



**SUPPORT POLICY FOR DEVELOPMENT PROJECTS TO IMPROVE
LIVING ENVIRONMENTS**

2020-2021

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1. POLICY FOUNDATION

1.1 Context

In March of 2020, the Regional Municipality of Pontiac County (MRC Pontiac) signed an agreement relating to the Fonds Régions et Ruralité: Volet 2 - Support for the MRCs' local and regional development jurisdiction with the Ministère des Affaires Municipales et de l'Habitation (MAMH). Through this agreement, the MAMH recognizes the competence of the MRC Pontiac in local and regional development. It requires the MRC to establish its annual intervention priorities and to table a support policy for development projects to improve living environments. This policy will be reviewed annually. This document constitutes the Support Policy for Development Projects to Improve Living Environments in the MRC Pontiac.

1.2 Field of application

The MRC Pontiac shall allocate the portion of the fund delegated to it by the Minister to finance, to any local and regional development measures taken by the MRC Pontiac under the agreement. These measures may include the following in particular:

- The realization of its mandates with regard to the planning and development of its territory;
- Supporting local municipalities in professional expertise or in establishing shared services (social, cultural, tourism, environmental, technological or other fields);
- The promotion of entrepreneurship, support for entrepreneurship and business;
- Mobilization of communities and support for the implementation of development projects to improve living environments, particularly in the social, cultural, tourism, economic and environmental fields;
- The establishment, funding and implementation of sectoral local and regional development agreements with government departments or agencies and, where applicable, other partners;
- Support for rural development within the municipal and unorganized territory of the MRC Pontiac.

1.3 Objectives

The principal objective of the *Support policy for development projects to improve living environments* is to promote the implementation of initiatives leading to the revitalization of living environments in the MRC Pontiac and/or to create and maintain jobs on the territory of the MRC Pontiac. These two major elements must improve the quality of life of the citizens of the MRC Pontiac and are based on the following principles:

- **Promote the sharing of equipment or services** and the establishment of multi-service centres within municipalities or non-profit organizations;
- **Promote the multifunctional development of the territory** by establishing links with other players, other environments and other sectors of activity;
- **Promote the beautification of communities** by making living environments more attractive;
- **Promote the retention and maintenance of young people** by encouraging employability initiatives for young people and young farmers, and by encouraging initiatives aimed at them;
- **Support a community transportation service** by ensuring that it meets the multiple needs of the community (transportation for medical purposes, public transportation, transportation of food aid for isolated or destitute people);
- **Favoriser des démarches pour attirer des familles** en favorisant la mise en place de mesures incitatives et d'initiatives qui visent à améliorer l'accès à des logements de qualité ;

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- **Promote new technologies** in order to increase the competitiveness of businesses and public services and facilitate the establishment of self-employed workers;
- **Create environments conducive to healthy lifestyles** by developing measures that allow for better eating habits and a physically active lifestyle.

1.4 Territory of application

This policy applies to the entire territory of the MRC Pontiac.

1.5 Admissible beneficiaries

Recipients eligible for a grant under this policy are:

- Municipal bodies;
- Band Councils of Aboriginal communities;
- Co-operatives (except financial co-operatives);
- Non-profit organizations.

Each of the eligible beneficiaries must be legally constituted. Its head office must be located on the territory of the MRC Pontiac. The beneficiary must also be registered in the Registre des entreprises du Québec (REQ) and its status must be up to date.

1.6 Priority fields of intervention

The mayors of the eighteen municipalities of the MRC Pontiac have established and forwarded to the Minister their priorities for action. These are posted on the MRC Pontiac website and are grouped under the following seven priority areas of intervention:

- Agriculture
- Forestry
- Tourism
- Goods and services
- Socio-community
- Culture and heritage
- Other

1.7 Admissible projects and expenses

The projects selected under this policy are projects for the creation and/or diversification of activities. The objective is, above all, the creation of new wealth. Eligible expenses are intended for projects that serve populations residing in the MRC Pontiac.

Eligible expenses retained under the policy are as follows:

- Capital assets/capital expenditures (land, buildings, equipment, machinery, automotive equipment);
- Acquisition of technology, software or software packages and patents;
- Professional fees/honoraria or promotion costs strictly related to the project;
- Salaries and social charges strictly related to a development project (project coordination costs), in proportion to the time spent if the proponent or its employees take on other tasks;
- Costs deemed necessary for the project (the proponent must specify the nature of the costs);
- Implementation of sectoral local development agreements.

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Expenses must be made within the MRC Pontiac, failing that, in the province of Quebec, unless the material or professional resource (services) is not available in the MRC or the province.

Any expense made outside the MRC Pontiac must be approved in writing by a Development Agent of the MRC Pontiac.

1.8 Non-admissible projects and expenses

Projects not selected under this policy are current projects carried out by the proponent, consolidation projects and projects that do not generate economic spinoffs in the territory. In addition, projects of a sexual, religious or political nature or related to controversial activities (dating agencies, numerology, tarot, astrology) are not eligible.

The following expenses are not eligible under this policy:

- Debt financing; loan repayment ;
- A project already completed;
- Working capital;
- Operating expenses such as rent, salaries and current payroll taxes of the organization, telecommunications and website costs;
- Room rentals, office supplies; insurance;
- Bank charges and interest;
- Rent and maintenance of premises;
- Amortization of real estate assets;
- Hospitality and entertainment expenses;
- Training expenses;
- Feasibility studies ;
- Expenses related to a festival or one-time event;
- Any expenses incurred prior to the date of approval by the review committee;

The same project cannot be funded twice. However, several phases of the project may be financed, provided that the progress of the results is justified.

In addition, projects that create unfair competition, or that do not comply with the laws and regulations in force in Québec or municipal by-laws, are not eligible under this policy.

2. INVESTMENT CRITERIA

Prioritised projects must contribute to local and regional development.

2.1. Nature of the project

Projects must fall within the priority areas of intervention defined in Article 1.6 and touch on at least one (1) of the intervention priorities posted on the MRC Pontiac website.

2.2. Innovation

Innovative projects that create new wealth will be prioritized. The nature of the project as well as the innovation process surrounding the project will be analyzed. In some cases, the creation of new services may be considered innovative in itself.

2.3. Job creation and economic impacts

The primary investment criterion is job creation. At the very least, projects must contribute to job maintenance. If they do not create jobs, projects must generate significant economic spinoffs, particularly through contracts with businesses in the MRC Pontiac.

2.4. Revitalization and local needs

Projects must contribute to the revitalization of living environments by responding to clearly identified needs expressed at different levels by the communities or by referring to existing policies (heritage guide, Agricultural Zone Development Plan, family policies, local action plan, etc.).

2.5. Applicant experience and investment capacity

The applicant will have to demonstrate their knowledge and skills to carry out a development project, as well as their commitment to invest financially in the project.

3. TERMS AND CONDITIONS

3.1 Analysis process

The Council of Elected Officials of the MRC Pontiac is the guarantor of the orientations of this policy. In this sense, driving projects in development are predefined and prioritized by the Pontiac Regional Council of Elected Officials according to the priority areas of intervention (art. 1.6).

The Council of Mayors of the MRC Pontiac will decide to hold a call for projects based on the credits available in the fund.

The process for a call for projects is as follows:

- 1) Launch of the call for projects
- 2) Filing of the program criteria and application form on the MRC Pontiac website
- 3) Mandatory appointment with a development agent of the MRC Pontiac to submit a request
- 4) Receipt of requests and analysis of requests by the development team
- 5) Analysis, scoring of projects on the analysis grid and recommendation by the analysis committee of the MRC Pontiac composed of 2 elected officials, 1 citizen, 1 NPO representative and 1 representative from the Outaouais regional development community
- 6) Final adoption of the prioritized projects by the Pontiac Regional Council of Elected Officials
- 7) Follow-up of the project by the development team
- 8) Project accountability by the proponents
- 9) Program accountability by the development team

3.2 Project financing

The policy of support for development projects to improve living environments is an integral part of the Regions and Rurality Fund (FRR). In this sense, the non-repayable contribution from this fund is considered governmental in nature and not as part of the proponent's capital outlay.

The aid granted is a maximum of 80 % of the total cost of the project. The proponent must contribute a minimum of 20% of the total cost of the project. This capital outlay is calculated as follows:

A minimum of 20 % of the total project costs in monetary contribution

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A minimum of 10 % of the total project cost in monetary contribution **AND a maximum** of 10 % the total cost of the project in service or volunteer contribution (calculated at the current minimum wage rate for labour plus \$5.00/hour for project coordination and supervision).

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The combination of government assistance (municipal, provincial and/or federal) cannot exceed 80% of the total cost of the project. (In the calculation, non-repayable assistance is considered at 100% of the value while a rate of 30% applies in the case of repayable assistance).

If the project is not carried out, the proponent must reimburse 100% of the sums received for the project.

Expenditures must be made according to the terms and conditions described in the memorandum of understanding to be signed between the proponent and the MRC Pontiac. The proponent's financial capacity to carry out its project will be a determining factor in the awarding of a grant. A letter from the bank may be required to this effect.

3.3 Accountability

The proponent must submit an activity report and final balance sheet (including invoices and proof of payment) with all the qualitative and quantitative details related to the project. The proponent must keep original supporting documents and records relating to the amounts granted under the agreement for a period of three years following the end of the project. The MRC Pontiac is subject to the same constraints.

3.4 Availability of credits

Any financial commitment is valid only if there is a sufficient balance of available credits in the fund to charge the expense and according to the amounts made available to the MRC by the Minister under the Regions and Rurality Fund: Volet 2 - Support for the local and regional development jurisdiction of the MRCs.

3.5 Distribution of credits

The funds available will be divided into two separate and distinct streams:

Stream 1 - municipalities; Stream 2 - NPOs, cooperatives, band councils for Aboriginal communities (distribution according to the table below).

The distribution of funds is intended to ensure fair and equitable access to funds for all eligible applicants. The analysis committee may decide to redistribute the funds based on the number of eligible projects submitted under each component.

Amount available	100 %
Stream 1 Municipalities	50 %
Projects less than \$5,000	10 %
Projects greater than \$5,000	90 %
Stream 2 NPOs, Coops, band councils for Aboriginal communities	50 %
Projects less than \$5,000	10 %
Projects greater than \$5,000	90 %

3.6 Visibility

The proponent receiving financial assistance must display the logo, in accordance with the visual identity standards of the MRC Pontiac. This logo will be provided by the MRC Pontiac and can be found on the website under "Visual Identification".