Multisensory Tourism Showcase – Cruise Terminal 30

Enhancing the Cruise Passenger Experience

Background, Purpose and Goals

The Port of Québec welcomes hundreds of thousands of cruise passengers annually and serves as a strategic gateway to Eastern Canada, as well as a key component of several international cruise itineraries. As cruise tourism continues to evolve, passenger expectations increasingly extend beyond transportation infrastructure to include meaningful, immersive, and accessible destination experiences from the moment they arrive.

To address this opportunity, the Port of Québec developed the Multisensory Tourism Showcase, an innovative experiential space located within Cruise Terminal 30. Officially inaugurated in March 2026, the initiative was designed to transform the visitor welcome experience by introducing travelers to the culture, landscapes, attractions, people, and identity of Québec City and its surrounding region through a combination of visual, auditory, tactile, and sensory elements.

The project builds on the Port's long-standing commitment to enhancing the passenger experience while supporting sustainable tourism development and strengthening connections between visitors and local communities. From the moment they arrive, cruise passengers and event attendees are invited to independently discover original tourism itineraries, vibrant neighbourhoods, local expertise, Indigenous culture, regional gastronomy, outdoor destinations, and community-led sustainable tourism initiatives.

The concept emerged through discussions and collaborative planning among members of the Québec Cruise Forum, a regional platform that brings together tourism stakeholders, government partners, cruise industry representatives, and community organizations. The initiative was subsequently incorporated into the Port of Québec's Sustainable Cruise Tourism Action Plan as a strategic project aimed at enhancing visitor experiences, promoting responsible tourism practices, and maximizing the benefits of cruise tourism throughout the destination.

The project was conceived as more than a visitor information tool. Its purpose was to modernize the arrival experience by replacing traditional tourism information methods with an immersive, interactive, and technology-enabled platform capable of engaging diverse visitor profiles. The initiative also sought to promote a broader understanding of the destination by showcasing not only iconic attractions, but also lesser-known neighbourhoods, nearby municipalities, Indigenous tourism experiences, and nature-based destinations such as Île d'Orléans, Côte-de-Beaupré, Portneuf, the Parc de la Chute-Montmorency, and the Parc national de la Jacques-Cartier.

Particular emphasis was placed on highlighting the culture, history, and living heritage of the Huron-Wendat Nation through multisensory interpretation developed in collaboration with regional Indigenous partners. The showcase also promotes local gastronomy by featuring regional products, culinary experiences, and local artisans, helping visitors establish a stronger connection with the destination before beginning their exploration.

The initiative pursued four primary objectives:

- Enhance the arrival experience for cruise passengers and event attendees.
- Promote regional tourism assets through an engaging and memorable format.
- Encourage the discovery of a broader range of attractions and experiences across the destination, helping distribute visitor flows beyond traditional tourism hotspots.

• Position the Port of Québec as a leader in visitor experience innovation within the cruise industry.

More broadly, the project seeks to increase destination awareness, encourage longer visitor stays, improve accessibility and inclusivity, reduce reliance on printed tourism materials through digital content delivery, strengthen collaboration among tourism stakeholders, and reinforce the Québec City region's positioning as an innovative, sustainable, and welcoming destination. The initiative was also intentionally designed as a replicable model that could be adapted to other tourism gateways and visitor reception infrastructures across Québec and beyond.

Implementation and Resources

The Multisensory Tourism Showcase was developed between **August 2025 and March 2026** through a collaborative process involving the Port of Québec and Destination Québec cité, the region's official tourism organization responsible for destination promotion and visitor experience development. The project also engaged Tourisme Wendake, First Nations representatives, cultural organizations, and technology partners throughout the design and implementation phases.

The project began with a comprehensive multisensory analysis workshop involving key stakeholders to identify visitor needs, destination storytelling opportunities, and strategic objectives. This phase culminated in the development of a detailed project brief and the validation of the overall concept.

From November 2025 onward, the project team developed the showcase's multisensory content, including visual, audio, olfactory, and tactile components. To maximize visitor engagement, biometric emotional response testing was conducted to evaluate and refine content effectiveness. During the same period, interactive supports, visitor scenarios, and digital infrastructure were designed and integrated into the overall experience.

In December 2025, all content was adapted and translated into both French and English. Final visual mock-ups were presented to stakeholders for approval prior to production, ensuring alignment with project objectives and visitor expectations.

January and February 2026 focused on system integration, accessibility optimization, internal testing, and pilot testing with stakeholder groups. Feedback collected during these sessions informed content refinements, interface improvements, and technical adjustments. A comprehensive mid-project review was conducted to evaluate progress, resolve technical issues, and finalize preparations for deployment.

The project represented an investment of approximately $120,000 and leveraged existing terminal infrastructure to maximize efficiency and minimize capital expenditures. Recognized by the Québec Ministry of Tourism as an innovative tourism initiative, the project received provincial funding support, validating its innovative approach and strategic contribution to the tourism sector. By combining public funding, partner contributions, and existing infrastructure,
the Port achieved a high-impact outcome while maintaining cost efficiency.

One of the principal implementation challenges was integrating an immersive visitor experience within a fully operational cruise terminal while maintaining smooth passenger flows and operational efficiency. Additional challenges included coordinating multiple stakeholders, incorporating Indigenous perspectives, ensuring bilingual accessibility, and designing content

that would remain relevant across multiple cruise seasons. These challenges were addressed through an iterative development process, continuous stakeholder engagement, modular design principles, and flexible content management systems.

The final installation was completed at Terminal 30 on March 15, 2026. The showcase was officially inaugurated during the 6th Québec Cruise Forum, on March 25, 2026, providing a high-profile platform to present the initiative to cruise executives, tourism stakeholders, government representatives, and journalists. Since its launch, it has been available to cruise passengers and event participants, extending its impact beyond the cruise sector while enhancing the overall visitor experience at the Port of Québec.

Innovation and Relevance

The Multisensory Tourism Showcase represents a new approach to destination interpretation within a port environment. Rather than relying solely on brochures, static displays, or digital information screens, the initiative combines immersive storytelling, cultural interpretation, and interactive technologies to create a comprehensive destination discovery experience. It is the first project of its kind within Québec's port sector and remains a relatively uncommon concept among passenger reception facilities in North America.

The innovation lies in its integrated approach, placing technology at the service of human connection, cultural discovery, and sustainable destination development. By transforming terminal space into an immersive gateway to the region, the showcase allows visitors to connect emotionally with Québec City and its surrounding communities before they even begin exploring the destination.

A key differentiator of the project is its multisensory design. Through the combination of visual, audio, olfactory, and tactile stimuli, visitors experience the destination through multiple dimensions rather than through information alone. This sensory hybridization creates stronger emotional engagement, enhances memory retention, and generates a more meaningful introduction to the region's culture, landscapes, heritage, and tourism experiences.

The initiative also incorporates intelligent interactivity. Visitors can navigate content autonomously based on their interests, language preferences, available time, or traveler profile, whether they are seeking cultural attractions, outdoor activities, culinary experiences, family-friendly activities, or Indigenous tourism experiences. This personalized approach increases engagement while allowing visitors to build their own discovery journey.

Beyond visitor experience, the showcase addresses important destination management challenges. Traditional visitor information services often concentrate attention on a limited number of iconic attractions. By highlighting lesser-known experiences, neighborhoods, municipalities, Indigenous tourism products, and regional attractions, the showcase encourages a broader distribution of visitor flows throughout the destination. This contributes to more sustainable tourism development while generating economic benefits across a wider territory.

The project also demonstrates social and operational innovation. As tourism organizations increasingly face labor shortages and growing visitor expectations, the showcase provides a partially automated visitor information solution that complements frontline staff while enhancing service quality. It simultaneously serves as a platform for cultural interpretation, sustainability awareness, and promotion of local businesses, artisans, and communities.

The initiative aligns closely with emerging industry priorities, including enhanced guest experience, sustainable tourism management, accessibility, digital transformation, destination stewardship, and stronger connections between visitors and host communities. Its modular architecture and scalable technology framework allow content to evolve continuously, adapt to changing visitor expectations, and integrate emerging technologies over time.
Finally, the project was intentionally designed as a flexible and replicable model. While currently deployed within the Port of Québec's cruise terminal, the concept can be adapted to airports, railway stations, convention centers, visitor centers, and other destination gateways. This scalability creates opportunities for broader adoption across the tourism and port industries and positions the Port of Québec as a leader in intelligent, experiential, and sustainable visitor reception.

Results, Evidence and Impact

The Multisensory Tourism Showcase was officially inaugurated on March 25, 2026, and therefore remains in the early stages of deployment. As the peak cruise season in Québec occurs primarily in late summer and fall, the initiative has not yet operated through a full cruise season, and comprehensive performance data is not yet available.
To ensure rigorous performance measurement, the Port of Québec and Destination Québec cité have established a monitoring framework that will be deployed throughout the 2026 cruise season. Visitor engagement, usage rates, interaction times, satisfaction levels, and destination discovery outcomes will be measured through observational data, digital analytics, and visitor feedback collected by frontline personnel.
Although quantitative data remains limited at this stage, early qualitative feedback has been highly encouraging. Internal stakeholders, tourism partners, and visitors who have experienced the showcase consistently report a strong "wow" effect, highlighting the immersive nature of the experience and its ability to generate curiosity, surprise, and emotional engagement. The installation has already enhanced the arrival experience by creating an attractive and informative point of contact that introduces visitors to Québec City's tourism offering in a memorable way.
Based on conservative projections derived from recent cruise and event attendance figures at Terminal 30, the initiative is expected to generate significant impacts for both the Port of Québec and the regional tourism sector.
Expected Results for the Port of Québec :
• Approximately 110,000 cruise passengers and event participants reached annually through the experience.
• An estimated 90,000 users interacting directly with the showcase, representing approximately 82% of visitors passing through the terminal.
• Average interaction time of 4 to 6 minutes, demonstrating meaningful engagement with destination content.
• Visitor stop rate estimated between 75% and 80%, reflecting the attraction power of the installation within a busy terminal environment.
• Between 1,500 and 2,500 pieces of user-generated content shared annually on social media platforms, extending the destination's visibility beyond the terminal.
• Visitor satisfaction levels exceeding 90%, measured through post-experience surveys.

Expected Results for the Tourism Sector and the Québec City Region

• Increased awareness of attractions located beyond the historic core, with approximately 30% to 40% of showcased content dedicated to lesser-known neighborhoods, municipalities, Indigenous tourism experiences, and regional attractions.

• An estimated 10% increase in visitor spending opportunities through enhanced promotion of local tourism products, experiences, and businesses immediately upon arrival.

• Increased visitor awareness of sustainable tourism options, with an estimated 50,000 to 75,000 visitors annually exposed to low-impact attractions, active transportation opportunities, and responsible tourism practices.

Beyond quantitative metrics, the project's broader impact lies in its ability to transform the cruise terminal into a destination discovery platform. By strengthening emotional connections, improving visitor orientation, promoting a wider distribution of tourism benefits, and supporting sustainable visitor management objectives, the initiative contributes directly to the long-term competitiveness and resilience of Québec City's tourism ecosystem.

Integration, Adaptability and Scalability

The Multisensory Tourism Showcase was intentionally designed to integrate seamlessly within the Port of Québec's existing cruise terminal infrastructure while enhancing, rather than disrupting, passenger flows and operational processes. Located within Terminal 30, the installation complements existing visitor services provided by Destination Québec cité and serves as a natural extension of the passenger welcome experience.

The initiative was developed using a modular architecture that enables content, technologies, and visitor pathways to be updated without requiring significant infrastructure modifications.

The platform can accommodate seasonal updates, promotional campaigns, new tourism products, Indigenous experiences, cultural events, and evolving sustainability initiatives. Its digital and multimedia components can be refreshed regularly, ensuring long-term relevance and operational efficiency.

As visitors' expectations increasingly shift toward personalized, experiential, and technology-enabled travel experiences, the installation provides a future-ready solution that can continue evolving over time.

Beyond its application at the Port of Québec, the concept offers significant replication potential. The model can be adapted to other ports, airports, rail stations, convention centres, visitor centres, and transportation hubs seeking to enhance destination orientation and visitor engagement. Because the concept relies on scalable technologies and transferable methodologies rather than destination-specific infrastructure, it can be customized to different operational environments while maintaining its core value proposition.

The project demonstrates how transportation gateways can evolve from transit spaces into immersive destination discovery platforms, creating opportunities for broader adoption throughout the tourism and maritime industries.

Stakeholder Engagement and Collaboration

Collaboration was a foundational element of the Multisensory Tourism Showcase from concept development through implementation and launch. The project brought together a diverse network of public, private, tourism, cultural, and Indigenous partners around a shared objective: enhancing the visitor experience while promoting sustainable tourism development throughout the Québec City region.

The Port of Québec worked closely with Destination Québec cité, the region's official tourism organization, to ensure the content aligned with destination marketing priorities, visitor information strategies, and regional tourism development objectives. This partnership enabled the showcase to serve not only as a passenger experience enhancement tool, but also as a strategic platform for destination promotion.

Tourisme Wendake and First Nations representatives contributed to the development process by helping incorporate Indigenous perspectives, cultural heritage, and authentic storytelling elements into the visitor experience. Their participation ensured greater cultural inclusivity and strengthened the representation of Indigenous tourism experiences within the destination narrative.

The project also benefited from the support of the Québec Ministry of Tourism, which recognized the initiative as an innovative tourism project and provided financial assistance. This support validated the project's strategic relevance and reinforced collaboration between provincial tourism authorities and local stakeholders.

The project has strengthened relationships among organizations that do not traditionally collaborate within a single visitor experience initiative, creating a foundation for future partnerships and innovation projects. By bringing together port operations, destination marketing, Indigenous tourism, government agencies, and cultural stakeholders, the showcase demonstrates how collaborative governance can generate greater value for visitors, communities, and the tourism ecosystem as a whole.

Conclusion

The Multisensory Tourism Showcase demonstrates how ports can evolve beyond their traditional transportation role to become active contributors to destination discovery, visitor engagement, and sustainable tourism development.

Developed through a collaborative effort involving the Port of Québec, Destination Québec cité, Tourisme Wendake, First Nations representatives, government partners, and industry stakeholders, the initiative transforms the cruise terminal experience into an immersive gateway to the region. By combining sensory engagement, cultural interpretation, interactive technologies, and destination promotion, the showcase creates meaningful connections between visitors and the communities they are about to explore.

Although recently launched, the project has already generated strong positive reactions from stakeholders and visitors alike. Its innovative design, flexibility, and integration within existing infrastructure position it as a promising model for enhancing visitor experiences while supporting

broader destination management objectives, including visitor dispersion, sustainability awareness, and economic benefits across the region.

Several key lessons emerged from the project, including the value of early stakeholder collaboration, the importance of integrating Indigenous and local perspectives, and the effectiveness of combining technology with authentic storytelling to create memorable experiences. These insights will continue to inform future visitor experience initiatives at the Port of Québec.

Looking ahead, the Port intends to further develop the showcase through ongoing content updates, performance measurement, enhanced personalization features, and new partnerships that reflect evolving visitor expectations and tourism priorities. As a scalable and adaptable concept, the initiative also offers potential for replication in other ports and transportation gateways seeking innovative approaches to welcoming visitors.

By placing culture, people, and destination stewardship at the heart of the arrival experience, the Multisensory Tourism Showcase reinforces the Port of Québec's commitment to innovation, collaboration, and sustainable cruise tourism development.