



Proposed Priorities for 2015-2017

(Adopted June 9, 2015)

The priorities of the JBACE are based on the strategic directions adopted for 2013-2018. Given the partial or full achievement of some of the directions, the JBACE would like to emphasize the following priorities for 2015-2017.

The JBACE believes that achieving these objectives will increase its visibility. Even so, specific actions could be required to ensure the JBACE is taken into account during initiatives that may have an impact on the regime under Section 22.

1. Consideration of strategic environmental assessment

In recent years, the Québec government has dedicated a number of efforts and resources to apply strategic environmental assessment (SEA) to natural resource development issues (shale gas and hydrocarbons in the Gulf of St. Lawrence). In light of such experience, the JBACE would like to review its approach to SEA in the context of northern development.

- ***Desired situation:***
 - i. Sharing of the results of an SEA workshop with government officials concerned.*
 - ii. Awareness on the part of government officials concerned of existing tools to improve environmental assessment in northern areas.*
 - ***Objectives:***
 - i. Hold one or two workshops with SEA specialists.*
 - ii. Determine whether SEA has a role to play in the assessment of northern development. If so, define the role.*
 - iii. As applicable, submit recommendations to the Québec government on the relevance of an SEA in the northern environment.*
- ***Targeted area 2.1 of the Action Plan: Issues related to development in northern Québec***

2. Study of cumulative impacts

A proper understanding of cumulative impacts when a project is reviewed is an important component of decision making concerning development in the territory. It is necessary to

provide a picture of the treatment of cumulative impacts under the Section 22 assessment and review procedure so as to reinforce the procedure.

- **Desired situation:** *Improved understanding of how cumulative impacts on the territory are taken into account under Section 22 and identification of the required improvements.*
- **Objectives:**
 - i. *Do an overview of the analysis of cumulative impacts in about 10 impact assessments of natural resource development projects that were subject to the procedure over the past 10 years, as well as the related directives of COMEV and the committees' reviews.*
 - ii. *Do a comparative analysis with the approaches and methods used in Labrador, the Northwest Territories and other Canadian and international jurisdictions.*
 - **Targeted area 2.3 of the Action Plan:** *Environmental and social impacts of mining development*

3. Knowledge of impact assessments and monitoring studies

Insertion of a project into the environment assumes that we can properly assess the impacts associated with or induced by such a development. The data gathered during impact analysis may come from several sources; ideally some will be new data collated in the field by the developer, often at a high cost.

All too often, such data are not disseminated and therefore make a limited contribution to improving our knowledge of the territory because of access constraints. It would be helpful to review ways of promoting recovery and sharing of data from impact assessments and monitoring studies. Moreover, sharing such data would make it easier to create a detailed portrait of the territory and to take cumulative impacts into account.

- **Desired situation:** *Consensus by organizations in the territory, developers and governments concerning dissemination and pooling of knowledge from impact assessments and monitoring studies.*
- **Objectives:**
 - i. *Determine the advisability of putting in place tools in order to collate data from impact assessments and monitoring studies and to make them accessible.*
 - ii. *Assess the feasibility of putting such tools in place.*
 - **Targeted area 2.4** (*Effectiveness of environmental monitoring programs*) and **targeted area 2.6** (*Access to high-quality, objective information on northern environments*) of the **Action Plan**

4. Review of integrated forest management plans and forest policies

Under the James Bay and Northern Québec agreement, the JBACE studies and comments on forest management plans before they are approved by the Minister responsible for them. Since 2008, the JBACE's review has been based on eight criteria, including participation by the Crees, protection of wildlife resources and socioeconomic benefits. With the adoption of the *Sustainable Forest Development Act* in 2010, the Québec government put in place a new forest regime geared to ecosystem-based management and the preparation of integrated forest management plans (IFMPs), both tactical and operational.

Given that discussions are in progress with the Crees concerning the application of this regime to the territory covered by the adapted forest regime under the Peace of the Braves (Chapter 3), the JBACE has informed the Minister responsible that it will not study the provisional plans to be submitted between now and the signing of an agreement.

The JBACE must take advantage of this transition period to consider its approach to reviewing the IFMPs. Does it want to maintain the same review criteria? How will it ensure that this work does not overlap with the work of bodies under the Peace of the Braves? Will it review the IFMPs individually or do a comprehensive review of them, such as from the standpoint of the cumulative impacts of the construction of forest roads?

This approach must also guide the JBACE when it comments on government policies on forestry, such as a proposal for a northern limit for the allocation of timber in commercial forest.

- **Desired situation:** *Implementation by the JBACE of an approach to IFMP review that takes into account the provisions of an eventual agreement between Québec and the Crees concerning the application of the new forest regime to the territory covered by Chapter 3 of the Peace of the Braves.*
- **Objective:**
 - i. *Define the new approach to the review of forest management plans.*
 - ii. *Identify possible collaborators concerning the approach to the review of forest plans and the review as such.*
 - **Targeted area 2.5 of the Action Plan:** *Environmental and social impacts of forest management plans*