

CATEGORY: STUDIES AND CONSULTING

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
- Regional tourism associations with the support of non-EPRTNT financial partners
- 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

ELIGIBLE PROJECTS

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

Financial assistance may be awarded for a contract given to a consultant to provide individual business coaching or consulting services or to carry out a study, assessment or any other project to improve business practices related to:

- Labour upskilling
- Customer service
- Digital needs
- Development of a new project or activity
- Development and establishment of responsible and sustainable policies, practices or initiatives

The job must be done by a specialized firm or recognized organization following a call for tenders (a minimum of two tenders is required).

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 where most of the costs are for upgrading, maintaining or replacing existing infrastructure or equipment
- 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).
- Business plans, marketing plans, local and regional development plans, or studies and surveys required to apply for financial assistance from other programs or to meet another ministry's requirements.

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.

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

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%
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 to specialized firms or consultants to carry out specific studies on developing an area’s tourism offering or providing targeted coaching to improve the quality of services and products
- Net taxes (excluding the refundable portion) related to direct costs

INELIGIBLE COSTS

- Wages, operating costs and management costs that are regular or related to the developer’s project
- Costs related to working capital, debt service, attrition, capital losses or share buybacks
- Costs of bringing the business up to standards, 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
- Regular maintenance and operating costs
- Direct or indirect operating or administrative costs
- Financing costs
- Compensation paid to a lobbyist
- Costs for which the recipient 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

- Studies or consulting projects to do with developing the organization or establishing responsible or sustainable policies, practices or initiatives are eligible.
- The project must include sustainable development measures that reduce the project’s impact on the environment and have positive social and economic impacts.
- Project appraisals will take into account the overall approach proposed for sustainable development, including integration of social and eco-friendly components.

REQUIRED DOCUMENTS

- The completed and signed form, SENT IN EXCEL FORMAT
- Copy of the call for tenders specifications, listing the issues, objectives, methodology (if applicable), deadline and expected deliverables
- Two offers of professional services
- 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 .