

PLAN NORD



**BUILDING NORTHERN
QUÉBEC TOGETHER**
The Project of a Generation



HIGHLIGHTS



MESSAGE FROM THE PREMIER

The 21st century is still young but it has already transported us to a different world. The advances made by the emerging countries are shifting major economic corridors. The emergence of environmental awareness and the fight against global warming are altering how we conceive of economic development.

The Plan Nord has been elaborated to take a stance in this new world, further broaden Québec's approach centred on openness to the world and strategic alliances, and develop our economic potential through a sustainable development partnership that respects the First Nations, the Inuit and local communities. Northern Québec is fascinating because of its immense territory and the scale of its potential. Today, the context lends itself to its rediscovery.

The Plan Nord is the project of a generation of Quebecers.

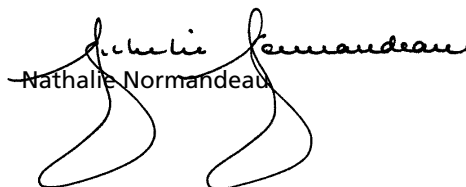


Jean Charest



MESSAGE FROM THE DEPUTY PREMIER, MINISTER OF NATURAL RESOURCES AND WILDLIFE AND MINISTER RESPONSIBLE FOR THE PLAN NORD

The Plan Nord is one of the most ambitious projects that Québec has undertaken. It is unique in its scope and in its approach. For over a year, a number of Aboriginal and local communities have sought to define conditions in Northern Québec and establish new methods of collaboration. This consensus-building approach that mobilized communities whose populations total over 120 000 residents is unprecedented. Between the James Bay and Côte-Nord regions, between the Saguenay–Lac-Saint-Jean region and Nunavik there are, of course, thousands of kilometres and a great deal to share: a northern culture, proximity to nature, boundless development potential, and social, economic and environmental challenges to be met.



Nathalie Normandeau

FOCUSING ON SUSTAINABLE NORTHERN DEVELOPMENT

The Plan Nord is the project of a generation. It first offered a perspective of sustainable development in Québec and is now one of the biggest economic, social and environmental projects in our time.

The Plan Nord will be carried out over a period of 25 years. It will lead to over \$80 billion in investments during that time and create or consolidate, on average, 20 000 jobs a year, equivalent to 500 000 man-years. The Plan Nord will be to the coming decades what the development of La Manicouagan and James Bay were to the 1960s and 1970s.

THE TERRITORY THAT THE PLAN NORD COVERS:

- encompasses all of Québec's territory north of the 49th parallel and north of the St. Lawrence River and the Gulf of St. Lawrence;
- covers nearly 1.2 million km² and accounts for 72% of Québec's geographic area;
- has one of the world's biggest fresh water reserves;
- accounts over three-quarters of Québec's installed hydroelectric power generation capacity and the potential of its untapped water, wind and photovoltaic¹ resources is at least just as considerable;
- encompasses over 200 000 km² of Québec's commercial forest;
- has outstanding wildlife resources, including internationally renowned salmon rivers;
- offers, among vast intact natural territories in the world, some of the last potential for preservation;
- comprises 63 towns, villages and communities linked to the rest of Québec by road, rail, maritime or air transportation infrastructure.
- is governed, by and large, by the *James Bay and Northern Quebec Agreement* and the *Northeastern Quebec Agreement*.
- produces all of Québec's nickel, cobalt, platinum group metals, zinc, iron ore and ilmenite, and accounts for a significant portion of gold production. Lithium, vanadium and rare-earth metals,² are also found there.

1. Electrical energy generated by means of sunlight.

2. Rare-earth metals encompass chemical elements, i.e. lanthanides, scandium and yttrium, which are fairly abundant in the earth's crust.

FIGURE 1

Area Covered by the Plan Nord



- Territorial boundaries**
- Area covered by the Plan Nord
 - Administrative region boundary
 - Regional county municipality (RCM) boundary
 - Southern boundary of Nunavik

- Borders**
- International border
 - Interprovincial border
 - Québec – Newfoundland and Labrador border (non-definitive)

Sources

Data	Organization	Year
Territorial divisions	MRNF	2010

Production

Ministère des Ressources naturelles et de la Faune
 Direction générale adjointe de l'information géographique

Note : This document has no legal standing.

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0 200 km

THE TERRITORY'S POPULATION:

- accounts for less than 2% of Québec's population overall, equivalent to just over 120 000 people, including 33 000 Aboriginals;
- includes residents of the James Bay, Saguenay and Côte-Nord regions, 30% of whom are under 24 years of age, a proportion that reaches 50% in the Aboriginal communities;
- lives in 63 towns, villages and communities grouped together in five regional conferences of elected officers (RCEOs) and nine regional county municipalities (RCMs). However, there are no RCMs in the Nord-du-Québec region, which is divided, at the 55th parallel, into two major areas, i.e. James Bay/Eeyou Istchee and Nunavik.

THE INUIT AND THE FIRST NATIONS:

- Nearly 10 000 **Inuit** live mainly in 14 Northern villages, with between 200 and 2 200 inhabitants. The Northern villages are located on the coast of Hudson Bay, Hudson Strait and Ungava Bay.
- The **Cree Nation**, with a population of some 16 000 people, is concentrated, above all, in nine communities located on the east coast of James Bay and inland from the drainage basin.
- The **Innu Nation** encompasses nine communities (eight in the Côte-Nord region and one in the Saguenay–Lac-Saint-Jean region) with a total population of over 16 000, of whom more than 9 300 live in the territory that the Plan Nord covers.
- The **Naskapi Nation** numbers nearly 1 000 people in the community of Kawawachikamach, 15 km north of Schefferville.

DEMOGRAPHIC CHARACTERISTICS OF THE POPULATION:

- Between 1991 and 2006, while Québec's population increased by nearly 10% during the period, that of the territory that the Plan Nord covers declined by nearly 3%, from 124 500 to 121 000 inhabitants.
- At the same time, the Aboriginal population grew markedly and its demographic weight rose from 17.7% to 27.1% of the total population in the territory that the Plan Nord covers. In the Aboriginal communities, young people up to the age of 14 are twice as numerous, while the proportion of individuals 65 or over stands at 4.5%, half that in Québec overall (13.2%).



1. A SHARED PERSPECTIVE TO MEET THE CHALLENGES THAT THE NORTH POSES

The partners under the Plan Nord jointly adopted the following perspective:

“The Plan Nord must be an exemplary sustainable development project that integrates energy, mining, forest, bio-food, tourism, and transportation development, the development of wildlife, environmental protection, and the preservation of biodiversity. It will foster development for the benefit of the communities concerned and Québec as a whole, in a spirit of respect for cultures and identities.”

The Plan Nord is the outcome of over 60 meetings of sectorial working and consensus-building groups that assembled nearly 450 participants. Through this representative, participatory organization, the Plan Nord will be a model of sustainable development that reconciles social and economic development and environmental protection.

POLICY DIRECTIONS LINKED TO SUSTAINABLE DEVELOPMENT UNDER THE PLAN NORD³

The Plan Nord will support the realization of projects based on coherent policy directions that satisfy overall the key concerns stemming from the sustainable development approach. Specifically, the policy directions seek to:

- ensure the application of a sustainable development approach centred on the essential needs of local and Aboriginal communities in the territory that the Plan Nord covers, their identity and cultural heritage;
- support development that respects the quality of the environment and its biodiversity and allows for collective social and economic enrichment;
- apply integrated analytical approaches in respect of different uses of the territory that hinge on past or ongoing reflection, bearing in mind existing legislative frameworks, agreements and planning initiatives.

3. The policy directions are drawn from the report of the sustainable development focus group, appended to the main report.



The Société du Plan Nord

The gouvernement du Québec will establish, by adopting legislation, a public coordinating body, the **Société du Plan Nord**, to confirm its determination to make the development of the North a priority and the essential nature of sustainable development.

The Société du Plan Nord will:

- coordinate public investment in strategic infrastructure and in the social sector;
- coordinate the implementation of projects included in the first five-year action plan;
- negotiate financing packages for the projects for which it is responsible.

The Société du Plan Nord will also act as a key partner in respect of local and Aboriginal communities that it can guide and support in their own community and social development projects.

NEW PARTNERSHIPS TO MAXIMIZE LOCAL SPINOFF

Through the Société du Plan Nord's role as the key coordinator and its consensus-building structure, the Plan Nord can establish new partnerships adapted to the territory and its specific constraints. The partnerships contemplated will seek, for example, to satisfy several uses.

Accordingly, transportation, energy and telecommunications infrastructure could be built to afford access to a new mining camp that encompasses several deposits, thus providing access to trapping lands and, possibly, outfitting operations and other tourist infrastructure, while benefiting neighbouring communities. In this way, the development of the North will rely on integrated planning and become a model of sustainable development.

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The board of directors of the Société du Plan Nord will comprise representatives of the regions, the Aboriginal nations, the private sector and the gouvernement du Québec. The governance rules applicable to the Société du Plan Nord will directly draw inspiration from those in the *Act respecting the governance of state-owned enterprises* (R.S.Q., c. G-1.02).



PROMOTE NORTHERN QUÉBEC ABROAD

Coordinated by the ministère des Relations internationales, the gouvernement du Québec is carrying out a sustained, original international initiative. By bolstering strategic partnerships, it is seeking to attract qualified workers and investments, open up new markets to Québec entrepreneurs, broaden cooperation in fields such as the environment, sustainable development and scientific research, and promote Québec's culture.

The government overall and the network of Québec government offices abroad is called upon to promote the Plan Nord abroad and to publicize northern Québec, during cultural or diplomatic activities.

A PARTNERSHIP WITH THE FIRST NATIONS AND INUIT BASED ON MUTUAL RESPECT

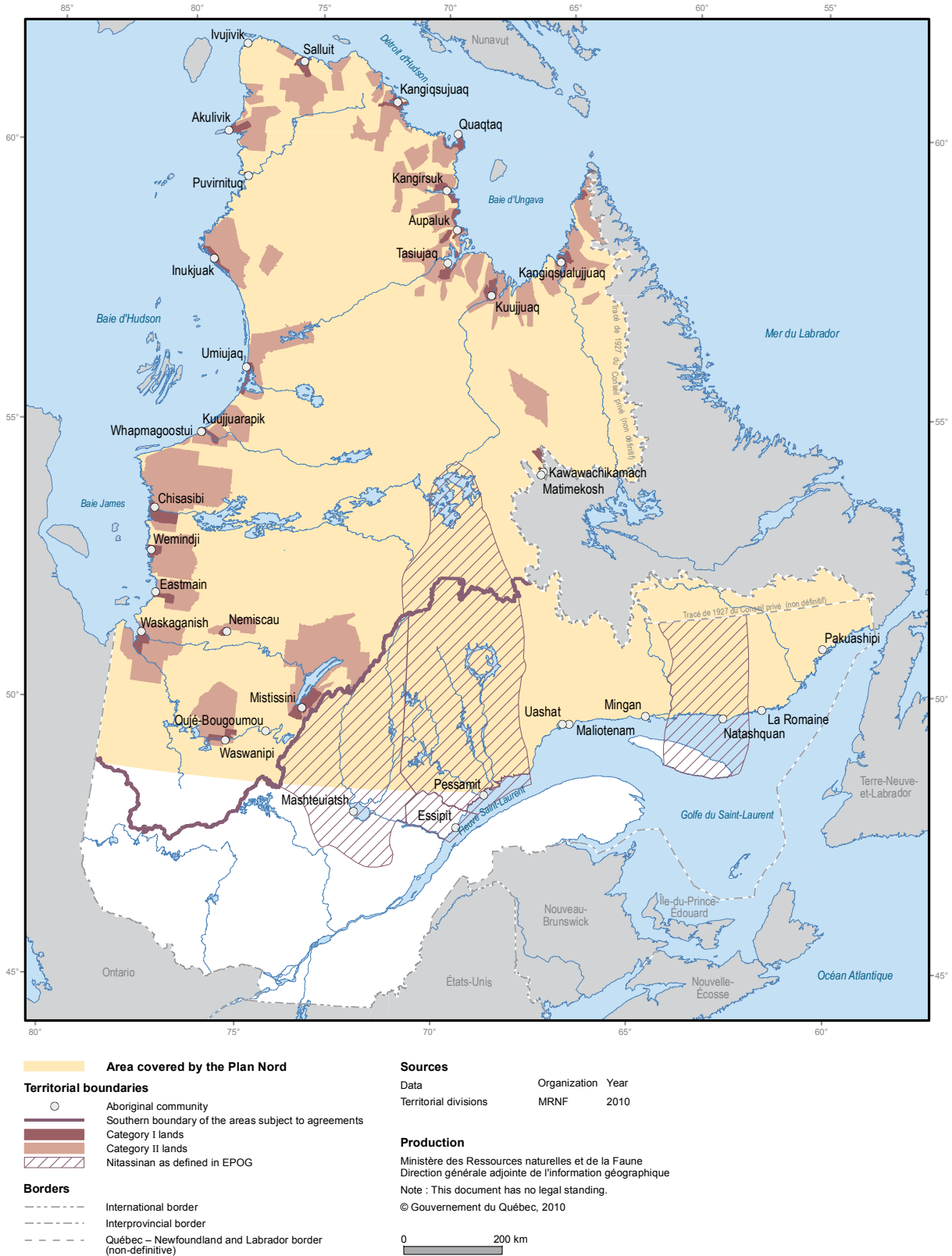
Through the Plan Nord elaboration process, the First Nations concerned and the Inuit (Figure 2) have expressed the desire to participate fully in its elaboration and implementation as partners within a framework that respects their aspirations and specific context. More specifically, the following principles have been put forward to make possible the partnerships that they wish to establish:

- the maintenance of a Nation-to-Nation relationship;
- the obligation to properly consult the populations;
- participation by the Aboriginal peoples both in decision-making processes and the realization of development projects;
- respect for the principles of sustainable development;
- respect for the Aboriginal culture and identity;
- respect for existing and impending treaties and agreements.



FIGURE 2

Aboriginal Communities



2. ENSURE COMMUNITY WELL-BEING AND DEVELOPMENT

The Plan Nord seeks to enhance living conditions in Aboriginal and local communities. Accordingly, measures are planned in the realms of education, manpower, housing, health and culture.

2.1 Education

Several existing educational organizations offer services and can be created. Six Centres de formation professionnelle (CFPs)⁴ and three CEGEPS⁵ operate in the territory that the Plan Nord covers. Some university services are also offered there.

The prospect of obtaining good jobs should strongly encourage young people to pursue their studies in the territory that the Plan Nord covers, where the drop-out rate among First Nations and Inuit young people is, on average, three times higher than the rate in Québec overall.

Education: an overview of the 2011-2016 action plan

The 2011-2016 education action plan will focus on an improvement in persistence in school and school success. In particular, it makes provision to:

- renovate and build points of service;
- offer learning paths adapted to students in Nunavik;
- heighten awareness among young people, with the assistance of communities and businesses, to the importance of school success.

2.2 Manpower

The enhancement of the basic level of training acquired by residents of the territory that the Plan Nord covers is a priority. In addition to the challenge of developing and training local manpower, another challenge stems from the integration into local and Aboriginal communities of workers from outside the territory.

PLAN NEEDS AND TRAINING

To meet the challenge of on-site worker training and the reception of workers from outside the territory, each economic development project in the territory that the Plan Nord covers must include from the conception phase a precise list of the requisite skills so that as many young people as possible from the Aboriginal and local communities participate rapidly in the process that leads to the acquisition of the desired skills. The success of such an approach will require close collaboration among all of the partners involved, i.e. educational and training institutions, businesses, the government, local communities, and the regional councils of labour market partners.

4. CFP A.W. Gagné, CFP de la Jamésie, CFP de Waswanipi, CFP Nunavimmi Pigiursavik, CFP Roberval et CFP de Baie-Comeau.

5. Cégep de Baie-Comeau, Cégep de Sept-Îles et Centre d'études collégiales de Chibougamau (relevant du Cégep de Saint-Félicien).

Manpower: an overview of the 2011-2016 action plan

The 2011-2016 manpower action plan will seek, in particular, to:

- take stock of manpower in the territory;
- implement specific projects to develop the skills of workers;
- plan manpower training programs to trigger projects in the mining sector;
- invest in the development of training facilities and the installation of suitable equipment.

2.3 Housing

The development of the North and the arrival of workers from outside the territory will pose for the partners under the Plan Nord a challenge in respect of reception, lodging and housing infrastructure throughout the territory.

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Accordingly, promoters must incorporate into their projects a housing component to contribute to enhancing the reception capacity of the communities that welcome workers and their families from outside the territory.

Shortcomings from the standpoint of the availability and quality of public housing are especially apparent in Nunavik.

Housing: an overview of the 2011-2016 action plan

In the realm of housing, the 2011-2016 action plan will focus, by and large, on determining needs and developing reception and housing capacity.

At least 500 new housing units will be built over a period of five years in Nunavik, in addition to 340 dwelling units covered by an tripartite agreement. Furthermore, talks are under way with the federal government and the Inuit partners to build 500 additional housing units.

- Pursue the renovation of 482 housing units in Nunavik between 2011 and 2014.
- Facilitate the granting of lots and help recruit workers to build new neighbourhoods and undertake work quickly.
- Determine as accurately as possible the number of workers from outside the territory and their families likely to settle in the region where a project is being carried out and be prepared to invest in the construction or designing of housing and community infrastructure.

2.4 Health and social services

The availability of healthcare and social services is a fundamental issue under the Plan Nord. Existing infrastructure generally satisfies the needs of the populations residing in the territory concerned without for all that offering the resources necessary to satisfy the newcomers who settle there and their specific needs. Any development and any increase in the labour pool will require additional healthcare and social services for the new clientele.

Health and social services: an overview of the 2011-2016 action plan

The 2011-2016 action plan will initiate an improvement in service quality. The action plan will seek, in particular, to:

- implement infrastructure suited to a telehealth network (remote medical consultations) in Nunavik;
- promote healthy lifestyles;
- ensure that all partners invest in the development of community and health infrastructure;
- develop, with the partners, approaches to occupational health and safety adapted to local and Aboriginal workers;
- implement a process designed to assess the impact on the health of northern populations of development projects under the Plan Nord.

2.5 Culture

Northern development must benefit the enhancement of the cultures of local and Aboriginal communities. In particular, such development must enable young people from the nations concerned to engage in modern development while preserving the reference points that define their identities. The Plan Nord will also establish cultural meeting points where workers from the south can become familiar with other cultures and where artists from southern Québec perform and meet each other to express the North.

Culture: an overview of the 2011-2016 action plan

From the standpoint of culture, the 2011-2016 action plan seek, in particular, to encourage:

- the signing of cultural cooperation agreements between the government, the Aboriginal nations and regional elected representatives;
- the renewal or conclusion of agreements between the Aboriginal nations and the Conseil des arts et des lettres du Québec;
- the renovation or construction of cultural and multi-purpose centres with the support of the partners.



3. HARNESS NORTHERN QUÉBEC'S ENORMOUS ECONOMIC POTENTIAL

The objective of the Plan Nord is to develop in a sustainable manner the economic potential of the territory in question in the energy, mineral resources, forest and wildlife sectors and in the realms of tourism and bio-food production. The Plan Nord, through its scope, the extent of its spinoff, the abundance of the knowledge required and the suppliers involved, will benefit all regions of Québec and all sectors of our economy.

3.1 Energy resources

The Plan Nord reflects the government's determination to make Québec a world leader in the realm of clean, renewable energy.

Since 2003, the gouvernement du Québec has revived hydroelectric development. Some 97% of the 4 500 MW announced in the *Québec Energy Strategy 2006-2015* will be generated in the territory that the Plan Nord covers.

Under the Plan Nord, the government has undertaken to develop 3 500 MW of clean, renewable energy, i.e. 3 000 MW of hydroelectricity, 300 MW of wind power, and 200 MW from other renewable energy sources. The requisite investment is estimated at \$25 billion and should create 75 000 jobs in man-years. **Energy is the key to the sustainable development of the territory that the Plan Nord covers. It affords an opportunity to develop energy in the North for the North.**

The infrastructure could supply villages, industrial projects or mines established in the territory that the Plan Nord covers. The development of hydroelectric and wind power to satisfy a specific need for local power would have the advantage of reducing energy supply costs in respect of the villages and businesses. It would also significantly reduce the greenhouse gas emissions that existing thermal power plants generate or that might be contemplated to supply them.

Hydro-Québec will support the development of industrial projects such as mining projects in the territory that the Plan Nord covers. The government corporation will develop and operate hydroelectric projects not linked to its main network in order to respond specifically to the energy and power needs of such industrial projects.

As for wind power, initial surveys suggest considerable potential in Northern Québec. Hydro-Québec TransÉnergie estimates that, to date, a 10% penetration level of peak power on the system is conceivable without posing major constraints to its operation. This potential can thus be developed gradually.

Energy development: an overview of the 2011-2016 action plan

The priority initiatives in the realm of energy development are indicated below.

- Develop an additional 3 500 MW of clean, renewable energy.
- Support the development of projects not linked to the main network to specifically meet the energy needs of industrial projects.
- Fund the studies necessary for projects to develop underwater generators.
- Carry out a combined wind power-diesel pilot project to supply an isolated network in a community in Nunavik.

3.2 Mineral resources

Mining operations are a major component of the economy of Northern Québec and Québec as a whole. Northern Québec produces all of Québec's nickel, cobalt, platinum group metals, zinc, iron ore and ilmenite, and accounts for a significant portion of gold production. Lithium, vanadium and rare-earth metals, used increasingly in numerous fields related to energy, transportation and high technology, are also found there. In addition, the territory has high potential for uranium and diamonds, as development projects in the Otish Mountains region reveal.

Northern Québec's mineral resource potential is far from being fully established. The Labrador Trough, recognized for its abundant mineral resources, extends north of Schefferville. There are already at least 11 new projects that could be launched in the coming years in the territory that the Plan Nord covers. The development of these projects would ultimately engender \$8.24 billion in investments and create 11 000 jobs during the construction

phase, then nearly 4 000 jobs a year once they are in operation. Moreover, it will ensure that it obtains a fair return on the development of natural resources.

Mineral resources: an overview of the 2011-2016 action plan

The priority initiatives in the realm of mining are indicated below.

- Invest to acquire and integrate geoscientific knowledge in SIGEOM;⁶
- Coordinate government initiatives concerning the rehabilitation of the railway between Emeril Junction (Labrador) and Schefferville;
- Examine the possibility of establishing a biodiversity tax credit to encourage investors to participate in ecosystem development or restoration projects.

3.3 Forest resources

Harvesting north of the 49th parallel produces annually 11.7 million m³ of wood, equivalent to nearly 53% of Québec's total output. All told, 32 plants obtain wood supplies in the territory that the Plan Nord covers, of which 11 are located north of the 49th parallel. These harvesting operations support nearly 15 000 jobs, 5 600 of them in the forests and 9 300 in primary wood processing plants.

Adopted in 2010, the *Sustainable Forest Development Act* (R.S.Q., c. A-18.1) puts Québec forests, part of its collective heritage, at the forefront of the province's sustainable socioeconomic development. In the territory that the Plan Nord covers, the Act will promote broader protection of biodiversity, enable local communities to participate in the development of the boreal forests, and contribute to the rapid expansion of a more innovative logging industry.

6. Système d'information géominère.

Forest resources: an overview of the 2011-2016 action plan

An industrial development strategy will be proposed to foster and promote the emergence of new wood products. Green chemistry, the production of engineering wood, the optimization of processing and bioenergy are some of the new sectors to be promoted.

Furthermore, a sustainable forest development strategy analogous to the strategy elaborated for Québec's forests overall but adapted to the socioecological characteristics of the North will be drawn up to structure the sustainable management of the territory's forest resources.

The priority initiatives in the forest resources sector are indicated below.

- Acquire knowledge of the vegetation north of the 53rd parallel.
- Pursue the deliberations of the Comité scientifique sur la limite nordique des forêts attribuables.
- Support initiatives that allow the use of forest biomass by conducting studies, opportunity analyses and inventories and by seeking uses (energy, wood-derived products, and so on) and good practices.
- Enhance the profitability of silvicultural investments.
- Establish local forests in the regions concerned.

3.4 Wildlife resources

The vast territory that the Plan Nord covers encompasses a wide range of wildlife habitats. Among other things, the territory is home to 237 bird species, 20 species of fur-bearing animals, and a dozen fish species of interest to sport fishermen. The

resources are a very important component of the culture and subsistence of the Aboriginal nations and offer unique hunting, fishing, trapping and wildlife-observation experiences.

Sport hunting and fishing in Northern Québec arouse considerable interest not only among Quebecers but also among an international clientele. The activities are thus a key driving force in the territory's economic development.

There are 186 outfitting operations, of which 52 have exclusive operating rights, in the territory that the Plan Nord covers.⁷ The territory that the Plan Nord covers also encompasses three controlled salmon harvesting zones (ZECs), nine hunting-fishing ZECs, and four wildlife preserves that offer various activities associated with wildlife harvesting.

Wildlife resources: an overview of the 2011-2016 action plan

Within the context of the realization of economic development projects under the Plan Nord, it is essential to properly ascertain and take into account the projects' impact on wildlife resources and their habitats, and on the Aboriginal way of life. For example, the gouvernement du Québec and the partners concerned will elaborate the next *Plan de gestion du caribou toundrique*, which will seek to restore the herds and strike a balance between the Aboriginal way of life, hunters' expectations and those of outfitting operations. It is understood that the commitments in the *James bay and Northern Quebec Agreement (JBNQA)* concerning Aboriginal harvesting activities will be fully respected.

7. The outfitting operations exercise exclusive control over wildlife harvesting in a given territory pursuant to a lease signed to this effect with the Minister of Natural Resources and Wildlife. Their territory is subject to specific wildlife use and only their clients may hunt, fish or trap there. [www.fpq.com/fr/fpq.rating.asp]

The priority initiatives in the realm of wildlife are indicated below.

- Invest in the acquisition of knowledge of the wildlife environment.
- Consolidate and diversify the service offer and activities adapted to the territory covered.
- Foster participation by local communities in the initiatives implemented.

3.5 Tourism potential

In addition to its abundant wildlife resources, Northern Québec possesses numerous attractions and points of interest likely to draw tourists from Québec and elsewhere.

The territory features remarkable scenery and communities with lively, authentic cultures. The northern lights, for example, can be observed under optimal conditions. The river system and geophysical traits of the territory offer outstanding potential and their wild nature makes visitors' excursions even more memorable.

In the Côte-Nord and James Bay regions, hydroelectric power plants are also arousing considerable interest among Québec and foreign tourists. Furthermore, the potential of the expedition cruise sector has been largely demonstrated in Nunavik and on the Côte-Nord.

The network of protected areas, which encompasses provincial parks in Northern Québec, is a key asset from the standpoint of northern tourism.

Tourism: an overview of the 2011-2016 action plan

Given their geographic and sociocultural particularities, the regions north of the 49th parallel require separate intervention adapted to conditions there. The government will launch a Québec northern tourism development strategy that will propose an ambitious long-term perspective:

Make the region north of the 49th parallel, by 2021, a sustainable, world-class tourist destination that provides a genuine, outstanding, safe tourist experience that combines the cohabitation of the northern peoples and respect for nature in a perspective of entrepreneurial development and collective enrichment.

The priority initiatives in the realm of tourism are indicated below.

- Support the development and structuring of northern tourism supply by relying on sustainable development.
- Promote and market northern destinations in order to position them on the northern world stage.
- Rely on human resource training in the tourism sector.
- Plan and implement, in collaboration with local and regional communities, a reception, information and tourism development network.

3.6 Potential for bio-food production

Farmland now under cultivation in the territory that the Plan Nord covers totals just over 8 500 ha, i.e. roughly 5 000 ha in the Côte-Nord region, 2 300 ha in the Saguenay–Lac-Saint-Jean region, and 1 200 ha in the Nord-du-Québec region. The cultivation of small fruits and fodder and pastureland account for over 90% of such farmland and most of the products are exported.

Northern Québec has 1.5 million hectares of arable land, one of the biggest reserves in North America. For comparison purposes, total cultivated land in Québec stands at 2 million hectares.

Moreover, commercial fishing in the North accounts for 20% of all landings in Québec in terms of the value of catches. Shipments from 15-odd plants on the Côte-Nord total \$65 million. Snow crab, Northern shrimp, molluscs (scallops, quahogs, Stimpson's surfclams) and bottom fish are the main species fished on the Côte-Nord.

Moreover, the regular supplying at reasonable cost of the population in Northern Québec is a logistical, economic and health challenge. The cost of food is high in the North, all the more so in the case of fresh products such as fruits and vegetables that are shipped by air.

The bio-food sector: an overview of the 2011-2016 action plan

Remoteness from major markets, the cost of and logistical constraints in respect of the transportation of foodstuffs also affect the type of bio-food products that can be profitably grown in the territory. The development of conditioning and processing infrastructure and distinctive niche products with high added value are the strategies being emphasized to contend with transportation constraints.

The priority initiatives in the bio-food sector are indicated below.

- Establish a bio-food research network north of the 49th parallel.
- Support the construction of greenhouses in the North.
- Elaborate a development strategy in respect of non-timber forest products.
- Implement a sustainable development strategy in respect of small northern fruits.
- Develop a joint strategy to promote local and rural products outside the regions covered.

4. MAKE THE NORTH ACCESSIBLE THROUGH TRANSPORTATION AND COMMUNICATIONS

The vastness of the northern territory poses a considerable challenge from the standpoint of access and transportation and communications infrastructure.

To meet these challenges, the government has given the Société du Plan Nord a mandate to develop on an ongoing basis a new comprehensive, integrated perspective of modes of transportation and means of communication.

Moreover, the government will emphasize public investments that contribute the most to the development of an integrated transportation and communications network and facilitate the realization of economic development projects. Private-sector partners will be required to contribute to fund investment in infrastructure built essentially for the benefit of an economic development project.

4.1 Develop an integrated transportation network

The territory that the Plan Nord covers includes undeniable strategic advantages with respect to the infrastructure need to develop an integrated transportation network.

- In the realm of maritime transport, four of Québec's 10 biggest ports from the standpoint of commercial tonnage handled are located in the Côte-Nord region, i.e. Sept-Îles–Pointe-Noire, Port-Cartier, Baie-Comeau and Havre-Saint-Pierre.
- The airport system comprises 46 airport facilities at all levels of jurisdiction, including 26 airports and six heliports for which the gouvernement du Québec is responsible.
- The rail network spans 1 190 km north of the 49th parallel.
- The road network, developed along major arteries, also comprises 51 000 km of logging roads. This network is strategic, since it allows all users to travel in the territory.

The challenge that the Plan Nord poses is twofold. On the one hand, the integration of different modes of transportation into a strategic, coherent network is essential to the development of the territory's immense resources. On the other hand, the age of the transportation network requires major rehabilitation and appropriate maintenance.

The development of an integrated transportation network will necessitate the pooling of the expertise of all government departments and bodies and the collaboration of regional stakeholders and businesses already operating in the territory or that have development projects. It will be the Société du Plan Nord's role to coordinate the stakeholders.

From now on, reconstruction needs in the transportation network north of the 49th parallel will be analysed under the Programme quinquennal des infrastructures.

Furthermore, the possible opening up of the Northwest Passage, which will ultimately significantly reduce shipping time between Asia and Europe, must be assessed in order to take advantage of it. Québec can position itself advantageously on this new maritime route, which promises to appreciably alter world trade.

Transportation infrastructure: an overview of the 2011-2016 action plan

The government will emphasize the establishment of an integrated transportation network. To this end, it is adopting a new approach that consists in maximizing the contribution that development projects make to the network's establishment.

The government is emphasizing transportation infrastructure projects that provide access to the territories with the greatest economic potential.

The priority initiatives in the realm of transportation are indicated below.

- Extend Route 167 to the Otish Mountains.
- Rebuild Route 389 between Baie-Comeau and Fermont.
- Pursue the upgrading of airports.
- Pursue the extension of Route 138 between Natashquan and Kegaska.
- Extend Route 138 through the construction of a link between Kegaska and Blanc-Sablon.
- Conduct studies to ascertain the feasibility of a road or rail link from Kuujjuaq southward.
- Conduct studies to ascertain the feasibility and profitability of a deepwater port in Whapmagoostui-Kuujjuarapik and of the construction of a land link to Radisson.

4.2 Telecommunications infrastructure

Telecommunications are now essential to any form of economic and social development. The available technologies only partly satisfy the needs of communities and businesses.

Given the very high cost of accessing such services in the northern regions, concrete measures must be promptly implemented to make available services such as high-speed Internet and cellular telephony, which can also contribute to the quality of life of families and young people.

For this reason, the government will initially emphasize the improvement of telecommunications networks to broaden access to the territories in the North and facilitate entrepreneurial development. In this way, communities can obtain better services in a number of fields such as education, health and social services.

Telecommunications infrastructure: an overview of the 2011-2016 action plan

The priority initiatives in the realm of telecommunications are indicated below.

- Invest in telecommunications infrastructure.
- Engage in partnerships with businesses that call, for example, for sharing their facilities for the benefit of communities.

5. PROTECT THE ENVIRONMENT

At all stages of the planning and realization of the projects put forward under the Plan Nord, the protection of the environment and northern ecosystems will be at the forefront of decision-making.

The government is committed to ensuring that the projects are carried out in a spirit of respect for Québec environmental legislation and regulations and that they are subject to rigorous environmental analyses. Moreover, it is making two additional commitments to ensure environmental protection in the territory that the Plan Nord covers:

- ultimately devote 50% of the territory that the Plan Nord covers to purposes other than industrial ones, environmental protection, and safeguarding biodiversity. This commitment will be enshrined in legislation, following consultation;
- complete the network of protected areas such that, by 2015, the network accounts for at least 12% of the area that the Plan Nord covers.

PRINCIPLES GUIDING THE IMPLEMENTATION OF THE GOVERNMENT'S COMMITMENT

- 1) Enable current generations to satisfy their needs but ensure that future generations also have the possibility of satisfying their needs.
- 2) Assure all Quebecers now and in the future that the ecological services now provided by ecosystems and biodiversity in the territory that the Plan Nord covers will be maintained or even enhanced.
- 3) Establish a dynamic approach to identify the territory that will be withdrawn from industrial activity in order to adapt to changing knowledge and social, economic and environmental conditions.
- 4) Guarantee, through the implementation of information, consultation and possible partnership mechanisms taking into account of the interests, needs and concerns voiced by Aboriginal, regional and local communities.



Ecosystem and biodiversity preservation: an overview of the 2011-2016 action plan

During this period, the government will fulfil its commitments and implement environmental protection mechanisms. Accordingly, its priority initiatives will seek to:

- broaden knowledge for the purposes of decision-making and the preservation and sustainable use of biodiversity, and environmental protection;
- finish and distribute the *Atlas sur la biodiversité du Québec nordique*;
- establish provincial parks;
- set aside over 31 000 km² of land and attribute, among other things, the status of projected biodiversity reserves or projected aquatic reserves;
- Adopt a legislative framework concerning the commitment to devote 50% of the territory in question to non-industrial activities and coordinate its implementation;
- adopt in conjunction with each project environmental protection, mitigation or restoration plans.



6. THE PLAN NORD FINANCIAL FRAMEWORK

The Plan Nord is ambitious and requires substantial investment. At the same time, its implementation must respect the government's overall financial framework, i.e. the plan to return to fiscal balance and the reduction of the weight of the debt.

Innovative funding establishes a direct link between economic activity that the Plan Nord triggers and the resources invested to develop infrastructure and enhance social services intended for the inhabitants of the territory that the Plan Nord covers.

6.1 Establishment of the Fonds du Plan Nord

To implement this business plan, the government is establishing the Fonds du Plan Nord, a special-purpose fund devoted to the implementation of the Plan Nord.

The tax spinoff stemming from new mining projects, Hydro-Québec's new projects and new infrastructure projects will be paid into the fund.

Moreover, a contribution from Hydro-Québec to fund social projects, set at \$10 million a year, will also be added to the Fonds du Plan Nord.

The first action plan under the Plan Nord, covering the period 2011-2016, comprises measures totalling \$1.625 billion over five years.

From the standpoint of transportation infrastructure, the government will first invest in projects that afford access to areas with the greatest economic development potential. It will invest \$1.191 billion in infrastructure development.



The first five-year action plan under the Plan Nord also includes \$382 million in expenditures to cover essentially social measures, in particular housing, health, the reduction of transportation costs, and education.

Such investments are essential: the development of the North and the enhancement of the quality of life of its inhabitants are closely linked.

The 2011-2016 action plan also sets aside \$52 million over the entire period to cover the implementation by the Société du Plan Nord of the Plan Nord and initiatives to solicit foreign investors.

6.2 Investissement Québec's equity participation

With the support of Investissement Québec, the government will negotiate equity participations in projects to ensure that the inhabitants of the North and Quebecers overall benefit directly from the resources developed in their territory.

The government will earmark \$500 million over the next five years for the purpose of concluding participations in impending projects. The mandate to manage the funds will be entrusted to Investissement Québec, which will negotiate equity participations on a business basis with the objective of a return. The equity participations may take the form of:

- joint ventures;
- purchases of share capital or investments in the form of convertible debentures.

Bearing in mind the \$500-million contribution paid to Investissement Québec, **the government will allocate a total of \$2.1 billion over the next five years to implement the Plan Nord.**





Photos:

ArcelorMittal Mines Canada

Christian Chevalier

David Rouault

Gilles Boutin

Marc Tremblay

Tourisme Québec

Québec Mining Association

Xstrata Nickel – Raglan Mine

The unabridged version and the highlights are available on the Plan Nord website (www.plannord.gouv.qc.ca).

Ce document est également disponible en français.

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