COLLECTIVITÉS ZÉN
ZÉRO ÉMISSION NETTE
Outaouais

Demain, l'Outaouais

A citizen-led vision of the future to inspire the socio-ecological transition of Outaouais

July 2025

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The Collectivités ZéN Outaouais initiative is part of the Québec ZéN project launched by the Front commun pour la transition énergétique.

Co-leads

Partners

ORGANIZATIONS THAT PARTICIPATED IN OR SUPPORTED CZO ACTIVITIES

Agir Outaouais	Académie des retraités de l'Outaouais - ARO	Agro Lab Petite Nation
Accompagnement des Femmes Immigrantes de l'Outaouais - AFIO	Alliance du parc Deschênes	Cégep de l'Outaouais
Chemins de Transition	Centre intégré de santé et des services sociaux de l'Outaouais - CISSSO	Coopérative de développement régional Outaouais-Laurentides - CDROL
Club des ornithologues	DEP Sylvestre	CommuniTerre
Enviro Éduc-Action - EEA	Conseil Régional de l'Environnement et du développement durable de l'Outaouais - CREDDO	Fondation Biodiversiterre
Coopérative des forêts et des gens	Gardien de la rivière Gatineau	Fondation de la Forêt Boucher
Hom Mini Chalets	Good4.Global	Mères au front région de l'Outaouais
Horticité	Mobi-O	Laboratoire de formation populaire de l'Outaouais - LFPO
Observatoire du développement de l'Outaouais - ODO	Table régionale des organismes communautaires autonomes de l'Outaouais - TROCAO	Opération veille et soutien stratégiques - OVSS
Table ronde des organismes volontaire en éducation populaire de l'Outaouais - TROVEPO	Select Aviation	Université du Québec en Outaouais - UQO

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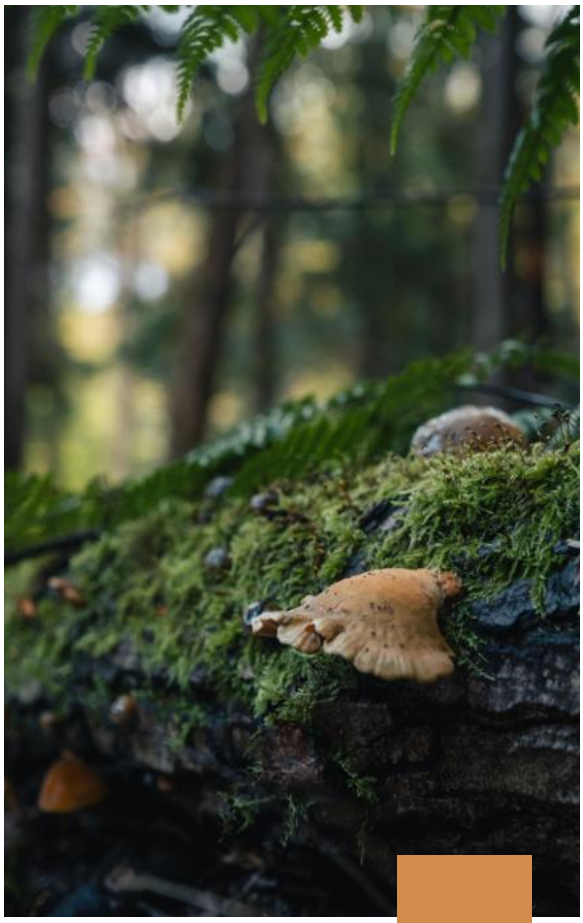
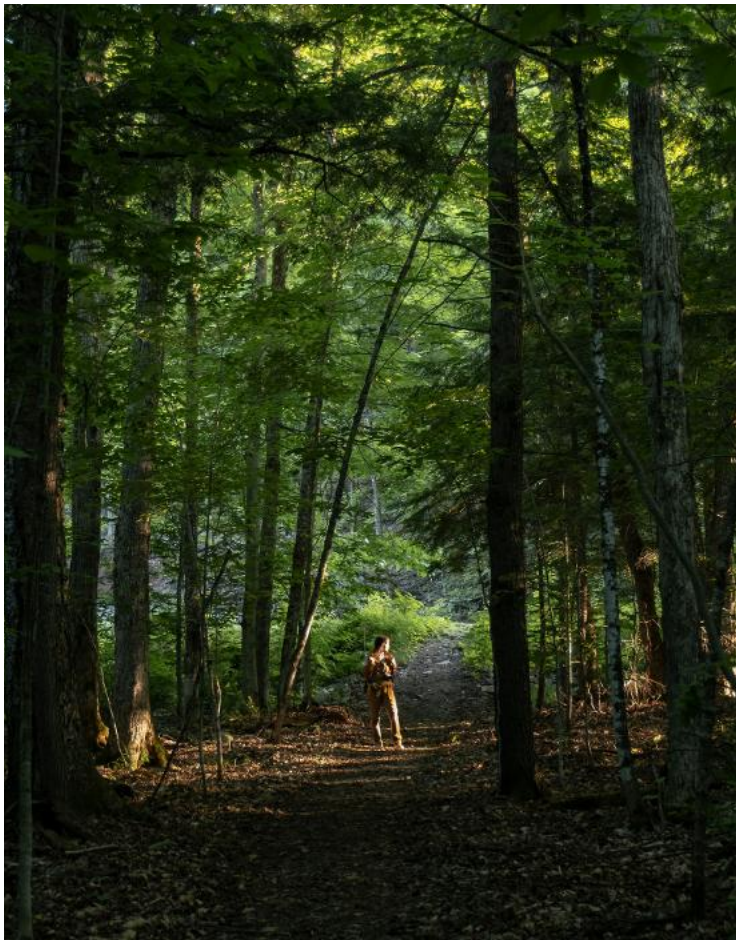
Land Acknowledgement

We would like to begin by acknowledging that our work is done on unceded Indigenous Land.
We recognize the Anishinaabe Algonquin Nation as the guardians of the waters and lands on which we carry out our activities.

It is with respect for connections between the past, present, and future that we acknowledge the ongoing relationships between Indigenous Peoples and other members of our community.





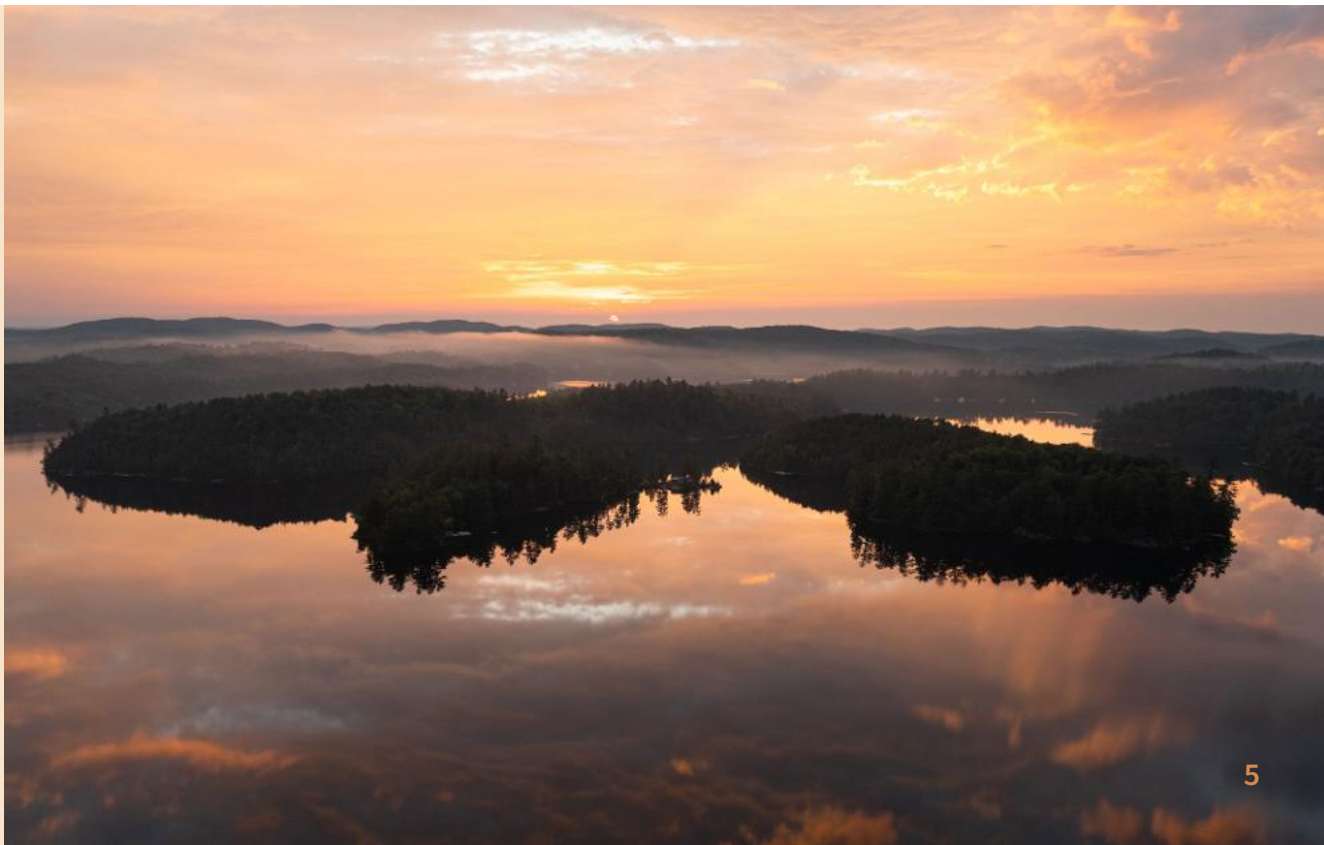
Acknowledgements

Collectivités ZéN Outaouais would like to thank all those who took part in the series of future-exploration workshops held in 2024–2025. It is thanks to your contributions, ideas, and hopes that the future of Outaouais is taking shape.

We also extend our thanks to the Front commun pour la transition énergétique (FCTÉ), as well as the lead organizations Action Climat Outaouais and Transition écologique La Pêche Coalition for a Green New Deal. We further thank our partner Chemins de transition, without which this process would not have been possible. In this respect, we would like to express our gratitude to Peggy Henry for her support. We are also deeply grateful to Ariane Beaudin (FCTÉ) and Éloïse Le Bihan (Ahuntsic-Cartierville en transition – ACeT) for their assistance with data processing.

Finally, our heartfelt thanks go to all the people who participated in the various CZO committees: Charles-Antoine Bachand, Dominic Bachand, Luc Bégin, Isabelle Hachette, Louise Mailloux, Bernard Malo, Dominique Laflamme, Réal Lalande, Florent Schmahl, and Ahamada Touré, project coordinator.

We warmly thank the partner organizations in the region who contributed to hosting the workshops. Your support was invaluable in this ambitious exercise in "consult-action".
Let us continue sailing together toward new horizons.



About us

Collectivités ZéN Outaouais

MISSION

With the support of the Front commun pour la transition énergétique (FCTÉ) and a strong network of national, regional, and local partners, Collectivités ZéN Outaouais aims to bring together key stakeholders from all sectors in Outaouais around an inclusive process for energy, ecological, and social transition, designed by and for the territory.

In response to the growing challenges caused by climate change and the disruption it brings, participants are called upon to engage in dialogue, unite their efforts, collaborate, and share knowledge and skills.

VISION

In tomorrow's Outaouais, the mobilization of all sectors of society has helped to reinvent ways of living, producing, and consuming, in a spirit of shared — yet differentiated — responsibility.

Rooted in values of inclusion and equity (social justice) that leave no one behind, this regional mobilization has made it possible to achieve carbon neutrality, or net zero emissions (ZéN), strengthen resilience, and carry out the socio-ecological transformation required.

OUR APPROACH

Collectivités ZéN represents the second phase of the Québec ZéN project. It brings together diverse groups sharing a common territory, with the aim of forming human communities that choose to develop and implement an inclusive collective process leading to carbon neutrality and resilience. Establishing Collectivités ZéN is a key step in implementing the Climate Transition Roadmap for Québec.

In Outaouais, the organization Collectivités ZéN Outaouais, founded in 2022, has been mandated to establish the Net-Zero-Emissions community for the region by following the FCTÉ's five-step process:

1. Launch
2. Situation analysis and vision
3. Transition pathway
4. Operational plan
5. Implementation

For three years, Chemins de transition, the Front commun pour la transition énergétique (FCTÉ), and Opération veille et soutien stratégiques have been experimenting with a methodology for planning and activating socio-ecological transition in neighbourhoods, cities, and regions across Québec. Several foresight methodologies and tools have been developed and tested by the Net-Zero-Emissions (ZéN) Communities. A new website has emerged from this productive collaboration, presenting this method and the available tools.

All available tools to apply the approach in your community or organization can be found at: **https://parcourscollectiviteszen.org/**

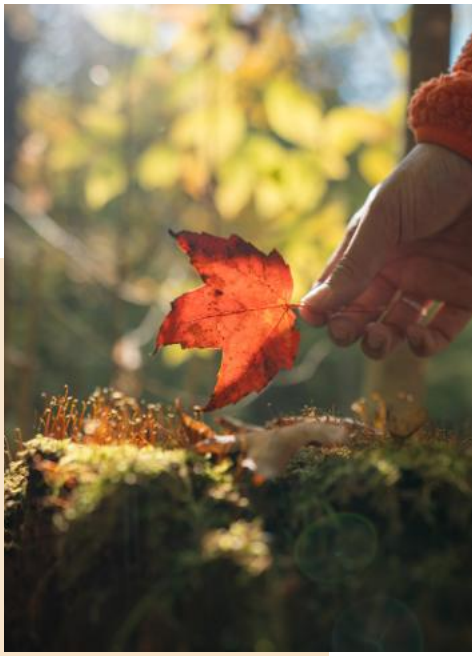
This report highlights the vision developed in **Step 2** of the process.

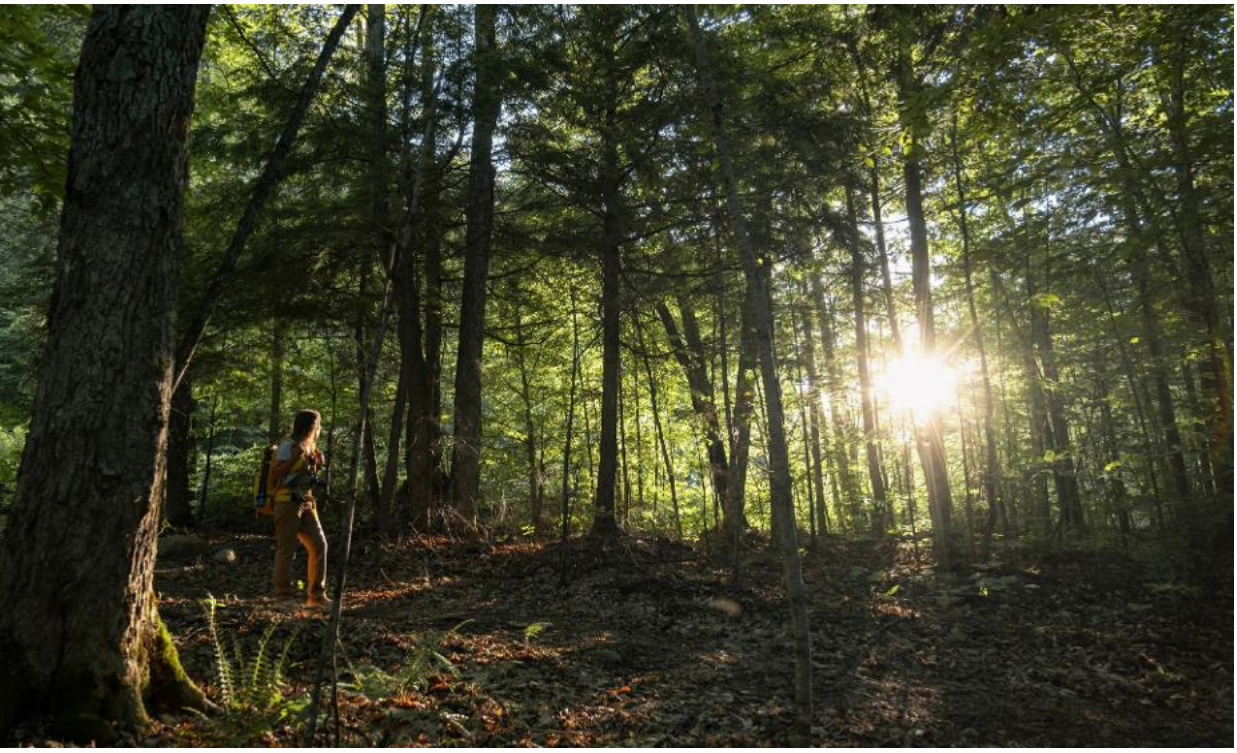
The Socio-Ecological Transition: A Shared Definition

Collectivités ZéN Outaouais adopts a shared definition of the socio-ecological transition (SET) as developed by the Observatoire du développement de l'Outaouais (ODO) and its partners. As part of this project to develop SET indicators, led by ODO in collaboration with around twenty regional partners, we helped develop the following definition:

"**Premise:**
Our current economic system and ways of operating are unsustainable, both environmentally and in terms of social equity.
Definition:
The socio-ecological transition (SET) refers to the shift from an undesirable state toward a desirable one, defined on the basis of new and shared values. This transformation involves the participation of the entire society, at all levels, to bring about a fundamental change in our ways of living, producing, and consuming, as well as in how we occupy territory, in order to build a society that is more just, more inclusive, and ecologically viable." [our translation]

We invite you to consult the baseline report on the transition, co-developed with ODO and our partners at CIRAIG, available on our website.





Co-constructing a Citizen Vision of the Future: Why such an initiative and how does it work?

Why a vision?

To achieve these ambitions, a structured and credible approach is a major asset. The one proposed to the Collectivités ZéN is made up of five steps, for which guidance and tools are provided. The experience of each Collectivité helps improve them continuously, and the resulting learning is easily transferable. It is also easier to bring together a wide range of stakeholders within a clear process in which everyone's contributions are sought and valued at key moments. The Collectivités ZéN pathway is based on foresight, an approach that anticipates possible futures. A socio-ecological transition requires redefining our ways of living. The changes needed will take at least a generation (2025–2050) to implement. A foresight-based approach allows us to consider these transformations over decades.

It makes it possible to build a collective vision of the future (Step 2) and to plan innovative actions in order to move toward the desired future (Steps 3 to 5 of the process proposed by UQÀM, Chemins de transition, Opération veille et soutien stratégiques (OVSS), and the Front commun pour la transition énergétique: **https://parcourscollectiviteszen.org/a-propos/**).

In parallel, thematic working groups and change indicators (UQO/ODO project) must be selected in order to assess progress in the various areas chosen to illustrate the three key dimensions of the desired transition:

- Respecting planetary environmental limits
- Protecting the population and achieving greater inclusion and social justice
- Operating an economy that respects nature and the region's citizens, as defined in the collectively and democratically developed vision

How does it work?

The workshops are based on the prospective co-design approach developed by Chemins de transition. This method invites participants to immerse themselves in the future through contrasting scenarios. These scenarios were developed from the Chemins de transition frameworks, which were adapted following an ideation session involving about ten regional organizations in November 2023. These frameworks are grounded in scientifically plausible trends.

The scenarios, presented as short stories embodied by fictional characters, sparked dynamic and engaging discussions. Participants were able to share their hopes and concerns about the dilemmas and challenges involved in transitioning toward a desirable future that protects life and ensures social equity.

Between February 2024 and April 2025, Collectivités ZéN Outaouais led a series of workshops titled Exploring the Futures of Outaouais, in collaboration with various organizations in the region. More than 220 people took part in 19 workshops, supported by approximately fifteen Outaouais organizations. The survey results collected at the end of each workshop are available in the appendix at the end of this report.

The data gathered were synthesized to produce a citizen vision of Outaouais' future grounded in social and climate justice. These elements are central to each of the thematic areas of the 2050 vision for Outaouais.

At the beginning of the workshops, participants were asked about the places of refuge that matter to them. The resulting word cloud illustrates these shared places of refuge, often linked to nature (forests, rivers), family, or home. These refuges are connected to shared values around protecting life and fostering social well-being, whether at home or in collective spaces that deserve protection. This vision is therefore the result of a collective process that will guide the next phases of the project.

The future-exploration workshops were made possible thanks to the financial support of Philanthropie Outaouais, the Choquette Legault Foundation, and the Trottier Foundation.

THE VISION

A frugal, supportive, and responsible economy

By 2050, Outaouais has become a region that places sobriety at the heart of its economy. Solidarity and responsibility among territorial actors have created a symbiosis between activities and services, enabling efficient use of available resources and a significant reduction in greenhouse gas emissions.

In this area, consumption habits are exemplary. Local agriculture helps feed the nearby population. People eat more seasonally and consume less meat. The destruction of land and large-scale industrial production are now a distant memory, having been largely replaced by organic, fair, and regenerative farming, which has become the new norm.

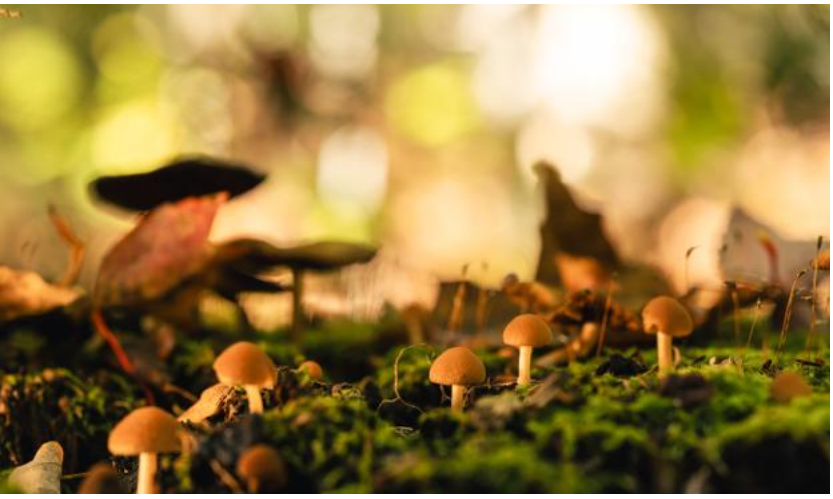
The region's energy needs are identified democratically and met through renewable, decentralized, and decarbonized energy production from a range of sources. Citizens trust independent studies conducted by specialists in favour of environmental and biodiversity protection. Digital technologies and artificial intelligence are also used to measure progress and are applied ethically and responsibly. AI is regulated so that it primarily serves to improve efficiency in risk-prevention calculations and to reduce human drudgery.

The transition has brought about a form of deep sobriety based on reducing overconsumption and promoting sharing, particularly with the most disadvantaged. This has strengthened a fair and supportive economy based on a trained and qualified workforce, including welcoming people newly arrived in the region. The labour market is attractive thanks to its adaptation to locally available skills and to measures that ensure workers have easy access to employment opportunities.

The development of the social economy, combined with sobriety, helps reduce dependence on oil and mining development, while increasing resilience to climate variability. Industrial activities, including wind and solar farms, are concentrated in areas where they have the least harmful impact. The cost of energy consumption is distributed equitably among individuals, institutions, and businesses. The social, environmental, and biodiversity costs caused by industrial and mining extraction are taken into account in order to limit damage and ensure ecological restoration.

Profit maximization is no longer the central objective; greater emphasis is placed on long-term social and environmental impact. The economy is now aligned with and respectful of nature, as well as of future generations.

Living environments for a healthy life



In Outaouais in 2050, the principles of social justice and respect for fundamental rights form the foundation of public policies to guarantee decent living conditions for all. Social inequalities have decreased significantly across the territory.

The entire community recognizes and values Indigenous expertise, perspectives, and knowledge, which are integrated into collective practices. The role of the First Nations as guardians of nature is celebrated. The population acknowledges Indigenous peoples' sovereignty and right to self-determination over their lands.

Knowledge and access to information are considered a shared public good. Skills-sharing workshops are accessible to everyone, covering areas such as traditional and modern medicine, cooking, and repair. This cultural shift has fostered a population that is generally more aware, curious, and critical.

Measures are in place to better manage water resources and protect wetlands. Biodiversity and forest resilience are strengthened to ensure the long-term protection of natural spaces that matter deeply to residents, both for human well-being and for the preservation of life. Contributions to climate change mitigation are fair and positive actions are encouraged. Risks related to forest fires are taken seriously, and ecological corridors are preserved within and between territories.

Vulnerable populations are included in decision-making and intervention processes, reconciling ecological transition goals with basic needs. There are now more spaces to speak out and participate in decisions that affect communities. Priority is given to ensuring equitable access to fundamental rights such as housing, food, and mobility.

Gentrification is limited and community support has been strengthened, particularly for those most exposed to climate risks and with fewer resources to respond. Local services are available in both urban and rural areas. Green spaces make neighbourhoods welcoming for pedestrians and other forms of active mobility. Some areas are even car-free. Cooperative management of common goods, resources, and spaces is encouraged and supported. Certain paved areas have been transformed into community gardens.

A strong sense of belonging and mutual aid has emerged. Citizens remain hopeful and continue to dream. Many take action and become engaged.

Communities have grown more autonomous through sharing. The revitalization of village centers fuels local mobilization and enables resource management at the territorial scale. Funding for initiatives, both local and large-scale, ensures a fair distribution of resources.

The return to collective life is built on strong social ties, shared services, collective spaces, and knowledge. A society grounded in inclusion, social justice, and community spirit offers more possibilities for ecological living.

As a result, the region shines through its cultural vitality while protecting its environment, biodiversity, and heritage. This dynamism is reflected in the many spaces that support social connection and engagement with nature.

Territorial equity and mobility

In recent decades, major citizen movements have led public authorities to make bold and ambitious choices, resulting in improvements to infrastructure—from waste management to road quality. Buildings and infrastructure are now ecological, helping preserve green spaces and urban micro-forests, through green and sustainable urban planning.

The densification of urban environments and village centers has increased. Municipalities involve residents in decisions about this densification. Some areas have become denser while still preserving green spaces essential for maintaining ecological corridors, wetlands, and urban parks. Urban heat islands are reduced while urban sprawl is limited. Human-scale, car-free neighbourhoods have been developed, providing walkable access to services, shops, and green areas. Access to nature, swimming areas, and hiking trails is also considered.

The distribution of local services has been reorganized and decentralized, enabling better access in rural areas and reducing isolation in outlying towns and villages.

Public transportation is now fast, decarbonized, and comfortable. Intercity and interregional transit has become widely used. All modes of transport are powered by electricity. Densification along major corridors has increased regional vitality. Non-profit housing is built along these axes, reinforcing the attractiveness of industrial zones with access to public transit.

Support and follow-up with local populations ensures mobility services are continuously improved according to real needs, while promoting access to information and education. Alternatives to single-family housing have been developed—such as co-housing, collective purchasing models, and shared resources—which reduce costs and encourage collective management of living spaces. Homelessness has been significantly reduced and more effectively addressed.
To ensure social justice, land regulation is in place to counter gentrification and prevent uncontrolled increases in housing costs. Housing is now considered, more than ever, a fundamental right.

The region is less dependent on cars and mobility is easier, safer, and more enjoyable. Active and alternative transportation options have expanded, including carpooling, car-sharing, on-demand shuttles, and safe cycling infrastructure. Parking needs have declined and are mainly reserved for those from less well-served areas. Transport services are adapted for seniors and people with disabilities. Public transit is free or very affordable. Traffic congestion is a thing of the past, and the air is noticeably cleaner.

Agency, democratic decision-making, and resilient communities

Cooperation and transparency between municipalities have been strengthened. Shared resources enable the implementation of solutions adapted to climate change. Financial resources dedicated to addressing climate change have been significantly increased. Achievable targets are set at all levels of governance to improve coherence among action plans and maximize success. Over the past 20 years, inspired by positive initiatives from Outaouais, Québec, and elsewhere, time has been taken to experiment and identify effective solutions for a successful transition.

Citizen participation is encouraged through dialogue and consultation. Needs are identified and projects integrate citizen contributions. Outaouais communities are aware of their collective capacity to act and are able to assert their rights. Governance is participatory and emphasized through decentralized decision-making and deliberative assemblies focused on the environment and social cohesion. This has led to policies that favour collective spaces and responsible ecological action.

Positions of power have been opened to women and minoritized populations and are now much more diverse and representative. Relationships with the environment have evolved under the influence of this diversity, including relationships with Indigenous communities such as Kitigan Zibi. The system is oriented toward long-term thinking and relies on incentives to drive change. Financial and value-based incentives are aligned with the goal of promoting individual sobriety. Diverse offerings—from housing and transportation to services—make sustainable lifestyles more attractive. Cynicism has declined regarding each person's ability to reach their full potential. Both human beings and nature are at the heart of the socio-ecological transition.

Greenhouse gas emissions are now markedly constrained. Institutions are actively working to correct the region's structural delays, gradually reducing the isolation of communities. Where it has become necessary to abandon sectors or municipalities that are too exposed to climate hazards, exceptional measures have been implemented to relocate and support affected populations. These abandoned zones are decontaminated and returned to nature.

Biodiversity protection is prioritized, and municipalities have been revitalized through resource pooling—citizen services, healthcare, schools, and more. Some municipalities have merged to diversify their economies and increase resilience through democratic decision-making and citizen participation.

A Preliminary Vision: Limitations of the Process

The process is based on workshops and scenarios, which do not necessarily allow all regional issues to be addressed within a single session. In addition, we were unable to conduct workshops with certain groups or hold sessions in some locations for various reasons (scheduling conflicts, limited resources, lack of time, and the closing of the workshop campaign).

This is why we aim to involve additional stakeholders in the consolidation phase of this vision, which we consider preliminary. The consolidation phase will continue until the end of 2025 in order to gather feedback from more people and collect comments, observations, and suggestions that will help better reflect the citizen vision of "Demain, l'Outaouais".

To respond and contribute to the vision, we invite you to complete the following form:
https://forms.gle/HAjqTYu5Uk7yrTT4A

Next Steps

Coming Up

STEP 3: TRANSITION PATHWAYS

At this stage, the goal is to define systemic transformative pathways for the entire territory. Thematic committees are tasked with developing these chronological pathways by identifying the key changes required to achieve the collective vision.

A transition pathway is made up of milestones—intermediate steps that lead from the current situation to the desired future. These milestones are mapped along a timeline, taking into account the level of difficulty involved in achieving them and the relationships between them, thus forming a coherent transformation pathway.

Thematic committees, bringing together diverse expertise on regional issues (in line with the selected thematic areas), develop these trajectories. This expertise is drawn from partners already involved in the CZO project and new collaborators.

Between meetings, an internal project team ensures alignment between pathways and verifies the overall coherence of the transition process.

STEP 4: BUILDING AN OPERATIONAL PLAN

A transition pathway provides guidance on the major changes required to reach the collective vision. However, the milestones alone do not specify "who" will act or "how."

The stakeholders mobilized through the Collectivité ZéN must therefore develop a shared understanding of these milestones and translate them into concrete short-term actions.

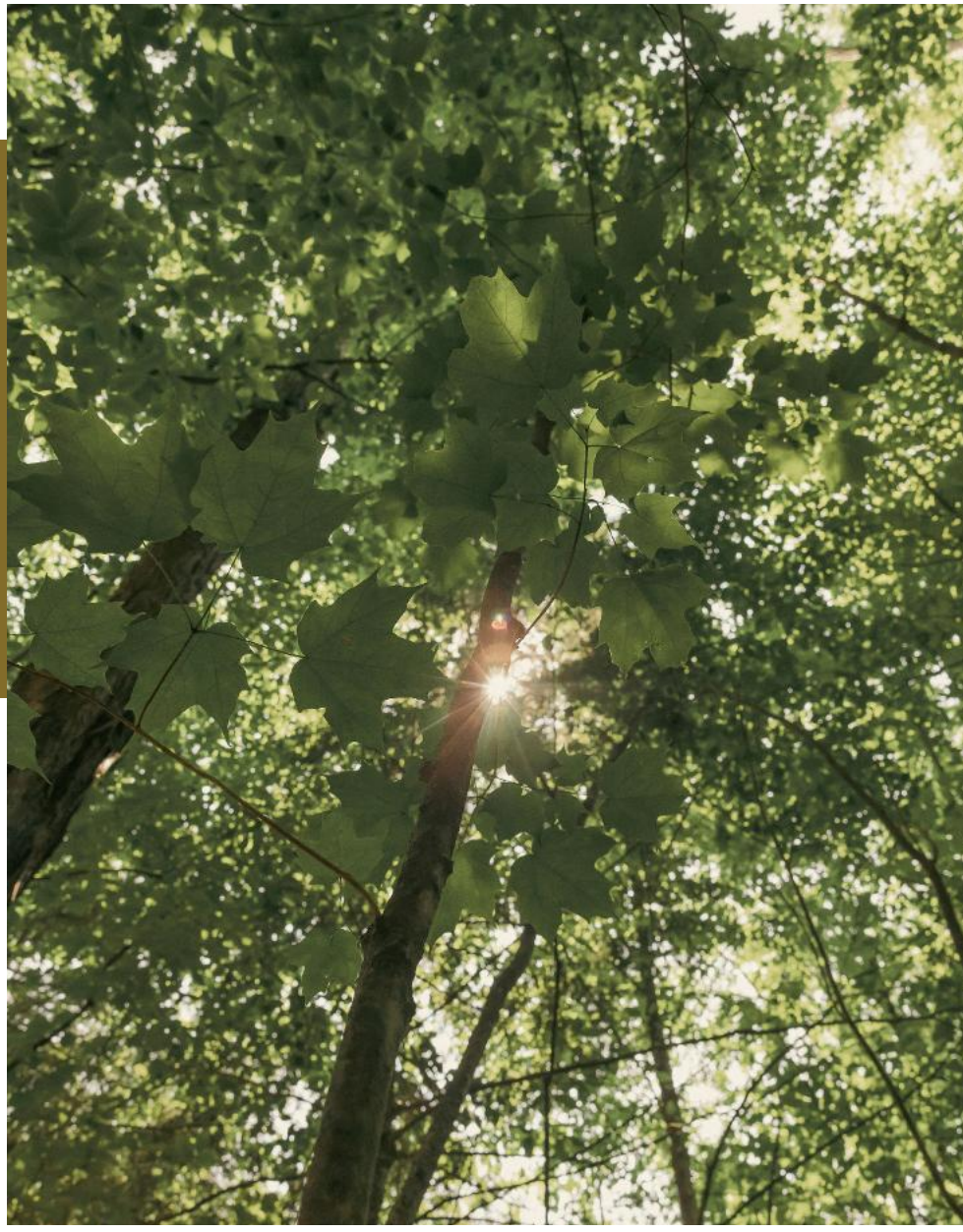
Collectivité ZéN must first select priority milestones for collaboration over the next two to three years. These are typically the milestones closest in time. However, it may also be necessary to choose longer-term milestones if they are deemed both important and difficult to achieve—requiring early action.

STEP 5: IMPLEMENTATION

Implementing change at the territorial scale marks the transition to action: the individuals and organizations that make up the Community carry out the actions outlined in the operational plan to which they have committed.

This phase includes a wide range of actions: program development, policy adoption, awareness campaigns, project launches, organizational change… and the list of possibilities continues to grow!
Throughout the implementation period, coordination meetings ensure progress tracking, and a community of practice is established to support members in addressing the challenges of deep social transformation.

In short, a guided momentum takes shape during this phase, and the socio-ecological transition intensifies. The Community advances along its transition pathways toward the shared destination: a desirable, carbon-neutral future that is more socially just.



Appendix

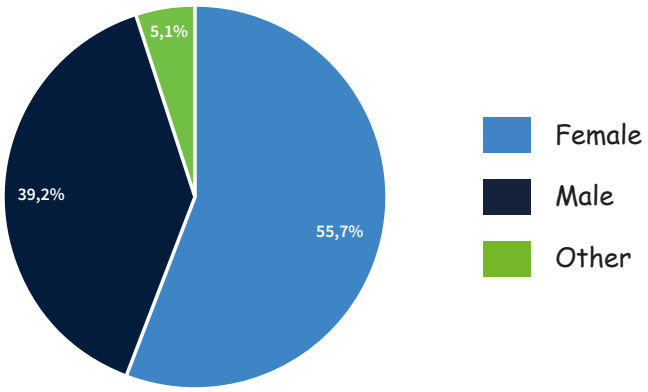
Survey Results

Building a collective vision requires consulting a large number of people from diverse backgrounds and life situations. The diversity of experiences and perspectives is essential. To encourage as much diversity as possible in the process, participants were invited to answer the following questions based on their personal situation. This information made it possible to gather statistical data on participation and improve our approach. The data were collected anonymously, and responses were not mandatory.

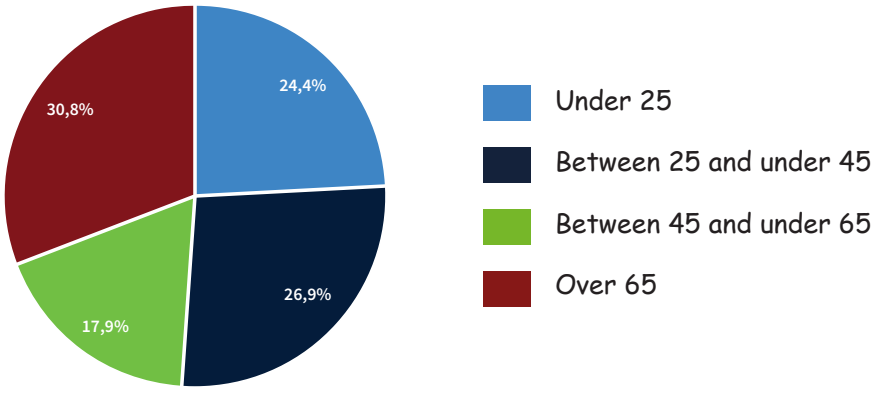
We received 80 responses out of 221 participants, representing a 36% response rate to the following questions:

Statistics

QUESTION 1: WHAT GENDER DO YOU IDENTIFY WITH?

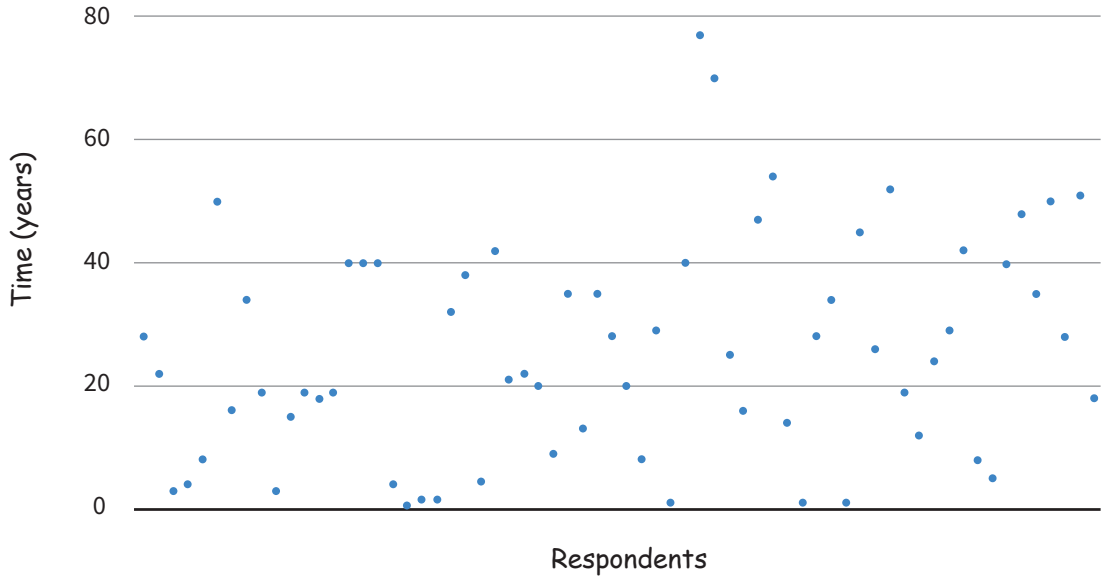


QUESTION 2: WHAT IS YOUR AGE?



QUESTION 3: WHICH NEIGHBOURHOOD OR MUNICIPALITY DO YOU LIVE IN?

QUESTION 4: HOW LONG HAVE YOU LIVED IN THE REGION?

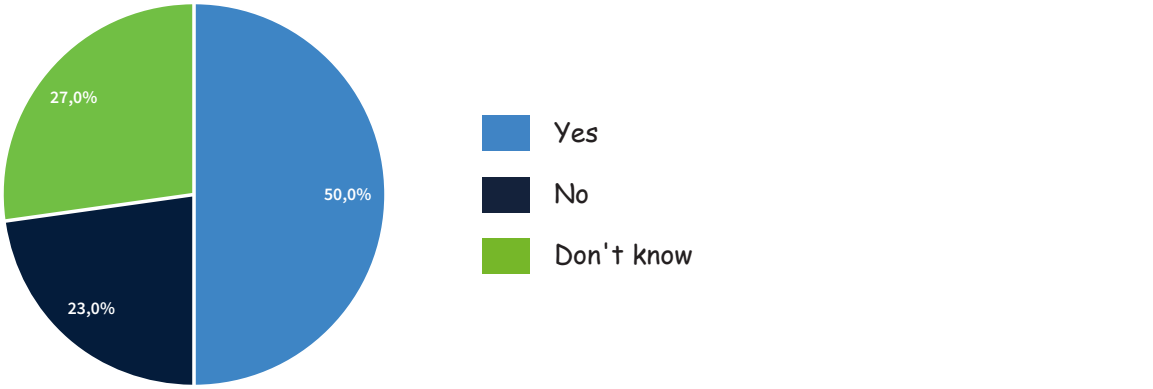


On average, respondents had lived in the region for 25.5 years, with a maximum of 77 years and a minimum of 6 months. Some participants indicated that they had lived in the region since birth, regardless of age category, while others had arrived more recently and shared fresh perspectives and experiences from both within and outside the region.

QUESTION 5: DO YOU IDENTIFY WITH ONE OR MORE OF THE FOLLOWING GROUPS?

Before the Workshop

QUESTION 1: DO YOU HAVE CONFIDENCE IN THE FUTURE?



Why ?

Word cloud "yes":

Word cloud "No" and "Don't know" :

After the Workshop

QUESTION 2: HOW DID YOU FEEL DURING THE WORKSHOP? DID YOU EXPERIENCE ANY PARTICULAR EMOTIONS?

QUESTION 3: AT THE END OF THE WORKSHOP, HOW DO YOU FEEL?

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