

Université du Québec en Abitibi-Témiscamingue

# Ecoresponsibility Plan



**UQAT**

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# Territorial acknowledgement

**Université du Québec en Abitibi-Témiscamingue acknowledges that it is located within *Nitakinan, Anicinape Aki*. It acknowledges that Indigenous languages, cultures, and identities are deeply rooted in Nitakinan and that this territory is vital to traditions of sharing, healing, and passing down knowledge.**

**Today, this territory is home of many nations living in both territorial and urban communities. UQAT also recognizes that its educational institutions and activities extend to the territories of other First Peoples.**

**UQAT is mindful that it is part of a system whose origins go back to colonization. Educational institutions have long been used for the purposeful assimilation of First Peoples, in particular through the imposition of the residential school system. The damaging effects of that system can still be felt today.**

**In view of this acknowledgement and in support of the full assertion of the First Peoples, UQAT commits to taking concrete action, specifically through education and research.**

NISITOTAMOK ECI ONAKISIK Université du Québec en Abitibi-Témiscamingue KITCI KIKINOAMATIWIKIWAM ANICINAPE AKIKAK, NITAKINAN KA ICINIKATEK. OKIKENTANAWA IIMA PITIKAMIK NITAKINAN EKI OTCISEKIN ICIKICWEWINAN, ICITWAWINAN ACITC ANICINAPE INENTAKOSIWINAN. MI ACITC WETCIMAKAKIN IIMA AKIKAK KITCI KI ACOWI MIKIWANIWAK KIKINOAMAKEWINAN, MECKOTONIKEWINAN ACITC KIKEWINAN.

NOKOM KITCI MANE PEPAKAN ANICINAPEK ICAWAK IIMA UQAT KITCI KIKINOAMATIWIKIWAM, AIANOTCIKOTC MANEWEK ANICINAPEWAKIN ACITC OTENAN OTCIWAK. AIANOTCIKOTC ANICINAPEWAKIN OTINIKATEWAN APITC MIKIMOWATC UQAT ACITC KEKON WI ICITAWATC.

OKIKENTANAWA UQAT EKI OTAPINIKATENIK OTAKIMIWA EKI TAKWICITC KA WAPISITC. KINWEC KI KAKWE ATCITCIKATENI ECI PIMATISIWATC ANICINAPEK, TAPICKOTC OTAPINOTCICIMIWA EKI MATCIWINAKA-NIWIWATC KITCI NTA KIKINOAMASOWATC WINAWA KA ICI PIMATISIWATC KITCI INATISIWATC.

EKIKENTAMOWATC KA ICISEWATC ANICINAPEK ACITC KITCI WITOKAWAKANIWIWATC NAWATC KITCI SOKIKAPAWIWATC ANICINAPEK, UQAT OKA WITCIAN MAIA KITCI KI MINOSEWATC, TAPICKOTC KITCI NANATAWAPATCIKANIWAK ACITC KIKINOAMAKEWINIKAK.

[uqat.ca/en/territorial-acknowledgement/](http://uqat.ca/en/territorial-acknowledgement/)

# A Message from the Rector

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We are pleased to present this first Ecoresponsibility Plan. It translates our commitments into practical steps, ready to be rolled out across all of the University's fields of action. While the 2025-2030 Strategic Plan reaffirms the central role played by ecoresponsibility in our vision of the future, we are very proud to unveil a number of projects that will drive UQAT in this respect over the coming years.

Whether in its teaching, research, research-creation or training activities, in its governance practices or in the management and operations of the living environment it provides, UQAT is committed to acting, in each of its centres and campuses and in any other location where it is involved, for the benefit of its home communities and the ecosystems within which it evolves.

If ecoresponsibility takes root in the awareness of our reciprocal relationship with our ecosystem and in the heart's impulse to care, we believe our university can act as a catalyst. Our power of action and influence lies first in each individual, while developing an institutional culture which brings us together as a community.

Accordingly, we want to create the right conditions for environmentally healthy and sustainable choices to become a habit at UQAT. Ecoresponsibility is not a burden, it is a human-centred, creative, and visionary mission, a way to generate pride and hope.

Thank you all for your vital contribution!

**Vincent Rousson**  
Rector



# Guiding Documents

## BACKGROUND

Ecoresponsibility has always had an important role to play at UQAT, with roots in its teaching and research mission. This is reflected in the innovative solutions to environmental problems and keen understanding of issues brought forward by our TRUs, schools, and institutes.

As part of its 2020-2025 Development Plan, UQAT committed itself to a formal and transversal approach to ecoresponsibility. The Office of Ecoresponsibility was created to coordinate the latter in a concerted manner, together with the entire university community.

In 2024, this concerted effort led to the adoption of a *Declaration of Commitment to Ecoresponsibility*. This plan is guided by the principles and commitments expressed in that Declaration and aligned with UQAT's 2025-2030 Strategic Plan.

On April 22, 2024, UQAT adopted its *Declaration of Commitment to Ecoresponsibility*. This declaration aimed to formalize UQAT's commitments to ecoresponsibility and the principles that support them, to mobilize the entire university community in a coordinated manner, and to guide the continuation of its efforts in this regard. This plan is therefore anchored to its content.



## Our Driving Forces

- Considering that humans are an integral part of the biosphere and that their survival and health depend on the quality of their environment;
- Faced with the climate emergency, the biodiversity crisis and threats to the ecosystem;
- Aware of the behaviours that are bringing us dangerously close to our planetary limits or which lead us to go beyond them, jeopardising the conditions that support human life on Earth;
- Wishing to honour its mission through the creation, transmission and practical use of knowledge in support of ecoresponsibility and through the training of eco-citizens;
- Caring not only for the well-being of its university community, but also for all living beings and future generations, in the spirit of the Seven Generations philosophy;

UQAT recognizes that it bears its share of responsibility and that, to ensure the sustainability of its mission, it has a duty to show courage and apply ecoresponsibility principles across the board, in all its activities.

## Our Vision of an Ecoresponsible UQAT

Through its education, research, creation and innovation activities, it trains eco-citizens who, in turn, contribute to significant advances in the protection and resiliency of our living environment. Through its example and actions, it inspires and encourages the communities in which it operates to do the same.

Its spaces are designed to promote a lifestyle that uses resources sparingly and are well suited for experimenting environmentally sound choices and solutions. By adopting concrete ecoresponsible practices and considering each of its decisions from a sustainability standpoint, UQAT is continually reducing its environmental footprint.

Knowledge is not confined within four walls; access to nature nurtures a relationship with the land. Whether we call it *Mother Earth*, *Nitakinan*, *Istchee* or *Nunarjuaq*, we learn from the land and benefit from its healing power. Caring for people and ecosystems thus becomes an intrinsic part of UQAT's institutional culture.

## Our Guiding Values

In Anicinape spirituality, various animals known as the Seven Grandfathers are the bearers of sacred teachings that enable us to live in harmony with ourselves, with others and with the land. Oscar Kistabish, Elder from Pikogan of the Abitibiwinni First Nation community, describes them as follows<sup>1</sup> :

- Eagle – Love (*SAKIITI8IN*)
- Moose – Respect (*MANATCIITI8IN*)
- Turtle – Truth (*TEP8E8IN*)
- Wolf – Humility (*TAPASENIMITISO8IN*)
- Beaver – Wisdom (*PEKATISI8IN-KAKITA8ENTAMO8IN*)
- Bear – Courage (*SOKITEE8IN*)
- The Giant<sup>2</sup> – Honesty (*K8AIAK8ATISI8IN*)

Together, these teachings represent a large part of what defines *MINO PIMATISI8IN*, "the good life" or "wellness". They are values reflected in this declaration and we wish to have them guiding us in our actions, complementarily with UQAT's values of humanity, creativity, and audacity.



On March 5, 2024, workshops were held at the Val-d'Or campus to explore Indigenous perspectives and equity, diversity and inclusion aspects of ecoresponsibility, which helped draft the *Declaration of Commitment to Ecoresponsibility*.

Photo credit :  
Sophie Richard-Ferderber

## Our Principles and Commitments

Our commitments to ecoresponsibility derive from the following six principles:

- Transversality and interdisciplinarity
- Participatory approach, access to knowledge and leading by example
- Recognition of Indigenous knowledge and concepts
- Solidarity, equity, social justice and inclusion
- Agility and continuous improvement
- Seeking balance

To read the full declaration, and to support it yourself, visit the UQAT website:



<sup>1</sup> The translation of words into anicinapemo8in (Algonquin language) is based on contributions from Oscar Kistabish, Elder of the Abitibiwinni First Nation, and Frances Mowatt, translator and anicinapemo8in teacher, also from the Abitibiwinni First Nation. The linguistic variety and spelling used are thus those of the Pikogan Anicinape community. In this declaration, the spelling used follows that preferred by the source of the information and may therefore vary for the same word.

<sup>2</sup> According to Adrienne Jérôme of the Lac Simon Anishnabe Nation, it is called *misabe* in anishnabemowin.



## 2025-2030 UQAT Strategic Plan

Given that ecoresponsibility is a transversal commitment to be applied to all of the University's fields of action, each of the Strategic Plan's orientations is to be addressed through the lens of ecoresponsibility. This plan, however, is specifically aligned with Orientation 5:

### Orientation 5 of the Strategic Plan

#### Innovate and act as a university to contribute to the common good, for the environment

For many years, UQAT has committed itself to stewardship of the environment, either in terms of educational content or in its research work, thanks in particular to significant scientific advances coming out of its Forest Research Institute and its Research Institute on Mines and Environment. This concern for the environment is also demonstrated in practical terms, in the University's everyday administration, with respect to the construction and maintenance of buildings, and institutional practices, in particular. UQAT collectively affirmed its institutional commitment in 2024 with the adoption of the *Declaration of Commitment to Ecoresponsibility*, which now informs our long-term actions.

This orientation is also based on a broad view of environmental stewardship. It calls for practical change guided by a willingness to work together, for a reduction of our footprint, and for innovation in the service of the common good and in the sustainability of our mission. This involves the ways we teach, research, create, make decisions, purchase, travel, design spaces, and manage resources. It means educating citizens who can act consciously in a changing world, supporting research aligned with community life, and incorporating scientific, Indigenous, and citizen knowledge to inform actions.

Today, as we find ourselves at the edge of our planetary limits, we must work that much harder. Today, we must make our actions part of a collective approach, based on collaboration between the university community and its public, private, and territorial partners. To work to support the environment is to work to support health, justice, fairness, and quality of life. It is a declaration of our responsibility to future generations, and to make the courageous, collective, and bold choice to contribute to a more resilient and sustainable society.



Goldenrod growing on the abandoned Aldermac mine site (Rouyn-Noranda). The UQAT's Mines and Environment Research Institute (IRME) is involved in the restoration process.

Photo credit : Christian Leduc

# UQAT in action

## A team effort

As called for by the "participatory approach, access to knowledge and leading by example" principles in the *Declaration of Commitment to Ecoresponsibility*, it is important to remember our commitment to conduct the actions specified in the plan "in a transparent and open manner, promoting the involvement of all members of our university community".

In drafting this plan, the benefits of having solicited contributions from a wide variety of people are clear, both with respect to the thoughtful prioritization and planning of the actions, and with respect to mobilization.

For every action specified in the plan, an administrative unit is identified as accountable and is in charge of incorporating the action into its own planning process to ensure its implementation. Therefore, the implementation of the Ecoresponsibility Plan relies on the expertise and skills of many internal teams, but also on experiential knowledge and the intrinsic motivation of each individual in our community who feels called upon to help.

Because the preservation of our ecosystem is a shared cause impacting us all, we also wish to work in close collaboration with our external partners, such as local ecological groups, institutional partners, Indigenous communities, as well as municipal and private organizations, by pooling our efforts and sharing our successes.



Launched in 2017 thanks to the green committee and UQAT staff involvement, the university community garden stands in front of the main campus in Rouyn-Noranda as a powerful symbol and a unifying space, conducive to many Ecoresponsibility projects.

Photo credit : Mélissa Roy

Strategic objectives

The Ecoresponsibility Plan pertains to three of the strategic objectives that derive from the Strategic Plan’s 5th orientation, broken down into seven specific objectives.

STRATEGIC OBJECTIVES	SPECIFIC OBJECTIVES
Create a culture of ecoresponsibility through awareness and education	<ul style="list-style-type: none"><li>• Involve the university community in its steps towards ecoresponsibility</li><li>• Increase the university community’s sustainability literacy</li></ul>
Mobilize research and knowledge towards protecting ecosystems and making them resilient	<ul style="list-style-type: none"><li>• Make ecoresponsibility a priority in our research and creation-research activities</li></ul>
Rethink operations to reduce UQAT’s environmental impact	<ul style="list-style-type: none"><li>• Adopt ecoresponsible procurement practices</li><li>• Undertake infrastructure projects in an ecoresponsible manner</li><li>• Reduce greenhouse gas emissions linked to travel by encouraging sustainable transport</li><li>• Strive for digital sobriety</li></ul>

The following pages outline a total of **59 actions** prioritized to meet these specific objectives



Green spaces on the Rouyn-Noranda campus come alive during UQAT’s 40th Anniversary Grand Reunion, June 15, 2024.

Photo credit : Régis Massicotte



## Create a culture of ecoresponsibility through awareness and education

Involve the university community in its steps towards ecoresponsibility

The following actions focus on ensuring internal consistency with our commitments to ecoresponsibility, on leading by example, on creating opportunities for discussion and, above all, on setting the right conditions for everyone to be able to participate in the movement.

ACTION	ACCOUNTABLE ADMINISTRATIVE UNIT
Formalise the role of ecoresponsibility in governance and in normative texts	General secretariat
Lead a program revision pilot project using an ecoresponsibility lens	Office of the Vice-Dean of Undergraduate Studies
Create a short program specifically about ecoresponsibility	Office of the Vice-Dean of Undergraduate Studies
Create a network of ecoresponsibility ambassadors within the university community	Office of Ecoresponsibility
Create a fund for ecoresponsible projects and the implementation of the Ecoresponsibility Plan	Financial Resources Service
Join interuniversity movements like the Race to Zero and Nature Positive Universities	Office of Ecoresponsibility
Launch a process of reflection on the application of our "Seeking balance" principle	Office of Planning and Strategic Analysis
Carry out a consultation and issue recommendations regarding promotional goals	Communications and Recruitment Services
Launch an online tool for reporting ecoresponsibility concerns within UQAT	Office of Ecoresponsibility
Create a "One Tree, One Diploma" type of program	Alumni Services



Photo credit : Isabel Dufresne

In November 2023, literary scholars from UQAM, scientists from the Abitibi RCM Ecology Research Group (GREMA), and from the Institute of Forest Research at UQAT (IRF) gathered in Amos for the 2nd edition of the event called "Rewriting the Boreal Forest". The team's mission was to use research in forest ecology as inspiration for creating literary texts, combining art and ecoresponsibility. *Boréaliser*, the group's first collective work from the first edition, is now available.

Increase the university community’s sustainability literacy

Access to information and evidence-based data, as well as awareness-raising and educational activities, appear to us to be essential to understanding ecoresponsibility issues and are a prerequisite for commitment. Accordingly, the following actions focus on building awareness of these issues within our university community, and on acquiring the knowledge and skills needed to address them.

ACTION	ACCOUNTABLE ADMINISTRATIVE UNIT
Create an annual Ecoresponsibility communication and awareness plan	Office of Ecoresponsibility
Make a training course covering Ecoresponsibility basics available to the entire university community	Office of Ecoresponsibility
Develop continuing development material in ecoresponsibility intended for faculty and teaching staff	Office of Ecoresponsibility
Develop a continuing education course to meet at least one established educational need linked to ecoresponsibility	Continuing Education Service
Create an awareness-raising contest specific to each discipline	Office of Ecoresponsibility
Develop recommendations regarding best practices for GHG emissions offsets	Office of Ecoresponsibility
Develop psychosocial supports specific to the phenomenon of eco-anxiety	Student Community services
Identify outdoor spaces, best practices, and opportunities conducive to learning in natural environments	University Teaching and Distance Learning Services (SPUFAD)
Review the UQAT Foundation (FUQAT) responsible investment practices and issue recommendations	UQAT Foundation (UQAT)



Photo credit : Sophie Richard-Ferderber

Kiosks and conferences were organized on the Val-d’Or campus as part of the pilot project for the implementation of compostable material collection.

## Mobilize research and knowledge towards protecting ecosystems and making them resilient

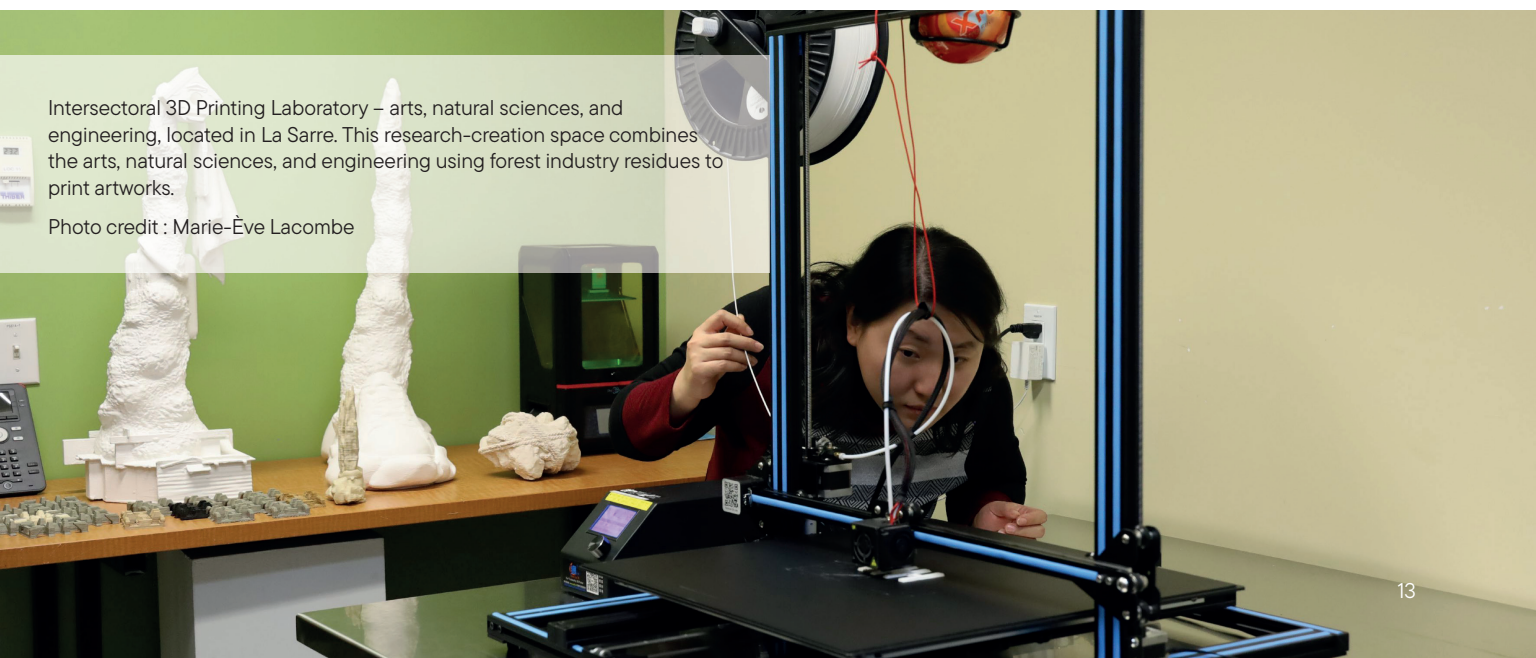
Make ecoresponsibility a priority in our research and creation-research activities

The following actions focus on establishing everyday ecoresponsible habits specifically with respect to research-related activities. They also aim to create and seize opportunities for interdisciplinarity, transdisciplinarity, and intersectionality which may contribute to the strategic objective.

ACTION	ACCOUNTABLE ADMINISTRATIVE UNIT
Establish a mechanism that allows for the ongoing consideration of ecoresponsibility during research project reviews	Office of the Dean, Research and Creation
Adopt ecoresponsibility criteria for the funding of ecoresponsibility-related research events	Office of the Dean, Research and Creation
Identify and promote opportunities for educational and research projects that can advance UQAT's ecoresponsibility efforts	Office of Ecoresponsibility
Identify the library's contribution to supporting research regarding ecoresponsibility	Library
Implement a sustainability initiative in laboratories	Human Resources Service

Intersectoral 3D Printing Laboratory – arts, natural sciences, and engineering, located in La Sarre. This research-creation space combines the arts, natural sciences, and engineering using forest industry residues to print artworks.

Photo credit : Marie-Ève Lacombe





# Rethink operations to reduce UQAT’s environmental impact

## Adopt ecoresponsible procurement practices

The following actions focus on consuming less and on making better choices, to conserve resources and respect planetary limits while taking into account social and ethical considerations. The aim is notably to enhance our procurement policy for the purpose of encouraging reduction at source, to promote pooling and sharing efforts, to ban certain detrimental products and to prioritize purchases based on ecoresponsibility criteria.



As part of Orange Shirt Day, UQAT promotes alternatives to consuming new textiles, such as reuse, borrowing, or buying second-hand, and has ensured that the shirt it offers for sale is a product ethically made in Quebec from organic cotton, with all profits benefiting Indigenous communities.

The habit of bringing a cup, a water bottle, or a reusable glass is now common, but the actions outlined in the plan aim to make this trend widespread. They rely on a zero-waste approach, favoring reusable options whenever possible.



ACTION	ACCOUNTABLE ADMINISTRATIVE UNIT
Enhance the <i>Policy related to the acquisition of goods and services and the awarding of construction contracts</i> with the inclusion of guidelines related to ecoresponsible procurement	Procurement Services
Train managers in procurement, applicants, and suppliers in ecoresponsible procurement practices	
Pool equipment and vehicles and encourage group purchasing	
Review guidelines for printing	
Evaluate the implementation of an affordable, ecoresponsible food co-op	
Evaluate the implementation of an ecoresponsible equipment loan and rental desk for use by the university community	
Implement a system of reusable containers and cutlery as well as a system of returnable containers for take-out meals in food services locations	
Adopt the suppliers' code of ecoresponsible conduct	
Provide and promote more ecoresponsible menstrual products	
Design Food Services menus so that they are healthy, affordable, and have a low environmental impact	
Adopt a procedure for the ecoresponsible disposal of surplus assets	
Create or join a circular economy platform to manage our surplus assets	
Upgrade broken or outdated research equipment	





Geothermal energy is part of the energy-efficient solutions integrated into the new Mont-Laurier campus. The wooden structure and natural light in the building create a sense of closeness to the surrounding nature. A rainwater recovery system has also been planned for watering the adjacent permaculture orchard.

Photo credit : Stéphane Lapointe



## Undertake infrastructure projects in an ecoresponsible manner

Aware that the impact of choices linked to real estate has repercussions over the very long term, the following actions focus on optimizing existing buildings, and on planning construction and renovation projects in such a way as to proactively reduce their footprint. This also means creating environments favourable to ecoresponsible actions, and preserving our natural spaces and their biodiversity.

ACTION	ACCOUNTABLE ADMINISTRATIVE UNIT
Formalise proactive ecoresponsibility planning ahead of all construction or renovation projects	Office of Construction Projects
Provide reserved financial resources for ecoresponsible choices in renovation and construction	Office of the Vice-Rector, Resources
Develop tools to optimize the use of existing spaces	Office of the Vice-Rector, Resources
Evaluate the measures needed for climate change adaptation and resilience	Office of the Rector
Develop a strategy to improve the energy efficiency of our buildings	Building Services
Identify avenues for the protection and conservation of water	Building Services
Develop a design and management strategy for parking lots	Building Services
Provide all sorting options, including one for compostables, at every waste collection point, at all times	Building Services
Provide the university community with structured solutions making donation, exchange, and resale of used goods easier	Student Community Services
Ensure access to sinks for rinsing and washing personal reusable cups and containers	Building Services
Protect and increase the share of green and garden spaces, the canopy, the presence of plants and biodiversity on our properties and in our buildings	Building Services
Ban the use of pesticides, herbicides, and nitrogen fertilizers on UQAT properties	Building Services
Test de-icing salts alternatives	Building Services

Reduce greenhouse gas emissions linked to travel by encouraging sustainable transport

Indirect transport-related emissions stood out as the main source in our first university-wide inventory of greenhouse gas (GHG) emissions, conducted in 2022-2023. Combining travel between home and UQAT for both staff and students and travel for professional purposes, these represent 91% of total emissions, or 11,269 tonnes of CO<sub>2</sub> equivalent of the 12,380 tonnes identified. Accordingly, the following actions focus on reducing travel at source and on encouraging solutions to replace single-occupant car travel.

ACTION	ACCOUNTABLE ADMINISTRATIVE UNIT
Create a sustainable transportation program suited to university community realities	Office of Ecoresponsibility
Adjust the reimbursement policies regarding air travel	Financial Resources Service
Identify ecoresponsible methods of transportation for institutional events	Communications and Recruitment Services
Negotiate public transportation schedules that better meet the needs of the university community	Leadership



Strive for digital sobriety

The environmental impact of digital is an emerging, rapidly changing and evolving field of interest. The following actions focus on increasing our subject-matter knowledge, and on implementing digital best practices both based on ecoresponsibility, and on considerations related to information security and the physical and mental well-being of our university community.

ACTION	ACCOUNTABLE ADMINISTRATIVE UNIT
Train staff involved in Information Technology (IT) management in digital sobriety basics	Office of Digital Product Management
Configure computer labs and institutional devices according to ecoresponsibility standards	Information Technology Services
Schedule regular required "digital cleanups"	Archive and Records Service
Ensure that end-of-life management of electronics and computer equipment follows the highest standards of ecoresponsibility	Information Technology Services
Encourage the reuse of devices that are no longer useful to the university, but which are still operational	Information Technology Services



Student life at UQAT offers numerous outings and events and outdoor activities that encourage disconnecting, an important aspect of digital sobriety.  
Photo credit : Baudelaire Koukat Sabin



## ECORESPONSIBILITY PLAN - QUICK-REFERENCE CHART

Strategic objectives	Create a culture of ecoresponsibility through awareness and education			Mobilize research and knowledge towards protecting ecosystems and making them resilient
Specific objectives	Involve the university community in its steps towards ecoresponsibility	Increase the university community's sustainability literacy	Make ecoresponsibility a priority in our research and creation-research activities	
Actions	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> <li>• Formalise the role of ecoresponsibility in governance and in normative texts</li> <li>• Lead a program revision pilot project using an ecoresponsibility lens</li> <li>• Create a short program specifically about ecoresponsibility</li> <li>• Create a network of ecoresponsibility ambassadors within the university community</li> <li>• Create a fund for ecoresponsible projects and the implementation of the Ecoresponsibility Plan</li> <li>• Join interuniversity movements like the Race to Zero and Nature Positive Universities</li> <li>• Launch a process of reflection on the application of our «Seeking balance» principle</li> <li>• Carry out a consultation and issue recommendations regarding promotional products</li> <li>• Launch an online tool for reporting ecoresponsibility concerns within UQAT</li> <li>• Create a “One Diploma” type of program</li> </ul>	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> <li>• Create an annual ecoresponsibility communication and awareness plan</li> <li>• Make a training course covering ecoresponsibility basics available to the entire university community</li> <li>• Develop continuing development material in ecoresponsibility intended for faculty and teaching staff</li> <li>• Develop a continuing education course to meet at least one established educational need linked to ecoresponsibility</li> <li>• Create an awareness-raising contest specific to each discipline</li> <li>• Develop recommendations regarding best practices for GHG emissions offsets</li> <li>• Develop psychosocial supports specific to the phenomenon of eco-anxiety</li> <li>• Identify outdoor spaces, best practices, and opportunities conducive to learning in natural environments</li> <li>• Review the UQAT Foundation (FUQAT) responsible investment practices and issue recommendations</li> </ul>	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> <li>• Establish a mechanism that allows for the ongoing consideration of ecoresponsibility during research project reviews</li> <li>• Adopt ecoresponsibility criteria for the funding of ecoresponsibility-related research events</li> <li>• Identify and promote opportunities for educational and research projects that can advance UQAT's ecoresponsibility efforts</li> <li>• Identify the library's contribution to supporting research regarding ecoresponsibility</li> <li>• Implement a sustainability initiative in laboratories</li> </ul>	

# Rethink operations to reduce UQAT's environmental impact

## Adopt ecoresponsible procurement practices

- Enhance the Policy related to the acquisition of goods and services and the awarding of construction contracts with the inclusion of guidelines related to ecoresponsible procurement
- Train managers in procurement, applicants, and suppliers in ecoresponsible procurement practices
- Pool equipment and vehicles and encourage group purchasing
- Review guidelines for printing
- Evaluate the implementation of an affordable, ecoresponsible food co-op
- Evaluate the implementation of an ecoresponsible equipment loan and rental desk for use by the university community
- Implement a system of reusable containers and cutlery as well as a system of returnable containers for take-out meals in food services locations
- Adopt the suppliers' code of ecoresponsible conduct
- Provide and promote more ecoresponsible menstrual products
- Design Food Services menus so that they are healthy, affordable, and have a low environmental impact
- Adopt a procedure for the ecoresponsible disposal of surplus assets
- Create or join a circular economy platform to manage our surplus assets
- Upgrade broken or outdated research equipment

## Undertake infrastructure projects in an ecoresponsible manner

- Formalise proactive ecoresponsibility planning ahead of all construction or renovation projects
- Provide reserved financial resources for ecoresponsible choices in renovation and construction
- Develop tools to optimize the use of existing spaces
- Evaluate the measures needed for climate change adaptation and resilience
- Develop a strategy to improve the energy efficiency of our buildings
- Identify avenues for the protection and conservation of water
- Develop a design and management strategy for parking lots
- Provide all sorting options, including one for compostables, at every waste collection point, at all times
- Provide the university community with structured solutions making donation, exchange, and resale of used goods easier
- Ensure access to sinks for rinsing and washing personal reusable cups and containers
- Protect and increase the share of green and garden spaces, the canopy, the presence of plants and biodiversity on our properties and in our buildings
- Ban the use of pesticides, herbicides, and nitrogen fertilizers on UQAT properties
- Test de-icing salts alternatives

## Reduce greenhouse gas emissions linked to travel by encouraging sustainable transport

- Create a sustainable transportation program suited to university community realities
- Adjust the reimbursement policies regarding air travel
- Identify ecoresponsible methods of transportation for institutional events
- Negotiate public transportation schedules that better meet the needs of the university community

## Strive for digital sobriety

- Train staff involved in Information Technology (IT) management in digital sobriety basics
- Configure computer labs and institutional devices according to ecoresponsibility standards
- Schedule regular required «digital cleanups»
- Ensure that end-of-life management of electronics and computer equipment follows the highest standards of ecoresponsibility
- Encourage the reuse of devices that are no longer useful to the university, but which are still operational

# Our trajectory

## Creating the Ecoresponsibility Plan

An institutional consultation and a survey initially helped identify needs. Subsequently, the process was given structure through the creation of various committees.

The Ecoresponsibility Steering Committee advised and supported the Office of Ecoresponsibility in its mandate towards the creation of the first Ecoresponsibility Plan. A Circle of Indigenous Perspectives also advised the Ecoresponsibility Office, to ensure that Indigenous concepts relating to the protection of Mother Earth were properly reflected in the process and content. A member of the Circle also held a seat on the Ecoresponsibility Steering Committee.

Seven working groups made up of strategic members and volunteers from our university community were also formed to look into actions to be taken in the following areas:

- Education and training
- Research and creation-research
- Institutional culture and community
- Responsible procurement
- Infrastructure and buildings
- Sustainable transport
- Digital sobriety

These different groups were tasked with submitting recommendations for actions specific to their area to the Ecoresponsibility Steering Committee. The steering committee prioritized the actions to be selected, supplemented by internal and external consultations, leading to the proposal of this plan to the Board of Directors.

Slices of a tree trunk collected as part of the research conducted by the Canada Research Chair in Dendroecology and Dendroclimatology based at UQAT. Dendroecology analyzes the evolution of tree growth over the years through growth rings. It also allows for the reconstruction of climate and environmental changes.



## Implementation and monitoring

### Ecoresponsibility Steering Committee

In order to monitor the implementation of the plan, the Ecoresponsibility **Steering Committee** (GTO-Éco), coordinated and facilitated by the Office of Ecoresponsibility, is maintained. Its role remains to advise the Office of Ecoresponsibility and UQAT management on matters of ecoresponsibility, acting as a consultation forum.

### Office of Ecoresponsibility

The Office of Ecoresponsibility guides and advises the units accountable for each action outlined in the plan. In order to report on the plan's progress, it collects monitoring data and prepares periodic feedback as well as a comprehensive, annual accounting for the Steering Committee and leadership.

### Accountable administrative unit

The accountable administrative unit receives a detailed assignment sheet for each action it is assigned. The unit incorporates the action into its own planning and becomes the coordinator for its implementation. Accordingly, it is the unit's responsibility to further document the file if necessary, to consult and coordinate with all collaborators, to plan and organize meetings, to ensure follow-ups and verifications, as well as to report on the action.

Whenever appropriate, the accountable unit is asked to create an ad hoc working group, open to a diversity of individuals, to consider the details of action implementation. By working closely with partner and supporting units, as well as with individuals from varied backgrounds who bring varied perspectives to the table, the accountable unit ensures that it avoids blind spots, encourages buy-in to initiatives, and promotes their success, in the spirit of the *Declaration of Commitment to Ecoresponsibility*.

### UQAT Leadership

As part of the process of creating its annual budget and needs assessment, and subject to available resources, UQAT allocates the human, financial, and material resources needed to implement the Ecoresponsibility Plan, and proceeds to adopt the guidelines required for its implementation.

### Update

The Ecoresponsibility Plan will be updated every five years, together with UQAT's Strategic Plan. In accordance with the "principles of agility and continuous improvement" set out in the *Declaration of Commitment to Eco-responsibility*, and with the approval of the Board of Directors, this review (in whole or in part) may be advanced.

### University community

Any person studying at UQAT, including those living in the residences, and any person working at UQAT, whether as a member of staff, faculty or lecturer; groups within the University, as well as visiting researchers, postdoctoral fellows, associate professors, graduates, members of any statutory or decision-making body, the Academic Committee and the Board of Directors, as well as members from outside the University who sit on any UQAT academic body duly created by a UQAT regulatory text.

People from outside the University who collaborate with members of the University Community, for example through a research project or as suppliers of goods and services within the centres and campuses, may also be considered members of the University Community within the meaning of this document.

### Ecoresponsibility

A set of behaviors forming an ethical commitment to adopt and implement ecologically sound and fair choices in all activities. For a university institution, ecoresponsibility also means being a role model and showing initiative in terms of ecoresponsibility, indissociably from inherent social issues.<sup>1</sup> [Translation]

### Ecosystem

The ecosystem is a dynamic system made up of living organisms and the non-living environment<sup>2</sup> in which they evolve, their interaction constituting the basic functional unit of ecology. [Translation]

In this document, the words "Mother Earth", "environment" and "territory" are used as equivalents for everything that makes up the global ecosystem sustaining life on Earth. These terms are used holistically and inclusively, to refer not only to our shared planet, but also to the various territorial concepts that may carry different meanings and be defined in their own way according to the culture from which they originate, such as *Nitakinan*, ᐱᐢᐱᐢᐱᐢ (Istchee) or *Nunarjuaq*.

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<sup>1</sup> Politique en matière d'écoresponsabilité, UQAM, 2023, p.17.

<sup>2</sup> It should be noted that the Western understanding of the living and the non-living may differ from Indigenous conceptions of the latter. In some worldviews, matter, such as the four elements, celestial bodies or inanimate objects, may be considered as living or animate, as explained in this testimonial: "Our worldview is rooted in the language and it is drastically different from other worldviews. An example is the way we classify things as animate and inanimate. English speaking people consider rocks and trees inanimate and if you want to break it down in a grammatical sense we can talk about those suffixes like mitick (tree) mitickok (trees, an animate suffix). It shows that we see it as being a living thing with spirit." (Young, 2003.) The suggested definition of ecosystem in this Declaration is intended to be inclusive of these visions, so as to respect Mother Earth as a whole.



Located on the Val-d'Or campus, *Tesabidan*, meaning "Let's sit down" in Anicinabemowin, is an outdoor teaching space, but also a place for sharing and reconciliation.

At its center, the medicine wheel, or circle of life, is a symbol of healing, balance, and harmony, both within oneself and with our environment.

Photo credit : Laurie Chabot





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