

2022-2023 ANNUAL REPORT

SADC

Société
d'aide au développement
des collectivités

VALLÉE-DE-LA-GATINEAU



Développement
économique Canada
pour les régions du Québec

Canada Economic
Development
for Quebec Regions

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WORD FROM THE PRESIDENT AND GENERAL MANAGER

Our region is currently experiencing major growth that we had been hoping to see for quite some time. Since the pandemic, we have gone through periods of demographic and economic growth that we were not very accustomed to. As actors in local economic development, we are thrilled to see such effervescence.

Historically, the Valley has been affected far too much by economic uncertainty, a high unemployment rate, population outflow (especially young adults), a high dropout rate, devitalization of its surroundings, etc. Since our economy has been traditionally based on natural resource development, which is mainly concentrated in the forestry and tourist sectors (camping, fishing), we are at the mercy of economic dynamics. This situation, which has affected several regions elsewhere in Quebec as well, has often hurt us both economically and demographically. However, a many of our activities are based on the presence of vacationers. Economically, the vacationer industry has been a windfall to the Valley, which not only strengthens and diversifies our economy but also its demographics. The various research we did previously back in 2004 and 2014 showed that our population doubles when vacationers are present on our territory. Historically, they would be concentrated during the summer from May to October. But in recent years, we have observed that they are increasingly spending time on the territory all year round, which has had a more significant economic and demographic impact. In short, the greater the population in our region, the greater the economic stimulus.

Unfortunately, the Valley has had a history of population migration dating back decades, and it has hurt us. The attraction of the Ottawa-Gatineau CMA, which is primarily economic in nature, has been a major factor in this exodus that has weakened us as a community.

Though the statistics may suggest otherwise, growth rates remain weak. One observation still stands: the average age of our population is rising at an accelerated pace, which means that the number of people of working age is decreasing. The phenomenon of a shrinking workforce (of working age) has become more acute since the pandemic. Many baby boomers have coordinated their departures from the labour force with the various measures the pandemic forced on us: business closures, reduced working hours, health rules to observe, atypical schedules, and so on. Since the pandemic, many rules and the way we do things, operate and work have altered our structures and the way we live our lives.

Fortunately, the Gatineau Valley has been able to attract people in recent years and create a keen interest on the part of many to live here permanently and to invest. This sudden enthusiasm was especially noted among people in the area near Ottawa-Gatineau.

Investments in digital development and high-speed Internet across the entire territory by various levels of government, the discovery by city dwellers



Pierre Monette
General manager



André Galipeau
President

of the quality of life in our region and the possibility of teleworking, which enables people to keep their jobs with their employer in the city (the federal government in many cases) have driven up our net migration.

According to data the ODO (Observatoire du Développement de l'Outaouais) published in its report on the impacts the pandemic had on the socioeconomic situation and the labour market (winter 2023), total net migration in the Gatineau Valley reached a peak of 479 people, which is largely attributable to internal migration (Outaouais).

For quite some time, the various research and development actions we have taken part in showed us that the greater a region's population, the greater the likelihood that it will experience dynamic and diversified economic activity.

The various studies we conducted have shown that the number of vacationers in the region is not only growing but that their stays are longer and more frequent, resulting in more consumers to satisfy and increased economic benefits.

WORD FROM THE PRESIDENT AND GENERAL MANAGER *(Continued)*

Demystifying the Gatineau Valley comes at an opportune time

Now that we have noted new interest by people in the Ottawa-Gatineau CMA, the efforts we have put into communication in the past two years for the purpose

of promoting economic exchanges with our respective territories have made the Gatineau Valley more attractive. We have noted that several investments have been made in several sectors, many of which have been made by business people outside our region.

We believe the future is bright in our RCM. The migration phenomenon that has too often overwhelmed us in the past is now reversing course.

The Valley has all it needs to diversify its economy. The keen interest in our territory has given us hope

that our population will not stagnate. Quite the opposite is true – it is projected to grow.

This will stimulate our economy across the region, and we hope it will be sustainable. It will position us as an attractive and distinctive region with a pleasant living environment and a prosperous economy. That is why we in SADC believe the future of our territory is quite bright and is in keeping with our aspirations and actions that we have been promoting for quite some time.



DEMYSTIFYING THE GATINEAU VALLEY

Eight new ambassadors have agreed to join in year two of the Demystifying the Gatineau Valley project. The advantages and opportunities that entrepreneurship provides in the Gatineau Valley appear under the term The Gatineau Valley, Taking care of business. (monentreprisedanslvg.ca).

Here are some of our ambassadors

The eight new ambassadors :

- Ferme au gros sabot
- Station l'Aventure
- Webaction
- Ferme Réservoir
- Épicerie Mulligan Inc.
- Informatique Sylvain Patry
- Lynda Cayer, physiotherapist
- Les Entreprises Carpe Diem

This year, an advisory committee was formed **to contribute to and support the success of projects spawned by Demystifying the Gatineau Valley project.** This committee, which is made up of representatives from SADC, the Maniwaki Chamber of Commerce and the GV-MRC and Services Québec, has met four times in the past year.



Lynda Cayer, physiotherapist. Project Visual



Épicerie Mulligan



Station l'Aventure



Ferme Réservoir

DEMYSTIFYING THE GATINEAU VALLEY

The ambassadors wanted to share their photos and their stories to illustrate their situation with interviews and photos that yielded the following information:

There were
8 975 single visits
to the website during
the year

30 signs
that appeared on Société de Transport
de l'Outaouais buses
12 weeks

3 pages
of advertising in
Le Droit Affaires
(1 page x 3 months)

708 messages
on Radio 104.7 FM

110 messages
on TVA

4 months
of Facebook advertising
(in English and French) that reached
753,856 persons

3 months
Google display ads
(English and French) for a total of about
1,680,000 prints

SURVEY ON THE LABOUR SITUATION OF AND ISSUES CONFRONTING Gatineau Valley companies

The survey on the labour of and issues confronting Gatineau Valley companies was launched in November 2022. Topics such as labour requirements over the next three years, the age and seniority of employees and their level of qualification, training requirements and issues/challenges such as cybersecurity, sustainable development, business owners' retirement intentions and many other subjects were examined during the survey.

The GV RCM and Services Québec joined up with SADC to complete various steps of the project. The firm mandated to collect and analyze data, Bip Recherche, submitted the final survey report in March 2023. It was noted, among other things, that in the next three years, the 233 companies that responded to the survey will have 2,192 job vacancies, most of which are unskilled and skilled or semi-skilled. To no one's surprise, the survey also confirmed that the main issues confronting companies is not only employee recruitment but concern for reducing their environmental footprint, cybersecurity and digital technologies.

This report also produced some courses of action, and some will be brought to light in the coming year. Although the action plan has not yet been totally defined, the scope of the issues identified suggests that toe work to be done will be spread over several years.



Éric Deslongchamps at Rona in Maniwaki

TECHNOLOGIES IN SUPPORT OF NEW BUSINESS MODELS FOR COMPANIES

In 2020, the SADC team, in cooperation with LTech solution, launched a project to document the situation of village convenience stores and propose innovative solutions that would improve their viability and profitability.

When the research was completed, the work team realized that the proposed innovations could benefit not only the convenience stores but also many other types of businesses.

Solutions such as automated checkouts, reservation applications, automated appointment scheduling, intelligent lockers and many others are presented in a paper entitled «Technologies in support of new business models for companies» which can be read at www.sadc-vg.ca.





ASSISTANCE PROGRAMS FOR SMALL RURAL TOURIST COMPANIES (PAPETR)

This program was launched last October. The budget envelope it has from Canada Economic Development enabled each SADC-CAE in Quebec to invest \$270,947.38 in the form of non-repayable financial assistance in tourism companies on their territory. This program enabled the Gatineau Valley SADC to support investment projects to improve customer experiences in seven companies in the region.

LOCAL ECONOMIC DEVELOPMENT (Technical assistance)

The objective of the Local Economic Development program is to support companies with their needs for outside expertise to plan their projects. This year, two companies availed themselves of this program and received an investment totalling \$10,479.15. Both projects involved technological improvements.

GOING GREEN

As its name indicates, the Going Green programs helps companies wishing to become “greener” by reducing their environmental footprint while enabling them to improve their profitability. In 2022-2023, two companies received total non-repayable assistance of \$9,512.64





CONTINUOUS IMPROVEMENT

In order to keep the organization's administration and service delivery up to date, SADC has, in the past year, gone ahead with various computer implementations/improvements (Office 365, accounting and management systems), made training available to its staff so that they can make maximum use of these tools and provided them with the skills they need to be in better position to meet changing environmental needs (cybersecurity, sustainable development, privacy, etc.).

ECONOMIC SPOTS

Throughout 2022-2023, the Gatineau Valley SADC ran economic spots on radio station CHGA. They featured new companies on the territory or companies that made significant changes to their organization. As a result, 49 companies enjoyed some visibility on CHGA.

PARTNERSHIPS IN THE AREA

In addition to the projects it initiated, SADC has been a partner in several regional projects and events such as the CCMVG, Gala, la Coopérative d'initiation à l'entrepreneuriat collectif (CJE), Place aux jeunes (CJE), Ose entreprendre (SADC Papineau-Collines), Vacationers' Handbook (CCMVG) and Mes achats à quelques pas (CCMVG).

VOLUNTEER INVOLVEMENT

The Gatineau Valley is headed by seven-member board of directors. Not only do they take effective operation of the organization and regional development to heart, but they have also contributed 135 hours of volunteer work in the past year.

Jacques Brazeau, a volunteer member involved in the organization for more than 34 years as either an employee or a volunteer, retired in 2022-2023. We would like to offer him a special thanks, as his extensive contribution has made SADC what it is today.



Volunteers



FINANCING AND TECHNICAL ASSISTANCE

(Regular fund and the Youth Strategy Program)

Consistent with its goal to advance the Gatineau Valley's economic development, SADC pursues its involvement in the territory's economic development.

In 2022-2023, \$1,079,566 was invested in companies to support entrepreneurship. These funds were used to launch 5 companies, acquire 2 others, modernize/expand yet another 8, resulting in the creation and maintenance of 59 direct jobs and generating total investments of \$2,200,943.

As for its involvement, SADC met with 55 new clients to provide them with consulting services, technical support and/or financing. Moreover, it was involved with some promoters and companies to help them with their management or with their projects.



ROLL-UP OF FINANCIAL INVESTMENTS FOR 2022-2023

FUNDS	AMOUNT	TOTAL INVESTMENTS GENERATED
Regular SADC Fund	948 910 \$	1 521 943 \$
Youth Strategy	130 656 \$	679 000 \$
Total financing	1 079 566 \$	2 200 943 \$
PAPETR Program	270 947 \$	290 839 \$
Going Green Program	9 513 \$	13 567 \$
Local intervention measure	49 950 \$	50 266 \$
Local Economic Development	10 479 \$	14 947 \$
Total local development assistance	340 889 \$	369 619 \$
Total	1 420 455 \$	2 570 562 \$
Number of companies helped	29	

DEMYSTIFYING THE GATINEAU VALLEY

Year three of the Demystifying the Gatineau Valley five-year plan will focus on extending the communication-related actions already in place., further enhance the territory's notoriety in order to develop more targeted actions subsequently to pave the way for the development of commercial ties with the business community in the Ottawa-Gatineau business community.

INNOVATION

It is common knowledge that the business world is in the throes of change relating to consumer behaviour, a shrinking labour pool, work organization, supply times, to name a few. In the next year, SADC is planning to take action to support companies in the adjustment of their business model to deal with these various changes. This can be in the form of individual or group actions.

SURVEY OF LABOUR OF AND ISSUES CONFRONTING GATINEAU VALLEY BUSINESSES

According to the final survey report submitted in March 2023, the first step in the coming year would involve presenting the findings of the report and developing a detailed action plan. Some actions have already been targeted and are under development, i.e., discussions to put together the action plan, a series of newsletters highlighting the important elements of the survey, the staging of workshops and/or a symposium, a presentation on the services offered by Détail Québec and individual support for companies expressing a need for them.

GOING GREEN

For 2023-2024, this program has \$67,000 available to support businesses that have projects to reduce their environmental footprint while improving profitability. This program could partially cover the professional fees of an outside consultant retained to develop a project. .

LOCAL ECONOMIC DEVELOPMENT (technical assistance)

The Local Economic Development program could partially cover the fees of an outside expert retained to assist companies requiring adaptation or innovation to deal with challenges confronting them.

PERMANENT EMPLOYEES



Pierre Monette, General Manager



Julie Bénard, Follow-up Officer



Nathalie Patry, Financial Analyst

BOARD OF DIRECTORS



**André Galipeau,
President**



Jean-Serge Rochon



André Lanthier



Kerry Anne Gorman



Maria Brennan



Michel Thibault



Daniel Chalifour

OUR MISSION

The SADC's mission is to encourage the community to actively take charge of its future, which is achieved through the development of the community's vision within the context of sustainable development.

Through activities that support joint action and partnership, SADC prompts the community to adjust and to plan their various requirements relating to all of their human resources to ensure that the community grows and evolves based on current and future realities.

The SADC supports business and job creation through advisory and financial services from the perspective of profitability and viability.

OUR VISION

As an agency, SADC shapes and brings about the necessary changes based on the issues confronting our areas so that they can adjust to these changes by promoting the well-being and growth of persons who make up our community.

As the organization which people turn to for expertise and know-how in business in our RCM, we strive to be at the forefront of innovation and change.

OUR VALUES

Help the community and individuals in an atmosphere of understanding and open-mindedness within the parameters of our spheres of activity.

- Emphasize excellence.
- Be frank.
- Avoid misleading people into thinking that funding opportunities exist when none do.
- Remain neutral and impartial without influence.
- Respect partners and/or organizations that adhere to their own mandate and vision.
- Create a climate conducive to exchanges, cooperation and partnership.
- Ensure the confidentiality of cases at all times.

TO REACH US

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