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Réseau des villes
francophones
et francophiles
d'Amérique

2016-2018 PROPOSED EVOLVING STRATEGIC PLAN

BACKGROUND

The Francophones of America: A Community of Shared Destinies[1]

"The root is old, and runs across the vast continent. French was often the first European language learned by the indigenous peoples. They remember it in the land of the Dene and the Sioux, they remember it everywhere, from Colorado to the Yukon, from California to Newfoundland. The names of places, the family names—they are all still there. The traces endure, the memories persist. There isn't a corner of Canada that doesn't have some kind of ties with French history. I'm speaking of course of those strong original communities: the Acadians, Fransaskois, Franco-Manitobans, Franco-Ontarians, and all those other versions of ourselves. As the source and cradle of French civilization, Québec obviously leads the way, along with Acadia. But it bears repeating that it's no longer a question of statistics and numbers. Wherever we find ourselves, there we are. The U.S. is no stranger to this great saga. Did not millions of Francophones play a part in the defining moments in the history of our neighbors to the south?
[...]

It's true that it's a difficult story to tell. Because a story that never gets told inevitably ends up dissipating like dust in the forgotten mazes of the mind. Today, duty and passion compel us to gather and reassemble the pieces, to patiently rebuild the puzzle of our torn family portrait."

Cities linked historically, culturally, and economically to the Francophonie
Ties with French language and culture are the outcome of a historically rich and extremely significant process spread over four centuries.The history of French-speaking North America is closely linked with that of the First Nations in Canada and Native Americans in the U.S. Their historical relationship is a story of shared endeavour, alliances, tensions, and accords. Francophones and indigenous peoples forged strong bonds, maintaining relationships of trade and friendship that, despite the inevitable difficulties, left a profound imprint on the ways of life and thought of each. And of course the ties between Francophones and the Métis of Western Canada run deeper still.

> *Ever since Samuel de Champlain brought the accent of France to the New World over 400 years ago, Francophones have set down roots across the continent, from East to West and from North to South.*[2]

Through exploration, commerce, and migration, the French, Acadians, French Canadians, and francophone Quebecers crisscrossed Canada and the United States. Everywhere they went, they helped found and build new settlements, which prospered and grew into our modern Canadian and American cities. To this day, bonds are still being formed and French language and culture are showcased across the continent by artisans, artists, and entrepreneurs—our Francophone and Francophile cultural ambassadors.

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[1] Conference by Serge Bouchard. Forum de la francophonie canadienne. La francophonie @ cœur. Québec City. May 28, 2012.
[2] Speech by Mayor Régis Labeaume. Ministerial Conference on Canadian Francophonie. June 2015

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Francophone migrants, merchants, and explorers helped found and develop many Canadian and American cities and towns that still bear traces of French influence today. They include Orleans, Ontario; St. Boniface, Manitoba; Prince Albert, Saskatchewan, Plamondon, Alberta; and Maillardville, British Columbia, as well as U.S. capitals and cities such as Baton Rouge, Beaumont, Bel Air, Boise, Des Moines, Detroit, Dubuque, Eau Claire, Fayetteville, Joliet, La Crosse, Lafayette, New Orleans, New Rochelle, Montpelier, Provo, Racine, St. Louis, and Terre Haute.

French Language Still Very Present in America

"The French culture in the Americas is a historical and geographical reality. Today, what we call French America is presented as a set of language and cultural derivatives whose boundaries usually remain invisible. Yet this Franco-America dispersal continues to resist and assert its differences, to structure its language and claim its Francophone identity. Across the continent, sometimes in isolated communities, French heritage resonates. From Acadian shores to the vast prairies of Western Canada, through Louisiana and the Caribbean, French in America continues to vibrate, to laugh, to cry, to dance, to sing and to live.[3] "

Did you know that some 33 million Francophones[4] live in the Americas?

• 9.6 million in Canada;
• 11 million in the United States;
• 200,300 in Mexico;
• 9.7 million in the Caribbean area;
• 2.6 million in Central and South America.

A Growing Interest in French Culture

Did you know that there is a growing interest in French and French culture among people for whom French is not their first language? They are referred to as Francophiles—people who may speak French very well, not so well, or even not at all, but who are interested in French for a variety of reasons. For some it's simple curiosity, while others are in love with French or passionate about culture generally. Many see the French language as a language of discovery, a key that opens doors to the unknown, to history, to grand traditions of thought and creativity, to research, or a better understanding of the world around them.

For years, increasing numbers of students have been studying French as a second language or attending French immersion, both in Canada and in the United States. One recent study counted 900 Francophone and Francophile associations in North America, ranging from Ottawa's Francophile Parents Circle (23,000 members) to the American Association of Teachers of French[5] in Chicago (10,000 members) and New York City's Committee of French-Speaking Societies[6] (56 member associations).

Many Francophiles who speak little or no French see in the Francophone and Francophile Cities Network a long-hoped-for opportunity to express and nourish their fascination with the French-speaking world.

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[3] Centre de la francophonie des Amériques. http://www.francophoniedesameriques.com/la-francophonie-dans-les-ameriques/ Page consulted October 20th, 2015.

[4] Centre de la francophonie des Amériques. http://www.francophoniedesameriques.com/la-francophonie-dans-les-ameriques/ Reference to a study conducted in 2013 by Étienne Rivard, Scientific coordinator, Centre interuniversitaire d'études québécoises (CIEQ), Université Laval. Page consulted October 20th, 2015.

[5] American Association of Teachers of French. https://www.frenchteachers.org/

[6] L'Actualité. Nadeau, Jean-Benoît http://www.lactualite.com/culture/diplomate-de-la-francophonie/ 14 août. 2009.

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The Francophone and Francophile Cities Network: a Reality

The Inaugural Event of the Francophone and Francophile Cities Network was held October 29 to 31, 2015 in Québec City. It was a historic moment, concluding with the official launch of the network.

As part of the Inaugural Event, a working session was held with representatives of Francophone and Francophile municipalities, associations, and organizations to discuss, develop, and improve the Network's dynamic strategic plan.

The idea of the Francophone and Francophile Cities Network was originally suggested by the mayor of Québec City, in collaboration with the mayors of Lafayette and Moncton, as a way to draw attention to cities that are historically, culturally, and linguistically associated with the French heritage in North America by promoting them to each other and to the world. The Network provides an all-new resource for North American Francophones and Francophiles drawn to explore their history, language, and ancestry.

Interest in cultural, heritage—even genealogical tourism (refer to annex)—continues to grow. It is therefore essential that we combine our strengths and provide those who have a love for French culture authentic tourist circuits in North America.

The Francophone and Francophile Cities Network is an undertaking that brings people together. It will boost tourism, culture, and the economy of member cities as well as Francophone and Francophile communities.

MISSION

Francophone and Francophile Cities Network
An informal network of Francophone and Francophile cities that design and develop collaborative projects, build partnerships, and create links to promote tourism and increase the economic, linguistic, and cultural development of member cities, thus strengthening the vitality of Francophone communities and preserving their shared heritage.

The mayors of the founding cities: Québec City, Moncton, and Lafayette

VISION

The Francophone and Francophile Cities Network is an innovative vector for tourism, economic, linguistic and cultural development.

STRATEGIC OVERALL OUTCOMES

Outcome 1
Members of the Network work together to preserve and promote shared French heritage and culture.

Outcome 2
Through this informal and dynamic network, cities join forces and collaborate to generate productive relationships that benefit the touristic, cultural, and economic sectors for their cities and communities.

Outcome 3
Through the Network, Francophone and Francophile cities develop and promote unique tourist circuits based on their historic, linguistic, genealogic, economic, and cultural ties with the French culture.

Outcome 4
Member cities have privileged access to the vast potential of Francophone and Francophile tourists from all over Quebec, America and worldwide.

Outcome 5
Member cities have access to new tools for developing and promoting their tourist circuits and attractions as well as their cultural products.

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2016-2018 MODEL

Immediate Results 2016-2017				
1. City leaders acknowledge the added value that the historical, linguistic, cultural, and economic ties we share through French culture represent. 2. Network members establish productive ties with actors in various sectors related to the preservation and promotion of French culture. 3. Members are committed to fostering the active participation of youth to achieve the Network's mission. 4. Network members facilitate and cultivate ties to foster the sharing of technical, technological, cultural, social and managerial knowledge and know-how.	1. A forum for dialogue and discussion is created in Québec City for member cities and their partners. 2. The Francophone and Francophile Cities Network is founded and gains momentum. 3. Network members agree on joint strategic outcomes (strategic plan). 4. A central office is established to coordinate and support the Network and to ensure receipt and dissemination of information, tools and products. 5. Support networks for economic, tourist, and cultural development are created. 6. Member cities and partners establish youth mobility and employment programs. 7. The network explores the possibility of holding a meeting of the Network in Québec City, in 2017, as part of the 150th anniversary of Canadian Confederation.	1. An inventory is taken of historical and commemorative sites and products and other marks that testify to the Francophone contribution. 2. Links between member cities and the Francophonie are identified and strengthened. 3. Attractions in Francophone and Francophile cities are developed, enhanced, and promoted. 4. Member cities and partners enlist the input of young people to develop tourist circuits and products that respond to the needs and expectations of youth, i.e., a "by youth for youth" approach. 5. Cities forge strategic and economic alliances with local businesses and organizations involved in economic, tourist, and cultural development.	1. Travel agencies, tourist transport companies, and tourism development corporations are informed about the attractions and tourist circuits in member cities. 2. Potential tourists are informed about member city attractions and tourist circuits. 3. Postsecondary educational institutions and youth organizations are informed about "the French cultural experience" that Network tourist circuits provide.	1. The online platform is launched. 2. Network member cities sign up for and contribute to the online platform. 3. Member cities have exclusive access to databases and toolboxes like *Le Carnet de la Francophonie* and the digital library. 4. The online platform highlights best practices and provides tools to promote francophone cities (for example, Québec City is organizing access to a digital library, access to *Éléphant*—a database of restored films transferred to a digital medium, access to *Lire nous transport,* and free limited access to YourFolks.com). 5. The Network develops and makes use of special resources and approaches for younger clienteles.

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Midterm Results 2017–2018				
1. Network member cities build productive relationships with volunteer-based and community organizations involved in preserving and promoting French culture. 2. A historical overview of French heritage is published and distributed.	1. A growing number of cities join the Network. 2. A growing number of collaborative projects are initiated by member cities and their partners. 3. More and more new products are introduced by member cities. 4. Member cities generate economic, tourist and cultural missions.	1. An outline of the history of the French heritage in the Americas is published and disseminated. 2. Members build on the historic, cultural, and heritage connections between the French and the First Nations in the Americas. 3. A genuine and virtual network of tourist circuits implemented.	1. Network members have a variety of platforms and mechanisms available for attracting new clienteles. 2. Tourists are aware they have access to a unique tourism product and take advantage of it.	1. The platform showcases tourist attractions, circuits, and cultural products of member cities. 2. The online platform proves to be relevant for its member cities. 3. Member cities benefit from initiatives that promote their city's tourist and cultural attractions (e.g. the concept of cultural capitals).

Strategic Overall Outcomes 2018 –				
Outcome 1	Outcome 2	Outcome 3	Outcome 4	Outcome 5
Members of the Network work together to preserve and promote shared French heritage and culture.	Through this informal and dynamic network, cities join forces and collaborate to generate productive relationships that benefit the touristic, cultural, and economic sectors for their cities and communities.	Through the Network, francophone and Francophile cities develop and promote unique tourist routes based on their historic, linguistic, genealogic, economic, and cultural ties with the French culture.	Member cities have privileged access to the vast potential of Francophone and Francophile tourists from all over Quebec, America and worldwide.	Member cities have access to new tools for developing and promoting their tourist circuits and attractions as well as their cultural products.

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GOVERNANCE, COORDINATION, LEADERSHIP, AND INCLUSIVENESS

Implementing the Francophone and Francophile Cities Network joint strategic plan is a group effort whose success relies on the full participation of numerous stakeholders committed to carrying out the Network's mission.

Mayors, city councils, city managers, and business and community partners will have to pool their efforts and resources in the service of a shared vision and to promote their cities' French ties and heritage and their economic, cultural, and tourism development.

Collaborative governance

Collaborative governance: a definition[7]
- Collaborative governance refers to effective decision-making and coordination in situations where power, information, and resources are not controlled by a single institution or stakeholder.
- Collaborative governance refers to all processes for effectively making decisions, operating, and coordinating a group of distinct, independent organizations that have decided to work together to achieve common goals as part of a mission that goes beyond the group.
- Collaborative governance does not depend on a hierarchy and central authority. Instead it promotes shared leadership in which each component takes responsibility for the group's success.
- Collaborative governance recognizes and respects the ability of groups to organize and decide for themselves.
- Collaborative governance creates the conditions for the implementation of platforms for collaboration and co-construction at every level of action.

A collaborative approach is the only way to run the Francophone and Francophile Cities Network. Network power, information, and resources are held by multiple stakeholders with no hierarchal relationship and no legal or contractual obligation attaching them the Network. The Network arises out of a shared vision and a common desire to work together to create something new and inspiring.

The decision to adopt collaborative governance was made by the mayors at the Inaugural Event. Moving forward it was decided to divide the Network into into geographic zones and establish five working groups, each with five (5) major themes, as illustrated below:

Geographic zone	Acadia	Lafayette	Western United States	Eastern United States	Québec	Ontario	Western Canada and the Territories	The Caribbean
Thematic working groups								
Tourism								
Economic development and social economy								
Culture								
Youth mobility and engagement								
History, heritage, and genealogy								

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[7] Paquet, Gilles. La gouvernance collaborative

Lead cities
In each geographic zone, one city will take the lead in promoting the Network and encouraging the region's member cities and community partners to collaborate and engage in common initiatives. Member cities have agreed to:

- Explain their particular connection to French-speaking North America;
- Identify, develop, and promote their tourist attractions;
- Forward their data and information to Québec City to be posted on the Network's website;
- Foster and support strategic and economic alliances with local businesses and organizations involved in development of the economy, tourism, and culture to develop tourist circuits;
- Actively work to advance the Network and its strategic plan;
- Report on progress at the October 2016 meeting of geographic zone leaders in Lafayette.

The Five Thematic Working Groups
The five themes are related to the Network's strategic plan. Working groups will be made up of representatives of member cities and partners in order to share knowledge, and work together on innovative initiatives in line with the Network's strategic objectives.

Each of the five thematic working groups will produce a progress report for distribution to Network members.

Coordinating the Network: A Shared Responsibility
The City of Québec and the Centre de la francophonie des Amériques will assume coordination and provide support for member cities of the Network.

This coordination office will ensure the storage, sharing, and posting of member city data and information on the website.

The coordination and support services provided by the City of Québec and Centre de la francophonie des Amériques will include the following:

- Fostering and facilitating active and creative participation by cities in growing and developing the Network and carrying out its strategic plan

- Keeping the Network's website up to date with the following information:
    o Member city names and locations
    o Member city profiles and ties to French heritage, culture, language, and history
    o Member city tourist attractions
    o Tourist circuits that include member cities

- Promoting the Francophone and Francophile Cities Network with target clienteles through the website including;
    o 9 million Quebecers
    o 2 million Francophones and Francophiles in Canada's Francophone and Acadian communities
    o 11 million Francophones in the United States
    o 35 million citizens of Canada, where French is an official language
    o 275 million Francophones and Francophiles world-wide

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- Making the following available to Network member cities:
  - Names and contact information for leaders and managers of member cities and their partners
  - Essential tourist, cultural, historical, heritage and genealogical information of interest to new tourists
  - Toolbox for use in building connections between cities and tapping the vast potential of Francophone and Francophile tourists
  - Access to Network's digital library, Éléphant (a bank of restored, digitalized films), Lire vous transporte's online library, and free limited access to the genealogy website YourFolks.com

- Facilitating the development of associated networks among member cities for purposes of tourism, economic development, arts and culture exchanges, and more, involving partners such as:
  - Historical societies, chambers of commerce, businesses, arts and culture agencies, and tourism development offices

- Providing a forum where Network and working groups can meet, discuss and exchange views

- Supporting the activities of the thematic working groups and the smooth functioning of geographic zones

Founding Cities: Shared Leadership
The three founding cities of Québec City, Moncton, and Lafayette will continue to play a leading role in promoting the Network as lead cities in their geographic zones and active contributors to the thematic working groups.

Member Cities: shared, Collaborative Leadership
Network member cities agree to
- Support the mission of the Francophone and Francophile Cities Network
- Take part in implementing the Network's strategic plan according to available resources
- Provide relevant information on their city (history, heritage, genealogy, sites, products)
- Establish ties with other member cities
- Reach out to local and regional community partners and in particular to youth
- Take part in setting up tourist circuits
- Promote the Network and its products and tourist circuits according to their capacities
- Develop tourist attractions related to French heritage and culture
- Encourage their community partners and agencies to participate actively in the Network, its related networks, the thematic working groups, and its geographic zones
- Foster alliances with the business and cultural communities
- Share new tools and products

An Inclusive Approach
The Francophone and Francophile Cities Network has a ground-breaking and innovative mission. Its strategic plan calls for a firm commitment from members, who will need to pool a wide range of expertise, resources, knowledge, and skills.

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Collaborative governance respects the connectivity and interdependence of people and organizations. An inclusive approach is therefore essential, to call upon the people and organizations who can support the objectives of the strategic plan.

For example, people or organizations that
- have information on a city or area's ties with French heritage and culture,
- are in charge of tourism development for a city or region,
- have established or are developing tourist circuits,
- manage historical or genealogical societies,
- welcome tourists in a city or area,
- manage tourist attractions,
- provide tourist services or products,
- bring together Francophones or Francophiles in a city or region, or
- have connections with First Nations or Native Americans in their area,
- share knowledge about French culture and heritage, particularly young people through education,
- have an interest in the economic benefits of Network activities, or
- act as investors in or sponsors of Network projects.

This wide range of potential stakeholders means that the Network can draw on multiple perspectives to enrich its thinking and dialogue and strengthen its ability to act.

There are many groups that will find something of interest to them in the Network's vision and mission and be happy to contribute.

The Network offers these stakeholders opportunities for discussion and collaboration that they would rarely have had working on their own.

Network partners will also know that they are part of a broad-based international initiative that involves hundreds of other groups and individuals and allows them to take the lead, makes allowances for their ability to contribute, and considers their local conditions.

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Motivated Tourists Looking for New Attractions and Tourist Circuits

A study conducted in November 2012 by the Ministry of Tourism and the Ministry of Transport Quebec[8] revealed several trends in tourism:

The Search for Authenticity
The search for authenticity has emerged as a major focus in recent years. People are looking to travel as if they were locals, get to know their host communities, and experience local life. Taking the scenic route is a great way to get to know the backcountry, venture off the beaten path, and discover local culture and people. Trips with local flavor are part of a trend of consumers looking for authenticity. They are designed to put tourists in touch with local residents.

Personalization
Personalization is a growing trend in tourism. More and more travelers are looking for tailor-made experiences that provide a sense of exclusivity. Tourist circuits can tap into this trend by providing a wide range of experiences that allow people to travel at their own pace and sightsee according to their own personal preferences. This kind of flexibility is supported by available technology.

Tourist circuits are part of the slow travel movement, which encourages people to take their time, venture off the beaten path, and get to know local communities.

Baby Boomers
Baby boomers represent an important potential market for tourist circuits.

Even though baby boomers grew up in the era of mass tourism, they want to avoid the crowds, experience the out of the ordinary, reinvent the tourist experience, and venture out on their own. They demand custom itineraries and are quite comfortable with technology. They often travel to indulge a passion or a favorite pastime like yoga, meditation, painting, hiking, birdwatching, biking, gardening, sports, motorcycling or gastronomy. They love to experiment, learn, interact with others, and be out and about. Baby boomers are much more interested in a memorable experience than a traditional "vacation."

The FIT Clientele
Tourist routes often attract Free Independent Travelers (FITs). FITs are leisure travelers who choose their destination and plan things on their own during their trip. FITs fall into two categories—travelers on a tight budget (e.g., backpackers), and travelers with a high income. The latter prefer to travel in small groups or as a couple and frequently consult travel agents for custom travel packages.

Self-sufficient Digital Consumers
More than ever, consumers are independent enough to make their own decisions. The defining factor of this era of tourism is the fact that consumers hold the power—literally—in the palm of their hand with a wide range of

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[8] Ministère du Tourisme, Ministère des Transports, and ATR associées du Québec (Ministry of Tourism, Ministry of Transport, and ATR Associates Quebec). *Soutien, recherche et analyse dans le cadre de la révision du programme de signalisation des routes et circuits touristiques. Volet 3 : Aperçu des tendances pouvant influencer l'évolution du programme québécois de signalisation des routes et des circuits touristiques*. Transat Chair in Tourism. November 2012.

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available online tools and apps, particularly collaborative platforms. The quantity of resources available online is so varied that the consumer is really in the driver's seat when it comes to planning a trip. Tourists' search habits are getting increasingly refined and they want advanced features to help them not only in the planning stages of a trip, but also during it.

Francophone Tourists: A Large Potential Client Base

There are currently over nine million Francophones and Francophiles living in Québec alone. Another two million people live in Francophone and Acadian communities across Canada. The U.S. is home to around 11 million Francophones. Over 35 million people live in Canada, where French is an official language. And there are more than 275 million Francophones and Francophiles living in the world today.

These Francophones and Francophiles are a reflection of our modern era. They are looking for new, authentic, enriching experiences when they travel. They are ready to invest in travel and entertainment, and are often passionate about history and genealogy.

They represent a large potential base of motivated tourists for Francophone and Francophile cities.