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Press release
For immediate distribution

French region of Poitou joins WBNB's international twinning program

New Brunswick – Following the launch of its international twinning pilot program with Germany in May 2020, **Women in Business New Brunswick** (WBNB) is now putting together a second cohort with France.

This move represents the culmination of months of collaboration between WBNB, the Greater Châtellerault region, the Greater Poitiers Urban Community and the French *département* of Vienne.

The second launch event was held on November 20 during an online meeting attended by 63 participants.

Taking part in this celebration of female entrepreneurship were a number of dignitaries and economic stakeholders, some of whom offered words of encouragement for the participants.

Her Excellency the Canadian Ambassador to France, Isabelle Hudon; the Honourable Lieutenant-Governor of New Brunswick, Brenda Murphy; the Consul General of France in the Atlantic Provinces, Johan Schitterer; members of Global Affairs Canada; New Brunswick's International and Multilateral Francophonie Directorate; and various French and Canadian elected officials all paid tribute to this major partnership between France and Canada.

The program seeks to foster long-term relationships between female entrepreneurs based in New Brunswick and their counterparts in France operating in comparable economic sectors. It is not a mentoring initiative as each of the twinned companies are of similar size and maturity level. In this regard, it is more of a “win-win exchange”. The partnership also strengthens the ties between elected officials and economic development departments on both sides of the Atlantic.

The program has a total of 27 participants, including 12 entrepreneurs from New Brunswick. Meeting for at least 60 to 90 minutes per month, the twinned companies have a chance to discuss best practices, markets, industries, cultural differences and local operations. They can also collaborate more actively by exchanging names of key contacts, forging stronger ties and facilitating access to their respective local markets. From a personal and cultural viewpoint, it is a highly worthwhile experience.

Although the organizing partners provide guidance throughout the 12-month program, another objective is to create long-term friendships and professional partnerships between the participants.

"I wish each of the women entrepreneurs in this twinning a rich and productive exchange. You will be able to share your experiences and expertise and thus accelerate the development of your businesses. This win-win program will also contribute to strengthening ties between the business communities in Canada and France. "

Said Mrs. Isabelle Hudon, Ambassador of Canada to France and Monaco

"Adopting a local, personalized approach, this wonderful initiative by Women in Business New Brunswick draws on the powers of creativity and networking while enhancing economic ties between France and Atlantic Canada. I extend my best wishes for success to these budding partnerships, which stand to benefit not only from the promising conditions afforded by the EU-Canada Comprehensive Economic and Trade Agreement, but also from the strong historic links between Acadie and Poitou!"

Said Mr. Johan Schitterer – Consul General of France for Atlantic Canada

About Women in Business New Brunswick

Women in Business New Brunswick (WBNB) helps current and aspiring women entrepreneurs reach their full potential as business owners by delivering quality counselling and services.

WBNB's great added value lies in its experienced team of development officers who provide bilingual support (including personalized consultations) to women entrepreneurs in both rural and urban regions. The organization seeks to meet the needs of local women entrepreneurs, focusing on three specific areas: (1) start-ups; (2) growth/expansion; and (3) exports. Nearly a year ago, a development officer was assigned to work exclusively with Indigenous women entrepreneurs.

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