



**FOR A SOCIALLY RESPONSIBLE
AND SUSTAINABLE FORM
OF ECONOMIC DEVELOPMENT**

Working document

November 6, 2009



Québec 

**For a socially responsible and sustainable
form of economic development**

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Introduction

Northern Québec is one of the components in the new economic space being developed by the Québec government. This huge expanse of land offers outstanding potential for development.

The population in this vast area lives in Aboriginal communities and municipalities, all sharing the same northern environment, sometimes with harsh coastal or other conditions depending on their location. The people in these communities are firmly anchored in their surroundings and apply their energy and creativity to maintaining a dynamic living environment.

This process to draft The Plan Nord results primarily from the need to establish a partnership linking local communities, the government and other stakeholders. It is based on the values of respect, awareness and openness. The partners—First Nations, Inuit, municipalities, civil society and the business sector—will work together with the government to define new opportunities for the generations to come. Together, they will define a project bearing promise for the future, a source of pride for the whole of Québec society.

1. Land base and population

1.1 Land base

The Plan Nord covers an immense area with extremely diverse geographic and biological characteristics. It also covers an extremely diverse population with some shared features.

The area covered comprises the whole of Québec located north of the 49th parallel, except Anticosti Island and the northern part of the Gaspé Peninsula.

It includes the whole of the Nord-du-Québec region and part of the Côte-Nord and Saguenay–Lac-Saint-Jean regions, accounting for almost 72% of Québec's entire land base or a total of 1.2 million square kilometres (Table 1). It excludes the more populous municipalities of the Saguenay–Lac-Saint-Jean region and those parts of the Manicouagan and Haute-Côte-Nord regional county municipalities located south of the 49th parallel.

Table 1: Area covered by The Plan Nord by Québec administrative region, 2006

	Area covered by The Plan Nord (km ²)	Percentage of the region covered by The Plan Nord (%)	Percentage of Québec as a whole (%)
02 Saguenay–Lac-Saint-Jean	75 294	70.7	4.5
09 Côte-Nord	257 879	73.4	15.5
10 Nord-du-Québec	860 422	100	51.6
Total Plan Nord	1 193 595	-	71.6
Whole of Québec	1 667 441	-	100.0

Source: Administrative region boundary system, 1 : 20 000 scale, updated to January 2009, Ministère des Ressources naturelles et de la Faune.

To give an idea of its size, the area covered by The Plan Nord is twice as large as France. It includes Blanc-Sablon and Ivujivik, respectively the most easterly and most westerly villages in Québec. Blanc-Sablon is located approximately 1 400 km from Montréal, while Ivujivik is at a distance of 2 000 km.

This vast area, shown on the map in Appendix 1, has 63 cities, villages and communities, 15 port facilities, 26 airports, 5 heliports, and 69 protected areas including two Québec national parks, as well as 217 806 km² of commercial forests and 126 866 km² of lakes and rivers.

1.2 Northern population

The area covered by The Plan Nord is inhabited by 121 000 people, or 1.6% of Québec's total population. Of these, two thirds, or almost 80 000 people, live on the North Shore, and just under 40 000 in Northern Québec. In the Saguenay–Lac-Saint-Jean region, fewer than 2 000 people are affected by the plan, since the most populous municipalities in the region lie to the south of the 49th parallel.

A defining characteristic of the area covered by The Plan Nord is the strong presence of Aboriginal communities. Four Aboriginal nations live in the area: the Cree and Inuit in the Nord-du-Québec region, and the Naskapi and Innu in the Côte-Nord region.

To the north of the 49th parallel, almost 33 000 Aboriginal people account for 27% of the total population living in the area covered by The Plan Nord. Other Aboriginal communities located further south, namely Mashteuiatsh, Pessamit and Essipit, have signed the agreement-in-principle of a general nature concerning the use of some areas covered by The Plan Nord.

1.3 List of communities

The municipalities, regional county municipalities and equivalent territories in the area covered by The Plan Nord are listed in Appendix II.

2. Background to the Plan

Over the last year, the Premier has taken every opportunity to call on all Quebecers to participate in various ambitious projects to increase prosperity in Québec, stimulate economic growth and promote business investment. The Plan Nord is part of this process.

In January 2009, in an economic statement, the Minister of Finance indicated the Québec government's commitment to promoting the development of the North. The Plan Nord is one of five components in a new economic space that will ensure sustained growth in Québec and reposition it following the financial crisis. The five components are as follows:

- the agreement signed with France concerning the recognition of skills and qualifications;
- negotiations between Canada and the European Union that will make Québec Europe's gateway to North America;
- an agreement to forge closer ties with Ontario in the fields of energy, environment, transportation, financial services and public contracts, and create the largest economic zone in North America after California and Texas;
- the implementation of the pan-Canadian agreement on labour mobility;
- the development of mining, energy and tourism potential in the North, in partnership with the northern communities concerned, including the First Nations and Inuit.

In his throne speech on March 10, 2009, the Québec Premier emphasized the importance of development in Northern Québec. He specifically mentioned that he intended to work with the citizens living in the area covered by The Plan Nord to define a new partnership.

In addition, in the 2009-2010 budget speech given on March 19, 2009 (see the details in Appendix III), the government laid the groundwork for the major sustainable development project represented by The Plan Nord when it announced a number of measures to develop potential in Northern Québec for the benefit of northern stakeholders and of Québec as a whole.

3. Basic conditions for a socially responsible form of sustainable development

The socially responsible and sustainable development of the North will take place in a manner that is respectful of existing communities. It will take existing cultures and identities into account. In addition, the potential identified will only be developed if certain other basic conditions are met, for example with regard to environmental protection, biodiversity conservation in the northern environment, the participation of local workers in development projects, access to public land, and a minimum supply of quality housing in Inuit communities.

3.1 Partnership and respect

The vision for northern development will evolve gradually through discussions with the communities concerned. This means that the parties affected by The Plan Nord or the projects it triggers will be asked, as partners in The Plan Nord, to play an active role in development to meet current and future needs. Through dialogue, a form of socially responsible and sustainable development will be established.

Through an approach based on partnership, respect, awareness and openness to all the players concerned, a new approach for collaboration between local communities, the government and the private sector will be defined.

Specifically with regard to participation by Aboriginal communities, it is essential that the actions taken respect the commitments made by the government in the agreements already signed with the Aboriginal nations concerned. In addition, in a broader context, the communities will be asked to play an active role in development. The Plan Nord will be drafted in light of current negotiations and the obligations of the Québec government.

With the active involvement of local communities, civil society, business partners, environmental groups and government authorities, the North will be developed as a new economic space under a partnership based on respect.

3.2 Sustainable development

Northern development is closely linked to sustainable development, which must be taken into account along with its underlying principles when analyzing projects submitted under The Plan Nord. The Plan will become a reference in the field of sustainable development.

The current network of protected areas accounts for 9.4% of the total area covered by The Plan Nord, which includes two Québec national parks, 45 biodiversity reserves and five aquatic reserves. By 2011, four other Québec national parks will also have been established.

The government undertook to exclude all industrial activities (forestry, mining, energy production) from 50% of the area covered by The Plan Nord, 12% of which will be set aside for existing and future protected areas.

With regard to environmental protection, The Plan Nord will be implemented in compliance with the legislation and regulations governing environmental quality, ensuring a form of economic development that is consistent with the protection of sensitive ecosystems and species in Northern Québec. The environmental assessment processes set out in the *Environment Quality Act* and the *James Bay and Northern Québec Agreement*, environmental inspections and controls, biodiversity conservation zones, and participation by local and Aboriginal communities in development choices, will all help meet the challenges involved.

3.3 Labour development in the North

In implementing The Plan Nord, it will be necessary to meet the challenge of training, attracting and retaining workers—one of the keys to sustainable development in the North.

In March 2008, the Québec government announced the *Employment Pact*, a concerted response tailored to the specific needs of the regions in the field of employment and labour force development. Because of the difficult economic situation, the Pact was expanded to include a time-limited component, *Employment Pact Plus*, which reinforces the support provided for workers, job seekers and businesses affected by the economic crisis.

The Pact allows communities to play an active role with businesses in the search for ways to provide adequate training. Various development projects will help young people and local workers to find jobs in their communities and obtain recognition for their work skills.

Because actions in the labour market must be coordinated with local and regional partners, a regional committee on the Employment Pact, under the responsibility of the regional council of labour market partners, is established in each region of Québec to identify the specific problems in each region that require targeted actions.

Today, thanks to measures implemented under the Employment Pact and Employment Pact Plus, the government provides increased support for individuals and businesses in northern regions.

3.4 Transportation and communications

To develop some of this immense potential, efficient transportation systems are essential, and the Québec government is working with the regions to determine the best strategic and sustainable options. The substantial investments already announced will help improve the state of existing transportation networks, increase safety and reduce travel times. The planned extension of Highway 167 from Chibougamau to the Otish Mountains is a good example of a regional partnership. For Highway 389 between Baie-Comeau and Fermont, the investments made over the coming years will increase

safety, facilitate the transportation of passengers and goods, and increase comfort. The rebuilding of airports in Nunavik and on the North Shore will provide the communities in the area covered by The Plan Nord with another lever for development. In addition, a network for high-speed electronic communications is almost complete in Nunavik, James Bay and the North Shore.

3.5 Housing in Inuit communities

The implementation of The Plan Nord will depend on the development of housing in the area. The Québec government intends to continue to develop the housing market in Nunavik by helping to build new social housing units, improving financial assistance programs for home ownership, and renovating existing social housing units.

3.6 Respect for cultures and identities

The Plan Nord will raise the profile of the culture and identity of northern communities. The Secrétariat aux affaires autochtones and the Ministère de la Culture, des Communications et de la Condition féminine will be asked to suggest ways to achieve this objective.

This is a fundamental dimension of the Plan and will involve communities and artists from various fields.

4. Prospects in each sector: key levers for northern development

The immense area covered by The Plan Nord offers outstanding potential for development. It contains extensive mineral and energy resources, as well as many different wealth-creating possibilities in the fields of forestry, farming, fishing and aquaculture, tourism, and wildlife development. The resources offer promising ways to support the economic and social development of local communities, and over the years the government has established strategies, policies and programs that act as levers for sustainable development in the regions covered by The Plan Nord.

With respect to **energy**, Northern Québec has the potential to become one of the world's leading producing regions of renewable energy. In Québec, 71% of Hydro-Québec's installed capacity is located in the area covered by The Plan Nord.

In the **2006-2015 Québec Energy Strategy**, the government announced the constitution of a portfolio of hydroelectric projects totalling 4 500 MW, almost all located in the area covered by The Plan Nord. In the 2009-2010 budget, the government undertook to develop a further 3500 MW of generating capacity. New energy sources such as tidal power, wind energy and dual wind/diesel generation, are examples of approaches that will promote sustainable development. In addition, part of the area covered by The Plan Nord has potential for oil and gas production.

Mining is a large part of the economy in Northern Québec. In 2008, over 60% of mining investment in Québec went to the area covered by The Plan Nord. The **Mineral Strategy**, announced by the Québec government in June 2009, provides for an increase in mining development, in particular by improving knowledge of mineral potential and improving access infrastructures under partnerships between private companies, regions and the government. In the social field, the Mineral Strategy provides for community-participation measures to attract and train workers, and to ensure better harmonization between mining projects and other land uses. A range of tools are also available, including the mining heritage fund, the Nunavik Mineral Exploration Fund and the Cree Mineral Exploration Board.

The boreal forest is Québec's largest vegetation zone. The portion located between the 49th parallel and the northern logging limit falls within the area covered by The Plan Nord. It offers significant possibilities for development while ensuring ongoing resource viability and ecosystem integrity. The current **forest regime review** will ensure that communities remain viable by developing forest-based products and services, promoting the use of timber and developing an innovative, productive and competitive industry. The new forest regime will introduce a more regionalized forest management system that will take into account new approaches to forest management, as well as the interests, values and needs of the population and First Nations. This management model will also take into consideration the economic, ecological and social potential of Québec's forests. Québec will have a modern, world-class forest regime ready to deal with the realities of climate change.

With respect to **wildlife**, Northern Québec is home to a caribou herd estimated at almost one million animals, world-renowned salmon rivers and a multitude of lakes with recognized wildlife potential. There are also more than 200 outfitting operations, representing almost one-third of Québec's entire network. The financial assistance program to consolidate outfitting operations in Northern Québec offers a new lever for improving hospitality and lodging facilities by strengthening the ability of northern outfitting operations to take advantage of Northern Québec's potential for tourism.

The area to the north of the 49th parallel also offers world-class potential for **tourism development**. The exceptional beauty of the landscape, its vastness, and its wilderness character make it unique. Northern Québec is inhabited by people who have been able to retain and develop their culture and traditions, and is one of the world's last explorable areas. The Ministère du Tourisme has set itself the task of adapting its actions to those of its partners, supporting them not only financially but also by providing technical expertise, and implementing all its projects with the communities concerned in keeping with the principles of sustainable development. The tourism strategy currently in preparation by the Ministère du Tourisme will address all these topics.

The emergence of a new **bio-food industry** offers another important level for economic and social development. Northern Québec has one of the largest reserves of arable soil in North America, amounting to 1.5 million hectares, a vast potential that has only just begun to be tapped. The area's northern climate and geographic isolation also make it an ideal location for genetic banks of plant life and research into new plant cultivars. It is already home to an agricultural research centre working, among other projects, on northern berry production. One quarter of all the fish and seafood landed in Québec comes from the northern regions, and the fishing industry has been able to carve out an enviable niche on world markets with authentic products such as pink shrimp, snow crab and Greenland halibut. The partnership established by Aboriginal communities and the commercial fishing industry on the North Shore is one of the outstanding examples of a successful sharing, between two communities, of the benefits generated by a natural resource.

The goal of the **ACCORD program** (*Action concertée de coopération régionale de développement*) is to identify niches of excellence and to create a strategy and action plan allowing each region to define its own character and become more competitive on international markets. The regions north of the 49th parallel have already begun this process. The niches of excellence they have identified include northern adventure tourism, engineering for industrial, mining and metallurgical processes, marine resources, science and technology, and the manufacture of black spruce building frames based on the principles of sustainable development.

5. The data challenge

No large-scale development of Northern Québec can take place without support from new data. For this reason, the Québec government is continuing to update the available information on Northern Québec, as shown by the examples in the following paragraphs. It is important to note that some of the stakeholders in the regions concerned already have data on the immense areas concerned, including the Aboriginal communities that have occupied the land for hundreds and even thousands of years. The information kept by schools, colleges, universities, research bodies, Hydro-Québec and industries (in the forestry, wildlife, tourism, mining and agri-food sectors) will also help generate a better understanding of the area.

Throughout the drafting process for The Plan Nord, the participants will be expected to pool their knowledge base.

The government and the regional authorities already possess a range of information from various planning processes, which must be taken into account in The Plan Nord. **Existing knowledge** must be used to good advantage, drawn for example, from the public land use plan (Plan d'affectation du territoire public, or PATP) which determines and publicizes government guidelines for the use and protection of publicly-owned land and resources, the regional plan for integrated land and resource development (Plan régional de développement intégré des ressources et du territoire, or PRDIRT), which defines the vision of the regional community with regard to the development and conservation of land and natural resources, regional transportation plans, land use plans drawn up by regional county municipalities, and other plans that bring together information on land and resources.

With regard to the **labour force**, Emploi-Québec regional offices and local employment centres are already present in the communities targeted by The Plan Nord and can count on a strong network of partners, schools and colleges, sectoral labour market committees (mining, tourism, forestry) and various government departments, including the Ministère de l'Éducation, du Loisir et du Sport, the Ministère des Ressources naturelles et de la Faune and the Ministère du Tourisme. To face the main challenges of coming years, Emploi-Québec is conducting research into the labour market and employment prospects in the North, in order to define a forward-looking vision.

Another essential condition for developing the vast, but in some respects unknown, area covered by the plan is to **improve the current state of knowledge**. To understand and protect the most vulnerable ecosystems and species of flora and fauna, the Ministère du Développement durable, de l'Environnement et des Parcs has begun working with the Ouranos consortium and the Prince Albert II of Monaco Foundation to prepare an atlas of biodiversity in Northern Québec. During this project, research will focus on measures to adapt to climate change and industrial development to ensure that biodiversity is preserved.

In the mining sector, Géologie Québec gathers geoscientific data every year. In the forestry sector, a scientific committee is currently examining the northern logging limit. The Québec government is also supporting initiatives to enhance data on agricultural potential in the North.

College-based technology transfer centres ensure links between technological research projects and businesses, in particular in the form of adapted technical training. Researchers will be expected to share their research findings with other stakeholders. All of these actions will help improve the technical expertise on the area covered by The Plan Nord.

6. Making the North better known

The vast area covered by The Plan Nord is still not widely known, not only at the Canadian and international level, but also within Québec. There is an imperative need to make its potential better known in two different sectors.

First, it is important for Quebecers to know more about the North. The drafting of The Plan Nord and the activities connected with its preparation will help raise the profile of the North among the general population. The role played by the partners will be crucial, since they will be both the artisans of, and the ambassadors for, the plan in their communities.

Second, making The Plan Nord an international reference in the field of sustainable northern development will constitute a major challenge. The dynamic attitude of the population in the North and the expertise created in natural resource development will help showcase Québec on the international stage. Québec's active participation in major events in Canada and around the world will offer opportunities to publicize and promote the Québec approach to sustainable northern development. All these actions will help achieve greater international recognition.

Conclusion

The Plan Nord will constitute the spearhead of a socially responsible, sustainable form of economic development in Québec. The Plan will be drafted in a joint, integrated and adapted way. It will be a reference in the field of sustainable development. Its preparation will be exemplary, and will take the specific features of the North into account.

The partnerships developed during the drafting of The Plan Nord will not only make it easier to gather public support, but will also strengthen the links between the peoples who make up the northern population.

Over the long term, The Plan Nord should lead to

- a socially responsible and sustainable form of economic development;
- prosperous, dynamic communities that offer an attractive living community for young people, workers and families (infrastructures, housing, education, healthcare);
- protection for ecosystems and biodiversity based on criteria adapted to northern realities;
- wealth creation by local communities, with respect for their culture and identity;
- harmonious cohabitation of the area's peoples;
- an area open to all, with multiple contacts with the outside world and international recognition for its sustainable development

Québec's history is built on initiatives that have pushed back the boundaries of development, and this pioneering spirit is still present in all Quebecers. It will find a new outlet in The Plan Nord, a 21st-century project for Québec. The development of the North is a major challenge, and the government invites all stakeholders to take part in the process.

Vision

An approach to **sustainable development** leading to an exemplary project integrating **energy, mining, forestry, recreation, tourism, transportation** and **wildlife** development, and promoting the growth of local **communities** in a way consistent with their culture and identity.

Area covered by the Northern Plan



Land divisions

- Area covered by the Northern Plan
 - Administrative region boundary
 - Regional county municipality boundary
 - Southern boundary of Nunavik*
 - Aboriginal community
 - Inhabited locality
- * Category 1a and 1b lands of the Cree village of Whapmagoosui are excluded from Nunavik.

Borders

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

Metadata

Map projection: Lambert Conic Conformal with two true-scale parallels maintained (46° and 60°)

0 150km

Sources

- Data: Organization, year
- Administrative boundaries: Ministère des Ressources naturelles et de la Faune, 2003
- Geographic basis: Ministère des Ressources naturelles et de la Faune, 2009
- Geographic nomenclature: Commission de toponymie du Québec, 2009

Production

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 Note : this document has no legal value.
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Appendix II Population and land base covered by The Plan Nord

Saguenay–Lac-Saint-Jean (region 02)

Regional county municipality or equivalent	Municipality	Status
Le Domaine-du-Roy (RCM)	Mashteuiatsh ¹	Indian reserve
Maria-Chapdelaine (RCM)	Girardville	Municipality
	Notre-Dame-de-Lorette	Municipality
	Saint-Stanislas	Municipality

Côte-Nord (region 09)

Regional county municipality or equivalent	Municipality	Status
Basse-Côte-Nord (RCM equivalent)	Blanc-Sablon	Municipality
	Bonne-Espérance	Municipality
	Côte-Nord-du-Golfe-du-Saint-Laurent	Municipality
	Gros-Mécatina	Municipality
	La Romaine (Unamen Shipu)	Indian reserve
	Pakuashipi	Indian settlement
	Saint-Augustin	Municipality
Caniapiscou (RCM)	Fermont	City
	Kawawachikamach	Land reserved for the Naskapis
	Matimekosh / Lac-John	Indian reserve
	Schefferville	City
La Haute-Côte-Nord (RCM)	Essipit ¹	Indian reserve
Manicouagan (RCM)	Baie-Comeau	City
	Baie-Trinité	Village
	Chute-aux-Outardes	Village
	Franquelin	Municipality
	Godbout	Village
	Pessamit (Betsiamites) ¹	Indian reserve
	Pointe-aux-Outardes	Village
	Pointe-Lebel	Village
	Ragueneau	Parish
Minganie (RCM)	Aguanish	Municipality
	Baie-Johan-Beetz	Municipality
	Havre-Saint-Pierre	Municipality
	Longue-Pointe-de-Mingan	Municipality
	Mingan (Ekuanitshit)	Indian reserve
	Natashquan	Township
	Natashquan (Nutakuan)	Indian reserve
	Rivière-au-Tonnerre	Municipality
	Rivière-Saint-Jean	Municipality
Sept-Rivières (RCM)	Port-Cartier	City
	Sept-Îles	City
	Uashat / Maliotenam	Indian reserve

¹ These communities are not in the area covered by The Plan Nord, but signed the Agreement-in-Principle of a General Nature concerning the use of land in that area.

Nord-du-Québec (region 10)

Regional county municipality or equivalent	Municipality	Status
Kativik (RCM equivalent)	Akulivik	Northern village
	Aupaluk	Northern village
	Inukjuak	Northern village
	Ivujivik	Northern village
	Kangiqsualujuaq	Northern village
	Kangiqsujuaq	Northern village
	Kangirsuk	Northern village
	Kiggaluk (Chisasibi)	Category I Inuit land
	Kuujuuaq	Northern village
	Kuujuarapik	Northern village
	Puvirnituq	Northern village
	Quaqtaq	Northern village
	Salluit	Northern village
	Tasiujaq	Northern village
	Umiujaq	Northern village
Cree Regional Authority (RCM equivalent)	Chisasibi	Cree village
	Eastmain	Cree village
	Mistissini	Cree village
	Nemiscau	Cree village
	Oujé-Bougoumou	Indian settlement
	Waskaganish	Cree village
	Waswanipi	Cree village
	Wemindji	Cree village
	Whapmagoostui	Cree village
Other James Bay municipalities (RCM equivalent)	Baie-James	Municipality
	Chapais	City
	Chibougamau	City
	Lebel-sur-Quévillon	City
	Matagami	City

In all, 63 communities (31 Aboriginal and 32 non-Aboriginal) are located in the area covered by The Plan Nord.

Appendix III Some recent actions by the government in the area covered by The Plan Nord

Several concrete actions have been completed by the government in various fields to develop the potential of the North. Those presented here include sectoral measures and those announced in the 2009-2010 budget speech.

Sectoral measures

In the field of clean, renewable energy

- The Eastmain-1-A-Sarcelle-Rupert project, currently under construction, that will add generating capacity of 920 MW by 2012 (an investment of \$5 billion);
- The La Romaine project on the North Shore, recently launched, that will add generating capacity of over 1 550 MW and will come on line gradually starting in 2014 (\$6.5 billion);
- 4 500 MW of generating capacity announced in the 2006-2015 Energy Strategy;
- 3 500 MW of generating capacity announced in the 2009-2010 budget speech.

In the field of mining

- The Mineral Strategy, which announces the government's intention to provide funding of \$200 million over ten years, mainly to gather geoscientific data. The government has also made a commitment to continue to support the Nunavik Mineral Exploration Fund and the Cree Mineral Exploration Board for three years.
- Recognition by the Québec government, in 2006, of the cost of abandoned mine sites as an environmental liability. As of March 31, 2009, this represented a total cost of \$329 million. In the area covered by The Plan Nord, most abandoned mines are in Nunavik. A group of mining companies set up the Restor-Action fund in 2007 with the Kativik Regional Government and the MRNF to carry out mine site rehabilitation work in Nunavik.

In the field of tourism

- Under the *Stratégie de développement durable et de promotion des croisières internationales sur le fleuve Saint-Laurent* (strategy for the sustainable development and promotion of international cruises on the St. Lawrence), the Québec government has allocated \$52.5 million, part of a total investment of \$156 million.

In the field of employment

- The Employment Pact;
- The Employment Pact Plus.

Combining the public-sector and private-sector funding provided for in the Employment Pact and Employment Pact Plus, the labour market development fund and the workforce skills development and recognition fund, around \$100 million will be invested in the Nord-du-Québec and Côte-Nord regions by the government and its partners over a three-year period, to help 17 000 job seekers, 11 000 workers and 1 400 businesses.

Measures announced in the 2009-2010 budget speech

In addition, in the **2009-2010 budget speech**, the government announced \$98 million of investment for the development of Northern Québec over the next two years. In all, almost \$825 will be invested.

The main goal of these budget measures is to

- preserve the environment and upgrade the natural heritage in the area;
- improve infrastructures to optimize access to resources.

Measures to preserve the environment and upgrade the natural heritage

Three measures will contribute to this objective:

- **Shared-cost support program for the consolidation of outfitting operations**

The assistance, of \$2.2 million, is designed to attract total investments of \$4.4 million over the next two years. The money will be used to

- draw up an inventory of needs and planned investment by outfitting operations;
- help outfitters prepare technical specifications for infrastructure investments;
- invest in hospitality and lodging facilities.

The measures will help the industry consolidate its bases for taking advantage of the tourism potential of northern Québec.

- **Designation and creation of protected areas**

The government plans to grant protected area status to 12% of all land to the north of the northern limit. No industrial activities will be allowed, but hunting, fishing and trapping, as well as tourism activities, will be permitted. For this purpose, \$1.2 million will be allocated in 2009-2010 and 2010-2011.

The government has also announced work to create four new Québec national parks from a list of five:

- Harrington Harbour;
- Guillaume-Delisle-et-à-L'Eau-Claire (Tursujuq);
- Albanel-Témiscamie-Otish;
- Monts Les Pyramides;
- Assinica.

The government will invest \$32 million to implement this commitment.

Measures to improve infrastructures

Improvements to infrastructures form the essential foundation for development, by optimizing access to resources and promoting community growth. The Québec government has announced almost \$700 million in infrastructure investments for

- the extension of Highway 167 to the Otish Mountains, from Chibougamau via Mistissini (\$260 million including \$130 million financed by the government);
- work to repair and upgrade Highway 389 between Baie-Comeau and Fermont (\$438 million);
- the upgrading of fifteen northern airports in Nunavik and on the North Shore (\$106 million over five years).

Measures to promote tree planting

The government has announced an improvement to the silvicultural investment program, with an additional investment of \$22 million. Part of this amount, or roughly \$9 million, will be spent on tree planting in Northern Québec, with 35 million additional seedlings planted in 2009-2010.

*Ressources naturelles
et Faune*

Québec 