



THE PLAN NORD

toward 2035



2015-2020
ACTION PLAN

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The Plan Nord and its reference framework are available on the
Plan Nord website (plannord.gouv.qc.ca)

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A MESSAGE FROM THE PREMIER



The Plan Nord toward 2035 is a key element in a broad-based operation to spur Québec's economic recovery, undertaken by our government to stimulate employment and ensure prosperity. Québec needs to increase its overall wealth and create new jobs in all regions, and the Plan Nord will help us meet this challenge.

We have made the relaunching of the Plan Nord a priority, in order to optimize economic benefits for local and aboriginal communities in the North and for all regions of Québec. Our message is

clear. Québec has a northern environment that is exceptionally rich in energy and natural resources, managed and developed within the framework of a rigorous, organized and well-coordinated process. The process is, in turn, based on partnership, the active involvement of the private sector, and support for local and aboriginal communities.

We have ensured that the Plan Nord brings together the essential conditions for attracting investors from inside and outside Québec who are interested in projects that enhance and develop the economic potential of the North. I have personally witnessed the keen interest generated among foreign investors by this opening up of northern Québec during international missions undertaken to promote the relaunching of the Plan Nord.

To create the conditions conducive to the development of resources in the North, it is essential to focus on the living conditions of the local populations and to address their specific needs. The Plan Nord includes a broad range of social measures that will help improve their wellbeing.

In terms of the environment, we want to develop the area in a sustainable and responsible way. The relaunching of the Plan Nord provides an opportunity to establish and specify conservation measures to ensure that, by 2035, 50% of the area covered by the Plan Nord is dedicated to non-industrial purposes, as well as the protection of the environment and the safeguarding of biodiversity.

In short, the relaunching of the Plan Nord will create a favourable climate for investment, which will be made on the basis of fundamental, guiding principles for social development and environmental protection. This will make it possible to increase Québec's wealth and support the diversification of the local and regional economy, for the benefit of the inhabitants of the area covered by the Plan Nord, the Québec population as a whole, and future generations. We have chosen to make the Plan Nord a development project that is harmonious, ethical and respectful of the local and aboriginal communities that will be directly affected by its implementation.

Philippe Couillard
Premier of Québec

A MESSAGE FROM THE MINISTER OF ENERGY AND NATURAL RESOURCES, MINISTER RESPONSIBLE FOR THE PLAN NORD AND CÔTE-NORD REGION



The Plan Nord toward 2035 has been drafted on the basis of updated policy directions and a new vision for the North, its issues and its potential. The extensive resources of the North will be developed first and foremost for the benefit of local inhabitants, while contributing to the progress of Québec as a whole. In particular, the Plan Nord takes into account the realities and needs of local and aboriginal communities in the fields of employment, education, health and social services, justice, housing, culture and security.

In addition to these economic and social components, the Plan Nord retains a fundamental and essential focus on the environment. It includes concrete measures to ensure protection for the natural environment and wildlife, the conservation of the distinctive biodiversity of northern Québec, and the supply of clean, innovative forms of energy to northern communities. Our goal is to ensure that the Plan Nord is implemented in a responsible way and in strict compliance with the principles of sustainable development.

Our action plan for the next five years is designed to reflect these aims. It will harmonize and channel the priority actions of the government departments and bodies involved in the development of northern Québec. The actions planned will, among other things, facilitate access to the land, improve telecommunications infrastructures and increase scientific knowledge about the northern environment. Everything is in place to meet the objectives we have set.

The Société du Plan Nord will coordinate the development process while consulting with all the partners involved. It will help harmonize the activities of the government departments and bodies working in northern Québec, for the benefit of citizens in the North and throughout Québec. In addition to providing coordination for all stakeholders in the North, it will play an important role by accompanying local communities to ensure the coherent planning of development prior to implementation.

To promote sustainable development in the North, the Société du Plan Nord will use the amounts available in the Fonds du Plan Nord. Adding this amount to existing funding for measures financed by government departments and bodies and contributions from other partners, a total of over \$2 billion will be devoted to actions in the area covered by the Plan Nord, creating the best possible conditions for the harmonious development of the area.

With *The Plan Nord toward 2035* and its 2015-2020 action plan, the government will take a decisive step in the process that began in 2011 to ensure the sustainable development of northern Québec. We will continue to target the policy directions and fundamental priorities for action set out in the initial plan, while proposing new and innovative options adapted to the current context.

A handwritten signature in black ink, appearing to read 'Pierre Arcand', written in a cursive style.

Pierre Arcand

Minister of Energy and Natural Resources,
Minister responsible for the Plan Nord and Côte-Nord region

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Waterfall at Lac à l'Eau Claire in
Parc national de Tursujuq.
Photo credit: David Rouault

INTRODUCTION

In May 2011, the Québec government unveiled the Plan Nord, an ambitious sustainable development program for the development of resources in northern Québec¹. Based on a shared, unifying vision, this once-in-a-generation project heralded one of the largest economic, social and environmental development initiatives of our time.

In 2014, in order to continue this major sustainable development project and take advantage of the opportunities it revealed, the government decided to relaunch the Plan Nord. It intends to make it one of the primary focus areas of the revival of Québec's economy, along with the closely related Maritime Strategy.

These two primary focus areas are complementary and cover some of the same geographic areas and key issues. The increased use of maritime routes and harbour facilities will, in particular, improve the flow of goods to northern Québec and make supplies for remote or isolated populations more secure, while supporting economic growth in outlying regions.

The relaunching of the Plan Nord will require the participation of local and aboriginal communities, in keeping with the principles of sustainable development and in a manner respectful of their culture and identities. Its benefits will be optimized to ensure that they are profitable for all regions of Québec.

The release of *The Plan Nord toward 2035, 2015-2020 Action Plan* is a key step in the process designed to rally all Quebecers behind this society-wide project.

The updated Plan Nord will constitute an adaptable framework for future years. Other projects suggested by communities or resulting from an analysis of the issues by various government departments and agencies may also, over the years, be added to this document, provided they are consistent with the key policy directions of the Plan Nord.

*The Plan Nord constitutes
an adaptable framework.*

¹ Québec. Ministère des Ressources naturelles et de la Faune. Plan Nord. *Building Northern Québec Together. The Project of a Generation*. Québec, 2011.



1. CONTEXT FOR THE RELAUNCHING OF THE PLAN NORD

A solid foundation based on past achievements

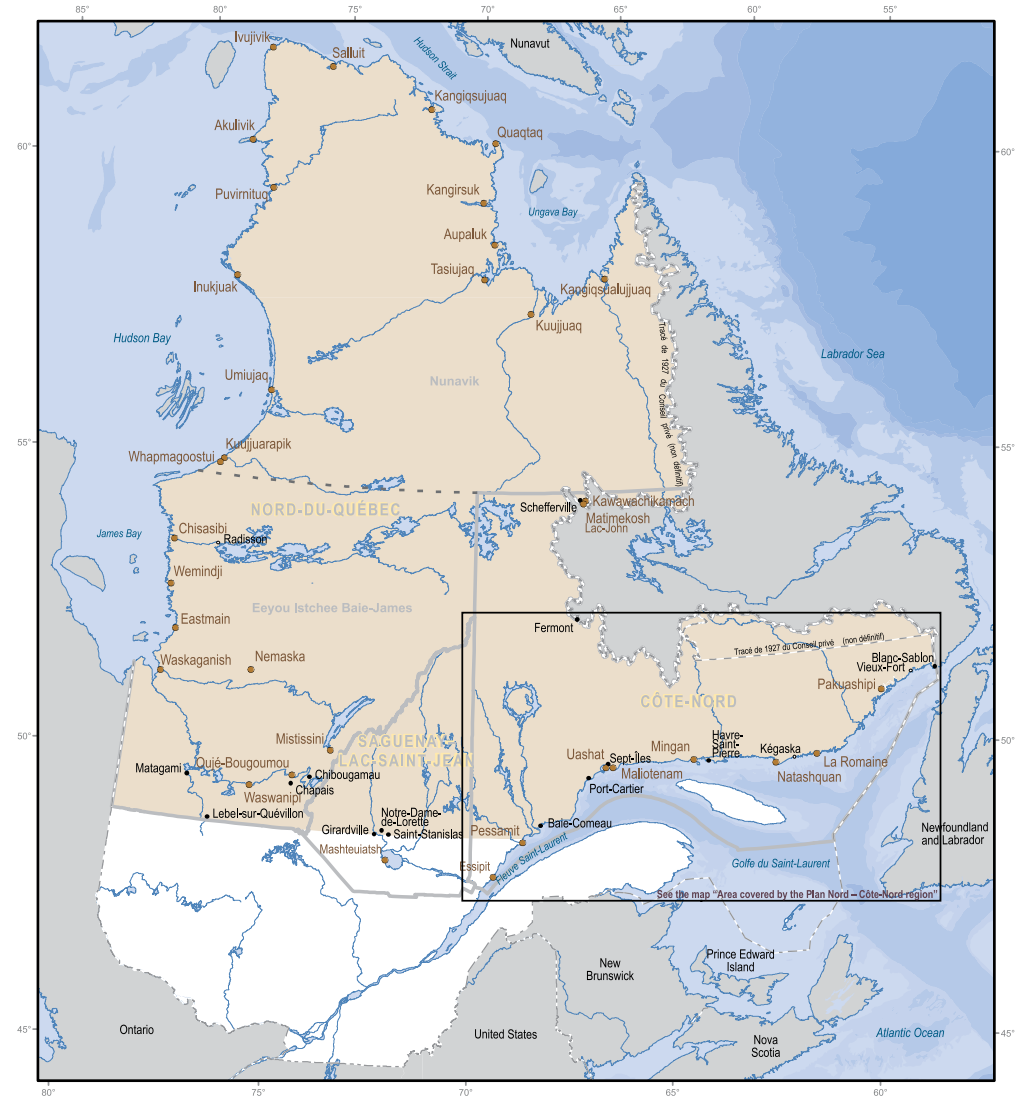
The relaunching of the Plan Nord takes the initial plan as its starting point. It already has at its core the work and discussions of the partners who helped draft the first plan, released in 2011. It also draws on the discussions of northern development issues that have taken place over the last three years.

With its updated Plan Nord, the government intends to continue to work in the spirit of the Declaration of the Partners signed in May 2011.

In addition, the implementation of the updated Plan Nord must, and will always, be consistent with previously signed agreements and all the government's obligations toward Aboriginals, including the constitutional obligation of consultation. The Québec government considers it a duty to honour its commitments toward the First nations and the Inuit, to accommodate them where necessary, and to establish a partnership with them in a form that reflects their aspirations and the realities they face.

In short, the government is relaunching the project from where it has been left off. The updated Plan Nord reiterates the essential elements of the initial plan which remain of current interest, and updates them either by maintaining the relevant policy directions and priority actions, or by proposing new ways forward to reflect the current context.

Map 1 - Area covered by the Plan Nord



Area covered by the Plan Nord and key features

The renewed Plan Nord will apply to the same geographical area as the initial plan, namely all of Québec located north of the 49 th parallel and north of the St. Lawrence River and Gulf of St. Lawrence, an area of almost 1.2 million km² that represents 72% of Québec’s total land mass (Maps 1 and 2).

Most of the area covered by the Plan Nord is governed by the Baie-James and Northern Québec Agreement and the Northeastern Québec Agreement².

It has a population of over 120,000 people, of whom one-third are Aboriginals from four nations (Inuit, Cree, Innu and Naskapi), living in 31 communities (Map 3). There are also 32 non-aboriginal communities in the Baie-James, north of Saguenay–Lac-Saint-Jean and Côte-Nord regions.

Spatial organization

- Aboriginal community
- Municipality
- Village
- Administrative boundary region
- - - Dividing line between the Eeyou Istchee Baie-James territory and Nunavik
- Area covered by the Plan Nord

Nunavik is located in the Nord-du-Québec region and designates a sociocultural region.

Borders

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

Sources

Data	Organization	Year
Spatial organization	MERN	2015

Production

Ministère de l'Énergie et des Ressources naturelles
 Direction générale de l'information géographique

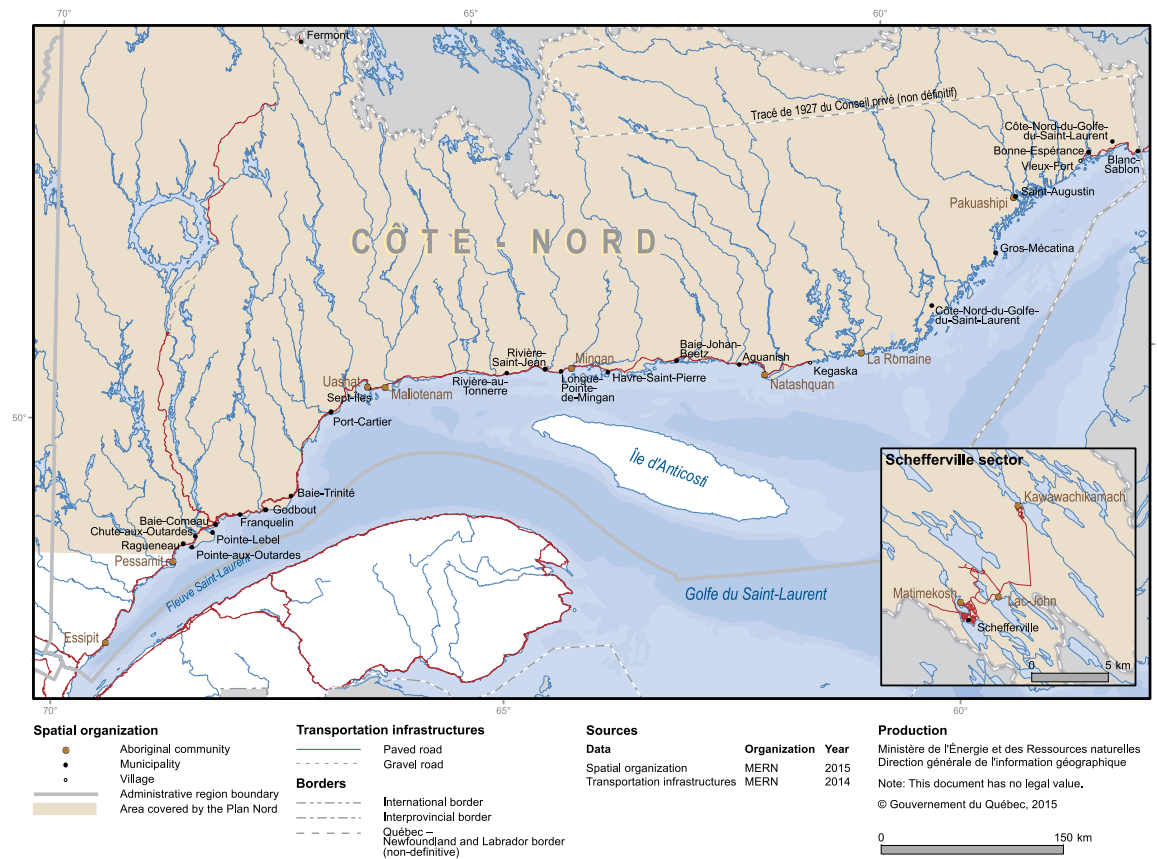
Note: This document has no legal value.

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0 200 km

² List of agreements signed by nation and by community. Secrétariat aux affaires autochtones: [Online] [www.autochtones.gouv.qc.ca/rerelations_autochtones/ententes/liste_ententes_conclues.htm].

Map 2 - Area covered by the Plan Nord – Côte-Nord region



The area of the Plan Nord is richly endowed with natural resources:

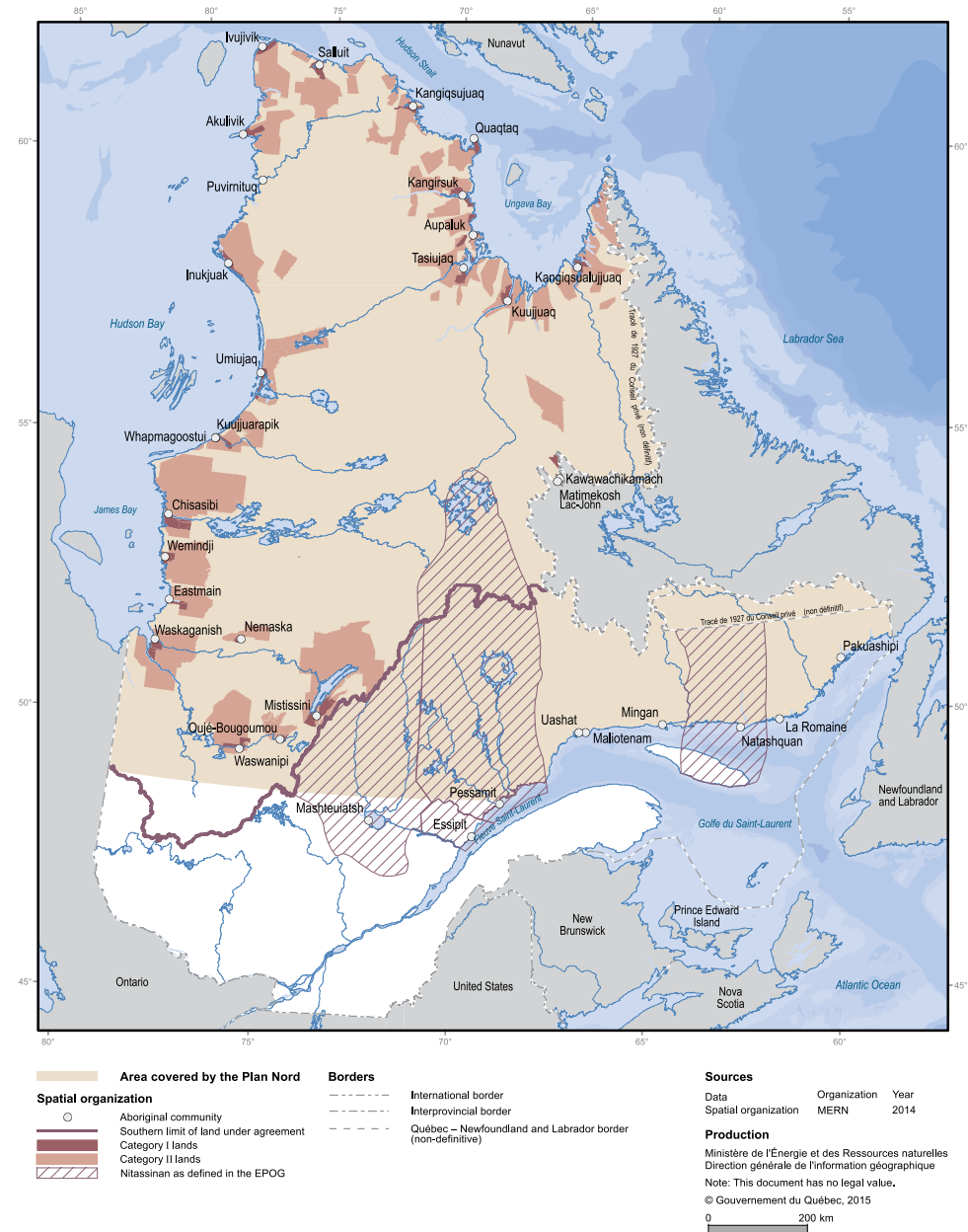
- It contains extensive mineral deposits and accounts for Québec's entire production of many different minerals.
- It has over 200,000 km² of forests, or over half of all the productive forest land in Québec.
- It is the site of 75% of Québec's installed hydroelectric capacity and has further untapped potential for hydroelectric, wind and solar energy generation.
- With landscapes containing outstanding wildlife potential and a range of local cultures, it has the potential to become a world-class tourism destination.

Known challenges

The area covered by the Plan Nord presents a range of challenges created by its geographic, demographic, social and environmental features. The major challenges are connected with:

- Abundant, diversified natural resources that are hard to access and are located in a distinctive, often fragile environment that deserves special attention.
- An immense, sparsely populated area with small, scattered communities, half of which are aboriginal and have sometimes fallen behind in terms of service provision and living conditions.
- A dynamic occupation of the area by people who play an active role in the socio-economic development of their community.
- The gathering of knowledge and commissioning of research to ensure more effective planning of environmentally respectful work.

Map 3 - Aboriginal communities





2. MAIN POLICY DIRECTIONS

A vision for 2015-2035

By 2035, the Plan Nord will have enabled the development of this rich resources area, for the benefit of its populations and of the whole of Québec, through an exemplary form of sustainable development based on a comprehensive, integrated, consistent and responsible approach.



Basic principles

The government wants to ensure that resource development in the North is conducted in a way that benefits the population living in the area and contributes to progress in Québec as a whole. It is concerned that development in the area should be supported by local and aboriginal communities and be socially acceptable. It also wants the process to be part of an exemplary sustainable development approach that preserves the natural riches of the land and resources in the North, as well as its potential uses, for generations to come.

For this reason, four basic principles have been established, on the basis of shared values, to guide the government's actions by ensuring:

- A planned, coordinated project based on partnership, private-sector investment and support for communities, in particular through the creation of the Société du Plan Nord.
- A focus on sustainable development that integrates the economic, social and environmental dimensions.
- Government actions adapted to the realities of local and aboriginal communities and to northern areas in general.
- A harmonious and ethical approach to development that remains respectful of aboriginal and non-aboriginal communities and consistent with equality between men and women.

Updated policy directions

Based on the long-term vision and the fundamental principles it has established, the government will implement three key strategic policy directions to guide its approach and that of its partners:

- Develop the diversified economic potential of northern Québec in a responsible way and for the benefit of the population living there and Québec as a whole.
- Support the development of all communities in the area covered by the Plan Nord, by helping them realize their full potential and enhancing their living conditions.
- Protect the environment and preserve the distinctive biodiversity of northern Québec by ensuring that mechanisms are put in place to dedicate 50% of the area covered by the Plan Nord, by 2035, to non-industrial purposes, protection of the environment and the safeguarding of biodiversity.

The resources of the North must be developed in a way that benefits the population of the North and contributes to the progress of Québec as a whole.



3. DEVELOPMENT OF THE NORTH'S ECONOMIC POTENTIAL

Objectives for 2035

To develop the North's economic potential, the Plan Nord will target six objectives:

- Promote the responsible development of natural resources in the North.
- Count on the diversity of natural resources, especially in the mineral sector.
- Promote private investment.
- Increase the processing of resources from the North within Québec.
- Promote the diversification of the local and regional economy, in particular by supporting enterprises of all sizes and at all stages of development.
- Maximize economic benefits in the area covered by the Plan Nord and throughout Québec.

Priority actions for 2015-2020

Re-establish a context conducive to mineral development based on a wide range of resources

Mining has already created a large number of jobs in the area covered by the Plan Nord, but could create more in a more favourable worldwide economic context. In addition to the 12,700 existing jobs in mining, the 17 mining projects in advanced phase could:

- Generate more than \$22 billion in investments.
- Create over 10,000 jobs during the construction phase.
- Support nearly 9,730 jobs each year during the production phase.

In 2013, more than 236 exploration projects were listed in the area covered by the Plan Nord. Not all will be implemented, but it is clear that the mining sector will contribute to Québec's economic growth in the coming years provided the context is conducive to expansion.

The conditions for developing mineral deposits must be stable and foreseeable if they are to attract the required investments and ensure the potential benefits. This is why the government has confirmed that the mining tax system in effect since January 1, 2014 will remain in force.

Mineral potential

The area covered by the Plan Nord contains numerous mineral deposits. It currently accounts for all the nickel, cobalt, platinum group elements, zinc, iron ore and ilmenite produced in Québec. It is also the source of a large part of Québec's precious metal production, mainly in the form of gold. The area covered by the Plan Nord also has enormous undeveloped potential for apatite, lithium, vanadium, diamond, graphite (and graphene) and rare earth elements.

Conditions needed to develop mineral potential

The successful development of mineral potential in the North must address the need to provide a stable, predictable operating framework, a transparent and open process, worker training programs adapted to the sector, accessible and high-quality geo-scientific information, incentives for investment, and increased partnerships with aboriginal communities. The government will ensure the compatibility of land uses and the social acceptability of natural resource extraction projects.

PRIORITY ACTIONS FOR 2015-2020 IN THE MINING SECTOR

- Gather basic knowledge about the area covered by the Plan Nord to ensure the responsible development of mineral resources for current and future generations.
- Continue clean-up operations on mineral exploration sites in Nunavik pursuant to the agreement between Makivik Corporation, Fonds Restor Action and the ministère de l'Énergie et des Ressources naturelles; sign similar agreements with regional government in the Eeyou Istchee Baie-James territory and restore the abandoned Mine Principale mine site. The government remains aware of the need to clean up other sites not covered by these agreements.
- Use the communication platform provided by Québec Mines to inform, consult, and promote discussions between the mining industry, the government, regional decision-makers and the general public on questions connected with mineral exploration and extraction.
- For diversification purposes, support projects to develop minerals such as diamond, apatite, ilmenite, graphite and rare earths.
- Take a stake in companies mining mineral substances on public land, or processing such substances in Québec, via the capital fund for mining and fossil fuels (Fonds Capital Mines Hydrocarbures).

Diversify and promote products from the forest environment and implement integrated forest management methods

The boreal forest is one of the main vegetation zones in the area covered by the Plan Nord. It is made up of relatively dense stands of mainly softwood trees. Black spruce, the dominant species, is used for saw wood and the manufacture of high-strength engineered and structural timber products. It is also in demand for pulp, paper and specialty cardboard production.

The annual allowable cut in the area covered by the Plan Nord is 11.8 million cubic metres of timber, representing 39% of the allowable cut in all of Québec's public forests. A total of 36 mills holding supply guarantees from public forests harvest timber in the area covered by the Plan Nord, and 9 are located in the area. These activities support around 12,500 jobs.

Since the coming into force of the Sustainable Forest Development Act³ in April 2013, Québec has applied a modern, world-class forestry regime. It is based on a management strategy that meets the highest standards for sustainable forest management and fits perfectly into a large-scale sustainable development project such as the Plan Nord.

One of the effects of the new forest regime is to increase participation by local and aboriginal communities in the forest management process. It defines a management approach that respects the environment and biological diversity while providing more enterprises with access to timber resources. It also promotes secondary and tertiary timber processing and the emergence of projects that rally the support of all actors in the North.

³ R.S.Q., c. A-18.1.

PRIORITY ACTIONS FOR 2015-2020 IN THE FOREST SECTOR

- Promote the use of forest biomass in energy generation for the mining industry, isolated communities and cogeneration plants.
- Develop the potential for biorefining through the extraction of components from wood substances.
- Establish a cooperative system for the management of forest resources in the area covered by the "Peace of the Brave" agreement⁴.
- Promote the development of a high-performance, competitive wood products industry on the Côte-Nord.

Continue to develop the North's energy potential

Québec and hydroelectricity are closely linked: hydro power is one of Québec's key advantages in dealing with competition from various organizations in the area of national and international economic development. Québec possesses 3% of the world's freshwater reserves, most of which are located on the tableland north of the 49th parallel.

⁴ Agreement Concerning a New Relationship Between Le Gouvernement du Québec and The Crees of Québec (referred to as the "Peace of the Brave").

Québec's large-scale hydroelectric projects have earned it a position as a leader in the production of green, renewable energy while reducing greenhouse gas (GHG) emissions from fossil fuels.

This clean energy is one of the foundations of the province's economy. With 97% of its electric power generated by water power, Québec is one of the world's largest producers of hydroelectricity. Electric power is also a foundation for Québec's industrial development, offering stable supplies for the extraction and transformation of a range of natural resources found in its territory.

Although the North is best known for its large dams, it also offers considerable potential for wind and biomass generation, which are both sources of clean, renewable energy.

Using clean energy for the benefit of communities

The government intends to support the development of clean, innovative energy sources to supply isolated communities in the area covered by the Plan Nord. It counts on a broadening of energy supplies to ensure the retention, development and economic diversification of enterprises in the North.

The potential of liquefied natural gas, wind energy and biomass generation creates an advantage for the regions that have access to them, especially if different energy sources can be combined. There is an opportunity here to develop northern energy for the North.

The government will also ensure that stable supplies of fossil fuels are available in municipalities on the Moyenne and Basse-Côte-Nord until access to renewable energy is possible.

Energy, a powerful lever for economic development

The extraction and processing of natural resources is a particularly energy-intensive sector. Up to 30% of a mine's operating costs are linked to energy use when it is forced to use a generator to produce electricity. Energy is necessary at all stages of the mining process, from drilling, blasting, excavation, crushing, ore and waste transportation to dehydration, concentration and granulation. The availability of competitively-priced energy is therefore a prime factor in the attraction of investors and the implementation of economically-viable projects.

Reducing costs by supplying renewable energy while reducing GHG emissions in extreme conditions is a major challenge that Québec is currently addressing.

Access to natural gas

Natural gas could offer a transitional, low-cost energy choice for energy-intensive industries and a way to attract new investment, in particular for mines in the area covered by the Plan Nord.

Despite its clear advantages, natural gas is not currently available in the Côte-Nord and Nord-du-Québec regions, because demand is not sufficient to justify the cost of extending the Gaz Métro supply network from Saguenay.

Liquefied natural gas offers an alternative way to meet current demand since it can be transported by road or sea.

PRIORITY ACTIONS FOR 2015-2020 IN THE ENERGY SECTOR

- Draft the 2016-2025 Québec Energy Policy in cooperation with the stakeholders concerned.
- Ensure a competitively-priced power supply for mine development.
- Ensure a competitively-priced natural gas supply to improve mine profitability, reduce GHG emissions and attract new investment and supply liquefied natural gas to the North.
- Support the projects of off-grid communities and enterprises to replace fossil fuels by renewable energy sources in order to generate power.
- Secure the electric power supply by extending the power transmission grid where possible and cost-effective.
- Ensure a stable supply of fossil fuels for municipalities on the Moyenne and Basse-Côte-Nord.

Increase the socio-economic benefits of wildlife activities while ensuring the long-term viability of the resource

The wildlife resources found in the area covered by the Plan Nord are a fundamental element in Québec's biodiversity. They are especially important in the culture, traditions and diet of the aboriginal nations, whose rights are at the heart of the northern agreements signed with the Crees, Inuit and Naskapis in 1975 and 1978. Wildlife resources are important for sports activities such as hunting, fishing and trapping, in addition to wildlife observation. Their importance is recognized outside Québec since they attract an international clientele.

These activities generate significant economic benefits for local and aboriginal communities, and for Québec as a whole. In 2012, for example, hunting, fishing and trapping activities in the area covered by the Plan Nord helped maintain roughly 1,400 jobs.

However, northern wildlife resources are highly vulnerable to harvesting and to habitat disturbance. As a result, development of the area and its resources must be adequately supervised to ensure the integrity and viability of the wildlife population. Habitat protection and all issues connected with wildlife conservation must be considered carefully. For example, the migrating caribou herds in northern Québec, which have been in decline in recent years, are a matter of concern that must be taken into account.

PRIORITY ACTIONS FOR 2015-2020 IN THE WILDLIFE SECTOR

- Implement a five-year financial assistance program to support knowledge acquisition, the development and enhancement of wildlife resources, and the involvement of local and aboriginal communities.
- Identify wildlife potential and wildlife issues through applied research projects.
- Support the development and implementation of training programs in the field of wildlife protection tailored to the needs of aboriginal communities.

Promote tourism development by highlighting the area's distinctive character

The *Québec Tourism Strategy North of the 49th parallel*, released in November 2011 as part of the Plan Nord, aimed to make northern Québec a world-class destination providing an authentic, exceptional and safe tourism experience that aligned the coexistence of northern peoples and respect for nature in a perspective of entrepreneurial development and collective wealth⁵.

The Strategy was drawn up in close collaboration with partners in the regions concerned and covered a ten-year period. It is expected to generate a total investment of \$70 million in Québec's northern regions by governments and the private sector. These investments, and the related structural efforts, should increase annual expenditure by tourists in the North from \$82 million to \$140 million by 2021.

Until now, the financial assistance program for tourism development north of the 49th parallel has provided support for 48 projects with a total estimated cost of over \$70 million.

PRIORITY ACTIONS FOR 2015-2020 IN THE TOURISM SECTOR

- Support the development of structural tourism projects north of the 49th parallel.
- Help tourism enterprise managers upgrade their skills and those of their workers.
- Design marketing tools compatible with Québec's brand image.
- Gather strategic knowledge about Nordic tourism.
- Promote the establishment of multi-purpose regional tourist centres.
- Diversify the activities of outfitting operations in the North.

⁵ Québec. Ministère du Tourisme. *Québec Tourism Strategy North of the 49th parallel* — *Cultures and Wilderness to Discover*. Québec, 2011. [Online][www.tourisme.gouv.qc.ca]

Design and implement a sustainable northern bio-food model based on potential in the area

The economy and jobs in several coastal communities in the North have, for many years, been based on the exploitation of a small number of marine species such as cod and other bottomfish, the stocks of which are in decline. These communities now face the challenge of finding outlets for other less intensively exploited marine species, adopting more eco-responsible fishing methods, and using their infrastructures for bio-food production.

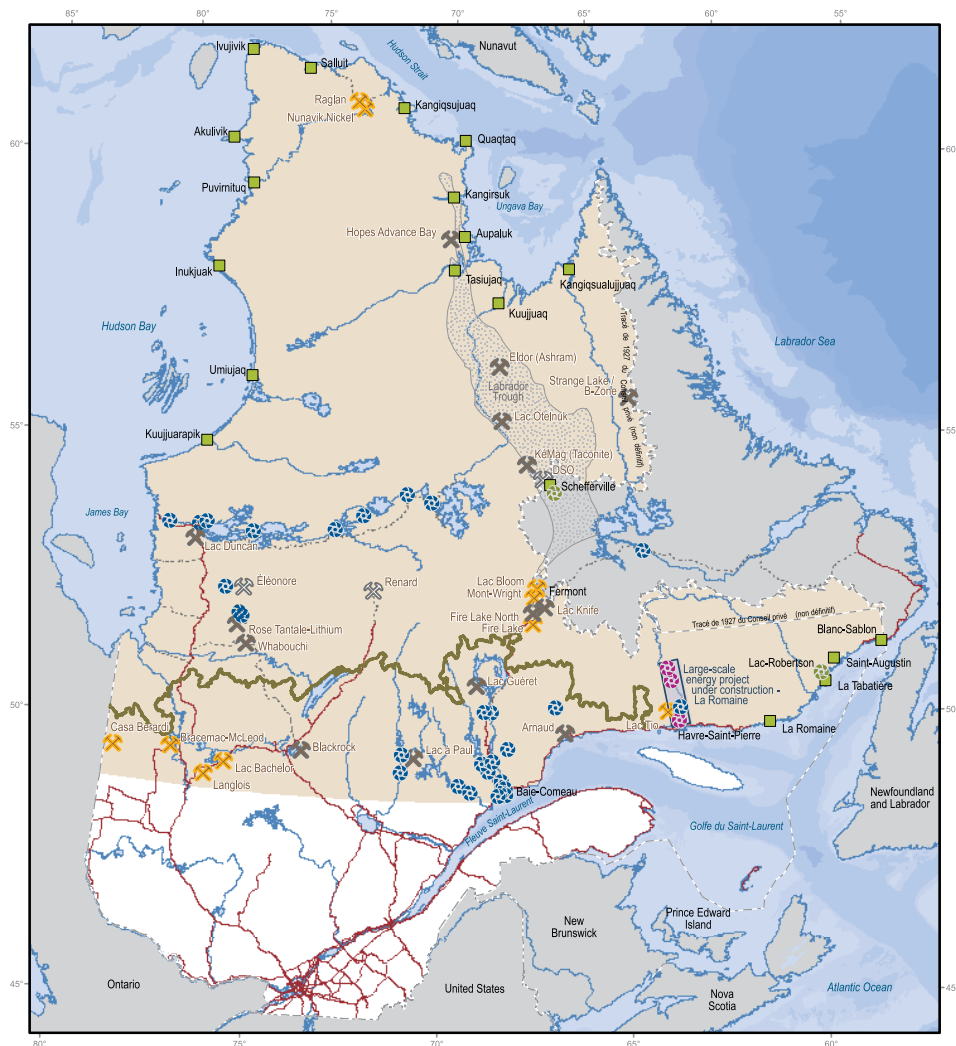
The North is already known for the production of certain sea products such as northern shrimp and snow crab. Wild mushrooms and other non-timber forest products are also harvested for many different commercial uses, such as food additives, essential oils and ornamental products. Small northern berries such as blueberries, northern cranberries and cloudberries, some of which are rich in health-promoting substances, are also typical of bio-food production in northern regions. Enterprises are currently being developed in the North to process and market these products in their region of origin and in national or international niche markets.

The high cost of food in the North resulting from transportation costs, along with certain deficiencies in quality, diversity, wholesomeness and nutritional value, has repercussions on the health and life expectancy of northern populations. This points the need to develop a locally-based food production, processing and distribution industry.

PRIORITY ACTIONS FOR 2015-2020 IN THE BIO-FOOD SECTOR

- Provide support for isolated local and aboriginal communities that invest in order to increase local food production, reduce their level of dependency and lower food costs. For example, support initiatives to grow crops under cover (greenhouses, polytunnels, etc.).
- Support the development of the northern berry sector and non-timber forest products sector.
- Provide local and aboriginal communities with the tools they need to implement and supervise the application of wholesome food initiatives at all levels (production, processing, restaurant services and retail sales).

Map 4 - Ressources and projects in the North



- Area covered by the Plan Nord
- Independent power stations**
 - Hydroelectric
 - Thermal (diesel)
- Hydroelectric stations of 50 MW or more**
 - In operation
 - Under construction
- Mineral resources**
 - Active mine
 - Mine project at the development stage
 - Mine project at the deposit appraisal stage

- Forest resources**
 - Northern limit for timber allocations
- Transportation infrastructures**
 - Paved road
 - Gravel road
- Borders**
 - International border
 - Interprovincial border
 - Québec - Newfoundland and Labrador border (non-definitive)

Sources

Data	Organization	Year
Power stations	Hydro-Québec	2014
Spatial organization	MERN	2015
Transportation infrastructures	MERN	2014
Forest resources	MERN	2014
Mineral resources	MERN	2014

Production
 Ministère de l'Énergie et des Ressources naturelles
 Direction générale de l'information géographique
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4. DEVELOPMENT AND WELLBEING OF LOCAL AND ABORIGINAL COMMUNITIES

Objectives for 2035

To channel the dynamism of local and aboriginal populations and ensure that they benefit as much as possible from the development of the North's economic potential, the Plan Nord targets the following objectives:

- Broaden the reflection on the occupation of the northern territory.
- Help local and aboriginal communities plan and structure their development.
- Promote labour force training and retention in the North.
- Increase graduation rates and educational attainment in northern communities.
- Provide a more adequate response to the social needs of local populations.
- Ensure the cultural development of northern communities and highlight the cultural heritage of local communities and aboriginal nations.
- Consolidate the services provided for families and seniors living in local and aboriginal communities by supporting innovative, collaborative solutions.

Priority actions for 2015-2020

Ensure that the development of the North generates concrete benefits for local and aboriginal communities

Development projects linked to the Plan Nord offer several ways for local and aboriginal communities to improve their quality of life, consolidate their sense of belonging and pride, and keep young people in the community.

At the same time, they present significant challenges, for example ensuring that local residents have access to the jobs generated by the projects and are able to exercise suitable control over structural effects on the social fabric, culture, land use and public infrastructures.

The arrival of new enterprises and new residents, including families, can also trigger industrial, commercial and residential development and create extra needs for municipal infrastructures and services of all kinds, in particular for children and seniors.

To meet these challenges, it is important to develop planning tools adapted to the realities of the North. It is also necessary to ensure that local and aboriginal communities have the resources they need to revitalize their territory, manage development effectively and reap the associated benefits.

PRIORITY ACTIONS FOR 2015-2020 IN THE FIELD OF COMMUNITY AND MUNICIPAL INFRASTRUCTURE DEVELOPMENT

- Document fly-in/fly-out (FIFO) issues for enterprises, workers and communities, especially in the Côte-Nord region.
- Continue to offer support for communities in their efforts to adapt to change, and to accommodate and benefit from development.
- Continue the implementation of Component 4 of the Québec-municipalities infrastructure program (Programme d'infrastructures Québec-Municipalités, or PIQM), which enables municipalities to implement infrastructure projects to meet priority development needs.
- Support social involvement by enterprises.

Train more specialized workers to meet the needs of development projects in the area covered by the Plan Nord

The implementation of the Plan Nord constitutes an unprecedented challenge for Québec because of the need to develop, attract, integrate and retain workers. General, technical and vocational education is, from this point of view, an essential component in the economic development of northern Québec. The people inhabiting the area will be encouraged to acquire and develop the skills needed to maximize their prospects in the labour market.

The technical and vocational education currently available and accessible to the local population is, however, limited and not necessarily adapted to local labour force needs. For this reason, many young people are forced to leave their home communities to study in urban centres in the South. For some of them, especially if they are Aboriginal, this situation considerably reduces their access to education and training.

Efforts must be made to promote the training, integration and retention of women and Aboriginals in certain high value-added jobs, as part of the government's commitments in the field of equal access to employment.

In addition, despite the effort made to provide education and vocational training in the area covered by the Plan Nord, the need for specialized workers is so great that it cannot be met just by graduates from the training centres in the area. This highlights the importance of setting up attractive technical and vocational training programs adapted to the needs of the North.

PRIORITY ACTIONS FOR 2015-2020 IN THE FIELD OF LABOUR FORCE DEVELOPMENT

- Attract, recruit and retain workers using the *Online Placement* website, job fairs, and access to an information service associated with the Plan Nord to inform and guide job seekers.
- Promote regional hiring in the construction sector by revising the placement regions for the construction sector in the Nord-du-Québec region.
- Produce and distribute information on the labour market.
- Support worker training by providing information on the labour market to improve the match between industry needs and worker skills, and by introducing employment assistance measures.
- Strengthen the links with aboriginal communities by maintaining a network of aboriginal liaison officers at Emploi-Québec offices and reviewing their tasks as required.
- Promote equal access to the labour market for women in the construction sector, in aboriginal communities and in all spheres of northern development.
- Encourage full participation by women in the workforce, by offering services for families and children in northern communities that are adapted to their needs, particularly high-quality, accessible daycare services.

Promote student retention and academic success, and ensure that as many young people and adults as possible obtain basic qualifications

Student retention is a crucial element in the development of northern Québec. The prospect of obtaining a good job should, in itself, be a powerful incentive for students in the area covered by the Plan Nord to continue their education. However, the dropout rate for young First Nations and Inuit people is on average three times higher than the rate for Québec as a whole. The causes are numerous and interrelated, and can be traced back to learning difficulties of various kinds, and to schools, families and living environments. It is also recognized that the teacher/student relationship is one of the factors that can encourage young people to persevere and succeed.

In addition, for women, it is important to ensure full participation in the labour market. A shortage of daycare spaces may, in some cases, increase the dropout rate for women or result in their exclusion from the labour market.

It is also extremely important to offer programs and services that are adapted to the adult population in the area. The programs and services must be designed to help students, once they become adults, to upgrade their skills, expertise and qualifications and increase their level of education.

A student's ability to enrol in college and university programs depends on the duration and quality of his or her elementary and secondary education. It is important to consider the general educational level within families and the value they place on education. An interest in college and university studies is kindled well before the point at which a student actually enrolls.

PRIORITY ACTIONS FOR 2015-2020 IN THE FIELD OF EDUCATION

General adult education, technical and vocational education

- Analyze the possibility of grouping together the vocational education school boards to maximize the possibility of training qualified workers for the mining sector or major hydroelectric projects.
- Increase the support services provided to aboriginal students in general adult education and vocational education.

College and university programs

- Launch a process, with other players in the area, to identify current and foreseeable needs in the field of higher education.
- Help establish regional mechanisms for coordination and cooperation with all players in the area covered by the Plan Nord to ensure an effective response to the needs expressed.
- Provide support for educational institutions in the design and implementation of training programs and infrastructures.

Recreation and sports services

- Improve existing actions plans in the field of recreation and sport.

Support ongoing efforts to provide improved health and social services, justice and housing

Large-scale projects in a northern environment can have both positive and negative impacts on various factors influencing the health of the population.

These impacts can be seen in the physical and mental health of individuals, their lifestyles or their socio-economic characteristics. They may also influence workers' families, the dynamics and infrastructures of the communities in the vicinity of the projects, the organization of health and education services, and environment quality. In addition, because of the historic and social heterogeneity of the North and the characteristics of each project, the nature and intensity of the impacts may vary from one project, or one community, to another. It is essential to manage the impacts jointly, considering that the health of the population in northern Québec is generally more at risk than elsewhere in Québec.

There are also clear differences between northern communities, whether local or Aboriginal, in terms of their social vulnerability and their ability to act and respond. Not all of these communities have strategies for social development, poverty reduction or revitalization.

Some northern communities experience significant social problems, associated in particular with alcohol or drug abuse and games of chance and gambling. It is recognized by all involved in these communities that addiction problems are interrelated. They may act as predisposing or aggravating factors, or appear as the consequence of the high-risk behaviour patterns and social problems observed in the communities. Some have also seen an increase in crime in recent years.

These problems require constant intervention from the police and justice system and from health and social service workers, even though human and other resources are in limited supply in the North.

PRIORITY ACTIONS FOR 2015-2020 IN THE FIELDS OF HEALTH, SOCIAL SERVICES AND JUSTICE

Improve access to health and social services for clients in the North

- By supporting work in the region to enhance the supply of general social services.
- By implementing programs that serve young people and their families.
- By consolidating addiction treatment services (alcohol, drugs and games of chance and gambling).
- By facilitating the transfer of knowledge and expertise to case workers in aboriginal communities, if so requested.
- By improving access to telehealth services⁶.

⁶ This measure depends on improvements to telecommunications infrastructures (chapter 6).

Anticipate the impacts of development projects on communities in northern Québec

- By creating a tool to monitor demographic changes and population movements in the North.
- By providing for better integration of health issues into environmental procedures.
- By strengthening the ability of professionals to analyze impacts on health.

Take preventive action and intervene in response to priority social problems

- By deploying services as part of a joint response by various partners and government departments and bodies in the fields of public security, justice, health, social services and aboriginal affairs, and by aboriginal communities.
- By integrating measures to take into account the realities faced by aboriginal women in the area of sexual assault and sexual exploitation.
- By supporting local and aboriginal communities in the area covered by the Plan Nord in the fight against bullying.

Consolidate and improve services in the field of justice

- By promoting the use of telecommunications services such as videoconferencing.

The housing situation

In Nunavik, the serious lack of available housing has led to overcrowding in hundreds of dwellings. Overcrowding, in turn, accelerates the pace at which buildings deteriorate and exacerbates certain problems, including the propagation of infectious diseases. In addition, the cramped conditions can generate social problems.

The private housing market, which can be a source of wealth for individuals and communities, is practically inexistent. The difficulty of purchasing and constructing buildings, their high cost, limited access to credit, the lack of a resale market and a considerable gap between the cost of social housing and the cost of privately-owned property are the main obstacles to the development of a private housing market.

The Société d'habitation du Québec aims to work with its housing partners in Nunavik to establish a financial tool for the repurchase of private property, the Fonds de rachat. The Fonds will compensate for the lack of a resale market for private houses, reassuring purchasers and financial institutions and facilitating access to credit for residents in the region. It will operate temporarily until the market is able to regulate itself.

The situation is different, but no less a concern, in the rest of the area covered by the Plan Nord. The number of new mining projects has led to a genuine housing crisis in some municipalities. Northern development and the arrival of new workers may lead to a rapid increase in the demand for housing in these localities.

In addition, there are currently few resources to help people with special needs such as seniors with reduced mobility, low-income workers, the disabled and female victims of violence, to find a dwelling that meets their needs.

High construction costs are also a major problem with a direct impact on the ability of regional authorities, for example in Nunavik, to increase the number of available dwellings.

PRIORITY ACTIONS FOR 2015-2020 IN THE FIELD OF ACCESS TO HOUSING

- Revise the parameters of the Home Ownership and Renovation Program for the Kativik Region to ensure that it provides an adequate response to residents' needs.
- Take part in catch-up work to deal with the shortage of housing by building 90 additional dwellings in Nunavik:
 - 70 new public housing units, including 10 multi-generational units.
 - 20 new private units via the Home Ownership and Renovation Program for the Kativik Region.
- Maintain the measures for land occupancy aiming at supporting the construction of affordable housing to meet specific needs in regions located north of the 49th parallel, under the AccèsLogis Québec Program.
- Establish financial tools to ensure that sufficient hypothecary credit is available for residents in the Kativik region and that building values remain stable, in particular via a repurchasing fund.
- Stimulate the construction of private dwellings in regions other than Nunavik via the Affordable Housing Québec Program (private component), which aims to promote the construction of affordable rental units for low-income households in municipalities with a low vacancy rate for rented housing.
- Establish a northern housing laboratory to stimulate research on northern housing issues and participate in specific projects.

Give priority to cultural development agreements as a lever for action by northern communities

With the deployment of the Plan Nord, northern populations will experience a substantial degree of economic development in the coming years. Aboriginal nations and local communities hope that their culture and identity will also gain from this development.

For this purpose, it will be necessary to establish tools that will allow local and aboriginal cultures to plan for their ongoing survival and increase support for the development of cultures and their adoption by young people. The role played by young people will be central in rejuvenating cultures, avoiding a process of folklorization, allowing them to move into the modern age and helping them flourish, at both the Québec and international levels.

By ensuring that their culture remains vibrant, the communities affected by the Plan Nord will be able to build a strong relationship with the rest of Québec that takes their identity into account. Aboriginal communities must also be given access to the tools they need to preserve the vitality of their language, which lies at the heart of their cultural identity. The survival of the language and its transmission as the mother tongue of future generations are vital concerns for aboriginal communities.

Through their dynamic, vibrant cultures, local and aboriginal communities express and communicate their northernness.

PRIORITY ACTIONS FOR 2015-2020 IN THE FIELD OF CULTURAL DEVELOPMENT

- Sign or enhance cultural development agreements with aboriginal nations and northern partners.
- Help establish cultural centres to preserve, develop and disseminate culture, the arts and heritage within multi-purpose facilities.
- Promote artists from the North in the application of the policy integrating the arts with architecture and with the environment of government and public buildings and sites.
- Continue to adapt programs and services to give northern partners access to culture.
- Help aboriginal populations recognize, protect and enhance their languages.
- Elaborate and adopt an action plan to highlight the value of the northern cultural heritage.
- Promote cultural exchanges at the international level to contribute to the dissemination of aboriginal values.

Ensure security in the area covered by the Plan Nord

The development of northern Québec will have impacts that will lead, in particular, to increased risks in the area of public security and civil protection. This will require the application of programs, measures and specific intervention methods by the government departments and bodies concerned. There will be a need, in particular, for police services adapted to the realities of the North.

Similarly, the area covered by the Plan Nord is not immune to natural or man-made events that pose a threat to people's lives or safety or, more generally, have a major impact on the normal course of activities in the community where they occur. The development of northern Québec will involve the construction of infrastructures and an increased human presence in northern regions. This may in itself become a factor that increases certain risks by making it more likely that an event will occur or by aggravating its consequences. This situation is a matter for concern, especially since communities and essential infrastructures in the North are exposed to risks that may be amplified by climate change.

Given that many areas have few or no roads or other infrastructures, and given the distances involved, it becomes more difficult to intervene in the event of an emergency such as a forest fire or another natural or man-made disaster. This is why the public security services made available to northern communities must be adjusted to meet the new needs generated by the implementation of the Plan Nord. A civil protection approach must be defined, with a focus on prevention and preparedness in order to minimize the impact of natural or man-made disasters. Special attention must be paid to providing suitable training for first-line responders (communities and risk generators) for such events. The civil protection plans of all the stakeholders must be harmonized.

PRIORITY ACTIONS FOR 2015-2020 IN THE FIELD OF PUBLIC SECURITY

- Adopt an integrated management approach for risks connected with forest fires.
- Establish programs and tools adapted to the new needs generated by the Plan Nord in order to reduce risks and ensure a rapid and effective response in the event of an emergency.
- Monitor regions and aboriginal communities in connection with strategic and operational issues with an impact on public security and police services.
- Support and advise local and aboriginal communities on the establishment of emergency prevention and preparedness measures, as well as disaster recovery measures.



Young Innu.
Photo credit: Marc Tremblay



5. PROTECTION OF THE ENVIRONMENT AND BIODIVERSITY CONSERVATION

Objectives for 2035

To protect the environment and conserve biodiversity in the North, the Plan Nord targets three main, and closely-related, objectives:

- By 2035, dedicate 50% of the area covered by the Plan Nord to non-industrial purposes, protection of the environment and the safeguarding of biodiversity.
- Gain knowledge about the area's physical and ecological environment in order to identify the most appropriate conservation measures and recognize the potential for development.
- Ensure effective environmental assessment processes.

Priority actions for 2015-2020

By 2020, establish protected areas in 20% of the area covered by the Plan Nord

The renewed Plan Nord offers an opportunity to establish and specify conservation measures to protect 50% of the land lying north of the 49th parallel from industrial activities, including a measure to establish protected areas.

As part of this process, the Québec government's target is to ensure that, by 2020, 20% of the area covered by the Plan Nord is made up of protected areas, of which at least 12% will comprise boreal forest north of the 49th parallel. Steps have already been taken to establish protected areas in the Rivière Kovik and Rivière Broadback watersheds. The government also intends this part of the North will be dedicated to the protection of the environment, the safeguarding of biodiversity and the promotion of various types of development.

CLIMATE CHANGE

This vast and little-known area is fragile and evolving rapidly, in particular as the result of climate change. To deal with the difficulties this creates, the government will continue to work with its northern and scientific partners to define ways to adapt to climate change.

Characterize the land base to target the most appropriate conservation measures

In order to protect 50% of the northern area from industrial activities, the planning of conservation activities must be supported by in-depth knowledge of the land base, through measures:

- to extend geo-physical and ecological knowledge, including the knowledge of fauna, flora and ecosystems, to determine the most appropriate conservation measures and characterize the potential for development.
- to conduct specific exercises to integrate ecological variables using adapted tools such as ecological and territorial planning, in places where major development is under consideration and where the land is more sensitive to potential development.

Continue to develop national parks as part of the target for protected areas

In the last ten years, three national parks have been created in Nunavik:

- Parc national des Pingualuit.
- Parc national Kuururjuaq.
- Parc national Tursujuq.

The government intends to continue the process to establish national parks as part of the implementation of the Plan Nord. Work is under way on three major projects:

- The Parc national Ulittaniujalik project, in Nunavik.
- The Parc national Albanel-Témiscamie-Otish project, to be created in partnership with the Cree Nation of Mistissini.
- The Parc national Assinica project, developed in collaboration with the four Cree communities concerned.

Ensure efficient environmental assessment processes

In the environmental protection field, the government will continue to act in compliance with the conventions, laws, regulations and specific agreements on the environment that apply in the area covered by the Plan Nord, while respecting its constitutional obligation to conduct consultations with Aboriginals.

It will ensure that development projects are only implemented following strict environmental analyses that respect the processes in place and the populations concerned, giving priority to a support/advisory approach.

The government will act with efficiency, diligence and rigour with respect to all the prior authorizations needed for project development, and will apply all the required supervisory mechanisms. Concrete initiatives will be proposed to improve the transparency and application of the processes to make them more efficient.

PRIORITY ACTIONS FOR 2015-2020 IN THE FIELD OF THE ENVIRONMENT

- By 2035, dedicate 50% of the area covered by the Plan Nord to non-industrial purposes, protection of the environment and the safeguarding of biodiversity:
 - a total of 20% of protected areas in the area covered by the Plan Nord by 2020, of which at least 12% will comprise boreal forest north of the 49th parallel.
 - a mechanism for the priority allocation of the remaining 30% of the area for non-industrial activities.
- Extend geo-physical and ecological knowledge of the land base.
- Elaborate and conduct ecological planning exercises and increase the weight of ecological information in the decision-making process.
- Improve the public consultation process in terms of transparency and accessibility by using new technologies and developing communication tools.
- Continue to develop national parks.

Map 5 - Area covered by the 50% target* - Existing protected areas (March 2015)





6. CONDITIONS FOR SUCCESS

The business environment and financial support measures established by the government will help create the conditions needed to attract private investment to northern Québec. However, the vastness of the area concerned, the remoteness of the communities, the lack of links between northern and southern Québec and access to outside markets are all factors that may limit northern development.

Facilitate access to the land

Infrastructures—harbours, railways, airports and roads—and their strategic development over the long term are cornerstones for the deployment of the Plan Nord. Although the area already has clear strategic advantages in the field of transportation infrastructures, the challenge of access to the land is two-fold:

- Existing infrastructures are aging and require major reconstruction work to extend their useful life.
- The various transportation modes must be part of a strategic, coherent network if they are to promote the economic potential of the North and provide adequate services for the northern population.

The government, via the Société du Plan Nord and with assistance from the Ministère des Transports du Québec, will coordinate the preparation and implementation of a comprehensive, integrated plan for all modes of transportation in the area covered by the Plan Nord. It will request input from the government departments and bodies concerned, regional authorities, including the Baie-James Development Corporation, aboriginal nations and companies already operating or about to operate in the area.

The process will be based on a multimodal approach, giving priority to the improvement of existing transportation infrastructures to increase their capacity and efficiency while minimizing their environmental footprint. It will also identify the nature and characteristics of the complementary infrastructures needed to ensure optimum service for northern areas.

PRIORITY ACTIONS FOR 2015-2020 IN THE FIELD OF TRANSPORTATION

- Ensure the ongoing viability of maritime infrastructures in Nunavik.
- Improve access and increase the capacity of the port of Sept-Îles to meet the needs of mining companies.
- Ensure that the capacity and efficiency of the rail services between the Labrador Trough and the port of Sept-Îles are increased to meet the needs of mining companies.
- Continue to improve northern airports.

- Ensure a permanent, safe road network adapted to northern characteristics:
 - by defining a government funding strategy for the extension of Route 138 and the improvement of Route 389.
 - by ensuring adequate funding for maintenance and reconstruction work on the Route de la Baie James.
 - by undertaking reconstruction work on the road linking Schefferville to Kawawachikamach.
 - by establishing a new category of northern road with standards adapted to the northern context.
- Draw up policies and directives for the planning, financing, commissioning and shared use of transportation infrastructures in the area covered by the Plan Nord.
- Continue discussions on the economic perspectives for the development of strategic multimodal infrastructures in the Nord-du-Québec region.

Improve telecommunications infrastructures

Access to digital technologies is an essential component in the socio-economic development of the area and the safety and wellbeing of northern populations, whether in connection with health, education or justice services or other services provided by the government and enterprises. The development and availability of telecommunications technologies are also essential elements for the attraction and retention of workers and enterprises in remote regions.

Although several telecommunications projects have emerged or continue to develop in the area covered by the Plan Nord in recent years, some specific needs still need to be met.

PRIORITY ACTIONS FOR 2015-2020 IN THE FIELD OF TELECOMMUNICATIONS

- Complete a master plan for a fibre optic-based telecommunications network serving the whole of the area covered by the Plan Nord through integrated planning for the following projects:
 - Nunavik project (Inuit): complete a feasibility study and prepare technical specifications for the creation of a fibre optic and satellite network.
 - Eeyou communications network project (Crees): add the communities of Eastmain, Waskaganish and possibly Whapmagoostui to the fibre optic network.
 - Schefferville regional project (Naskapis): design, plan and implement a fibre optic project from Labrador City to Schefferville.
- Improve the high-speed Internet network on the Basse-Côte-Nord.

Increase scientific knowledge and promote its application

Northern development and the transformations under way in the area covered by the Plan Nord raise a number of issues that concern the research and innovation community. All the components of the Plan Nord generate a need for research and for the gathering of scientific data and knowledge. This information is needed to ensure that actions are planned effectively in a way that ensures respect for communities. In-depth knowledge of all social, economic and environmental factors is essential to develop the full potential of the North, protect it and inhabit it.

The government will, for this purpose, create a nordic institute for Québec, the Institut nordique du Québec, as a pathfinder project to respond to the research objective while ensuring a balance between the social, economic and environmental dimensions. The Institut will bring a range of expertise in the natural, social, health and engineering sciences to bear on the question of sustainable development in the North, in an interdisciplinary, inter-institutional centre for research and innovation, with the involvement of Université Laval, McGill University and the Institut national de recherche scientifique. The centre will be located on the campus of Université Laval, in Québec City, and will also have offices in the area covered by the Plan Nord.

Thanks to the Institut nordique du Québec it will be possible to deploy a number of research and technology transfer platforms that will incorporate aboriginal knowledge and meet the needs of stakeholders, whether northern communities, the government or the private sector. The institute will work closely with other research establishments and teams in Québec and Canada, including college-level technology transfer centres and aboriginal services, and will help attract the most talented science and technology experts, providing both a source of social and technological innovation and sustainable economic leverage. Québec will position itself as a national and international leader in the field of northern research.

Innovation is the main lever for increased productivity and social and economic development, playing a role in all fields and all sectors of activity. The ability to meet the challenges raised by the Plan Nord will depend on an ability to innovate and pool the strengths of all innovators in the institutional and private sectors, whether in Québec or abroad.

PRIORITY ACTION FOR 2015-2020 IN THE FIELD OF SCIENTIFIC KNOWLEDGE

Support the creation of the Institut nordique du Québec and assist the research partners involved.

Promote the Plan Nord in Canada and abroad

To ensure the successful implementation of the Plan Nord, intergovernmental relations will have to be conducted in a joint, coordinated fashion to uphold and defend Québec's interests.

All the government departments and bodies involved, with assistance from the Secrétariat aux affaires intergouvernementales canadiennes, will work to improve collaboration between the Québec government, the governments of the other provinces and territories and the federal government with respect to northern issues. This approach will help maximize the development prospects for the area covered by the Plan Nord. Participation by the federal government, in particular at the financial level, in the relaunching of the Plan Nord will also be fundamental in several priority areas.

Québec's participation in various intergovernmental forums, including the Northern Development Ministers Forum, will provide an opportunity for the sharing of information, best practices and expert knowledge with regard to various northern development issues.

The Plan Nord will also be implemented against the backdrop of an extremely competitive international environment, where natural resource prices can fluctuate widely and states and governments vie with each other to attract foreign investors and qualified workers. Given this context, concerted action, along with international representation, prospection and promotion activities will be essential if the objectives of the Plan Nord are to be achieved.

The Québec government, under the guidance of the Ministère des Relations internationales et de la Francophonie, will conduct a broad, sustained and original international campaign to promote the unique comparative advantages of a project of this scope.



Amundsen.
Photo credit: Gérald Darnis/ArcticNet



7. A PARTNERSHIP-BASED FRAMEWORK FOR IMPLEMENTATION

To implement the Plan Nord, the government intends to set up a governance structure adapted to the objectives it has set, and to ensure the social acceptability of the Plan for local and aboriginal communities.

The Société du Plan Nord

On December 4, 2014, the Act respecting the Société du Plan Nord was passed. Under the Act, the Société du Plan Nord becomes the key authority for the deployment of the various components of the Plan Nord. Its mission is to contribute, in collaboration with the representatives of the regions and the aboriginal nations concerned, as well as the private sector, to the integrated and coherent development of the area covered by the Plan Nord, in keeping with the principle of sustainable development and in accordance with the policy directions defined by the Government in relation to the Plan Nord.

Its mission is also to:

- Coordinate infrastructure projects and, if applicable, engage in infrastructure development and operation, alone or in partnership, including as a rail carrier.
- Assist and support local and aboriginal communities in their community and socio-economic development projects, among others.
- Carry out or contribute to research and development activities as well as activities to acquire knowledge of the area.
- Contribute to setting up mechanisms to allow 50% of the area covered by the Plan Nord to be used, by 2035, for purposes other than industrial purposes, for the protection of the environment and for the preservation of biodiversity.
- Contribute to maximizing the economic spinoffs generated by the development of the natural resources in the area covered by the Plan Nord, in accordance with Québec's intergovernmental and international trade commitments.
- Advise the Government on any matter the latter submits to it.
- Establish satellite offices in the Nunavik, Baie-James–Eeyou Istchee, Côte-Nord and Saguenay–Lac-Saint-Jean areas to ensure ongoing, functional and effective communications with its clients.
- Set up a marketing office whose object is to communicate to local and regional enterprises as well as to all other Québec enterprises the supply and equipment needs of ordering parties operating in the area covered by the Plan Nord.

The Assembly of Partners

The Act also specifies that the Société du Plan Nord is supported in its actions by the Assembly of Partners whose members are appointed in a way that ensures that it is representative of the local and aboriginal communities in the territories of Nunavik, James Bay–Eeyou Istchee, Côte-Nord and Saguenay–Lac-Saint-Jean and the main sectors of activity concerned. Its role is to provide an opinion to the Société and the Minister responsible on any matter the Société submits to it in relation to its mission or activities. The Assembly may also, on its own initiative, submit advice and recommendations.

Close, ongoing collaboration with government departments and bodies

The Société will play a key role in the implementation of the Plan Nord. It will coordinate development in the area and the introduction of economic, social and environmental measures, working closely with the government departments and bodies concerned, several of which have already established joint action mechanisms.

The Société will help ensure better coordination of the activities of all the government players in northern Québec, for the benefit of the main clients and the citizens of Québec. It is important to note that the Baie-James Development Corporation, established in the early 1970s, will continue its current activities and will be involved as a satellite of the Société du Plan Nord.

Specific partnerships: Secrétariat aux affaires autochtones, Secrétariat à l'implantation de la stratégie maritime and Investissement Québec

The Secrétariat aux affaires autochtones, the Secrétariat à l'implantation de la stratégie maritime and Investissement Québec will all play a key role in the implementation of the Plan Nord. The government's objective is to ensure that the missions and actions of all of these organizations complement those of the Société du Plan Nord.

Because of its specific mandate and its cross-departmental role, the Secrétariat aux affaires autochtones will remain the main point of contact with aboriginal communities in northern Québec. It will retain this role, within the limits of its mandate, and will also ensure the coordination and implementation of agreements and conventions signed by the Québec government and the aboriginal nations in the North.

Clearly, enterprises are increasingly aware that their investment projects cannot be implemented without a degree of social acceptability. The government, via the Secrétariat aux affaires autochtones, can play a leading role in this field by working with aboriginal communities, in particular by promoting the signing of impact and benefit agreements by project promoters and aboriginal communities.

The Secrétariat à l'implantation de la stratégie maritime will promote the development of harbour operations in Québec and especially northern Québec as part of the active deployment of the Plan Nord. It will be responsible, among other things, for ensuring that road and rail infrastructures meet the needs of various harbour development projects by helping to create intermodal connections. It will also promote a safer, more ecological approach to freight transportation.

Last, Investissement Québec will continue to work with enterprises in Québec while providing ongoing support for international corporations that wish to establish themselves or expand their operations in Québec. Its actions will promote private investment and the attraction of enterprises to the area covered by the Plan Nord, highlighting the numerous advantages offered by Québec for the development of its natural resources and the application of its know-how.

The Société du Plan Nord will establish close ties with these organization in order to optimize the socio-economic benefits for the North and for all regions of Québec.

Joint action structures

Throughout the process that led up to the initial version of the Plan Nord, local communities, First Nations and Inuit communities expressed a desire to participate fully in the drafting and implementation of the Plan as partners, within a framework that ensured respect for their aspirations and realities.

The Plan Nord could not exist without a close partnership with the communities that inhabit this vast territory and in a manner consistent with the development priorities they have defined for themselves.

The continuation of this dialogue with partners in the North reflects the government's firm intention to maintain and strengthen the close, dynamic relationship it has established with local, and especially aboriginal, communities.

Under the coordination of the Secrétariat aux affaires autochtones, the Québec government also intends to continue the process to set up aboriginal discussion tables for each nation—Cree, Naskapi, Innu and Inuit—to provide a discussion space adapted to its needs and aspirations.

Zones covered by the Plan Nord

The strategy for the relaunching of the Plan Nord sets out a new vision and updated policy directions and governance mechanisms that will apply to the entire area covered by the Plan Nord, and will also affect Québec as a whole as a lever for economic development.

However, its implementation and the actions taken under the Plan must be adapted to meet the specific needs of populations, the visions they express and the characteristics of each of the zones covered by the Plan Nord:

- Nunavik.
- Eeyou Istchee Baie-James.
- Côte-Nord.
- Northern Saguenay–Lac-Saint-Jean.

For this purpose, meetings have been organized in each zone covered by the Plan Nord with the aboriginal nations concerned and with representatives from civil society, associations, and representative groups from the business and environmental communities. The meetings have helped identify specific concerns which will require a range of adapted actions for each zone, population group and sector of activity in the area covered by the Plan Nord.

The establishment of the Société du Plan Nord with satellites offices in each zone will respond to the need expressed by all of the stakeholders for an ongoing, functional and effective connection with each group involved.

In addition, the government will take into account existing plans in the process of implementation in the area by the communities concerned.



8. FINANCIAL FRAMEWORK

With the relaunching of the Plan Nord, major investments will be made to support the development of projects already under way and those planned for the area north of the 49th parallel.

To put in place the conditions needed to promote development and access to the land, the government, via the Société du Plan Nord, will use the amounts made available by the Fonds du Plan Nord, estimated at \$356.7 million over the period 2015-2020.

This amount, along with the contributions made by various government departments and bodies and other partners, will enable the government to support, over the next five years, actions totalling \$1.340 billion, in the form of:

- \$914.2 million in investments for the completion of strategic infrastructure projects, and
- \$425.4 million in expenditure for the implementation of priority actions and the administration of the Société du Plan Nord.

Adding the measures entirely financed by government departments and bodies and their partners, actions in the area covered by the Plan Nord will total almost \$2 billion over the 2015-2020 timeframe. In addition to these amounts, substantial investments will be made by the private sector.

Contributions from the federal government may also increase the budgetary envelopes available.

THE FONDS DU PLAN NORD

A fund dedicated to northern development

The Fonds du Plan Nord is a special fund dedicated to financing the activities of the Société du Plan Nord that concern financial assistance for strategic infrastructure, measures promoting the development of the area covered by the Plan Nord, research and development, knowledge acquisition, protection of that area, and social measures aimed, in particular, at meeting the needs of the populations living in that area.

Income of the Fonds du Plan Nord

The Fonds's income comes mainly from an annual basic contribution reflecting the fiscal benefits generated by natural resource extraction projects and public infrastructure projects implemented in the area covered by the Plan Nord. They also include an annual contribution paid by Hydro-Québec, currently set at \$10 million, and income from investments.

Annual revision of contributions

The amounts paid into the Fonds are revised annually to take into account any changes in the projects undertaken in the area covered by the Plan Nord and the resulting fiscal benefits.

This approach takes into account the economic activity generated north of the 49th parallel and allows the government to adjust the pace of its actions to develop northern Québec to reflect the evolution of projects under way or planned in the area.

The Fonds du Plan Nord over a 25-year timeframe

To track the financial results of the Fonds du Plan Nord, the government has chosen a progressive, 25-year timeframe which will allow it to plan the use of the amounts in the Fonds du Plan Nord effectively, given that some projects will involve expenditure over a period of several decades.

Over a 25-year timeframe, an estimated \$2.2 billion will be paid into the Fonds as the basic contribution. With the annual contribution from Hydro-Québec and income from other sources, the Fonds du Plan Nord should have a total envelope of nearly \$2.7 billion.

These amounts will be used by the Société du Plan Nord in accordance with the objectives and priorities set out in its strategic plans in connection with the policy directions for the Plan Nord defined by the government.

Table 1 - Financial framework for the fonds du Plan Nord – 2015-2016 to 2019-2020 (\$ Million)

	2015-2016	2016-2017	2017-2018	2018-2019	2019-2020	5-year total ⁽¹⁾	25-year timeframe
Income	88.7	85.3	88.5	78.4	84.4	425.4	2,686.1
Expenditure	81.5	80.6	77.2	61.4	76.6	377.2	2,684.8
- Contributions to the Société du Plan Nord ⁽¹⁾	78.8	73.1	71.8	58.9	74.2	356.7	2,648.8
- Other expenditure	2.8	7.5	5.4	2.5	2.4	20.6	36.0
BALANCE	7.2	4.7	11.4	17.0	7.9	48.2	1.3

Note: All amounts have been rounded off and may not match the totals indicated.

(1) The balance forecast over the next five years will be retained by the Fonds du Plan Nord and used to support long-term commitments for current infrastructure projects.

Over a 25-year timeframe, the Fonds du Plan Nord will have spent an amount comparable to its anticipated income of around \$2.7 billion. The money spent will have been used to support long-term commitments under current or future infrastructure projects and measures launched since 2011 for a total of \$751.7 million.

Funding for measures and infrastructure projects may be improved by an increase in the envelope made available to the Fonds du Plan Nord, which reflects the scale of economic activity north of the 49 th parallel.



400km railway linking the mine at Mont-Wright to the harbour facilities in Port-Cartier.
Photo credit: Arceor/Mittal Exploitation minière Canada s.e.nc.

Actions for the benefit of local and aboriginal populations and all Québécois

Since the creation of the Fonds du Plan Nord in June 2011, several measures and infrastructure projects have been launched or completed as part of the Plan Nord.

To finance these actions from the Fonds, a total of \$454.3 million has been spent, committed or set aside for the next five years.

The initial financial framework for the Plan Nord called for the Fonds du Plan Nord to finance actions totalling \$900.6 million over five years, and a surplus has accumulated since some of these actions were not implemented⁷.

With the relaunching of the Plan Nord, this surplus gives the government an opportunity to improve the allocation of the envelopes available on the basis of the objectives and priority actions for the development of northern Québec.

As a result, over the next five years, the Société du Plan Nord, using the financial resources made available from the Fonds du Plan Nord, will help finance new priority actions in the area covered by the Plan.

Like the measures and infrastructure projects already completed or launched in the area, these new initiatives will benefit local and aboriginal communities. They will also generate substantial economic benefits for the whole Québec population and help a successful relaunch of the Plan Nord.

The Fonds d'initiatives du Plan Nord

The Fonds d'initiatives du Plan Nord will support the concrete implementation of innovative structural projects as part of the relaunching of the Plan Nord.

The Fonds will have an annual budget of \$2 million and will give the Société du Plan Nord the flexibility it needs to support the implementation of projects that are both innovative and structural.

The work of the Fonds will complement that of other existing programs. The \$2 million annual budget will be used to finance projects with specific needs that cannot be funded through other channels, or that require additional financial assistance.

⁷ The initial financial framework for the Plan Nord provided, for the period 2011 to 2016, for interventions totalling \$1.625 billion, financed through contributions to the Fonds du Plan Nord and the payments made by government departments and bodies and other partners.



CONCLUSION

By relaunching the Plan Nord, the government has taken a strategic step in the process it began in 2011 to ensure a harmonious and sustainable approach to development in northern Québec.

Using an updated vision and an original approach, the government will be able to meet the objectives it has set to develop economic potential in the North for the benefit of Québec as a whole, ensure the wellbeing of local and aboriginal populations, protect the environment and preserve biodiversity throughout this vast area.

The objectives of the Plan Nord will be implemented on the basis of an action plan reflecting a concerted effort by various government departments and bodies and the active involvement of partners in the community. The plan will identify a set of priority actions which will be set in motion over the next five years.

These actions will help re-establish a context that is conducive to mining development in northern Québec, diversify and add value to forest resources, continue to develop energy potential, increase the socio-economic benefits from wildlife activities, promote tourism and design an bio-food model based on the eco-responsible use of local products.

The local and aboriginal population will be the first to benefit from these actions, and also from the implementation of a series of measures adapted to northern realities in the field of education, health, social services, justice, public security, access to housing and cultural development.

Priority actions will also be proposed to protect the environment and conserve biodiversity in the North, in particular through the establishment of protected areas and national parks. Development projects will continue to be subject to efficient environmental assessment processes.

Concrete measures are described in the 2015-2020 action plan to create favourable conditions to attract private investment to northern Québec. A set of priority actions will facilitate access to land, improve telecommunications infrastructures, increase scientific knowledge about the northern environment and ensure the promotion of the Plan Nord in Canada and abroad.

The implementation of these actions will be coordinated by the Société du Plan Nord, which will, in particular, ensure close ongoing cooperation between the government departments and bodies concerned. The Société's actions will complement those of the Secrétariat aux affaires autochtones, the Secrétariat à l'implantation de la stratégie maritime and Investissement Québec, which will be called upon to play a key role in the implementation of the Plan Nord. The Société will also continue the close dialogue that has been established with partners in the North.

Lastly, a special fund, the Fonds du Plan Nord, will help finance strategic infrastructures, social measures, and protection and development interventions. The Fonds, whose budget will mirror economic trends in the area covered by the Plan Nord, will constitute a key financial incentive for the development and enhancement of northern Québec, for the benefit of the population of Québec as a whole and for future generations.



Québec 