



*The Plan Nord :  
a Society-Wide project*

Québec

Northern Québec is a vast, rich and diversified region with outstanding development potential. Its mineral, energy, wildlife and bio-food resources, potential for tourism and forests are all assets that can be used for development purposes.

Northern Québec is located north of the 49<sup>th</sup> degree of latitude and represents 72% of Québec's landmass. It covers an area of over one million square kilometres, twice the size of France.

#### **A unique process**

The Plan Nord sets out a vision for the future development of Northern Québec, based on the values of respect, receptivity, openness, discussion and solidarity.

The Québec Government has launched a far-ranging participatory process to lay the groundwork for a new partnership with stakeholders and northern communities. The Plan Nord is intended as "an exemplary sustainable development project combining energy, mining, forest, bio-food, tourism and transportation development, wildlife development, environmental protection and biodiversity protection. It will promote development for the benefit of the communities concerned and of Québec as a whole, while ensuring respect for cultures and identities."

The process will ensure an orderly, respectful, socially-responsible and sustainable form of development for Northern Québec over a 25-year period.

#### **Occupation spanning a millennium**

The Aboriginal communities have preserved a culture based on traditions and lifestyles that are adjusted to the Northern Québec environment. They are attached to their heritage,

and to a history that in some cases spans more than a millennium. Today, over 120,000 people live in the area covered by the Plan Nord. Four Aboriginal nations (the Inuit, Cree, Naskapi and some Innu) inhabit 31 communities alongside 32 non-Aboriginal communities.

#### **Exceptional natural potential**

##### *A wealth of mining potential*

Québec has gained worldwide recognition for its mineral wealth, and mining accounts for a large part of the economy in Northern Québec. In recent years, over 60% of the investments in Québec in the mineral exploration and extraction sectors have been made in Northern Québec. This area is responsible for all Québec's nickel, cobalt, platinum, iron and ilmenite ore production, and shows strong potential for diamond, uranium and rare earth extraction. However, a large part of this mineral potential remains to be discovered as a complete geological inventory is completed.

##### *Energy resources*

Northern Québec already produces more than three-quarters of Québec's electricity. The Plan Nord sets out the Government's intention of making Québec the leading worldwide producer of clean energy. In all, 97% of the extra 4 500 MW in generating capacity announced in the 2006-2015 Energy Strategy will come from the area covered by the Plan Nord. It has already been announced that a further 3 500 MW in renewable energy generation will be produced in the same area, made up of 3 000 MW from hydro-electricity, 300 MW from wind energy and 200 MW from other renewable sources (such as tidal power). Overall, it is estimated that almost \$50 billion will be invested in this sector in Québec.

### Forests

Northern Québec has many public forests. There are two principal vegetation zones in Northern Québec, the boreal zone to the south and the arctic zone to the north. Because of the importance and fragility of the ecosystems in the North, logging in the boreal forest is strictly regulated in order to ensure sustainable forest management. Almost 34% of the continuous boreal forest, or 187,509 km<sup>2</sup>, is available for logging. The potential to the north of the 49<sup>th</sup> parallel represents almost 33% of the total forest yield in Québec.

### Biofood

Despite the northern location of the administrative regions covered by the Plan Nord, the biofood sector contributed \$640 million to Québec's GDP in 2007, and accounted for one out of eight jobs.

The biofood sector is a community-based, sustainable tool for social development that helps anchor the population in a given territory. The climate in the area covered by the Plan Nord is suitable for the development of a differentiated biofood industry.

### Tourism

Northern Québec, with its preserved wilderness, breathtaking landscapes and varied animal and plant life, along with the rich, diverse cultures of its communities, offers unrivalled potential for an out-of-the-ordinary tourism experience. Many opportunities exist for tourism development in the North, thanks to a wealth of attractions and sites of interest that can appeal to tourists from around the world seeking an unusual, authentic experience.

Northern Québec is a paradise for the new adventure tourism and ecotourism sectors that are developing rapidly throughout the world.

### Wildlife resources

Northern Québec's wildlife resources are exceptional. The area boasts the world's largest herd of migrating caribou. In Nunavik, the caribou population is estimated at approximately one million, while the region's fishing potential is also significant and varied.

Hunting and fishing in Northern Québec provide a unique experience that is very popular among international clients. The hunting and fishing outfitters are the principal gateways to Northern regions for foreign visitors.

In recent years, non-harvesting wildlife activities, such as outdoor wildlife observation, have grown in popularity. These activities should continue to develop quickly with the creation of new national parks.

### A vision of the future for the North

The Québec Government is aware of the strong natural and economic potential of Northern Québec, and wishes to encourage an integrated, sustainable approach to development by involving the communities concerned and acting with due respect for their lifestyles and needs.

In the Plan Nord, the Government sets out a planned, coherent approach that includes a range of initiatives designed and implemented in collaboration with local communities and stakeholders, and that constitutes an exemplary approach to a socially-responsible, sustainable form of development. The initiatives, processes and projects launched under the plan will include requirements relating to environmental protection and biodiversity conservation, and will take into account the specific nature of northern ecosystem and the concerns expressed by the local population.