

Tourism marketing plan Lower North Shore

Plan marketing touristique de la Basse-

Côte-Nord

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1. Introduction

The tourism marketing analysis of the Lower North Shore was developed by the Lower North Shore (LNS) Steering Committee along with the previous studies and plans developed by the Quebec Labrador Foundation (QLF), the Local Development Center (CLD), Coop Voyages CoSte and the Regional Tourism Association (ATR). This project will also be carried out in collaboration with these organisations as well as the Coop Solidarité Bioproducts (CSB) and Destination Labrador. This strategic plan will help to identify new innovative opportunities for tourism business development in line with Canada's tourism strategy. The plan will be presented to an Advisory Committee, the Lower North Shore (LNS) Steering Committee, Industry Canada and LNS/Labrador partners.

This tourism marketing analysis will seek to accomplish the following goals:

- Research existing tourism markets of the LNS and Labrador.
- Increase tourism in remote regions .
- Achieve goals set out by the Federal Tourism Strategy.
- Encourage partnership development between communities and key tourism industry stakeholders both inside and outside of Quebec.
- Job creation.
- Business development.
- Increase economic development for businesses and economies of the LNS.

The tourism marketing analysis will be divided into 5 sections: *Evaluation and Marketing Orientations, Marketing and Communication Plan, Tourism Growth and Development, Marketing Strategies and Performance Measurement.*

Evaluation and Marketing Orientations will assess the strengths/opportunities and weaknesses/threats of the LNS tourism industry as well as discuss the marketing orientations by product and market/clientele. It will also look at communication objectives.

The Marketing and Communication Plan will cover products and experiences to emphasize, target tourism markets, the optimal position of tourism on the LNS and branding of the industries and citizens of the region.

The Tourism Growth and Development will look at key partnerships to emphasize/develop, sustainable transportation, workforce development and finally leadership development.

The Marketing Strategies section will examine communication tools, Internet strategies/Social media, representation, promotion and advertising actions as well as budget and validated financing sources.

The Performance Measures section will determine which results (Return On Investment) are important to measure to confirm if this plan is a success or not for the region and its SMEs.

The information found in this tourism marketing plan was gathered from the work of the organisations mentioned earlier as well as PAR Conseils and surveys that were asked to tourism businesses (restaurants, lodging, fishing camps) on the LNS, tour providers on the LNS and Labrador and key industry stakeholders (organisations, municipalities, band councils).

2. Evaluation and marketing orientations

2.1 SWOT analysis of current tourism situation on the Lower North Shore

Strengths/Opportunities

The Lower North Shore is a natural paradise with many unique features such as 6 bird sanctuaries, 50 rare plants with a multitude of small fruits and waters rich with marine wildlife for both sport fishing and viewing. The coast is also filled with beautiful landscapes, rigolets and archipalegos including the St-Augustine/La Tabatière rigolet. A unique maritime tundra forest also covers the coastal strip with an approximate width of 30 kilometers. Majestic icebergs are also often seen in coastal waters.

The Lower North Shore is rich with exceptional archaeological potential as far back as 8,500 years ago and also a lot from the 16th century. Most of these sites are concentrated around the Blanc-Sablon area but also all along the coast. The cultures that are now present on the coast are Innu, Métis, Francophones and Anglophones with a live and built heritage of interest but little emphasized.

Harrington Harbour is a picturesque village as well as Mutton Bay that can be very attractive to tourists. The Bremen site on Greenly Island is another site of significant historical importance that can be exploited.

The Lower North Shore has unique local food and there is an opportunity there for food transformation. The abundance of fish and seafood products can allow local restaurants to serve specialty dishes that are fresh and unique in taste.

Several regional airlines that fly to the area are available in Quebec and the road from Baie-Comeau to Blanc-Sablon (“Circuit Grand Nord”) offers a road link to the Lower North Shore without having to a detour through the Maritimes. The cooperative travel agency Coste, specialized in Lower North Shore, also offers many packages to facilitate the holiday experience for tourists wanting to visit the coast. There is also an existing business plan for a fast maritime link that was created in 2013.

When it comes to the fishing industry, tourism potential is high in certain areas such as observing at fishermen’s wharfs, purchasing directly from fishermen, sport fishing for cod in the Norwegian model, sport salmon fishing and making local products more accessible in restaurants. Many entrepreneurs are also willing to offer boat tours especially in the Blanc-Sablon and Bonne-Espérance regions.

La Route Blanche is a unique snowmobile trail that links the Lower North Shore during the winter months. This trail is maintained by the Ministère des Transports du Québec since it is the only terrestrial link between many villages on the coast. 4 businesses are already interested in exploiting this product such as Tours Nord, Coste, SportMax and PAL. The region also has the potential to offer different winter activities such as snowshoeing, ice fishing, cross country skiing, trapping and Northern Lights viewing. There is even a potential for winter cruises along the coast.

The millennia Innu culture, represented by two (2) communities (Unamen Shipu and Pakua Shipu), is a huge opportunity for Lower North Shore mainly on the European markets.

Weaknesses/Threats

One of the biggest challenges to tourism on the Lower North Shore is access. Without a road from Kegaska to Old Fort, a lot of natural attractions are hardly accessible. There are very few maritime excursions available on the coast and air links are very expensive and there is also very little capacity. The underdevelopment of tourism products also makes it difficult to charter flights from and to Montreal/Quebec City during the entire tourist season.

The main maritime link for the Lower North Shore from the west is the Bella Desgagnés. This vessel’s deficient touristic approach greatly harms the development of products and economic benefits because visitors have no time to spend in the communities and no time to spend their money either. The Bella Desgagnés primary role is a cargo ship so tourism is a distant priority. Tourists often miss some communities all together because

of schedule changes and harsh weather conditions. Few entrepreneurs or organisations are interested in investing in tourism services or products because it's very difficult to structure with the lack of importance given to tourism by Groupe Desgagnés.

A fast maritime link between communities would be essential and air transportation at a reasonable cost would be also be a necessity to ensure the development of the tourism potential on the Lower North Shore. The sometimes harsh weather conditions already pose a great enough threat on their own to navigation and flights so more accessibility is definitely needed.

The short summer tourist season and variable temperature also makes it difficult to develop sustainable and profitable tourism during usually peak tourist times. Some areas are also heavily invaded by flies which makes enjoying the communities very difficult.

The winter season is irregular so such products such as The Route Blanche are hard to develop if there is a lack of snow or mild temperatures. Global warming therefore affects the Lower North Shore tourism industry as well. The Route Blanche must also improve it's trail standards to increase safety and the ride quality for both residents and tourists. The Minister of Transport is responsible for grooming the trail and they need to improve signage as well as the communication between intervening organisations for the maintenance of this winter access route. This way the trail's opening time can be maximized.

The Lower North Shore has an abundance of archaeological potential but its development is not prioritized regionally, provincially or federally. There is also no built heritage plan and some historical buildings and artefacts are already not being properly preserved. There is also a lack of inventories of the unique current elements of the living heritage with high tourism potential. Most citizens are even unaware of the rich cultural heritage within their communities and this makes it even more difficult for tourists to discover and experience the uniqueness of the region.

First Nation communities have a lot to offer in terms of cultural history but there is a lack of interest towards tourism. These aboriginal reserves could offer tours and displays of their heritage but there isn't enough interest in presenting this to visitors and youth are becoming less and less aware of their own cultural background.

The potential workforce for tourism businesses and the population in general is aging and declining on the Lower North Shore. Some villages only have a few students in their school and their educational establishment is in great danger of closing down. Some kids

are already forced to get their education in another community which hinders their bond to their village and their desire to return as an adult citizen.

The overall capacity for tourists of many of the communities of the coast cannot accommodate for many visitors even if there was a lot. Some villages also lack basic infrastructure such as sewer lines and safe drinking water. Therefore, a heavy flow of tourists would be too much for a lot of communities to handle. Medical care is also limited in some areas and many of the tourists are elderly and with some health restrictions. This can also be a barrier to the optimization of tourism potential.

The lack of bilinguals on the Lower North Shore also makes it difficult for some tourists coming from the province of Quebec and a lot of visitors are from the province. Proper education resources would then be necessary to ensure courses such as French, tourism management and even local history are provided for adults as well as children. This would help to give proper services to visitors and to increase the enjoyment of their experience. It would also increase the likelihood of the citizens creating a bond with their community and a sense of pride and belonging.

Small and medium businesses also need more resources such as access grants and technical support to ensure their viability and the creation of new enterprises. Businesses cannot succeed or be created if people don't feel like there's a support network in place to help them with their needs. Some financial resources are already available but many people aren't even aware of these so more promotion must be made by local and regional development agencies.

2.2 Marketing orientations

MARKETING ORIENTATIONS
1. Intercept neighboring visitors
2. Extend the stay of existing visitors to the area
3. Offer new international caliber products in the Lower North Shore to differentiate the region

From a development perspective, there will need to be a focus first on **enhancing existing attractions and/or packages** that are built on already developed activities, features and natural/cultural assets and that will be demand-generators (i.e. that will provide reasons for visitors to come to the Quebec Lower North Shore). A **secondary focus will be on tourism services** (demand supporters) such as accommodations and restaurants.

Tourism development recommendations should be concentrated in **clusters of activities and attractions** that have the most potential (i.e. from a product/market/access perspective), not necessarily in all communities within the region.

A focus must be on **what is special and distinctive** about the Lower North Shore so as to provide a unique selling proposition to potential customers. At the same time, implementation of the strategy will need to follow a disciplined course of action to ensure that new development is paced to respond to market growth, and that too much development of the same type and in the same location does not occur. Tourism attractions, businesses, and services need time to establish themselves in the marketplace if they are to have a chance of becoming successful.

Priority must be given for the development of those activities and products that will successfully produce the **greatest economic impact** for the region such as outfitting, snowmobiling and the development of bioproducts from local berries and plants.

Based on the assessment of the current situation and market review, three overall strategic opportunities for the further growth of tourism in the study area are proposed.

These opportunities form the basis of the Lower North Shore Tourism Plan and are outlined below.

2.2.1 A visit to the Lower North Shore as part of a Touring Trip (interception)

Travellers would “add on” a visit to the area to a longer touring trip that currently includes a visit to neighbouring destinations (the Mingan area of Quebec and the Labrador Straits area and/or Viking Trail area of Newfoundland and Labrador). This strategy would apply to the eastern sub-region and to the western sub-region.

This opportunity will require both product development, marketing, and access initiatives such as:

<i>Product Development</i>	<i>Marketing</i>	<i>Access</i>
<ul style="list-style-type: none"> ▪ Develop market-ready “things to do” including interpretive experiences (built, signage, guided and self-guided tours), a scenic route between Old Fort and Blanc-Sablon (“<i>Chicoutai Scenic Drive</i>”) and activities in the eastern and western regions. ▪ Establish “sampler” eco-adventure activities that can be packaged for tourists interested in spending time in the region. 	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> ▪ For the eastern and western sub-regions, the marketing strategy will focus on getting travellers to spend more time on the Lower North Shore. This effort will need to start in the trip planning stage with partner ads in the ATRD official tourism guide, Quebec Maritime, the Newfoundland and Labrador Travel Guide, CoSte and publications of other area tourism associations provided to visitors throughout eastern Quebec and western Newfoundland. 	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> ▪ Western region: road to Kegaska and <i>Bella Desgagnés</i> or fast maritime link. ▪ Eastern region: existing road access from Labrador and ferry from St. Barbe to Blanc-Sablon / make this entry point to the region and the province more appealing with appropriate signage (branding of Lower North Shore and scenic route)

2.2.2 Extend the Stay of Existing Visitors to the Area

There is an opportunity in all of the sub-regions of the Lower North Shore to extend the stay (and spending) of visitors already coming to the area, both business visitors and recreational visitors. While the number of existing visitors is not high, the small scale of the tourism business infrastructure means that extending their stay by an additional day could have a significant positive impact on business revenues. The types of product development, marketing, and access initiatives required for this strategy include the following:

<i>Product Development</i>	<i>Marketing</i>	<i>Access</i>
<ul style="list-style-type: none"> ▪ Establish part-day packages and programs for visitors, such as sea kayak or canoe trips, iceberg boat tours, craft demonstrations and entertainment activities and make them readily available, easy to buy, and coordinated to the schedule of the fast maritime link or <i>Bella Desgagnés</i>. 	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> ▪ Promoting activity packages to visitors who have already booked trips through web sites. Lodging establishment or CoSte. 	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> ▪ Eastern region: existing road access from Labrador and ferry from St. Barbe to Blanc-Sablon. ▪ Self-drive tours from Blanc-Sablon to Old-Fort. ▪ Central and Western: Local boat transportation (e.g. fishing boat) between communities and to some islands. ▪ Central and Western: Shuttle service as part of canoeing/ sea kayaking/aboriginal/ birding excursions.
<ul style="list-style-type: none"> ▪ Establish packages designed to encourage <i>Bella Desgagnés</i> passengers to stay longer in communities such as Harrington Harbour, Tête-à-la-Baleine, La Tabatière, Saint-Augustin and Blanc-Sablon. This would require offering multi-day activity packages. 	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> ▪ Working with <i>Bella Desgagnés</i> to develop and offer packages with the help of CoSte. 	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> ▪ Providing alternative transportation options to return home or meet up with the ship (regular airlines or chartered planes for groups of 6 – 8 people).

<ul style="list-style-type: none"> ▪ Offering shore excursions to cruise-ship passengers to encourage at least a half day stay – these could include elements such as a guided hike, boat tour, craft demonstration and sales, and opportunity to meet and talk to local residents. 	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> ▪ Working with cruise lines or tour providers with the help of CoSte or local tour providers such as Tour Labrador to develop and offer packages. 	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> ▪ Local boat transportation (e.g., fishing boat, boat taxi) between communities and to some islands. ▪ Bus tour itinerary between Blanc-Sablon and Old-Fort or to the Labrador Straits.
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2.2.3 Create new international caliber products in the Lower North Shore

Given the natural and cultural/heritage resources of the Lower North Shore, a number of activities/experiences has been identified that may have the potential to form the basis for new “destination trips,” (i.e. trips where the region is the main destination and where the activity/experience is the main trip purpose). These are niche markets (e.g., outdoor, nature, culture and ecotourism segments) that require good quality, experiential and comprehensive packages as well as targeted marketing efforts. Potential destination products/experiences that have been identified include:

Fishing – at quality outfitting camps on excellent salmon/trout rivers, building on the existing situation. There may be an opportunity for the camps to become part of Quebec’s Inns of the Forest program, to broaden the market (and extend the season), to include adventure and ecotourism experiences, and possible winter activities. Sport cod fishing is also a new product that can be exploited and both the multispecies fisherman’s association and the Lower North Shore’s fisherman’s association are willing to give quotas for this new endeavour.

Agrotourism: Scallop, mussel farms, fish plant and wild berries cooperative – there is a mussel farm in Belles-Amours, a fish plant at St-Paul River and a scallop farm in Salmon Bay that offer tours and the sale of fresh seafood products. The scallop farm offers boat tours as well as tasting of their products. The new St-Paul River wild berries cooperative adds to this unique offer (factory tours, harvesting tours and the sale of local gourmet products for culinary purposes or cosmetic goods). This must be advertised more, with the Scenic road, because with the scenery, it is THE unique feature. Bus tours have started to visit the area but the potential is still not fully developed given its distance from the Blanc-Sablon ferry and lack of recognition.

Iceberg cruises – guided tours to majestic icebergs could be done from especially the Blanc-Sablon area. A test season (2016) with SportMax and Coste is planned. The construction of a marina by 2018, a bigger boat and chartered flights from Montréal and Québec in 2017 will help to establish this “feature product”.

Snowmobiling – guided snowmobile tours throughout the area (Route Blanche), linking to Labrador’s snowmobile trails and possibly planning around events such as the Cain’s quest snowmobile endurance race. This will require outfitters to arrange packages, provide equipment and guides, and arrange meals and accommodations. There are opportunities to tie in with operators in other parts of Quebec, as well as in Labrador. CoSte could help with the coordination and bookings of a multi-day and multi-stop trip. Opportunities for guided trips within the region, such as into the interior along the rivers, may also exist.

Sea Kayaking – several parts of the region offer excellent sea kayaking and there may be a market opportunity for multi-day sea kayaking trips to the area. Again, outfitters will be required to develop packages, provide guides, and support services with the possibility of help from CoSte. Packages that include stays in local communities and evening activities such as kitchen parties might be considered. Accommodation could be provided in B&Bs and insulated tents on islands.

Birding – the quality of the birding found in the area suggests an opportunity for packages tailored to the avid niche birdwatcher market. These might include visits to areas of the Lower North Shore in conjunction with visits to other parts of Quebec Maritime and/or

Newfoundland and Labrador. Again, a tour operator/outfitter would be required to develop packages and deliver the experience with the assistance of CoSte.

Archaeology and History – the unique and high quality of the archaeological resources of the area could be the basis for learning packages targeting the niche market with a high interest in this topic. Packages could be developed in conjunction with Port aux Choix, L'anse aux Meadows, Red Bay and Battle Harbour. The region has also the potential to develop a feature international caliber archeological site near Blanc-Sablon ("*Commanderie du Labrador*") which could eventually be recognized by UNESCO.

Maritime cabin network – develop a quality concept (style and services) typical to the Lower North Shore of an extensive network of cabins on coastal islands with various operators. This would allow visitors to truly live the life of a coaster from anywhere on the Lower North Shore.

Scenic road between Old Fort and Blanc-Sablon – the road between these two communities offers many beautiful views of the land and the sea. Properly branded signage along with a well constructed and simple map would incite tourists to turn left and discover the natural and rich cultural heritage of this region of the Lower North Shore. Sites should be ready on this route to allow visitors to sit down and enjoy the outdoors and available services should be clearly identified along the way and on the map. This map should be easily accessible at the tourism information centre in Blanc-Sablon and in various businesses in the area and in Newfoundland/Labrador..

Creation of a national park – having a national park on the Lower North Shore would generate an instant increase in recognition from tourists and especially lovers of the great outdoors. This would also create employment and bring in government funds for preservation of the land and wildlife.

The overall approach to product development is to ensure that initially a few significant "feature" products are ready to attract tourists to the region. These products will be based on enhancing existing attractions and/or packages that are built on already developed activities, features, and natural/cultural assets. Additionally, tourism development will be concentrated in clusters of activities and attractions that have the most potential to attract tourists while a tour by boat, by plane and/or snowmobile in all the region must be prioritize to answer visitors' expectations. Finally, all primary attractions must focus on what is special and distinctive about the Lower North Shore. Specific product development strategies are listed elsewhere, but with the above in mind, the following general product development strategy principles should be followed.

See in Annex 1 for more details related to product development.

2.3 Marketing orientations by markets

ORIENTATIONS BY MARKETS	
1. Intercept travellers from Ontario, Maritimes and USA which are coming already to Labrador from NFLND	
2. Intercept travellers from Québec which are coming already to Côte-Nord and Minganie	
3. Insert LNS in the Maritimes' packages for the European markets (France, UK and Germany)	
4. Insert LNS in Québec' packages for the European markets	

For the North American markets, there are 2 parts to this strategy: the eastern and the western parts of the Lower North Shore. These areas are both quite different regarding the accessibility so there will be a different section for each of these regions.

Eastern sub-region of the Lower North Shore

Most of these tourists will be traveling by the Strait of Belle Isle ferry and some by plane or coming from the Trans-Labrador highway from Baie-Comeau. Most of these visitors are travelling in the Northern Peninsula/Viking Trail area and to or in western Newfoundland. They primarily come from Ontario, the Maritimes, the United States of America and some from Europe as well. They travel mainly by car or by recreational vehicle (RV). Most come for pleasure or discovery but some come to visit friends and family. There is also a sizeable bus tour market that comes to the area during the summer months.

In 2015, this was the number of visitors that was recorded visiting the Red Bay National Historic site.

Visitor Category	Number	Percentage of Total
Individual travellers	3671	45.9%
Motor coach	3343	41.8%
Cruise	820	10.2%
School/other educational	168	2.1%
Total	8002	100%

The objective with these visitors is to get them to turn left once they disembark from the ferry so that they could discover the Quebec sector and spend ½ day to 1 day in the area as a package or part of a tour. Another goal would be for them to include the Lower North Shore as part of their visit to Newfoundland and Labrador and that they may spend even more than just 1 day in the region and perhaps be persuaded to visit further up the Lower North Shore.

To competitively position the eastern portion of the Lower North Shore, packages could be branded as experiencing a beautiful agrotourism and scenic drive, 9,000 years of human settlement, five cultures, quality handcrafts, inland and coastal trails and accessible coastal wilderness.

Key partnerships would have to be made with Destination Labrador, Tour Labrador, receptive tour operators from the Maritimes, CoSte, the Viking Trail Tourism Association and bus tour operators to ensure that the most visitors possible plan in advance or at least are aware of what the region has to offer before they arrive.

Key sites to advertise would be Red Bay, Battle Harbour, L'Anse aux Meadows, Port aux Choix and Gros Morne National Park (Rocky Harbour). The North Sydney to Port aux Basques ferry could also be a key area for promotion since everyone that arrives on the island of Newfoundland by vehicle must take this marine vessel. Deer Lake airport is also another important point of entry for tourists ("fly & drive" type) given the number of people that travel there and its proximity to Blanc-Sablon and neighbouring villages.

Ads for these activities should be placed in the Viking Trail Tourism Association publications, the Labrador Straits Historical Development Association, the Newfoundland and Labrador provincial travel guide, the Destination Labrador website as well as all the websites of the previous organisations and their Facebook pages. Brochures should be placed at all the areas mentioned earlier as well as Parks Canada sites nearby and hotel lobbies.

Packages for these tourists should include ½ to 1-day tour packages with a map and suggested stops such as trails, museums, mussel or scallop farm, fish plants, bioproducts facilities, landmarks, stores, restaurants, arts and crafts retailers, etc. The map will be branded the same as the route from Old Fort to Blanc-Sablon to facilitate the recognition sign and important places. This route will be branded in 2016 and the signage completed by the summer of 2017.

Multi-day self guided packages should be developed that include visits to the Labrador Straits area as well as the Lower North Shore that would include, accommodations, attractions and activities.

½ day and 1-day salmon and trout fishing experiences should also be provided on the St. Paul's River and the rivers in Old Fort.

Western sub region of the Lower North Shore

Tourists coming to this part of the Lower North Shore already travelling along the Côte-Nord especially those visiting Mingan and Havre-Saint-Pierre. Most of these visitors come from Quebec with a few arriving from Ontario, the United States and Europe. They are primarily independent travellers using cars and RVs. They visit the area for pleasure, seeing family and friends or for a specific reason such as seeing the Parc national de l'Archipel-de-Mingan.

The goal is then to extend their trip to Kégaska by road and then to other locations such Musquara by boat excursion. Another objective is to make tourists include the Lower North Shore as part of their trip to the Côte-Nord.

Selling points would include slogans such as where the road ends or where the real adventure begins. Activities that can be highlighted are salmon fishing, arts and crafts, aboriginal tourism and friendly welcoming villages. There's also Tour Nord in Chevery that offers many packages in the area.

Key partnerships must be made with the ATR Manicouagan and Duplessis to ensure that enough promotion is made. The Association touristique de la Gaspésie can also help direct tourists to the Lower North Shore as well as Québec Maritime and Tourism Quebec. ½ page ads should be included in the ATRs mentioned earlier and brochures should be distributed in visitor information centres throughout the Côte-Nord as well as the Blanc-Sablon tourism information centre. Hotel lobbies, park sites and other regional attractions would be key points for brochures. The Lower North Shore website, once it's updated, will be an excellent promotional tool and a Facebook page as well. Links to the website should be included on the Facebook pages and websites of the previously mentioned organisations.

Partners such as the one mentioned above should be reminded to distribute information about the Lower North Shore at trade shows in Quebec City, Montreal, etc. Tour operators

also need to be provided with information about this area of the Lower North Shore with the intermediary services of Coste. Trade partners include Québec Hors-Circuit, Boréal Tours, Horizon Nature Adventures, etc.

Some packages that can be developed include 5 day packages with an overnight stay that would go from Havre-Saint-Pierre to Kegaska with excursions on the Bella Desgagnés towards Harrington Harbour and Tête-À-La-Baleine .

To monitor the flow of traffic to the area, the visitor information centre in Natashquan can be a good source of information as well as the ATRs on the Côte-Nord.

For the European markets, the approach should be different with two distinct packages:

1. All Lower North Shore included in a “ Maritimes” fly & drive package (with Newfoundland & Labrador);
2. All Lower North Shore included in a “ Québec” package with Côte-Nord if by car or with Montréal/Québec City with a flight (chartered) going to Sept-Îles, Chevery and Blanc-Sablon with an option to Labrador.

2.4 Objectives

2.4.1 General marketing objectives

MARKETING OBJECTIVES
1. To publicize the existence of the Lower North Shore (increase awareness as a new destination to discover) mostly with the existing neighbor travelers (Ontario-Maritimes, USA for the Eastern sector/ Québec for the Western sector)
2. Make it accessible by the packaging of the destination (decreasing the challenges of accessibility)
3. Increase significantly the number of visitors during summer
4. Extend the tourism high season (from June to September)
5. Increase awareness in the local population of the tourism importance for economic development, job creation and cultural enhancement and protection

3. Marketing and communication plan

3.1 Products and experiences to emphasize

This marketing plan covers 2016-2017-2018. Some “feature products” identified in the tourism action plan adopted by the Lower North Shore tourism steering committee will take years to be put in place (eg. National park, Historic national park of “La Commanderie du Labrador”, etc.) and are not mentioned here but remain in the center of the future of tourism for LNS. They will allow the LNS to place itself on the international market and offer unique experiences that will benefit the businesses and the population of the region.

EXPERIENCES	
2016	
Chicoutai scenic drive	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> • From Blanc-Sablon to Old Fort • Half day, 1 day and 2 days based on several activities (agrotourism – 4 SMEs - , 2 museums, trails, excursions by boat with Garland Nadeau) • Packages to be developed (Coste) including with the new touristic road from Blanc-Sablon to Baie-Comeau via Labrador
Iceberg excursions	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> • From Blanc-Sablon with SportMax and Coste packages in collaboration with PAL
Route Blanche	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> • Snowmobile packages with Coste and Tours North (for winter 2017)
Bella Desgagnés (ferry-cruise along LNS)	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> • Daily shore excursions (Coste) in most communities • Cruise portion of a multi-day packages in some communities (Coste)

2017	
1 or 2 weeks travel along LNS	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> • Weekly airplane chartered from YUL/YQB to Sept-Iles, Chevery and Blanc-Sablon • In combination with the fast maritime link
Fast maritime link (1 or 2 weeks package from Eastern or Western LNS)	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> • Daily transferts from Kegaska to Blanc-Sablon with stopover in every community via Rigolet; • Several packages created (Coste)
Chicoutai scenic drive	
Iceberg and islands excursions	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> • Greeny and île au Bois excursions
Interpretative archeological trails	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> • In Blanc-Sablon sector
Salmon fishing	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> • Incollaboration with local outfitters
Route Blanche	
Bella Desgagnés (ferry-cruise along LNS)	
Innu' experiences	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> • Packages with Unamen Shipu "Innuberge" cabins and activities at a traditional camp
2018	
1 or 2 weeks travel along LNS	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> • With chartered weekly flights
Fast maritime link	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> • Daily basis in summer
Chicoutai scenic drive	
Iceberg excursions	
Interpretative archeological trails	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> • In Blanc-Sablon sector
Bella Desgagnés (ferry-cruise along LNS)	
Islands' touristic cabins network	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> • Packages for a tour with the chartered plane and the fast maritime link of several cabins (1 or 2 weeks)
Cod sport fishing	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> • 1 week packages • A first in North-America

3.2 Target tourism markets

EXPERIENCES	MARKETS	CLIENTELES
Summer tourism discoveries (icebergs, Scenic drive, agrotourism, Bella Desgagnés, Islands' cabins, etc.)	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> • Canada (Ontario-Maritimes), USA and Europe (France, UK, Germany) arriving from NFLND • Québec (Côte-Nord, Québec City, Montréal'450 region) and Europe (France, UK, Germany) arriving from Montréal/Québec by plane or car 	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> • 45 years old + • Couples by car and RVs • Motorcoach tours • Cruiseship'groups • Retired people • 45 years old + • Couples with no children • Retired people
Snowmobiling	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> • Québec (Côte-Nord, Saguenay, Lanaudière, Mauricie) • Ontario • USA • Europe (France, Belgium, Italy) 	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> • Men 45 years old + : Friends and small groups arriving by snowmobiles • Retired men • Fly & snowmobile for the European market
Fishing (salmon) Fishing (cod)	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> • USA • Québec/Ontario • Europe (France, UK) • Québec/Ontario • USA • Europe (France, UK) 	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> • Men (friends), 45 years + retired • Couples with no children • Couples with no children 45 years+ • Men (friends), 45 years + retired
Soft adventures (kayak)	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> • Québec/Ontario • USA • Europe (France, UK) 	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> • Couples 35-55 years old

Ornitology	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> • USA • Québec/Ontario 	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> • Small groups (clubs)
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According to a survey of tourism related businesses and tour providers on the Lower North Shore and Labrador conducted in 2016, most visitors are from Quebec with Ontario being second on the list. Europeans and Americans also make up the list as well as some tourists from the maritime provinces.

This same survey shows that most of the tourists are between the ages of 51-60. Almost all of the tourists are 41 and over with a small proportion of them being between the ages of 18-30. The results also show that most of the visitors staying on the LNS are there for 2-3 days.

Therefore, tourism products should be advertised in areas where the potential customers can know beforehand about the available activities and services before arriving the LNS. For example, creating partnerships with tour providers and tourism organisations from the Labrador area such as Destination Labrador, Experience Labrador or Tour Labrador would provide clients the opportunity to purchase packages on the LNS.

Establishing a link with the *Bella Desgagnés* through Coste would also give tourists a chance to visit the LNS and experience activities within the communities such as Tours du Nord in Chevery. Packages must be planned and known by tourists well in advance because the transportation logistics are complex for certain areas. The visitors must sometimes plan 1 week of vacation to experience the LNS for 3 days especially in the more remote villages.

Most businesses on this survey use a website or a Facebook page to advertise their services or activities. Given the abundant use of technology, these means are practical but the precise pages or sites will likely go unnoticed by the potential tourists. Therefore, links to their pages on sites such as Destination Labrador, the ATRs in Duplessis and Minganie, Québec Maritime, Tourism Quebec, Viking Trail, Labrador Coastal Drive and Newfoundland and Labrador tourism will allow customers to access the information from already established and known webpages. The update (and replacement) of the Tourism Basse-Côte-Nord website is also essential and could be a good reference for tourism related businesses and tour providers on the LNS. This site should also be a link on the previously mentioned sites.

The target market of middle aged people living within the province and Ontario should be contacted in written publications such as the Duplessis tour guide and the Newfoundland and Labrador tour guide. Information should also be available on the *Bella Desgagnés* and the Blanc-Sablon ferry since most of the tourists come into the area on these vessels. This would definitely help the tourism businesses offering spontaneous ½ to 1 day activities because many visitors also come to the LNS as part of a trip to Labrador. This would incite them to turn left and to actually experience activities in the area instead of simply passing by and not generating any revenues for the region.

According to the Red Bay national historic site, 45.9% of their 8002 visitors were individual travellers and 41.8% came by motor coach. These bus tours show that many potential travellers coming to the area already have their trip planned before coming and are retired or middle aged. This target market must then be reached through tour providers that offer these types of trips to the Labrador area. This way, the LNS tourism businesses can reap some of the benefits of these visitors coming to Labrador. It's essential to make them want to extend their stay by a day or more for the future of tourism on the LNS.

10.2% of the visitors to the Red Bay site were people that were a part of a cruise ship package. This is a smaller market but must still be considered as a good potential client base for the LNS. The cruise providers must then be contacted well in advance to include the LNS tourism businesses and activities in their packages. This will definitely be helpful for the tourism enterprises in the Blanc-Sablon and Bonne-Espérance areas.

3.3 Optimal positioning of tourism on the Lower North Shore

The brand image of a destination like Lower North Shore is a key element to convince potential visitors to come and visit the region.

With over 200 countries investing in tourism and more than 500 different provinces, states or regions, it is necessary to determine clearly where Lower North Shore of Québec stand and differentiate itself from the others.

Québec Lower North Shore optimal positioning:

A-

Who knows

Québec Lower North Shore

Real people, thousands of islands, local foods & millenia cultures

“ Who knows ” = One of the strongest motivation for travellers is to discover new destinations and / or activities. LNS is one of the best kept secret in North-America !

“ Real people ” = Locals are nice, authentic with many “ characters ”

“ Thousands islands ” = Sea & water in an huge territory

“ Local foods ” = One the biggest motivator to chose a destination

“ Millenia cultures ” = One of the most distinctive feature (concentration of consecutive occupation of a territory) compare to any other destinations in NorthAmerica

or

B-

Québec Lower North Shore

Be touched by an untouched coast

or

C-

Québec Lower North Shore

Wild wild coast

Novelty must be the concept to establish LNS' branding.

Typo and colors have to be determined. A simple drawing must be attached to the name and its signature. We recommend to combine, if possible, a stylish face of an individual representing at the same time islands and a footprint of an animal.

3.4 Branding of the industries and citizens of the Lower North Shore

A successful brand is not only for tourism. It must be in the DNA of all communities, residents, organizations and SMEs. Declinations (colors, slogans, dimensions) should be developed for several situations but still translating the same message.

A tool kit (norms and formats) has to be developed to make it easy to transfer on the Web.

4. Tourism growth and development

4.1 Key partnerships to emphasize/develop

The Lower North Shore needs a clear vision and governing body to direct tourism in the right direction. Making a permanent steering committee for tourism is therefore essential before making links with other organisations. Such a committee should be made up of members from key organisations such as the Coasters, Coste, CEDEC, Emploi Quebec, CLD, QLF, ATR Duplessis, MRC, Commission Scolaire du Littoral, QLF and the SADC. Members of the communities of the coast including the two Innu communities should be on this committee especially those with tourism businesses or those who are currently members of a local tourism board. Local tourism agents, if available, should be included on the steering committee as well.

Once such a committee is proceeding, (the orientations, priorities already confirmed) this marketing plan can be discussed and confirmed for the Lower North Shore. This committee will also supervise the search for financing for tourism development, hospitality and marketing.

After this core resource for tourism development on the Lower North Shore is established with a permanent Tourism Officer, it should seek out partnerships that would benefit its success. The proximity to Labrador and the already well established tourism industry in the area is an opportunity that must be capitalized on. The Red Bay national historic site attracted over 8,000 visitors in 2015 and most of these will not even see the left side of the southern Quebec/Labrador border other than to get off and get back on the ferry to Newfoundland.

Destination Labrador, which is responsible for marketing and helping tourists plan their adventures to the province, is a necessary partnership to develop for the Lower North Shore because it can help tourists extend their stay instead of leaving for Newfoundland on the ferry. Such a partnership could benefit both sides because a tourist that stays longer in the area is likely to spend more money on both sides of the border.

By being present on the Destination Labrador site or included in their offered activities, tourism businesses and services will have a chance to receive new clients that probably would've never ventured further than the ferry access road or would've simply drove by the possible adventures on the coast because of a lack of knowledge about them.

Many people come to the Labrador Straits area as a part of a tour bus package so tour providers would have to be contacted well in advance so that they could offer activities on the Lower North Shore. For example, over 40% of the tourists visiting the Red Bay national heritage site were a part of a bus tour. Therefore, they either didn't visit the Lower North Shore or simply drove by it because it wasn't included or offered in their trip package. Tourists would definitely love to visit a scallop farm or a mussel farm or even go on a boat tour to see icebergs or marine wildlife but these activities must be sold in advance or else their revenue potential will never be reached and their sustainability compromised as well.

Another key partnership to develop would be with Quebec-Maritime. This organisation helps to market many regions such as the Bas-Saint-Laurent, Gaspésie, Iles de la Madeleine and notably the Cote-Nord and the Lower North Shore. By having a more solid and extensive partnership with Quebec-Maritime, activities on the Lower North Shore can be included more thoroughly in vacation packages which would lure more tourists to the area that would've never of considered setting foot on the Lower North Shore.

Activities packaged through Quebec-Maritime could also attract cruises to the region and these vessels carry hundreds and sometimes thousands of tourists which

could be the difference between the creation or closure of tourism businesses and jobs.

A strong partnership must be maintained with the ATR Duplessis because they are one of the organisations that help to push tourists down the Cote-Nord and towards the Lower North Shore. The ATR Duplessis helps all of the region with the marketing of activities and informing tourists but they are very essential to the municipalities other than Blanc-Sablon and Bonne-Esperance. This is so because the communities between Kegaska and Old Fort can only be reach by plane, boat or snowmobile to tourists arriving on the Cote-Nord sometimes only hear about the Lower North Shore once they are in Duplessis and Minganie.

Blanc-Sablon and Bonne-Esperance have the opportunity of receiving tourists already going to Labrador but the other municipalities do not. Therefore, tourists on the Cote-Nord definitely need to find out about the Lower North Shore when they're there because they will likely not return just to visit the coast especially from west to east since there is no road connection. There's only air travel which is very expensive and usually is taken as a last resort or the *Bella Desgagnes* which may not have availability and may be off schedule. Therefore, very few tourists visit the Lower North Shore from west to east or even east to west if they're not well informed before hand by organisations such as the ATR Duplessis.

4.2 Sustainable transportation

(to be complted)

5. Marketing strategies

(list of actions to be completed. Anticipated budget for 2016: 113 000\$; 2017: 280 000\$¹; 2018: 280 000\$

MARKETING TOOLS



¹ If summer weekly chartered flights in operation in 2017.

2016

Orientation 1 : Intercept neighboring visitors

Action	Comments	Responsible	Partners	Costs	Funding	Schedule	Priority
1.1 Chicoutai Scenic Drive	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> • Create a printed map • Create dedicated web pages • Map' distribution • Press releases • Meet bus operators and receptives agencies 	Tourism officer	SMEs 2 Municipalities Local tourism committees	5000\$ 2000\$ 2500\$ 800\$ 1 200\$	CLD EDC	May 2016	1
1.2	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> • 			-			
1.3	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> • 			-			
1.4	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> • 			-			

Orientation 2 : Extend the stay of existing visitors to the area							
Action	Comments	Responsible	Partners	Costs	Funding	Schedule	Priority
2.1 Offer half-day and full day excursions at lodging establishments	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> For Blanc-Sablon, St-Paul River, Chevery, Tête-À-La Baleine; Excursions offered on their website and in the rooms 	Tourism Officer Lodging establishments	Coste	0\$	-	June 2016	1
2.2	•						
2.3	•						
2.4	•						

Orientation 3 : Offer new international caliber products in the Lower North Shore to differentiate the region

Action	Comments	Responsible	Partners	Costs	Funding	Schedule	Priority
3.1 Iceberg excursions	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> Using SportMax boat and personnel Create a package Press release Position it on LNS and Coste website 		Coste PAL	?	EDC	June 2016	1
2.1 2017 chartered flights	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> Create 2017' packages Approach receptive travel agencies 	Coste	Tourism Officer	0\$	-	May 2016	1
3.2	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> 						
3.3	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> 						
3.4	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> 						
TOTAL 2016 BUDGET		113 000\$					

2017

Orientation 1 : Intercept neighboring visitors

Action	Comments	Responsible	Partners	Costs	Funding	Schedule	Priority
1.1 Chicoutai Scenic Drive	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> • Reprint the map • Map'distribution • Press releases • Meet bus operators and receptives agencies 	Tourism officer	SMEs 3 Municipalities Local tourism committees	5000\$ 2500\$ 800\$ 1 200\$	CLD EDC	May 2017	1
1.2	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> • 			-			
1.3	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> • 			-			
1.4	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> • 			-			

Orientation 2 : Extend the stay of existing visitors to the area							
Action	Comments	Responsible	Partners	Costs	Funding	Schedule	Priority
2.1 Offer half-day and full day excursions at lodging establishments	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> For Blanc-Sablon, St-Paul River, Chevery, Tête-À-La Baleine; Excursions offered on their website and in the rooms 	Tourism Officer Lodging establishments	Coste	0\$	-	January 2017	1
2.2	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> 						
2.3	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> 						
2.4	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> 						

Orientation 3 : Offer new international caliber products in the Lower North Shore to differentiate the region

Action	Comments	Responsible	Partners	Costs	Funding	Schedule	Priority
3.1 Iceberg excursions	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> Using SportMax new larger boat Create 2017' package Press release Position it on LNS and Coste website 		Coste PAL	?	EDC	December 2016	1
3.2	•						
3.3	•						
3.4	•						
3.5	•						
TOTAL 2017 BUDGET		280 000\$					

2018

Orientation 1 : Intercept neighboring visitors

Action	Comments	Responsible	Partners	Costs	Funding	Schedule	Priority
1.2 Chicoutai Scenic Drive	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> • Reprint map • Map'distribution 	Tourism officer	SMEs 4 Municipalities Local tourism committees	5000\$ 1 200\$	CLD EDC	May 2018	1
1.2	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> • 			-			
1.3	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> • 			-			
1.4	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> • 			-			

Orientation 2 : Extend the stay of existing visitors to the area							
Action	Comments	Responsible	Partners	Costs	Funding	Schedule	Priority
2.1 Offer half-day and full day excursions at lodging establishments	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> For Blanc-Sablon, St-Paul River, Chevery, Tête-À-La Baleine; Kegaska, Unamen Shipu, La Tabatière; Excursions offered on their website and in the rooms 	Tourism Officer Lodging establishments	Coste	0\$	-	January 2018	1
2.2	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> 						
2.3	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> 						
2.4	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> 						

Orientation 3 : Offer new international caliber products in the Lower North Shore to differentiate the region

Action	Comments	Responsible	Partners	Costs	Funding	Schedule	Priority
4.1 Iceberg excursions	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> • Create 2018'package • Press release • Position it on LNS and Coste website 	SportMax	Coste PAL	?	EDC	December 2017	1
4.2 Cod sport fishing	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> • Invite specialized journalists to a famtrip 	Tourism Officer	Outfitters and operators	6 000\$	EDC	July 2018	2
4.3	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> • 						
4.4	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> • 						
4.5	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> • 						
TOTAL 2018 BUDGET		280 000\$					

ANNEX 1 LNS product development (other considerations)

- Other regions will benefit from improved access with the proposed maritime link. These new access routes will facilitate the development of a series of smaller tourism clusters that link attractions and activities. In the central region, coordinated winter recreational activities in the Gros Mecatina and Saint-Augustine area would be a priority with small boat excursions and outfitting in the summer months. Building a network of cultural and natural heritage activities based on the Rowsell house and the Côte des Archipels (Ile Providence, Harrington, Iles Saint-Marie). In the west, Musquaro should be developed due to its designation as a National Historic Site with links to Kegaska as the gateway to the region.
- Create a panoramic road (“*Chicoutai Scenic Drive*”)between Blanc-Sablon and Old Fort Bay and develop directional and informational signage that is clear for all visitors to local communities. Consider signage follows a trademark brand for the Lower North Shore but each community or tourism attraction may be personalized using the new region’branding. Cundari branding will be delivering a brand suggestion as early as Spring 2016 in partnership with the Bioproducts company in St. Paul’s River. An exchange with all the stakeholders and partners including with this marketing plan should be planned.
- Develop and promote locally and to tourists, a code of ethics for the industry and by-laws that protect the natural and cultural heritage of the Lower North Shore (e.g., forbids poaching of seabirds at sanctuaries and the pillage of artefacts at archaeological sites, restricts use of all-terrain vehicles in sensitive areas, adopts clean-up programme (with fines) for car wrecks, adopts architectural guidelines in communities to maintain their appeal and protect the natural and constructed sceneries.

Natural Attractions

The following are general recommendations for integrating a number of natural attractions as part of the plan. The fragility of these resources cannot be over emphasised. Therefore, it is critical that proper resource management strategies include monitoring and evaluation elements to ensure the adequate protection of these resources. Listed below are the recommendations involving the natural heritage of the area.

Seabird Sanctuaries

Due to their biodiversity, accessibility and level of restrictions imposed by CWS, development of the Brador Bay and Saint-Mary Islands seabird sanctuaries for visitor use should be organised to consider the following:

- A visitor use management plan that defines zones of access and codes of ethics should be completed as part of the strategy for properly managing these protected areas in collaboration with CWS. Access to sensitive nesting areas should be restricted.
- Necessary infrastructure development should take place to accommodate visitors.
- Guiding and interpretation programmes should also be administered to train local residents in welcoming and providing tours for visitors.
- A surveillance program should also be instituted to limit poaching at these sites.
- Promotion and marketing should occur to target birding niche markets to create a destination trip for the region based on bird-watching.

Fishing

- The Fédération des Pourvoyeurs du Québec (FPQ) monitoring system for salmon rivers in the region should be evaluated annually by a tourism agent to assess the viability of the resource. Total captures, average weight and effort should be gathered to make sure that use intensity does not diminish the resource. At present visitor use of the rivers is stable or increasing.
- Education programmes at the camps should advocate the Atlantic Salmon Federation's catch and release philosophy.
- Workshops should be offered for interested outfitters to enable them to extend their season or diversify their services through the development of additional nature-based products such as canoe-camping, trout fishing, ice-fishing or winter products.
- Sport cod fishing could also be possible with both fishermen association on the Lower North Shore willing to give up quotas for this tourism activity.

Protected Area Planning

Less than 2,4% of the Lower North Shore territory is protected under the IUCN's protected area classification system and are limited to the six seabird sanctuaries. This situation raises three important issues:

- 1) there is a need to protect the biodiversity of the region for future generations in order to promote sustainable development;
- 2) there is a lack of protected areas on the Lower North Shore. Protected areas play a key role in attracting tourists – they are the major attractions in many rural and remote areas;

- 3) neighbouring regions already count on national parks as their major tourism attractions (Gros Morne in NF, Mount-Torngats in Nunavik-Labrador, Mingan Archipelago, and Anticosti in Minganie region). The Manicouagan Regional Tourism Association is also working on establishing a World Biosphere Reserve in the “Monts Groulx” area.

There is a strong federal and provincial interest in establishing protected areas along the Quebec Lower North Shore. Park planning agencies at both levels of government have recommended the establishment of parks in the Strait of Belle Isle and Harrington Harbour regions of the coast.

National Marine Conservation Area

- Interested local residents in the St. Marys Islands and Blanc-Sablon regions need to organise to invite Parks Canada and FAPAQ to explain the process of creating a National Marine Conservation Area and to show their support for such a project.
- A series of community consultations and educational workshops will be conducted by Parks Canada and the Tourism Development Corporation to gauge local support for the establishment of a National Marine Conservation Area on the Lower North Shore of Quebec.
- A Parks Canada confirmation study of the representative marine areas (St Marys Islands and Strait of Belle-Isle) will be conducted to select and delineate a preferred area for protection.
- Continued consultations with federal and provincial agencies will be needed to bring the site to formal designation (i.e. the Saguenay-St. Lawrence Marine Park was established through a joint provincial-federal agreement).
- Consideration for World Heritage Site designation through UNESCO is a separate process and can be applied for at any time.

Québec National Park

- Along the coast, a first project to create a new national park was discarded by some local communities but a new approach should be undertaken.

Quebec Territorial Reserves

- Local residents need to invite FAPAQ and SEPAQ to their communities to understand that the provincial government is giving more attention to the need for residents to have access to traditional resources and activities within the reserve limits.
- Residents need to understand the designation process, regulations and restrictions that are a part of this type of designation. SEPAQ is a very marketing oriented organization. They help organise packages to Anticosti and have an ecolodge project in the Gaspesie Region. SEPAQ will become an important tourism player in the LNS with the implementation of the new territorial reserves.

Cultural Attractions

The following section focuses on the major cultural attractions on which to base the Lower North Shore's tourism development. Many of the region's sites are just as important as the nearby world heritage sites of Newfoundland and Labrador. The Lower North Shore's cultural sites proposed for development include sites that highlight two periods -- the initial settlement of Amerindians to the period of contact with Europeans, and from the arrival of the first explorers to that of the great cod fishing companies.

Hereafter, details of enhancement, of several archeological potentials in the area. But to succeed in creating an **exceptional archaeological site of international caliber**, the following steps should be taken :

- *Establish the status of the research done ,the ones to be done and a prioritization by historical and tourist potential (Jean-Yves Pintal & François Guindon, 8 semaines)*
- *Development of an interpretive trail on the Blanc-Sablon River ;*
- *Development of tourism with Ile-Aux-Bois and Greeny Island (feasibility study to achieve);*
- *Undertake , if applicable marine and terrestrial excavations in certain areas of the LNS according to the achieved status*
- *Creating an exceptional site in Brador : reconstruction of the **Commanderie du Labrador** (1708) with an Innu village : Feasibility Study and an implementation Plan*

Establishment in the Municipality of Blanc Sablon a reception centre coupled with interpretation facilities and experiences.

The Blanc Sablon region is proposed as an anchor for the cultural and heritage tourism development of the Lower North Shore, for the following reasons:

- It contains one of the most important concentrations of archaeological and historical sites in North America. The western shore of the Blanc Sablon River features nearly 60 archaeological sites, and of the 12 archaeological sites classified as cultural property in Quebec, 4 are located on the Lower North Shore, including 3 at Blanc Sablon (Room's Point, Wood Island, the western shore at the mouth of the Blanc Sablon River).
- The Blanc Sablon sites are easily accessible: by road from Labrador, by the St. Barbe/Blanc Sablon ferry, and as a stop for cruise ships.
- A substantial tourist clientele from Newfoundland and Labrador is already aware of this product and passes through the region. With the development of adequate visitor facilities, the Lower North Shore will benefit economically from the approximately 8,000 tourists passing through this sector.

The reception centre would have a dual purpose: 1) to offer the visiting public available information on the tourism products and services of the entire Lower North Shore and the Strait of Belle Isle; 2) to serve as a gateway for various interpretative experiences on the territory of the Lower North Shore. The centre would meet the needs of a diverse clientele (tourists, local population, school groups) through activities that interpret the landscape, the rich cultural heritage, and the diversity of archaeological sites (natives, Europeans and Eurocanadians).

- *The visit to the centre will feature the many artefacts and architectural elements, (prehistoric as well as historic) that have been prepared for exhibition purposes as part of the promotional project of the Ministère de la Culture et des Communications. In addition, this reception and interpretation centre would offer indoor activities in case of bad weather (rain, fog) such as videos and internet access.*
- *There will also be adventure tours to discover the archaeological richness and landscapes of the Brador/Blanc Sablon sector. (i.e. hiking, cycling, sea kayaking). These activities will focus on interpretation tours (see the six tours proposed on next page) starting from the reception centre. The tours would lead tourists 'back' in time on the Lower North Shore. The proposed interpretative experiences would integrate other assets of the sub-region, such as the Jacques-Cartier Trail and the history of the Bremen.*

The tours will provide information that interprets the landscape and will highlight the richness of the sector's archaeological sites. The tours will be thematic discovery tours, either with an interpretive guide or self-guided, and will feature travel by foot, minibus, or ship.

Blanc Sablon Tours

- 1) A first tour on the western shore of the Blanc Sablon River will feature the following:
 - a. native themes;
 - b. product accessible to all;
 - c. discovery of the ancient marine terraces and of 8,500 years of Amerindian and Inuk history, of the initial settlement of the Lower North Shore, until the arrival of the first Europeans to America;
 - d. explanation of the main characteristics of the region's landscape.
- 2) A second tour will link the sectors of Blanc Sablon and Lourdes-de-Blanc-Sablon, and follow Mount Parent hill along the shoreline:
 - a. accessible to all;
 - b. themes: history of these villages and of the islands' use.
- 3) A third tour along the *chemin des Français* linking Blanc Sablon to Anse-des-Dunes and Brador:
 - a. relatively easy;
 - b. theme of the importance of the Labrador Commandery to the region's history;
 - c. discovery of the sweeping viewscapes of the interior.
- 4) A fourth tour linking Blanc Sablon to L'Anse-au-Clair and bordering the Strait of Belle Isle:
 - a. more demanding (or easy, if done as a guided minibus tour);
 - b. themes and sites visited: built heritage of Blanc Sablon, location of quartzite extraction (a stone used by Amerindians for millennia to make their tools); border between Quebec and Labrador, and the existing links between these two territories.
- 5) A fifth tour taking tourists to the interior, from Blanc Sablon to lake Carré at Brador:
 - a. relatively difficult;
 - b. themes: limits to the sea invasion, ancient Amerindian occupation;
 - c. discovery and soft adventure: walking behind a waterfall, discovering the region's 2 main types of landscapes – the small staggered hills of the Blanc Sablon region (the *cuestas*), as opposed to the rounded hills at the end of Brador Bay, more typical of the rest of the North Shore.
- 6) A sixth tour focusing on the discovery of icebergs, possibly Wood Island and Greenly Island:
 - a. maritime discovery and iceberg watching;
 - b. themes: historic fishing sites and marine wildlife observation;
 - c. crash site of the Bremen.

Development of heritage attractions and tours along the Shore, based on the communities' distinctive characteristics:

- *Middle Bay*: distinctive treatment of the Basque theme by using available archaeological information and already existing Middle Bay Interpretation centre.
- *Saint Paul's River*: unique theme of the cod trap and the Whiteley premises which is already on display in the Whiteley museum; and a long river that is easily travelled by canoe. This makes it possible to address issues related to the use of the hinterland. The cod trap experience could be interpreted in the context of a boat tour leading to a real cod trap.
- *Old Fort*: themes of the port of Brest and of the first Courtemanche station.
- *St. Augustine*: theme of the archipelago and its use by Amerindians and Eurocanadians.
- Sector of *Mecatina* (from La Tabatière to Chevery): themes of seal net fishing in winter and of the Robertsons' innovation of stake-nets.
- *Harrington Harbour* archipelago: built heritage theme and presentation of houses that are undeniable attractions, notably at Harrington Harbour and Mutton Bay.
- *Kegaska-La Romaine*: themes of the trading post and mission of Musquaro/La Romaine, of the Eurocanadian presence, of Amerindian families, and of relations and trade with Minganie.
- Theme of the prehistoric Amerindian settlement² in the sector of La Tabatière/Mutton Bay and in the St. Augustine archipelago and the Kegaska-La Romaine sector; the dispersion of historic sites lends itself to the development of a local maritime tour linking Chevery to Mutton Bay or La Tabatière, via Harrington Harbour, Providence Island and Tête-à-la-Baleine.
- *Tête-à-la-Baleine*: theme of transhumance.

The development of the entire Lower North Shore's heritage and cultural products must also be based on:

- The rigour and accuracy of information and historical facts, to satisfy an ever-more educated and aware clientele, notably from Newfoundland and Labrador, that is demanding a high quality product.
- Organizing adequate signage and branding (e.g., interpretative signs, to inform the visiting public of the presence of areas classified as Cultural Property by the Quebec government) and supplementing existing or future signs along the Jacques Cartier Trail.
- Production of informative material, such as a leaflet explaining the tourist and cultural attractions of the Lower North Shore for self-guided tours, (or re-editing and issuing small brochures on the Lower North Shore published at the beginning of the 1980s), so that the visiting public, the school population and local residents alike may discover the rich past of "the Shore". Use of possible rented iPads or App creation.

- The processes that officially recognize the importance of the Lower North Shore's archaeological and historic sites:
- Pursuing actions to ensure that sites classified as Cultural Property in the Blanc Sablon region obtain the federal government's recognition;
- Organizing efforts to obtain UNESCO's World Heritage recognition for the Blanc Sablon region's archaeological sites, where the vestiges of five cultures converge.

- Development of a range of heritage tours throughout the Lower North Shore, by focusing on various types of travel and access, whether as cruise stops, fast maritime link stops or as components of ecotourist tours (e.g., sea kayaking combined with activities to discover nature and LNS history).

It is important to collaborate with Newfoundland and Labrador in establishing a single heritage tour based on exceptional archaeological sites completely surrounding the Strait of Belle Isle. The development of the Blanc-Sablon region would make it possible to complete this tour, which would then cover the 4 corners of the Strait of Belle Isle: Port-au-Choix, L'Anse-aux-Meadows, Red Bay and Blanc-Sablon.