



LEGAL AND ADMINISTRATIVE CONTEXT
 SUPPORT DOCUMENT FOR THE
 TACTICAL INTEGRATED FOREST MANAGEMENT PLANS 2023–2028
 Outaouais Region

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Courtesy translation. If there is a discrepancy in interpretation due to the translation, please note that only the official document in French has legal value.

Legal and Administrative Context

Legal context

In Québec, the basic elements of the forest regime are set out in the *Sustainable Forest Development Act* (SFDA). Its aim is to ensure the long-term health of forest ecosystems so that present and future generations can enjoy the environmental, economic and social benefits that these ecosystems provide.

This document presents the main sections of the *Act* on which the Tactical Integrated Forest Management Plans are based. Information on how some of these provisions are implemented locally or regionally can be found in the supporting documents and in the tactical plans.

Provisions governing development activities

The ministère des Ressources naturelles et des Forêts (MRNF) intervenes with respect in the use and development of land and forest resources. Specifically, it manages all aspects of sustainable development for forests in the domain of the State. It promotes the development of the forest products industry and private woodlots. It prepares and implements research and development programs to acquire and circulate knowledge in fields relating to sound forest management and forest product processing. Its responsibilities towards Québec's forests include forest inventories, the production of seedlings and plants for reforestation, and the protection of forest resources against fire, disease and insect infestations. The ***Sustainable Forest Development Act*** governs forest management activities. Under section 1 of the Act, the forest regime is designed to:

- implement sustainable forest development, in particular through ecosystem-based development;
- ensure integrated and regionalized resource and land management based on clear, consistent objectives, measurable results and the accountability of managers and users of the forest;
- determine how responsibilities under the forest regime are shared between the State, regional bodies, Native communities and users of the forest;
- follow up and monitor forest operations in the domain of the State;
- govern the sale of timber and other forest products on the open market at a price reflecting their market value, and the supply of timber to wood processing plants;
- regulate the development of private forests;
- govern forest protection activities.

According to section 54 of the *Act*:

“The Minister draws up a tactical plan and an operational plan for integrated forest development for each development unit, in collaboration with the local integrated land and resource management panel set up for the unit. When drawing up the plans, the Minister may also retain the services of forest planning experts.

The **tactical plan** contains, among other things, the allowable cuts assigned to the unit, the sustainable forest development objectives, the forest development strategies adopted to ensure that allowable cuts are respected and objectives are achieved, and the location of the main infrastructures and the areas of increased timber production. This plan covers a five-year period.

The **operational plan** basically sets out the forest operations zones in which timber harvesting or other forest development activities are planned under the tactical plan. It also contains the harmonization measures adopted by the Minister. The operational plan is updated from time to time, to allow for, among other things, the gradual addition of new zones in which forest operations may be carried out.”, please see the Planning and Monitoring section. For additional information, see the “[Planning and Monitoring](#)” section.

According to section 55 of the *Act*:

“The **local integrated land and resource management panel** is set up in order to ensure that the interests and concerns of the persons and bodies affected by planned forest development are taken into account, to define local sustainable forest development objectives and to agree on measures to harmonize the use of resources.”

According to section 57 of the *Act*:

“**Integrated forest development plans** must be the object of a public consultation held by the body responsible for the composition and operation of the local integrated land and resource management panel or, if applicable, by the regional county municipality to which that responsibility was entrusted under section 55.1. The conduct of the public consultation, its duration, and the documents that must accompany the plans during the consultation are defined by the Minister in a manual which the Minister makes public.

If the Minister holds a consultation, the Minister prepares a report summarizing the comments obtained during the consultation. If the consultation is held by a responsible body referred to in section 21.5 of the *Act respecting the Ministère des Affaires municipales, des Régions et de l’Occupation du territoire* (chapter M-22.1) or by a regional county municipality, the body or municipality, as applicable, prepares and sends to the Minister, within the time determined by the Minister, a report summarizing the comments obtained during the consultation and, in the case of a divergence in points of view, proposes any solutions. The consultation report is made public by the Minister.”

According to section 58 of the *Act*:

“Throughout the process leading to the drafting of the plans, the Minister sees that forest planning is founded on ecosystem-based development and on integrated and regionalized land and resource management.”

According to section 40 of the *Act*:

“The Minister may, for all or part of the forest, impose on persons or bodies subject to a development plan forest development standards different from those prescribed by government regulation, when existing government standards do not provide adequate protection for all the resources of the forest due to the characteristics of the forest and the nature of the project to be carried out. The Minister may also, at the request of a Native community or on the Minister’s own initiative after consulting the Native community, impose different forest development standards to facilitate the conciliation of forest development activities with the domestic, ritual or social activities pursued by the community, or to implement an agreement that the Government or a minister enters into with the community.

The Minister may also authorize a departure from the regulatory standards if it is shown that the substitute measures proposed by persons or bodies subject to a development plan offer equivalent or superior protection for forest resources and the forest environment.

The Minister defines, in the plan, the forest development standards imposed or authorized and specifies the places where they are applicable, any regulatory standards they replace, and the mechanisms for ensuring their application. The Minister specifies, in the plan, from among the fines prescribed in section 246, the one to which an offender is liable for a given offence.”

Provisions relating to Native communities

The SFDA contains provisions specific to Native communities. Thus, section 6 of this *Act* stipulates that “taking account of the interests, values and needs of the Native communities present on forest lands is an integral part of sustainable forest development”. Likewise, section 7 of this *Act* stipulates, in particular, that “the Minister must consult Native communities specifically to ensure that sustainable forest development and forest management take into account, and accommodate if necessary, their interests, values and needs”.

Section 40 of the SFDA thus allows the Minister to impose development standards different from those prescribed by government regulation, to facilitate the conciliation of forest development activities with the domestic, ritual or social activities, or to implement an agreement that the Government or a minister enters into with a Native community.

Apart from the SFDA context, it is important to specify that the MRNF has the constitutional obligation to consult and, if applicable, accommodate the Native communities when it considers making a decision or taking an action that may have prejudicial effects on established or potential Aboriginal or treaty rights.

For additional information, see: <u><i>Sustainable Forest Development Act</i></u>
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Provincial Orientations

To complement the legislation and regulations, the MRNF has devised a set of provincial orientations that set out its approach to the social, ecological and economic aspects of sustainable forest management. A five-yearly review of sustainable forest management is required to report on the progress made and on the implementation of government strategies.

Sustainable Forest Development Strategy

The **Sustainable Forest Development Strategy** serves as the foundation for all the MRNF's policies and actions. It sets out a vision for the progression of sustainable forest management. Its challenges and orientations provide direction for the next 20 to 25 years, while its objectives are more immediate in scope.

Vision of sustainable forest management

The vision in the Strategy addresses the three aspects (environmental, social and economic) of sustainable management. Hence: Québec's forests are a source of pride, wealth, stimulating jobs and development for everyone. Québec is known worldwide for the quality and diversity of its forest, its exemplary, sustainable forest management practices, and the quality of its forestry products and services.

The six challenges

The Sustainable Forest Development Strategy is structured around six challenges, chosen to reflect the Department's vision of sustainable forest management and to cover all forest management in Québec. The challenges are inspired by the environmental, social and economic aspects of the sustainable forest management criterias.

1. Take the interests, values and needs of the Québec population and the Indigenous nations into account in managing the forests.
2. Use forest management practices that ensure ecosystem sustainability.
3. Ensure productive forests that create diversified wealth.
4. Support a diversified, competitive and innovative wood production and forestry industry.
5. Ensure that forests and the forest sector help fight and adapt to climate change.
6. Ensure sustainable, structured and transparent forest management.

Each challenge has its own orientations that set out the direction to be taken when moving forward with sustainable forest management.

The objectives set out the goals to be achieved in the five years following the Strategy's adoption or revision. The actions indicate the steps the MRNF intends to take to achieve those objectives.

Implementation

The Sustainable Forest Development Strategy is aimed at individuals and organizations concerned by the forest because of their activities or interests. It is of relevance to every stakeholder involved in sustainable forest management, in their specific areas of responsibility (e.g. forestry companies, forestry associations, forest users, wildlife agencies, contractors, regional agencies for private forest development, private woodlot owners, Indigenous communities and private citizens).

Given that the Strategy embraces many elements and tools from the current forest regime, it will be implemented gradually, through a management approach focused on objectives and results which leaves more room to select methods and actions that will lead to success.

For additional information, please see:
[Sustainable Forest Development Strategy Reporting — SFDS \(in French only\)](#)

Québec Timber Production Strategy

The **Québec Timber Production Strategy** seeks to build on the economic element of the Sustainable Forest Development Strategy by committing firmly to the creation of wealth from Québec's public and private forests. It provides for consistency in timber production in Québec and offers a means of achieving government climate change prevention targets.

The aim of the Québec Timber Production Strategy is to produce more wood with the characteristics sought by markets, through profitable investments and by developing the forest's existing potential, in order to create more wealth. It introduces a vision, targets and clear objectives for wood production that will be achieved among other things through timber production strategies prepared by individual regions.

The Québec Timber Production Strategy targets an annual harvested volume increase of at least 4 million cubic metres of wood starting in 2025, 13.9 million cubic metres in the period up to 2050, and 23.9 million cubic metres by 2080. These additional volumes will generate economic impacts in every region of Québec. As a result, Québec's forest sector gross domestic product will be in excess of \$3 billion in 2050 and \$6 billion in 2080 (2018 dollars).

The Québec Timber Production Strategy is structured around the following five areas of focus, which in turn are broken down into 11 objectives and 22 specific actions:

1. Production of economically desirable wood;
2. Valorize of available wood;
3. The private forest's contribution to collective wealth;
4. The forest sector's contribution to climate change mitigation goals;
5. Innovation and knowledge;

The Québec Timber Production Strategy is consistent with the government's existing forest sector strategies and measures, including the Sustainable Forest Development Strategy. It also introduces some provincial indicators on which public reports will be published, among other thing through the Sustainable Forest Development Review.

For additional information, please see:
[Québec Timber Production Strategy - Overview](#)
[Québec Timber Production Strategy — PDF](#)

Government Strategy for Climate Change Adaptation

Climate Change and its Effects on Forests

Climate change is caused by the increase in atmospheric greenhouse gas (GHG) concentrations. One of the GHGs of greatest concern is carbon dioxide (CO₂), for which the concentrations have increased 40% over the preindustrial period. This rise is attributable to the increase in the use of fossil fuels and the reduction of forest area worldwide.

Climate change is detected by the change in temperature and the precipitation regime (mean trends and seasonal distribution) and the recurrence of extreme weather events. In Québec, the historical temperatures already show a generalized increase for all regions.¹ Although the variations differ depending on the location, the mean temperature has increased 1 °C from 1961 to 2010. The climate models disseminated by the Consortium on Regional Climatology and Adaptation to Climate Change (Ouranos) forecast even greater changes by 2100.²

On the scale of the Québec commercial forest, annual temperature increases of around 3 to 7 °C are forecast by 2100 depending on the GHG scenarios used and the regions. The mean annual precipitation forecasts are less striking than the temperature forecasts. However, the seasonal distribution of precipitation, in the form of rain or snow, shows more contrasting trends. The models generally forecast an increase in annual precipitation, but stability of summer precipitation and a decrease in winter precipitation in the form of snow. Moreover, an increase in summer temperatures, accompanied by stagnation of precipitation, indicates a greater risk of drought periods.

Climate change will lead to direct and indirect impacts on forests, for example:

- forest species habitats will have to migrate northward with climate warming, because climate influences the possibility of establishment, survival and productivity of forest species;
- the natural disturbance regimes (e.g. fires, insect epidemics) will be altered, which will affect the range of species, the age structure of forests and in some cases, forest resilience;
- other species could take advantage of the new climate conditions. These opportunities could foster forest resilience and diversify the timber development options;
- the habitat of the animal and plant species associated with the forest environment will therefore also be affected by climate change.

¹ MINISTÈRE DE L'ENVIRONNEMENT ET DE LA LUTTE CONTRE LES CHANGEMENTS CLIMATIQUES, DE LA FAUNE ET DES PARCS. Service Info-Climat. [En ligne] [\[Service Info-climat\]](#) (2020, may 15).

² OURANOS (2015), Vers l'adaptation. Synthèse des connaissances sur les changements climatiques au Québec. Partie 1 : Évolution climatique au Québec, Édition 2015, Montréal, Québec, Ouranos, 114 p.

The interactions among the effects of climate change are difficult to quantify. However, it can be expected that the species subject to climate conditions that are less favourable to them will be more vulnerable to extreme climate episodes, such as droughts or insect epidemics.

Impact on Natural Disturbances

Accounting for the effects of climate change in forest development is a major challenge. To begin the work, the MRNF is currently working to identify the issues raised by climate change for forests, in collaboration with different partners. The impacts on the natural disturbance regime are among the priority issues to consider. The following paragraphs describe the main natural disturbances that will have an impact on the territory and the work in progress.

Forest Fires

Forest fires influence the composition, structure and dynamics of Québec forest ecosystems. Climate change will have impacts on occurrence of fires: lengthening of the season conducive to fires, increase in days of drought when fires are more likely to be triggered, etc. The majority of the studies converge on an increase in the fire regime in the Spruce-lichen, Spruce-moss and Fir-White Birch bioclimatic domains, with a greater impact in western Québec.

The fire regimes in the bioclimatic domains of southern Québec should also be affected upward, but to a lesser degree.

The MRNF, under the 2013-2020 Climate Change Action Plan, documented the severity of forest fires and regeneration of boreal ecosystems in a context of global changes. Long-term modelling of the impact of Québec forest fires based on the most frequent and most intense fires is in progress under the 2030 Plan for Green Economy (PGE).

Spruce Budworm (SBW)

During the last century, SBW epidemics occurred about every 30 years. The duration and severity of epidemic episodes are modulated by:

- the presence and abundance of host species (fir and spruce);
- the influence of weather conditions on the insect's performance;
- the response of natural enemies.

The SBW causes significant mortality in the Balsam Fir domains due to the concentration of host species in these domains. In fact, the Balsam Fir is more vulnerable than spruce to defoliation and thus more subject to mortality. Mature trees in poor health or located in pure stands composed of vulnerable species are also more at risk of defoliation.

Climate is one of the main factors that controls the insect's development. Consequently, it is very likely that climate change will have an impact on range, frequency and severity of the damage over the next few decades.

The anticipated provincial criteria are as follows:

- a northward displacement of the northern defoliation limit;

- a reduction of population growth or defoliation frequency at the centre of the historical distribution belt;
- the persistence of the southern defoliation limit is variable according to the studies and seems related to the persistence (or not) of host species to the south.

The MRNF is currently developing improved methods for monitoring of disturbances based on satellite imaging to support mapping of annual SBW defoliation and produce data on the state of loss of vegetation vigour in the affected areas. In particular, a tool for continuous monitoring of the state of forest cover based on artificial intelligence and satellite imaging is in development (Treenetsat) in a study area located in the Québec mixed forest.

Forest Tent Caterpillar Moth

The Forest Tent Caterpillar Moth is present throughout the province's bioclimatic domains, with the exception of the Spruce-moss bioclimatic domains, where the insect is only present in the southern portion. Climate is the main factor that controls the range and the dynamics of Forest Tent Caterpillar Moth epidemic periods. Other factors influence the occurrence of defoliation: the species, the composition of the stand and the state of health of the trees. Trembling Aspen is the species most vulnerable to defoliation by the Forest Tent Caterpillar Moth. It is followed by Paper Birch, Sugar Maple and Red Oak.

The anticipated climate change should affect the insect's range, and the frequency and severity of the damage it will cause in the coming decades. No study exists that has documented the probable evolution of the Forest Tent Caterpillar Moth's range in Québec. Nonetheless, North American studies have retrospectively analyzed the impact of climate on the behaviour of epidemics and have issued certain hypotheses about changes to watch:

- a northward expansion of the range without contraction in the south;
- an increase in the frequency and severity of epidemics due to the insect's lower mortality during mild winters;
- an alteration of the synchronism, cyclicity and frequency of epidemics if climate anomalies are greater than that of Forest Tent Caterpillar Moth epidemics.

The monitoring tools mentioned in the SBW section will also allow improvement of detection of the areas affected by the Forest Tent Caterpillar Moth in order to limit its impacts.

Drought

A drought corresponds to a water shortage resulting from abnormally low precipitation, abnormally hot temperatures and a combination of the two. Southern and western Québec suffer droughts more frequently than other sectors of Québec, where the mean temperature is lower and/or annual precipitation is more abundant.

The impacts of drought depend on many factors, such as scope, intensity, duration and the time (season) when it occurs. Its effects on forests also depend on the cumulative stress and the time elapsed between two drought episodes, which may limit or allow recovery of the trees.

The models indicate that southwestern Québec, already characterized by relatively drier summer conditions compared to the rest of the province, will be the region most affected by future climate droughts.

Some research is continuing under the PGE to document the effect of droughts on forest productivity and regeneration to better predict the resilience, growth and allowable cuts in a context of climate change. In particular, work for the purpose of increasing the resilience and adaptability of forests by means of forest genetics will allow a short-term change in forest practices by the production of seedlings adapted to future climate conditions.

Complementary Approaches to Fight Climate Change

The fight against climate change is conducted on several fronts, both to mitigate the effects of global warming and to adapt to new conditions.

Mitigation of climate change has the goal of reducing GHG emissions and sequestering them outside the atmosphere. Forests contribute naturally to mitigation, because they sequester and store carbon in vegetation and in the soil. They thus act as carbon sinks. The forests occasionally act as a carbon source (e.g. during years of major forest fires). Forest management contributes to the mitigation effort when practices make it possible to increase forest productivity and the harvested timber is transformed into long-lived forest products. In addition to storing carbon, forest products can replace materials for which production requires large quantities of energy and which were manufactured from oil products. In particular, biofuels can replace fossil fuels to reduce GHG emissions. The increase in wooded areas (e.g. by afforestation of non-forest sites, such as fallow agricultural lands) may increase the mitigation potential of the developed forest. Likewise, ecosystem conservation strengthens the sequestration capacity of forests by protecting major carbon sinks, such as wetlands and certain old-growth forests.

Despite the efforts deployed in mitigation, climate change will be felt and risks accentuating in the future. To limit the anticipated negative impacts on forest ecosystems and take advantage of opportunities, efforts must also be invested to **adapt** forest management and development to new conditions. Thus, forest ecosystems will be able to maintain their resilience and productive capacity to continue to deliver all the ecological services expected by society.

Integration of issues related to the effects of climate change in the forest planning process

The *Sustainable Forest Development Act* considers that forest management must account for the effects of climate change on forests. The Sustainable Forest Development Strategy goes in the same direction by determining objectives with the goal of integrating the effects of climate change into forest management and development (Objectives 2 and 3).

Since 2016, the Ministry has worked to determine the issues raised by climate change in forest management. In October 2021, the Ministry tabled a Draft Climate Change Adaptation Strategy for Forest Management (CCASFM) in public and Indigenous consultations. This strategy is based on four key topics, which involve:

- In-depth knowledge of the impacts of climate change;

- Stronger management of risk associated with natural disturbances;
- Maintenance of the forest's productive resilience and capacity;
- Ongoing access to the forest.

The CCASFM will allow ongoing development of knowledge related to the effects of climate change and gradual deployment of concrete actions on the provincial and regional scales to adapt sustainable forest management and management practices.

It will also make it possible to meet Objective 3 of the Québec Timber Production Strategy: “Increase the robustness of management strategies so that they are able to withstand risk and uncertainty in the context of climate change”. This objective will be achieved through the Regional Timber Production Strategies (RTPS), particularly by:

- Including risk management guidelines for natural disturbances in management strategies;
- Diversifying timber production options to address different issues;
- Gradually incorporate the impacts of climate change into forestry plans;

These actions will be integrated progressively into the RTPS to account for the knowledge that will be developed in the first years following deployment of the CCASFM.

The MRNF action plan on integration of climate change into forest planning will be rooted in the CCASFM. In the short term, it will depend on intensification of acquisition of knowledge with the aim of documenting the anticipated issues and improving the understanding of the forest development adaptation options. In the longer term, it will seek to adapt the current forest strategies and practices to account for the effects of climate change. Until then, the MRNF is already implementing several actions to enable the ecosystems and the forest sector to prepare to deal with climate change (Table 1).

Table 1 Examples of Current and Future Actions for Adaptation of Forests to Climate Change

Action	Acquisition of knowledge	Adaptation of development
Current actions		
Diagnostics of regional vulnerabilities	X	
Research project on the use of new species in reforestation in southern Québec to increase the resistance and resilience of ecosystems	X	
Research project on the adaptability of regeneration of the main northern temperate and boreal species to future climate conditions	X	
Research project on the trajectories of managed forests in response to natural disturbances: better prediction of resilience, growth and allowable cut in a context of climate change	X	
Deployment of assisted migration of genetic provenances during reforestation with White Spruce and Black Spruce		X
Conservation of wetlands and riparian areas to favour connectivity		X
Maintenance of a forest reserve with the historical proportions of old-growth forests		X
Maintenance of residual forests in the aggregated cut blocks to favour habitat connectivity		X
Maintenance of residual trees in certain total cuttings to favour natural regeneration		X
Renewal of seed orchards		X
Analysis of monitoring systems to verify their ability to detect current changes	X	
Due to the increased presence of Western Gall Rust: limit Jack Pine reforestation in harvested Jack Pine forests and reforest them mixed with Black Spruce in management units 073-52 and 074-51. In the other management units, replace reforested Jack Pine with White and Red Pine.		X
Favour mixed reforestation (mix of species)		X
Increase the number of reforested Red Oak seedlings in MUs 071-51, 072-51 and 073-51 in replacement of previously reforested Yellow Birch.		X
Future actions		
Improvement of monitoring systems to detect current changes	X	
Update of species composition objectives (if required according to the regional diagnostics)		X
Deployment and documentation of silvicultural tests of silvicultural adaptation scenarios	X	
Analysis of economic profitability of different integrated management options for risks related to natural disturbances (prevention, detection, preventive silvicultural practices and direct fighting)	X	
Characterization of vulnerability of the forest road network to anticipated flow variations	X	
Review of the Regional Timber Production Strategies		X
Approach with the Table régionale de gestion intégrée des ressources et du territoire de l'Outaouais (Outaouais Regional Integrated Land and Resource Management Panel) and the Indigenous communities to assess the issues related to climate change for the various stakeholders in the territory.	X	X

The MRNF is also active in mitigation of the effects of climate change by the development of knowledge and tools intended to maximize the contribution potential of natural environments and timber products to GHG emissions reduction. To this effect, the first PGE implementation plan confirms a budget of \$16.9 M at the MRNF up to 2025-2026.

The MRNF intends to play a key role in development of the understanding of vulnerability and opportunities related to climate change. It will strengthen its capacity to detect its effects as they occur. By relying on a range of knowledge sources and thus on exchanges with forest environment actors, the MRNF will be able to perfect and deploy coherent adaptation solutions over time within its field of activity.

Environmental Management System

The Regional Operations Sector has established and adopted an environmental and forest-related policy that asserts the Sector's undertaking to:

- comply with and even exceed legal requirements;
- continue to improve its environmental and forestry performance;
- prevent, reduce and fight against pollution;
- act like an informed owner.

To implement its environmental and forest-related policy, the Sector has deployed an environmental management system based on sustainable forest management criteria.

The system applies to activities governed by the SFDA concerning forestry plans, management of contracts and agreements, and monitoring and control of forestry work.

Companies that carry out forest development work on behalf of the MRNF also take actions that affect the environment. They must therefore have a certificate recognized by the Minister (ISO 14001 or Forest Management Certification) to show that they are able to control the environmental repercussions of their own activities. By being accountable, the forest development companies support the MRNF by helping to implement and monitor forest management work based on sound environmental management practices. It is also a way of harmonizing practices, standardizing norms, facilitating communications between the MRNF and its collaborators, and ensuring that forest certification is maintained over time.

Planning and Monitoring

The MRNF is responsible for forest planning and management on public land, for carrying out work in the forests, and for monitoring and controlling that work. It fulfills its responsibilities and exercises its powers in compliance with the Sustainable Forest Development Strategy.

Public Land Use Plan

The **public land use plan** is a general guidance tool that structures the actions of the government departments and agencies responsible for managing land and resources in the domain of the State. The public land use plan is drawn up at administrative region level. It presents and conveys the government's orientations for public land use and protection. These orientations are prepared jointly by several different departments and agencies, under the responsibility of the MRNF. The MRNF must take the government's orientations, as presented in the public land use plan, into account when managing public land. Coordination steps are provided for in the integrated forest development plan preparation process.

Compliance with zoning information (e.g. conservation, priority or exclusive use, etc.) from the public land use plan has been incorporated seamlessly into the strategic and operational planning process. It is assured by means of a regional tool to control the use of the forest, which incorporates exclusion zones and special conditions for management activities. In addition, the objectives specific to multiple use zones are taken into account in the legislative and regulatory framework, by the integrated land and resource management panels, in measures to address the values and issues set out in the Forest Management Strategy, through the public consultation process and through the harmonization process with partners.

For additional information, please see:
[Public Land Use Plan](#)

Forest planning

Forest management activities are planned at MU level by the MRNF regional office concerned. There are two plans: the **tactical integrated forest management plan** and the **operational integrated forest management plan**. These plans are prepared as part of a collaborative process at regional level, using an ecosystem-based approach to sustainable forest management. They reflect the efficiency objectives and targets set for forestry work.

Tactical Integrated Forest Management Plan

The tactical plan covers a period of five years. It presents the sustainable forest management objectives, along with the strategy that will be applied to achieve those objectives and ensure compliance with allowable cuts.

The MRNF's planner must propose management solutions that address the social, economic and environmental issues identified by the local integrated land and resource management panels for the management unit. The chosen solutions then serve as a basis for selecting the best possible silvicultural scenarios.

Operational Integrated Forest Management Plan

The operational plan mainly presents the forest operations zones in which timber harvesting and other management activities (non-commercial silvicultural work and road work) will take place in accordance with the tactical plan. In other words, it identifies the zones in which forestry work will be carried out.

The planner works with the timber marketing board to identify the sectors in which timber will be sold on the free market. The timber marketing board's role is to establish the yearly merchantable value of standing timber and other products from the public forest, and the amount of annual dues to be paid by supply guarantee holders. It does this by means of a public bidding process. Under the *Sustainable Forest Development Act*, any person or body can purchase timber by taking part in the auction sales announced on the timber marketing board's website.

For additional information, please see:
[Timber Marketing Board](#)

Annual planning

The **annual plan** presents the prescribed, harmonized forest operations zones in which forest management activities will take place in a specific year. The plan is prepared in compliance with the forest development strategy set out in the tactical plan, based on the forest operations zones presented in the operational plan. The annual plan for harvesting work is drawn up by the holders of rights in the forest, under an agreement with the MRNF, while the annual plan for non-commercial work is prepared by the MRNF itself.

Special development plans

When a large tract of forest is damaged by a natural disturbance (forest fire, insect infestation or windfall), the MRNF draws up a special management plan to ensure that the timber is salvaged and, where necessary, the damaged areas are restored to production.

For additional information, please see:
[Forest planning](#)

Forest Certification

Forest certification is a voluntary process in which an independent, accredited certification body certifies that forest management practices comply with predetermined sustainable forest management standards. These standards are developed by different certification systems.

Three internationally recognized forest certification systems can be used in Québec. They are administered by:

- the Sustainable Forestry Initiative (SFI);
- the Forest Stewardship Council (FSC);
- the Canadian Standards Association (CSA).

Although each forest certification system has its own specific features, they all cover the major issues currently encountered in sustainable forest management and promote a form of forest management that is ecologically, socially and economically responsible.

In Québec's public forests, it is the supply guarantee holders that generally obtain forest certification. The MRNF fulfills its responsibilities by encouraging the companies to obtain and maintain certificates. Exchange and collaboration initiatives have been set up for this purpose, including the operations panels, which help to align certification needs with forest plans.

Certification is primarily a business decision to develop new markets, address customers' requests or convey a responsible brand image. Certified companies therefore select the certification system that best suits their needs. For the MRNF, forest certification provides additional recognition for the quality of sustainable forest management achieved by Québec's forest regime. In addition, it helps to improve forestry practices.

Generally speaking, a certificate is awarded for a management unit, or for the area covered by a tactical plan. All timber harvested in a certified area can be sold under the certification system's trademark. A certificate may cover several management units (multi-site certificate or multiple unit certificate). In some cases, a management unit may be covered by more than one certificate.

The regional and local issues, objectives, management strategy and silvicultural scenarios in the tactical plans address some of the specific requirements of certified management units. Other aspects that meet forest certification requirements include public consultations and consultations of Indigenous communities before the tactical plan is accepted.

A [provincial map](#) shows certified areas by certification system, in each management unit.

For additional information, please see:
[Forest certification](#)

Regional forest certification data

The forestry companies holding forest development certificates for areas located in the region are listed in the table below. For further information on these certificates, including the results of verification audits, please visit the certification body's website by clicking on the name of the company.

For each region, a map to management unit scale shows the areas certified by each certification system.

Table 2 Regional forest certification

Certification system	Certificate holder	Type of certificate	Scope of certificate on public land
SFI	Louisiana Pacific Corporation	Multisite	071-51, 071-52, 072-51, 073-51, 073-52, 074-51
SFI	Produits forestiers Résolu Canada inc.	Multisite	071-51, 071-52, 073-51, 073-52, 074-51

See the Québec Government's ecoforest data portal: [Forêt Ouverte](#)
[Forêt Ouverte: Certification forestière en forêt publique](#)

Forest Monitoring

The inputs used in the forest planning process are derived from knowledge and an understanding of the issues. Knowledge acquisition and monitoring helps to understand how ecosystems react and change. Inputs vary by region and interact with other factors in a complex way.

Several forest ecosystem monitoring systems are already used in Québec, including:

- The ecoforest inventory of southern Québec;
- The forest ecosystem oversight network;
- The natural disturbance detection systems
- Biodiversity monitoring.

These monitoring systems, through their scope and the recurrent nature of their data collection activities, are important in identifying the impacts of sustainable forest management. Data on the success of previous work is also used to guide future strategies and influence future tactical plans.

To optimize the data acquisition process, improve its ability to detect change and facilitate the application of appropriate adaptations, the MRNF uses an approach that includes exchanges and complementarity with other authorities that are active in the forests, including universities, federal research centres, private forest partners, First Nations and other key partners and players.

Types of monitoring

Under the *Sustainable Forest Development Act*, the MRNF is responsible for monitoring forestry work. To do this, it verifies the quality of management work and the extent to which the objectives established during the planning process have been achieved. Monitoring provides important information for the implementation of the management strategy and ongoing improvements to practices.

Validation monitoring

Monitoring and identification of impacts are important, not only to understand how ecosystems react to and change as a result of development scenarios, but also to inform predictions and reduce uncertainty. The MRNF monitors the impacts of forestry work in the medium and longer terms, using a network of sample plots to measure the real impacts of silvicultural treatments. The network, established by the Direction de la recherche forestière, in collaboration with the MRNF's regional offices, is used to verify initial assumptions concerning the natural evolution of the forest and the anticipated impacts of different silvicultural treatments.

Compliance monitoring

Compliance monitoring (also known as “compliance control”) is carried out immediately upon completion of forestry work and is designed to see whether that work, done by a silvicultural company or forestry company, is in compliance with the silvicultural prescription, the applicable standards and the conditions set out on a permit, contract or agreement under the *Sustainable Forest Development Act*.

The silvicultural prescriptions produced by the MRNF contain operational instructions and treatment success criteria that are used to assess compliance and calculate the amounts of any financial assistance that may be payable. The prescriptions are prepared in line with the *Guide sylvicole du Québec* and the measurement methods associated with the criteria and assessed during the compliance monitoring process are described in the [Guide d'inventaire et d'échantillonnage en milieu forestier](#).

The companies carrying out the work must provide a declaration of compliance with the Regulation respecting the sustainable development of forests in the domain of the State (RSDF) and any harmonization measures. The declaration must be produced under the supervision and authority of a forest engineer.

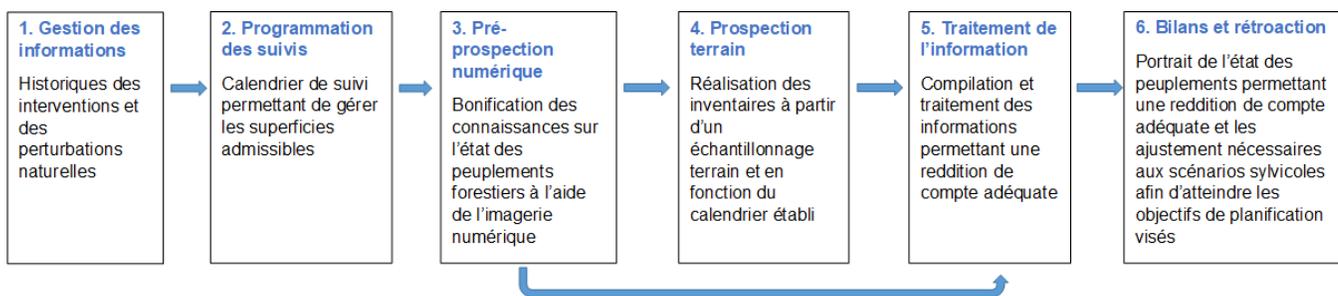
The MRNF has established a management framework for reporting and control. The framework describes the control activities, their aims and how they should be carried out, for example by means of a start-up meeting, site visit, end-of-work declaration, annual report or accountability. Together, these control activities are designed to identify problems so that remedial action can be taken where necessary. Among other things, regional control plans verify the quality of the information provided by stakeholders and confirm the quality of the work done. The sample-based risk management approach helps to ensure that the objectives are met and that the stakeholders themselves are accountable. Control efforts are adjusted to the scope of the silvicultural investments and the level of risk presented by the forest development activity concerned and the company responsible for carrying it out.

Situations are documented and reported to the companies concerned, so that ongoing improvements can be made. In short, the results of the control process are used to adjust or improve practices and forest development strategies where necessary. Penal proceedings may also be instituted.

Efficiency monitoring

The purpose of efficiency monitoring is to see whether the actions taken in the forests have enabled the objectives to be achieved, in particular with respect to the establishment and condition of post-treatment regeneration.

The efficiency monitoring process is designed to ensure timely identification of potential problems (establishment or release of regeneration, etc.), so that appropriate remedial measures can be planned and the objectives can be achieved. It also facilitates the accountability.



Provincial indicators have been adopted to assess the efficiency of silvicultural work. These indicators include targets and monitoring timeframes, which vary by type and intensity of silvicultural work. Minimum thresholds must be met, based on stocking for regeneration (in the case of site inventories) or cover (in the case of digital imaging inventories). These indicators focus on two types of monitoring:

Regeneration establishment monitoring (area regenerated):

- for clear-cut areas;
- for partial cut areas;
- for areas subjected to natural disturbances occurring since 2013 and with no special management plan (salvage);

Regeneration condition monitoring (free growth area):

- for areas that have been subjected to a treatment involving artificial regeneration (planting and fill).

Table 3 Summary of provincial indicators of regeneration establishment and condition.

Work monitored	Intensity	Timeframe for threshold achievement	Threshold required
1. Clear-cut (Regular structure)	Extensive	10 years post-harvest	Commercial tree species: stocking \geq 50 % or cover \geq 50 %
	Basic	5 years post-harvest	Desired tree species: stocking \geq 60 % or cover \geq 55 %
	Intensive/ Elite	5 years post-harvest	Desired tree species: stocking \geq 75 %
2. Partial cut aimed at establishing regeneration of desired species (Regular, irregular and selection structure)	Basic	5 years after the last regeneration work	Desired tree species: stocking \geq 60 % or cover \geq 55 %
	Intensive/ Elite		Desired tree species: stocking \geq 75 %
3. Natural disturbance with no special salvage development plan	Extensive	10 years after a major disturbance	Commercial tree species: stocking \geq 50 % or cover \geq 45 % If a salvage plan is applied, monitoring is as for clearcutting
4. Artificial regeneration work	Basic	15 years post-planting	Future desired species: stocking \geq 60 % or cover \geq 60 %
	Intensive/ Elite		Future desired species: stocking \geq 75 %

Regional monitoring

Different types of monitoring can be carried out at regional level. For example, regions may establish their own regional indicators for use in monitoring silvicultural diagnoses and scenarios. In addition, monitoring may address the regional timber production strategy or various regional issues. The types of monitoring to be carried out are described in detail in the tactical plan for the management unit.

Participatory Management

Today, forest management is influenced by a number of elements, including the range and diversity of forest users, ecosystem sustainability requirements, an increased demand for new uses of forest resources, and consideration of community expectations. To take all these different interests, values and needs into account, the MRNF favours participatory management through which forest users can be involved in the planning process. Under the *Sustainable Forest Development Act*, the forest planning process uses two participatory mechanisms, namely the local integrated land and resource management panel, and public consultations.

Local integrated land and resource management panel

The local integrated land and resource management panel (TLGIRT) brings together the people and organizations concerned by the territory's forest management. This Table has a mandate to cooperate with the MRNF in the development of Tactical and Operational Integrated Forest Management Plans. It must identify the local forest management issues and formulate recommendations to the MRNF so that it can consider them in forest planning. The TLGIRT's recommendations must respect the national

directions (e.g. Sustainable Forest Development Strategy, Québec Timber Production Strategy) and the regional directions (e.g. Public Land Use Plan).

In accordance with section 55 of the *Sustainable Forest Development Act*, the panel's composition and operations, including its dispute resolution panel, fall under the responsibility of the Minister or, where applicable, the competent bodies mentioned in section 21.5 of the *Act respecting the Ministère des Affaires municipales, des Régions et de l'Occupation du territoire* (chapter M-22.1). The Minister or body must, however, ensure that the following individuals or bodies, or their representatives, are invited to take part in the panel:

1. The Indigenous communities, represented by their band council;
2. The regional county municipalities and, if applicable, the metropolitan community;
3. The holders of a timber supply guarantee;
4. The individuals or bodies that manage controlled zones;
5. The individuals or bodies authorized to organize activities, provide services or carry on a business in a wildlife reserve;
6. The holders of an outfitters' licence;
7. The holders of a sugar bush management permit for acericultural purposes;
8. The lessees of land for agricultural purposes;
9. The holders of trapping licences who hold a lease of exclusive trapping rights;
10. The regional environmental councils.

See the document entitled "Analysis of issues" for additional information on the issues chosen and the means by which they are considered in the forest planning process.

In 2015, the regional county municipalities (RCM) of the Outaouais region and Ville de Gatineau signed a first agreement with the Ministry to obtain delegation of part of the management of the Sustainable Forest Management Program (PADF). In Outaouais, the Pontiac RCM is the delegated RCM designated to administer the PADF in accordance with section 21.5 of the *Act respecting the Ministère des Affaires municipales, des Régions et de l'Occupation du territoire*. This Program, renewed in March 2022, particularly allows funding of the operation of the Table régionale de gestion intégrée des ressources et du territoire de l'Outaouais (TRGIRTO, Outaouais Regional Integrated Land and Resource Management Panel) and implementation of specific projects in this regard.

Moreover, the TRGIRTO is the only Local Integrated Resource Management Planning Table in Outaouais. It covers the 6 management units placed under the responsibility of the Direction régionale de la gestion des forêts de l'Outaouais (DGFo-07, Outaouais Forest Management Department). The TRGIRTO brings together a total of twenty representatives from various sectors of activity and interest on public land, composing the groups listed above.

Table 4 Organizations that compose the TRGIRTO

Sectorial group	Partner	Organism
Ligneous material	Forest industries appointed by the Comité consultatif MRNF- Bénéficiaires de garantie d'approvisionnement (MRNF-Timber Supply Guarantee Holders Advisory Committee)	Louisiana-Pacific Canada Ltd.
		Resolute Forest Products
		Commonwealth Plywood Company Ltd.
		Lauzon Ressources forestières
Wildlife	Wildlife partners appointed by the Table régionale Faune de l'Outaouais	Outaouais Outfitters Association
		Association des zones d'exploitation contrôlée (ZEC) de l'Outaouais
		Société des établissements de plein air du Québec (SÉPAQ)
		Fédération québécoise de chasse et pêche – section Outaouais
Other users with rights	Forest worker (call for candidacies)	Forest worker
	Regroupement des locataires de terres publiques Outaouais/Laurentides	Regroupement des locataires de terres publiques Outaouais/Laurentides
	Citizen (call for candidacies)	Citizen
	Outaouais member clubs of the Fédération québécoise des clubs quads	Fédération québécoise des clubs quads
	Outaouais member clubs of the Fédération des clubs de motoneigistes du Québec	Fédération des clubs de motoneigistes du Québec
	Syndicat des producteurs acéricoles Outaouais-Laurentides	Sucrerie BeauBel
Nature	Organizations dedicated to conservation and environmental protection (call for candidacies)	Société pour la nature et les parcs du Canada
		Club des ornithologues de l'Outaouais
		Pontiac Environmental Protection
		Conseil régional de l'environnement et du développement durable de l'Outaouais
Territory	RCM de Pontiac (RCM Pontiac)	RCM Pontiac
	RCM Vallée-de-la-Gatineau	RCM Vallée-de-la-Gatineau
	RCM des Collines-de-l'Outaouais	RCM des Collines-de-l'Outaouais
	RCM de Papineau	RCM de Papineau
	RCM de la Vallée- de-l'Or	<i>Vacant</i>

The TRGIRTO meets 5 to 6 times a year. It annually identifies priority issues on which it wishes to work during the year. A working committee is formed for each issue and is composed of the actors interested in it. In general, the working committee discussions can specify the problems related to the issue discussed, raise the related concerns, and agree on a recommendation to propose to the TRGIRTO for adoption. The recommendations then are transmitted to the MRNF for consideration in planning of forest management if the analyses allow. For any additional information, visit the TRGIRTO website at the following address: www.trgirto.ca.

For additional information, please see:
[Panel Guide](#)
[Additional Info](#)

Public consultations

Section 57 of the *Sustainable Forest Development Act* provides that the integrated forest management plans must be the object of a public consultation. The consultation process and duration, as well as the documents that must be provided with the plans during the consultation, are identified by the Minister in a published manual.

Changes to the plans and consultation

A public consultation is also required for any changes or updates to the integrated forest management plans (section 59 of the Act). In these cases, the consultation applies only to the additions and substantial changes to the plans.

Public consultations are also required for special management plans and any changes to them. However, if the Minister believes that a special development plan must be applied urgently, for example if it is needed to avoid deterioration or loss of timber, it is not necessary to hold a public consultation, either for the plan itself or for any changes to it (section 61 of the Act). For additional information, please see the [Public Consultation Manual](#) (link below).

For additional information, please see:
[Public Consultation Manual](#)

Harmonization

Harmonization measures may be needed to address the interests, values and needs of the various stakeholders when planning forest management activities. Harmonization measures are actions or decisions that reconcile forest management with the other activities taking place in the forest.

The MRNF recognizes two types of harmonization measures:

1. Usage harmonization measures
2. Operational harmonization measures

Usage harmonization measures are steps recommended by panel participants or participants in public or Indigenous community consultations on the integrated plans, to address issues or concerns that are not generally addressed through local management objectives.³ The Minister may choose to include all or some of these steps, or may decide not to include them. A usage harmonization measure addresses an issue that affects a potential forest operations zone. It is important to note that the MRNF itself may propose usage harmonization measures.

³ The Guide de la TLGIRT defines a local management objective as an action that can respond to an issue relating to a group of sites (all lacks in a territory, all salmon rivers in a region, a soil type, etc.) or a territory (a management unit, a wildlife reserve, etc.). It could modify the management strategy with the goal of reconciling forest management activities with other users or functions of forest land, designated as issues by the TLGIRT participants.

Among other things, a usage harmonization measure may result in a change to the silvicultural treatment (silvicultural prescription), the boundaries of an operations zone or the location of a main or strategic road infrastructure⁴ to address an issue or concern identified by the panel or by a participant in a public consultation or an Indigenous community consultation on a forest plan. A measure does not usually change the way in which operations are conducted on a worksite.

The Agreement on the sharing of forest planning and certification roles and responsibilities, entered into in 2013 by the Ministry and the Conseil de l'industrie forestière du Québec (CIFQ) and revised in 2015, made the forest industry responsible for operational harmonization in logging sectors intended for supply guarantee holders and sold by the timber marketing board.

Operational harmonization measures are adopted to address concerns about forest management activities on worksites. Concerns of an operational nature are processed by the supply guarantee holders, which are responsible for carrying out the operational harmonization process with the participants concerned, including Indigenous communities,⁵ as provided for in the Agreement. Where the concerns relate to non-commercial silvicultural work, operational harmonization measures are processed by the Ministry or by a delegate.

Operational harmonization measures may affect detailed operational timetables, wood transportation, road construction or improvement, the location of an extraction road (on a worksite),⁶ or an aspect of road maintenance.

Indigenous community consultations

The consultations with Indigenous communities must be conducted in compliance with the parameters established by the Supreme Court of Canada regarding the obligation incumbent on governments to consult their Indigenous communities and, if applicable, accommodate them.

The MRNF particularly relies on the Interim Guide for Consulting the Indigenous Communities, which constitutes the government policy in this matter. The Guide provides general guidelines allowing better operationalization of the constitutional obligation incumbent on the Gouvernement du Québec to consult Indigenous communities. It also specifies the notion of accommodation that arises, in some cases, from the obligation to consult.

Moreover, the MRNF distinctly consults the Native communities affected by forest planning, as provided in section 7 of the SFDA. The purpose of these consultations is to know the communities' concerns and interests regarding the potential effects the planned activities could have on their rights and activities carried on for food, domestic, ritual or social purposes and accommodate them, if applicable. The Indigenous communities are also invited to take part in the work of the local integrated land and resource management panel.

⁴ Main or strategic road infrastructures are roads that provide access to worksites. According to the definitions in the Forest Manual (2009), these infrastructures are generally primary or secondary road categories.

Under the Agreement on the sharing of forest planning and certification roles and responsibilities, supply guarantee holders are responsible for preparing the road infrastructure plan. However, the MRNF is responsible for usage harmonizations relating to main and strategic road infrastructure planning.

⁵ The Agreement on the sharing of forest planning and certification roles and responsibilities sets out the supply guarantee holders' duties to the Native communities, in particular with respect to consultations on annual plans.

⁶ According to the definitions in the Forest Manual (2009), this category tends to group tertiary roads and winter roads.

Consultation conditions specific to Indigenous communities may be defined between these communities and the MRNF. They may pertain to the consultation phases and deadlines, the nature of the information exchanged, the preferred methods of exchange, the definition of the accommodation measures, and the nature and method of feedback.

For additional information, please see:
[Secrétariat aux affaires autochtones | Gouvernement du Québec \(quebec.ca\)](#),
under « Publications »

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