



## **The « Plan Nord »: a new model of sustainable development rich in opportunities for Europe**

On May 9, 2011, the Government of Québec launched its Plan Nord (“Northern Plan”), an ambitious economic and social development project that will generate over \$80 billion Canadian dollars (€58 million) in investments. This project will engage many sectors like energy, mining, bio-food, tourism and transportation, wildlife development, environmental protection and biodiversity conservation. Deployed over 25 years, the Plan Nord will create new demand for workers, knowledge and expertise. It will have an impact across Québec and pave the way to numerous new opportunities for international partnerships. Premier Jean Charest has invited the European scientific and business communities to contribute to the project and take part in creating an original, sustainable development model for the respectful growth of a resource-rich territory.

### **An outstanding territory**

The territory covered by the Plan Nord encompasses all of Québec north of the 49th Parallel. Spread over nearly 1.2 million square kilometres, it accounts for 72% of Québec's total landmass (twice the size of France and 40 times the size of Belgium). It boasts one of the world's largest freshwater reserves, made up of almost 500,000 lakes and thousands of rivers. Northern Québec has impressive potential in terms of unharnessed hydro, wind and solar power. This huge land area comprises over 200,000 square kilometres of commercial forest. It is home to outstanding wildlife resources and, as one of the world's largest remaining intact territories, has great conservation potential. It is rich in minerals such as nickel, cobalt, platinum-group metals, zinc, iron ore and ilmenite, and accounts for a significant share of gold production. It is also blessed with deposits of lithium, vanadium and rare earth elements, which are in hot demand around the world, given their growing use by the energy, transportation and high-tech sectors.

### **A unique approach**

The representative, participatory approach adopted for the Plan Nord makes it a unique sustainable development model that reconciles social and economic development with environmental protection. Since January 2010, a number of Aboriginal and other local communities have taken part in sector work-group and consensus-building meetings aimed at ensuring that northern development improves local populations' living conditions, in a spirit of respect for cultures and identities.

### **Environmental protection**

At all stages in the planning and deployment of projects launched under the Plan Nord, protecting the environment and northern ecosystems will be at the heart of the decision-making process. The Québec government will therefore make sure that projects are aligned with the principles of sustainable development and are subject to rigorous environmental analyses. It has also promised to protect the environment in the area covered by the Plan Nord, by ultimately devoting 50% of northern Québec to non-industrial purposes, environmental protection and the safeguarding of biodiversity, and by

establishing a network of protected areas equivalent to at least 12% of the Plan Nord territory by 2015.

### **Economic potential of northern Québec**

The Plan Nord is in keeping with a number of high-priority initiatives deployed by the Québec government to develop Québec's economic potential and create wealth. It is aimed at sustainable development in the energy, mineral resources, forest, wildlife, tourism and bio-food sectors. Thanks to its scope and extensive spin-offs, as well as the abundance of knowledge required and large number of suppliers involved, the Plan Nord opens up an array of possibilities that will benefit all of Québec and its foreign partners.

This large-scale project offers partnership opportunities for the acquisition of knowledge and know-how in the development of fragile territories, essential to the preservation of the ecological balance. It will allow to conceive, with the help of our partners, a new original model of growth concerned with integration of the local communities and with respect for biodiversity.

### **A few figures**

#### **Québec**

- Land area: 1.7 million square kilometres
- Population: 7.9 million

#### **Northern Québec (above the 49th Parallel)**

- Land area: 1.2 million square kilometres
- Population: 120,000, including 33,000 Aboriginal people
- 63 cities, towns, villages and communities

#### **Plan Nord**

- CAN\$80 billion (€58 billion) in public and private Plan Nord investments, including:
  - CAN\$47 billion (€34 billion) for renewable energy development
  - CAN\$33 billion (€24 billion) to develop the mining sector and public infrastructure (roads, airports, etc.)
- 3,500 additional megawatts of renewable energy:
  - 3,000 MW of hydroelectricity
  - 300 MW of wind power
  - 200 MW from other sources of renewable energy (underwater generators)
- over 200,000 square kilometres of commercial forest

Detailed specification sheet:

<http://www.mrnf.gouv.qc.ca/english/press/communique8980.pdf>

→ [www.plannord.gouv.qc.ca](http://www.plannord.gouv.qc.ca)



Avenue des Arts 46, 7<sup>th</sup> floor  
1000 Brussels, Belgium  
Phone: 02 512 00 36 / Fax: 02 514 26 41  
[qc.bruxelles@mri.gouv.qc.ca](mailto:qc.bruxelles@mri.gouv.qc.ca)  
[www.quebec-europe.be](http://www.quebec-europe.be)

[Twitter](#) – [Facebook](#) : [QuebecEuropeBE](#)