

Reflection process on the future of forests

INDIGENOUS PARTNERSHIPS



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Specification regarding the approach:

The consultation approach with the First Nations and Inuit has no effect on any agreement made between the Gouvernement du Québec and an Indigenous group, or any negotiation process in progress.

Theme 5. Indigenous Partners

This theme is addressed exclusively to the First Nations and the Inuit and their representatives. They are invited to answer the following questions, if all of their comments, concerns and suggestions have not been formulated under other themes.

Sub-theme 1. Participation in Decision-making Processes and Consultation and Accommodation

Assessment

The Indigenous nations and communities have maintained longstanding ties with the land and its resources. These ties have contributed and still contribute to shape their identity, their cultures and their ways of life. This is why the Ministère des Ressources naturelles et des Forêts recognizes the importance of the participation and contribution of the First Nations and Indigenous communities in sustainable forest management and development.

In this regard, the Sustainable Forest Development Act (SFDA) contains provisions specific to the Indigenous communities, which have the objective of better reconciling the management and development of forest land with their interest, values and needs. The Sustainable Forest Management Strategy (SADF) also provides for directions specific to the Indigenous communities to better integrate their rights, interests, values and needs into the management and development of forest land and resources.

The obligation to consult the First Nations and, if applicable, to accommodate them, is incumbent on the MRNF in the context of its responsibilities. It consults them on the activities that may have a prejudicial effect on their established or claimed Aboriginal or treaty rights, such as draft forest management plans, and on the draft strategies, policies, regulations, etc. It conducts exchanges for this purpose in view of a better understanding of their concerns. The MRNF also seeks to agree with the First Nations on accommodation measures, as needed, in order to avoid or mitigate as much as possible the prejudicial effects of these activities on their rights.

To this effect and in accordance with the SFDA, the MRNF adopted a Consultation Policy for Sustainable Forest Development and Forest Management, which provides for consultation criteria specific to Indigenous communities. Special consultation criteria for Indigenous communities also apply regarding forest planning.

Moreover, consultation criteria adapted to the needs and criteria of the various First Nations can be agreed on with them. Agreements relating to participation, consultation

and accommodation of Indigenous peoples on subjects specific to forest land have been made or are in negotiation between the Gouvernement du Québec and certain Indigenous nations or communities. For example, these agreements may cover adapted consultation and accommodation processes, a territory of application and areas or sectors for which special criteria are applied, committees for communications purposes, a dispute resolution mechanism, etc.

The MRNF also offers technical and financial support to the Indigenous communities to favour their participation in the consultations related to sustainable forest management or in panels or forums arising from the forest regime.

Additional Discussion Documents

- Sustainable Forest Development Act Gouvernement du Québec [Online], [[A-18.1 - Sustainable Forest Development Act \(gouv.qc.ca\)](#)].
- Stratégie d'aménagement durable des forêts. (Sustainable Forest Management Strategy) Gouvernement du Québec [Online], [[Stratégie d'aménagement durable des forêts | Gouvernement du Québec \(quebec.ca\)](#)].
- Regulation respecting the sustainable development of forests in the domain of the State. Gouvernement du Québec [Online], [[Guide d'application du Règlement sur l'aménagement durable des forêts du domaine de l'État - Ministère des Forêts, de la Faune et des Parcs \(gouv.qc.ca\)](#)].
- Politique de consultation en matière d'aménagement et de gestion du milieu forestier (Consultation Policy for Sustainable Forest Development and Forest Management) [Online], [[Politique de consultation en matière d'aménagement et de gestion du milieu forestier](#)].

Sub-theme 2. Relationship between the Department, Indigenous Communities and the Forest Industry

Assessment

The MRNF's mission is to ensure, in a sustainable development perspective, conservation and management of forests to contribute to the prosperity and quality of life of the Québec population. Under the responsibilities devolved to it, the MRNF intends to affirm, consolidate and strengthen its commitment to develop and maintain harmonious and privileged relations with the Indigenous nations and communities, based on dialogue, cooperation, trust and mutual respect.

In addition to consulting the First Nations separately, the MRNF invites them to participate in the Local Integrated Land and Resource Management Panels (TLGIRT) or other discussion forums relating to sustainable forest management. These panels or forums are opportunities to share concerns, values and needs relating to the forest environment and to allow the stakeholders to exchange views on this subject.

Moreover, in accordance with their roles in planning of forest management activities, holders of forest rights may participate in the consultation processes. In such cases, the MRNF specifies the role of holders of forest rights regarding Aboriginal communities.

The MRNF also encourages the forest rights holders to communicate with the Indigenous communities with the objective of establishing and maintaining harmonious relations with them, favouring information sharing regarding the activities under their responsibility, considering their concerns or favouring their economic development. Incidentally, the measures deployed regarding socio-economic development (see the following sub-theme) create conditions hospitable to the development of partnerships and synergies among the communities, the forest industry and the regional players concerned.

Additional Discussion Documents

- Sustainable Forest Development Act Gouvernement du Québec [Online], [[A-18.1 - Sustainable Forest Development Act \(gouv.qc.ca\)](#)].
- Stratégie d'aménagement durable des forêts. (Sustainable Forest Management Strategy) Gouvernement du Québec [Online], [[Stratégie d'aménagement durable des forêts | Gouvernement du Québec \(quebec.ca\)](#)].
- Regulation respecting the sustainable development of forests in the domain of the State. Gouvernement du Québec [Online], [[Guide d'application du Règlement sur l'aménagement durable des forêts du domaine de l'État - Ministère des Forêts, de la Faune et des Parcs \(gouv.qc.ca\)](#)].
- Document d'information à l'intention des promoteurs et introduction générale aux relations avec les communautés autochtones dans le cadre de projets de mise en valeur des ressources naturelles (Information document for developers and general introduction to relations with Indigenous communities in the context of natural resources development project), [Online], [[2015-02-document-intention-promoteurs.pdf \(quebec.ca\)](#)].

Sub-theme 3. Participation in Socio-Economic Development

Assessment

The MRNF has engaged for the past several years in an approach with the aim of favouring the involvement and socio-economic development of the Indigenous Peoples in the forest sector. This commitment is in continuity with the government directions on Indigenous affairs, the SFDA and the Sustainable Forest Management Strategy (SADF), which emphasizes the importance of contributing to the socio-economic development of the Indigenous nations and communities in the management of forest land.

Concretely, for several years, the MRNF has granted Indigenous communities or businesses forest rights, whether timber supply guarantees (GA), forestry permits to harvest timber to supply a wood processing plant (PRAU) or management delegation agreements (EDG). It also awards contracts for the performance of forest management activities.¹

Agreements providing for socio-economic development measures on subjects specific to forest land are also made between the Gouvernement du Québec and Indigenous groups.

The MRNF intends to continue supporting the socio-economic development of Indigenous nations and communities resulting from the management of forest land, while seeking courses of action that could maximize and strengthen the effects of the various measures in place. The forest, as the host of the cultural and social practices of the Indigenous communities, but also as an environment where opportunities for economic development and diversification are materialized, constitutes a space for reconciliation among the various stakeholders.

Additional Discussion Documents

- Sustainable Forest Development Act Gouvernement du Québec [Online], [[A-18.1 - Sustainable Forest Development Act \(gouv.qc.ca\)](#)].
- Stratégie d'aménagement durable des forêts. (Sustainable Forest Management Strategy) Gouvernement du Québec [Online], [[Stratégie d'aménagement durable des forêts | Gouvernement du Québec \(quebec.ca\)](#)].
- Publication des droits consentis en forêt publique. (Publication of Granted Rights in Public Forests) Gouvernement du Québec [Online], [[Droits-forestiers \(quebec.ca\)](#)].

¹ These contracts are awarded by Rexforêt. The MRNF delegates the performance of certain forest management activities to this body.

Sub-theme 4. Skills and Capacity Development

Assessment

The MRNF seeks to favour and strengthen skills and capacity development of the Indigenous Peoples in the forest industry, in convergence with the government intentions and wishes.

Moreover, the Gouvernement du Québec makes agreements with Indigenous nations or communities with this objective. For example, collaborative approaches addressing management of forest resources in certain territories were developed with the Crees of Eeyou Istchee and the First Nation of Pekuakamiulnuatsh.

Regarding employment and training measures, increased concerted action among the partners could conduct operations in this regard (e.g. Indigenous bodies with a human resources development mission, department and agencies working in the field of education or workforce training, educational institutions, companies and associations, etc.) would be likely to favour and increase the service offering, as well as the professional development opportunities for the Indigenous Peoples.

Additional Discussion Documents

- List of agreements reached by nation and by community [Online], [quebec.ca/en/government/departments-and-agencies/secretariat-premieres-nations-inuit/publications/list-of-agreements-reached-by-nation-and-by-community].
- Indigenous Initiatives Fund [Online], [quebec.ca/en/government/quebec-at-a-glance/first-nations-and-inuit/indigenous-financial-assistance/indigenous-initiatives-fund-iv].



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