

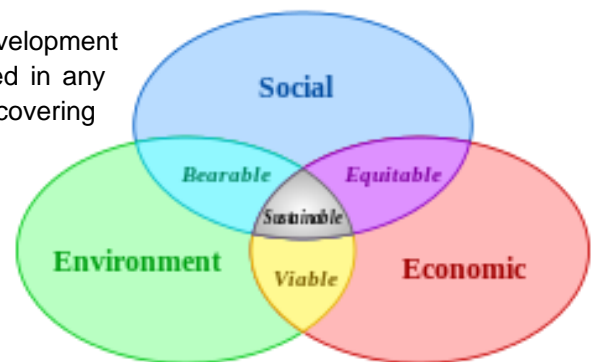


Context

Environmental management and land use planning in the Kativik Region is based on the fundamental principle of conservation. This principle applies to all types of land and resource use, regardless of whether the resources are renewable, non-renewable or heritage-related. The term conservation does not mean not developing resources, but instead refers to using them with care and judgment according to the needs and welfare of present and future generations.

This principle is reiterated in the fundamentals of sustainable development wherein the environment is one of three aspects to be considered in any development and specifically during the evaluation of projects covering their entire lifecycle.

In 2011, the Québec government committed to setting aside 50% of the territory for environmental protection, safeguarding biodiversity, promoting our natural heritage as well as for various types of development that do not rely on industrial activities.



A Few of the Challenges

Inuit depend on a healthy environment as it supplies them with renewable resources, such as caribou, arctic char and waterfowl, for their subsistence harvesting. At the same time, the region must take steps to foster a climate for economic development and local creation of wealth. These two seemingly contradictory needs are putting pressure on the environment in Nunavik; an environment which is already subject to various impacts stemming from climate change. Some of the impacts of climate change on the environment include permafrost thawing, changing ice conditions and changes in the frequency and severity of extreme weather events.

The region's stakeholders have made tangible advances towards the sustainable development of lands. The *Master Plan for Land Use in the Kativik Region* was approved in 1998; however, regional by-laws need to be adopted in order to implement the Master Plan.

Various proposed projects for natural resource development are emerging and the current mechanisms for environmental impact analysis do not sufficiently take into account the social and cultural aspects of the environment.

Currently, regional stakeholders are hard pressed to analyse proposed development projects and an integrated and harmonized process is lacking. This leads to various regional entities and departments working on projects with seemingly diametrically opposed objectives. At the same time, there is a need for the reinforcement of environmental protection, including increased monitoring and enforcement of operations as well as a stronger overall environmental assessment process with environmental monitoring committees.

The following guidelines need to be established:

- Establishment of a sustainable development concept;
- Valorisation of natural resources with the common good at heart;
- Expression of a shared vision of the region's stakeholders;
- Compliance of local and regional designated entities with their responsibilities;
- Consideration of previous orientations, principles and development plans;
- Conformity with legal frameworks and treaties as well as compliance with all statutes and rights in force.

Solutions and Priorities

Further to an extensive consultation carried out with all regional stakeholders in 2009, the Québec government gave the region a mandate to create a Regional Plan for Integrated Land and Natural Resources Development. This planning process aims to identify regional issues and formulate related orientations in the form of objectives and actions in order to arrive at a regional development vision. The production and implementation of an Integrated Plan is subject to consultation in order to ensure that the values and needs of all stakeholders are accurately and sufficiently represented.

The Integrated Plan will be complementary to the vision being developed through Parnasimautik. The Integrated Plan will focus primarily on issues directly related to the management of natural resources and reiterate the fundamental values expressed through Parnasimautik.

In 2010, community consultations were carried out for 14 proposed bio-diversity reserves and an overall protected areas proposal will be finalized by the spring of 2013. At the same time, the region and communities are cooperating with Québec to develop and create parks. Proposed protected areas, which include biodiversity reserves and parks, will likely total more than 20% of Nunavik. Further, other areas may be excluded from industrial development.

Further to work on the Integrated Plan, specific initiatives are:

- Incorporate the region's preoccupations and input in a meaningful manner into the ecological planning being carried out by Québec.
- Unify the vision of stakeholders pertaining to resource development through various working groups (ex. Western Ungava Bay mine development working group).
- Adopt by-laws at the regional level for the implementation of the Regional Master Plan and at the local level (northern villages and landholding corporations) pertaining to the sustainable development of lands.
- Undertake impact analysis and steps with the landholding corporations to ensure that Category I lands are suitable for the respective needs of all of the communities.

Discussion

Various proposed projects and initiative for natural resource management and development are on-going in the region. In order to have a better understanding of the real impacts of these projects on the environment, the region's stakeholders must "step back" from the specific project details and define their vision for the sustainable use of resources. By working together, the various entities which have a vested interest in the environment and land use will be able to present a unified discourse as well as realize synergies in terms of resources and time.

