and businesses
- Any group of such clients

Eligible businesses must be legally incorporated under the laws of the government of Québec or Canada and must do business in Québec.

To be eligible, an organization must have delivered on any commitments to partners for any prior subsidies it was awarded.

Businesses and organizations operating tourism accommodation establishments must follow all laws and bylaws in effect for these establishments and must possess a registration number.

Nature and adventure tourism businesses must possess or must have initiated or agree to initiate the process to obtain a Quality/Safety Certification or Quality/Safety Attestation from Aventure Écotourisme Québec.

The following types of organizations are not eligible for this program:

- State-owned enterprises, as well as ministries and agencies of the Québec and Canadian governments
- Businesses listed in the enterprise register as not eligible for public contracts
- Businesses not in compliance with the Office québécois de la langue française's Francization process

Notwithstanding the foregoing, no financial assistance will be granted to a business if the Ministry is funding a similar project with a group of businesses in that sector (e.g., a sectoral tourism association, or STA).

ELIGIBLE PROJECTS

Financial assistance may be granted to a business for digital development in order to increase virtual or digital interactions with customers in a way that maintains focus on the customer experience.

Projects to set up digital applications (automated pay stations, virtual maps, reservation systems, reception terminals, delivery robots, etc.) are the intended focus.

This category is meant to help organizations set up business solutions. For digital attractions, refer to the "Attractions, activities and equipment" category. For needs analysis, refer to the "Studies and consulting" category.

Notwithstanding the foregoing, no financial assistance will be granted to a business if the Ministry is funding a similar project with a group of businesses in that sector (for example, a sectoral tourism association, or STA).

INELIGIBLE PROJECTS

The following projects are not eligible:

- Bed and breakfast projects
- Condominium hotel (condotel) projects
- Projects for bike lanes, snowmobile trails, golf courses and wharf repairs
- Projects in the food and beverage or retail sectors
- Tourist hospitality and signage projects
- Development of training content
- Projects in the gambling sector or projects having to do with the sale and consumption of alcohol
- Projects that have already been completed or are in the process of being completed when the request is filed
- Projects receiving non-repayable financial assistance 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

- The promoter must be a Cree beneficiary under the James Bay Northern Quebec Agreement (JBNQA) and must be 18 years of age OR the business must be owned by a majority of Cree beneficiary of the JBNQA
- Compatibility with EPRTNT objectives
- Major impact (ability to draw visitors, project scope, effects, coordination with other partners, job creation, extension of the tourist season, etc.)
- Innovative character
- Design, product and service quality
- Financial structure and financing package
- Relevance (primarily tourist clients, diversification of clients, market, competition, quality of offering, marketing strategy, networking, etc.)
- Feasibility (timeline, marketing strategy, quality of the business plan or study estimates, developer expertise)
- Consideration of sustainable development principles

FINANCING TERMS

- The financial support is a non-repayable financial contribution.
- The project must have at least \$15,000 in eligible costs.
- Financial support cannot surpass \$50,000 and cannot exceed 90% of eligible costs.

The following table lists the applicable investment percentage and stacking rules for each type of client.

Eligible clients	Minimum developer investment	Maximum stacking of government assistance
For-profit organization	50%	50%
Non-profit organization	20%	80%
Cooperative	20%	80%

¹ Municipal entities include municipalities, towns, cities, villages, parishes, townships, united townships, northern villages, unorganized territories, regional county municipalities (RCMs), intermunicipal management boards and corporations or organizations that have most of their members

appointed by or over half of their funding provided by a municipal corporation, as well as groups of such municipalities, corporations or organizations.

Indigenous community, organization or nation	10%	90%
Any organization carrying out a project in Îles-de-la-Madeleine	10%	90%
Groups of several of these clients	20%	The lowest % applies, based on the type of organization

If the project receives investment from the developer or its partners (community support, private sponsorships), this investment cannot come from:

- A source used to calculate the stacking of government assistance
- A transfer of assets
- A contribution in goods and services

When calculating the stacking of government financial assistance, contributions are counted from municipal entities and any ministries or agencies of the Québec or federal government.

ELIGIBLE COSTS

- Professional fees paid for support and implementation of the proposed solutions
- Purchase of technological or other equipment that helps the business use the solution
- An initial subscription (24-month limit) to cloud services if the solution is available with this technology
- Purchase of material, software or mobile applications that allow for increased customer interaction
- Purchase of enterprise resource planning software
- Purchase of e-commerce software
- Travel costs (comparable to RTA costs), overhead, wages and benefits specifically paid to human resources to complete the developer's project
- Professional fees paid to train or develop the human resources responsible for implementing the digital development project
- Net taxes (excluding the refundable portion) related to eligible costs

INELIGIBLE COSTS

- The developer's regular wages, operating costs and overhead
- Costs of purchasing land, real estate or facilities
- Capital expenditures related to the purchase of equipment
- Costs of purchasing bandwidth
- Costs related to sales commissions on online reservation or sales platforms
- Recurring operating costs for the business solution
- Development of video games and technological infrastructure
- Creation of a server room
- Costs related to working capital, debt service, attrition, capital losses or share buybacks
- Costs of bringing the business up to standards (other than those proposed in the government of Québec's or its partners' health plans), maintaining assets or complying with bylaws
- The portion of Québec sales tax, 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, as well as donations and contributions in kind or in services
- Direct or indirect operating or administrative costs
- Regular maintenance and operating costs
- Financing costs
- Compensation paid to a lobbyist
- Costs for which the business entered into contractual obligations before filing the request for financial assistance (with the exception of fees related to project development)
- Promotional, advertising and marketing costs
- Cost overruns
- Legal fees

SPECIAL RULES

EQUAL ACCESS EMPLOYMENT PROGRAM

- Any financial assistance of \$100,000 or more granted to a for-profit organization with over 100 employees requires the organization to agree to set up an equal access employment program in compliance with the *Charter of Human Rights and Freedoms*.

AN ACT RESPECTING FRENCH, THE OFFICIAL AND COMMON LANGUAGE OF QUÉBEC

- On June 1, 2022, *An Act respecting French, the official and common language of Québec*, received official assent. All companies that do business in Québec, regardless of size, must respect the provisions of this Act.

SUSTAINABLE DEVELOPMENT

- As one of the objectives of the EPRTNT is to promote the development of a responsible and sustainable tourism offering, project appraisals will take into account the overall approach proposed for sustainable development.

REQUIRED DOCUMENTS

- The completed and signed form, SENT IN EXCEL FORMAT
- The project's complete business plan
- The organization's financial statements from the past two (2) years and its most recent interim financial statements; this is not required for start-ups, municipal entities and Indigenous communities and nations
- Three (3) years of forecasted financial statements for the organization following the project's completion (depending on the project's scale)
- A resolution from the board of directors (or equivalent) authorizing the signing of the request for financial assistance from this program, and authorizing any document relevant to the request
- Confirmation of financial partners, if available
- If applicable, an Indigenous certification or certificate recognizing the Indigenous status of a for-profit organization, not-for-profit organization, or cooperative (which helps determine the level of assistance)
- For adventure tourism businesses, confirmation that they have received a Quality/Safety Certification or Attestation from Aventure Écotourisme Québec OR a copy of an email exchange proving that the business has initiated the process to obtain the certification or attestation

HOW TO APPLY

Fill out the application form of Eeyou Istchee EPRTNT to submit a request and send it with any necessary documents to pbilodeau@creetourism.ca .

For more information call Philippe Bilodeau at 1-888-268-2682 ext. 4230 or email pbilodeau@creetourism.ca .