

Summary Vision and Priorities

A vision of Abitibi-Témiscamingue in 2027.....



The 7 Axes of the Vision

AXIS 1: A region that is welcoming, characterised by a diversity of cultures and talents.

IN 2027... Abitibi-Témiscamingue's demography is outstanding. The region manages to maintain and vitalise its population through increased youth retention and a growing number of immigrants motivated by the quality of social and cultural life, stimulating jobs and services that meet their needs. Culture is booming. The region values its artists. They are recognised within and beyond the region. Young people are proud of their region, they invest their energy and talents in it. The elderly people's knowledge, the Algonquins' millennium-old knowledge of the land and the immigrants' cultural diversity contribute to a large extent to the development of our competencies. The population forms a rich cultural and human mosaic.

AXIS 2: A region where two peoples co-exist in a spirit of sharing and respect for the land

IN 2027... In Abitibi-Témiscamingue, Aboriginal and non Aboriginal communities coexist and cooperate in mutual respect. The Algonquins, key players and partners in regional development, form a healthy and proud society, within healthy communities, and enjoy a quality of life that ensures a promising future for the younger and unborn generations. They earn decent incomes and are financially self-reliant due to their involvement in the region's economic development. Young people are trained and hold gratifying jobs. The region has three recognised languages: French, Algonquin and English. Algonquin language and history are taught in several schools in the region. The Algonquin culture is thriving on the territory.

AXIS 3: A region with a sense of solidarity and justice, responsive to its citizens' needs

IN 2027... Abitibi-Témiscamingue is a mobilised and united region with all its people working together. It builds upon its human and social capital, promotes sharing and networking opportunities for individuals, groups, activity sectors, communities of interests and territories while valuing differences. People and their quality of life are at the heart of development. The impacts of poverty are monitored and controlled. Men and women enjoy the same rights and opportunities in all areas of life, and they are equally and fairly represented in decision-making bodies. Small communities have access to a wide range of nearby services. Public transit serves urban and rural communities. The region has managed to develop a network of innovative family services consistent with the principle that a healthy society must provide quality services to its people, starting at an early age. Abitibi-Témiscamingue emphasises family health, well-being and growth as the essential basis of regional development. Health problems are decreasing thanks to a well integrated health system, based on prevention and health promotion. People of all ages and socio-economic conditions benefit from facilities and services that meet their needs. Social animation models that foster wellness and development are adopted by a large number of communities.

AXIS 4: A region that is eager to learn, knowledge-oriented and open to the world

IN 2027... Abitibi-Témiscamingue is an innovative and creative region, aware of its potential. Education and knowledge have become the main driving forces of its social and economic vitality. Its educational institutions offer a wide variety of study and research programs, reducing school drop-out rates and youth out-migration and fostering immigration. The region is a model of inventiveness, creativity and originality, it encourages all forms of

exchanges at both national and international levels. Its higher educational institutions develop and import brainpower and processes it for the benefit of regional development and communities. Its university is a key player in high-tech research and development at the global level. The First Nations' independent university trains its own researchers and specialists who contribute to a large extent to the region's development.

AXIS 5: A healthy and responsible region, with a concern for its natural environment

IN 2027... Abitibi-Témiscamingue is the greenest and healthiest region in Quebec. It is a preferred destination for those seeking a life in balance with nature. It has a clear and common vision on land occupancy and respectful use. Recognised for its interest for its natural capital, its forests are valued in both natural and processed state. Primary natural resources exploitation operates based on resource renewal capacity. The region practices integrated natural resources management. The actions of both individual and corporate citizens respect the integrity of ecosystems and biodiversity. Through research and innovation, the region has developed an expertise it exports across the world and which makes it a leader in environmental and sustainable development issues. The environment is no longer a constraint but an economic value. Its degraded sites are reclaimed and residual materials are recovered and recycled.

AXIS 6: A region of prosperity and brainpower economy

IN 2027..... Abitibi-Témiscamingue values natural resources development. The region has developed an expertise and exports it across the world and which makes it a world leader in terms of innovation and know-how in the fields of mining, forestry and scientific research. The region's wealth is better distributed and more people work for the region's growth. Cultural vitality has fostered the implementation of high-tech companies. The region has managed to develop efficient mechanisms that allow safeguard its interests with enterprises for the benefit of the whole community. Local entrepreneurship is thriving. The region's economy is booming thanks to its innovative companies and educational institutions. A well integrated and diversified agri-food sector, adapted to the territory, feeds the region and exports its surpluses, including a large quantity of value-added and organic products. Tourism, focused on people, culture, nature and outdoor recreation, warmly welcomes tourists from across the world. Harmonious development partnership agreements are signed with neighbouring regions.

AXIS 7: A region that is self-reliant, controlling its destiny and development

IN 2027... Abitibi-Témiscamingue enjoys a high level of autonomy in terms of its development decisions and the means to implement them. It is more self-reliant in the area of education, health care, culture, energy, agri-food and value-added products. Its public agencies have real and decentralised powers, as well as human and financial resources that allow to adapt national policies to local, territorial and regional conditions. The region exercises its new powers with good judgement. Businesses are well positioned in the global economy with due regard for regional development. Each citizen feels responsible, in his own way, for doing his share for development. People, now more politicised and united, act more in terms of public interest. The territory is dynamically occupied, each MRC, each town and village has a specific local economic mission, which is recognised and complementary.

AXIS 1 A region that is welcoming, characterised by a diversity of cultures and talents.

1. RELATION TO AND IMAGE OF THE TERRITORY

- To develop the community's active knowledge of the region's assets and potential.
- To promote Abitibi-Témiscamingue's distinctive strengths and advantages outside the region.

2. IMMIGRANTS AND NEWCOMERS

- To aim at attracting more immigrants and newcomers, and help them take roots.

3. ARTS AND CULTURE

- To value and reinforce the region's artistic and cultural vitality.
- To support the professional artists in Abitibi-Témiscamingue.
- To promote art awareness and education, particularly among youth, and encourage cultural recreational activities.
- To value and preserve regional history and heritage.
- In a context of openness to the world, recognise and assist libraries as local and regional catalysts in the area of culture and information.

4. INFORMATION AND COMMUNICATION

- To promote a better media coverage as well as a better knowledge of current events and issues concerning Abitibi-Témiscamingue, Nord-du-Québec and North-eastern Ontario.
- To develop a regional action plan for citizen action.
- To promote debate on local and regional issues.
- To determine local/community media contribution to local and regional development.
- To ensure a better knowledge of the region's and territories' socio-economic data and issues, and to ensure their broad dissemination.

AXIS 2: A region where two peoples co-exist in a spirit of sharing and respect for the land

1. ABORIGINAL PEOPLE: MAMAWI MIKOMOWITAN, WORKING TOGETHER

- To create opportunities for the development of common projects between Aboriginal people and the different non Aboriginal authorities of the regional community.
- To help increase the Algonquins' graduation, enrolment and qualification rates in order to increase their level of autonomy.
- To promote the development of an employment integration strategy, particularly for young people, in order to increase the number of available jobs inside and outside of the communities.
- To support the Wanaki project for the construction of a village for the community of Kitcisakik.
- To develop research and knowledge on the Algonquin people.

AXIS 3 A region with a sense of solidarity and justice, responsive to its citizens' needs

1. IMPOVERISHMENT AND SOCIAL EXCLUSION

- To act on poverty and social exclusion factors.
- To work at reducing prejudice against people living in poverty and experiencing social exclusion.

2. WOMEN

- To ensure equity and attain equality between men and women.
- To support initiatives aimed at reducing all forms of violence against women, including sexual aggression and domestic violence.

3. FAMILY

- To value families and improve their living conditions.

4. YOUTH

- To value youth's commitment and participation as citizens by creating the conditions that allow young people to play an active role in local and regional development.
- To increase the supply of health and social services in cooperation with the intersectoral partners to counter psychological distress in youth, including Aboriginal youth.
- To promote and support initiatives for youth's return in the region.
- To support youth's alternative paths that promote their involvement in society and increase their graduation rate.
- To encourage organisations, government departments, institutions and enterprises to take the initiative of actively getting involved with youth in their actions, thus fostering youth's full potential development.

5. SENIORS

- To promote a better integration of elderly citizens in local and regional development.
- To increase residential services supply in order to meet seniors' current and future needs.
- To support initiatives aimed at reducing isolation and all forms of violence and abuse against seniors.
- To recognise the seniors' social and economic contribution to regional society.

6. DISABLED PEOPLE

- To promote a better integration of the disabled in the community.

7. COMMUNITIES' HEALTH AND DEVELOPMENT

- To ensure general public access to quality health and social services.
- To promote prevention through the adoption of healthy lifestyles.
- To recognise, encourage and support community development as well as community and volunteer organisations.

8. RURAL LIFE

- To increase the dynamic occupation of rural areas.

9. PUBLIC TRANSIT

- To maximise and pool public transit networks that take advantage of the different modes of transportation at the regional level.

10. SPORTS AND RECREATION

- To provide better access to recreational, sports and physical activities across the territory for all clientele in order to improve life quality and health, and to counter sedentary living.
- To ensure the development of different types of recreational, sport and physical activities to allow for personal and collective growth of the local and regional community.
- To support the development of the outdoor activity sector in Abitibi-Témiscamingue.
- To support the on-going efforts to increase the floor area of hunting/fishing camps from 20 m² to 30 m².

11. SOCIAL ECONOMY

- To promote the strengthening and development of social economy enterprises.

AXIS 4 A region that is eager to learn, knowledge-oriented and open to the world

1. INFORMATION AND COMMUNICATION TECHNOLOGIES (ICT)

- To develop and ensure knowledge of the tools, services and applications concerning ICTs in order to identify development opportunities.
- To ensure the implementation of Phase II of the broad band project.
- To work at increasing coverage for a better cell phone reception signal throughout the regional territory.

2. INTERNATIONALISATION

- To promote consultation and mobilisation of all the actors active in internationalisation issues in Abitibi-Témiscamingue.
- To reinforce and organise the involvement of the regional actors and organisations in the international arena (or international networks).

3. EDUCATION AND TRAINING

- To value general, vocational, technical training and higher education, adapted to regional and global realities.
- To pursue efforts aimed at supporting school retention in youth, and particularly in boys.
- To promote and support return to school for adults without a degree.
- To promote and support continuing education and make it more accessible.
- To promote the integration of regional and social dimensions in the educational institutions' pedagogical content (elementary, secondary and vocational schools, cégep and university).

4. LABOUR DEVELOPMENT

- To direct labour towards customised training based on enterprises' needs and offering good job conditions.
- To support initiatives aimed at reducing labour shortages in order to respond faster to the enterprises' anticipated needs.
- To promote the development and reinforcement of enterprises active in social and vocational integration.
- To promote diversification of career opportunities for women by supporting them in their entrepreneurial development and helping them access and keep non-traditional occupations.
- To support labour recruitment from outside Abitibi-Témiscamingue in order to respond to the region's unmet human resources needs.

5. INNOVATION, RESEARCH AND DEVELOPMENT

- To ensure the development and presence of infrastructures and organisations dedicated to research, development and innovation.
- To develop a strong culture of innovation in the region.
- To support the implementation of an innovation system specific to Abitibi-Témiscamingue.
- To increase networking between enterprises and training, research and technology transfer institutions.
- To support enterprises in their activities promoting management skills development that allow for a strategic management of innovation.

AXIS 5 A healthy and responsible region, with a concern for its natural environment

1. NATURAL ENVIRONMENT PROTECTION AND ENHANCEMENT

- To ensure a better knowledge of the region's natural environment.
- To protect, rehabilitate and enhance the region's physical and natural environment in order to maintain and improve people's health, security and well-being.
- To promote integrated watershed-based management of water resources.
- To support initiatives that allow to reduce greenhouse gas emissions.

AXIS 6 A region of prosperity and knowledge-based economy

1. EMPLOYMENT SUPPORT AND DEVELOPMENT

- To contribute to improving enterprises' productivity and their capacity to adapt to change.

2. ENTREPRENEURSHIP

- To ensure the development of a strong entrepreneurship culture in Abitibi-Témiscamingue.
- To provide entrepreneurs and enterprises with the necessary means to implement their business projects.

3. MARKETING SUPPORT STRATEGY

- To support initiatives that allow for the development of a marketing culture.
- To support market development and diversification initiatives for the Abitibi-Témiscamingue enterprises' products and services.

4. STRATEGIC ALLIANCES

- To maintain and further develop strategic linkages and partnerships between the two regions.
- To develop and promote the transfer of complementary expertise in cooperation with the Nord-du-Québec region.
- To create favourable conditions for the development of partnerships between the Abitibi-Témiscamingue and North-eastern Ontario regions.

5. TOURISM

- To develop the regional population's awareness of Abitibi-Témiscamingue's assets and potential.
- To develop a sustainable and genuine tourist industry for tourists but first for the region's citizens.
- To increase the efforts aimed at enhancing the quality of services in order to increase client satisfaction.
- To increase the region's attractiveness by prioritising the consolidation and development of traffic-building or "leader" products.
- Adopt a common regional position on tourism.
- To promote regional leader products.
- To better structure the supply of tourism products so as to make them easier to market and more attractive.

6. ROAD NETWORK

- To maintain and develop transportation infrastructures on the Abitibi-Témiscamingue territory.

7. REGIONAL AIR SERVICE

- To ensure that regional interests are represented towards governments and air carriers.

8. RAIL TRANSPORT

- To ensure that regional interest are represented towards governments and the railroad company.
- To assess the possibility of significantly increasing the use of railroad, mainly for heavy freight transport, and the resulting benefits in terms of greenhouse gas reduction and economic and social benefits.

9. OFF-HIGHWAY VEHICLE TRAFFIC

- To promote harmony between the different users across the territory.

10. MAXIMISATION OF ECONOMIC SPIN-OFFS

- To support initiatives that allow to maximise the regional social and economic benefits from major projects.

11. MULTIPLE LAND USES

- To develop new joint action mechanisms involving all actors to ensure the territory' harmonious development.

12. FOREST RESOURCES

- To aim at an economy based on high value-added products.
- To provide the Abitibi-Témiscamingue and Nord-du-Québec regions with a joint strategy that allows for the development of wood processing in both regions.
- To adopt a philosophy focused on silviculture and increased productivity.
- To consider the environment as a wealth.
- To encourage community-based forestry.
- To develop a forestry that takes all the users into account.
- To seek the implementation of a responsible, accountable and profitable forestry.

13. AGRI-FOOD SECTOR

- To improve and reinforce primary agricultural production (milk, beef, lamb/sheep).
- To promote the development of a value-added cattle stream based on plant biomass conversion, especially fodder.
- To support the shift towards agri-environmental practices.
- To ensure training that meets the farming sector's needs.

- To support and value young farmers/farm succession.
- To support and increase the marketing of regional products.
- To develop regional agri-food processing.

14. MINING RESOURCES

- To contribute in having the mining industry recognised as a strategic sector for economic development in the Abitibi-Témiscamingue and Nord-du-Québec regions and Québec.
- To contribute in having the underground Techno-mines niche recognised as a beacon of mining development in Abitibi-Témiscamingue and Québec.
- To contribute in maintaining and developing Abitibi-Témiscamingue’s mining innovation capacity.
- To promote and support exploration activities to discover new deposits to be developed on the Abitibi-Témiscamingue territory.
- To support initiatives that allow the mining industry in Abitibi-Témiscamingue and Nord-du-Québec to have the necessary qualified labour for its development.

15. UNDERGROUND WATER RESOURCES

- To ensure the protection and sustainability of the underground water resources.
- To promote the development of sustainable economic activities that bank on underground esker water.

16. WILDLIFE RESOURCES

- To maintain and enhance wildlife habitats through conservation, management and awareness activities.
- To promote wildlife resources development and derived activities.
- To promote dialogue between the Algonquin and non Aboriginal communities on common use of land and wildlife resources.

AXIS 7 A region that is self-reliant, controlling its destiny and development

1. REGIONALISATION OF GOVERNMENT SERVICES

- To allow government department’s regional branches in Abitibi-Témiscamingue to have more flexibility and autonomy in their regional interventions and service delivery.

2. A PASSION FOR DEVELOPMENT

- To ensure and promote the development of a responsible and dynamic succession of leaders working at developing Abitibi-Témiscamingue.
- To value volunteer work, support future leaders and ensure training.