

# **SADC HARRICANA ANNUAL REPORT 2024–2025**

## **WHO ARE WE?**

### **SADC AND CAE NETWORK**

Our network brings together 57 SADCs and 10 CAEs, which have collectively dedicated over 40 years to promoting economic development across Quebec's regions. A dedicated team of 350 professionals, along with more than 600 volunteers, manages the Community Futures Program (CFP) in all areas, providing support and funding to over 10,000 entrepreneurs and 1,500 local economic development initiatives each year. The CFP is a federal initiative that recognizes the expertise of local decision-makers and the significance of independent decision-making, encouraging community involvement in shaping their future. The CFP is carried out on a national scale through funding for 269 SADCs and CAEs.

### **OUR MISSION**

The mission of SADC Harricana is to foster economic development in the Abitibi region by supporting entrepreneurs and community projects, while emphasizing sustainable prosperity, business succession, innovation, and the vitality of its local communities.

### **OUR STRATEGIC DIRECTIONS**

#### **Enrich the entrepreneurial ecosystem**

- Energize the entrepreneurial sector
- Cultivate mutual support and solidarity as drivers of success
- Develop and stimulate the entrepreneurial spirit
- Promote, facilitate, and support business succession

#### **Support entrepreneurs and their businesses**

- Improve and develop entrepreneurs' competencies, skills, and know-how
- Help businesses reach their full potential

DEAR MEMBERS AND PARTNERS,

We are pleased to present SADC Harricana's 2024–2025 annual report. The year was marked by significant achievements and key projects for our territory—a testament to the vitality of our region and the commitment of those who believe in the economic and human potential of Amos and of the Abitibi RCM.

For nearly forty years, SADC Harricana has supported entrepreneurs and stimulated local economic development, a mission that has become even more critical amid a climate of inflation, high interest rates, and labour shortages. Despite these challenges, our entrepreneurs have shown resilience, boldness, and confidence in the future. Through our programs and funds, we offered them tangible support in the form of financing, advice, personalized guidance, and participation in collective projects. By acting as a catalyst, partner, and occasional guide, the SADC helps transform ideas into drivers of development for our community.

This year, SADC Harricana granted 19 loans to 15 businesses, totalling over \$1.19 million. These investments helped fund projects worth \$16.7 million and create or preserve 88 jobs, numbers that attest to a dynamic entrepreneurial ecosystem built on boldness and creativity. This year, the SADC created two new funds to better meet the changing needs of entrepreneurs. The Transfer Strategy Fund is designed to support business succession and ownership transfer, while the Green Strategy Fund and Digital Strategy Fund aim to support projects related to the green transition and the adoption of new technologies, thereby fostering a more sustainable and innovative economy.

Since summer 2021, SADC Harricana has been spearheading the summer and Christmas public markets, a flagship project underpinning its commitment to local development. In 2024, the Market celebrated its 25th anniversary, highlighted by a series of initiatives, including revamping its brand identity, purchasing 16 tents in the Market's brand colours, staging an historical exhibition, and creating a collective artwork with artist Geneviève Hardy.

The SADC is also working on building a public square in downtown Amos that will provide a fully health-and-safety-compliant space for performers and artisans to feature their work, which will enhance the tourist experience. This project, currently in the preparation phase, will be completed in summer 2026. It will play a pivotal role in revitalizing the downtown sector and serve as a lasting symbol of our collective pride. In parallel, SADC Harricana and its partners continue to work on

other initiatives to revitalize downtown Amos with the goal of creating an inviting, dynamic commercial sector with a strong local identity and a focus on serving the community.

In January 2025, a talk by Dominic Gagnon at the La Centrale coworking space generated strong interest surrounding innovation and business resilience, offering participants insights on ways to adapt their practices. Similarly, the Afftech 2025 business and technology day, held in February at Hôtel des Eskers, brought together businesses and experts to discuss issues related to technology and productivity. Together, these events prompted reflection and strengthened the culture of innovation within the Abitibi RCM's entrepreneurial community.

None of these achievements would have been possible without the invaluable contribution of our board members and staff. Thank you for your dedication. Thanks also to our key partners—notably Canada Economic Development, CLD Abitibi, the Abitibi RCM, and the city of Amos—for your unwavering and uplifting support. Together, driven by a spirit of collaboration and solidarity, we are showing that it's possible to shape strong and sustainable economic development for the benefit of the population.

PIERRE BEAUCHEMIN

President

and

ÉRIC

LALIBERTÉ

General Director

# **SERVICES FOR BUSINESSES**

## **2023–2024 RESULTS**

### **HARRICANA INVESTMENT FUNDS**

\$15.5 M project costs

\$981,750 total investment

11 businesses funded

56 jobs preserved and 19 jobs created

Each dollar leveraged: \$14.79

### **YOUTH STRATEGY FUND**

\$1.3 M project cost

\$160,000 total investment

7 businesses funded

24 jobs preserved and 11 jobs created

Each dollar leveraged: \$7.36

## **EVOLUTION OF OUR FUNDS**

### **INVESTMENT FUNDS**

#### **Maximum loan of \$300,000 per business**

- Flexible repayment terms tailored to the projects submitted
- Base rate + 2% minimum

### **CREATED IN 1986**

Average annual investments: \$904,720

Net value: \$6.7 M

Active loans: 63 loans to 59 businesses

## **BREAKDOWN OF THE PORTFOLIO BY ACTIVITY SECTOR**

Hospitality and food services	\$1,217,003	
Retail and distribution	\$1,691,590	
Construction and related services	\$506,939	
Manufacturing, machining, and equipment suppliers	\$201,801	
Transportation and heavy equipment	\$456,789	
Agriculture	\$488,813	
Services	\$544,543	
Agrifood - production and processing	\$119,828	
Tourism and recreation	\$51,309	
Artistic and cultural production	\$37,072	
Forestry - harvesting and processing	\$52,387	

## **YOUTH STRATEGY FUND**

### **Personal loan of \$5,000 to \$25,000 (per entrepreneur aged 18–39)**

- Interest-free loan for the first 24 months
- Loan term up to 84 months

## **CREATED IN 1998**

Average annual investments: \$131,110

Net value: \$543,000

32 active loans to 35 businesses

## **BREAKDOWN OF THE PORTFOLIO BY ACTIVITY SECTOR**

Services	\$164,851
Agrifood - production and processing	\$35,614
Construction and related services	\$41,491
Transportation and heavy equipment	\$26,152
Retail and distribution	\$81,597
Forestry - harvesting and processing	\$17,077
Hospitality and food services	\$29,057
Agriculture	\$13,263

## **NEW FUNDS – CAPACITY BUILDING**

As part of its capacity building to better support businesses, SADC Harricana now offers two new investment funds.

### **Transfer Strategy Fund**

The dedicated Transfer Strategy Fund supports the transition of businesses or business acquisitions within the community. It is intended for small local businesses that want to ensure the continuity of their activities through an ownership transfer, asset purchase, or transition to a new generation of entrepreneurs. This fund supports the long-term sustainability of the local economic fabric by assisting businesses through strategic transitions.

### **Sustainable Development/Technology Building Fund**

The Green and Digital Investment (or SD/Technology Building) Fund is designed to accelerate the sustainable digital transformation of small businesses. It targets projects that promote:

- The adoption of eco-responsible practices or clean technologies (smaller environmental footprint, energy efficiency, sustainable resource management);
- The implementation of digital solutions (automation, e-commerce, management systems, cybersecurity).

This fund is a driver to enhance the competitiveness and resilience of local businesses through technology modernization and sustainability.

### **Common funding arrangements**

Each fund should receive an initial capitalization of about \$280,000.

- Loan amount: between \$10,000 and \$50,000
- Maximum repayment term: 84 months (7 years)
- Interest: interest-free for the first 24 months
- Repayment moratorium: no repayments for the first 3 months
- Use of funds: exclusively for productive investments (acquisition or modernization of capital assets, installation costs, project-related working capital)—refinancing of existing debt is not permitted

## **TECHNICAL INITIATIVES**

SADC provides businesses with personalized support to optimize their financial management and investment structuring. It also offers technical guidance to develop strong business strategies, realistic financial forecasts, and tailored

financing strategies. Finally, it assists entrepreneurs in improving access to local and regional support resources.

Number of technical initiatives: **20 projects and initiatives**

## **LOCAL ECONOMIC GROWTH**

Through its Local Intervention Measure (LIM) and Local Economic Growth (LEG) funding streams, SADC collaborates with community partners on collective local development projects that address specific economic issues.

LOCAL INTERVENTION MEASURE (LIM): 4 PROJECTS – \$41,267

LOCAL ECONOMIC GROWTH (LEG): 3 PROJECTS – \$13,280

## **REVITALIZING OUR COMMUNITY**

### **LAUNCH OF THE DOWNTOWN AMOS REVITALIZATION PROCESS**

In November 2024, Amos announced the creation of the Commission de dynamisation du centre-ville and the hiring of Luc Valcourt as project manager. Composed of representatives from the city, entrepreneurs, and economic development stakeholders—including Guillaume Lamarre, SADC Harricana administrator—the Commission met several times this year to approve the action plan and budget proposed by the steering committee, among other things. Coordinated by Mr. Valcourt, working committees were formed to begin implementing the initiative's actions, including the downtown activity program and brand development. The SADC has a presence on both the commission and the steering committee, and on the communications and project committees. It will also participate in discussions and initiatives centered on the economic development of the downtown core.

### **A MULTIFUNCTIONAL PUBLIC SQUARE TO HOST THE AMOS PUBLIC MARKET**

Work is ongoing on the development of the multifunctional public square. The architectural firm TRAME presented its plans during a third consultation meeting attended by market vendors and the project partners. Based on the comments and ideas gathered, the firm work with the city of Amos to fine-tune its plans in line with one of the selected concepts, resulting in the final plan and specifications. The city council approved the \$2.7 M budget.

The project is made possible by an injection of nearly \$1.2 M from the Ministère des Affaires municipales et de l'Habitation's Fonds régions et ruralité (FRR). The city of Amos is contributing \$1.3 M and the Abitibi RCM \$230,000. The city of Amos will oversee the site preparation and public utilities installation work. According to the project schedule, the structure will be erected before the end of this year, and the remaining development work will be completed next spring, meaning the 2026 season of the Amos public market will be held in the new square. A promotional campaign announcing new location will be launched in the spring.



## **SHOWCASING LOCAL PRODUCERS AND ARTISANS**

### **2024 SUMMER PUBLIC MARKET: 25TH ANNIVERSARY AND NEW BRAND IMAGE**

Beautiful weather, festivities, and new features set the tone for the 2024 season of the public market. Not only did the market hold several special events to mark its 25th anniversary, but it also took the opportunity to update its brand image. Continuing a trend seen since 2021, the number of vendors and the economic spinoffs were up again compared to last season, with an over 65% increase in economic spinoffs and over 50% jump in the number of vendors. The year's results appear on the next page.

The market's visual identity was completely updated, which required the creation of new communication tools, resulting in expenses of \$27,000.

Nearly \$7,000 was spent on 25th anniversary activities, including entertainment at the season launch party, the creation of a collective artwork, and the production of panels on the market's history.

### **CHRISTMAS MARKET AND GOÛTEZ AT**

The SADC also helps fund Goûtez AT's online store and loans out its employees to assist with preparing and distributing orders (Amos sector).

Like the summer market, the Amos Christmas market also got a new look. Elements of the two brand images were harmonized, to make them more obviously associated with the same organizer.

With an operating budget of more than \$17,000, the 2024 Christmas edition was a huge success, and the economic spinoffs were up compared to last year, at \$93,000.

### **BY THE NUMBERS**

#### **Summer market (June 20 to September 26, 2024)**

- **35** agrifood producers and artisans
- **\$240,000** in economic spinoffs
- Nearly **600 visitors on average** per market day
- **\$4,900** in purchases from the **Goûtez AT** online store

#### **Christmas market (December 7, 2024)**

- **63** vendors
- Nearly **1,680** visitors
- **\$93,00** in economic spinoffs

- **\$10,900 in purchases** from the **Goûtez AT** online store (**December 7-13, 2024**)

	<b>SADC contribution</b>	<b>Total project cost</b>
<b>Summer market</b>	\$10,000	\$80,752
<b>Christmas market</b>	\$5,932	\$17,294
<b>Goûtez AT (summer and Christmas)</b>	\$15,532	\$15,532

## INNOVATION

For the past four years, eight economic development organizations, in partnership with Espace d'accélération et de croissance de l'Abitibi-Témiscamingue, have worked together to create the Hub territorial en innovation de la MRC Abitibi. The goal of this group is to increase synergy and networking among stakeholders in the regional and territorial ecosystem, and to contribute to the creation, preservation, and growth of businesses and innovative projects.

Based on the hub's objectives and the territory's priorities, three projects were supported:

- Colloque Affaires et Technologies (business and technology conference)
- Tournée régionale de Dominic Gagnon (Dominic Gagnon's regional tour)
- Study on biochar

SADC Harricana was involved in the first two projects.

### **BUSINESS AND TECHNOLOGY CONFERENCE: AI AS A BUSINESS DRIVER**

A full day of training on artificial intelligence (AI) was organized last March by the members of the territorial hub. The goal of this 3rd business and technology conference was to offer businesses, professionals, and institutional stakeholders a unique opportunity to learn about and master the new tools and technologies that are shaping the future of industry. Through two keynote speeches and nine breakout sessions, the conference sought to promote the use of AI, stimulate innovation, and strengthen competitiveness in a constantly evolving digital world. Nearly 120 participants attended the event.

SADC CONTRIBUTION: \$8,000

TOTAL EXPENSES: \$55,130

### **DOMINIC GAGNON'S REGIONAL TOUR**

Co-founder of Connect&GO and blogger for Les Affaires, Dominic Gagnon—named one of the 15 most innovative people in the world—toured the region at the invitation of SADC de l'Abitibi-Témiscamingue. He made a stop in Amos, where he gave a talk called *La meilleure façon de prédire le futur c'est de l'inventer* (The best way to predict the future is to invent it) for an audience of more than 50 participants. Drawing on his own inspiring journey, he spoke about topics such as innovation, artificial intelligence, failure, neurodiversity, and mental health.

SADC CONTRIBUTION: \$4,500

TOTAL EXPENSES: \$10,684

## ENTREPRENEURSHIP AWARENESS

### Plonge... Vis tes passions! (Dive in... Live out your passions!)

To promote and strengthen the entrepreneurial culture in the Abitibi RCM, SADC collaborated on two of the activities planned as part of *Plonge... vis tes passions!*: the Marché des jeunes entrepreneurs and the Défi OSEntreprendre – Échelon local.

#### PLONGE... VIS TES PASSIONS! ACTIVITIES:

- Boost ton projet
- Défi OSEntreprendre – Échelon local
- Marché des jeunes entrepreneurs
- Semaine des entrepreneurs à l'école

Jolann Rochefort, Luc Valcourt and Karine Roy, coordinator of the Amos public market, sat on the organizing committee for the Marché des jeunes entrepreneurs.

## ATTRACTING AND RETAINING WORKERS

### DÉFIS RH

To keep up the initiatives of the attraction strategy under the Défis RH approach, the Abitibi local development centre (CLD) coordinated the launch of the action plan, whose objectives are to:

- Attract immigrants
- Welcome, integrate, and retain new arrivals
- Ensure the collaboration and engagement of all partners

The SADC participated in various committee meetings and also made a financial contribution of **\$3,780**.

**To better equip entrepreneurs, training sessions were offered as part of the ad hoc committee:**

- La Chic Équipe: *8 dimensions clés pour vous aider à développer votre marque employeur* - 27 participants
- Sébastien Bélisle, social entrepreneur, speaker and trainer: *ChatGPT au travail* - 80 participants
- Andrée-Anne Guindon, trainer on digital tools: *Fais-en plus, clique moins, Dompte les applis Microsoft pas l'inverse* - 41 participants

# OUR TEAM

## EMPLOYEES

CHANTAL COMEAU: Technical Advisor

KARINE ROY: Coordinator, Summer and Christmas Markets

ÉRIC LALIBERTÉ: General Director

ANNE GAUTHIER: Coordinator, Communication and Local Development

MÉLANIE LECOMTE: Coordinator, Accounting and Administration

## BOARD MEMBERS

Pierre Beauchemin: President

Guy Baril: Vice-President, Chair of the Development Committee

Léandre Paré: Vice-President, Chair of the Investment Committee

Monic Bergeron: Treasurer

Claudine Bérubé: Secretary, Youth Representative

Mathieu Chevrier: Administrator (replaced Danyelle Gonthier in February 2025)

Corinne Perron: Administrator

Amélie Brouillard: Administrator

Guillaume Lamarre: Administrator

15 volunteers – 380 volunteer hours

Contact us

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