A Common Vision of Our Future

2007-2012 Strategic Plan
for the Outaouais Region

Outaouais

Preamble

The *Conférence régionale des élus de l'Outaouais* (CRÉO) is proud to present the Regional Strategic Planning 2007-2012 for the Outaouais area. Using the theme "A common vision of our future", it is the fruit of contributions from several hundred stakeholders from Outaouais, as well as their organization. We would like to acknowledge this. We would also like to add a special mention for members of the board of directors, members of regional commissions and the internal CRÉO team.

The development vision we defined is the expression of our collective aspirations. It indicates the pursuit of an ideal to be reached so we can offer all Outaouais citizens lasting life quality through sustainable development.

Achieving our development orientations involves a responsible commitment from stakeholders engaged within structured regional initiatives and rests on the innovative potential of our communities.

At the request of participants at the regional Forum "*Towards a common vision of our future*" held on 15 September 2006, and as privileged representative of the Government of Quebec for regional development, the *Conférence régionale des élus de l'Outaouais* (CRÉO) is committed to assuming regional leadership in the pursuit of our common development vision, notably by supporting community mobilisation and ownership of their own development.

With the determination to coordinate and support regional actors, in line with their mission and mandate, in order to influence and achieve regional development, the *Conférence régionale des élus de l'Outaouais* (CRÉO) will provide a strong, solid voice to our region to acquire the power to decide, act and invest.

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Development vision for the Outaouais region

The vision statement describes an ideal to accomplish and a direction for getting there. Because it is rooted in the region's identity, it projects a strong image of how the Outaouais wants to develop

The Outaouais is a border region—egalitarian, inclusive and innovative, it is conscious of its identity, diversity and potential—a place where urban and rural areas develop in complementarity through their dynamic occupation of the territory and responsible utilization of its resources.

The Outaouais offers all its citizens a quality of life that corresponds to the aspirations of its communities and is supported by sustainable development.

Integrated approach to regional development

The challenges of development are increasingly complex and interdependent and a more integrated approach must be adopted to better meet them.

The aim of an integrated approach to regional development is to ensure that all stakeholders in the Ouatouais base their analyses, decisions and actions concerning development ona participatory, territorial, cross-cutting, comprehensive and horizontal approach that is based on common values.

To be successful, regional development interventions require a systematic reading of the issues, adaptation to the situations of different territories and communities; greater consistency of actions and synergy among the principal stakeholders.

One of the challenges is to stimulate discussion and partnerships with the Algonquin Aboriginal communities, to contribute to harmonious cohabitation and establish operational relationships between regional structures and First Nations.

Based on values

Base our decisions and actions on shared values, notably, respect, solidarity, equality and equity.

Participatory

Foster the participation and support the commitment of citizens, partners and communities in the design and implementation of development actions.

Territorial

Taking into account the border context, develop adapted and consistent strategies to meet the challenges and potential of the different types of territories in the Outaouais: urban areas and rural territories.

Within urban areas and rural territories there are weakened areas characterized by extensive socio-economic deterioration that demand specific action.

Cross-cutting

Aim for inclusiveness of all citizens and gender equality by taking their situations and needs into account in analyses, decisions and actions concerning development.

Comprehensive

Take into account the economic, environmental, educational, cultural, sports, social and health dimensions, and the globalization context, in the design and implementation of development strategies and actions.

Horizontal

Increase the capacity and ensure consistency of interventions through the coordinated action of local, regional and governmental partners.

Overall development strategy for the Outaouais region

Coordinate and support regional stakeholders, while respecting their missions and mandates, in order to influence and achieve regional development and give a strong and united voice to the Outaouais—enabling it to make decisions, act and invest.

Development focuses of the Outaouais region

Education, research and science

Knowledge

Be a knowledge centre by focusing on the acquisition and transfer of knowledge and the development of competencies

Culture, recreation and sports

Well-being and affirmation of identity

Affirm our identity and develop our capacity of attraction and retention by positioning the Outaouais as a dynamic region where culture, recreation and sports are part of the daily lives of all citizens.

Environmental protection, land-use planning and transportation

Environment

Ensure that communities have a healthy and sustainable environment by promoting dynamic occupation of the territory, responsible utilization of resources and accessible transportation of people and goods.

Economic development and employment

Innovation and prosperity

Improve citizens' standard of living through the development of an entrepreneurial and diversified economy that is open to the world, promotes employment integration, and is based on a competent and qualified regional labour force.

Social development and health

Vitality

Ensure communities' vitality and people's improved health and well-being through citizens' active participation in their development and that of their community; the promotion of a healthy lifestyle; and service accessibility, while respecting their fundamental rights.

Development Focus

Environmental protection, land-use planning and transportation

Environment

Ensure that communities have a healthy and sustainable environment by promoting dynamic occupation of the territory, responsible utilization of resources and accessible transportation of people and goods.

Issues	Strategic goals
Protect and enhance the territory and its resources.	

Territory

- Harmonize, on a regional basis, development plans and regulations to adequately respond to protection and development needs throughout the territory, notably regarding densification and urban sprawl;
- Ensure regional consistency of strategies and actions for the protection of biodiversity, protected areas, climate change, drinking water, agricultural land, aquatic and forest ecosystems;
- Control territorial development to preserve biodiversity, ecosystems, agricultural land, protected areas, and regional landscapes and heritage.

Integrated regional management of residual materials

- Stimulate and support the City of Gatineau and the MRCs in the research, formulation and implementation of regional solutions with a view to harmonizing the management of residual waste.

Water

- Expand regional awareness of the potential and vulnerability of water sources;
- Ensure the protection of groundwater and surface water;
- Ensure the enhancement of and access to drinking water.

Climate change and air quality

- Define regional guidelines for implementation in the areas of climate change and air quality maintenance.

Outaouais as a fluvial area

- Update the "Outaouais as a fluvial area" characterization concept by implementing the following integrated development plans (IDP):
  - IDP of the Outaouais River;
  - IDP of the Gatineau River and the du Lièvre River;
  - IDP of the Petite Nation River;
  - IDP of the Outaouais' trail network;
  - IDP of Outaouais' building and natural heritage;
  - Integrated protection and management plan for tributary basins.
- Explore the possibility of formulating new IDPs, notably for:
  - Du Moine River;
  - Coulonge River;
  - Noire River.

Issues (continued)	Strategic goals (continued)
Regionalize the integrated management of natural resources and proclaimed territory	**Regional management** • Create a regional commission on natural resources and proclaimed territory; • Draft and implement the regional integrated development plan of natural resources (forests, fauna, mines, energy and water) and proclaimed territory. **Resources** • Ensure the increased participation of local communities in managing their territorial resources; • In allocating forestry resources among the territories, prioritize product certification, transformation for added value, and direct spin-offs on employment; • Prioritize certified users' access to territorial resources.
Promote access to the territory and people's mobility at the regional, inter-regional and interprovincial levels	**Transportation infrastructures and services** • Continue the integrated development of transportation in the Outaouais (peoples, merchandise, information, energy, resources and navigable routes); • Complete construction of Highway 50 and the region's principal arteries while respecting rural-urban balance; • Harmonize the Outaouais-Eastern Ontario transborder link; • Support the consolidation and development of airport infrastructures and operations in the Outaouais. • Promote the development of public transportation infrastructures and adapted transportation; • Promote regional harmonization of regulations respecting heavy transport; • Preserve the public utility corridors allocated to rail transport, energy and communications; • Promote and develop alternative transportation methods (train, bicycle, walking, car pooling and car sharing).
Position the Outaouais at the cutting edge of North American knowledge and sustainable development	**Scientific centre for sustainable management and silviculture** • Support UQO and the Institut québécois d'aménagement de la forêt feuillue (IQAFF) in the development of structuring regional projects in the fields of scientific research and knowledge transfer in silviculture and sustainable management of the deciduous forest and the Eastern white pine; • Promote the intensive and sustained management of the deciduous forest and Eastern white pine; • Consolidate the integrated regional management of digital georeferencing information processing. **Environmental certification** • Establish use standards and certification for products derived from the utilization and processing of territorial resources; • Promote monitoring and control in the area of organic certification.

Development Focus

Social development and health

Vitality

Ensure community vitality and improved public health and well-being through the active participation of citizens in their development and that of their community; promoting a healthy lifestyle; and accessible services, respecting people's fundamental rights.

Issues	Strategic goals
Ensure accessibility and proximity of services in each territory of the region	• Consolidate and develop services in close proximity, modeled on communities' specific needs, by ensuring a basic service offer in all domains for each territory and, especially, by taking social integration and the reduction of inequalities into account; • Promote the adjustment of certain programs and training based on communities' specific nature and needs; • Encourage, support and promote innovation in service delivery and ensure their continuity; • Foster the participation of citizens in the preparation and implementation of the service offer.
Increase the vitality of communities	• Support and develop strategies to attract and retain people in communities, notably youth and families; • Support the emergence and consolidation of local and regional initiatives to promote community control over their development; • Reinforce communities' capacity to establish an environment that is conducive to health and the adoption of a healthy lifestyle; • Promote the social and economic integration of people requiring specific types of intervention, in particular, through diverse means, including academic success and awareness-raising of employers; • Encourage and promote individuals' contributions to their communities, locally and regionally; • Support the establishment of mechanisms to stimulate skills transfer; • Support strategies to combat violence against women and to support youth in difficulty; • Encourage women's and young people's representation in decision-making and consultative bodies.

Issues (continued)	Strategic goals (continued)
Promote individuals' active participation in ensuring their well-being	• Promote health and prevent social and health problems by acting on the determinants; • Reinforce people's capacity to make positive choices regarding their health and well-being, particularly concerning diet, physical activity, tobacco use and mental health.
Reduce socio-economic inequality by fighting poverty and social exclusion	• Support diverse policies, strategies, measures and initiatives aimed at reducing socio-economic inequalities among the territories and reducing the poverty of individuals and families; • Draft an integrated regional anti-poverty strategy and obtain the means to ensure its ongoing implementation; • Promote access to affordable quality housing that is adapted to different specific needs; • Promote respect for differences and inclusion.
Adjust to anticipated demographic changes	• Ensure the ability to meet the needs of an aging population and of young families; • Develop reception and retention strategies for people migrating to the Outaouais: • Set up and consolidate reception and integration mechanisms for immigrants that take into account cultural diversity through the sensitization of host communities and socioprofessional integration measures.

Development Focus

Economic development and employment

Innovation and prosperity

Improve the standard of living of citizens through the development of an entrepreneurial and diversified economy that is open to the world, promoting employment integration, and based on a regional, competent and qualified labour force.

Issues	Strategic goals
Support the development of entrepreneurship and improve business competitiveness	**Support entrepreneurship as an engine of economic development** • Encourage the development of an entrepreneurial culture and a new generation of entrepreneurs; • Create an environment that is conducive to women's and youth entrepreneurship; • Encourage the creation, attraction, retention and intergenerational transfer of SMBs throughout the territory; • Improve managers' strategic management capacity; • Promote business' access to capital to ensure their development; • Support regional businesses in developing new local, regional, national, governmental and international markets, notably in terms of their integration into federal government and international supply chains; • Promote the advantages of local purchasing to the regional population and businesses; • Develop the offer and access for businesses and individuals to telecommunications, notably to the broadband network in rural territories. **Support innovation to improve business' competitiveness** • Design and implement a regional social and technological innovation strategy; • Encourage research and development in businesses; • Encourage technology transfers and expansion; • Create bridges between the regions' businesses, institutions and research centres. **Support the development of the social economy** • Encourage regional coordination of sector stakeholders to ensure the emergence, consolidation and development of businesses, notably cooperatives; • Promote solidarity-based and responsible consumption; • Support innovation in the development of new products and services.

Issues (continued)	Strategic goals (continued)
Diversify the economy by developing high potential sectors	**Tourism** • Consolidate and improve the regional tourism offer by developing cultural tourism, sports tourism, Outaouais fluvial, the trail network, heritage attractions and natural sites, farm tourism, outdoor recreation and ecotourism; • Coordinate and network with tourism stakeholders to promote the development of the regional tourism offer. **Technology sector** • Promote the emergence, consolidation and attraction of technology enterprises with respect to the regional and National Capital context; • Develop the technology sector through coordination and networking of stakeholders, businesses and and the education/training sector; • Support implementation of the plan to develop the language industry's excellence niche, in particular, the consolidation and development of the Language Technologies and Research Centre (LTRC); • Support the drafting and implementation of the plan to develop the emerging niche: "Integration of technologies and business processes." **Forest products** • Consolidate and reorient the industrial forest sector through innovation and added value; • Support implementation of the development plan for the "Hardwood production and processing excellence" niche. **Agri-food** • Increase agricultural production and per hectare revenue, notably of horticultural and cattle production businesses; • Diversify regional agriculture by developing organic agriculture, farm tourism and other niche productions; • Develop agri-food processing; • Develop strategies and support marketing of regional agri-food products; • Ensure environmental compliance of agricultural enterprises without compromising their continuing viability; • Support the start-up and transfer of agricultural enterprises to ensure the establishment of the sector's next generation. **Cultural industries** • Promote the emergence, development and consolidation of cultural enterprises to ensure the increased reach of Outaouais cultural production locally, regionally, nationally and internationally.

Economic development and employment (continued)

Issues (continued)	Strategic goals (continued)
Develop a competent and qualified work force based on current and emerging labour market needs	**Work force** • Implement work force planning and retention strategies with regard to the major demographic challenges, notably through work-family balance measures; • Support businesses in work force planning and training, in face of, among other things, massive retirements in the upcoming years; • Support businesses in developing innovative and high performance human resource management models; • Ensure that a training offer adapted to the needs and situations of the region's different territories is made available and accessible throughout the territory; • Promote the integration and continued employment of people requiring specific types of intervention due to barriers to employment; • Support the formulation and implementation of the regional action plan of the Conseil régional des partenaires du marché du travail de l'Outaouais; • Encourage and support professional diversification toward non-traditional and scientific careers; • Ensure work force employment qualification through continuing education and prior learning assessment mechanisms.
Maintain and develop our capacity to act and invest in local and regional development	**Local, regional and sectoral organizations** • Ensure that local, regional and sectoral organizations obtain the resources needed for implementation of development guidelines. **A regional public administration that is present, accessible and adapted to communities' needs** • Maintain and consolidate the Québec government's presence in the region; • Consolidate and develop jobs offered throughout the territory by the Québec public service; • Accelerate the regionalization of programs and adapt them to the regional context; • Consolidate federal government jobs offered in the Outaouais.

Development Focus

Culture, recreation and sports

Well-being and affirmation of identity

Affirm our identity and develop our attraction and retention capacity by positioning the Outaouais as a dynamic region where culture, recreation and sports occupy a place in the daily lives of citizens.

Issues	Strategic goals
Consolidate and develop an offer in culture, recreation and sports in response to community needs and make it accessible in an equitable manner throughout the territory	• Meet needs by improving the quality and increasing the quantity of equipment and infrastructures; • Offer and support affordable, varied and of quality in cultural, recreational and sports activities throughout the territory of the Outaouais, notably by sharing infrastructures among schools and cities; • Foster citizen participation in designing and implementing the offer; • Increase the ongoing participation of people of all ages in cultural, recreational and sports activities, notably by offering adequate transportation services; • Ensure the optimal development of different sectors by increasing human and financial resources.
Affirm our sense of belonging and develop Outaouais' reputation	• Support excellence in culture, recreation and sports and promote its success models; • Support professional artists and creators in order to contribute to the enrichment of the region and its outreach, through ongoing training and the production and diffusion of cultural products; • Consolidate and develop major regionally identified events in culture, recreation and sports throughout the Outaouais territory; • Stimulate and support citizen participation in organizing and promoting events; • Protect, enhance and publicize our distinctive heritage, historical and natural wealth; • Promote the inclusion and contributions of different cultural communities in developing culture, recreation and sports.

Develop our attraction and retention capacity by implementing structuring projects in partnership with other regional stakeholders	• Ensure regional consistency in the implementation of structuring projects:
	  ◦ Cultural tourism;
	  ◦ Heritage attractions and natural sites;
	  ◦ Sports tourism;
	  ◦ Farm tourism;
	  ◦ Outaouais as a fluvial area;
	  ◦ Trail network;
	  ◦ Outdoor recreation and ecotourism.
	• Recognize the economic contribution of culture, recreation and sports to regional development.

Development Focus

Education, research and science

Knowledge

Be a knowledge centre by focusing on knowledge acquisition, transfer and development of competencies

Issues	Strategic goals
Promote education and make young people's academic success a collective regional priority	• Ensure the academic success of a maximum number of Francophone and Anglophone students at all educational levels; • Improve school retention and promote academic success in partnership with students and sector stakeholders, notably employers, by pursuing the comprehensive strategy undertaken by school boards, community colleges (CEGEPs) and universities; • Develop and diversify the college and university education offer; • Develop and offer an adapted and accessible education offer based on rural-urban equity in the service offers; • Promote prior learning/skills recognition in order to facilitate admission to programs of study and the labour market; • Support and promote a culture of continuing education and lifelong learning.
Provide education for active citizenship	• Ensure education that prioritizes the development of a healthy lifestyle; • Promote respect for differences and inclusion; • Value the protection, respect and enhancement of the environment and sensitize the public about responsible consumption; • Develop interest for greater openness to the world; • Raise youth awareness of and offer them training on economic, social and political issues; • Promote the development of entrepreneurial skills and competencies; • Meet the literacy training needs of people in the Outaouais.
Promote and develop the professional and technical training offer	• Regionalize decision-making processes concerning professional and technical training to ensure the real time correspondence of the different training levels with current and emerging labour market needs; • Ensure the diversification, upgrading and accessibility of professional and technical training; • Increase harmonization of the different levels of training by establishing bridges (general, professional, technical and university training); • Promote the adjustment of certain programs and training based on clienteles' specific nature and needs.
Maximize the contribution of research and innovation to regional development	• Design and implement a regional research and innovation strategy and establish a regional coordination mechanism; • Identify and adapt research and innovation to our businesses' needs; • Ensure the attraction and retention of students and qualified teachers and researchers; • Promote a better transfer of acquired knowledge to regional businesses and organizations; • Based on their needs, guide our businesses to research centres; • Promote the development and competitiveness of research agencies and centres.

Mandate of the Conférence régionale des élus de l'Outaouais

CRÉO was constituted pursuant to the Act respecting the Ministère des affaires municipales et des régions (R.S.Q., chapter M-22.1)

The Conférence régionale des élus de l'Outaouais (CRÉO) is the Québec government's preferred interlocutor for regional development. It has been mandated to stimulate coordinated action of regional partners and brief the Government of Québec on the development of the Outaouais region.

The CRÉO must establish a five-year development plan for the Outaouais region. With a view to sustainability, the plan will set general and specific regional development goals that reflect the priority of fostering democratic participation in the region by young people and—based on principles of equality and parity—women. The plan must take into account regional workforce and employment strategies and goals determined by the Conseil des partenaires du marché du travail.

The CRÉO's mandate is to evaluate local and regional planning and development agencies that are either entirely or partially funded by the Government of Québec. The CRÉO may conclude specific agreements with the Government of Québec to exercise the powers and responsibilities that are vested in it.

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This strategic regional development plan for 2007-2012 was approved unanimously on October 30th 2006 by the members of the board of directors of the Conférence régionale des élus de l'Outaouais (CREO)

Réalisation : Simbal et Eskalad communication design