

NEW CULTURAL POLICY: A FUNDAMENTAL LEVER FOR THE SOCIAL, ECONOMIC AND ENVIRONMENTAL DEVELOPMENT



AGENDA 2030 - SDGs



CULTURE 21: ACTIONS - COMMITMENTS

1. CULTURAL RIGHTS
6. CULTURE, EQUITY AND SOCIAL INCLUSION
9. GOVERNANCE OF CULTURE

COMMUNITY, SUPPORT, INSTITUTIONAL,
COOPERATION, DEVELOPMENT, CULTURE,
GOVERNANCE, PARTICIPATION, POLICY

1. Trois-Rivières and culture

Trois-Rivières is the regional capital and ninth largest city in Quebec with a population of 142,598. Its prosperity has long been based on the manufacturing and paper industry, which experienced a crisis in the 1990s. Since then, the city has relied on culture to restore pride, a sense of belonging, and to spark the city's transition. It is the main cultural hub of the Mauricie region and is home to leading cultural institutions: university, colleges, a music conservatory, symphony orchestra, performance halls, amphitheatre, museums, art galleries, exhibition centres, and heritage sites, as well as numerous festivals and cultural events.

This creative wealth earned it the title of Canada's Cultural Capital in 2009. In 2019, Trois-Rivières officially recognized culture as one of the 4 pillars of sustainable development. With the arrival of the pandemic, population outreach and bringing culture to life in different ways have become essential. The city has therefore adopted a strategic vision for 2030, with a cultural pillar focused on "recreational and cultural services [...] centred on the needs of the entire community in consultation with local organizations".

Its cultural public policy is based on cultural rights and aligns with the perspectives of Agenda 21 for culture, the New Agenda for Cities, and the United Nations 2030 Agenda. Specifically, it emphasizes the central role of citizens in cultural vitality, their proactive participation, the richness of diversity, and the desire to establish closer ties with Indigenous populations in order to fully include them in new approaches and actions.



THE GOAL OF THE PROGRAM IS TO REAFFIRM THE IMPORTANCE OF CULTURE IN LOCAL DEVELOPMENT BY MEETING THE CURRENT NEEDS OF THE COMMUNITY AND WITHOUT COMPROMISING THOSE OF FUTURE GENERATIONS.

2. Project goals and implementation

2.1. Main goal and specific objectives

The goal of the program is to reaffirm the importance of culture in local development by meeting the current needs of the community, without compromising those of future generations, and doing so in harmony with the environmental, social, and economic spheres. Therefore, the cultural public policy contributes to developing a strong sense of belonging and pride and, overall, to increasing people's quality of life.

Trois-Rivières hopes to promote the right to, the access of, and participation in culture for all people, regardless of their socio-demographic background, social condition, origins, or unique identities; to enjoy full access and participation in cultural life. There is also a clear desire to establish a closer tie with First Nations.

2.2. Project development

A socio-demographic portrait of the population of Trois-Rivières and a document analysis served as the basis for the assessment. The city worked in collaboration with the population, artists, cultural and community stakeholders, as well as certain members of municipal staff and other key collaborators in order to better understand their values, experiences, and priorities with respect to culture. A review committee of 24 people from a variety of backgrounds (representatives from the Québec Ministry of Culture and Communications, the Regional Council for Culture, and elected municipal officials) was appointed to provide regular feedback on the progress of project feedback.



As a result, feedback meetings, a citizens' idea box, open communication, and citizens' discussion workshops were all set up. A total of 80 individuals and 28 organizations participated in developing the local cultural policy. The city has established six core principles for cultural intervention, each accompanied by several specific commitments that will guide future concrete actions. These principles are:

- To provide citizens with a variety of opportunities to participate in culture;
- To support cultural organizations, cultural practitioners, and local artists;
- To place cultural features of interest at the heart of land use planning and development in the river region;
- To disseminate, promote, and spread awareness of cultural activities;
- To make culture a vector for integration, social cohesion, and improvement of citizens' quality of life;
- To promote economic development through culture.

TROIS-RIVIÈRES HOPES TO ALLOW EVERYONE TO ENJOY FULL ACCESS AND PARTICIPATION IN CULTURAL LIFE.

3. Impacts

3.1. Direct impacts

The program facilitates cross-cutting work between the various municipal departments and stakeholders, allowing for a better understanding of the realities and issues of all parties involved. This approach has also facilitated improved dialogue between the city and its community, leading to a significant increase in the mobilization of cultural protagonists, organizations, and stakeholders from civil society. In this way, everyone can see themselves represented in the program. Everyone seized the opportunity to influence their city in their own way and it has been a great success.



3.2. Assessment

Several evaluation mechanisms are planned, including indicators on the consultation process for the implementation of the action plan (number of external stakeholders consulted, number of actions in which external partners participate), and indicators on the implementation of the action plan (number of actions of the 2022-2024 plan already implemented, proportion of the commitments that have been acted upon, satisfaction rate of the review committee members, and amounts invested in the implementation process). The first data collection program will take place following the implementation of the 2023-2025 action plan.

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3.3. Key factors

- Extensive consultation and dialogue process for greater relevance
- Involvement of numerous representatives from different spheres of civil society
- Structuring of policy deployment
- Increased collaboration with local stakeholders to identify and implement necessary actions
- Investment in human, financial, and material resources.
- Support from political authorities to make this project a priority for the city.

3.4. Continuity

The city is planning an action plan for 2022-2024 that will target priority actions related to cultural citizenship, accessibility, and cultural diversity. The development of the five local libraries as local hubs will be a determining factor. An exchange process with the Indigenous community will also be created. The city will continue its work to establish downtown area as an attractive cultural district, while maintaining and enhancing its existing municipal infrastructure. Some of the objectives of the cultural policy will also be integrated into other municipal action plans.

4. Further information

Trois-Rivières was a candidate for the fifth UCLG Mexico City – Culture 21 International Award (February - June 2022). The jury for the award drew up its final report in September of 2022, and requested that the UCLG Committee on Culture promote this project as one of the good practices implemented under Agenda 21 for culture.

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