

SADC + CAE

AR 2024-2025

We are a catalyst for sustainable development and collective success, powered by the strength, resilience, and vitality of our local communities.

Réseau des
SADC+CAE

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Message from the Minister



MÉLANIE JOLY

the Honourable Mélanie Joly, Minister of Industry and Minister responsible for Economic Development in the Regions of Quebec

For three decades, Canada Economic Development for Quebec Regions (CED) has partnered with the Réseau des SADC et CAE to bolster local enterprises and initiatives that promote growth and prosperity of all rural communities in Quebec. CED relies on the Réseau des SADC et CAE to achieve its objective of fostering business start-ups and expansion by leveraging the unique strengths of each region.

The dynamism, creativity, and dedication exhibited by your approximately 350 professionals and 600 volunteers position you as pivotal contributors to community development. Your expertise and understanding of regional issues enable CED to gain deeper insights into the challenges associated with the economic development of RCMs and to tailor its regional interventions accordingly.

By assisting over 10,000 entrepreneurs and facilitating the realization of more than 1,500 projects annually, you play a vital role in fostering robust, resilient, and inclusive regional economies that are central to the prosperity of our areas.

On behalf of the Government of Canada, as well as my own, I wish to recognize your ongoing and exceptional contributions to economic development and innovation within our communities, and I extend my gratitude for your efforts.

I eagerly anticipate the continuation of our collaboration.

Message from the President and Chief Executive Officer





JEAN LAROCHE

President of the Réseau des SADC et CAE

PASCAL HARVEY

Chief Executive Officer of the Réseau des SADC et CAE

Our Network's 2024-25 year was characterized by notable accomplishments and encouraging momentum for the future of local economic development in Quebec. The renewal of our five-year agreements with Canada Economic Development for Quebec Regions, coupled with the Network's new strategic planning, has revitalized our organizations, enabling us to affirm our strategic role and guarantee the continuity of our mission within the communities we serve.

This agreement renewal comes with new funding aimed at tackling pressing economic challenges in our regions, specifically through the Transfer Strategy Fund, the Digital Strategy Fund, and the Green Strategy Fund. These financial resources empower us to effectively facilitate business transfers and support essential technological and ecological transitions. Since their launch in December 2024, $3.1 million has already been allocated, demonstrating our swift ability to address the genuine needs of SMEs in Quebec's regions.

The newly established capacity-building program for SADCs and CAEs represents a significant advancement for our organizations, enabling all members to enhance their local interventions through the preservation of resources and the cultivation of expertise associated with the newly allocated dedicated funds.

Always with the intention of better addressing the needs of our communities, the Network has also embarked on its own internal digital transformation, designed to streamline and expedite all of our business processes. A highly promising development is in progress!

Our presence has been firmly established within the Quebec economic development ecosystem. Through robust partnerships and enhanced representation, particularly via our extensive participation in various strategic panels, we actively engage in significant collective discussions. Moreover, our commitment to better serve communities is evidenced by tangible actions, especially through our collaboration with CEDEC (Community Economic Development and Employability Corporation), which enables us to fortify our connections with English-speaking communities across Quebec's regions. This partnership is integral to a comprehensive strategy for implementing the Official Languages Act.

In light of prevailing economic uncertainties, SADCs and CAEs continue to be actively engaged: on the ground, vigilant, and in ongoing dialogue with our partners to support entrepreneurs and assist them in their decision-making. Our Network also aims to remain responsive to its members and communities. Furthermore, a regional tour is scheduled for the upcoming year, with the objective of collaboratively reflecting on our shared future. This tour is also a testament to our strong commitment to fostering effective communication and robust connections with all SADCs and CAEs.

In conclusion, we express our heartfelt gratitude to the numerous volunteers and professionals engaged in our SADCs and CAEs, as well as throughout the Network. It is your commitment, enthusiasm, and profound understanding of our communities that enable us to achieve so much. We also extend our appreciation to the many partners who have collaborated with our organization this year.

Overview of Economic Advantages 2024-2025



More than **$108 million** has been invested in Quebec's regions through the Community Development Program and several special projects carried out by the SADCs and CAEs in the province

Bola Design Boutique, situated in Sorel-Tracy. Photo credit: Kim Bergeron, Photographer.

FUNDING FOR ENTREPRENEURS

A total of $86 million has been distributed to companies in the form of loans, broken down as follows:

$71.4 million through our standard investment funds
$11.4 million in support for entrepreneurs under 39
$812,000 dedicated to flexible women entrepreneurs
$1.84 million allocated from the Transfer Strategy Fund
$510,000 sourced from the Digital Strategy Fund
$700,000 drawn from the Green Strategy Fund

ASSISTANCE FOR ENTREPRENEURS

Over 1 600 companies received support, reflecting investments of **$2 M** in **technological assistance**.

92 Flexipreneurs have benefited from the **Flexiprêt** initiative, which is designed to support women.

Moreover, more than 6,000 businesses received a non-repayable contribution from the Canadian Digital Adoption Program (CDA), totaling nearly $14.8 million in grants.

REGIONAL ECONOMIC GROWTH

over 780 new collaborative initiatives

$5 M in investments

THE SADC AND CAE ALSO PLAY A ROLE IN:

→ Benefits of Business Growth Increase Survival Odds: Double the chances of business survival after five years, achieving a 75% success rate.

→ Boost Employment Opportunities: Experience an average annual growth of 4.8% in job creation.

→ Accelerate Sales Growth: Enjoy an average annual sales increase of 7.9%.

According to a 2023 study by Statistics Canada

SADC AND CAE CONTRIBUTE TO A 2% INCREASE IN QUEBEC'S GDP, OR $468 M

AND AN IMPACT ON GOVERNMENT REVENUES OF $217 M

According to the Avisēo Conseil study conducted from 2019 to 2023

SATISFIED CLIENTS

- The general satisfaction rate among entrepreneurs using our services is an impressive **97%**.
- Additionally, **81%** of our clients report that they would recommend SADC and CAE services to others.

According to an internal survey, research 2024

Le Réseau : Three Decades of Influence

In 2025, the SADC and CAE Network will commemorate 30 years of influence!

Since its inception in 1995, our organization has aimed to bring together the strengths and expertise of Quebec's SADCs and CAEs. This strategic alliance has continuously adapted, effectively addressing the needs of its members and communities, and thus preserving its role as a key player in local economic development.

Thanks to the hard work and commitment of dedicated committees and working groups, many national initiatives have emerged, often inspired by local successes. The Network, alongside its members and esteemed partners—particularly Canada Economic Development for Quebec Regions—has tackled economic challenges with resilience and creativity.
We extend our heartfelt gratitude to everyone who contributes to our mission!
Professionals, volunteers, partners, dedicated employees, your commitment and enthusiasm are the driving forces behind our success. Together, we cultivate a thriving program and a shared vision for local development.

On the journey toward the future... with pride and aspiration.

The critical junctures:

- → The CAEs are consolidating with the CADCs.
- → The Community Development Program (PDC) was transferred to the Federal Office of Regional Development for Quebec (FORD-Q), which subsequently evolved into Canada Economic Development (CED).
- → The Association of CAEs and the Conference of CADCs are consolidating to form the Quebec SADC Network.

1995



The inaugural board of directors of the Réseau de SADC+CAE

Presidents throughout history



Jean-Martin Leclerc, inaugural president 1995-1999



Raymond Breton, President 1999 -2002



Gratien Lebel, President 2002-2008



Pierre Marois, President 2008-2012



Daniel Dumas, President 2012-2018



Vallier Daigle, president 2018-2024



Jean Laroche, president 2024-present

General directives over time



Helen Simard, General Manager, 1995-1997



Helene Deslauriers, Executive Director, 1997-2019



Paul Gauthier, General Manager, 2019-2021



Pascal Harvey, CEO 2021 - present

→ Development of the Youth Strategy, an initiative designed to assist young entrepreneurs.

1997



The SADC Amiante team and Minister Martin Cauchon at the signing of the Youth Strategy.

→ The establishment of Capital Réseau, a novel financial instrument for SADCs and CAEs, enables them to manage their liquidity effectively, ensuring continuous access to capital and enhancing their ability to address community needs.

1999



Pierre Monette of the SADC Vallée-de-la-Gatineau played a pivotal role in the establishment of Capital Réseau, also referred to as the Common Fund.

→ Establishment of the Capitalization Fund for Succession and the Venture Capital Fund for Start-ups. Over $50 million has been allocated to promote business investment and growth.

2006



The President of the Gratien Lebel Network, alongside Minister Jean-Pierre Blackburn and the President of the SADC Lac-Saint-Jean Ouest, participated in the launch of the succession and start-up funds.

The Network: Three Decades of Influence

→ The establishment of the $9.6 million Small Business Support Fund served as a swift response to the challenges posed by the economic crisis. Developed and implemented within a matter of weeks, it offered vital assistance to nearly 100 regional SMEs and preserved over 2,000 jobs.

2008



Representatives of the Network met with Minister Denis Lebel during the inauguration of the Support Fund.

→ The SADC and CAE have now extended their reach to all rural areas of Quebec, broadening their services to encompass the MRC of Caniapiscau, Saint-Hyacinthe, Argenteuil, and the Soulanges region.

2018



When announcing the inclusion of territories encompassed by the CAE Rive-Nord.

→ The establishment of the Small Business Support Fund offers specialized technical assistance totaling $4.5 million. This initiative is designed to help small businesses implement strategies related to sustainable development, innovation, technology integration, and business succession and transfer.

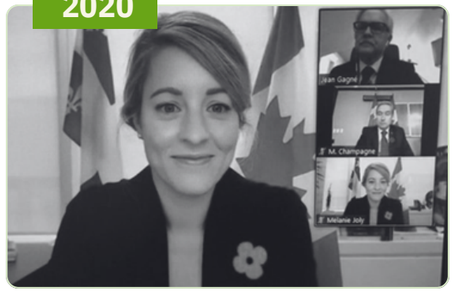
2016



During the official announcement with Minister François-Philippe Champagne, alongside representatives from the Network, DEC, and the SADC Vallée-de-la-Batiscan.

→ Establishment of the Regional Relief and Recovery Fund, amounting to $94.6 million, to assist businesses impacted by the repercussions of the health crisis.

2020



Minister Joly, during her virtual tour of announcements for the Regional Aid and Recovery Fund.

→ Launch of the Virage Vert program, with an investment of $9.4 million to support entrepreneurs and implement collective projects.

2022



Amélie Rocheleau Leclair, Director of Communications at Parc Nature Éco-Odyssée; Vallier Daigle, President of the Network; the Honorable Pascale St-Onge; Sophie Chatel, Member of Parliament for Pontiac; and Olivier Rocheleau-Leclair, Owner of Parc Nature Éco-Odyssée.

2023



The president of the Vallier Daigle Network, alongside Minister Pascale St-Onge and Charles Milliard, former CEO of the FCCQ, participated in the program's launch at Mont Orford.

→ Launch of the Regional Small Tourism Business Assistance Program, which allocates $20 million in non-repayable financial contributions to support rural tourism enterprises in capitalizing on the opportunities presented by economic recovery.

2024



→ Launch of three new funds focused on business transfer, digital transformation, and green transformation, totaling $40 million.

Réseau des SADC + CAE

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. Furthermore, the CFP is implemented on a national scale through funding for 269 SADCs and CAEs.

MISSION

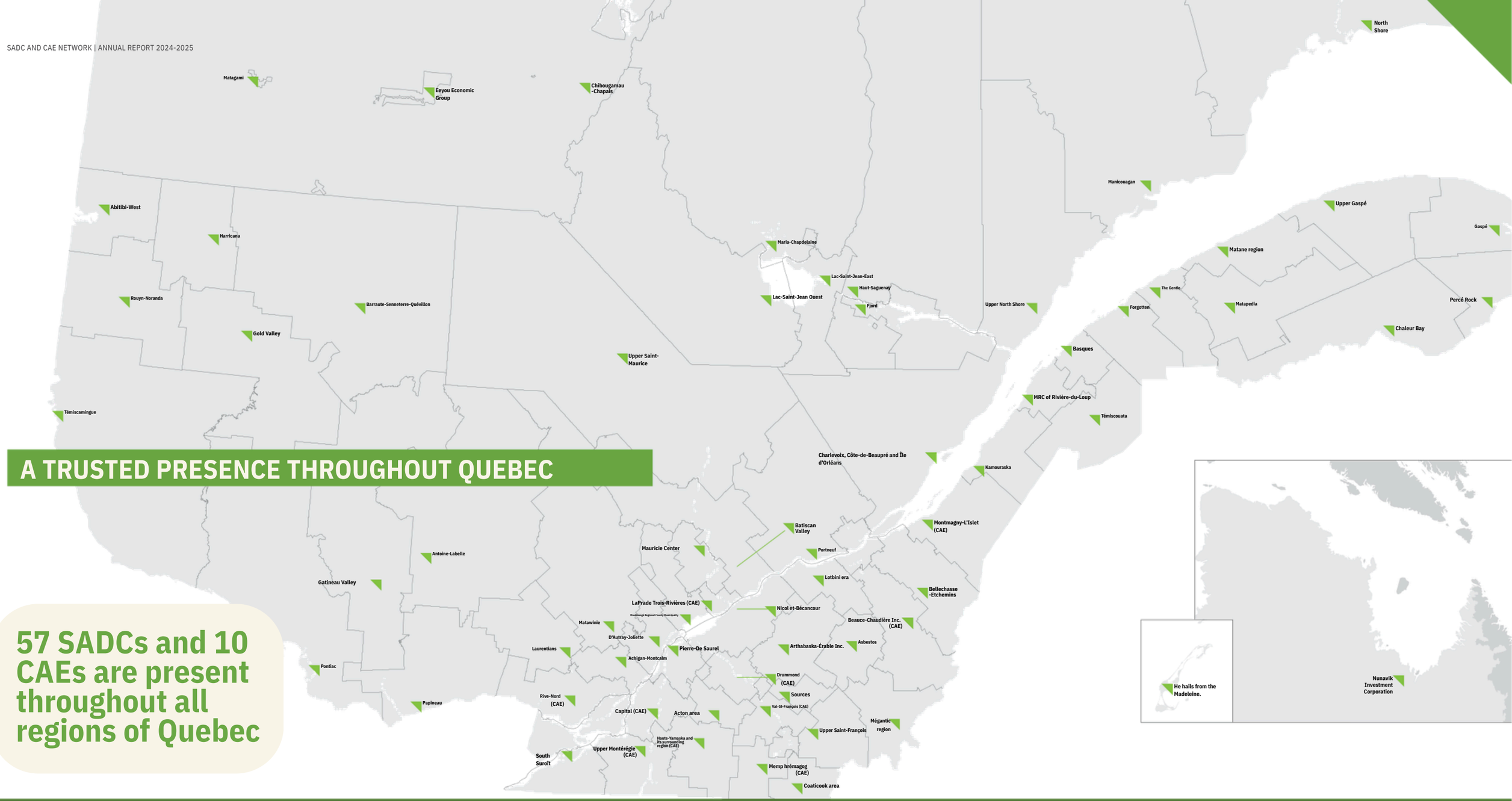
Integrating the strengths of SADCs and CAEs to foster economic development and prosperity across Quebec's regions. We promote coordinated efforts among our members to guarantee robust representation, effective development, and deliver customized support.

OUR VISION

To be acknowledged as a vital collaborator in the local economic development of our communities.

A TRUSTED PRESENCE THROUGHOUT QUEBEC

57 SADCs and 10 CAEs are present throughout all regions of Quebec



A Summary of the 2024-2025 Period

The Réseau participated in the 7th National Local Development Meeting organized by the Quebec Federation of Municipalities (FQM). It was an inspiring two-day event featuring meetings and discussions among various stakeholders in economic development across Quebec's regions.



Mireille Thibault, General Director of CAE Montmagny-L'Islet

Great news for the regions of Quebec! During the annual conference of the Réseau des SADC et CAE held in Rivière-du-Loup, a significant announcement was made regarding our new agreements with the Government of Canada. The government has reaffirmed its commitment to the SADC and CAE by investing $245 million. This investment will allow us to strengthen our support for communities and entrepreneurs, especially through enhanced assistance and financing options.



Isabelle Brochu, facilitator and general director of CAE Haute-Yamaska and region; Sylvie Cyr, Business Advisor at SADC Rivière-du-Loup; Pascale St-Amand, owner of Crèmerie du Potager; and Pascal Harvey, CEO of the SADC+CAE Network.

It's time to reflect on the success of CTEQ's national tour focused on entrepreneurship. Spanning 16 regional events from February to September, this tour offered a fantastic platform for entrepreneurs to connect with expert speakers and guests. It facilitated the sharing of ideas and the acquisition of practical solutions for taking action.

A heartfelt thank you goes out to all our partners, including Morency, Société d'avocats, the FCCQ, and Raymond Chabot Grant Thornton, as well as to the more than 556 participants who played a key role in making this tour a success.



The Réseau took part in the Quebec Business Women's Network's "Cap vers la réussite" event, where we had the opportunity to engage in meaningful interactions and empower entrepreneurs to cultivate new opportunities. Over 40 prominent corporate buyers participated, both in person and online, to foster enduring relationships with the attendees.





Jean Laroche has been named the Chairman of the Board of Directors for the SADC and CAE Network. His leadership comes at a crucial time, aligning with the launch of a new strategic plan.



The Réseau is participating in the APDEQ Annual Conference in Sherbrooke, centered on the theme "The Economic Prosperity Equation, Inspired by Quantum Science." This presents an exceptional opportunity to explore emerging trends, challenges, and innovative solutions for our communities.

SSADCs and CAEs Shine at the Quebec Federation of Municipalities Conference
At the recent Quebec Federation of Municipalities (FQM) conference, SADCs and CAEs made a notable impression. André Simard from SADC Charlevoix and Nadia Bellehumeur from SADC Témiscamingue participated in a workshop focused on collaboration in local economic development. They highlighted inspiring examples of what SADCs, CAEs, and RCMs can accomplish together when guided by a common vision.

→ Charlevoix-Est: An innovative housing model aimed at addressing the shortage of affordable housing for workers.

→ Témiscamingue: Emerging as a center of excellence in adventure tourism, particularly through the coordination of the Raid International Témiscamingue.



Photo credit: Quebec Federation of Municipalities - Amélie Caron, Photographer



We are excited to introduce the new website for the Réseau, which offers a diverse range of resources and tools tailored for entrepreneurs.

We are excited to introduce our new grant and financing search tool for small and medium-sized enterprises: GoFin! This innovative addition improves our capability to help customers quickly find financing solutions customized to their requirements, all with just a few clicks.



A Summary of the 2024-2025 Period

With a steadfast focus on the future, the SADCs and CAEs of Quebec and their Network exhibit revitalized dynamism and a heightened presence within Quebec's economic ecosystem.



The Réseau des SADC et CAE is excited to support the BDC's collaborative financing initiative, aimed at connecting with 100,000 entrepreneurs over the next ten years by collaborating with local organizations like ours. By joining forces, we will boost our ability to assist a larger number of entrepreneurs who possess the drive and potential to grow their businesses, ultimately creating a stronger and more inclusive entrepreneurial ecosystem.



Martin Légaré, General Manager, Socca; Adil Hassam, BDC; Geraldine Martin, CEO, Evol; Pascal Harvey, CEO, SADC and CAE Network; Diane Lafontaine, Head of Corporate Strategy and Stakeholder Engagement, BDC.

Local launch activities for the Flexiprêt project aimed at women were conducted throughout the year, encompassing a total of eight events across various regions of Quebec.



During the launch event of the Flexiprêt for women, organized by the SADC de la Neigette, the following individuals were in attendance: Marie-Michèle Bélanger, the evening's host and founder of La Firme marketing; Sarah Pineault, flexipreneure at Chez Aphrodite; Lisiane St-Pierre, Director General of SADC de la Neigette; Daisy Levesque, entrepreneur and buyer at Carrossier CarrXpert Jacques-Lévesque; Nancy Dionne, Regional Director of Bas-Saint-Laurent at EVOL; and Julie Carré, entrepreneur at Tangram Expérience and Clinique école Le Mammouth. Additionally, Francis Chouinard serves as the Director General of Réseau Accès Crédit.

The Réseau Semi-Annual empowers our professionals to enhance the prosperity of Quebec's regions!



Our Réseau brings together the strengths of SADCs and CAEs, fostering the exchange and enhancement of their expertise while supporting the development of promising projects. We would like to express our heartfelt gratitude to the more than 200 SADC and CAE professionals, along with the twenty trainers and panelists, who made our traditional Semi-Annual event at the Lévis Convention Center a success.

Under the banner of Regional Champions, we drew inspiration from Joannie Rochette's journey and participated in a variety of workshops centered on financing, local economic development, artificial intelligence, and additional topics.



The Network endorses the CDEC of Quebec's initiative, "Towards a More Inclusive and Egalitarian Entrepreneurial Ecosystem." Amélie Racette, coordinator of the Flexiprêt project for women at the Réseau des SADC et CAE, contributed to the panel discussion: Supporting All Entrepreneurs. Our President and CEO, Pascal Harvey, reiterated our Network's dedication to this initiative, which seeks to mitigate and eradicate the systemic barriers encountered by women and individuals from diverse backgrounds in entrepreneurship.

This event convened leaders and stakeholders from the entrepreneurial support sector to examine the prevailing challenges confronting entrepreneurship in Quebec. It also served as an opportunity to explore the programs and tools provided as part of the initiative.

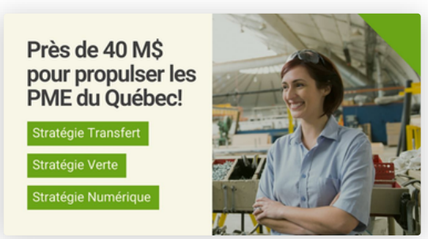


Pascal Harvey, Chief Executive Officer of the Réseau des SADC et CAE ; Jean-Yves Duclos, Member of Parliament for Quebec and Minister of Public Services and Procurement; Isabelle Gilbert, Director General of the CDEC; and Amélie Racette, Coordinator of the Flexiprêt project for Women at the Réseau des SADC et CAE.



The Réseau is showcasing women who are entrepreneurs on their own terms through the launch of our Flexipreneures campaign. Additionally, 11 flexipreneurs received $500 scholarships from the Réseau des SADC et CAE as part of the 2024 DéfiOsentreprendre (Osentreprendre Challenge).

Nearly $40 million to support Quebec SMEs! The Réseau des SADC et CAE has announced three new funds aimed at assisting regional SMEs in their development, modernization, and successful business transitions. Small enterprises will benefit from favorable loans with flexible terms designed to promote their growth.



Following a comprehensive consultation process, the Network has unveiled its new strategic plan for 2024-2029.



Participants engaged in the work associated with Lac-à-l'épaule 2024 concerning the development of the Réseau's strategic planning.

Can we move forward together? This was the key question we explored during the panel on ecosystem development and mobilization at the recent APDEQ conference in Sherbrooke. It served as a valuable platform for discussing strategies aimed at bringing together diverse skills to build a more resilient economy.



Steven Radenne, host; Pascal Harvey, Chief Executive Officer of the Réseau des SADC et CAE ; Marie-Josée Turgeon, President and Chief Executive Officer, C2MI; Vincent Aimez, Vice-Rector of Partnerships, University of Sherbrooke; Évelyne Beaudin, Mayor of Sherbrooke; Olivier Gagnon, LL.B/M.B.A, Director General, Économie Estrie.

Photo credit: Manuel Ezeta, Miguel Ezeta, Bruhh.



SADC INTERVENTION CENTERS AND CAE

SADC AND CAE: THE VITAL PARTNERS FOR ENTREPRENEURS AND COLLECTIVE INITIATIVES

Over the course of the year, the **SADCs and CAEs provided $86 million in loans and $2 million in technical assistance, benefiting over 1,664 businesses throughout the regions of Quebec**. These investments, along with the dedicated support from our professionals, empowered many businesses to carry out their projects, adjust to economic challenges, and generate wealth within their communities.

Furthermore, **approximately 788 collaborative projects are launched each year** across Quebec's regions, thanks to the commitment of SADCs and CAEs to foster local economic development. **This year, these initiatives represent a total investment of $5 million.**

LOCAL ECONOMIC GROWTH

This year, $5 million has been allocated to various collective projects, with the SADCs and CAEs contributing $2.6 million through the Local Intervention Measure (MIL) to support 392 high-impact initiatives. The MIL is dedicated solely to advancing structural initiatives and serves as a crucial catalyst for regional transformation this year.

Objectives of the Initiatives:

- Promote the growth of local businesses
- Create and maintain high-quality job opportunities
- In response to the challenges posed by labor shortages,
- Promote the retention of talent within the regions.

At the heart of the initiatives launched through the MIL are numerous projects aimed at mobilizing essential resources to tackle significant economic challenges and enhance local capacities. Notable achievements include a local procurement campaign, a symposium on business transitions, training programs for women entrepreneurs, a gala honoring sustainable development, heritage promotion efforts, a committee focused on church conversions, among others.

Thanks to the MIL, SADC and CAE professionals dedicated their time and energy to these projects. Additionally, nearly 45% of the initiatives were implemented directly by SADC and CAE development agents, highlighting their crucial role in community engagement and development. A significant portion of the activities focused on entrepreneurs, youth, and women—three essential pillars of regional vitality.

The total economic benefits generated by the projects supported under the MIL program are estimated to reach $11.2 million, reflecting the collaborative efforts of all partners involved.

ACCOMPANIEMENT

~~The support provided by SADCs and CAEs extends far beyond mere~~ financing, with over 1,664 entrepreneurs benefiting annually from their guidance on initiating, expanding, or transitioning businesses. They aid entrepreneurs in assessing the genuine needs of their companies, identifying partners and potential successors, and directing them to pertinent tools and programs.

→ EXTERNAL TECHNICAL ASSISTANCE

When entrepreneurs require more sophisticated technical support, SADCs and CAEs can also fund the engagement of external consultants. This year, **$2 million was allocated for technical assistance related to this component.**

Investments in external technical assistance have significantly advanced entrepreneurs in various critical aspects of their development. They have benefited from support in financial management, comprehension of the legislative and tax implications of business transfers, and the formulation of effective tax strategies.

In the present economic landscape, technical assistance has empowered numerous SMEs to investigate promising new markets that are directly associated with their existing operations. This strategic support is also designed to enhance management practices, validate business trajectories, and pinpoint promising sectors to foster growth and innovation.

Specialized assistance was also extended to various SMEs to facilitate the implementation of a sustainable development policy aimed at achieving recognized certification, as well as to conduct cybersecurity audits designed to enhance the digital resilience of enterprises.

THE SMALL ENHANCEMENTS THAT REINFORCE OUR SUPPORT

Thanks to recent investments designed to bolster the intervention capabilities of SADCs and CAEs, these organizations have not only fortified their teams but also amplified their on-the-ground initiatives. These incremental enhancements have tangibly resulted in increased expertise and ongoing support for entrepreneurs, especially in critical domains such as digital technology, the green transition, and business succession.



2024-2025

LOCAL ECONOMIC DEVELOPMENT

$5 M invested in more than **788** NEW PROJECTS

SUPPORT

Over 1,664
business each year

$2 M in investments

SADC+CAE INTERVENTION CENTERS

FUNDING

→ STANDARD INVESTMENT FUND

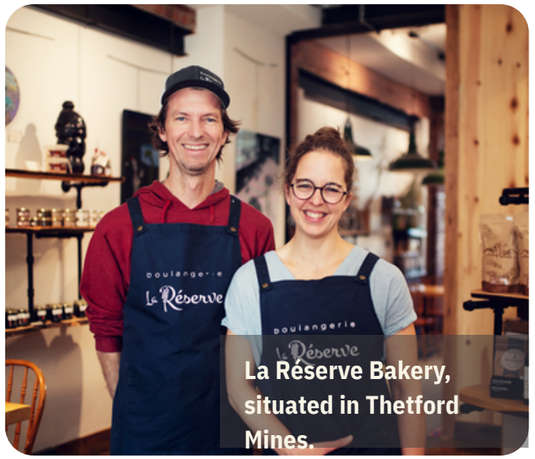
Over the course of the year, the SADCs and CAEs distributed **$71.4 million** in loans through their standard investment fund to foster business development. A remarkable total of 860 loans were granted, highlighting our unwavering dedication to revitalizing the local economy, supporting the growth of SMEs, and promoting job creation across all regions.

→ YOUTH STRATEGY FUND

Supporting the next generation of entrepreneurs has always been a core priority for our Network. Investing in young individuals means investing in the future of our communities. With this mindset, we have been implementing the Youth Strategy since 1997, a comprehensive program developed in partnership with Canada Economic Development for Quebec Regions. Through this initiative, we offer support and funding to individuals aged 39 and under who wish to start a business or acquire an existing one.

Over the years, this strategy has proven its effectiveness and impact. More than 14,000 young entrepreneurs have successfully achieved their business goals, whether through innovative projects, local enterprises, or business successions. In total, the SADCs and CAEs have invested $215 million, resulting in an impressive leverage effect of 1 in 10.

The momentum continues! This year alone, **$11.4 million has been allocated to assist 546 young entrepreneurs** across Quebec. These individuals are revitalizing our regions, creating sustainable jobs, and ensuring the economic strength of our communities.



La Réserve Bakery, situated in Thetford Mines.

→ NEWLY ALLOCATED FUNDS

Addressing Challenges Faced by Quebec Communities

In December 2024, the Réseau des SADC et CAE launched three new funds across the province to provide financing to SMEs. This initiative aims to help them confront challenges related to business transfer, the green transition, and digital transformation.

$3,1 M ALLOCATED AMONG
83 BUSINESS

In addition to financing, the professionals within our network enhance their expertise by offering support in these three areas through co-development groups and specialized training programs.

Overall, these funds provide loans of up to $50,000, featuring a two-year interest holiday and a principal moratorium for the initial three months, with the option for extension of up to two years.

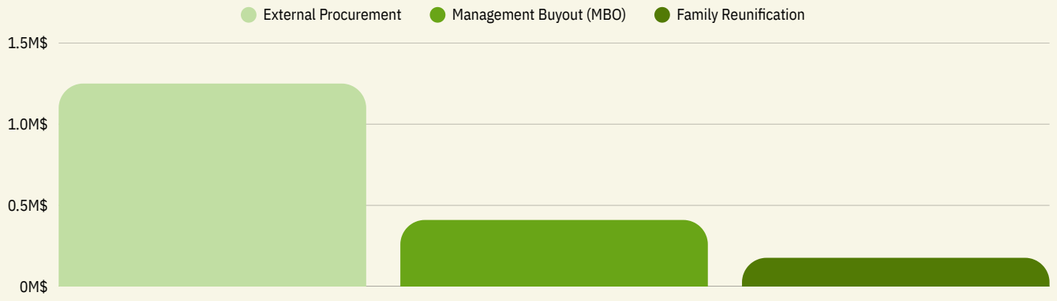


Emyard Farm is situated in Saint-Robert. Photo credit: Kim Bergeron, Photographer

→ TRANSFER STRATEGY FUND

The Transfer Strategy Fund was created to support the transition of businesses within the region, covering internal and family succession alongside business acquisitions. As of December 2024, the fund has achieved the following:

- $1.84 million allocated to 54 companies
- Each dollar leveraged $20
- 593 jobs preserved and created



SADC+CAE INTERVENTION CENTERS

ADVANCEMENTS IN SUSTAINABLE DEVELOPMENT EXPERTISE THROUGH THE DD GROUP OF SADC AND CAE

Founded in 2008 by visionaries in sustainable development from the Réseau, the Sustainable Development Group has continuously expanded and strengthened its influence. It now comprises 56 active members from SADCs and CAEs, all committed to improving internal expertise in sustainable development through knowledge sharing, tool creation, and collaboration.

In 2024, three meetings provided members with opportunities to learn, exchange ideas, and find inspiration on relevant topics. In February, 70 participants took part in a webinar on digital sobriety, exploring how technology can aid the ecological transition of SMEs. In April, 53 members attended a presentation on artificial intelligence for sustainable development, which offered practical solutions for SMEs.

Lastly, during the réseau's Semi-Annual Meeting in October in Lévis, 107 members gathered for an engaging activity titled the Fresco of Stories – New Imaginaries: On the Road to a New Society. This interactive workshop allowed participants to deconstruct existing narratives and collaboratively create inspiring visions of a society aligned with socio-environmental transition.

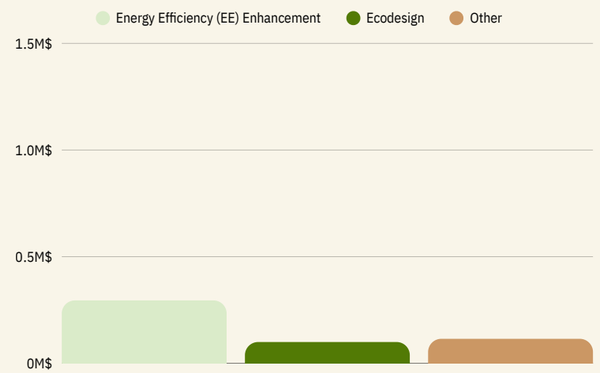


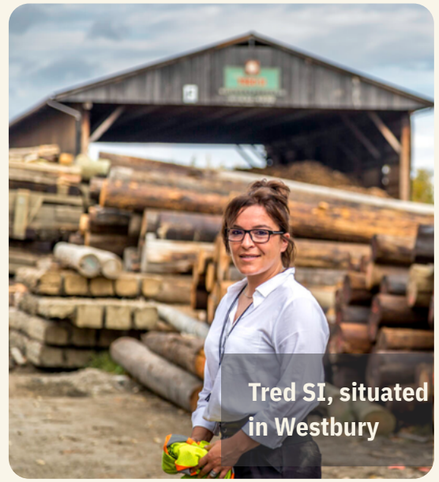
Sustainable development initiatives within the context of the Network Semi-Annual.

→ GREEN STRATEGY FUND

This fund aims to accelerate the shift towards sustainability for small businesses in Quebec by encouraging the adoption of environmentally friendly practices and the use of clean technologies. Key focus areas include improving energy efficiency, managing waste materials in small and medium-sized enterprises (SMEs), and minimizing greenhouse gas emissions.

- $510,000 allocated to 13 companies
- Each $1 invested leveraged $4.
- 103 jobs have been preserved and created.



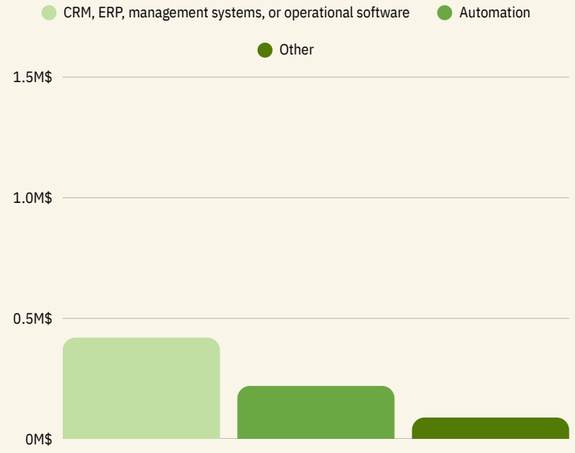


→ DIGITAL STRATEGY FUND

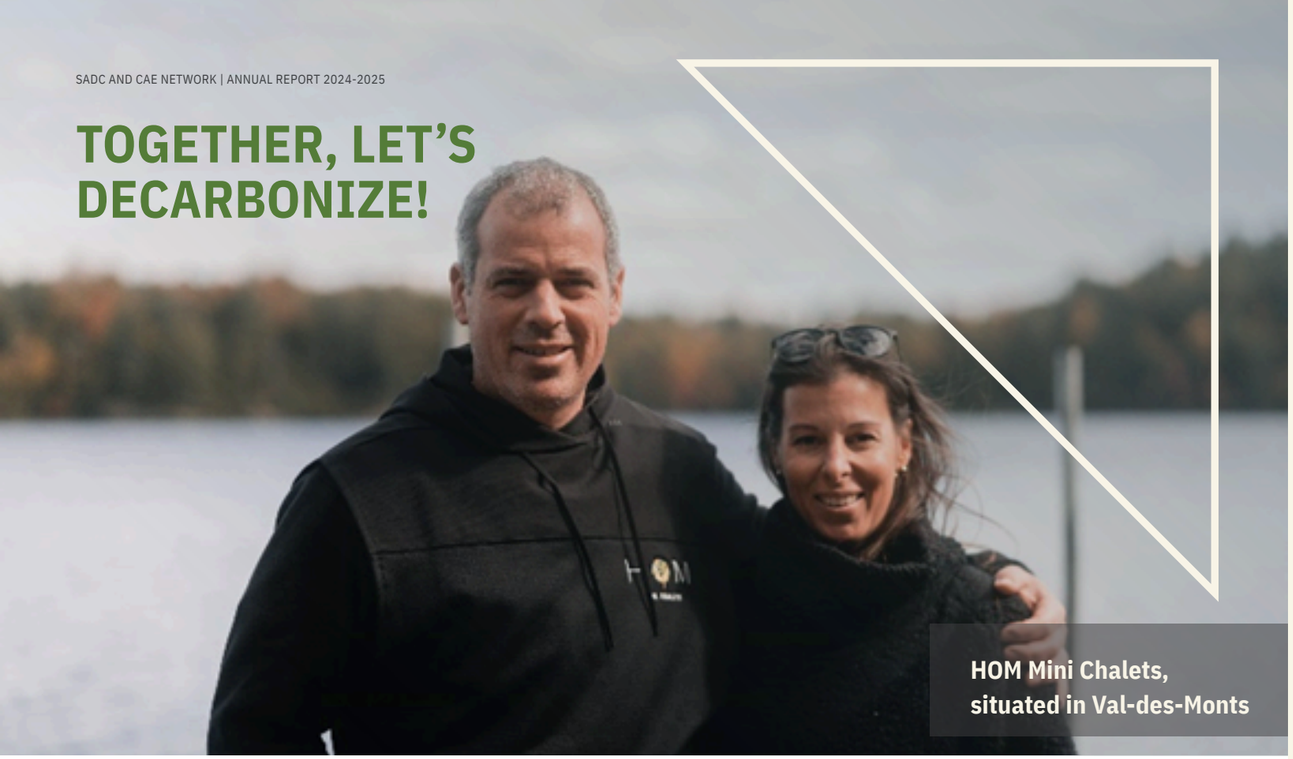
The aim of this fund is to accelerate the digital transformation of small businesses by facilitating the adoption of management systems (CRM, ERP), automating processes, integrating robotics, implementing home automation, and improving IT security.

- $700,000 allocated from a $4.1 million financial package
- 20 projects funded
- 328 jobs preserved and created





TOGETHER, LET'S DECARBONIZE!



HOM Mini Chalets, situated in Val-des-Monts

A PROJECT THAT SHOWCASES THE EFFECTIVENESS OF OUR INTERVENTION CENTERS

For over 15 years, the SADC and CAE Network have prioritized sustainable development, leveraging their expertise in local economic development, financing, and business support to promote the adoption of environmentally responsible business practices.

Led by the SADC Papineau-Collines, the Together, Decarbonize! project exemplifies this integrated approach. It provides businesses with a systematic framework to comprehend and mitigate their carbon footprint. In a co-development format, entrepreneurs engage in four collaborative workshops, receive expert guidance, obtain a customized carbon assessment, and identify specific actions tailored to their unique requirements: energy efficiency, waste reduction, transportation optimization, and more.

This project transcends diagnostics; the SADC also assists businesses in identifying financing sources to implement their initiatives. Once emissions are reduced, they become eligible for the SADC and CAE Carbon Credits project, the sole initiative enabling small businesses to access the Voluntary Carbon Market (VCM) and receive financial compensation.

SINCE JANUARY 2024:

20 companies received support, resulting in approximately thirty concrete actions and the emergence of nearly $500,000 generated spin-offs in the voluntary carbon market.

These companies enhance their profitability, bolster their reputation, and increase their capacity to attract a skilled workforce.

With Ensemble décarbonons!, the SADC Papineau Collines is effecting a significant change in its community and motivating other SADCs and CAEs throughout Quebec, as a training program specifically designed for SADC and CAE advisors has been established to facilitate the implementation of this project in additional communities!

"Thanks to the Together We Decarbonize Cohort, we can now quantify our GHG emissions with greater precision, identify innovative and effective solutions for their reduction, and enhance the profitability and optimization of our operating costs."

Martin Poitras and Dominique Laflamme, HOM Mini Chalets

Innovative and flexible tools designed to support businesses

In a constantly shifting economic and entrepreneurial environment, enhancing our support capabilities has become a vital strategic priority. Through our key actions and initiatives, we are committed to providing the SADC and CAE Network with essential tools and expertise to better support the growth of our members and their local communities. This strategy demonstrates our dedication to customizing our advisory, support, and technical assistance services to meet the new realities on the ground.

The integration of advanced tools like GoFin, GoData, and artificial intelligence in business plan development showcases our ability to anticipate community needs while staying true to our mission: to serve as leading partners and a source of inspiration for entrepreneurial success in the region. These tools, easily accessible on our web platforms, promote an agile and forward-thinking approach.

GOFIN: THE ULTIMATE DIRECTORY OF FUNDING AND GRANTS FOR SMES

Launched in the fall of 2024, GoFin is accessible at no cost to all entrepreneurs via the SADC and CAE Network website. This tool enables businesses and SADC and CAE advisors to swiftly identify financing options customized to their specific needs. Since its inception, nearly 1,000 entrepreneurs have utilized the search function.

Additionally, with the GOFin Pro Advisor license embraced by numerous SADCs and CAEs, they can convert their data and notifications into strategic opportunities. The introduction of new key local notification features, tailored to the specific territories of each SADC and CAE, enables the provision of even more relevant and targeted support to their clients.



GODATA: LEVERAGING THE CAPABILITIES OF ARTIFICIAL INTELLIGENCE DATA

AI mapping serves as a potent and pertinent instrument for the strategic advancement of our organizations and the economic growth of our regions. Consequently, our organization has embraced GoData, a tool developed by Civision. With its user-friendly interface, this solution enables the Network, SADCs, and CAEs to generate profiles and analyses of their regions, utilizing approximately fifty factual socio-economic indicators.

An interactive map tailored for SADC and CAE regions is available on each respective webpage of the Réseau sadc-cae.ca website. These maps provide access to 15 categories of data for the entire ecosystem. Discover them!



GoData

NEW BUSINESS PLAN CREATION TEMPLATE LEVERAGING ARTIFICIAL INTELLIGENCE

Tailored specifically for our clients, this user-friendly tool seamlessly integrates our expertise with AI insights. Assisting in business plan development is a crucial component of our comprehensive service offerings. This template will enhance the capabilities of our advisors, who consistently seek to provide innovative tools to their entrepreneurial clients.



Services are offered in both French and English across all rural areas of Quebec

In 2024-2025, the SADCs and CAEs maintained their dedication to accessibility and linguistic inclusion via the Program for the Delivery of Services in Both Official Languages. Financial backing of $570,000 reinforced initiatives aimed at delivering quality services to the population in both French and English across the territory.

This investment empowered SADCs and CAEs to enhance their practices, allowing all individuals to communicate in their preferred official language and access equivalent services, irrespective of their location. Drawing from the consultations conducted, they successfully adapted their communication tools, executed promotional activities for their services, provided online training, and organized events in both languages.

Our commitment to enhancing service to communities is evidenced by tangible actions, particularly our partnership with CEDEC (Community Economic Development and Employability Corporation). This collaboration enables us to gain a deeper understanding of local realities and, consequently, to fortify our connections with English-speaking communities.

This tangible advancement demonstrates our commitment to providing equitable and inclusive services tailored to the specific needs of the communities we serve.

ENTREPRENEURIAL JOURNEY

WILLIAM WATSON, ORIGINALLY FROM ONTARIO, HAS OPENED AN UPSCALE ROTISSERIE IN TROIS-PISTOLES, DESPITE HAVING LIMITED KNOWLEDGE OF THE AREA

Monsieur Poulet

Partnering with a local from the Bas-St-Laurent region, he was driven by a strong desire to make a positive impact on his new community. As an English-speaking entrepreneur, he decided to contribute through his culinary expertise.
As an experienced chef, William committed himself to understanding his surroundings. He observed local consumption habits, engaged with residents, and evaluated the area's needs. It soon became clear to him that there was a gap in the roast chicken market regarding both quality and pricing. This realization inspired him to launch a product under the M. Poulet brand, known for being 100% fresh, flavorful, and budget-friendly, all delivered through a quick and efficient model.

This opportunity, while promising, posed a challenge for an anglophone looking to establish a business in a predominantly French-speaking region. However, fueled by his passion and with his partner's help in navigating the language barrier, William embarked on his entrepreneurial journey. He introduced a mobile concept that embraces a retro vibe.

Support from the SADC and CAE Network was crucial in bringing this project to life. With the guidance of an advisor dedicated to assisting English-speaking clients—a service recently implemented to strengthen ties with these communities—William received personalized and financial support. Furthermore, the SADC des Basques provided a loan to help establish the business.

As the grand opening of "M. Poulet" approaches, William Watson proudly reflects on his accomplishments. He warmly invites both locals and visitors to stop by and indulge in his delicious, locally inspired dishes!

An exceptional program!

The Canadian Digital Adoption Program: A pivotal mechanism for the digital transformation of Quebec SMEs

Three years after its launch, the Canadian Digital Adoption Program (CDAP) is demonstrating a tangible impact on Quebec's entrepreneurial fabric. Between 2022 and 2025, 61% of participating companies saw a significant increase in sales, of which 44% grew between 10% and 25%, and 10% exceeded this threshold. At the same time, 32% generated new jobs.

Piloted in Quebec by the FCCQ and the Réseau des SADC et CAE, the PCAN aimed to increase business productivity and competitiveness through digital technology. Over 11,500 companies were supported, mainly micro-businesses (82%), with a strong representation of small businesses (17%).

The initiative has made a significant contribution to the development of digital skills: 84% of companies have acquired new expertise, and 78% are considering other digital projects. Preferred areas include digital marketing (71%), content creation (61%) and management (51%).

Artificial intelligence (AI), while still in the exploratory stage (36% have adopted it), is generating significant interest: 67% of companies seek to leverage it further.

Retail leads in demand at 21%, followed by construction at 12% and professional and cultural services. Montreal is notable at 23%, while regions such as Montérégie at 17% and Capitale-Nationale at 12% also exhibit significant growth.

The PCAN represented a pivotal moment for SMEs regarding digital transformation, operational efficiency, and overall appeal. This initiative has demonstrated its effectiveness as a significant catalyst for local economic development.



Pascal Harvey, President and Chief Executive Officer of the Network, alongside Alexandre Gagnon, Vice President of Labor and Human Capital at the FCCQ.



→ ÖLALAVERT

A bulk products store located in Estrie that benefited from the PCAN program to improve their online sales strategies.

FLEXIPRÊT FOR WOMEN



"Being a flexipreneur means embracing who I truly am and finding personal fulfillment."

Gabrielle Coulombe is one of the Flexipreneur Ambassadors featured in the Réseau's communications campaign. With support from the SADC of Charlevoix, she works as a community development officer and is the co-owner of Aux Monts Fleuris.

PROMOTING FEMALE ENTREPRENEURSHIP: A PRIORITY FOR OUR RÉSEAU

In Canada, merely 31% of small and medium-sized enterprises (SMEs) are either majority-owned or equally owned by women. A study conducted by McKinsey & Co. indicates that the complete integration of women into the economy could result in a 6% increase in Canadian GDP. Women play a crucial role in entrepreneurship, and our Réseau is dedicated to supporting them through tangible initiatives such as the Flexiprêt.

FLEXI-LOAN FOR WOMEN: A PILOT INITIATIVE IN COLLABORATION WITH ~~THE~~ SADC SHAWINIGAN

In response to this need, our Réseau, in partnership with SADC Shawinigan, is currently piloting the national Flexiprêt initiative for women. This program offers tailored support and flexible financing solutions specifically designed for flexipreneurs.

Launched in January 2024 in collaboration with Women and Gender Equality Canada, the pilot project is being implemented by 11 SADCs and CAEs across Quebec. The results so far are very promising:

- → **92** Flexipreneurs received support
- → **$812 200** investments in the form of loans,
- → **DOZEN** of free trainings were offered.

At the same time, data is being carefully collected. A research report, developed in partnership with the Université du Québec à Trois-Rivières, will outline the challenges flexipreneurs face and offer recommendations to support their success.



REACH OF IMPACT

OVER 60,000 VISITORS

OVER 40,000 SUBSCRIBERS ACROSS OUR FACEBOOK PAGES

1,920 LINKEDIN FOLLOWERS

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Our customized financial instrument

$133 MILLION IN ASSETS TO SATISFY THE COMMUNITY REQUIREMENTS



THE OBJECTIVE:
An innovative tool for SADCs and CAEs to ensure the long-term economic development of all Quebec regions.

- pooling of funds and their successful capitalization
- equitable circulation and judicious management of capital
- support for specific needs and local investment initiatives

THE VISION:
A collective and sustainable approach focused on solidarity and the fair sharing of strengths across our network.

Avignon Sawmill situated in Saint-Alexis-de-Matapédia



Message from the President

JEAN-CLAUDE LAROCQUE

It is with great pride and enthusiasm that I address you for the first time as President of Capital Réseau. For over 25 years, Capital Réseau has played a central role in community finance in Quebec. As a symbol of solidarity among the SADCs and CAEs, our organization actively supports these essential pillars of local development in their mission to stimulate the economy, create sustainable employment, and maintain services across all regions of Quebec.

Each year, our financing helps launch and grow businesses, generating meaningful impact in their communities. These tangible results reaffirm our strong belief in the power of local finance.

The year 2024 marks a turning point, with the launch of specialized funds designed to address the pressing challenges facing our regions: digital transformation, the ecological transition, and business succession. These funds will empower local businesses to adapt to rapid societal changes and ensure the successful transfer of entrepreneurial leadership within our communities.

Our commitment to regional entrepreneurship remains unwavering. We continue to support youth through accessible loans under the Youth Strategy program and promote women's entrepreneurship through financing initiatives like the Flexipreneure program.

We are also focused on strengthening our role as a strategic partner to SADCs and CAEs. We will continue to equip and support them as they respond to the specific needs of the communities they serve.

To our partners, we express our sincere gratitude for your trust and continued collaboration. It is thanks to your support that we can actively contribute to the vitality and resilience of our regions.

For all those looking to invest in and engage with local development, Capital Réseau will remain your key link to the SADCs, CAEs, and community-based financing.

Jean Claude Laroque
President, Capital Réseau



Message from the Treasurer

JOCELYN GURNARD

As of March 31, 2025, Capital Réseau's assets under management exceeded $130 million. This figure reflects the network's confidence, the strength of our management, and our collective ability to generate concrete impact in communities.

During the 2024-2025 fiscal year, we awarded 29 regular loans totaling $8.2 million. Of these, $5.6 million was awarded for the Regular Fund (11 loans), and $2.6 million for the Youth Strategy Fund (18 loans). These loans are not simple transactions: they support promising projects in the regions, create jobs, and support entrepreneurs where the needs are most urgent.

Since 2020, Capital Réseau has administered the Regional Relief and Recovery Fund (RRRF). As of March 31, 2025, $63.4 million had been repaid, with a loss rate limited to only 5%. $5.8 million remains in active loans to businesses. This recovered capital has not remained idle: nearly $63 million has already been recommitted to structuring initiatives, including more than $9 million deployed during the 2024-2025 fiscal year.

$34.8 million has been committed to accelerate business transfers, the ecological transition, and the digital transformation of SMEs. Since the launch of these funds in December 2024, $3.08 million has already been loaned to innovative and strategic businesses. $38.25 million has been allocated to capacity building for SADCs and CAEs, to give them the means to maximize their impact in the regions. Since September 2024, $3.8 million has already been deployed for this purpose. Entrepreneurial succession remains at the heart of our priorities, with a capitalization of $1.7 million for 7 CAEs.

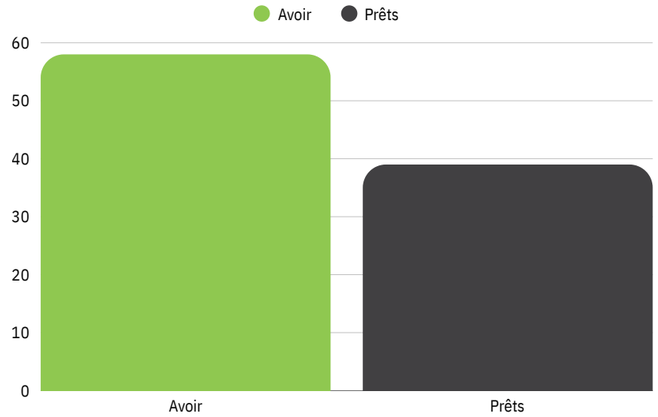
Throughout the year, we also continued to actively support the Youth Strategy Fund, with tailored financing terms: 0% interest rates for two years and interest rebates. 34 SADCs and CAEs were able to offer these terms to their young entrepreneurs, thereby increasing access to financing and strengthening the fund's local roots in communities.

Finally, an additional $615,000 was mobilized to support women's flexipreneurship in SADCs and CAEs. For us, supporting women's entrepreneurship is a strategic requirement for building an inclusive and sustainable economy.

With these results, Capital Réseau reaffirms its role as a strategic financial vehicle serving community development. More than an asset manager, we are a local partner, committed to supporting each region in its economic and social transition with ambition, rigor, and determination.

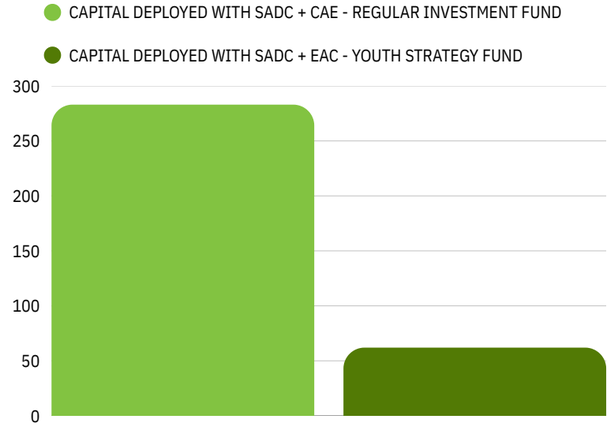
Funds

Regular assets and loans - evolution over 5 years



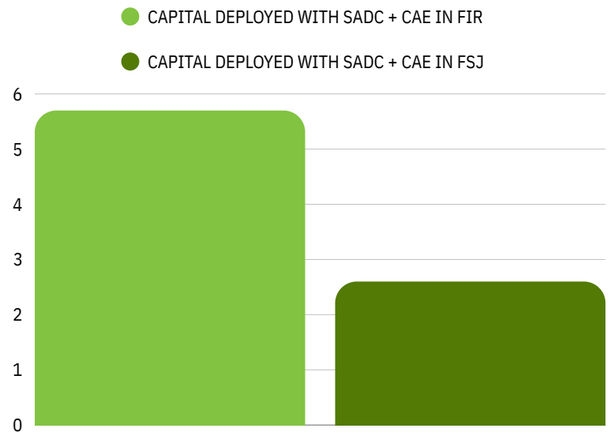


Capital loaned to SADC + CAE
since creation



$345 million to quickly meet the needs of communities across Quebec's regions!

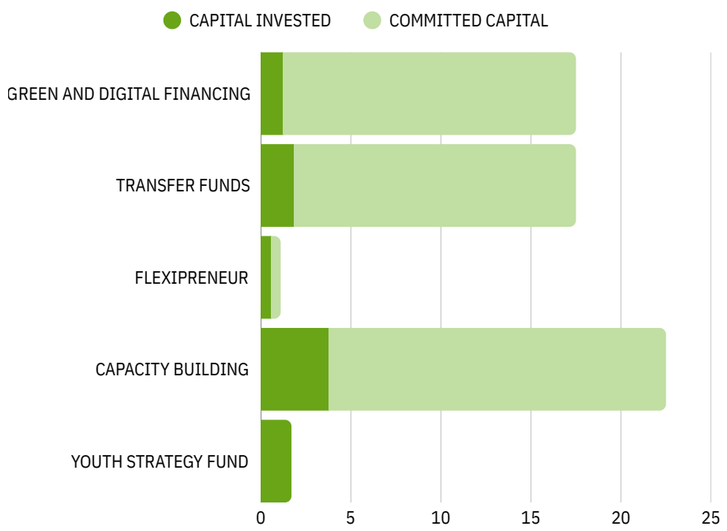
Capital loaned to SADC + CAE
in 2024-2025



$8.2 million enabled SADCs and CAEs to provide more loans to SMEs in their regions in 2024–2025!

CAPITAL RÉSEAU
SADC+CAE

Capital allocated and utilized for SADC + CAE in 2024-2025



Over $60 million has been committed to support SADCs and CAEs in community development and local finance, including $9 million already deployed in 2024-2025.



Capital Réseau: Regional Financing for Community Development.

Over
40 years
of expertise

67 SADC and CAE
across Quebec

Over
1,000 volunteers and professionals