



Canada Economic Development

News Release

Tuned in to the regions – Tuned in to business

Canada Economic Development raises to \$46 million its investment in tourism development along the St. Lawrence and Saguenay rivers

Québec, Quebec, May 8, 2008 – The Honourable Jean-Pierre Blackburn, Minister of Labour and Minister of Canada Economic Development, today unveiled the new *Support Initiative for International Cruise Development along the St. Lawrence and Saguenay Rivers*.

This initiative, which carries a budget allocation of \$36 million over three years, is intended to fund projects aimed at renovating port facilities to accommodate the berthing of high-tonnage cruise ships and at enhancing tourist attractions to increase the appeal of Quebec ports of call for cruise ship passengers. In February 2007, the City of Saguenay was awarded \$10 million in funding to develop a port of call for cruise ships at Baie des Ha! Ha!, which brings to \$46 million the level of funding Canada Economic Development is devoting to increasing the drawing power of these ports and making them choice destinations for the international cruise market.

The ports targeted by this initiative are Baie-Comeau, Saguenay, Sept-Îles, Havre-Saint-Pierre, Gaspésie and Îles-de-la-Madeleine.

“The international cruise industry is experiencing significant growth. It is important that we take steps now to harness travellers' mounting interest in the St. Lawrence Seaway as a prime tourist stop. New world-class ports of call for cruise ships will help strengthen and diversify the economy of these targeted regions. Over the long range, these improved port facilities will mean a greater number of foreign tourists visiting our regions and, consequently, a higher level of tourism revenues,” stated Minister Blackburn.

This initiative is expected to generate considerable spin-offs for Quebec by the year 2014, including a rise in international cruise ship spending to reach a total of \$223 million, the creation and maintenance of some 2,800 jobs and the injection of about a billion dollars into the Quebec economy.

“With this initiative, the targeted cities and communities will be able to develop the kind of community infrastructure that will help them strengthen and build on their socio-economic development. I would like to underscore the excellent spirit of cooperation between Canada Economic Development and Quebec's *Ministère du Tourisme* that has made it possible to arrive at a common understanding of the issues relating to the international cruise industry,” Minister Blackburn concluded.

The *Support Initiative for International Cruise Development along the St. Lawrence and Saguenay Rivers* comes under the [Major Economic and Tourism Facilities](#) component of the Canada Economic Development 2008-2011 Strategic Plan released on April 22, 2008. The aim of this first component is to encourage execution of projects whose benefits correspond on all fronts to the needs and aspirations of Quebec's regions.

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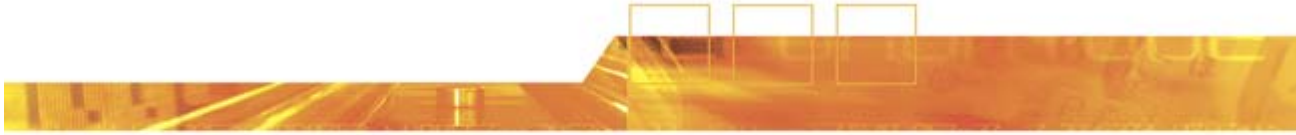
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