



## **Eco-Baleine Fund** **for research and education on whales of the Marine Park**

One of the first achievements of the Eco-Whale Alliance is the creation of an Eco-Baleine Fund to support research, training and educational activities associated with the whale watching activities in the Saguenay-St. Lawrence Marine Park. This commitment is based on a fundamental principle of sustainable development, where those enjoying the use of a resource are responsible for its continued good use.

The Fund receives an annual contribution from marine tour business owners member of the Alliance and is managed by the Fondation de la faune du Québec (FFQ). The FFQ is also responsible for the administration of the Fund, management of the calls for tenders and the selection of projects to be supported by the Fund.

The Fund's steering committee includes five people: two marine tour business owners member of the Alliance, one representative of the Marine Park Management, one representative of the Group for Research and Education on Marine Mammals (GREMM) and one representative of the FFQ. This committee is responsible for establishing the financial priorities and strategies of the Fund according to the principles and objectives adopted by the Alliance members. The committee is based on the recommendations made in the *Saguenay-St. Lawrence Marine Park Management Plan, the Plan for Sea Activities in the Saguenay-St. Lawrence Marine Park* and the Coordinating Committee of the Marine Park.

The Fund will support two categories of activities: monitoring and training activities, and research and development activities. Annually, the funds will be used primarily to ensure the continuity of the monitoring and training programs identified by the Fund's steering committee. Additional funds available will be dedicated to research and development projects following the submission and assessment process defined by the FFQ.

### **One fund, two activity categories**

**Monitoring and Training:** the **monitoring** of marine observation activities and exploited whale populations is one of the foundations of eco-responsible commitment which will assess the effectiveness of the protective measures in place and will adapt them according to the scientific information collected. **Training** the cruise staff, captains and naturalists also serves as one of the best strategies for ensuring compliance with the established measures to limit the impact on the whales and enhance the educational value of whale watching tours. Monitoring programs, and continuous training programs are recurring activities and priorities that require a long-term commitment.

**Research and Development:** research activities are necessary to better understand the status of the whale populations which support marine observation in the Marine Park and to evaluate the quality of the visitor's experience. The knowledge gained would be directed towards the development of practical applications to limit the impact of marine observation activities on whales and to enhance their educational value. In general, this type of activity should be of a non-recurring and fixed-term nature.