



Community and bay at Salluit, June 2006

Photo: Edith van de Walle

COMMISSION DE LA QUALITÉ DE L'ENVIRONNEMENT KATIVIK
KATIVIK ENVIRONMENTAL QUALITY COMMISSION
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THE COMMISSION'S SUSTAINABLE DEVELOPMENT ACTION PLAN

Following enactment of the *Sustainable Development Act* in 2006, Québec Premier Jean Charest tabled the Government's *Sustainable Development Strategy 2008-2013* before the National Assembly on December 12, 2007. The vision, strategic orientations and objectives of the strategy represent the terms of reference of the government's approach to sustainable development, inviting all departments and agencies to action and inviting the participation of all of society.

The 2008 action plan of the *ministère du Développement durable, de l'Environnement et des Parcs* (MDDEP) proposes a set of actions to implement the principles of sustainable development in its laws, regulations and programs.

As a public agency, the Kativik Environmental Quality Commission is pleased to prepare a sustainable development action plan consistent with its mission, mandate and available resources.

The Commission's action plan outlines the principles contained in the *James Bay and Northern Québec Agreement*, the foundation of the Commission's mission, that serves as the basis for the objectives and actions proposed herein. The activities, indicators and targets of the proposed actions will be evaluated periodically and the results posted on the Commission's website: <http://www.keqc-cqek.ca>.

A handwritten signature in black ink that reads "Peter Jacobs". The signature is written in a cursive style with a large, looping initial "P".

Peter Jacobs
Chairman

Mission of the Kativik Environmental Quality Commission

The mission of the Kativik Environmental Quality Commission (KEQC) is derived from the *James Bay and Northern Québec Agreement* (JBNQA), a modern treaty signed by the governments of Québec and Canada, along with the Cree and Inuit of Québec in 1975. Section 23 of the JBNQA describes the environmental protection regime that applies in Nunavik. It contains various provisions related to sustainable development that underlie all of the analyses of development projects carried out by the KEQC. The following principles apply:

- a) the protection of Native people, societies, communities and economies, with respect to developmental activity affecting the region;
- b) the environmental and social protection regime with respect to minimizing the impacts on the Native people by developmental activity affecting the region;
- c) the protection of the hunting, fishing and trapping rights of Native people of the region and their other rights with respect to developmental activity affecting the region;
- d) the protection of wildlife resources, physical and biotic environment, and ecological systems in the region with respect to developmental activity affecting the region;
- e) the involvement of the Native people and other inhabitants in the application of the environmental protection regime;
- f) the rights and interests of non-Native people, whatever they may be;
- g) the right to develop, in accordance with the provisions of the agreement, by persons acting lawfully in the region;
- h) the minimizing of negative environmental and social impacts of development on Native people and non-Native people and their communities by reasonable means with special reference to those measures proposed, recommended or determined by the impact assessment and review procedures.

Mandate of the Kativik Environmental Quality Commission

The KEQC is a bipartite Commission composed of four members appointed by the Québec government and four members appointed by the Kativik Regional Government. The chairman is appointed by the Québec government with the approval of the Kativik Regional Government. The Commission has a half-time executive secretary.

The mandate of the KEQC is to analyze development projects subject to the environmental and social impact assessment and review procedure established in Section 23 of the JBNQA and Chapter II of the *Environment Quality Act* situated in the territory of Quebec north of the 55th parallel.

The KEQC may, under certain circumstances, determine whether a development project is or is not subject to the environmental impact assessment procedure. If so, the Commission prepares a directive indicating the contents of the impact study that must be produced. The KEQC may request additional information on the project at any time during their analysis. The Commission organizes information and public consultation sessions related development projects under review in order to obtain public feedback on the project. These sessions are normally organized in Nunavik in the communities situated near the site of the proposed development project.

Following its analysis the KEQC transmits its decision to authorize the proposed development project, including the conditions that must be respected, to the Deputy Minister of the ministry of Sustainable Development, Environment and Parks.

A First Sustainable Development Action Plan

For 30 years the work of the KEQC has been carried out in accordance with the above-mentioned guiding principles reflected in the Government's *Sustainable Development Strategy*. Nevertheless, the legal obligation to prepare a sustainable development action plan represents an important challenge for the KEQC.

The KEQC's unique characteristics, including its composition, the origin and occupations of its members, and the relatively limited time devoted to its mission, limit our scope of feasible sustainable development actions. The members reside in different regions of Quebec and are employed by different government departments, universities, and a variety of public and private organizations. Members travel frequently to attend the meetings an average of seven Commission meetings that are held every year to review and analyze submitted files. Public hearings in the North and to visit development project sites. Despite this workload, the members devote only part of their time to the mission and mandate of the organization. Moreover, the KEQC's executive secretary position is currently only a half-time position.

The KEQC is nonetheless committed to contributing to the government's sustainable development approach and has identified concrete and measurable actions that it intends to carry out in the coming years consistent with the orientations and objectives identified in the Government's *Sustainable Development Strategy*,

In order to report on the activities implemented as part of the Commission's sustainable development action plan, the KEQC will produce periodic overviews of its activities that will be transmitted to the MDDEP as well as posted on the KEQC's website.

The KEQC proposes actions that are within its means, given the constraints outlined above. The Government's strategic objective to "Inform, make aware, educate, innovate" is the area in which the KEQC can make the greatest difference through its procedures, directives, project conditions and public information and consultation activities.

SUSTAINABLE DEVELOPMENT OBJECTIVES AND ACTIONS

Objective 1: Help people to become increasingly aware of the sustainable development concept and principles. Promote knowledge and shared experience in this area and assimilate the knowledge and know-how that will facilitate the implementation of development projects throughout Nunavik.

See: Government Sustainable Development Strategy, Objective 1, Direction 1 – Inform, make aware, educate, innovate. Reference: 16 principles defined in the Sustainable Development Act.

Action Foster sustainable development principles and practices that can be integrated into all directives for the proponents of conservation and development projects in Nunavik.

Target 90% of the Commission’s directives will contain a dedicated sustainable development section or related principles and practices integrated into other sections of the directives.

Objective 2: During analysis of the development projects submitted for environmental assessment, support research in sustainable development, as well as the implementation of new practices and technologies that promote this orientation and will serve to advance development project planning in Nunavik.

See: Government Sustainable Development Strategy, Objective 3, Direction 1 – Inform, make aware, educate, innovate. Also in line with the principles of “economic efficiency” and “access to knowledge” defined in the Sustainable Development Act.

Action During the analysis of development impact studies, the KEQC will decide whether or not it is appropriate to request, in connection with each project, knowledge acquisition or performance monitoring of new practices and technologies integrated into the proposed project’s construction or operation, and it will ensure that the knowledge thus acquired is shared with the concerned communities.

Target 90% of the Commission’s directives will contain monitoring conditions related to the acquisition of sustainable development knowledge.

Objective 3: Promote reduction in the amount of energy and natural resources used for development projects in Nunavik.

See: Government Sustainable Development Strategy, Objective 7, Direction 3 – Produce and consume responsibly. Also refer to the principles of “responsible production and consumption” and “internalization of costs” defined in the Sustainable Development Act.

Action During the analysis of development project impact studies, the KEQC will promote project variants that reduce resource consumption and waste production, as well as responsible management of resources and waste.

Target 80% of the Commissions directives will contain project variants that reduce energy consumption and waste production.

Objective 4: Increase citizens' involvement in the assessment of development projects throughout Nunavik and increase the integration of their concerns in KEQC decisions.

See: Government Sustainable Development Strategy, Objectives 24 and 25, Direction 8 – Promote social involvement. Also refer to the principles of “participation and commitment” and “protection of cultural heritage” defined in the Sustainable Development Act.

Action Improve the contents of the KEQC's website as well as related access to information, and encourage project proponents to post their impact studies or summaries in French and in Inuktitut or English on the KEQC's website.

Target 60% of projects submitted to the Commission for which impact studies are posted publicly on the KEQC's website.

LIMITATIONS AND MONITORING

Many principles of sustainable development were integrated into the JBNQA when it was signed in 1975. These principles have always guided the work of the KEQC and the manner that it analyzes development projects. Although care must be taken, it is not feasible for the KEQC to propose new measurable actions for all of the government's objectives as many of the objectives do not apply to the Commission's mandate. The KEQC plans to revise this sustainable development action plan in light of the experience it will gain and the results produced in the coming years, and to make the necessary corrections or add new actions where they are deemed appropriate and feasible.

For more detailed information on the *Sustainable Development Act* and the Québec government's strategy, consult: http://www.mddep.gouv.qc.ca/developpement/inter_en.htm.

For more detailed information on the Kativik Environmental Quality Commission, consult: www.keqc-cqek.ca.