

Press release

FOR IMMEDIATE RELEASE

Tourisme Montréal is pleased that the World Centre of Excellence on Tourism Destinations (CED) will be located in Montréal

(Montréal, February 19, 2007) — The President and CEO of Tourisme Montréal, Charles Lapointe, greets the founding of the World Centre of Excellence on Tourism Destinations (CED) in Montréal with great enthusiasm. The CED project was initiated by Tourisme Montréal in conjunction with Université du Québec à Montréal (UQAM). A World Tourism Organization (UNWTO) recognized agency, the World Centre of Excellence on Tourism Destinations will have a mission to provide tools to develop competitiveness and achieve sustainable development objectives, improve the quality of the experience offered to tourists, and strengthen the distinct geographic character of each destination. Tourisme Montréal will contribute to the centre's operations in Montréal.

"We are extremely proud that this World Centre of Excellence, created by the Destinations Council of the World Tourism Organization, is coming to Montréal," noted Charles Lapointe. "Apart from the fact that it strengthens the city's international character, the Centre's presence will position Montréal as an outstanding hub of expertise that can help achieve a better understanding of the trends and challenges facing tourism develop worldwide."

The founding of the CED in Montréal is the result of representations made by Tourisme Montréal to the UNWTO over the past several years. As Chairman of the UNWTO Destinations Committee, André Vallerand, the Tourisme Montréal representative, in conjunction with UQAM, drafted plans for the World Centre of Excellence on Tourism Destinations and submitted them in 2006.

Through its Centre international de formation et de recherche en tourisme (CIFORT), UQAM, which has been behind this major project from the start, will play a key role in developing tools and products for the World Centre of Excellence on Tourism Destinations in the coming years.

"On behalf of Tourisme Montréal, I would like to thank Francesco Frangialli, Secretary General of the UNWTO, for his unflagging support and the confidence he has always placed in us," Charles Lapointe commented. "I would also like to thank the Government of Québec, and in particular the Minister of Tourism, Françoise Gauthier, for believing in this project and for her support in making it a reality. We would also like to thank the Minister of Municipal Affairs and Regions, Nathalie Normandeau, whose Ministry matched the Ministry of Tourism's contribution toward funding the first three years of the CED's operations. Lastly, we would like to thank the Government of Canada, which, through the Economic Development Agency of Canada, provided \$750,000 over three years, or half the total funding."

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About Tourisme Montréal

Tourisme Montréal is the agency that provides leadership in a concerted promotional effort to position Montréal as a destination on the pleasure and business travel markets, and to steer development of Montréal's tourism products in response to a constantly changing market..

About the CED

In performing its mission, the CED concretely extends the action of the Destination Council and departments of the United Nations World Tourism Organization (UNWTO) by bringing added value and expertise to innovative policies and practices on tourist destination management.

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Tourisme Montréal is responsible for providing leadership in the concerted efforts of hospitality and promotion in order to position the destination on leisure and business travel markets. It is also responsible for developing Montréal's tourism product in accordance with the ever-changing conditions of the market.