



Context

Many countries around the globe rely on mineral resources to drive their industrial output. Nunavik is rich in mineral resources. The region's mineral exploration and mining potential was recognized in the *Sanarrutik Partnership Agreement on Economic and Community Development in Nunavik* (2002). Mining represents a significant force for generating training, jobs, contracts and investment opportunities.

Currently in the region, there two operating mines (Raglan opened in 1997 and Nunavik Nickel is scheduled to open in 2013), several mining projects at various stages, and more than 72,000 mineral exploration claims (i.e. about 30% of all the claims staked in Québec). Through the Plan Nord and the Québec Mineral Strategy, the development of mining potential in the north of the province is strongly endorsed by the Québec government.

A Few of the Challenges

Inuit depend on renewable resources, such as caribou, arctic char and waterfowl, for their subsistence, but the habitats of harvested wildlife are often the same areas coveted for mineral exploration and mining projects.

Mineral resources are not renewable, but the exploitation of some of the region's mineral deposits could create employment for more than 50 years each.

Many mining development activities are being conducted in the region without contact with nearby communities and regional organizations.

The region's ecosystems are fragile and especially vulnerable to climate change and industrial activities.

Environmental protection legislation is not always effectively enforced at all stages of development: mineral exploration, mining operations and closures.

No educational institution in the region has dedicated education programs in geosciences and mining technologies to help Nunavimmiut obtain employment in mineral exploration and mining projects.

Solutions and Priorities

The guaranteed Aboriginal rights of the Nunavik Inuit and the Sanarrutik Agreement will help ensure dutiful mining development. Specifically, Section 2.3 of the Sanarrutik Agreement is a commitment by Québec to encourage and facilitate the signing of agreements between the Makivik Corporation and mining companies concerning remedial measures and project monitoring, financial arrangements, and employment and contracts.

