

Climate change
is putting the tourism
industry to the test

Winter activities



Quebec offers a wide variety of activities and attractions throughout the province. Some of them are particularly vulnerable to climate change and may be affected in different ways depending on their specific characteristics.

Challenges in ensuring the resilience and longevity of the tourism offering

Depending on the situation, the impacts of climate change may pose a threat, but in some cases they can also present new opportunities.

Taking these threats into account, along with the associated environmental, economic, and social issues, is part of the challenge of ensuring the resilience and long-term viability of the tourism industry. The needs include:

01

[Consult](#)

Ensuring the long-term viability of infrastructure, equipment, and facilities that are exposed to weather events while minimizing the impact on the natural environment

02

[Consult](#)

Maintaining the quality of tourism offerings over the long term despite more variable weather conditions and rising adaptation costs

03

[Consult](#)

Preserving the health, safety, and well-being of visitors and employees despite the increase in extreme weather events

Understanding the impacts in order to optimize climate change adaptation

To assess the threats and opportunities facing a tourism destination, it's essential to consider the scope and scale of the impacts of climate change on the industry. These vary depending on several factors, including the specific characteristics of each region and seasonal variations.

Learn about the impacts of climate change by region and by season in a special report on tourism industry on the website of Ouranos. [Access the report](#)



Main

challenges

The information provided here is based on current knowledge and discussions with tourism associations. It is provided as an example and does not reflect all possible scenarios. A thorough understanding of climate phenomena and their effects on tourism supply and activities remains essential for assessing their impacts in a fair and representative manner.

01 Longevity of infrastructure, equipment, and facilities

Challenges

Winter activities

What factors might be causing this?

Extreme weather events

Precipitation

Winter thaws

Precipitation

Winter thaws

What kind of threat does this pose?

Cancellation, interruption, or disruption of activities related to the affected infrastructure.

Cancellation, interruption, or disruption of activities due to damage to access roads.

Increased operating costs to maintain the quality of the offering.

Examples for the industry

Temporary closure of ski lifts at a ski resort due to damage caused by high winds.

Temporary closure of a ski resort due to impassable access roads caused by icy conditions.
Limited access to a site due to a forest road that has become impassable following winter rain.

More frequent maintenance of ski slopes or outdoor ice rinks due to winter thaws.
Increased energy requirements to maintain the ice on outdoor rinks.

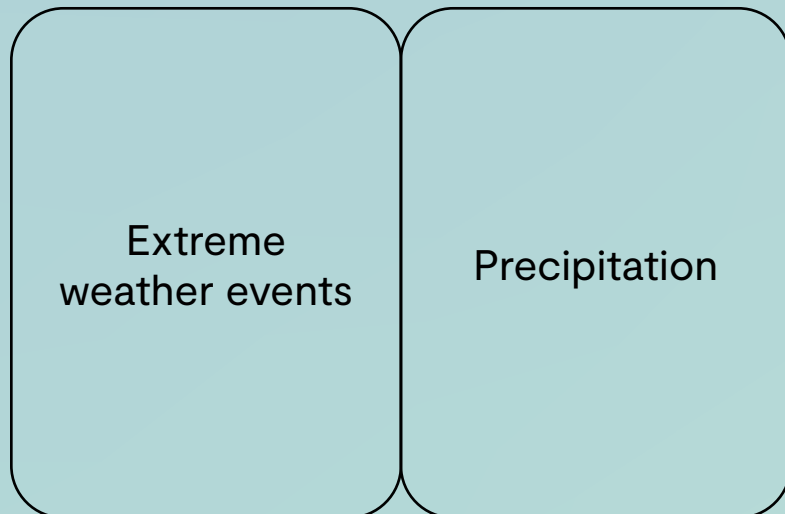
 Track climate change and inform your actions on [Climate Portraits](#) platform.

01 Longevity of infrastructure, equipment, and facilities

Challenges

Winter activities

What factors might be causing this?




What kind of threat does this pose?

Total or partial loss of infrastructure, equipment and facilities

Examples for the industry

Damage to a ski resort's ski lift caused by freezing rain or high winds.
Damage to a snowshoe or cross-country ski trail bridge caused by a tree that fell during high winds.

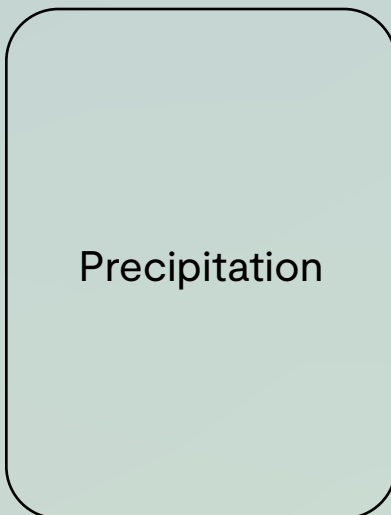
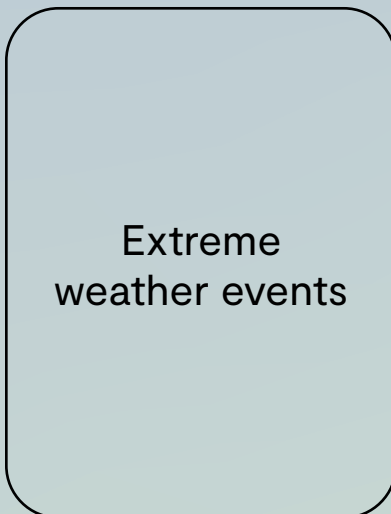
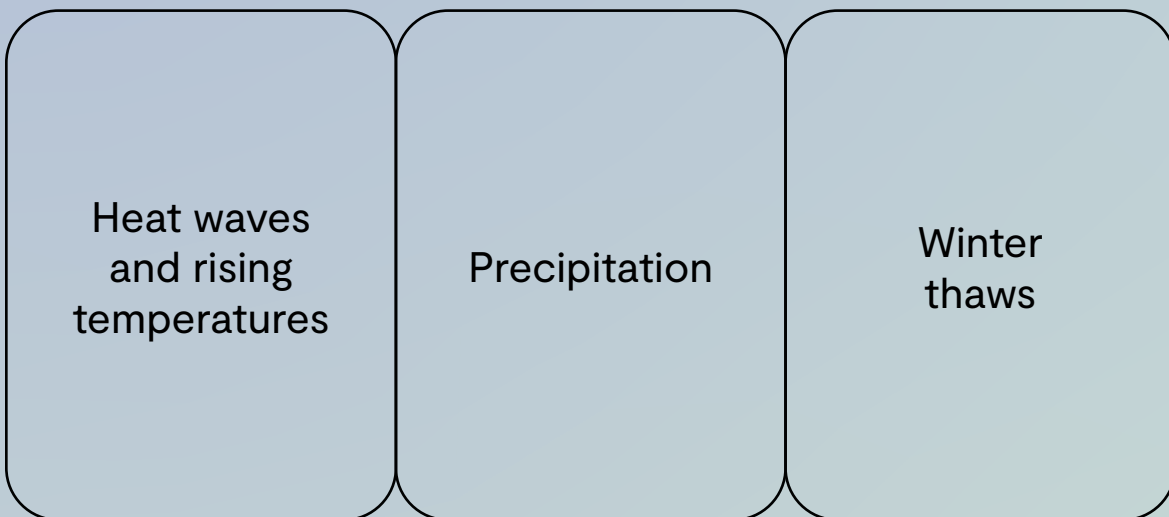
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02 Viability of the tourism offering

Challenges

Winter activities

What factors might be causing this?



What kind of threat does this pose?

Decreased appeal and/or loss of attractions and activities due to changes in ecosystem dynamics.

Interruption or disruption of the supply chain


Increased pressure on the natural environment.

Examples for the industry

A decline in visitor numbers due to the shorter snowy season.

Supply disruptions for remote outdoor recreation centres due to roads that are impassable or closed because of storms.

Water and energy requirements for maintaining snow cover for winter sports.



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What factors might be causing this?

Winter
thaws

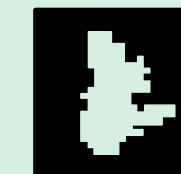
Cold
snaps

What kind of threat does this pose?

Increased risks to the health, safety, and comfort of visitors and workers.

Examples for the industry

Unstable ice conditions on lakes and rivers during winter thaws.
Hypothermia or frostbite during cold snaps.
An increase in injuries due to icy surfaces following winter rain and a cold snap.



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Turning threats into opportunities

Some climate-related threats can also serve as powerful drivers of innovation for the tourism industry. Already, several organizations are taking concrete steps to adapt and are seizing these opportunities to enhance their offerings, strengthen their resilience, and set themselves apart.

The case of Saguenay–Lac-Saint-Jean

Threat

Winter weather conditions threaten the long-term quality of the alpine skiing tourism offering

Opportunity

Increase the resilience of tourism businesses by diversifying winter and year-round activities

Despite exceptional natural snowfall, the Le Valinouët ski resort faces growing threats from climate change. Rising winter temperatures, increased winter rainfall, and fluctuating snowfall, which shorten the alpine skiing season, are putting the resort's main activity at risk. To adapt, the resort is diversifying its activities across all four seasons (cross-country skiing, snowshoeing, fatbiking, tubing, hiking, mountain biking, and wildlife viewing), thereby reducing its reliance on downhill skiing while highlighting its unique selling point of 100% natural snow. This strategy strengthens its economic resilience and attracts families seeking an authentic experience. [Learn more](#)

The power of a network to accelerate the transition to action

As the effects of climate change intensify, collective action is more essential than ever.

It is based on scientific knowledge informed by learnings, the sharing of experiences, and collaboration through an iterative and ongoing process. Our understanding of the climate is evolving, risks are shifting, and vulnerabilities are changing. In this context, every tourism stakeholder has a role to play in developing activities and attractions that are better suited to the current and future climate conditions.

Key leaders in the development and structuring of the winter activity tourism offering

Association des stations de ski du Québec (ASSQ)

Rando Québec

Ski de fond Québec

Événements Attraction Québec

Vélo Québec

Fédération des clubs de motoneige du Québec

Fédération des clubs quad du Québec

Avalanche Québec

Regional tourism associations