

NEWS RELEASE
FOR IMMEDIATE RELEASE

An international network of expertise in tourism The World Center of Excellence on Tourist Destinations (CED) is founded in Montreal

Montreal, February 19, 2007 — The United Nations World Tourism Organization has founded the World Center of Excellence on Tourist Destinations (CED) in Montreal. A non-profit organization, the Center is dedicated to research and the creation of tools to sustainably manage, develop, and conserve tourist destinations around the world. The announcement was made today by Quebec Minister of Tourism Françoise Gauthier, on her own behalf and on behalf of Minister of Municipal Affairs and Regions Nathalie Normandeau, as well as by Minister of Public Works and Government Services Canada and Minister Responsible of the Montreal Region, The Honourable Michael M Fortier, on behalf of Minister of Labour and Minister of Canada Economic Development, The Honourable Jean-Pierre Blackburn. The Center will be chaired by André Vallerand, Chairman of the Destination Council of the World Tourism Organization (UNWTO) and former Quebec Minister of Tourism.

By responding to a direct need of the destinations, the CED is fulfilling one of the priority mandates of UNWTO for promoting the quality and competitiveness of tourist destinations.

The CED's mission is to provide tools to develop competitiveness and sustainable development in tourism in order to improve the experience offered to tourists and to strengthen the distinct character of a destination. The CED will also be a global portal of tourism expertise to support research as well as a discussion and communication forum for all parties involved in promoting and managing tourism destinations around the world.

The initiative to create the CED in Montreal came from Tourisme Montréal. Following a proposal by Tourisme Montréal representative André Vallerand, the UNWTO Executive Council gave the green light to create this unique agency at its meeting in Algiers in November 2006.

"Tourism is a fast-growing industry with international scope," noted André Vallerand, Chairman of the Board of the CED. "It is essential that we develop the tools to better understand the factors shaping its evolution and to foster sustainable development practices to ensure that its growth is acceptable for all parties concerned."

The CED's products and services will be developed with a view for their added value and in the context of partnerships with expertise holders and research institutions from around the globe. The CED will start out by developing the following services:

- Excellence certification system for tourist destinations
- Electronic portal that, in addition to providing access to information on tourist destinations, compiles the results of existing research and presents findings
- Stewardship tools for industry and communities
- Marketing and management tools
- Comparative research (qualitative and quantitative analyses)
- Strategic monitoring
- Training programs

The founding of the CED in Montreal was made possible by matching funds from the federal and provincial governments to finance the first three years of operation, amounting to a total of \$1.5 million. The federal government's \$750,000 contribution comes from the Economic Development Agency of Canada. The Quebec government's share comes from the Ministère du Tourisme du Québec and the Ministère des Affaires municipales et des Régions du Québec, each of which contributed with equal sums.

The CED also enjoys the support of a number of prestigious founding partners, including Bell Canada, George Washington University, and National Geographic's Center for Sustainable Destinations. The Centre international de formation et de recherche en tourisme (CIFORT) of UQAM's School of Business Administration (ESG UQAM) has made a commitment to play a leading role in developing CED tools and products in the coming years.

About the World Center of Excellence on Tourist Destinations (CED)

In performing its mandate, the CED is also furthering the mission of UNWTO's Destination Council and departments by adding value and expertise to the innovative policies and practices concerning tourist destination management.

*** Please note that all the press releases and the fact sheet are available at www.cifort.uqam.ca/ced.

– 30 –

Source: World Center of Excellence on Tourist Destinations (CED)

Information: André Vallerand
President

Media contact: Véronique Arsenault
Morin Public Relations
514-289-8688, ext. 227
Toll Free: 1 877 289-7007
Cell: 514-923-9371
veronique@morinrp.com