

Context

In order to implement various provisions of the *Agreement on Governance in the Eeyou Istchee James Bay Territory between the Crees of Eeyou Istchee and the Gouvernement du Québec*, the *Act establishing the Eeyou Istchee James Bay Regional Government and introducing certain legislative amendments concerning the Cree Nation Government* was adopted and assented to in June 2013.

In particular, this Act provides for the coming into operation of the Eeyou Istchee James Bay Regional Government (Regional Government) on January 1, 2014. From that moment on, it will replace the Municipalité de Baie-James (MBJ).

This is an historic milestone in the establishment of a real partnership between the Jamésien and the Crees, which will benefit Québec as a whole.

The Regional Government will be governed under the laws of Québec and will exercise the same jurisdictions, functions, and powers on the Category III lands in the Eeyou Istchee James Bay Territory as those currently attributed to the MBJ. The Regional Government will have the ability to affirm its jurisdiction regarding fields of jurisdiction belonging to a regional county municipality (MRC). It will also act as a regional conference of elected officers (CRÉ) with respect to Category III lands in the Eeyou Istchee James Bay Territory.

Territory

The Regional Government will be responsible for the management of the Category III Lands in the current MBJ, which are public lands in the domain of the State. This territory has a total area of approximately 277,000 square kilometers and is situated between the 49th and the 55th parallels.

Operation of the Regional Government

Composition:

The Regional Government will be directed by a **council** composed of **eleven (11) Jamésien representatives, eleven (11) Cree representatives** and, for at least the first five (5) years of operation, one (1) representative of the Gouvernement du Québec without the right to vote.

The **11 Jamésien representatives** will be designated by the Ministre des Affaires municipales, des Régions et de l'Occupation du territoire from among the elected members of the councils of the enclosed municipalities and the persons, other than the Crees, residing within the Regional Government's territory. Collectively, these representatives will have twenty-two (22) votes, to be allocated among the representatives taking into account, in particular, the relative demographic weight of the population represented by these members, that is, the number of residents of the enclosed municipalities and of the residents of the territory represented.

As for the **Cree representatives**, the Chair of the Cree Nation Government will sit on the council of the Regional Government, as well as ten (10) persons designated by the council of the Cree Nation Government from among its elected members. Each member will have two (2) votes.

Chair:

The person serving as chair of the council of the Regional Government shall alternate every two (2) years between a representative of the Crees and a representative of the Jamésien. A random draw shall determine whether the first chair shall be a representative of the Crees or a representative of the Jamésien. When the chair is to be a representative of the Crees, the Chair of the Cree Nation Government shall serve ex officio in that capacity. When the chair of the council is to be a representative of the Jamésien, he or she shall be elected by secret ballot by the majority of these representatives.

Language:

The Citizens will be able to communicate with the Regional Government in French, in English or in Cree. The employees of the Regional Government will be able to work in French or in English.

The Regional Government will, where applicable, take the necessary measures to have any text intended to be understood by a Cree translated into either Cree or English.

Continuity of Services

The services offered by the Municipalité de Baie-James (MBJ) will be maintained.

- ♦ The financial support and municipal services provided to taxpayers residing in the **localities** will be maintained for a period of five (5) years.
- ♦ The fiscal equity agreements for the **zones of service** will be maintained for the duration of their terms, and then they will be renewed for a minimum period of three (3) years.

Advantages

The joint participation of the Jamésien and the Crees in the regional governance of the territory seeks, first and foremost, to promote respectful, harmonious, and constructive relations throughout the Eeyou Istchee James Bay territory. The establishment of the Regional Government will also make it possible to foster the development of the region, ensure better representation of the populations concerned, and provide a structure adapted to the current issues and challenges within the territory.

