

# Certification for Sustainable Tourism

## DESTIN'ACTION BIOSPHERE LAC-SAINT-PIERRE

### Lac-Saint-Pierre Biosphere Reserve

#### Context

First, it's important to remember that since her nomination of a biosphere reserve, the priority of Lac-Saint-Pierre is the development of sustainable tourism. That's how, a solidarity cooperative was created. The mandate of the Cooperative is the development and marketing of nature tourism, hospitality industry and gourmet tourism in Lac-Saint-Pierre. So in the first Citizens' Forum, participants identify sustainable tourism as the developmental way. It's from that the idea of developing a Certification for Sustainable Tourism was born.



#### Process

Many meetings were organized with potential financial partners (Développement Économique Canada and Tourisme Québec) for certify the success of the certification. Following this, in March 2007, the Ministère du Tourisme du Québec granted the mandate at the Cooperative's develop a certification for sustainable tourism, aiming to packaging and marketing enterprises in the territory of the Lac Saint-Pierre Biosphere Reserve. The first term, two-year (2007-2009), aimed to develop a specification for gourmet tourism, hospitality industry and nature tourism, apply to all Biosphere Reserve and transferable to other biosphere reserves. The Certification is a process that aims commitment to sustainable development by adopting environmentally responsible behavior on the part of members of the Cooperative.

The Certification, titled DESTIN'ACTION BIOSPHERE LAC-SAINT-PIERRE, is developed in line with the *Government Sustainable Development Strategy 2008-2013*<sup>1</sup>, under the Act on *Sustainable Development* adopted in 2006. DESTIN'ACTION BIOSPHERE LAC-SAINT-PIERRE is a tool developed by the Cooperative. This tool was born from the need to control the misuse of the term "biosphere reserve", especially in tourism promotion. Moreover, it is a tool available to members who wants to engage in an evolutionary way in sustainable development enabling them to participate in contemporary challenges such as climate change and the economic decline. Besides these aspects, the certification program offers benefits to members working in tourism industry.

In 2009, the Government of Quebec awards a second term contract for a period of two years which aims to finalize the project.

<sup>1</sup>

[http://www.mddep.gouv.qc.ca/developpement/strategie\\_gouvernementale/](http://www.mddep.gouv.qc.ca/developpement/strategie_gouvernementale/)

Our research and numerous consultations have helped to build a certification program that corresponds to the international trend, the objectives of the Cooperative and the regional particularities. Also, the potential for adaptation will allow the exportability of the program through the World Network of Biosphere Reserves.

### **DESTIN'ACTION BIOSPHERE LAC-SAINT-PIERRE benefits**

The advantages for the enterprise are to have sustained support in their commitment to sustainable development, to be part of a packaging and provide quality assurance to their customers.

- Adding value of products and services;
- A quality assurance for the customer;
- A distinction commercial territory of the Lac-Saint-Pierre Biosphere Reserve;
- Visibility in other biosphere reserves and among proponents of sustainable tourism;
- A money saving medium and long term (eco-efficiency)
- Improved image of the company (eco-friendly).

### **Operation of the Certification Program**

BIOSPHERE DESTIN'ACTION LAC-SAINT-PIERRE is a voluntary program and includes three levels: Commitment (Engagement), Performance and Excellence.

The Commitment level is accessible to all enterprises that the program applies is free and shows a serious commitment to the principles of sustainable development.

Performance and Excellence levels, unlike the previous, require a minimal commitment to sustainable development and lead to the privilege of being packed and to be in a joint marketing



### **Certification documents available from LSPBR :**

- Cahier des charges/specifications (in French but available soon in English)
- Grille d'évaluation/ evaluation grid (in French but available soon in English)
- Thesis which allowed us to develop the program «L'engagement envers le développement durables des producteurs de tourisme de nature dans le contexte du Programme de labellisation de la Réserve mondiale de la biosphère du Lac-Saint-Pierre». (French)