

2021-2022 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

A changing world

The pandemic brought major change to our societies and organizations. In the spring of 2022, we went through our 6th wave of COVID-19 in two years.

Although this produced far fewer impacts in terms of numerous business closures and health restrictions, it was nonetheless a fact that we had to abide by government requirements to reduce the risks associated with the spread of the virus.

Of course, we are hoping this wave will be the last one and that we will be able to move on to something else and return to a normal life, thereby consigning this pandemic to history.

Economically, our society fared relatively well. However, threats did appear and heightened the challenges we have to deal with.

The labour shortages that rocked all companies, inflation, the risks of recession, delays and supply chain problems, climate changes, the war in Ukraine, etc. are all issues that brought their share of worries and concerns, which highlighted the changes that societies, organizations and companies have to deal with.

The next few years will not necessarily be smooth sailing. We will have to take on a myriad

of behavioural, societal, environmental and/or technological challenges.

Labour shortages will persist over time. If there was the one factor that had the greatest and most immediate effect on public or private sector organizations during the pandemic, it was labour shortages.

Though this had been known and documented for several years by various experts, the pandemic showed just how extensively and how quickly labour shortages could affect all organizations.

The impact was immediate when the economy was shut down at the onset of the crisis. As we are now looking to a return to normalcy with respect to health requirements, labour shortages in themselves are part of the daily reality of all organizations. Forecasts on this issue indicate that their effects will be felt until the late 2020s.

All sectors of our economy will be impacted. Entrepreneurs will have no choice but to review their business model and ask themselves, for example, "Do I still have to stay open for long hours, knowing that I don't have enough staff to keep up with demand?" Will merchants, by adapting, end up scaling back their business hours? If so, how do they keep their sales up while reducing the number of hours due to staff shortages? How are they able to respond to



their customer base with fewer resources at their disposal? With questions such as these, technology may be the solution for some businesses.

The pandemic put us in fast-forward mode and hurled us headlong as a society into avenues we never knew existed. The past two years were instrumental as vectors of change. They forced us to develop new behavioural and technological avenues that were either unknown to us or not overly present in our lives until only recently.

As a society, all of us must adapt to these new realities. That said, the Gatineau Valley SADC will offer a new service to entrepreneurs to help them address new realities and challenges confronting them. With our consulting and support service, we not only provide support and non-refundable financing, but we will also have access to a group of experts to deal with the various needs of contractors. Whether in retail, the restaurant industry, accommodation, transport, service, construction, to name a few, everyone will be able to benefit from the advice of experts to find solutions tailored to their own situation.

This support service directly relates to the mission we established for ourselves. i.e., encourage the community to adapt and plan its various needs based on current and future realities.

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

Demystifying the Gatineau Valley

Meet some of our ambassador companies

As announced at our last general meeting in 2021, we launched this initiative in mid-November 2021 with the presence of our ambassador companies in this project.

Right from the time it was launched, the results were immediate on the various platforms used to convey strong and positive images of the Gatineau Valley in a well-targeted area that the Ottawa-Gatineau CMA is.

The aim of our campaign was to show the nearby and urban population on our territory that the Valley is not only a good place to live but that it is possible to operate a business and thrive, while living on a territory where quality of life is front and centre in the reality of its residents.

Our intent is to create and intensify conditions conducive to increasing economic interaction with the urban area in the Outaouais. This will produce both an economic and environmental impact, because a shorter economic circuit means fewer greenhouse gases.

Our hope is that this large-scale regional promotional project will spawn interactions that will benefit the various regions in the Outaouais. This is one way of addressing the regional disparities between the urban core and the Gatineau Valley.

We are moving ahead with phase 2 of our project and, at this point, we would like to introduce you to eight new ambassadors who have taken up this initiative.



Fromagerie La Cabriole



Groupe DL Solutions
Informatiques



Réfrigération RoxTone



Menuiserie Lafrenière

WORD FROM THE PRESIDENT AND GENERAL MANAGER *(Cont'd and end)*

Autonomous convenience stores

In the late 2010s (2018 and 2019), we anticipated that we had to show business persons in our community that technology would play an increasingly larger role in the day-to-day operations of their businesses.

Even back then, we were contemplating the repositioning of the operations of one retail sector, i.e., town convenience stores.

For many municipalities in Quebec, these service companies represent the last businesses that capture the heartbeat of a village. They are often perceived as an essential service that contributes to the cohesiveness of a community. They constitute the last rampart in justifying the very existence of the village.

Consistent with the objective of repositioning this retail sector, we performed a series of analyses, research and surveys that helped us reposition from a marketing standpoint these convenience stores of tomorrow, which we have termed “autonomous convenience stores.”

With the implementation of new and accessible technologies (\$) and the deployment of high-speed Internet that is coming to our territory in the very near future, we concluded that it is quite fair to say that these businesses certainly do have a future in our villages.

During the course of our research, we were able to visit two companies that use this technology – the experimental Couche-Tard store at McGill University (the “disconnected Couche-Tard”) and Aisle 24 in Old Montreal. Both are fully autonomous, in other words, there are no employees physically present in the business. They can

operate 24 hours a day, 7 days a week.

Though they do not necessarily use the same technologies, they do share one trait in that technology has made it possible for them to operate autonomously.

This is a reality today, and it will only expand in the short term. We need only to think of the cash registers that autonomously read all items placed in a bin (D cathlon and Couche-Tard). No need to scan each item. Everything is done during one single, user-friendly process.

Customers can use intelligent lockers that are available at all times. This is another way for entrepreneurs to make sales to their customers and avoid labour shortage issues.

As part of our suggestion to reposition retail businesses, which include convenience stores and businesses in any other sector, owners can now use this technology, keep labour to a minimum, modernize its offerings, limit its hours of operation with employee(s) and/or owner(s), while remaining open 24/7.

The technology is there to help change business models, simplify day-to-day life (It’s the objective, though



Pierre Monette
General Manager



Andr  Galipeau
President

it’s not always the case !) and help make operations profitable for companies in general, not only convenience stores.

In closing, we wish to take this opportunity to thank the members of the board of directors and the investment committee for their involvement throughout the year in the various activities of the Gatineau Valley SADC and the staff for their work, without whom we never would have achieved the results that we did.

DEMYSTIFYING THE GATINEAU VALLEY

The “Demystifying the Gatineau Valley” project aims to foster the development of business ties between entrepreneurs in the Valley and those in the Ottawa-Gatineau region. The first phase of this five-year project was launched on November 25, 2021.

The objective of this first phase was to elicit awareness and promote the Gatineau Valley as a place conducive to business development through company launches, acquisitions or start-ups and the development of business ties.

To demonstrate the potential of the Gatineau Valley, nine entrepreneurs offered personal accounts of their business experience in the Valley. They have either one or several outlet(s) of their company outside the region, have a strong customer base outside the region, or are from outside the region and came here to set up a new company

or take over an existing company.

These were the basic recruiting criteria of the Fromagerie la Cabriole, Ameublement Branchaud, Mélanie Auger architectural technologist, Pothier Lévesque Réfrigération (now Réfrigération RoxTone), Érablière Bo-Sirop, Menuiserie Lafrenière, Premiers soins Haute-Gatineau, Services Informatique DL and Rona Deslongchamps.

The personal accounts and photos of these nine entrepreneurs and companies were used in the development of numerous bilingual communication tools of the year 1 plan: the monentreprisedanslvg.ca website, articles in Le Droit Affaires and the Ottawa Business Journal, radio advertising on 104.7 Outaouais, television ads on TVA and Noovo, social media (Facebook and Google Display), and finally advertising on OC Transpo bus panels.

This action enabled us to achieve the following results from November 2021 to March 2022:

WEBSITE :
Close to 4,900 individual visitors

LE DROIT AFFAIRES :
Four 1-page ads

RADIO 104,7 OUTAOUAIS :
755 30-second spots

TVA AND NOOVO :
146 30-second spots

FACEBOOK AND GOOGLE DISPLAY :
More than 2.5 million views

OC TRANSPRO BUS PANELS :
30 ads over 16 weeks

OTTAWA BUSINESS JOURNAL :
33,000 run, digital advertising banner per month for 3 months in addition to 3 articles and visibility on their social media

Late in the year, entrepreneurs were recruited for phase 2 of the project based on the same criteria as for phase 1. Starting in May 2022, 8 new companies will be joining the project, i.e., Station l’Aventure, Informatique Sylvain Patry, Ferme aux Gros Sabots, Ferme Réservoir, Carpe Diem, Épicerie Mulligan, Webaction and Lynda Cayer,

physiotherapist. For this second recruitment, special attention was paid to their geographical distribution in the Gatineau Valley.

A total of \$138,683 was budgeted for phase 1, which was covered by the Gatineau Valley SADC with the participation of Services Québec.



Launch



Advertising on the panels of OC Transpo buses

INTELLIGENT LOCKERS

On May 6, the intelligent lockers project came to fruition in the Gatineau Valley. Customers can pick up or deposit merchandise or documents at all times. This improves customer service and can become an effective time management device.

The Gatineau Valley SADC pilot project made it possible to establish this service in six companies in the region: Chez Figaro, Chez Gargantini, Galeries Maniwaki, Sylvain Patry Informatique, MS Performance plus and Monique Fortin, CPA.

This innovative technological project was used close to 500 times by customers who deposited or picked up merchandise or documents during year one. A survey of users revealed a customer satisfaction rate of 9.83/10. The most important features, they found, were that the lockers were user-friendly, quick to use and that their parcels were safe.

The SADC pilot project, which was carried out in collaboration with Expedibox, was for one year. Four of the six companies indicated their interest in continuing on with the lockers when the pilot project ended.

WEBINAR

“What does the future of marketing hold in store?”

For the year just ended, a webinar entitled “What does the future of marketing hold in store?” was held for entrepreneurs in the region on February 23, 2022.

Luc Dupont, who served as facilitator, used content developed in collaboration with the SADC team and adapted to regional realities. Some twenty participants discovered technological innovations that will have a

bearing the business models of companies. Some of the examples cited were QR codes, automated checkouts, new methods of payment, intelligent lockers and many others, all of which are available to companies. They also provide opportunities for business owners to adopt a business model to respond to changing consumer behaviours and to overcome labour shortages.



Webinar

Service

Casiers intelligents

Offerts dans la Vallée-de-la-Gatineau

Allez-y, simplifiez vos achats !

C'est facile et rapide → **4 étapes**

Je passe ma commande au commerçant

J'achète en ligne, par courriel ou par téléphone.

Je reçois mon code sur mon téléphone

Une fois ma commande préparée, le commerçant m'envoie un code sur mon téléphone.

Je vais chez mon commerçant quand je veux

Je me rends sur place, avant, pendant ou après les heures d'ouverture.

J'entre mon code et je récupère ma commande

J'entre le code reçu sur l'écran du casier, celui-ci s'ouvre et je récupère ma commande.



Intelligent lockers

New business model

AUTONOMOUS CONVENIENCE STORES

To succeed in business, you must listen to and question yourself on the internal and external environment you are in and make whatever innovations are needed to respond to the market and meet the company's profitability objectives. This is true for all businesses, and by observing the situation of convenience stores on the territory, the SADC team began analyzing that particular sector in 2018-2019.

Some basic observations emerged – convenience stores are often the last businesses to be operating in villages, which means that they are not only important economically but socially as well.

Several convenience stores have had the same owner for many years and no longer have any long-term debt on their buildings. The profit margin in this sector has plummeted over the years to the point that their viability and profitability would become difficult if a new owner were to retain the same business model and take on debt to acquire the business. A new business model is therefore essential to the viability and profitability of convenience stores in villages.

Based on these observations SADC began looking for solutions. Research was done on the clientele of the various existing business models. Innovative companies were paid a visit, which were supplemented by meetings with people in the sector.

These actions did yield some potential solutions that are accessible to any convenience store owners, and the research did reveal that some of this technology could also be applied to other types of business.

With the upcoming implementation of high-speed Internet in villages on the territory, several models ranging from totally autonomous convenience stores to a hybrid model with some technological features such as automated checkouts are possible.

Some items remain to be validated before the writing of the final report to be submitted early in 2022-2023.





FINANCING AND TECHNICAL AID

(Regular fund and Youth Strategy Program)

In accordance with its goal to promote the economic development of the Gatineau Valley, SADC continues to pursue its local economic development involvements.

During the 2021-2022 fiscal year, \$406,370 was invested in companies on the territory to support entrepreneurship. These investments resulted in the launch of three companies, one acquisition, modernization/expansion of another three and the rescue of two, which created and maintained 26 direct jobs and generated total investments of \$823,221.

In terms of its involvement, SADC met with 41 new clients to offer them consulting services, technical support and/or financing. In addition, 62 promoters and businesses were approached directly to offer them support for their management or their projects.

STA PROGRAM

(Structuring Technical Assistance)

In March 2021, the federal government announced an additional contribution to the Réseau des SADC and the CAE to provide its members, including the Gatineau Valley SADC, the necessary funding to support businesses requiring technical assistance.

The purpose of this program was to ensure that businesses are well equipped during the economic recovery to deal with the challenges brought on by the pandemic.

The program allotted funding to hire experts to provide businesses affected by the pandemic with long-term structuring processes to help them resume their activities in the following areas: diagnosing business functions, identification of more effective interventions, development of structured strategies in the area of production, financial management or human resources, innovation, sustainable development, marketing or digitization.

Thanks to this program, SADC was able to assist three businesses on its territory by investing \$98,776.90, which generated a total investment of \$168,664.46.

LED PROGRAM

(Local economic development)

This program enabled SADC to provide \$18,262.50 in total financial support to three companies in the region, resulting in a total investment of \$21,012.50. These funds were used to hire specialized consultants.

For the upcoming year, businesses wishing to review or rethink their business model will be able to avail themselves of this program.

GREEN SHIFT

The Green Shift Program was announced in February 2022. Its aim is to help companies make the shift to a greener economy and provides businesses on the territory non-repayable financial assistance to hire consultants to effectively plan their efforts along these lines such as by reducing greenhouse gases, achieving energy efficiency, managing residual matter, etc.

For the period ending on March 31, 2022, this program had not taken on any cases, given the short time since it was launched. However, businesses will still have access to the program for 2022-2023.



2021-2022 FINANCIAL INVESTMENT REPORT

FUNDS	AMOUNT	TOTAL INVESTMENTS GENERATED
Regular SADC	\$381,370	\$781,261
Youth Strategy	\$25,000	\$41,960
Regional Relief and Recovery Fund (RRRF) 1-2-3	\$30,000	\$0
Total financing	\$436,370	\$823,221
STA program	\$98,777	\$168,664.46
Local intervention measure	\$49,629	\$75,767.24
Local economic development	\$18,262.50	\$21,012.50
Total local development aid	\$166,668.50	\$265,444.20
Total	\$603,038.50	\$1,088,665.20
Companies helped	16	

PERMANENT MEMBERS



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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