

# Canada Economic Development

*Support for a promising niche*

## Government of Canada awards \$46 million in funding for the development of international cruiseship ports of call in Quebec

**Gaspé, Quebec, August 19, 2008** – The Honourable Jean-Pierre Blackburn, Minister of Labour and Minister of Canada Economic Development, took the opportunity while in Gaspésie to report on the *Support Initiative for International Cruise Development along the St. Lawrence and Saguenay Rivers*. A budget allocation of \$46 million has been earmarked for the upgrading of port facilities intended for the berthing of large cruise ships and for the enhancement of tourist attractions.

"I firmly believe in the vast promise of the international cruise industry and in its potential for fostering the sustainable development of many Quebec communities. Modernizing or developing ports of call will help strengthen and diversify the economic base of these communities. Our government sees this initiative as strategically important because of the numerous spin-offs it will generate by prolonging the tourism season, increasing the number of tourists and reinforcing Quebec's position as a world-class destination," stated Minister Blackburn.

Economic stakeholders in the Gaspé-Chandler axis consider the establishment of ports of call as vital to Gaspésie's tourism development. They have already presented a project valued at \$35 million to Canada Economic Development's Gaspé Business Office to define the final plans for these ports as well as the various reception areas and infrastructure, the extension of the Sandy Beach dock and the establishment of a tourist train connecting these three destinations.

"It is estimated that, from 2010 until 2014, the Gaspésie region will accommodate between 15,000 and 35,000 cruise passengers, which could mean an increase of \$1.5 million in tourism revenue for the region's economy. In this context, Canada Economic Development intends to examine this project very carefully in light of the parameters of the *Support Initiative for International Cruise Development along the St. Lawrence and Saguenay Rivers*," Mr. Blackburn stated.

The funding for this initiative will serve to support the construction or upgrading of port facilities or equipment, work or services related to the international ports of call. Projects involving the revitalization, development or upgrading of tourist attractions located near the ports of calls or the services they offer are also eligible, provided they are of interest to cruise passengers. Promotion and commercialization and other related activities may also be eligible for funding.

Along with Gaspésie (in the Gaspé-Chandler axis), the other ports of call targeted by this initiative include Saguenay, Côte-Nord (Baie-Comeau, Sept-Îles and Havre-Saint-Pierre) as well as Îles-de-la-Madeleine

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