

# Agricultural Zone Development Plan (PDZA) - Vallée-de-la-Gatineau



## Action Plan

Technical Committee PDZA

Vallée-de-la-Gatineau

05/10/2015



Cultivons l'avenir 2  
Une initiative fédérale-provinciale-territoriale

Canada

Québec

Adopted by the Vallée-de-la-Gatineau MRC via resolution #2015-R-AG359, on October 20<sup>th</sup>, 2015.

## **Background**

### **Action Plan for the Agricultural Zone Development Plan**

#### **Vallée-de-la-Gatineau MRC**

In June 2013, the *Ministère de l'Agriculture, des Pêcheries et de l'Alimentation du Québec* (MAPAQ), implemented a financial assistance program known as the Development Plan of the Agricultural Zone (PDZA), to allow the County Regional Municipalities (MRC) to support agricultural communities throughout the regions of the province. The program is designed to facilitate the creation of planning tools for the development of the agricultural sector. As of March 2015, twenty eight MRCs had completed the process and 25 plans were being developed.

According to the MAPAQ, the Development Plan of the Agricultural Zone (PDZA) is a planning document that aims to support the agricultural zone of a County Regional Municipality (MRC) by promoting the sustainable development of agricultural activities. The document is based on the current state of agricultural activities as well as on the identification of opportunities for the development of agricultural activities. It is produced by the MRC in consultation with community stakeholders.

The main objectives of a PDZA are:

- To enhance agricultural businesses and their products;
- To increase or diversify productions, products, business models or marketing methods;
- To promote recognition of the multi-functionalities of agriculture;
- To encourage the development of complementary activities such as agro-tourism or transformation directly at the farm.

In November 2013, supported by MAPAQ and the UPA, the Vallée-de-la-Gatineau MRC began the process. Throughout this PDZA process, it was deemed important to consult agricultural producers, municipalities and the general population of the MRC since the document is intended to benefit them. Four hundred and eleven people took part in the process during all the development stages.

The first step in the process was to provide a portrait of the agricultural characteristics of the area. In order to determine the correct objectives and to come up with an appropriate plan for development, the MRC surveyed real agricultural and agro-food potential, taking into account the physical resources, general climate conditions, new technologies and agro-food prospects. The second step was a public consultation on the portrait of the agricultural zone. For this step, three consultations were conducted in the municipalities of Bois-Franc, Gracefield and Low in the fall of 2014. The third step was the diagnosis, where teams were formed based on the themes raised during the public consultations. Through various activities, the teams identified the strengths, weaknesses, constraints and opportunities contained in each theme. The last step was to create an Action Plan. For this step, 13 of the 17 municipalities of the MRC were consulted and a working committee was formed in order to properly target the actions required to achieve the objectives.

# The Action Plan

The teams formed during the diagnosis all mentioned actions that could be put into place so that agriculture in the region would be more dynamic. To ensure the involvement of the municipalities in this process, we proposed to meet them individually to present the analysis and get their suggestions to therefore include them in the Action Plan. Of the 17 municipalities in the MRC, 13 agreed to meet for a total of 96 people consulted.

Subsequently, a Working Committee was set up with the leaders of the 8 teams and a representative from each municipality consulted. All the actions mentioned in the previous steps were defined and classified by priority in order to finally determine whether or not they were realistic.

## A few explanations to help understand the Action Plan

The first step in implementing the PDZA was to prioritize 6 objectives, each comprising several actions identified during the different meetings. Priority was not given to the objectives, but rather to the actions required to attain the objectives.

Actions were classified by priority as followed:



The deadline indicates in which time line the action must take place:

Short Term:	0 to 2 years
Mid Term:	2 to 5 years
Long Term:	5 to 10 years
Continuous	

For each of the actions, potential partners have been identified to carry out or help carry out achieving the objectives.

## LIST OF ACRONYMS



AFPO	Agence des forêts privées de l'Outaouais ( <i>Outaouais Private Forests Agency</i> )
CCMVG	Chambre de commerce de Maniwaki et de la Vallée-de-la-Gatineau ( <i>Maniwaki and Vallée-de-la-Gatineau Chamber of Commerce</i> )
CFA	Collectif de formation agricole ( <i>Agriculture Training Association</i> )
CLE	Centre local d'emploi ( <i>Local Employment Agency</i> )
COOP	Coopérative agricole de Gracefield ( <i>Gracefield Agriculture Coop</i> )
CSHBO	Commission scolaire des Hauts-Bois-de-l'Outaouais ( <i>Haut-Bois-de-l'Outaouais School Board</i> )
FADQ	Financière agricole du Québec ( <i>Québec Agriculture Financing</i> )
FPBQ	Fédération des producteurs forestiers du Québec ( <i>Quebec Forest Producers Federation</i> )
FPAQ	Fédération des producteurs acéricoles du Québec ( <i>Quebec Maple Syrup Producers Federation</i> )
MAMOT	Ministère des Affaires municipales et Occupation du territoire ( <i>Municipal Affairs and Territory Occupation Ministry</i> )
MAPAQ	Ministère de l'Agriculture, des Pêcheries et de l'Alimentation du Québec ( <i>Quebec Agriculture, Fisheries and Food Ministry</i> )
MELS	Ministère de l'Éducation, du Loisir et du Sport ( <i>Education, Leisure and Sports Ministry</i> )
MFFQ	Ministère des Forêts, de la Faune et des Parcs du Québec ( <i>Quebec Forests, Wildlife and Parks Ministry</i> )
MRC	Municipalité régionale de comté ( <i>County Regional Municipality</i> )
ODA	Opération diversification agricole ( <i>Agricultural Diversification Operation</i> )
OPBG	Office des producteurs de bois de la Gatineau ( <i>Gatineau Wood Producers Office</i> )
PERO	Pôle d'excellence en récréotourisme Outaouais ( <i>Recreational Tourism Outaouais</i> )
PDZA	Plan de développement de la zone agricole ( <i>Agricultural Zoning Development Plan</i> )
SADC	Société d'aide aux développements des collectivités ( <i>Community Development Support Society</i> )
TAO	Table agroalimentaire de l'Outaouais ( <i>Outaouais Agro-Food Board</i> )
UPA	Union des producteurs agricoles ( <i>Agricultural Producers Union</i> )

## Objective#1: Reinforce Institutional Support

To ensure institutional support of agricultural and forestry producers at the informational and economic level.

To recognize that the agricultural and forestry production in private forests are an important economic engine for the Vallée-de-la-Gatineau.



**Background:** In the context of an overview and analysis, it has been shown that the agriculture sector is an important economic engine in the region that generates 12.2 million dollars each year with a far greater potential. We must also add the private forest timber valued at an average of \$ 8 million per year in sales. To exploit this potential and to stimulate the agricultural and forestry sectors, the producers must have the support of institutions and partners.

<i>Actions</i>	<i>Priority</i>	<i>Partners</i>	<i>Deadline</i>
1.1 Hire an agronomist at the MRC level. This person would work interactively with the economic development team dedicated to agriculture development and implementing the PDZA.	★ ★ ★	MRC CLE MAPAQ	Short Term
1.2 Prioritize agricultural and forestry production in agricultural zones through MRC funding and other funds managed by various partners.	★ ★ ★	MRC Municipalities	Short Term
1.3 Exchange information on funds and agricultural and forestry programs available amongst partners by informing current and potential producers.	★ ★	SADC MRC MAPAQ MFFP AFPO	Continuous
1.4 Show the same positive attitude towards agricultural and forestry businesses as shown towards other businesses.	★ ★	Municipalities MRC	Continuous
1.5 Inquire into agricultural and forestry assets and strengths for each municipal territory and promote those assets to those with agricultural and forestry projects.	★ ★	Producers Municipalities MRC UPA	Continuous
1.6 Propose to the producers trained and funded employees available at a low cost.	★ ★	CLE ODA	Mid Term

1.7 Support forestry producers by ensuring they receive fair access to provincial budget programs that promote private forestry.	★ ★	MRC MAMOT	Continuous
1.8 Set up « Land Improvement » projects with agricultural producers (ex.: Drain or irrigate land where the cost could be spread out through taxation).	★	MAMOT Municipalities	Long Term
1.9 Unify and extend the territory to include other regions to create a pool of technical and consultant resources.	★	MRC's	Long Term
1.10 Allow agriculture to include additional activities to bring extra income to the farm.	★	MRC	Long Term
1.11 Create an MRC fund to support the next generation.	★	MRC Municipalities UPA COOP Other partners	Long Term
1.12 Produce a section 59. (Linked with the Action Plan) :			
1.12.1 Characterize the agricultural zone;	★	MRC	Long Term
1.12.2 Review the agricultural zone.			
<b>Comments:</b> Hiring an agronomist at the MRC level should not replace the existing resources, but rather be a complementary initiative. Prioritizing MRC funds for forest production would be intended as assistance for agricultural producers exploiting the forest. This support should not replace existing programs and is not intended for public forests and factories.			



## Objective#2: Value and promote local agricultural and forestry production amongst the population

To promote the farming profession so that the population is aware of its importance and to encourage the next generation to get involved.

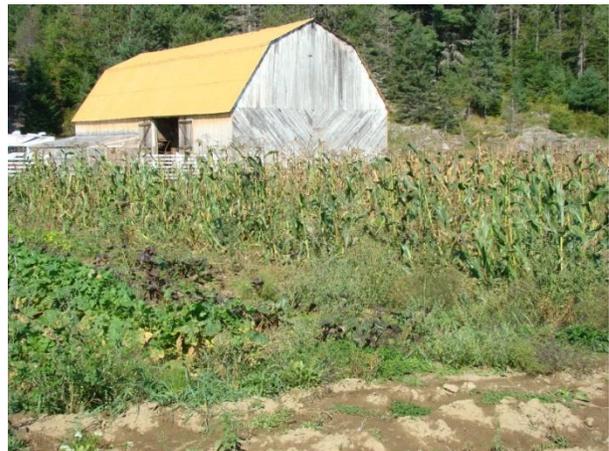
To promote local agriculture to the population discover products “from here” and facilitate marketing.



**Background:** During the consultations, it was mentioned on several occasions by agricultural and forest producers that their profession, despite its great importance, was not valued by the general population, which is a cause for the lack of motivation in the next generation. Indeed, the majority of agricultural businesses did not specify having a succession plan. Moreover, agriculture is part our daily lives, even though people do not know the source of what they consume.

Actions	Priority	Partners	Deadline
<p>2.1 Promote agriculture and forestry professions:</p> <p>2.1.1 Educate farmers and forestry workers regarding the messages that they convey about themselves;</p> <p>2.1.2 Broadcast agriculture and forestry success;</p> <p>2.1.3 Financially assist producers to improve the visual appearance of farms and private wood lands;</p> <p>2.1.4 Maintain farmland to preserve the landscapes of the MRC.</p>	<p>★ ★ ★</p>	<p>Agriculture Producers UPA MRC Municipalities FPFQ OPBG MAPAQ</p>	<p>Short Term</p>
<p>2.2 Increase the promotion of local farming and forestry:</p> <p>2.2.1 Promote and use the services of UPA ambassadors to inform students in schools;</p> <p>2.2.2 Produce promotional material to be distributed to the population;</p> <p>2.2.3 Produce an information video for schools and tourist attraction centers in the region.</p>	<p>★ ★ ★</p>	<p>UPA CSHBO MRC Municipalities AFPO MFFP OPBG</p>	<p>Short Term</p>

2.3 Organize activities to showcase the agriculture and forestry territories to the population, such as: tours for elected representatives, open house days, agricultural fairs, displays of forestry machinery.	★ ★	UPA MRC Municipalities TAO MAPAQ OPBG	Mid Term
2.4 Implement basic agricultural and forestry training in elementary schools.	★	CSHBO MELS OPBG	Long Term
2.5 Put in place an incentive to accommodate more agriculture and forestry services, such as (ex.: sales input).	★	CCMVG MRC TAO	Long Term
<b>Comments:</b> It is difficult to make a link the perception that the farming profession is not valued to specific facts, but the psychological distress found in this group of people shows that this is an important goal for the Vallée-de-la-Gatineau PDZA.			



## Objective #3: Encourage Agriculture and Forestry Businesses

To make sure producers have access to tools to improve their businesses and increase profitability.



**Background:** During public consultations, agricultural businesses profit margins were under scrutiny. In fact, 59% of farms are categorized as small with an income of \$50,000 or less. Therefore, for the majority of agricultural businesses, off-farm employment is required and any additional income from the forest is important. On the other hand, during the analysis, the team that worked on the profitability issue mentioned that farming businesses with good management and an entrepreneurial focus are successful.

Actions	Priority	Partners	Deadline
3.1 Provide management training to producers when required.	★ ★ ★	CFA UPA FADQ MAPAQ	Short Term
3.2 Encourage producers to use resources available to assist them in their business management (management unions, UPA Farm Economist, Agriculture Advice Network, Marketing agent).	★ ★ ★	UPA MAPAQ	Continuous
3.3 Make a directory to consolidate information and identify resources available to producers (Agriculture Advice Network, Table Agroalimentaire de l'Outaouais, MAPAQ, FAQ, UPA...).	★ ★	MRC	Mid Term
3.4 Establish a mentoring system.	★ ★	CCMVG	Continuous
3.5 Re-establish a recognition initiative via Forestry Merit.	★ ★ ★ ★	AFPO MFFP	Continuous
3.6 Encourage the next generation to get involved through scholarships.	★	UPA COOP	Long Term

**Comments:** These actions are directly related to the three main topics during discussions in most of the teams: profitability, technical assistance and information.

## Objective #4: Diversify Agricultural and Forestry products available in the Vallée-de-la-Gatineau MRC (MRCVG)

To diversify production in the Vallée-de-la-Gatineau territory and on farms in order to access various sources of revenue and be less affected during economic crises, such as what happened to cattle production and forestry production.



**Background:** As mentioned in the overview, production in the Vallée-de-la-Gatineau is not very diversified as 66 % of the farms are producing beef cattle. Different climates, landscapes, drainage and soils found in the MRC could provide diversified agricultural activities.

Actions	Priority	Partners	Deadline
<p>4.1 Increase the supply of local products:</p> <p>4.1.1 Make and disseminate a list of missing products in demand in the region to encourage new agricultural activity, wood from private forests and non-timber forest products;</p> <p>4.1.2 Promote the use of new cultivation methods to obtain earlier results;</p> <p>4.1.3 Encourage the next generation to try new crops.</p>	★★★	ODA UPA MAPAQ Producers OPBG	Short Term
<p>4.2 Promote private and public maple syrup production:</p> <p>4.2.1 Promote maple syrup potential to FPAQ;</p> <p>4.2.2 Inform potential producers when setting quotas.</p>	★★★	FPAQ MAPAQ MRC	Short Term
<p>4.3 Continue to use the CLD and MAPAQ approaches to diversify farm activities by introducing other products.</p>	★★	MRC MAPAQ	Mid Term
<p>4.4 Establish a data bank of farm, forest and combined farm/forest products that includes the necessary agronomic and economic characteristics.</p>	★	MRC	Long Term
<p>4.5 Expand the areas under irrigation.</p>	★	MAPAQ MRC	Long Term

## Objective #5: Increase awareness of land value and accessibility

To develop and exploit a greater amount of farm land.

To stop the increase of uncultivated land that have agricultural potential

To increase the number of producers by one per year in the MRC.

To restore forest production in non-cultivable lands.<sup>1</sup>



**Background:** The number of farmers is decreasing. In 2013, the number of producers dropped by 27 compared to 2008 and the number of fallow land is increasing. Cultivated areas represent 46% of the occupied<sup>2</sup> agricultural area. Thus, there is a potential for different cultures, but these land has not yet been identified.

Actions	Priority	Partners	Deadline
Find incentives to attract producers and future agricultural students to operate in our MRC to increase the number of producers: <ul style="list-style-type: none"> <li>5.1.1 Set up a data bank of available lands to exploit;</li> <li>5.1.2 Promote agriculture as a career choice in high school;</li> <li>5.1.3 Promote the region in agricultural colleges and platforms as a region with good agroforestry potential.</li> </ul>	★ ★ ★	MRC MAPAQ UPA CSHBO OPBG	Continuous
5.2 Inform agricultural land owners about the benefits of renting land, such as municipal tax reimbursement.	★ ★ ★	MAPAQ Municipalities Producers	Continuous
5.3 Establish a specific taxation system for agricultural land owners.	★ ★	Municipalities	Mid Term
5.4 Consider what has been done elsewhere and what can be done to address fallow lands through legislation.	★ ★	MRC MAPAQ	Mid Term

**Comments:** A letter could be included with the tax bill to inform agricultural land owners in the agricultural zone of the advantages of renting their land.

<sup>1</sup>Non cultivable land: Soils classed above 4 where pasture has not been maintained where the wasteland stage is passed and where return to culture is not possible.

<sup>2</sup>Occupied agriculture area: Areas held by producers registered with MAPAQ and areas under rent.



## Objective #6: Regional Agricultural Product Marketing

To open access to other markets, which are not being exploited by the producers in the region.



**Background:** Products sold directly to markets is underdeveloped. Approximately twenty businesses market a portion or the totality of their products directly to markets. Transformation is also not very present on the territory. In 2010, there were roughly ten producers selling transformed products. Since the summer population grows by 43% due to tourism, direct sales to consumers are an option to be considered to improve marketing.

Actions	Priority	Partners	Deadline
6.1 Develop agro-tourism:			
6.1.1 Assist businesses wishing to include agro-tourism in their approach;		Producers TAO	
6.1.2 Work with the TAO for the development of an agro-touristic circuit;	★ ★	MRC PERO MAPAQ	Mid Term
6.1.3 Integrate agro-tourism with the activities offered by the PERO.			
6.2 Prioritize and promote marketing of wood and non-timber forest products from private forests with the MFFP and the industry.	★ ★	UPA OPBG MRC Municipalities	Mid Term
6.3 Implement infrastructure to help crop producers to meet the requirements for an initial transformation.	★	Producers MRC Targeted municipalities Community partners	Long Term
6.4 Create a product label for local produce.	★	Producers ODA UPA	Long Term

**Comments:** Being familiar with the various commercialization pathways of a product allows us to the best suited commercialization type and at the same time would lead to an increase of profit for the business.

In conclusion, the following 10 actions have been identified as priorities, which must be accomplished within the next 2 years. To begin with, hiring an agronomist must occur in order to implement the PDZA action plan. The following actions are of equal priority and importance.

- **Hire an agronomist at the MRC to be part of the economic development team whom would be dedicated to agricultural development and implementing the PDZA.**
- **Prioritize agricultural and forest production in the agricultural zones with regard to MRC funds and other funds managed by various partners.**
- **Promote agriculture and forestry professions:**
  - Educate farmers and forest producers regarding the messages they convey about themselves;
  - Broadcast agriculture and forestry success stories;
  - Financially assist producers to improve the visual appearance of farms and private woodlands;
  - Maintain farmland to preserve the landscapes of the MRC.
- **Increase the promotion of local farming and forestry:**
  - Promote and use the services of UPA ambassadors to inform students;
  - Create a promotional flyer to distribute to the population;
  - Produce an informational video for distribution in schools and tourist attraction centers in the region.
- **Provide management training to producers when required.**
- **Encourage producers to use available resources available to assist them in their business management (management unions, UPA economist, Agriconsultant Network, marketing agent).**
- **Increase the supply of local products:**
  - Establish and disseminate a list of missing products in demand in the region to encourage new agricultural activity, the wood from private forests and the non-timber forest products;
  - Promote the use of new cultivation methods to obtain earlier results;
  - Encourage the next generation to try new products.
- **Promote private and public maple syrup production:**
  - Promote maple syrup potential to FPAQ;
  - Inform potential producers when setting new quotas.
- **Find incentives to attract producers and future agricultural students to operate in our MRC to increase the number of producers:**

- Set up a data bank of available lands to exploit;
  - Promote agriculture as a career choice in high school;
  - Promote the region in agricultural colleges and platforms as a region with a good agro-forestry potential.
- **Inform agricultural land owners about the benefits of renting land, such as municipal tax reimbursement.**







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