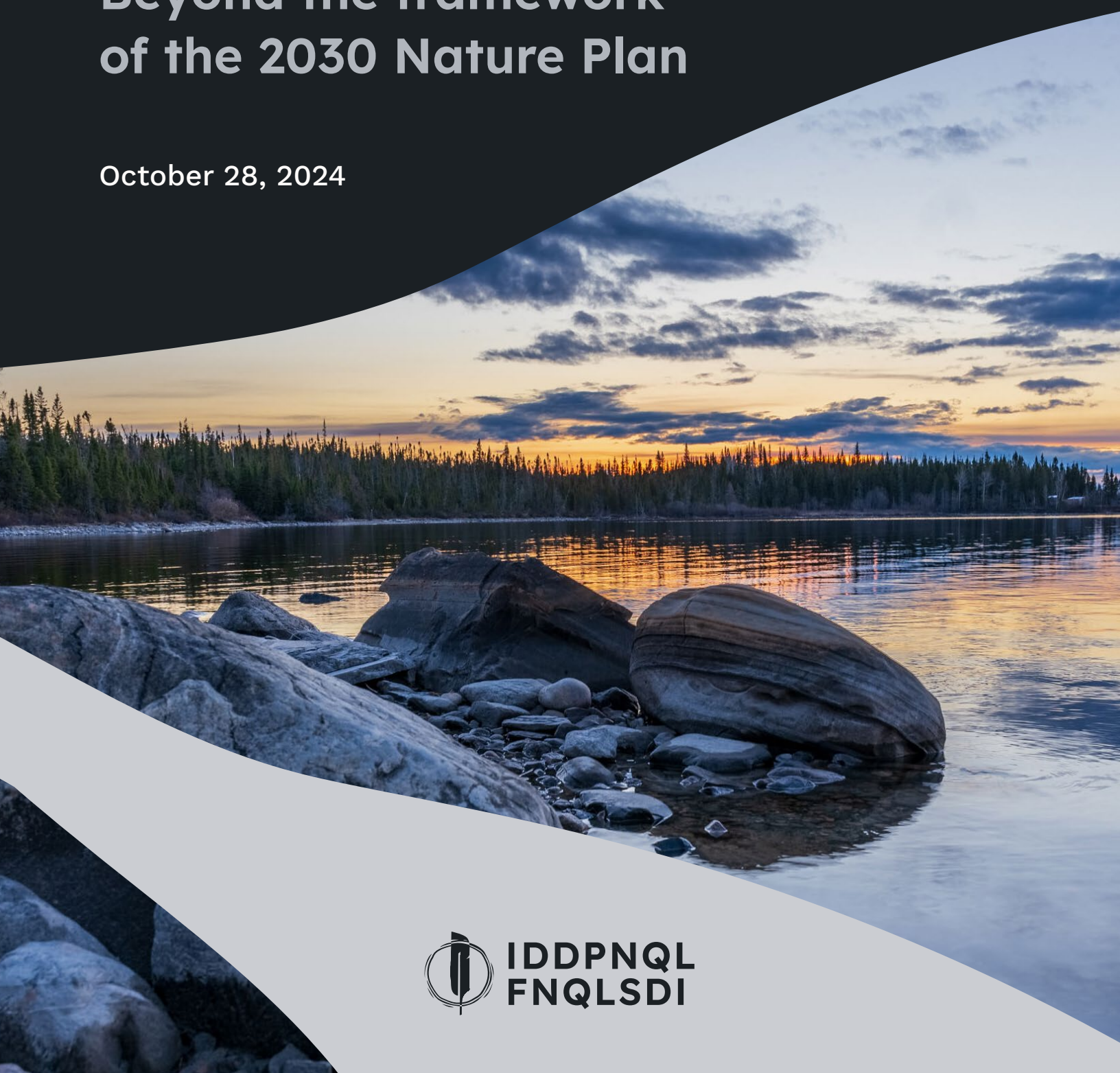


First Nations Actions and Indicators

Beyond the framework
of the 2030 Nature Plan

October 28, 2024



IDDPNQL
FNQLSDI

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A word from our director

It is with great pride that we present to you today a series of actions and indicators centred on the issues and ambitions of First Nations in Québec for the implementation of the 2030 Nature Plan by the Government of Québec. This document is the result of several months of collaboration between First Nations and our organization.

The actions and indicators presented here reflect First Nations' desire to take concrete action and contribute to the achievement of global targets. They also reflect the importance they attach to the health of their territories and biodiversity, and to their aspirations for self-determination, respect for their rights and the preservation of their cultures and ways of life for the next seven generations.

First Nations are asking the Government of Québec to take action by fully integrating these actions and indicators into the 2024-2028 action plan of the 2030 Nature Plan.

As emphasized in the Kunming-Montreal Global Biodiversity Framework, the involvement of First Nations is essential to the success of the 2030 Nature Plan and the achievement of its objectives and targets.

Their role as guardians of biodiversity, their indispensable knowledge and the fact that they are holders of aboriginal and treaty rights all require First Nations to be key players in this process.

We must all work together to preserve the biodiversity that is so dear to us, and which is essential if we are to continue to enjoy its benefits.

Alain Bédard
FNQLSDI General Director

Clarification on the document

This document has been prepared without prejudice to the existing indigenous or treaty rights of the First Nations of Quebec and cannot therefore affect their positions, actions, negotiations, or land claims, whatever they may be.

This document should not be considered definitive; it is intended to evolve and may be improved over time, depending on subsequent discussions that may take place between the First Nations of Quebec and the Government of Quebec.

Context

At the 15^e Conference of the Parties (COP15) to the United Nations Convention on Biological Diversity in Montreal in December 2022, new global goals and targets were adopted to preserve and reverse biodiversity loss by 2030.

Through their endorsements of the new [Kunming-Montreal Global Biodiversity Framework \(KMF\)](#), the governments of Canada and Quebec have committed to develop government strategies and action plans by 2024 to help protect 30% of land and oceans by 2030 and live in harmony with nature by 2050.

The 2030 Nature Plan is the Quebec government's tool for achieving KMF's global objectives and targets on a Quebec-wide scale. The final version of the 2030 Nature Plan was made public on September 7, 2024, just a few weeks before COP16, which begins on October 21, 2024, in Cali, Colombia.

Although the Government of Quebec has chosen to develop the 2030 Nature Plan using an iterative approach (see Appendix 1), the current result falls short of First Nations' expectations and aspirations.



This observation has several sources :

- 01 **The lack of explicit mention of First Nations' indigenous and treaty rights, of the United Nations Declaration on the Rights of Indigenous Peoples (UNDRIP) and of the principle of Free, Prior and Informed Consent (FPIC);**

 - 02 **The lack of actions and indicators to measure progress in achieving the targets and objectives of the 2030 Nature Plan, and to ensure that First Nations' ambitions for biodiversity conservation are truly taken into account;**

 - 03 **The lack of coherence between the objectives of the KMF and those of the 2030 Nature Plan (certain subjects are absent from the 2030 Nature Plan);**

 - 04 **The leading role of First Nations in biodiversity conservation, as expressed in the KMF, is not reflected in the 2030 Nature Plan.**
-

In response to these elements, the First Nations of Quebec have chosen to work upstream of the Government of Quebec by developing a series of actions and indicators linked to the targets of the 2030 Nature Plan, and which are centred on their needs, interests and aspirations.

These actions and indicators will provide a framework for monitoring the implementation of the KMF in Quebec, while ensuring that the rights of First Nations are duly considered and respected. They also have the potential to serve as a basis for further discussions leading to the development of additional actions and indicators.

First Nations would like to reiterate that they are not simple stakeholders, like other land users, but rather holders of rights enshrined and recognized in section 35 of the Canadian Constitution.

In the KMF, more specifically in [section C \(7\)\(a\)](#), it is explicitly recognized that First Nations are the custodians of biodiversity, that they are key players in achieving the objectives, and that governments must collaborate with them :

The Framework's implementation must ensure that the rights, knowledge, including traditional knowledge associated with biodiversity, innovations, worldviews, values and practices of indigenous peoples and local communities are respected, and documented and preserved with their free, prior and informed consent, including through their full and effective participation in decision-making, in accordance with relevant national legislation, international instruments, including the United Nations Declaration on the Rights of Indigenous Peoples, and human rights law.

In order to ensure that these indicators are properly considered and integrated, First Nations will conduct a progress analysis at the end of the first 2024-2028 action plan of the 2030 Nature Plan.

This document was the result of a major collaborative effort between First Nations in Quebec. The objective of combining these efforts was to reflect, in the actions and indicators, the common issues experienced by First Nations, while building on a flexibility that would encourage consideration of the distinct contexts in which they evolve. We therefore expect the Government of Quebec to respect this document, given its importance and legitimacy among First Nations.



GOAL 1

Protect and restore biodiversity to ensure ecosystem resilience

TARGET 1

Stop biodiversity loss through participatory planning and integrated development respectful of biodiversity throughout Québec, with a view to combating climate change and improving access to nature.

1.1 OBJECTIVE

Develop land-use planning and decision-making tools to foster biodiversity conservation, ecological connectivity and access to nature.



Photo credit :
Isaac Trapper

Generally, the biggest issue here is that the indigenous consultation on these legislative and regulatory tools usually takes place after the decision has been made. The influence of First Nations comments is often limited to minor modifications.

Furthermore, a review of the legislative and regulatory framework supporting biodiversity conservation is needed to correct the inconsistencies stemming from the Quebec government's tendency to prioritize economic development at the expense of biodiversity protection.

Greater recognition of First Nations values, knowledge and expertise, and of their links to the territory, should also be reflected in the legal framework and upstream of decision-making processes.

Currently, the legal framework for land-use planning frequently excludes First Nations from the decision-making process. This is particularly true of land-use development plans and regional wetlands and water management plans, which are the responsibility of regional county municipalities (RCM). Since the obligation to consult lies solely with governments, First Nations are often excluded from the development and decision-making processes surrounding these documents, despite the impact they may have on their rights and practices.

Also, the 2030 Nature Plan (and its action plans) will need to be closely aligned with the municipal climate plans (French only) that will be developed over the next few years. These documents must be linked to ensure consistency in the efforts made to fight climate change.

Funding should support First Nations projects, as well as the development and strengthening of their capacity to conserve and improve connectivity within their territories.

FIRST NATIONS ACTIONS AND INDICATORS

- Require from municipal and regional organizations to report annually on their progress in achieving objectives.
- Provide tools and raise awareness of municipal and regional organizations on First Nations rights and practices.
- Develop a practical guide to improve collaboration with First Nations on biodiversity conservation.
- Develop a toolkit for First Nations to enhance their biodiversity conservation skills.
- Fund the development/implementation of First Nations territorial planning that considers biodiversity conservation and connectivity.
- Raise awareness and integrate First Nations values into government documents affecting public and privatized land use planning.
- Consult First Nations before making decisions related to the legal and regulatory framework.
- Include First Nations fully in the development/modification of the legal and regulatory framework.
- Evaluate the performance of existing tools.
- Integrate ecosystem services assessment into governance.



Photo credit :
Theresa MacLeod Loon

1.2 OBJECTIVE

Encourage nature-based solutions that benefit biodiversity and its resilience to climate change, including through ecological connectivity.



Nature-based solutions must promote and strengthen the ecosystem services of natural environments, which in themselves contribute to biodiversity conservation.

Nature-based solutions are controversial among First Nations. Some find them beneficial, while others criticize them for their tendency to denature an environment. We need to ensure that these solutions respect the principles of biodiversity. To this end, we can refer to guidelines such as those drawn up by [Nature United](#) or the global standard from the [International Union for Conservation of Nature \(IUCN\)](#).

In terms of ecological connectivity, many of today's ecological corridors are located in southern Quebec. However, the resilience of species to climate change will inevitably depend on their connectivity to the north (due in particular to ecological migration). A balance will be required to avoid the creation of «ecological islands» that would be isolated from the rest of the network of protected/conserved areas.

FIRST NATIONS ACTIONS AND INDICATORS

- Produce a statistical report on ecological corridors in Quebec.
Indicator : % surface area of new ecological corridors.
- Ensure the connectivity of the network of protected/conserved areas.
Indicator : % of interconnected protected/conserved areas.

1.3 OBJECTIVE

Support and promote actions aimed at integrated land-use planning that respects biodiversity and promotes access to nature.



The comments made under objectives 1.1 and 8.3 also apply here.

TARGET 2

Initiate restoration efforts for 30% of priority degraded ecosystems to promote biodiversity and access to nature.

2.1 OBJECTIVE

Identify priority degraded environments for restoration with the participation of society as a whole and indigenous communities.



At present, we are beyond the identification process. A multitude of degraded sites have already been identified by various players, including First Nations (e.g. forest roads and abandoned mining sites).

The contribution of First Nations in ecosystem restoration offers them numerous benefits (e.g. job creation, re-establishment of sites of importance for culture and the practice of traditional activities, cultural transmission). Depending on First Nations priorities, restoration projects can also foster the emergence of ecotourism businesses.

FIRST NATIONS ACTIONS AND INDICATORS

- Conduct an inventory of priority degraded sites identified by the First Nations.
- Conduct a portrait of the cultural values impacted by habitat degradation (e.g. black ash or white birch), for each traditional territory.

2.2 OBJECTIVE

Support the restoration of selected degraded environments, such as wetlands and waterbodies, as well as mining sites under government responsibility.



Some First Nations are already planning various restoration projects and measures on their territories. These projects can contribute to achieving the 30% target and are often just waiting for authorization and funding from the Government of Quebec to start.

On the other hand, some First Nations restoration projects fail as a result of the consultation processes that municipalities must carry out with other stakeholders on the territory. This approach undermines indigenous leadership and slows, or even prevents, project implementation.

FIRST NATIONS ACTIONS AND INDICATORS

- Implement restoration projects proposed by First Nations, entrust them with the management and ensure adequate funding.

Indicators :

Number of restored sites identified by First Nations;

% and/or area (e.g. in hectares) of priority degraded ecosystems restored by First Nations;

% and/or surface area (e.g. in hectares) of priority degraded ecosystems restored in collaboration with First Nations.

- Offer training in ecosystem restoration, with accessible content adapted to the diverse realities of First Nations.
- Allocate resources and support to First Nations who carry out restoration projects on their own initiative.
- Promote and encourage indigenous leadership and knowledge in restoration projects.
- Optimize the consultation and approval process handled by municipalities when a restoration project is submitted by a First Nations.

TARGET 3

Preserve 30% of terrestrial and inland water areas and 30% of marine areas in Québec with a focus on effective management, representativeness and ecological connectivity of the sites preserved, while improving access to nature.

3.1 OBJECTIVE

Identify priority areas to improve the network of protected and conserved areas, taking into account the representativeness and the ecological connectivity of its components.



Photo credit :
Johnny Boivin

Once again, the identification stage has passed for many First Nations. Many conservation projects, notably protected areas, have been developed by various communities and are currently stagnating due to a lack of initiative on the part of the Government of Quebec. By giving them legal conservation status, these projects would make a significant contribution to the 30% target. The holistic approach of First Nations is directly rooted in this desire to promote connectivity and ecological representativeness.

It should also be noted that some First Nations conservation projects aim to go beyond biological/ecological objectives, prioritizing objectives of a cultural nature (e.g. conservation of cultural sites which at the same time have a positive impact on biodiversity conservation).

The MELCCFP [call for projects for protected areas in southern public lands](#), which ended on October 15, 2024, will possibly contribute to achieving this target and the recognition of First Nations protected areas.

Finally, it is important to recognize and develop various governance models with First Nations in order to give them, according to their preference, different margins of decision-making power (e.g. to be able to decide on the management regime and activities within their protected area).

FIRST NATIONS ACTIONS AND INDICATORS

- Recognize and prioritize First Nations conservation projects.

Indicators :

% (of the 30% target), number and surface area of terrestrial protected areas proposed by First Nations designated, set aside or implemented by 2027;

% (of the 30% target), number or surface area of marine protected areas proposed by First Nations designated, set aside or implemented by 2027;

% (of the 30% target), number or surface area of terrestrial protected areas proposed by others and supported by designated First Nations, set aside or implemented by 2027;

% (of the 30% target), number or surface area of marine protected areas proposed by others and supported by designated First Nations, set aside or implemented by 2027.

- Encourage, when desired by First Nations, the conclusion of delegated management agreements with First Nations for existing and future protected areas.
- Support the development, mapping and implementation of an Indigenous conservation vision that considers the diversity of First Nations conservation objectives, including those of cultural nature.

Indicator : % (of the 30% target, number or surface area of protected areas per traditional First Nations territory.

3.2 OBJECTIVE

Accelerate the deployment of protected and conserved areas, taking into account the new tools available and Québec's territorial contexts.



This objective will require progress to be made in the process of defining the status of Aboriginal-led protected areas (ALPA) and drawing up the guidelines for their creation, management and implementation. The same applies to the recognition of all other legal conservation statuses. Several First Nations already have such projects on the table and are simply waiting for the «green light» from the Government of Quebec to go ahead. Moreover, their legal recognition by the provincial government is only an administrative step toward their inclusion in Quebec's targets, since some of these projects already benefit from federal funding.

Management delegation agreements (s. 12 of the *Natural Heritage Conservation Act* (NHCA)) are a promising legal tool for First Nations self-determination. They enable First Nations to acquire management powers that initially belonged to the minister responsible for the NHCA.

In this sense, the principle of «adaptive management», as presented in our report «[Towards True First Nations-led Protected Areas](#)» (2023), is a strategy for developing internal First Nations capacities, while acquiring over time new responsibilities beyond the NHCA and with other government departments, in keeping with a vision of stewardship of the First Nations territory.

Take note that for some First Nations, the term “delegation agreement” is not acceptable because it constitutes an obstacle to their self-determination, suggests an implicit recognition of Quebec's sovereignty over their traditional territories, and does not correspond to their aspirations.

On the other hand, Other Effective Conservation Measures (OECM) also represent good opportunities for involving and recognizing First Nations conservation initiatives. Thus, further collaboration between them and the MELCCFP on the development of the OECM guidelines will be essential to adapt this concept to their needs and interests. Since the designation of OECM is a recognition of an existing conservation initiative, they should not be used to inflate the government's progress in achieving its targets and prevent the implementation of new initiatives.

FIRST NATIONS ACTIONS AND INDICATORS

- Establish ALPA with the guide by the end of 2025, which is the date targeted by the MELCCFP.
Indicator : % of ALPA designated by the end of 2025.
- Approve applications for recognition of First Nations ' OECMs.
Indicator : % of OECMs carried out by First Nations by 2027.
- Revise the process for delegation agreements under section 12 of the NHCA to speed up the signature process and to enable the implementation of the adaptive management concept.

3.3 OBJECTIVE

Ensure the effective management and appropriate use of protected and conserved areas to promote biodiversity-friendly access to nature.



Through their ongoing presence and knowledge of their territory, First Nations can make a significant contribution to the effective management of conservation areas, whether in terms of knowledge acquisition, monitoring or surveillance.

In addition, the contribution and expertise of land guardians must be encouraged and promoted. Adequate and multi-year funding must be provided. It's also worth noting that the role of land guardian can take various forms, depending on how a given First Nations see it. These jobs/roles are not always financed by governments and is therefore an initiative of the First Nations.

At present, land guardians have no legal powers (e.g. issuing tickets for infractions), thereby hindering the effectiveness of their work on the territory. It would be beneficial to review existing legal tools in order to grant them certain law enforcement powers.

With regard to the desire to promote access to nature, the comments made under objective 8.3 also apply here.

FIRST NATIONS ACTIONS AND INDICATORS

- Ensure, when desired by First Nations, that management delegation agreements are signed with First Nations and provide them with sufficient resources to carry them out.

Indicator : % of First Nations managing and developing protected areas.

- Set up a funding program for land guardians in Quebec, to complement the existing federal program.
- Implement a recognition process for Indigenous Protected and Conserved Areas (IPCA).



TARGET 4

Protect threatened or vulnerable species (TVS) in Quebec and encourage their recovery.

4.1 OBJECTIVE

Pursue and consolidate the acquisition of knowledge essential to the protection of TVS and those likely to be listed as such, taking into account the scientific, Indigenous and local knowledge available.



Despite the designation of 27 new threatened or vulnerable species in June 2023, more work remains to be done. Several species that should be listed are not, despite their high-risk status, notably wildlife and plant species that are culturally important to the First Nations.

Moreover, some of these culturally important species may eventually become at risk due to climate change and/or continued development of the territory. While the Government of Quebec often justifies its biodiversity conservation actions by the precariousness of resources (e.g. TVS), it would be advisable to adopt in parallel a preventive attitude in order to also work to conserve the abundance of these same resources.

In that view, it may be useful to draw up a portrait of these species, as well as the cumulative effects they have undergone over time, in order to prevent future impacts on First Nations rights and practices.

Finally, although emphasis is placed on species threatened at the provincial scale, some species are threatened at the regional and/or ancestral territory scale.

FIRST NATIONS ACTIONS AND INDICATORS

- Conduct indigenous consultations at the provincial, regional and First Nations territorial levels to identify culturally important species for First Nations whose status is precarious or declining.
Indicator : Portrait of culturally important TVS for First Nations.
- Draw up a portrait of First Nations culturally important species that are at risk of being impacted by climate change and land development.
Indicator : Draw up a portrait of First Nations concerns regarding these species.
- Provide funding to First Nations to conduct research projects on TVS and culturally important species.

4.2 OBJECTIVE

Protect and effectively manage threatened or vulnerable populations and those likely to be listed as such, as well as their habitats, with the collaboration and participation of society as a whole, as well as First Nations and Inuit communities.

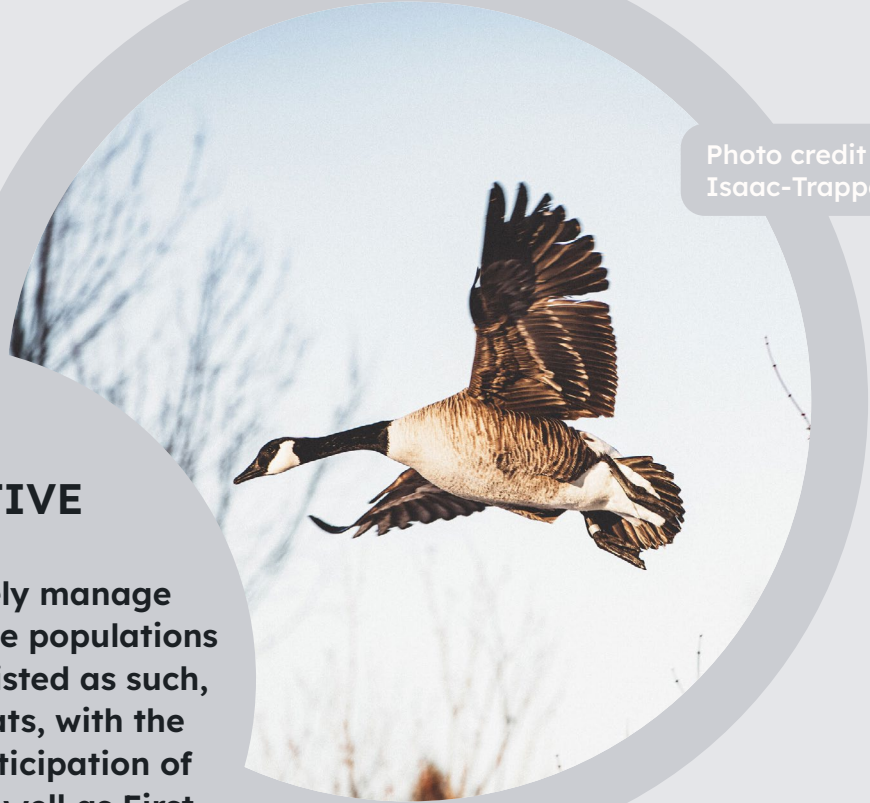


Photo credit :
Isaac-Trapper

The *Act Respecting Threatened or Vulnerable Species* (ARTVS) has not been amended since it came into force over 30 years ago. Revising this law is necessary to adapt it to the current challenges of protecting TVS in Quebec, and to restrict the government's ability to authorize harmful activities in their habitats.

It should also be noted that few habitats are legally designated. This step must follow the one of species designation, particularly in privatized environments (due to the absence of legal tools for this type of territory). Protecting a species and not its habitat has little resonance with the holistic approach of First Nations.

To cite a more concrete example: Quebec's recent announcements concerning the Charlevoix and Gaspésie caribou herds (French only) do not reflect the urgency of action for other declining herds, not to mention the interminable delays associated with the publication of the global strategy.

Furthermore, the protection of culturally important species and their habitats is essential to the cultural transmission and survival of First Nations languages.

FIRST NATIONS ACTIONS AND INDICATORS

- Evaluate the performance and application of the tools available under the ARTVS to protect species and habitats.
- Increase the number of wildlife habitats legally designated under the Act Respecting the Conservation and Development of Wildlife and any other legally protected status.
- Establish partnerships with First Nations to manage and restore wildlife and plant species and habitats.
- Publish a strategy for all declining woodland and mountain caribou herds in Québec that meets the needs of the species and the rights and interests of First Nations.

TARGET 5

Avoid the introduction associated with human activity in Québec of new invasive alien species (IAS) and new pathogens in Québec, stop the spread of those already present, and limit their impact through control measures at priority sites.

5.1 OBJECTIVE

Improve knowledge sharing to prevent the introduction and spread of new IAS and pathogens of concern.



IAS (e.g. Japanese knotweed, giant hogweed, emerald ash borer, etc.) need to be inventoried and controlled to limit their negative impacts on native species. First Nations can contribute to these activities.

FIRST NATIONS ACTIONS AND INDICATORS

- Draw up, in close collaboration with the First Nations, a portrait of the threats facing their culturally important species.

5.2 OBJECTIVE

Broaden the monitoring of IAS and pathogens of concern with the participation of society as a whole and Indigenous communities.



Given their continuous presence on the territory, First Nations are in a good position to contribute to IAS monitoring. Their participation must be accompanied by adequate and multi-year funding.

FIRST NATIONS ACTIONS AND INDICATORS

- Allocate resources to First Nations to inventory IAS on their territories.
- Establish partnerships with First Nations to carry out IAS awareness and monitoring activities.
- Develop preventive measures applicable by First Nations to prevent the introduction and spread of IAS on their territories.

5.3 OBJECTIVE

Limit the adverse effects of IAS and pathogens of concern by implementing control measures.



Given their continuous presence on the territory, First Nations are well placed to contribute to IAS control. Their participation must be accompanied by adequate funding.

Some First Nations are already carrying out IAS-related activities on their territory (e.g. inventories, portraits, monitoring, prevention and eradication). In these cases, the allocation of adequate resources is essential to the successful continuation of these activities.

FIRST NATIONS ACTIONS AND INDICATORS

- Develop partnerships with First Nations to control IAS.
- Allocate resources to ensure the continuation of IAS-related activities carried out by First Nations.



GOAL 2

Encourage sustainable practices that foster biodiversity and enhance access to nature

TARGET 6

Ensure the sustainability of agriculture and aquaculture, especially through the use biodiversity-friendly practices and a reduction of nutrient loads and risks for biodiversity linked to pesticides use.

6.1 OBJECTIVE

Broaden the adoption of agricultural and aquacultural practices that foster biodiversity conservation.



First Nations have a unique knowledge of agriculture. It is important to promote indigenous agriculture, aquaculture and fishing techniques as they support the sustainability of ecosystem services such as soil health, increased food productivity and carbon sequestration.

On another note, it is important to establish resilient agricultural systems in First Nations communities that wish to do so, by implementing regenerative agriculture practices that restore soil health, improve nutrient management, and reduce reliance on synthetic inputs.

Key strategies such as composting, cover cropping, crop rotation, and establishing buffer zones will be employed to enhance biodiversity, mitigate nutrient runoff, and ultimately improve soil and water quality for sustainable development and long-term food security.

FIRST NATIONS ACTIONS AND INDICATORS

- Create an indigenous working group to promote the inclusion of indigenous knowledge in agricultural and aquacultural practices.
- Promote Regenerative Agriculture Practices.

6.2 OBJECTIVE

Reduce the nutrient loads discharged into the environment and risks for biodiversity linked to pesticide use.



Some traditional practices exclude the use of pesticides and high-nitrogen fertilizers. Farmers using these practices are currently facing refusals for crop insurance.

FIRST NATIONS ACTIONS AND INDICATORS

- Legally recognize traditional indigenous practices that do not use pesticides and high-nitrogen fertilizers.
- Establish partnerships with First Nations in projects related to pollution reduction on their territories (e.g. waste management, contaminated sites, etc.).



TARGET 7

Maintain the sustainability of forestry practices, in particular through sustainable resource use and the maintenance of ecosystem services for the benefit everyone, including the indigenous and local communities.

7.1 OBJECTIVE

Encourage the Implementation of measures aimed at adapting forest management and development, especially with respect to climate change.



Photo credit :
Annie Hervieux

For a long time, First Nations have been reiterating their issues and solutions through various forestry-related consultations. Despite Quebec's current consultation on the future of the forests, First Nations have once again been excluded from the decision-making process leading up to the publication of the consultation document.

In response to this situation, the Assembly of First Nations Quebec-Labrador (AFNQL) has published a [statement of First Nations forest principles](#). The purpose of these principles is to protect the rights, practices and lifestyles of First Nations and biodiversity in general. At present, the implementation of the *Sustainable Forest Development Act* (SFDA) is inadequate and does not reflect the sustainable development principles set out in the Act.

FIRST NATIONS ACTIONS AND INDICATORS

- Develop an action plan to implement the First Nations forestry principles. Specific indicators must be attached to each of the 11 principles.
Indicator : Number of principles implemented.
- Implement the recommendations issued in 2015 by the Special technical committee on consultation and accommodation in forestry (CTRCA).
Indicator : Number of CTRCA recommendations implemented.
- Improve the Quebec government's process for managing and closing forest roads following forestry operations.
Indicators :
Develop a mapping tool for Quebec's forest road network;
Number of contracts granted to First Nations for road closures;
% of wildlife and plant habitats impacted by the road network.
- Implement a forest planning approval process by the MELCCFP before the beginning of forestry activities in order to identify habitats sensitive to human disturbance. This approach is already suggested for the conservation measures proposed for the Charlevoix and Gaspésie caribou herds.
- Incorporate biodiversity conservation into the calculation of allowable cut.
- Develop biodiversity conservation targets/criteria for calculating allowable cut, in collaboration with the First Nations.
Indicator : % of biodiversity conservation targets/criteria met.
- Review current targets for old-growth forest conservation.
Indicator : % of new targets met.
- Offer First Nations, who wish to do so, technical and financial support to help them adapt their forestry practices to climate change.
- Support First Nations research projects measuring the impact of forest management on TVS habitats and/or habitats of cultural importance to First Nations.
- Revise standards surrounding riparian strips to potentially increase the minimum distance from watercourses to improve their protection.

7.2 OBJECTIVE

Promote forest conservation and sustainable use on private lands and support private landowners to act accordingly.



FIRST NATIONS ACTIONS AND INDICATORS

- Develop a portrait of private forest producers who collaborate with a First Nations for biodiversity conservation and sustainable forestry.

Indicators :

Number of private forest producers collaborating with a First Nations;

Surface area of forest under collaboration between a First Nations and a private forest producer.

TARGET 8

Strengthen sustainable management and responsible use of exploited species and natural environments to ensure the long-term survival of wildlife and plant populations, preserve the integrity of ecosystems and improve access to nature.

8.1 OBJECTIVE

Ensure ongoing monitoring of fish, game and fur-bearer species and their harvesting, using a broad knowledge base to improve their sustainable management and use.



Photo credit :
Johnny Boivin

First Nations can contribute to the monitoring of exploited species, in particular through their land guardians, who are key players in terms of their knowledge of the area and its resources. Their expertise should be put to good use (e.g. by carrying out inventories).

FIRST NATIONS ACTIONS AND INDICATORS

- Create a provincial funding program to support the efforts of land guardians

Indicators : Number of provincially funded land guardians.

- Establish partnerships with First Nations to monitor species exploited on their territory.

Number of monitoring projects carried out by First Nations and funded by the provincial government.

- Allocate funding to First Nations to carry out wildlife and plant inventories on their territory.

8.2 OBJECTIVE

Promote and implement sustainable use practices for fish, game and fur-bearer species to simultaneously contribute to biodiversity conservation in a spirit of respect for the use that First Nations and the Inuit make of such resources and their associated cultural values.



Photo credit :
Simon Clark

First Nations possess knowledge that could contribute to the achievement of this objective, particularly in terms of responsible harvesting, which ensures the sustainability of the species. Their involvement in the development of awareness-raising tools would also help to improve the public's knowledge of the rights of First Nations on their territory.

The vocabulary used in [target 9 of the KMF](#) should be adopted in its entirety for this objective. In particular, it refers to "Ensure that the management and use of wild species are sustainable, thereby providing social, economic and environmental benefits for people, especially those in vulnerable situations and those most dependent on biodiversity". First Nations and their practices are largely affected by irresponsible species exploitation practices. Target 9 of the KMF also calls for the promotion of indigenous people's traditional sustainable use practices.

FIRST NATIONS ACTIONS AND INDICATORS

- Develop awareness-raising initiatives for land users, in collaboration with First Nations.
- Conclude agreements with First Nations to review species management plans.
- Set up training sessions on sustainable harvesting practices offered by First Nations.

8.3 OBJECTIVE

Facilitate sustainable access to nature for all, including First Nations and Inuit communities, in keeping with existing biodiversity conservation objectives.



Increasing the access to nature can quickly become problematic and undermine biodiversity conservation. A healthy balance needs to be struck between access to these natural environments and the preservation of biodiversity, notably by authorizing only the activities that have little impact on biodiversity (e.g. gathering, canoeing).

Emphasis should be placed on preserving and respecting the rights and interests of First Nations, whose traditional activities are largely impacted by the increased occupation of their territories. More precisely, pressure of different land uses on First Nations territories should be assessed (e.g. vacation lot leases, recreational activities, forestry and mining), notably by drawing up portraits of the cumulative effects on the respective First Nations territories.

Particular attention should also be paid to the extensive network of multi-use roads on public land. These roads lead to increased human disturbance and predation for certain species (e.g. caribou with wolves and bears). What's more, most of these roads have been abandoned by industrialists, as they are no longer their responsibility following their construction work (French only).

These roads also have a direct impact on the health of aquatic habitats, causing sedimentation and, consequently, a loss of biodiversity. Their maintenance and closure become even more important to avoid all these impacts.

FIRST NATIONS ACTIONS AND INDICATORS

- Establish a maintenance, monitoring, closure and restoration plan for Quebec's network of multi-use roads.
- Draw up a portrait of forest roads abandoned by industry and not essential to the practice of First Nations traditional activities.
- Assess the pressure of various uses on First Nations territories and the impact on their rights and practices.
- Develop a framework or tools to assess the cumulative effects of the various activities taking place on First Nations territories.

GOAL 3

Encourage all stakeholders to engage in biodiversity conservation efforts, and make the most of their contributions

TARGET 9

Further incorporate considerations pertaining to biodiversity and its multiple values into government initiatives.

9.1 OBJECTIVE

Take biodiversity impacts into account when awarding grants.



Photo credit :
Annie Hervieux

Grants to large companies need to be better supervised and accompanied by transparent reporting to justify the allocation and use of funds. In the past, money allocated from various government funds has been misused.

For example, under the Green Fund, a number of subsidies have been awarded to large companies, for reasons that are unclear and difficult to link to the fight against climate change. The tax credit for flow-through shares is also a form of subsidy for mineral exploration, which can hinder the creation of protected areas by encouraging the maintenance of mining claims.

The effectiveness of offset systems should also be analyzed, as these systems allow companies to carry out projects/initiatives that are harmful to biodiversity in exchange for financial contributions (e.g. compensation regime for adverse effects on wetlands and bodies of water) (French only). Unfortunately, these financial offsets rarely result in concrete gains for biodiversity.

FIRST NATIONS ACTIONS AND INDICATORS

- Identify government spending (subsidies, programs, infrastructure, etc.) that has an impact on biodiversity and First Nations rights and interests.
- Transfer funds from spending that harms nature to programs that benefit it.

9.2 OBJECTIVE

Ensure biodiversity monitoring in Québec, in particular to support biodiversity-friendly governance.



As for the implementation of the 2030 Nature Plan, monitoring will have to be frequent and transparent, at least at the end of each fiscal year, and not just in 2028, which is the deadline for the 1st action plan.

More specifically, reporting on Target 13 (Indigenous leadership) should be led by First Nations, who are best placed to assess its progress.

Otherwise, First Nations will have to be involved in the development of indicators that will be added in the future to the 2024-2028 action plan, and this for all of the objectives. This involvement will ensure that the indigenous perspective is taken into account during this process.

FIRST NATIONS ACTIONS AND INDICATORS

- Monitor the indicators developed and proposed by the First Nations in this document.
- Produce an annual report for each target, objective and indicator of the 2030 Nature Plan.
- The elaboration of the target 13 monitoring report is drafted by First Nations.

TARGET 10

Help businesses and investors act in favour of biodiversity.

10.1 OBJECTIVE

Help businesses and investors integrate biodiversity into their activities.



FIRST NATIONS ACTIONS AND INDICATORS

- Sensitize companies to practices that are harmful to biodiversity and provide training and tools to achieve this goal.
Indicator : Number of training courses given to companies.
- Require companies to report annually on their efforts to conserve biodiversity.
- Evaluate the performance of various certifications attesting to the sustainable nature of certain products and respect for First Nations rights in their production and marketing methods.

10.2 OBJECTIVE

Support the development of tools to facilitate the disclosure of businesses' and investors' impacts on biodiversity.



TARGET 11

Empower Quebecers to make sustainable consumption choices and encourage greater contribution from economic activities to biodiversity conservation.

11.1 OBJECTIVE

Improve the information available to citizens on biodiversity to guide their consumption choices.



FIRST NATIONS ACTIONS AND INDICATORS

While awareness-raising and education is the right path to take, we mustn't forget that some First Nations communities are more isolated and don't evolve in the same context as those in urban areas, where resources and services are sometimes more accessible. As a result, awareness-raising and the solutions found will need to be flexible and adaptable to the diversity of contexts.

11.2 OBJECTIVE

Reduce the forms of pollution that have the most detrimental impacts on ecosystems and species.



This reduction in pollution must be achieved through better regulatory oversight of the various activities taking place in wildlife habitats and the granting of ministerial authorizations that allow them to take place.

This pollution can come from a variety of sources, such as agriculture and road construction, which add sediment to watercourses, harming aquatic ecosystems and the species that live in them. It's also important to look at pollution sources in the marine environment, not just on land.

In addition, the recovery of certain culturally important species may be closely linked to the reduction of pollution in a given environment (e.g. the eventual recovery of the yellow perch in Lac Saint-Pierre).

Finally, we must work to eliminate the use of chemical products and the presence and accumulation of microplastics in ecosystems, since they have multiple negative impacts on ecosystems and the species they support.

FIRST NATIONS ACTIONS AND INDICATORS

- Reduce the presence of chemicals and microplastics in ecosystems by eliminating their use.

11.3 OBJECTIVE

Bolster the consideration of biodiversity in circular economy projects.



FIRST NATIONS ACTIONS AND INDICATORS

Several circular economy techniques for using First Nations resources should be taken as inspiration (e.g. using the majority of animal parts).

TARGET 12

Increase the financial resources allocated to biodiversity.

12.1 OBJECTIVE

Develop and support biodiversity funding mechanisms.



To contribute to the success of the 2030 Nature Plan, First Nations must have access to adequate and recurring financial resources to support their actions, notably from government funding programs or royalties.

The federal [Project Finance for Permanence: Support for Indigenous-led Conservation Initiatives program](#) is a good example of an innovative funding mechanism. The Government of Quebec should join this initiative and contribute to the realization of long-term indigenous-led conservation projects in Quebec.

Moreover, royalties issued to First Nations for the exploitation of resources on their territory is one of the four main thrusts of the [Lands and Resources Declaration](#) adopted by the AFNQL Chiefs in 2021 :

The right to economic benefits, including the sharing of natural resources and the collection of royalties for the past, present and future exploitation of our territories and resources.

FIRST NATIONS ACTIONS AND INDICATORS

- Implement a natural resource royalty mechanism for First Nations.

TARGET 13

Support indigenous leadership and initiatives in biodiversity conservation.

13.1 OBJECTIVE

Encourage the development, implementation and promotion of biodiversity conservation projects under the leadership of Indigenous nations, communities and organizations.



Photo credit :
Simon Clark

Many First Nations protected area projects are currently stagnating, as they are entangled in the administrative obstacles of the NHCA and/or simply lack recognition from the provincial government. The new ALPA status should be an opportunity for First Nations to assert their leadership, their visions and their responsibilities on their territory.

Indigenous leadership also requires recognition of their governance models and their role in decision-making processes, whether in the governance of an ALPA or any other initiative. First Nations should be able to strengthen their conservation capacities through a clear and concrete increase in their management powers. To this end, it is important that the First Nations in charge of the project is empowered to determine the management and activity regime within the said protected/conservation area.

On another note, section C(7)(a) of the KMF recognizes “the important roles and contributions of indigenous peoples and local communities as custodians of biodiversity and as partners in its conservation, restoration and sustainable use”.

By adhering to the KMF, Quebec has committed itself to respecting these principles, which implicitly include recognition of indigenous rights and the United Nations Declaration on the Rights of Indigenous Peoples (UNDRIP).

In that sense, the Government of Quebec must commit, beyond the process surrounding the 2030 Nature Plan, to co-developing with First Nations a provincial law to implement the principles of the UNDRIP across Quebec’s legislative corpus. This was one of the recommendations of the Viens Commission in 2019 (call to action #3).

FIRST NATIONS ACTIONS AND INDICATORS

- Approve and implement conservation projects.
Indicator : Number of indigenous protected area projects adopted by 2027.
- Develop the ALPA guide in collaboration with the First Nations.
Indicator : Due date (e.g. 2025).
- Recognize the contribution of indigenous conservation projects to the other targets of the 2030 Nature Plan and ensure their access to funding for these targets.

13.2 OBJECTIVE

Support the initiatives of Indigenous nations, communities and organizations for the acquisition, use and valorization of biodiversity-related Indigenous knowledge.



Photo credit :
Annie Hervieux

Here are a few points that must be respected in order to promote indigenous knowledge :

- Respect for the intellectual property of First Nations, in particular according to the principles of ownership, control, access and possession ([OCAP](#));
- Respect for free, prior and informed consent (FPIC), which goes beyond simple consultation;
- Consideration of the First Nations Climate Lens, a tool proposed under the Assembly of First Nations (AFN) [National Climate Strategy](#).
- Recognition of the holistic and special relationships between First Nations people and their lands and waters.
- Recognition of indigenous approaches to research, knowledge acquisition and reconciliation, such as two-eyed seeing.
- Particular attention should be paid to the various «partnerships» with certain scientific organizations/institutions. All too often, these organizations will mention that they have collaborated with a First Nations in order to put an indigenous label on it.
- The conservation of cultural and heritage elements and sites must be recognized and promoted.

In addition, training programs should be established to support the development and strengthening of the capacities of First Nations and their members in the acquisition, processing and analysis of biodiversity data. Such training should be based on the combined use of indigenous and scientific knowledge.

FIRST NATIONS ACTIONS AND INDICATORS

- Develop a guide or guidelines for collaboration between Government of Quebec representatives and First Nations, and the responsible use of their knowledge.
- Develop training programs for the acquisition, processing and analysis of data based on indigenous and scientific knowledge.



Photo credit :
Simon Clark

TARGET 14

Get stakeholders involved with biodiversity conservation and access to nature, while supporting Québec and international cooperation initiatives in this respect.

14.1 OBJECTIVE

Share and promote biodiversity-related knowledge.



The comments made under objective 13.2 also apply here.

FIRST NATIONS ACTIONS AND INDICATORS

- Disseminate and raise awareness of First Nations projects/issues/solutions on selected social media and other platforms, outside biodiversity networks.

14.2 OBJECTIVE

Encourage awareness-raising, outreach and education initiatives related to biodiversity, and support actions to achieve the 2030 Nature Plan's targets.



The comments made under objectives 8.2 and 11.1 also apply here.

14.3 OBJECTIVE

Support provincial and international biodiversity cooperation initiatives and consolidate Québec's leadership in this respect.



FIRST NATIONS ACTIONS AND INDICATORS

- Increase the visibility and influence of First Nations within national and international institutions and delegations.

Indicator : Number of First Nations representatives on Quebec delegations at national and international level.

Conclusion

The present actions and indicators for the 2030 Nature Plan result, as illustrated in this document, from a sense of urgency for biodiversity conservation that is shared among First Nations in Quebec.

These indicators will be essential to ensure proper monitoring of the implementation of the 2030 Nature Plan and its action plans, while ensuring that the rights of First Nations are protected and respected.

Once again, the Government of Quebec must consider and integrate these elements into its action plans and target implementation plans. These conditions are essential to meeting the commitments towards First Nations that are anchored in the KMF, a framework to which the Government of Quebec has voluntarily and knowingly adhered.

As mentioned, the First Nations, through the FNQLSDI, will conduct a review of the implementation of these actions and indicators in 2028 and 2030, in order to assess their integration and consideration by the Government of Quebec.

The First Nations of Quebec wish to contribute to the protection and conservation of biodiversity and their territories, for present and future generations. This work requires collective effort and cannot be achieved without the genuine collaboration of First Nations.



Appendix 1

Quebec government process for the 2030 Nature Plan

Mobilization Phase 1 - Summer 2023 :

Exchange meetings with First Nations were organized on June 7 and 8, 2023 by the Ministère de l'Environnement, de la Lutte contre les changements climatiques, de la Faune et des Parcs (MELCCFP).

Mobilization Phase 2 - Fall/Winter 2023 :

Presentation of the 1^{re} draft 2030 Nature Plan. Information meetings were held on October 31 (French) and November 2 (English) 2023 to inform First Nations about the draft and hear their comments.

Mobilization Phase 3 - Winter/Spring 2024 :

To conclude the strategic component, the MELCCFP presented a new draft of the 2030 Nature Plan, which was adapted according to comments raised during phases 1 and 2. Meetings were held on March 20 (French) and 21 (English) 2024 to present the new draft and provide feedback on the comments raised.

Mobilization Phase 4 - May-June 2024 :

On May 28, 2024, the MELCCFP sent First Nations a document containing excerpts from the future 2024-2027 action plan¹. Meetings on the 2024-2027 action plan were held on June 3,4 (French) and 5 (English), 2024. The deadline for submitting comments on the MELCCFP document was June 18, 2024.

As mentioned, the 2030 Nature Plan is the Quebec government's tool for achieving global KMF objectives and targets at the Quebec level.

¹Please note that in the final version of the action plan made public on September 7, 2024, the action plan runs from 2024 to 2028, rather than from 2024 to 2027 as initially planned.

The process is divided into three main components :

1. 2030 Nature Plan
(Strategic document)

2. Action plans
2024-2028
2027-2030

3. Target
implementation
plans

1. The 2030 Nature Plan :

A strategic document presenting 14 targets and 33 objectives. This document sets out Quebec's major orientations for meeting the objectives set out in the KMF.

2. Action plans :

In the words of the Government of Quebec, the action plan is not a detailed roadmap to 2028 (or 2030). It presents examples of actions to achieve the objectives by 2028.

3. Target implementation plans :

These documents will contain their own objectives and will be linked to targets in the 2030 Nature Plan. As of today, we know that implementation plans are being developed for **Target 3** (Conservation of 30% of terrestrial and marine environments) and **13** (Indigenous leadership).



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