

SIGNING OF AN IMPORTANT AGREEMENT BETWEEN THE WORLD CENTRE OF EXCELLENCE FOR DESTINATIONS (CED) AND PORTUGAL'S DOURO VALLEY

MONTRÉAL, MAY 8, 2008 – The World Centre of Excellence for Destinations (CED) announced today the signing of an important agreement with the Douro Valley in Portugal with the goal of implementing the System for Measuring Excellence in Destinations (SMED) in this nature-discovery destination.

The announcement was made during the North of Portugal International Conference on Tourism in Porto, Portugal. The agreement was officially confirmed today by the president of the *Comissão de Coordenação e Desenvolvimento Regional do Norte* (CCDRN), Mr. Carlos Lage, and the president of the CED, Mr. André Vallerand.

This agreement aims to establish a tourism profile of the Douro Valley and assist it in gauging itself against international competition, while facilitating the attainment of its objectives in sustainable development. The SMED also aims to improve the quality of the experience offered to tourists and to strengthen the geographical character of a tourist destination (environment, culture, aesthetics, heritage, well-being of the residents, etc.) while strategically identifying major issues facing tourist destinations around the world.

“This important agreement comes just three weeks after the signing of a similar agreement with Mexico City,” noted Mr. André Vallerand, President of the CED and guest speaker during the North of Portugal International Conference on Tourism. Other countries have expressed their interest in the SMED and new agreements will be announced shortly. “The fact that such agreements are being made one year earlier than forecast in the CED’s business plan is excellent news. This confirms the importance of the existence of the CED in serving international destinations,” added Mr. Vallerand.

With its headquarters located in Montréal, the CED began operations in February 2007. The CED has signed partnership agreements with Canada Economic Development for the Quebec regions, the *Ministère du Tourisme du Québec* and the *Ministère des Affaires Municipales et des Régions du Québec*

About the CED

The CED is a non-profit organization dedicated to the research and creation of tools to support the development of sustainable tourism for destinations around the world. In performing its mission, the CED executes and further develops the tasks of the Destinations Council and other departments of the World Tourism Organization (UNWTO). It does so by adding value and expertise to the policies and innovative practices concerning tourist destination management. The UNWTO is a specialized agency of the United Nations with 153 member states and some 300 associate members from the tourism industry.

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