

**Written Submission
for the Pre-Budget Consultations
in Advance of the Upcoming Federal Budget**



By
Simon Paquin, C.E.O.





Recommendations

EcoMaris is requesting that the federal government commits \$13 million to the development and construction of the St. Lawrence Base Camp on the Port of Montreal's Grand Quay. The Base Camp requires:

- 1) That the government invest in the St. Lawrence Base Camp's **Planktonarium** as a way to spur Montreal's attractiveness on the global tourism market, provide environmental education to Canadians and support scientific research in the environmental and technological fields;
- 2) That the government invest in the St. Lawrence Base Camp's **Café Des Rescapés** as a way to encourage youth reintegration, foster social diversity, support local food suppliers, mitigate food waste and stimulate tourism;
- 3) That the government invest in the Base Camp's **St. Lawrence Theatre** as a way to raise Canadians' awareness of environmental issues, provide a broadcasting space to Canadian artists, keep Canadian history alive, facilitate cultural exchange and highlight Indigenous contributions to Canada;
- 4) That the government invest in the St. Lawrence Base Camp's **Training Centre** as a way to solidify its support of the Sea Cadets program jointly developed by the Department of National Defence, encourage youth reintegration, enhance Canada's educational offer; mitigate the shortage in the maritime industry and foster diversity in that industry;
- 5) That the government invest in the St. Lawrence Base Camp's **Docking Space and in EcoMaris' acquisition of a 2nd training vessel** as ways to increase Canadians' sea access through expeditions and guided tours and energize the Port of Montreal's industrial landscape.



ECOMARIS

Founded by Simon Paquin in 2006 as Quebec's first sail training vessel with an environmental focus, EcoMaris offers unique learning experiences through sailing expeditions. Participants learn about sailing, teamwork and maritime professions while exploring marine ecosystems and their conservation. EcoMaris has 5 active programs which, since 2012, have welcomed close to 2,700 participants. As a non-for-profit organization, we fund our operations through self-generated revenues, and we are now looking for investments to leverage our expansion while maintaining sustainability.

ST. LAWRENCE BASE CAMP (EXPANSION PROJECT)

Building on its successes and the growing demand for its programs, EcoMaris is prepared for growth. The non-profit is looking to extend its activities in order to promote and offer the 'St. Lawrence experience' to more visitors. To that end, it plans on developing a new marine complex: the *St. Lawrence Base Camp*, an innovative structure that will allow visitors to reclaim and experience a river that is central to Montreal, Quebec, Canada and the history of Indigenous communities. Ideally located at the Port of Montreal, this complex will reboot and complete the recreation and tourism offerings on the Grand Quay, while creating 47 permanent positions.

This expansion project includes the construction of a permanent educational facility as well as the acquisition of a second training vessel. By providing access to the St. Lawrence while promoting the river's conservation through Aboriginal traditional knowledge (ATK) and cutting-edge technology, EcoMaris wants to build a community of responsible citizens who are aware of the richness of the ocean. With the *St. Lawrence Base Camp*, tourists, cruise ship passengers, residents, students and marine scientists as well as novices will be able to experience the river from all angles.

What?	The creation of a marine complex at the Port of Montreal: the <i>St. Lawrence Base Camp</i> .
What for?	To allow visitors to fully experience the St. Lawrence River in all its facets: maritime, scientific, culinary, experiential, artistic and cognitive.
How?	Through an innovative expansion plan and the acquisition of a second training vessel in order to increase the capacity of current programs, develop new ones as well as diversify EcoMaris' services and operations.
Our request?	EcoMaris is asking for \$13 million to cover the cost of construction, machinery, equipment, exhibits at the Planktonarium, vessel acquisition and working capital.



1. INVESTING IN THE *PLANKTONARIUM*

- *To provide environmental education to Canadians*
- *To support scientific research in the environmental and technological fields*
- *To spur Montreal's attractiveness on the global tourism market*

Welcome to an immersive space where visitors learn about the river through its smallest organism: plankton, which is the base of **marine life and the ecosystems** that inhabit it. This interactive installation will welcome elementary school students, international tourists, researchers and the local community to discover, observe and study the world of plankton.

Thanks to its modern public laboratory, the *Planktonarium* will also be a way of providing **ease of access to the results of (on-site) scientific research** on plankton, increasing knowledge of the St. Lawrence River through novel tools that are both educational and up-to-date.

EcoMaris' *Planktonarium* and Base Camp expansion project was born of a desire to **enhance the recreational and tourism offerings on the Grand Quay**, which especially serves as a terminal for international cruise ships. With an exceptional location known for its amazing view and direct access to the river, the *Planktonarium* will benefit from the site's clientele, which includes tourists and cruise ship passengers whose numbers are expected to be around 50,000 in the first year, to reach 150,000 by 2023¹. The Port of Montreal is increasing its investments in order to develop an infrastructure for the reception of visitors and maximize the offerings on the Grand Quay. Our goal is to make it a dynamic destination.

The *Planktonarium* and St. Lawrence Base Camp will have direct economic benefits for the city of Montreal through on-site traffic, not to mention indirect benefits for the food and hospitality industries, retail business and transportation companies, to name a few.

¹ Targets are based on the Port of Montreal traffic forecasts.



2. INVESTING IN THE *CAFÉ DES RESCAPÉS*

- *To encourage youth reintegration*
- *To mitigate food waste*
- *To support local food suppliers*
- *To stimulate tourism*
- *To foster diversity by helping marginalized youth overcome systemic barriers*

Café Des Rescapés is an eatery where **participants from our Capstan youth program** prepare fish caught in the St. Lawrence River. Known as “by-catch” since it would otherwise be released and wasted for various reasons, the fish cooked here is served by young adults who are in the process of restarting their careers. Through this original concept, customers are introduced to **local delicacies** in an unmatched environment with a breathtaking view of the river. Note that the café will likely be the only food supply on the wharf, thus providing an **invaluable attraction** for tourists, cruise passengers, workers and residents alike who frequent the Old Port.

Diversity at Work: BIPOC and LGBTQ+ Youth

EcoMaris is committed to the reintegration of youth from all backgrounds, no matter an individual’s gender, gender identity, sexual orientation, racial or cultural background, etc. We are constantly trying to adapt our reintegration programs to marginalized groups’ specific needs and challenges.

3. INVESTING IN THE *ST. LAWRENCE THEATRE*

- *To raise Canadians’ awareness of environmental issues*
- *To provide a broadcasting space to Canadian artists*
- *To keep Canadian history alive*
- *To facilitate cultural exchange and highlight Indigenous contributions to the river’s history and Canada as a whole*

Open to the general public, this venue will host **live screenings of crews aboard EcoMaris’ training vessels**, as well as **cinematographic works and exhibitions** showcasing the knowledge of the St. Lawrence. The *St. Lawrence Theatre* will raise awareness about the significance, (Indigenous) history as well as the future of the river. Permanent collections and temporary exhibits (including from Inuit/First Nations artists) will come together within a space that will transport the public to a unique place: one that will make them fall in love with the St. Lawrence all over again.

The addition of an **Arctic component** to programming focused on the St. Lawrence will allow comparisons between diverse ecosystems that are as fragile as they are extraordinary. Themes will include the importance of local/Inuit communities in conservation.

4. INVESTING IN THE *ECOMARIS TRAINING CENTRE*

- *To solidify governmental support of the Sea Cadets program, jointly developed by the Department of National Defence*
- *To encourage youth reintegration*
- *To enhance Canada's educational offer*
- *To foster diversity by helping women and minorities overcome systemic barriers*
- *To mitigate the shortage in the maritime industry, by increasing access to field training and by funding an information desk on maritime professions*

Since 2006, EcoMaris has introduced a diverse clientele to the maritime world, through expeditions on its sail training vessel. Marine scientists and researchers, sea cadets, academics and youth in search of a purpose *experience* the river by discovering its ecosystems, learning the fundamentals of sailing, encountering jobs related to the ocean, understanding teamwork and developing a passion for the sea. Our programs are:

- 1) Sea Cadets: jointly developed by the Department of National Defence and EcoMaris to **train sea cadets** and introduce them to maritime professions;
- 2) Capstan: professional internships for young adults (aged 18 to 35) who are in a **socio-professional reintegration process**, to learn about maritime professions while developing new interests through the discovery of marine life;
- 3) Cosmic Plankton: a science-based program offering a beginner's journey aboard a sail training vessel **open to the general public**;
- 4) Bio-Ecology Internships complementing the **CEGEP curriculum**;
- 5) Nomad Campus: workshops on social innovation tailored to HEC students, taking place on a sail training vessel.

The demand for EcoMaris' programs far exceeds its current capacity. In 2019, the organization had to turn away 400 participants due to a lack of space in its facilities. With its *Training Centre*, the non-profit will be able to **further advance the implementation of its current programs, while increasing its overall capacity: 4 new programs will be added**. Among these, *Giving Back the St. Lawrence* will allow training vessels to welcome a greater number of visitors onboard. The number of participants will, therefore, increase significantly, going from 350 to 3,000 per year starting in 2023.

Willing to welcome a more diverse clientele, EcoMaris recognizes systemic challenges faced by **women as well as BIPOC and LGBTQ+ individuals**. It is important for our organization to improve access to opportunities for all. Through our expansion project, we are looking to create new programs that are tailored to women's and minorities' specific needs – including a new version of our *Capstan* program for the Innu community from the Mingan Archipelago. Our goal is to help individuals 1) overcome systemic barriers through better self-esteem and concrete individual actions as well as 2) participate in community initiatives aiming to mitigate or abolish such systemic obstacles.



While ensuring its presence on the waterfront, including through an information desk on maritime professions, EcoMaris will continue **training a skilled workforce in an industry facing a significant shortage** – including in the shipping sub-sector, as reported by the Quebec government in its Maritime Strategy. We also believe that by helping underrepresented groups such as women and minorities access maritime professions, we can contribute to mitigating this shortage even more.

5. INVESTING IN ECOMARIS' *DOCKING SPACE* & 2nd *TRAINING VESSEL*

- *To increase Canadians' sea access through additional expeditions and guided tours*
- *To energize the Port of Montreal's industrial landscape*

The addition of a second vessel will allow EcoMaris to implement its *Giving Back the St. Lawrence* program, among other initiatives. A two-day expedition aboard one of the training vessels, **this field program will focus on environmental science** related to the St. Lawrence River in an inclusive atmosphere. It will also encourage the development of 'human skills' such as teamwork, perseverance and self-esteem amongst marginalized youth.

The *Docking Space* will offer **guided tours of the ships**. The shipyard provides the opportunity for minor repairs: apprentice sailors get hands-on experience in a 'nautical workshop'. By housing EcoMaris' armada of training vessels, this site will **energize a landscape that is essentially industrial**.