

# Ministère de l'Énergie et des Ressources naturelles's Approach to Foster Social Acceptability

International Summer School on the Geopolitics of Energy & Natural Resources  
Calgary, May 19, 2017

# Plan of Presentation

1. Introduction to the MERN
2. Factors underlying the MERN's actions
3. What is social acceptability?
4. The MERN's process that led toward a new policy
5. Important changes to methods
6. Some recent research into social acceptability
7. Conclusion

# Introduction to the MERN

## Mission and Vision

### Mission

- To manage and support the development of energy and mineral resources and land in Québec, from the standpoint of sustainable development

### Vision

- A team recognized for its leading-edge expertise and responsible management of energy, mineral and land development in Québec

# Introduction to the MERN

## A major actor in its milieu

- > Three business sectors: Energy, Mines and Land (Forests until 2014)
- > Significant regional presence via nine regional branch offices
- > Maintains business relationships with more than 47,000 citizens and organizations (issues rights and licences for use of public land)
- > Because of its mission and mandate, the MERN is one of the organizations in Québec that has to carry out the most consultations with the Aboriginal people

[http://www.autochtones.gouv.qc.ca/publications\\_documentation/publications/guide\\_inter\\_2008.pdf](http://www.autochtones.gouv.qc.ca/publications_documentation/publications/guide_inter_2008.pdf)

# Introduction to the MERN

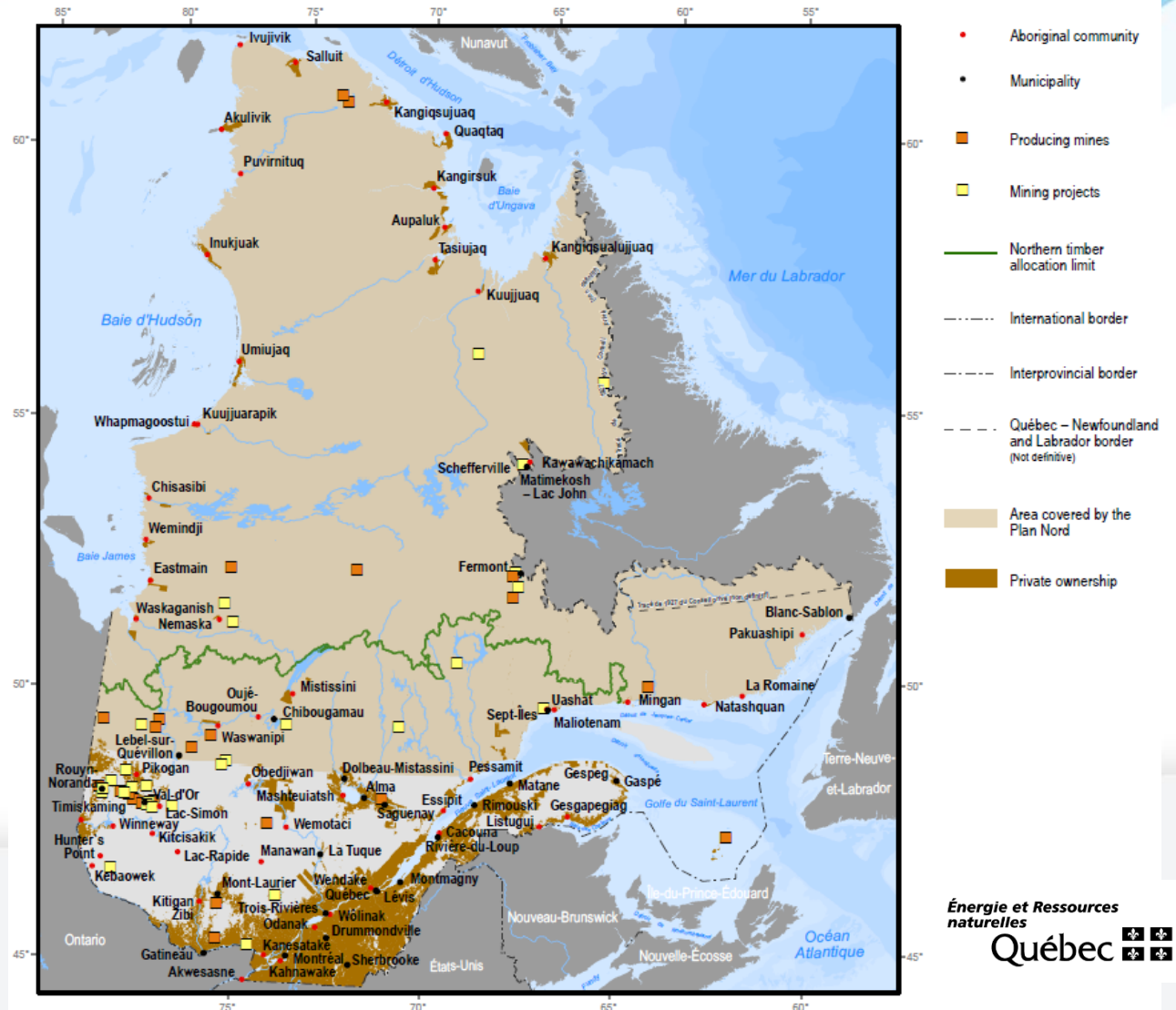
## Present throughout the territory

### > A vast territory

- An area of 1.7 million km<sup>2</sup>
- 92% of Québec is public land

### > Abundant natural resources

- World-class mining deposits and discovery of promising indices
- Major energy potential to be developed, in addition to its vast hydroelectricity network



# Factors Underlying the MERN's Actions

## Early stages

- 2014: Groups of citizens, Aboriginal people and elected representatives put pressure on the MERN to prevent authorization of certain projects (mining, large and small power generating stations, hydrocarbons)
  - In certain cases, it was difficult to go ahead with the projects, and some were completely blocked
- Québec's economy needs natural resource development projects
  - Better standard of living and impact on regional development (jobs with better-than-average pay, impact on local suppliers' networks)



Photo credit: Stornoway



# Factors Underlying the MERN's Actions

## Some observations

- > Opposition often began at the local level
- > Several national environmental groups were very active
- > Some major projects, regardless of sector, triggered opposition in the communities concerned
- > Opposition can target to specific projects or even entire sectors (uranium, hydrocarbons)
- > Sensitive projects can be located in remote and inhabited areas alike
- > Analysis of these projects revealed a number of factors underlying the opposition by individual citizens and groups

# Factors Underlying the MERN's Actions

## Examples of projects considered sensitive in 2014

### Energy

- Hydrocarbons on Anticosti Island
- Small hydroelectricity generating stations (50 MW and less)

### Mining

- Matoush (uranium, land under agreement, Northern Québec)
- Arnaud (apatite, near Sept-Iles)

### Forestry

- Logging operations at Mont Kaaikop

### Land

- Protected areas in the Broadback River sector (boreal forest, woodland caribou habitat)
- Forest road construction, land occupation



# What is Social Acceptability?

## General concept

- No definition has been unanimously accepted by the scientific community
- As a concept, it is difficult to quantify
- A concept encompassing the three spheres of sustainable development: the need for a balance between the economic, environmental and social aspects



Photo credit: Stornoway

# What is Social Acceptability?

## General concept

- > Social acceptability:
  - Is not necessarily unanimous and is never set in time
  - Involves all levels of governance (local, regional national)
  - Requires participation by local actors at every step of the project, from planning to site closure
- > The MERN chose to focus on factors influencing social acceptability when deciding on its orientations



Photo credit: Stornoway

# What is Social Acceptability?

## Main factors



# What is Social Acceptability?

## Some of the principles guiding the MERN

- > Trust in promoters is vital to the involvement of actors in project development and implementation
  - Trust requires greater transparency on the part of both the promoter and the Government
- > The actors want to be involved from the early stages of the project
- > Projects must be structural for the communities and must generate significant economic benefits in the community

# The MERN's Actions

## The main steps

Launch of the Social Acceptability Project in November 2014

1. Preliminary diagnosis of the MERN's practices and tools: Fall 2014 to Spring 2015
2. Consultation on the profile and diagnosis: May to October, 2015
3. Tabling of the Green Paper, followed by parliamentary standing committee consultations: February to April, 2016
4. Adoption and publication of guidelines
  - Adoption: December 2016
  - Publication: January 24, 2017



Au cœur du  
développement  
économique du Québec  
et de ses régions



# The MERN's Actions

## Step 1: Preliminary diagnosis of the MERN's practices and tools

- > Organization of work
  - Following a public call for bids, some of the work was entrusted to Raymond Chabot Grant Thornton, assisted by Transfert Environnement (RCGT/TE)
  - Several people at the MERN were involved in RCGT/TE's work
  
- > Elements considered to prepare a profile of the MERN's practices and produce a diagnosis
  - Role of decision-making authorities at the local, regional and national levels
  - Participatory approaches for projects
  - Benefit-sharing mechanisms
  - Consideration of the social, environmental and economic repercussions of projects
  
- > Main steps in the preliminary work done by RCGT/TE
  - Information collection and analysis (Fall 2014 to Winter 2015)
  - Transmission of findings to the MERN (Spring 2015)

# The MERN's Actions

## Step 2: Consultations on the profile and diagnosis

- > Production and publication of an issues paper prior to the consultation (May 2015)
- > Consultation (May to September 2015)
  - Targeted: 25 discussion panels led by RCGT/TE, in Montreal, Québec City, Sept-Îles, Rouyn-Noranda, Gaspé, Wendake and Mistissini; more than 120 organization representatives, 37 private citizens and more than a dozen elected representatives took part
  - Public: Dedicated website
  - In all: 39 briefs examined + notes taken during discussions
- > Final diagnosis report (October 2015)
  - Based on the preliminary diagnosis, followed by a comparative analysis and discussions at panel meetings

<http://mern.gouv.qc.ca/ministere/acceptabilite-sociale/documents/>

# The MERN's Actions

## Step 3: Green Paper and parliamentary standing committee consultations

- > Preparation of the Green paper containing the MERN's proposed social acceptability guidelines (October 2015 to January 2016)
  
- > Tabling of the Green Paper in the National Assembly of Québec (February 2016)
  - 5 proposed guidelines and roughly 30 actions
  
- > Examination and consideration by the Parliamentary Standing Committee for Agriculture, Fisheries, Energy and Natural Resources (March and April 2016)
  - 29 individuals and organizations were heard, from the following sectors: natural resource exploration and extraction companies, Aboriginal organizations, environmental groups, research, municipalities, municipal unions, trade

<http://mern.gouv.qc.ca/ministere/acceptabilite-sociale/documents/>

<http://www.assnat.qc.ca/fr/travaux-parlementaires/commissions/capern/mandats/Mandat-34817/index.html>



# The MERN's Actions

## Step 4: Adoption and publication of guidelines

- > Principles underlying the guidelines
  - Support for promoters and local communities
  - Involve local actors as early as possible
  - Foster dialogue between actors
- > Guidelines adopted
  - Guideline 1: Make the MERN better known
  - Guideline 2: Update Public Land Use Plans
  - Guideline 3: Establish predictable public participation processes
  - Guideline 4: Promote the sharing of project benefits with host communities
  - Guideline 5: Enhance the MERN's analysis ability

<http://mern.gouv.qc.ca/ministere/acceptabilite-sociale/>

ORIENTATIONS DU MINISTÈRE DE L'ÉNERGIE  
ET DES RESSOURCES NATURELLES EN MATIÈRE  
**D'ACCEPTABILITÉ SOCIALE**



ENSEMBLE   
on fait avancer le Québec

Québec 

# Important Changes to Methods

## Overview

- > Implementation of 31 actions over more than three years – some examples:
  - Communication: Provide information on projects, sectors, project analysis process, etc.
  - Develop good practice guides for promoters
  - Analyze the economic benefits from projects and publish the results
  
- > New methods for the MERN:
  - A major project office has been set up
  - More support is given to promoters and local actors

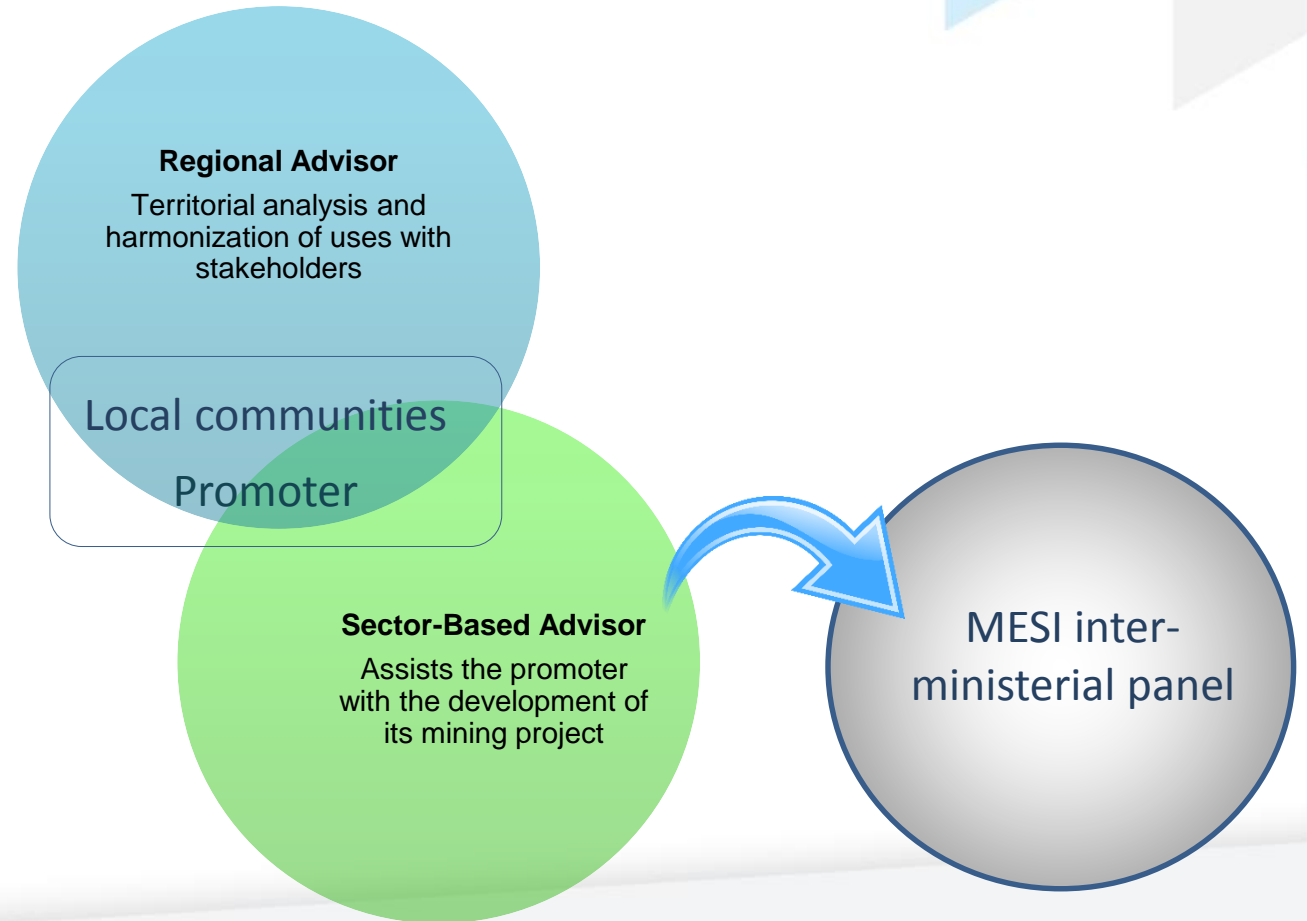
<http://mern.gouv.qc.ca/ministere/acceptabilite-sociale/>



# Important Changes to Methods

The current situation applicable to project management

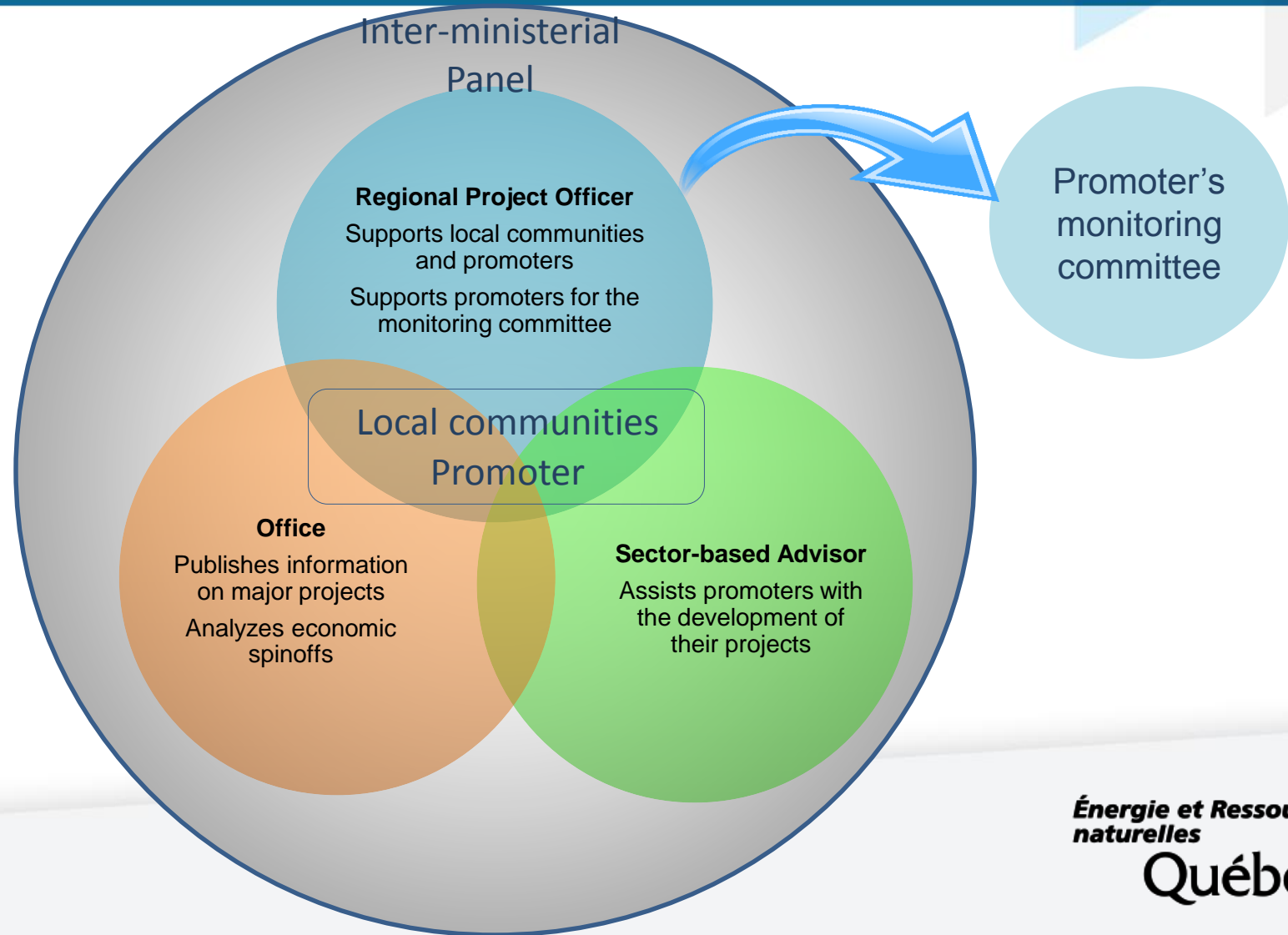
- The sector-based advisor supports the promoter (technical component) and takes part in MESI panels
- The regional advisor determines the compliance of the land use application



# Important Changes to Methods

A project management process that meets expectations

- > A **regional project officer** who supports local communities and promoters and liaises with the monitoring committee
- > A **Major Project Office** that coordinates ministerial and inter-ministerial actions and analyzes economic benefits



# Important Changes to Methods

## Some achievements arising from the 2016 Guidelines

GUIDELINES	ACHIEVEMENTS
Produce and publish information on projects	The first document published in January 2017, 4 others will be published between now and June 2017; target of 20 for 2017
Assess the economic benefits of projects (using modelling)	Results of economic analyses of the first project published in January 2017; 4 other analyses underway (June 2017); target of 15-20 for 2017
Foster the creation of monitoring committees	Good practices guideline (Mines in 2016, Hydrocarbons for 2017-2018) In-depth study of success factors by Laval University (June 2017)
Produce and publish guides and policies for promoters and local communities, to support them in the public participation process	Consultation guidelines (Mines in 2016) Underway: Local community participation policy, Aboriginal community participation policy (Mines in 2017, MERN in 2018)

# Important Changes to Methods

## Other achievements – legislation and taxation

- > Involve citizens in land planning:
  - Mining Act and its regulations (adopted in December 2014) and Hydrocarbons Act (Act adopted in December 2016, regulations currently being drafted):
    - Allows for exemptions of development activities, with respect to government guidelines for land use management – Mines (December 2016) and government land use guidelines for land use management – Hydrocarbons (under preparation)
  
- > Foster dialogue between promoters and local actors:
  - Mining Act and its regulations (adopted in December 2014) and Hydrocarbons Act (Act adopted in December 2016, regulations currently being drafted):
    - Promoters must inform, consult and set up monitoring committees for their projects

<http://legisquebec.gouv.qc.ca/fr/ShowDoc/cs/M-13.1>

<http://www.assnat.qc.ca/fr/travaux-parlementaires/projets-loi/projet-loi-106-41-1.html>

# Important Changes to Methods

## Other achievements – legislation and taxation

- Promote the sharing of benefits from projects with local communities
  - Fiscal pact with municipalities, 2016-2019 (September 2015)
    - Component 1: \$10 million per year allocated to the municipalities to foster social acceptability within communities. Component 2: \$15 per year allocated to the RCMs as economic benefits from natural resource use
- Act respecting transparency measures in the mining, oil and gas industries (October 2015)
  - Requires companies to declare the amounts they pay to government agencies, municipalities, Aboriginal communities and their mandataries
  - Payments of \$100,000 or more, made to the same organization which include taxes and income tax, royalties, fees, entitlements, dividends, and contributions for infrastructure construction or improvement

[http://www.mamrot.gouv.qc.ca/pub/grands\\_dossiers/entente\\_signee\\_accord\\_partenariat\\_municipalites.pdf](http://www.mamrot.gouv.qc.ca/pub/grands_dossiers/entente_signee_accord_partenariat_municipalites.pdf)

<http://legisquebec.gouv.qc.ca/fr/showdoc/cs/M-11.5>

# Some Examples of Recent Research into Social Acceptability

- > Strategic environmental assessments on hydrocarbons (completed)
  - Gendron, C. and A. Friser, [Revue de littérature sur l'acceptabilité sociale du développement des hydrocarbures](#), Université du Québec à Montréal, 2015.
  - Beaulieu, L. et al., [Revue de littérature critique du bilan des connaissances sur les impacts sociaux et socioéconomiques de l'exploration/exploitation des hydrocarbures au Québec](#), Centre international de référence sur le cycle de vie des produits, procédés et services, 2015.
  - Plante, S. et al (2015). *Rapport d'analyse sur les effets anticipés par la communauté d'un développement des hydrocarbures à l'île d'Anticosti et les capacités d'adaptation et de résilience face à un changement*, Université du Québec à Rimouski and Alliance de recherche universités-communautés – Défis des communautés côtières, 119 pages.
  - Papillon, M. (2015). *Vers un nouveau partenariat? Rapport sur la participation des communautés autochtones aux activités de mise en valeur des ressources naturelles hors Québec*, Université de Montréal, 54 pages.

<http://hydrocarbures.gouv.qc.ca/EES-bilan-connaissances.asp>

<http://hydrocarbures.gouv.qc.ca/EES-plan-acquisition-connaissances.asp#filtrer>



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- > Strategic environmental assessments on hydrocarbons (completed)
  - Gauthier, Mario, Guy Chiasson, Martin Robitaille, Chantale Doucet and Lynda Gagnon (2015). *Analyse des facteurs d'influence de l'acceptabilité sociale des activités de mise en valeur des hydrocarbures et propositions relatives au mode de gouvernance territoriale – Volume I*, Study GSOC-03 carried out as part of the strategic environmental assessments on hydrocarbons, Centre de recherche sur la gouvernance des ressources naturelles et des territoires (CRGRNT), Université du Québec en Outaouais, 172 pages.
  - Gauthier, Mario, Guy Chiasson, Martin Robitaille, Chantale Doucet and Lynda Gagnon (2015). *Analyse des facteurs d'influence de l'acceptabilité sociale des activités de mise en valeur des hydrocarbures et propositions relatives au mode de gouvernance territoriale – Volume II*, Study GSOC-03 carried out as part of the strategic environmental assessments on hydrocarbons, Centre de recherche sur la gouvernance des ressources naturelles et des territoires (CRGRNT), Université du Québec en Outaouais, 120 pages.

<http://hydrocarbures.gouv.qc.ca/EES-plan-acquisition-connaissances.asp#filtrer>

# Some Examples of Recent Research into Social Acceptability

- Partnership research program on sustainable development of the mining sector (underway)
  - Offered jointly by the Fonds de recherche du Québec – Nature et technologies and the MERN
  - A five-year program with an overall budget of \$15.25 million
  - Maximum grants of \$200,000 for 2-year research projects and \$300,000 for 3-year projects
  - The research projects currently underway are:
    - Social perceptions of the mining industry and social acceptability of mining projects, Université de Sherbrooke
    - Sharing of information with communities through the social risk indicator, Université du Québec à Montréal
    - Québécois' perceptions of mineral resource development, Institut national de la recherche scientifique

# Conclusions

## > Positive steps:

- A structured process – in-depth diagnosis of practices, involvement of an outside specialist, targeted and public consultations
- A process focused on better collaboration between the MERN's various units and with other Government organizations

## > Challenges:

- Need to function through the same budget framework (e.g. restructuring of human resources)
- Enhance participation by the actors without adding to the administrative burden or increasing delays
- Development of tools (guides, regulations, training, etc.) takes time, and the promoters want immediate support from the MERN

THANK YOU FOR YOUR ATTENTION!

