

TOGETHER, WE ARE QUÉBEC



QUÉBEC POLICY ON IMMIGRATION, PARTICIPATION, AND INCLUSION

Québec Policy on Immigration, Participation, and Inclusion



immigration participation inclusion

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WE ARE QUÉBEC

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Readers can also consult the Immigration, Participation, and Inclusion Action Strategy 2016-2021 *Together, We Are Québec*.

The French version is available under the title *Ensemble, nous sommes le Québec – Politique québécoise en matière d'immigration, de participation et d'inclusion*.

This document is available online at www.midi.gouv.qc.ca.

This policy was developed in keeping with the principles of gender-based analysis, sustainable development, and the occupancy and vitality of territories. These principles will guide the implementation, monitoring, and evaluation of the action strategy.

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A Message from the Premier



Today, the Government of Québec is adopting an ambitious policy to reap the full potential that immigration and ethnocultural diversity offer. *Together, We Are Québec: Québec Policy on Immigration, Participation, and Inclusion* is the fruit of a public consultation and close collaboration with various stakeholders. Twenty-five years following the adoption of Québec's first policy statement on immigration and integration, *Let's Build Québec Together*, this policy offers updated orientations and practices.

In order for Québec to remain an open, democratic society where Quebecers of all origins can participate actively and fully, we must remove the systemic obstacles that hinder true equality. By emphasizing our society's open and inclusive nature, we can benefit further from all Quebecers' contributions to Québec's development.

The policy centres on two challenges. First, we must modernize our immigration system to more efficiently and effectively respond to Québec's needs, in particular by encouraging the transition from temporary to permanent status. Next, we must ensure that immigrants are able to quickly access the workforce in positions that correspond to their skill sets, and focus on their contributions to the vitality of the French language, especially through francization services that emphasize acquiring the necessary skills to rapidly join the labour market.

Creating and maintaining an inclusive society that promotes full participation hinges on the commitment of economic and local stakeholders, government departments, public agencies, and the general public who, together, contribute to creating welcoming, inclusive communities. Their collective commitment guarantees our success in bolstering the relationship of trust and solidarity that unites Quebecers of all origins.

Finally, the policy must be implemented responsibly, coherently, and efficiently. The Government of Québec intends to closely monitor progress by accurately assessing society's evolving context and by relying on an evaluation framework that measures the relevance and efficiency of its initiatives and ensures that the most vulnerable among us are protected.

The *Québec Policy on Immigration, Participation and Inclusion* requires the commitment of all Quebecers, newcomers, and longstanding residents, because together, we are Québec.

A handwritten signature in black ink, which appears to be 'Philippe Couillard'.

Philippe Couillard
Premier

A Message from the Minister of Immigration, Diversity and Inclusiveness



Québec's international environment is highly competitive and characterized by growing worker mobility and intense competition between major immigrant societies seeking to attract the best talents. Our society is becoming increasingly diversified, and its needs have changed. Information and communication technologies are pervasive and demand increased responsiveness and efficiency.

Against a backdrop of major transformations and at a time when immigration is destined to play a key role in future economic, social, and cultural development, Québec must make considerable changes to set itself apart and capitalize on the potential these transformations offer.

The Government of Québec is therefore adopting a new immigration policy to guide its actions over the coming decades. *Together, We Are Québec: Québec Policy on Immigration, Participation, and Inclusion* is an essential document that will facilitate the implementation of an avant-garde, efficient immigration system that is more closely aligned with the Québec's needs. This policy outlines a forward-looking plan for Québec, that of a French-speaking, inclusive society that seeks greater prosperity through immigration and through the full participation of immigrants and members of ethnocultural minorities.

Together, We Are Québec is accompanied by an action strategy that contains specific goals and measures that will allow Québec to better select and integrate immigrants and encourage all members of society to live well together. Our communities must be both welcoming and inclusive; they are truly the heart of this policy. The commitment and mobilization capacities of communities, socioeconomic actors, government departments and agencies and of the general population are truly paramount to our success.

The policy offers a comprehensive vision and leads the way towards a Québec that facilitates and recognizes contributions from Quebecers of all origins. It is a testament to our shared ambition to make Québec a prosperous place that fosters individual and collective fulfillment.

A handwritten signature in black ink that reads "Kathleen Weil".

Kathleen Weil
Minister of Immigration, Diversity and Inclusiveness



A Cooperative Undertaking

The Committee on Citizen Relations held public consultations between December 2014 and February 2015.¹ A special parliamentary consultation also took place in January and February 2015, the results of which inspired the writing of the policy and its action plan. Its contents were developed in collaboration with various government departments and agencies. It also benefited from research on immigration's impact on the economy and on innovation, as well as on the conceptual foundations of ethnocultural diversity management and the challenges associated with skills recognition.

During the consultations, a broad consensus emerged around the following points:

- The importance of better aligning immigrant selection with employer needs and the need to facilitate the transition from temporary to permanent immigration status
- The importance of timely access to accurate information so that individuals can begin their integration and francization process from their countries of origin
- The need to resolve persistent skills recognition issues with regulatory bodies and employers and remove systemic obstacles to employment that offer growth potential, in an effort to promote immigrants' labour market integration
- Employer recognition of the importance of French as the language of socioprofessional integration and the need to offer French classes in the workplace
- The key role employment plays in attracting immigrants to regions outside the Greater Montréal area
- The importance of devoting additional effort to creating and maintaining inclusive communities, particularly through education on rights and freedoms, intercultural training, and initiatives to create awareness about diversity's and immigration's contributions to society
- Better coordination between economic actors, community partners, and government departments and agencies so that we can better target our efforts as we continue to build an inclusive society
- The importance of shared responsibility between society and immigrants in order to both enhance participation and strengthen trust and solidarity among Quebecers of all origins
- The need to underscore the importance of democratic values, particularly substantive equality and religious neutrality of the state
- The need to acknowledge obstacles encountered by second generation immigrants and ethnocultural minority youth who were born and educated in Québec, which requires specific measures to counter discrimination
- The leadership role the government is called to play as an employer by ensuring that the public service reflects Québec's diversity and, more generally, the widely observed finding that racialized minorities are underrepresented in government, media, boards of directors and elected bodies

- The need to provide Québec with a new policy statement and promote interculturalism as Québec's pluralist model for living well together

The types of issues raised within this policy's comprehensive vision concern society as a whole; everyone is encouraged to get involved and contribute to building a more inclusive society.

Like all Quebecers, immigrants and members of ethnocultural minority groups already benefit from services delivered by government departments and public agencies, generally as part of universal programs in areas such as education, health care, and employment. This policy is part of a mainstreaming approach intended to optimize government efforts to foster full participation. As a result, government departments and agencies are expected to refer to the policy guidelines when planning and coordinating their own policies, programs, and measures, to ensure that the population's various needs are taken into account.

Going a step further

Appropriate intervention depends on a number of factors, including a shared understanding of the phenomena and its terminology. For this reason, it is important to pay close attention to vocabulary and choose suitable terms, avoiding expressions that can reinforce stereotypes or prejudice. This policy is accompanied by a glossary which contains definitions and clarifications of key terms.

The policy also has a compendium of statistics, which serve as an important reference for understanding current phenomena. Both the glossary and statistics are available on the Ministère de l'Immigration, de la Diversité et de l'Inclusion website.

Despite past efforts, there is reason to introduce strategic innovative measures in order to achieve the hoped-for results. The policy is thus the foundation for an initial five-year action strategy (2016 to 2021). This policy and action strategy are necessary, not only for Québec to fully benefit from the skills of immigrants and ethnocultural minority groups, but also to ensure that public sector interventions are tailored to the constantly changing economic, demographic, and geopolitical context.

Scope of the policy

This policy deals with the immigration system's performance, as well as ways to encourage the full participation of people from ethnocultural minority groups in a prosperous and inclusive Québec. It is part of the Québec approach to living well together.

Because of Aboriginal nations' specific history and identity and the recognition of Aboriginal rights, Aboriginal diversity issues differ from those related to ethnocultural diversity resulting from immigration. Consequently, and in accordance with two resolutions passed by Québec's National Assembly in 1985 and 1989 and the approach that led to "The Peace of the Brave" in 2002, Québec and the Aboriginal peoples maintain a nation-to-nation relationship.

Moreover, in 2000 the Québec National Assembly officially recognized the existence of a Québec English-speaking community that enjoys long-established rights (*Act respecting the exercise of the fundamental rights and prerogatives of the Québec people and the Québec State*, CQLR, chapter E-20.2).

Diversity in Aboriginal nations and Québec's English-speaking community is not directly addressed in this policy because of their distinct status and established rights. Nonetheless, the policy's broad goal of promoting inclusion, particularly with regard to interculturalism and combating discrimination and racism, equally apply to these forms of ethnocultural diversity.

Aboriginal nations

In Québec, 11 Aboriginal nations coexist with the Québec nation: the Waban-Aki (Abenaki), Mamiwinnik (Algonquin), Atikamekw, Nituuuuuiyuuuch (Cree), Huron-Wendat, Innu, Inuit, Wulust'agooga'wiks (Maliseet), Mig'maq (Micmac), Kanien'kehakas (Mohawk), and Naskapi.²

These Aboriginal nations live in 14 Inuit villages and 41 Aboriginal communities across Québec. Today, an increasing number of Aboriginal people live in urban centres like Gatineau, La Tuque, Montréal, Sept-Îles, and Val-d'Or. Aboriginal nations are stakeholders in Québec's history, culture, and identity, which they have helped shape from the time of their first encounters with settlers.

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Introduction

Some 50 years ago, Québec became aware of the importance of being actively involved with immigration, francization, and integration to ensure that immigration was in keeping with its economic interests and helped maintain its distinct, francophone character. Today, the Government of Québec is just as determined to act, conscious that its prosperity depends to a fair extent on the ability of Quebecers of all origins to fully and actively contribute to society.

Since 1990, the government's actions have been guided by the first policy statement on immigration and integration, *Let's Build Québec Together*, which recognized immigration's contribution to demographic recovery, economic prosperity, the ongoing vitality of the French language, and global outreach. This policy statement heightened Québec's ability to act.

Social and economic changes over the past 25 years explain the need to review the 1990 policy statement's objectives. In terms of demographics, it is no longer a question of harnessing immigration's potential to ensure the recovery of population growth. It is the decline in the working-age population that requires an increased supply of potential workers, including immigrants, to counter this phenomenon. This situation underscores the need to reassert immigration's role and its contribution to Québec.

In contrast to expectations in 1990, today immigration's contribution reaches well beyond the scope of permanent immigration. All migratory movement—whether it be permanent economic, family, or humanitarian immigration, or temporary immigration for work or study—contributes to Québec's vitality, provided that conditions are established to ensure that immigrants can actively and successfully participate in their new society.

Thanks to the selection of French-speaking immigrants and the deployment of quality francization services, immigration's contribution to the vitality of the French language has grown considerably since 1990. Today, additional efforts need to be devoted to increasing the proficiency and use of the French language so that, among other things, immigrants can more quickly find jobs that match their skills.

Because the Government of Québec understands that immigration and diversity are both valuable and economically beneficial, it also understands that the adoption of a new policy on immigration, participation, and inclusion and an action strategy for its implementation are of vital importance. An in-depth revision of the *Act respecting Immigration to Québec* (CQLR, chapter I-0.2) will provide the authority required to introduce a new immigration system and apply this policy, which will also serve as the foundation for future multi-year immigration plans.

This policy underlines the dynamic and pluralistic nature of Québec's identity and emphasizes the fundamental importance of the French language. It conveys a vision of integration based on a commitment that is shared by immigrants and society as a whole. It affirms democratic values and the importance of intercultural contact and rapprochement, as well as the continued fight against discrimination and racism. Thus, the policy adopts a comprehensive approach revolving around two of the major challenges Québec

faces in achieving its vision of an inclusive, francophone society that seeks greater prosperity through immigration and the full and active participation of immigrants and ethnocultural minorities in society:

- A Québec that values immigration's contributions to its prosperity and to the vitality of the French language
- An inclusive society committed to fostering full and active participation

Four main objectives are being pursued to guide actions related to these two challenges:

- Harnessing the strategic benefits of permanent and temporary immigration
- Making it possible for immigrants to quickly and effectively complete the immigration process
- Strengthening trust and solidarity among people of all origins
- Striving for substantive equality through cooperation with economic leaders, local community partners, and departments and agencies

IMMIGRATION, PARTICIPATION,
AND INCLUSION IN QUÉBEC

immigration *participation* *inclusion*



Basic Tenets

Over the past several decades, Quebecers have gradually developed a common understanding of the challenges posed by immigration and living together in an ethnoculturally diverse society. The Québec Policy on Immigration, Participation, and Inclusion is built on three basic tenets:

- Immigration plays an important role in boosting Québec's prosperity and the vitality of the French language
- More effective selection, francization, and integration practices will encourage immigrants' full and active participation in society
- The full and active participation of people of all origins, in keeping with Québec's democratic values, is both a right and a responsibility

Immigration plays an important role in boosting Québec's prosperity and in the vitality of the French language

Immigrants can contribute in many ways—bringing skills or financial resources to the table, fostering business and entrepreneurship, and being engaged members of society. The possibility of immigrating with family or sponsoring close relatives in the family class category are factors that motivate people to settle in Québec for the long term.

A number of studies³ have shown that, beyond immigration, ethnocultural diversity is itself a source of economic and social innovation. For example, it fuels creative business solutions and productivity gains. Diversity can also help businesses reach global markets more effectively and meet the needs of clients all over the world.

Contributing to economic growth

Like many other societies, Québec is facing significant demographic change, including a slowdown in population growth, a decline in the working-age population,^A and an aging population.^B Without productivity gains, these changes will have serious repercussions on Québec's prosperity. Action must be taken now in order to mitigate their impact.

^A Although the "working-age population" generally includes people age 15 and older, here it is used to describe people aged 20 to 64, an age group that represented over 90% of Québec's 15 to 64-year-old cohort in 2014, as defined by the Institut de la statistique du Québec. Changes in the size of this age group may therefore be used to approximate trends in the potentially active population in the coming decades. Limiting the indicator to 20 to 64-year-olds reflects society's decision to prioritize education for 15 to 20-year-olds, but does not exclude employment among young people or those age 64 and older.

^B These demographic changes are the result of the combined effect of a sub-replacement fertility rate, rising life expectancy, and negative net interprovincial migration.

These changes impact economic growth, which, when measured by the increase in real gross domestic product (GDP),^c is based on three key factors:

- Demographic growth, particularly the increase in the 20–64 age group, which represents the pool of potential workers
- The portion of the population holding a job and the number of hours worked
- Improvements in productivity, measured per hour worked or by individual production levels

In recent decades, these three factors have been of roughly equal importance in driving Québec's real GDP growth. But Québec's population is aging more quickly and more dramatically than elsewhere in Canada and in most countries of the Organisation for Economic Co-operation and Development (OECD).⁴ Moreover, Québec's demographic weight in Canada is diminishing year after year, although less so in recent years. The higher number of immigrants admitted since 2010 and the narrowing of the population growth gap between Québec and Canada could explain this favourable trend.

Yet, according to demographic projections,^d assuming an immigration level of 50,000 permanent entrants per year is maintained, the size of the working-age population will decline markedly between 2016 and 2031, causing a labour shortage that will hit certain regions and sectors harder than others. The working-age population is subsequently expected to start growing again, but slowly, not returning to 2011 levels until 2036, and with little long-term variation in relation to current levels. Consequently, only productivity gains and a higher employment rate can contribute to real GDP growth.

According to the demographic outlook, admitting 60,000 or more immigrants a year would keep Québec's working-age population above 2011 levels and allow this population group to grow more robustly over the long term.^e

Immigration's contribution to economic growth can easily be appreciated by looking at the proportion of all immigrants who declare salary income, regardless of category. The proportion increases with the duration of residency, stabilizing at over 70% after five years.⁵ It is also important to note that the proportion of immigrants who declare they are self-employed is higher than that among the native-born population. Therefore, while major obstacles to future economic growth remain, immigration can play a pivotal role in maintaining the strongest possible long-term economic growth.

^c Real gross domestic product (GDP) is given in constant prices and refers to the volume level of GDP. Constant price estimates of GDP are obtained by expressing the value of all goods and services produced in a given year in terms of a base period. Forecasts are based on an assessment of the economic climate in individual countries and the world economy, using a combination of model-based analysis and expert judgements. This indicator is measured in year-over-year growth rates. Organisation for Economic Co-operation and Development, *Real GDP forecast (indicator)*, 2015, [Online], [DOI:10.1787/4537dc58-en] (consulted August 5, 2015).

^d In addition to immigration numbers, the Institut de la statistique du Québec bases its demographic forecasts on other factors, including net international and interprovincial migration. Net interprovincial migration loss, estimated at 7,500 people in the baseline scenario, demonstrates the importance of working toward the long-term settlement of immigrants. See Québec, Institut de la statistique du Québec, *Perspectives démographiques du Québec et des régions, 2011–2061*, 2014 edition, p. 124.

^e This data, pulled from simulations produced by the Institut de la statistique du Québec for the Ministère de l'Immigration, de la Diversité et de l'Inclusion, is shown in Graphic 2.8 of the compilation of statistics for the Québec Policy on Immigration, Participation, and Inclusion.

Meeting future labour market needs

Québec's economy is changing—not just due to technological advances and the changing nature of international trade, but also due to domestic factors. Continued growth in commercial and administrative activities in the service sector is a prime example. Increasingly, local governments are turning to innovation, knowledge, skills, and entrepreneurship as a way to stimulate their economy.

From 2013 to 2022, some 1.4 million jobs will open up in Québec, 81% of them—over 1.1 million—as a result of retirement.⁶ Half of these jobs will require a college or university education (50.8%), and the other half will require at most a vocational or general secondary education. (49.2%).

These labour needs can be partially filled by newcomers to the job market, e.g., young people or recent immigrants.^F They can also be met by increasing the employment rate within certain segments of the population, including immigrant women, racialized minorities, and people aged 55 and older.

The vitality of the French language

Given that Québec is the only majority francophone society in North America, the government has prioritized immigration's contribution to the vitality of the French language. In 1977, the National Assembly adopted the Charter of the French Language (CQLR c C-11), making French not only the official language of government and of legal documents, but also the normal and everyday language of work, instruction, communication, commerce, and business. In terms of education, with few exceptions immigrant children and children from immigrant backgrounds are required to attend French schools, transforming these schools into vitally important settings for welcoming and integrating newcomers.

Since the adoption of the Charter of the French Language, the vast majority of immigrants have integrated into Québec society in French. This integration is a real achievement, especially considering that only 2% of the North American population speaks French. It also represents an important contribution to the vitality of the French language in Québec as well as across Canada and North America and helps to promote Québec and its Francophonie worldwide.

Increases in the number of immigrants who already possess better-developed French language skills and in the availability of francization services for those who, upon arrival, do not have a sufficient command of the French language are some of the strategies that have been advanced to facilitate integration and encourage active participation in society and ensure that immigration contributes to the vitality of the French language.

More effective selection, francization, and integration practices will encourage immigrants' full and active participation in society

Better selection of immigrants...

Immigrant profiles must be better aligned with Québec's economic needs so that immigrants⁷ can access jobs that are commensurate with their skills and thereby contribute to Québec's prosperity. Current selection tools rely on characteristics considered to be predictors of successful participation: education level,⁸ age⁹ and language skills.¹⁰ The selection of qualified workers must correspond to labour market needs and reflect the diversity of these needs in the professional, technical, and skilled trades sectors. Sufficient emphasis must

^F Emploi-Québec estimates that between 2013 and 2022, 18% of all available positions will be filled by recently arrived immigrants.

be placed on the qualifications and skills required by the labour market so that the best candidates can be selected.

...for successful integration

Immigrants can face sizeable challenges penetrating the job market.¹¹ One solution involves continuously revising the tools and criteria used to select candidates with the necessary talents, knowledge, and skills.

It is important that immigrants, just like all other Quebecers, have equal access to jobs. Employment not only helps immigrants meet their needs and those of their families, but also helps them to fulfill their potential, expand their social network, and develop French language skills.

The role of francization

Immigrants' ability to fully participate in Québec society is deeply intertwined with the language issue. On the one hand, Québec expects immigration to contribute to the vitality of the French language, regardless of newcomers' mother tongue. On the other hand, immigrants' contribution to economic prosperity depends on their mastery of the language in their workplace, in a job market context where French and English are often pitted against one another. It is vital that these two objectives overlap and reinforce one another through effective, diversified, and readily accessible francization services throughout Québec. These services are clearly one of the best ways to align the need for immigrants' fast and effective socioprofessional integration, as will be discussed in this policy's first challenge section, with the need to guarantee that their contribution to the vitality of French as the common language of an increasingly diverse and multilingual Québec, as will be covered in the second challenge section. To accomplish these two objectives, stakeholders must do their part to remove barriers, such as discrimination, which prevent people from finding jobs that match their skills—even though, in some cases they already master the French language.

The full and active participation of people of all origins, in keeping with Québec's democratic values, is both a right and a responsibility

All immigrants must go through an integration process that requires strong commitment and a willingness to acquire the knowledge to fully and actively participate in society. Some will find integration more challenging than others. Integration is first and foremost a period of transition that requires a great deal of learning and adjusting.

Society's commitment to a successful integration process is virtually inseparable from the commitment made by immigrants themselves. Society must adapt to its populations' growing ethnocultural diversity and provide immigrants with the necessary conditions for successful integration and equal access to shared resources. When this commitment is mutual, immigrants are more^G likely to participate fully.

^G Full participation is defined here as "the ideal engagement of all members of a society in all areas of society. It reflects a successful combination of individual abilities and aspirations and society's inclusive practices." Québec, Ministère de l'Immigration, de la Diversité et de l'Inclusion, *Stratégie de mesure de la participation des Québécoises et des Québécois des minorités ethnoculturelles aux différentes sphères de la vie collective*, 2015, p. 14.

We believe that participation is a right because ethnocultural diversity should never be an obstacle to leading a full life. This notion is supported by the principles of equality and justice set out in Québec's Charter of Human Rights and Freedoms (CQLR c C-12). It also underscores every Quebecer's responsibility to personally fight all forms of discrimination.

Diversity is not just an immigration issue; members of ethnocultural minorities who were born in Québec also face barriers. That is why the Government of Québec favours an approach that correlates integration and inclusion and urges society to work together so that all Quebecers can fully and actively contribute to our society's development.

Ethnocultural diversity has been a reality throughout Québec's history, but it wasn't until the 1960s that the government began to gradually adopt integration, participation, anti-discrimination, and anti-racism policies. These policies and action strategies are rooted in the fundamental rights and freedoms set out in the 1948 Universal Declaration of Human Rights and reflected in Québec's 1975 Charter of Human Rights and Freedoms as well as the Canadian Charter of Rights and Freedoms adopted in 1982 (Part 1 of the Constitution Act, 1982 (UK), Schedule B to the Canada Act 1982 (UK), 1982, c 11). They also incorporate obligations laid out in a number of international declarations, conventions, and pacts to which Québec is a party^H and are reflected in various declarations and motions adopted by the National Assembly.^I

Bolstered by its commitment, Québec boasts a number of achievements and successes; while it has areas of high multiethnic concentration,¹² Québec does not have any ethnic ghettos dominated by a single minority group. Public schools also serve as vectors for encounters with diversity and social cohesion.¹³ Coexistence in multiethnic neighbourhoods is generally positive, despite occasional tensions,¹⁴ and ethnically diverse neighbourhoods help contribute to developing intercultural contacts.¹⁵ Québec increasingly recognizes and values its ethnocultural diversity, which is advantageous because studies show that tolerance, trust, and recognizing diversity are factors that drive national prosperity.^J

^H For the Francophonie, this includes the Charte de la Francophonie adopted in 1997 and the Bamako and Luxembourg declarations, both adopted in 2000. Internationally, this includes the International Covenant on Economic, Social and Cultural Rights, the International Covenant on Civil and Political Rights, the International Convention on the Elimination of All Forms of Racial Discrimination, the Convention on the Elimination of All Forms of Discrimination against Women, the Convention on the Rights of the Child, and the Convention against Torture and Other Cruel, Inhuman or Degrading Treatment or Punishment.

^I Examples include the Declaration on Intercultural and Interracial Relations of the Government of Québec, unanimously adopted on December 10, 1986, and the motion affirming that Quebecers of Muslim faith are full-fledged citizens and unreservedly condemning incitement to hatred and violence against any Québec citizen, unanimously adopted on October 1, 2015.

^J Major development organizations use prosperity indices that include indicators on tolerance, trust, equality, etc. See the Legatum Prosperity Index (LPI) compiled by British think-tank Legatum Institute, the Social Progress Index (SPI) used by the European Commission, the Better Life Index (BLI) developed by the OECD, and the Inclusive Wealth Index (IWI) and Human Development Index (HDI), both created by the UN.

Context

For a policy to inspire relevant and concrete actions, it must reflect our collective reality. Thus, Québec will be able to face and overcome its challenges if we remain conscious of our major issues and the greater context within which they occur.

In order for Quebecers of all origins to more fully contribute to developing Québec's prosperity, we must create more favourable conditions for their active participation. Past efforts have yielded positive results, but the demographic and economic context is changing so we must revisit our methods to improve the suitability, effectiveness, and efficiency of our actions and ensure that we continue to meet the needs of those in vulnerable situations.

Diversifying the composition of immigration

Immigrant recruitment efforts and selection programs have changed immigration's composition over the past several decades. The relative share of economic immigration in overall immigration has increased significantly, from 49.1% in 1990–1994 to 69.2% in 2010–2014. Québec's immigrants are also increasingly well educated. The proportion of immigrants with a university education at the time of their admission went from 25.6% in 1990–1994 to 45.6% in 2010–2014. In the wake of efforts to encourage francophone immigration, the percentage of immigrants speaking French at admission also increased from 35.1% in 1990–1994 to 61.3% in 2010–2014, reaching 75.6% among qualified workers.

In 2011, the top 20 countries of birth accounted for only 64.0% of all immigrants versus 85.2% in 1971—a testament to Québec's desire to diversify its sources of immigration. The diversity of its immigration sets Québec apart from the rest of Canada and has led to increasing population diversity, especially in Québec's urban centres.

Diversity has also reshaped the province's religious landscape. While Catholicism is still the majority religion, the percentage of people declaring no religious affiliation (12.1%) is increasing rapidly, as is the number of individuals belonging to non-Christian faiths, although their numbers are still marginal (5.7%).¹⁷ This diversity is also the product of an increasingly complex society that features multiple forms of affiliation and belonging, resulting from an increase in the number of unions between people of diverse origins and beliefs, as well as from the recognition of individuals' attachment to multiple identities.¹⁸

A more diverse society

Québec has changed over the past 30 years. The proportion of immigrants in the total population has increased, from 8.7% in 1991 to 12.6% in 2011. In the Greater Montréal Area, this proportion rose from 16.8% in 1991 to 22.6% in 2011. The percentage of visible minorities^k in Québec rose from 5.6% in 1991 to 11% in 2011. And in 2014, 30% of newborns in Québec had at least one parent who was born outside the country,¹⁶ compared to 14.6% in 1990.

^k For the purposes of this document, the term "racialized minorities" is favoured over "visible minorities." However, the visible minorities category is employed in reference to statistics and equal employment opportunity programs where it is used.

Barriers to labour market integration

The employment rate among native-born job seekers aged 15 to 64 in Québec was 73.1% in 2014, versus 67.1% for immigrants aged 15 to 64 and 57.9% for recently landed immigrants (within the past five years) aged 25 to 54. While the employment rate for native-born job seekers aged 15 to 64 is now similar to the Canadian and Ontario averages for the same group, Québec is not doing as well for immigrants aged 15 to 64 (69.5% in Ontario and 70.1% in Canada) and recently landed immigrants aged 25 to 54 (63.2% in Ontario and 66.1% in Canada).

Québec has the highest employment rate among native-born women between the ages of 25 and 54. This situation further compounds the employment gap between immigrant and Canadian-born women in Québec (16.7 percentage points in 2014 versus 11 percentage points for Ontario and for Canada as a whole).

Job over-qualification is another issue that proportionally affects immigrants more often than native-born job seekers—both in Québec and the rest of Canada¹⁹—(53.4% and 35% respectively in 2013).²⁰ However, these rates are lower than those seen in Ontario, British Columbia, or Canada as a whole. The gap between the immigrant and Canadian-born populations is wider in Québec because of the higher percentage of recently landed immigrants (within the past 5 years) and the higher percentage of immigrants with university degrees.

That being said, the unemployment rate decreases sharply over time. In 2014, it was 17.2% for immigrants aged 15 and over who had arrived within the previous five years, 10.1% for those admitted five to ten years previously and 9.6% for those admitted more than ten years previously. Furthermore, revenues among immigrants are lower than those among the general population, although this gap narrows with years of residence.

Immigrants' barriers to the labour market can also be observed on an international scale.²¹ While Québec's immigrant population is among the best educated among the OECD countries, its employment and unemployment rates for immigrants aged 15 to 64 fall within the OECD average. Immigrants' children may also experience similar challenges due to discrimination and systemic barriers. For instance, in 2011 the employment rate of native-born visible minorities aged 15 and older was 55.6% and the unemployment rate was 12%, compared to 60.8% and 6.5% respectively for the non-visible minority native population.²²

The benefits of immigration are diminished because immigrants are unable to achieve their true potential. More targeted actions are needed, given that “the underutilisation of immigrants' skills is a waste of resources that OECD countries can scarcely afford. [...] Effective labour market integration has important spill-overs: it improves language learning, for example, and enables immigrants to contribute to society at large in their host countries.”²³

Furthermore, timely labour market integration and successful participation therein have an impact on immigrants' long-term settlement. In January 2015, the long-term retention rate^L among immigrants who settled between 2004 and 2013 was 75.5%. This rate was 78.4% in January 2004 and was 85.2% at its peak in January 2010.

^L The retention rate is the ratio of immigrants living in Québec at the time of the measurement to the total number of immigrants admitted during the period in question.

French: the key to successful economic and social participation and to ensuring the vitality of our common language

Knowledge of the French language has increased among both anglophones and allophones, from barely 50% in 1971 to 70.7% in 1991 and 79.2% in 2011. Across Québec, French predominates as the language most often used in the public sphere (82.5% of people).

Proficiency in French allows people to fully and actively participate in society, making it easier to find and keep a job, for example. Studies show that, regardless of immigration class and of the country in which people are educated, an insufficient grasp of the language is closely correlated to barriers to employment and over-qualification.²⁴ These integration difficulties have an impact on all aspects of societal participation.

The majority of people in Québec work primarily or solely in French (66% in 2010). Indeed, regular use of French in the workplace has increased; the percentage of people who use French 50% of the time or more went from 82% in 1971 to 88% in 2010. This increase is even more pronounced among people whose first language is neither French nor English, up from 42% to 68%.²⁵

Prior knowledge of French, which may be the result of francization before arrival, is a key factor in aligning language skills with labour market needs. Immigrants aged 15 and older who know French have a higher employment rate and lower unemployment rate than those who know only English or who know neither language. Prior language skills are especially important in a context where some employers require employees to speak both French and English. The language used in their first workplace appears to be a determining factor in newly arrived immigrants' long-term linguistic orientation.²⁶

It is of note, however, that immigrants who speak only French have an employment rate of just 48.6% and an unemployment rate of 14.5%.²⁷ In Québec's job market, knowing solely French is therefore insufficient for many immigrants. The requirement to be French/English bilingual, prejudice on the part of certain employers, unfamiliarity with Québec's sociocultural references, and even having an accent can all be obstacles to newcomers' full and active participation.

Persistent prejudice and discrimination

Diverse societies that do not promote inclusion see marginalization, discrimination, racism, and ethnic isolationism take root, all of which can provide fertile ground for mounting social tension.

Québec's openness to ethnocultural diversity and immigration is a testament to the remarkable transformation it has undergone since the Quiet Revolution in the 1960s. Once a society in which the majority of people had little contact with minority communities, Québec has embraced a commitment to working together to build a common future. This shift in perception has motivated Québec to take a clear stand and collectively engage in issues related to immigration, diversity, and inclusion.

Due to the francophone community's minority status in North America and Québec's historic struggle to preserve its distinct identity,²⁸ linguistic and cultural fears outweigh economic concerns²⁹ in the minds of some Quebecers. International events such as conflicts and terrorist acts can also heighten concerns about immigration.³⁰ These fears are not unique to Québec, and the government must not discount them but provide a coherent response to avoid polarization and exclusion.

Sometimes these fears are rooted in the assumption that immigrants' values differ substantially from those of Québec society, especially with regard to gender equality and the religious neutrality of the state. These perceptions can breed distrust and hinder intercultural dialogue. Yet studies show that the vast majority of immigrants are just as supportive of democratic values as the general population, and that actively participating in society fosters a deeper commitment to those values, especially among young people born in Québec to immigrant parents.³¹ These findings point to the importance of working to build more inclusive communities and fostering intercultural rapprochement and exchange to strengthen trust and solidarity.

While there is room for debate about immigration and ethnocultural diversity in a pluralist society, it should not be used to justify any form of exclusion or discrimination. An inclusive society must stand strong against discrimination and pay close attention to the culmination of factors that feed into it. For instance, some people may face discriminatory barriers because they are from a racialized minority, but also because of their gender, age, religion, social class, or sexual orientation.³² Such situations may require more targeted actions, for example to remove obstacles to economic participation for female immigrants of colour.



The Vision

This policy's focus is our collective goal of building a prosperous Québec that ensures individual and collective fulfillment. The underlying vision is based on Québec's history and its experience of living together in an ethnoculturally diverse society. It paints a picture of where Québec is headed and guides its action pertaining to immigration, participation, and inclusion.

Québec: an inclusive francophone society that seeks greater prosperity through immigration and the full and active participation of immigrants and ethnocultural minorities.

Immigration has contributed to Québec's history and will be called to play a decisive role in building its future. It is crucial that immigrants selected for admission have profiles that are aligned as closely as possible with Québec's needs. Québec is also committed to the principle of family reunification and places great importance on international solidarity efforts by welcoming refugees and responding to other humanitarian situations.

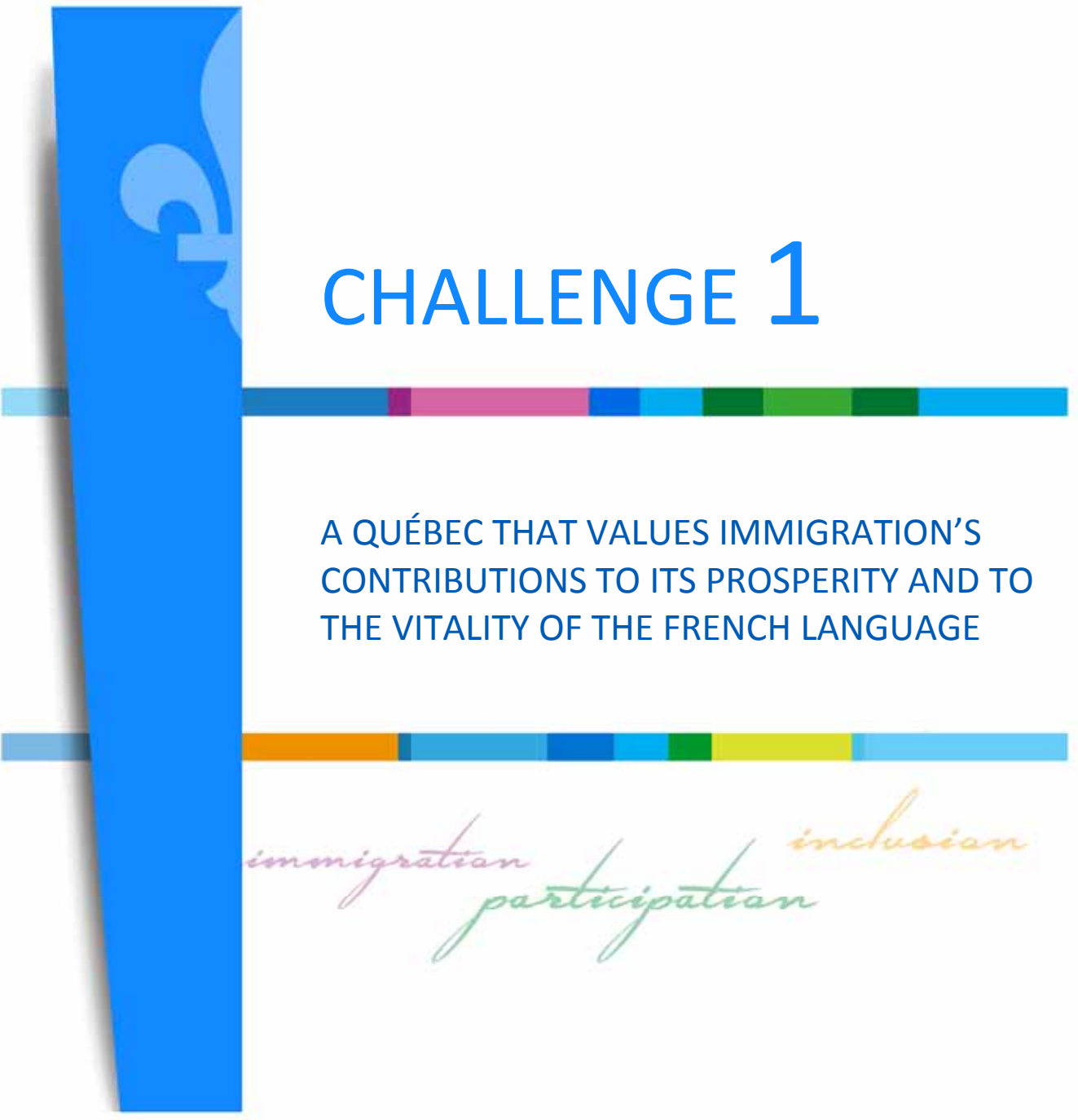
Québec strives to ensure that those it welcomes are able to participate fully because, in a diverse society such as Québec, prosperity is only possible when people of all origins are included.

Inclusion is based on the principle of substantive equality and the sense of belonging that develops when people who live side by side come to know one another and recognize one another as full-fledged members society, each with their similarities, differences, agreements, and disagreements.

Québec's pluralist model does not imply acceptance of all cultural practices and does not preclude criticism thereof. While Québec values diversity and respects differences, it is essential that the entire population adhere to the three central pillars of Québec's civic framework which are: democracy, human rights and freedoms, and the French language.

Québec has distinctive social and cultural dynamics. While the province's language and major institutions are shaped by French culture, society has also developed through diversity's multiple contributions. Québec's dynamics made way for interculturalism, Québec's approach to living well together in an ethnoculturally diverse society, upholding and strengthening the vitality of its distinct, francophone character and recognizing and fostering respect for ethnocultural diversity at the same time.

Interculturalism requires active societal participation and intercultural rapprochement and interaction in order to promote opportunities to build harmonious intercultural bonds and foster a shared sense of belonging among Quebecers of all origins. This model is based on a plural vision of Québec's identity, a shared common language, the respect for human rights and freedoms, and the fight against discrimination. Moreover this model promotes an ethos of dialogue and mediation and an approach to integration that involves the shared commitment of society and immigrants alike.



CHALLENGE 1

A QUÉBEC THAT VALUES IMMIGRATION'S
CONTRIBUTIONS TO ITS PROSPERITY AND TO
THE VITALITY OF THE FRENCH LANGUAGE

immigration *inclusion*
participation

A Québec that values immigration's contributions to its prosperity and to the vitality of the French language

In recent years, numerous countries have been competing to attract strategic talent, intracontinental migratory flows have increased in areas with free movement agreements, and some emerging countries have opened up to economic immigration. To retain its appeal, Québec will need a prosperous economy, an efficient immigration system, and an inclusive society. It must position itself as a choice destination by promoting its openness, security, and quality of life.

For immigrants to fully contribute to Québec's prosperity and to the vitality of the French language, the Government of Québec must ensure that its services are both effective and coherent to encourage the prompt completion of francization and integration efforts. Undertaking these efforts from abroad can facilitate work integration that is in line with individuals' skills. Successful integration requires the involvement of all stakeholders, particularly employers and regulatory bodies, to ensure that skills are recognized.



Objective 1.1

Harnessing the Strategic Benefits of Permanent and Temporary Immigration

Most immigrants begin the immigration process from their countries of origin. That is why the Government of Québec undertakes to inform candidates about its needs and the steps involved in its immigration process. These recruitment actions abroad are matched to immigrant selection criteria, which are constantly being adapted to Québec's needs.

The Government of Québec is also aware of the innovative practices that have been implemented by other countries. Modernizing Québec's immigration system will speed up and optimize the processing of immigration applications. It will also better align immigrants' skills with employers' needs.

Although most immigrants are selected while living abroad, some apply for permanent residency while living in Québec, either as students or as temporary workers. These individuals are already an integral part of our society, and the Government of Québec hopes to encourage their long-term settlement so they can continue to participate in community life.

The Government of Québec will also pursue its efforts to inform sponsored immigrants and their guarantors about their rights and responsibilities in order to increase their participation and avoid situations of vulnerability. In keeping with its commitment to international solidarity, the Government of Québec will also step up its efforts to welcome refugees or those in similar situations, and will ensure access to services that are adapted to their migration process.

An optimal balance between Québec's needs and immigrants' profiles

The Government of Québec has a number of tools and programs at its disposal for selecting and welcoming immigrants. One such tool is the selection grid for economic immigration. Continually improving methods to evaluate employment prospects is one of the ways of optimizing the alignment of economic needs and immigrant profiles. To this end, a list of training areas reflective of the most sought-after secondary, college, and university fields is updated on a regular basis.

Some of the current practices are excessively rigid, reducing our ability to act. For example, currently, every immigration application must be processed, even if it doesn't match any of the profiles that Québec is seeking.

The Government of Québec will introduce a dynamic, avant-garde immigration system based on declarations of interest and inspired by systems in countries such as New Zealand, Australia, and Canada. According to the OECD, systems like these may be more equitable. For example, the system will no longer block new applications. In addition, it will increase candidate interest and help garner public support for immigration by better aligning Québec's needs with immigrants' profiles. Under the new system, candidates seeking to immigrate as qualified workers will be required to "declare their interest" by submitting an online application, and will be added to a bank of candidates for a predetermined period. Applicants who most closely meet Québec's needs will be invited to submit a formal immigration application on a priority basis. At the end of a predetermined period, candidates who have not been invited to apply will be removed.

The Government of Québec believes that an immigration system based on the declaration of interest will:

- Maximize economic participation by prioritizing candidates whose profiles meet labour market needs and who can contribute to the vitality of the French language
- Reduce delays matching qualified candidates and in-demand employment opportunities
- Introduce a flexible and dynamic system that allows the government to continually adapt selection criteria, invitation frequency, and the number of candidates
- Inform candidates about the status of their applications in a more timely manner and expedite processing times
- Allow Québec to remain competitive with other countries who have introduced similar systems

The online application process for those wishing to immigrate to Québec will be simple, fast, and efficient. This will allow Québec to be competitive internationally.

Furthermore, economic and regional stakeholder involvement will make it easier to determine sectoral needs and define sought-after socioprofessional profiles.

Transition from temporary to permanent status

Temporary status immigrants are valuable to Québec's economy. In addition to responding to pressing labour needs, temporary workers are quite likely to transition to permanent status because they have already started their integration process. Indeed, individuals with previous experience in Québec have better labour market success once they obtain permanent resident status.³³

That is why the Government of Québec will implement an effective promotional strategy to target these individuals, offering them the possibility of rapid, priority consideration for permanent status. Since 2010, the *Programme de l'expérience québécoise* [Québec experience program] has allowed some 20,000 specialized temporary workers and Québec graduates or future graduates to quickly obtain permanent status. Québec's new immigration system aims to do even better.

Other countries have already embarked upon this path. For example, New Zealand has a system of declaration of interest, and the majority of admissions to permanent status are candidates who have spent time in the country as temporary workers or as students.³⁴

Temporary workers

Employers can recruit temporary workers through two federal programs: the Temporary Foreign Worker Program and the International Mobility Program.^M

The Temporary Foreign Worker Program requires Québec employers to complete a Labour Market Impact Assessment, which is evaluated jointly by the Québec and federal governments. Temporary workers

^M The movement of temporary workers is growing around the world, including in Québec. Admissions under the Temporary Foreign Worker program increased from 9,476 in 2009 to 11,467 in 2013. In the same period, admissions under the International Mobility Program grew from 18,161 to 25,915. As of December 1, 2013, there were 47,563 people with temporary worker status living in Québec, compared to 30,476 in 2009.

admitted under this program meet the ad hoc needs of employers who demonstrate pressing labour requirements that cannot be filled by local workers.

Under the International Mobility Program, employers wishing to recruit temporary workers are exempt from the Labour Market Impact Assessment requirement. This includes people participating in youth exchange programs looking to come to Québec for cultural and travel experiences while gaining work experience in their profession or field of study. Others come to Québec through this program to do research or teach, namely as guest professors and postdoctoral fellows.

The International Mobility Program attracts people who are often young, well-educated, and globally aware, and who have an interest in Québec. Through their presence and their professional contributions, they foster cultural exchange and enrich Québec's economic, social, and scientific sectors.

Temporary workers, including seasonal agricultural workers, contribute significantly to our society through their work in sectors experiencing a shortage of local workers. In some cases, they are essential to company growth, and they have a strong likelihood of transitioning to permanent status. Because of this, Québec intends to actively pursue its role within the Temporary Foreign Workers Program to help meet employer labour needs.

Furthermore, better access to francization and integration services for individuals and families with temporary status, as well as greater contributions to these services from employers may encourage long-term settlement in Québec. Qualified workers' transition from temporary to permanent status presents businesses with long term benefits.

Foreign students

The presence of foreign students makes for more dynamic education and research networks. It helps foster international contacts and enhances the international profiles of our educational institutions, in addition to having significant economic benefits.^N

Québec is recognized for the quality of its educational programs. Tuition fees are attractive to foreign students, and the cost of living is among the lowest in Canada. Social diversity and cultural vitality are other strengths noted in several rankings that place Québec among the top destinations for foreign students.^O

During their stay in Québec, foreign students contribute to our economy and to the development of the communities that welcome them. They learn French and become familiar with the labour market. If they leave at the end of their studies they become the best possible ambassadors, particularly within international educational networks. If they do decide to settle permanently in the region where they studied, they contribute to its diversity and prosperity.

^N The contribution of international education services to Québec's gross domestic product was estimated at \$600 million in 2010. These services employed approximately 8,000 people. See ROSLYN KUNIN & ASSOCIATES INC., *Economic Impact of International Education in Canada – An Update*, Vancouver, 2012, 64 pages.

^O The number of foreign students in Québec has grown sharply over the last few years. From approximately 28,000 in 2008, the number of foreign students rose to 42,000 in 2013, 90% of them in higher education. See QUÉBEC, MINISTÈRE DE L'IMMIGRATION, DE LA DIVERSITÉ ET DE L'INCLUSION, *L'immigration temporaire au Québec 2008-2013*, 2014, 38 pages.

Québec ranks third in Canada for the number of foreign students it welcomes annually, after Ontario and British Columbia.

Foreign students with a Québec diploma are quite likely to transition to permanent status; they are young and their diplomas are recognized here. They already have significant experience with life in Québec and many have work experience, as well.

International competition to attract foreign students is fierce. We must remain vigilant and take steps to ensure that Québec remains competitive, notably by simplifying and expediting the application process to study in Québec. While respecting Québec's commitments to international cooperation, we can encourage students' long-term settlement through targeted promotion and rapid processing of permanent immigration applications.

Immigration's contributions to economic development and a dynamic and innovative entrepreneurial base

One of the keys to prosperity is the creation of businesses and the injection of new capital into Québec's economy. The Government of Québec recognizes the contributions by immigrants who arrive within programs specifically intended for business people, be they immigrant investors, entrepreneurs, or self-employed workers.^p Furthermore, Québec promotes the globalization of its own economy through the trade contacts that these immigrants possess.

However, long-term settlement of immigrant investors poses a significant problem for Québec, much like for other provinces and countries competing to attract them: business people are highly mobile and retain economic interests in their countries of origin or elsewhere. Since August 2013, immigrant investors with advanced intermediate knowledge of French have not been subject to Québec's application caps, since knowledge of French is recognized as a factor in promoting long-term settlement. Other measures are therefore needed to encourage the long-term settlement of immigrant investors, whose profiles and capital contribute to our collective enrichment.

Currently, immigrant investors' contributions to Québec's economic development stems much more from the financial investment resulting from their selection than from their physical presence, which remains limited.³⁵ The services currently available under other economic immigration programs need to be enhanced as part of the renewed services strategy. Greater effort must be made to strengthen relationships with the candidates—from the moment they are recruited and selected to when they are settled in Québec—and to take advantage of their presence and substantial investment capital to forge international partnerships with targeted sectors in Québec.

The Entrepreneur Program has brought in people who want to start businesses or buy existing businesses in Québec. However, the number of people selected under the Program is dropping for a number of reasons, in part because the business proposals submitted by program applicants do not fit with Québec's expectations.

Québec promotes the immigration of entrepreneurs who contribute to innovation and entrepreneurial vitality. Offering support adapted to their needs maximizes the chance that their business projects will succeed, in whatever region of Québec they may be. Also, involving key economic actors as soon as these immigrants are selected will help focus efforts on the most promising projects.

^p According to the 2015 Québec Entrepreneurial Index, 32.3% of immigrants have entrepreneurial intentions, compared with 18.8% of the rest of the adult population. FONDATION DE L'ENTREPRENEURSHIP, *Indice entrepreneurial québécois 2015 Entreprendre : partout pareil au Québec?*, 2015, 96 p.

Attracting and identifying immigration candidates

In order to reconcile the various goals of its immigration policy, the Government of Québec will develop a process for identifying and attracting immigrants that is based more extensively on their work profiles. Using this approach, actions to attract potential candidates can be adapted more effectively to needs defined by the new declaration-of-interest-based immigration system.

The goal is to attract strategic talent and provide accurate and realistic information about Québec and its regions. Efforts will be made to provide candidates with better information about labour market realities, professional accreditation steps that can be initiated from outside Canada, the skills Québec employers are looking for, and Québec's francophone culture and democratic values.

Candidates who are planning to start a business also need better information on entrepreneurial and investment opportunities. The Government of Québec wants to work with its partners to create a dynamic entrepreneurial base, accelerate innovation, and contribute to the province's economic development.

To identify and attract immigration candidates requires focus on their working knowledge of French, which is valued across the labour market and plays a major role in career advancement. Accordingly, actions to identify and attract immigration candidates extend beyond francophones to embrace francophiles and francophones around the world. In addition, the Government of Québec stresses the importance of learning French as early as possible in the immigration process, and to that end, has partnered with an expanded network of organizations who offer French courses in accordance with its agreements with Alliances françaises and online French courses adapted to immigrants.

Actions to identify and attract candidates also aim to maintain immigration diversity. The Government of Québec therefore informs and attracts potential candidates in a variety of regions around the world. The government calls on partnerships in Québec and abroad as well as on information and communication technologies to help reach a broad audience in numerous countries in order to maintain a balance that fosters ethnocultural diversity.

Recognition of internationally acquired skills

Like Québec, many countries are aware of the human capital that is lost through the underutilization of immigrant skills³⁶ and the impact this can have on the economy.³⁷ While it is difficult to put an exact figure on this impact, one study estimates the losses associated with the underutilization of immigrant skills in Canada at more than \$10 billion annually.³⁸

Underutilization of skills is reflected in the high ^Q rates among people with degrees obtained abroad. This rate is higher than the rate for people educated in Canada or in the United States.³⁹ While the over-qualification rate drops significantly based on length of residency, particularly in the case of immigrant women, the longer it takes to recognize skills, the lower the chances of getting a job commensurate with one's work qualifications.

One of the problems with recognizing skills is that immigrants have acquired training and experience in a different professional context or educational system, making it more difficult for employers, professional and trade associations, and educational institutions to assess those skills, and even more difficult to transfer

^Q Over-qualification is the term used when a person's level of education is higher than normally required in his or her job.

those skills to the host country's labour market. Additionally, some skills and knowledge specific to working in North America and in Québec may still have to be acquired, such as proficiency in French, specialized vocabulary, the ability to use technologies that are different from those used in the country of origin, and the knowledge of industry-specific legislation and regulations.

Much progress has been made, particularly regarding access to information about regulated professions and trades, educational equivalency recognition based more on assessing skills than simply comparing curricula, and upgrade courses of a reasonable length that are tailored to people trained abroad. Québec and French organizations have also entered into mutual recognition arrangements to facilitate and accelerate the acquisition of skills that are legally required to practice a profession for eligible persons who were educated in Québec or France. However, many problems remain, including access to skills upgrading courses and internship access, as well as the overall time required to complete the recognition process.

Skills recognition remains an ongoing priority for both the Government of Québec and all labour market stakeholders, in particular employers, the bodies that regulate professions and trades, and the education system. Through resolute action, we can expect the process for recognizing internationally acquired skills to be substantially improved and accelerated.

The principle of family reunification

Québec is committed to family reunification because it encourages the long-term settlement of immigrants in Québec. In addition to participating in community life, immigrants who arrive within the family reunification program contribute to a healthy community environment.

It is up to the Government of Québec to quickly and methodically process sponsorship applications from people hoping to be reunited with their spouses, children, parents or grandparents. Ensuring compliance with sponsorship undertakings from both financial and integration perspectives is also important.

It is essential that both guarantors and the people they sponsor know their rights, their responsibilities, and the scope of their commitment. To ensure that sponsorships do not put immigrants, especially women, in vulnerable positions, information on available services, particularly in the event of sexual violence, must be transmitted systematically to both guarantors and the people they are sponsoring. Conveying how important it is for sponsored individuals to integrate and participate fully in society is also key.

International solidarity

Humanitarian immigration is rooted in the importance Québec accords to international solidarity. Thousands of refugees or people in similar situations have been admitted to Québec, some after spending many years in refugee camps with no hope of returning to their countries of origin, often because they were victims of persecution.

The United Nations High Commissioner for Refugees (UNHCR) estimates that there are 59.5 million refugees, asylum-seekers, and individuals displaced within their home countries. Of that number, 14.4 million are UNHCR-mandated refugees.⁴⁰ Only a fraction of them will be given the opportunity to continue their lives in safety in countries other than their countries of origin or their countries of asylum. For 2016, the UNHCR estimates that there are 1,153,300 people worldwide who are eligible for third-country resettlement, but there are only about 80,000 places available each year in countries offering resettlement programs.⁴¹

Through their courage, determination, and willingness to integrate, refugees make an important contribution to our prosperity, a contribution of which Québec can be rightfully proud. However, their particular paths to Québec often mean that they need additional support to learn French and integrate at work, at school, and in the community.

In 1997, the Government of Québec assumed responsibility for the Collective Sponsorship Program, determined terms and conditions of sponsorship, and began processing sponsorship applications. The participation of sponsorship agencies and groups is critical. Whether facilitating their sponsorship activities, providing them with clear and accessible information, or better equipping them to ensure a successful outcome, the Government of Québec does what is necessary to support their sponsorship initiatives.

Québec has demonstrated its solidarity in humanitarian crises. Examples include the 2004 tsunami in the Indian Ocean, earthquakes in South Asia in 2005 and Haiti in 2010, and the 2013 typhoon in the Philippines. Through the emergency aid component of the Québec International Development Program, the province financially contributes to Québec international cooperation agencies' emergency response to assist people affected by natural disasters or major humanitarian crises.

Québec departments and public and community agencies need to work together more effectively to build on the province's commitment and to help protect those affected by humanitarian crises. Implementing specific measures can ensure a rapid and targeted response to specific needs—for example, physical, mental and social needs—and thereby facilitate integration and adapt services.

Refugees around the world

The sharp increase in the number of refugees, asylum-seekers, and people displaced within their own countries is largely attributable to the war in Syria, which has generated more than four million refugees.⁴² According to the UNHCR, it is the biggest refugee population from a single conflict in a generation.⁴³

Apart from Syria, Somalia, Myanmar, Iraq, and the Democratic Republic of Congo have accounted for 62% of all resettlement submissions over the last five years.⁴⁴

During the past 10 years, the UNHCR has also received a much higher percentage of applications in the Survivors of Violence and/or Torture categories (up from 5% in 2005 to 22% in 2014) and in the Women and Girls At Risk category (up from 6% in 2005 to 13% in 2014).⁴⁵



Objective 1.2

Making It Possible for Immigrants to Quickly and Effectively Complete the Immigration Process

For both individuals and families, the immigration process involves a number of steps that should be simple and easy to complete. Successful completion of these steps requires commitment and determination from potential immigrants.

Access to complete and accurate information throughout the immigration process is critical.⁴⁶ Over the last decade, the ways in which immigrants have gathered information has changed dramatically. Information and communication technologies have helped create self-service mechanisms that empower people to become more autonomous. Online francization and integration services are two concrete examples of this growing trend.

These technologies enable immigrants to gather information from anywhere; they can facilitate procedures and help candidates quickly prepare themselves for immigration. Key steps in the process—e.g., learning French, comparative evaluation of studies completed outside Québec, qualifying steps required to practice regulated professions and trades, and searching for potential employers—can all be undertaken abroad.

To this end, the Government of Québec favours the development of a personalized service approach tailored to immigrants' needs and profiles and offers online access to government services and information.⁴⁷

A concerted approach based on personalized services

The personalized service approach is particularly effective at ensuring a better fit between immigrant's profiles and needs and the services made available to them and is an integral part of revamping participation and inclusion services.

The current government service delivery model is evolving to offer individuals the opportunity to be more autonomous. Mobile communication technologies and increased social media use have significantly changed public habits and expectations. Given this, both service delivery and internal government operations can be improved by using social media as a new communication and promotion tool.⁴⁸

These trends must be taken into account when personalizing services. The goal is to provide integrated, cohesive electronic service delivery tailored to immigrant profiles and needs, regardless of the administrative complexity or number of government agencies involved. Digital modes are therefore preferred.

Revamping service delivery aims to address the following questions:

- What knowledge do immigrants need in order to fully participate in our society? What are the characteristics of a society that includes immigrants and facilitates their full and active participation?
- For each of these characteristics and areas of knowledge, what level of proficiency is required to ensure that immigrants can fully participate?
- How can we close the gap between current levels and target levels?

- Based on the previous findings, what are the main participation and inclusion objectives for a service delivery strategy? Who are the main stakeholders and what type of contributions are expected from them?
- What are the best ways to take action?

The new participation and inclusion services were developed in collaboration with all concerned government departments and agencies and alongside community partners who have acquired expertise over the years. They are based on the principle of shared commitment and require all stakeholders to actively participate. These services have two main purposes: first, they seek to implement targeted actions that enable immigrants to acquire crucial knowledge, such as skills to help build up their social networks; second, they aim to create the conditions conducive to making all communities more welcoming and inclusive for immigrants and members of ethnocultural minorities.

Meeting the special needs of the vulnerable

The personalized service approach will also allow us to better focus our resources and provide services to those with greater needs. Online services cannot fully meet the needs of all immigrants, especially those furthest from the labour market or those with poor literacy skills. Additional support measures will also be needed to remove obstacles faced by certain individuals such as children, women (particularly sponsored women), seniors, and people experiencing culture shock.

People who are accepted for their own protection, or on humanitarian grounds, often have greater needs because they have experienced various forms of trauma or violence. It is important to offer an effective response tailored to their needs.

Francization services for immigrants

Knowledge of French is a key selection criterion for qualified workers. Many other countries have adopted similar requirements, although the proficiency level required and the stage at which this requirement is imposed during the immigration process vary. Accordingly, to obtain permanent or temporary resident status or citizenship, knowledge of the host country's language must be demonstrated through language tests.

Immigrants have access to a wide range of part-time and full-time language courses, in the classroom and online, offered by the Government of Québec, school boards, and other partners. The government seeks to increase participation, notably among those whose first language is unrelated to French, and those who are not planning to enter the workforce. Stepping up various actions to reach these individuals remains a priority, so that they can access economic, social, and cultural resources, have their skills recognized, and contribute to their children's education.

To improve the coherence of our approach to francization, two tools—the *Programme-cadre de français pour les personnes immigrantes adultes au Québec* [French framework program for adult immigrants to Québec] and the *Échelle québécoise des niveaux de compétence en français des personnes immigrantes adultes* [Québec scale of French competency for immigrants]—are key to harmonizing our public services. These tools were jointly developed by the Ministère de l'Immigration, de la Diversité et de l'Inclusion and the Ministère de l'Éducation, de l'Enseignement supérieur et de la Recherche, and they illustrate the government's desire to optimize the use of francization resources and ensure that equitable services are provided to all immigrants.

The framework program aims to achieve a level of language proficiency sufficient to work in a range of technical or vocational fields or to undertake vocational or technical training in French. This level of proficiency also promotes full participation in society, which includes civic and cultural life.

Depending on their needs, immigrants can either access francization courses for adult immigrants, provided by the Ministère de l'Immigration, de la Diversité et de l'Inclusion, or francization services or French language programs administered by school boards under the Ministère de l'Éducation, de l'Enseignement supérieur et de la Recherche. The two networks provide comparable content and can each structure teaching as they see fit. This ensures high quality, complementary services. Note that cégep and university French programs are also open to immigrants and foreign students as a means of achieving sufficient language proficiency to undertake postsecondary studies.

Professional francization

Inadequate proficiency in French hinders immigrants' ability to secure employment and prevents Québec from reaping immigration's full potential. That is why knowledge of French is one of Québec's selection criteria for potential economic immigrants.⁴⁹ To speed up labour market integration, professional francization services are designed to help immigrants acquire the French language skills they will need to work in a given field.

Depending on their situations, immigrants can benefit from specialized courses tailored to different sectors^R as well as French classes in the workplace. Specialized French classes are designed to meet the needs of immigrants who want to work in a specific field, while workplace classes are meant, in part, to meet the needs of those who are already employed and contribute to the francization of businesses.

Specialized courses cover certain fast-growing sectors where qualified workers are in short supply, but the language skills acquired in these courses must be assessed and validated in the workplace or by institutions that provide professional and vocational training. Efforts are under way to develop assessment tools for these specialized courses. It is important to increase the number and variety of available courses and create tools to assess progress and describe outcomes in a reliable, standardized manner. It is also important to develop partnership mechanisms to ensure that content is updated regularly. Access to specialized in-class courses outside of major urban centres is another aspect that must be improved. Courses of this nature, including online self-study modules must be promoted more actively in outlying regions and adapted to regional requirements.

To strengthen professional francization services, the Government of Québec could draw from analyses used elsewhere in Canada to evaluate language competency requirements for trades and professions. The Red Seal program, for example, sets common standards to assess the skills of tradespersons across Canada and facilitates the development of a specialized, mobile, and highly qualified workforce. Analysis of these requirements will continue in order to better target immigrants' needs.

^R The specific professional areas are administration, law and business, health care and nursing, and engineering and applied sciences.

French, the language of integration

The *Programme-cadre de français pour les personnes immigrantes adultes au Québec* [French framework program for adult immigrants to Québec] specifies that adequate French language training makes it easier to find and keep a job and pursue studies. In addition, immigrants must rapidly acquire the language skills they need to both access essential services and communicate in French. That is why the framework program is comprised of two distinct components:

- The first component covers each language skill to be acquired. It specifies the realm of action as well as the learning situations, communication goals, message structure, vocabulary, grammar, pronunciation, and spelling
- A second component presents sociocultural norms and shared democratic values, and describes the intercultural competency that immigrants will acquire in the course

Workplace French courses are provided by businesses that employ large numbers of immigrants. Courses vary in length and intensity, ranging from basic French to specific language skills workers need to function within the company. Various options are available to businesses and immigrants under agreements made with private-sector partners. As part of the *Stratégie commune d'intervention pour le Grand Montréal* [common intervention strategy for Greater Montréal], a workplace francization committee was set up to bring together stakeholders from government, management, unions, institutions, and the community to inform small businesses about the francization, workplace integration, and job retention resources available and to promote their use.

Existing models for workplace French classes are aimed at people who are already employed and may have had their first work experience in Québec in English or another language. New models that combine francization with work experience will enable immigrants who haven't yet joined the workforce to strengthen and validate the language skills they have acquired in class by putting them to use in the workplace, expedite their transition to a job commensurate with their qualifications, or acquire initial job experience working in French in Québec.



CHALLENGE 2

AN INCLUSIVE SOCIETY COMMITTED TO
FOSTERING FULL AND ACTIVE
PARTICIPATION

immigration *inclusion*
participation

An inclusive society committed to fostering full and active participation

Ethnocultural minorities' abilities to contribute to Québec's economic prosperity and social development are not always in line with our ambitions to build a more inclusive society. Certain obstacles continue to hinder their participation, often in a systemic manner.

Interculturalism promotes contact and dialogue between Quebecers of all origins in order to foster their full and active participation and nurture their sense of belonging. To accomplish this, communities and economic stakeholders must work together to educate the population about rights and freedoms and raise awareness about the fight against discrimination and racism.

To fully recognize Québec's intercultural reality, it is important to acknowledge not only the contributions of people from diverse backgrounds to Québec society, but also the injustices and conflicts that can sometimes arise from intercultural interaction. Québec cannot dismiss the conflicts that are part of its history, or their ramifications—such as the effect of colonization on Aboriginal nations, the impact of slavery on persons of African descent, and ongoing discrimination and racism that can affect all Quebecers.



Objective 2.1

Strengthening Trust and Solidarity Among People of All Origins

The world is facing many challenges, such as growth of inequality⁵⁰, environmental and economic insecurity, unprecedented migratory movements, terrorism, and violent radicalization. These issues have an impact on perceptions, inclusion, and the recognition of ethnocultural diversity. Although we have witnessed a trend toward greater openness to immigration over the past few decades, concerns about language persist due to francophones' minority status in North America. Since the turn of the millennium, this problem has been compounded by other cultural, social, economic, political, and security issues. With this in mind, governments must strive to understand the root causes of these challenges rather than avoid or ignore them, which could exacerbate the issues.⁵¹

Québec's common civic framework—based on democracy, human rights and freedoms, and the use of French as the common language in the public sphere—unites Quebecers of all origins. Québec must encourage better understanding among citizens about our common civil framework because its fundamentals are precisely what allow people of diverse origins to see beyond their differences and form strong bonds of mutual trust. In doing so, we can ensure that ethnocultural diversity is both recognized and promoted and, at the same time, our civic framework fortifies our common good and prevents society from fragmentation into isolated communities and practices that conflict with our fundamental democratic values.

Promoting interculturalism

Interculturalism recognizes and values Québec's plural and dynamic identity, French as the common language of public use, respect for human rights and freedoms, the struggle against discrimination, an approach to conflict that uses dialogue and mediation, and integration based on a shared commitment between immigrants and the host society. It also recognizes the importance of intercultural rapprochement and the full and active participation of Quebecers from all walks of life.

However, the rich experience that comes from living together in an ethnoculturally diverse society too often remains informal, diffuse, and unrecognized. In order for all Quebecers to reap the full benefit of this experience, it is necessary to promote and build awareness and recognition of interculturalism.

By rallying around interculturalism, Québec can better promote inclusion and strengthen the sense of belonging shared by Quebecers of all origins. Educating the population about interculturalism is essential to forging trust and building solidarity. By reaffirming this model for living well together, the Government of Québec reasserts its commitment to building a pluralist society and clarifies the conditions under which it welcomes immigrants—conditions that allow it to maintain its distinct identity, its common public language, and its fundamental democratic values. By reiterating that Québec recognizes and celebrates diversity under its common civic framework, the promotion of interculturalism will help strengthen the sense of belonging among immigrants and ethnocultural minorities and encourage them to become fully engaged in Québec society.

Education and raising awareness are proven ways to move in this direction and increase communities' ability to recognize diversity while fighting prejudice, discrimination, xenophobia, and racism. Sustained efforts are also needed to promote intercultural rapprochement and exchange and to build relationships between people of all origins. This can only be effective when supported by government measures aimed at fighting social, economic, and political injustice and inequality. Education and information initiatives can also help explain interculturalism and contextualize its emergence in Québec's history.

For these initiatives to truly succeed, all members of society must fully uphold the right to equality and engage in the fight against discrimination and racism. This includes the media as they can have a profound influence on public perceptions. Dismantling prejudice and building awareness of the consequences of discrimination, xenophobia, racism, and other forms of prejudice on individuals and society must be central objectives. In this regard, it is important to fight misconceptions surrounding immigration by countering them with factual data.

The Government of Québec also seeks to incorporate interculturalism into public events, immigrant integration, and various public policies. For example, since 2003 the *Semaine québécoise des rencontres interculturelles* [Québec intercultural week] has provided opportunities to engage Quebecers of all origins and deepen their desire to live collectively together.

Major government programs and policies also have been inspired by interculturalism, such as the *Programme-cadre de français pour les personnes immigrantes adultes au Québec* [French framework program for adult immigrants to Québec], the 1998 Policy Statement on Educational Integration and Intercultural Education and the 2008 Agenda 21 for culture. These latter two are truly standard-bearers in their fields for the promotion of Québec's intercultural vision. Initiatives like these are essential to expanding interculturalism throughout society and heighten the Québec experience of living pluralism well together.

Democratic values

Democratic societies like Québec recognize the equal dignity of all citizens and the freedom for each person to lead his or her life according to his or her own convictions. When people who hold different values and lifestyles come into contact with one another, the disagreements that sometimes result are healthy by-products of democratic life. They give rise to creative tension and inspire innovative solutions.

Québec's core democratic values—the pillars of Québec society, are universal in nature. They are recognized in multilateral international agreements and covenants on human rights to which Québec has declared itself bound. However, societies can feel more attached to certain values than others, often because they were hard won. In Québec, there is particular concern for gender equality and the religious neutrality of the state, as well as a deep-seated determination to ensure the vitality of Québec's distinct francophone character.

The attachment to gender equality was born of the prolonged struggle by feminist activists and their male allies, who fought vigorously and sustained their efforts to transform legal equality into substantive equality. The now deep-rooted principle of state neutrality was also hard fought for in a society long defined by the influence of the Church and its doctrine on public and private life. In the wake of the major reforms that marked the Quiet Revolution in the early 1960s, Québec's population became more secular and religious neutrality of the state strengthened, leading to a transformation of its education and healthcare systems.

The phenomenon of racism

Racism can take many forms, from offensive remarks and insults to harassment and physical attacks. A notion rejected by scientists for decades now, the concept of “race” is the foundation for traditional racism, which attempts to justify social inequality based on a variety of alleged biological differences. Racism, buoyed by pseudo-scientific theories, has been used over the centuries to justify the oppression of entire populations, including Black and Aboriginal people.

Although traditional racism is less prevalent today, in some situations it has been replaced by cultural racism, also known as neoracism. Cultural racism refers to the racialization process experienced by certain populations that occurs when cultural differences are labeled immutable, quasi-biological, and the cause of individual behaviours. This new form of racism suggests that certain cultural differences are insurmountable and prevent people with different ethnocultural backgrounds from integrating into society in any way.

Cultural racism is often more subtle and requires the adoption of new strategies. Once it is identified, it must be fought as vigorously as traditional racism because it perpetuates the same kinds of inequalities and injustices by attempting to justify the exclusion and marginalization of populations based on their cultural differences.

Québec has its own institutions, a pluralist and dynamic culture, and solid and vibrant democratic values as set forth in the Québec Charter of Human Rights and Freedoms, the Charter of the French Language, and other fundamental laws. Political power is placed in the hands of citizens who, through the electoral process, delegate their power to representatives at the local, provincial, and federal levels. In addition to its institutions, Québec’s political system rests on freedom of expression, the equality of all people, and active participation by the citizenry in democratic life—essential conditions for informed decision-making and good governance.

Québec’s democratic life is based on the rule of law and the guarantee of human rights and freedoms. A foundational, quasi-constitutional legal document, the Québec Charter of Human Rights and Freedoms limits state activities and regulates relationships between citizens, in accordance with the right to equality. Unique in its scale and scope, the Charter also recognizes social and economic rights that reflect the strength solidarity in Québec. With these rights also come certain duties; each person must comply with the law, regardless of personal conviction, and must not violate the rights of others.

Fostering an understanding of democratic values

Québec’s core democratic values are largely shared by Quebecers of all origins. However, when it comes to their practical application, sometimes these values do not fully measure up to the standards set out by Québec’s legislative framework. Not everyone fully knows or understands his or her rights and responsibilities in this regard. Unfortunately, in certain cases, this lack of knowledge can lead to discriminatory, xenophobic, or racist behaviours in individuals who are unaware of their unlawful nature. This is particularly noticeable on the Internet and is amplified by social media. It is therefore necessary to reinforce education on human rights and freedoms and promote intercultural training so that all Quebecers acquire a better understanding of democratic values.

Education—the transfer of knowledge, social skills, and know-how—inspires openness to diversity. For this reason, democratic values have been integrated into the pedagogy of the *Programme-cadre de français pour les personnes immigrantes adultes au Québec*. Citizenship education, including a component on rights and freedoms, is already part of the school curriculum for young Quebecers, as outlined in the *Programme de formation de l'école québécoise en matière d'enseignement de l'histoire* [Québec program for history education]. This is in addition to a wide range of school activities aimed at raising awareness of intercultural realities. Civic education plays a major role in raising awareness among citizens and providing them with the skills they need to live in a pluralist and democratic society.

In both the private and public sectors, education to develop intercultural skills generally remains the purview of front-line workers and public-sector practitioners, leaving out managers, including human resource executives, who do not fully understand its importance. Moreover, this education would have greater impact if it also addressed human rights and freedoms (with the aim of preventing and combatting situations of discrimination and racism) and if it were more widely offered to public and private sector workers and the general population.

Awareness and educational activities must form a cohesive whole and provide access to information on democracy, human rights and freedoms, ethnocultural diversity, and openness. Through cohesive action, public service staff could have opportunities to acquire the skills they need to ensure that all Quebecers enjoy equitable and non-discriminatory access to public services.

The role of French as a language of integration and social cohesion

Allophone immigrants must acquire the skills they need in French through a learning program that is adapted to Québec's context. Linguistic integration also entails choosing French as the common language of public use.⁵² The concept of "French, the language of integration" is best understood as learning a common public language using day-to-day life references that reflect the linguistic environment in which the student is immersed. The language learned then becomes the primary language used in social interactions.

French is the vehicle that allows contact between all Quebecers, regardless of their mother tongue or the language used in their private lives. The *Conseil supérieur de la langue française* promotes the concept of "French, the language of social cohesion," which rests on three main pillars: equality of access to common resources and the freedom to use them, integration into social networks, and the sense of community belonging.⁵³ These pillars demonstrate the importance of creating conditions to establish French as the common language of public use, which includes opportunities to learn and practice the language in inclusive living environments.

A number of issues persist. On the one hand, the status of French as Québec's working language remains an issue of concern; this influences the linguistic preferences of newcomers, who are increasingly well educated. Throughout Québec, the higher the level of education, the less commonplace the use of French in the workplace, with 60.6% of high-skill jobs requiring French–English bilingualism.⁵⁴ On the other hand, immigrants must be better informed of the benefits and role of French in Québec society. They must also be provided with francization services tailored to their needs, and the host society's attitudes toward immigration and linguistic diversity must be encouraged to evolve.



Objective 2.2

Striving for Substantive Equality Through Cooperation with Economic Leaders, Local Community Partners, and Departments and Agencies

The OECD attributes the difficulties faced by immigrants in finding employment to certain factors⁵⁵ that have been observed in Québec. Of particular note are insufficient access to appropriate and timely information on job market requirements, problems related to skills recognition, language and socioprofessional skills that are inadequate for the job requirements, incipient social networks limiting access to the informal networks of contacts through which many jobs are found,⁵⁶ lack of work experience in the host country, and discrimination in hiring.⁵⁷

Implementation of this policy will require an integrated approach known as mainstreaming,⁵ whereby the realities of immigrants and ethnocultural minorities are taken into consideration when general policies and programs are developed. Rather than directly targeting the immigrant population, this approach involves incorporating recognition of diversity into overall policymaking and actions regarding the well-being of all Quebecers.⁵⁸ The government, departments and agencies, and their networks must first lead by example by ensuring that their institutions are representative, demonstrating their ability to consider the differentiated needs of the population in the services they offer⁵⁹ and showing they can adapt to the ethnocultural diversity of the population. Such adaptation is part of a societal openness that encourages everyone to get involved in order to achieve full participation in society.⁶⁰

Despite Québec's commitment to ensuring equal opportunity employment, the job market remains one of the most visible and documented examples of unequal participation, particularly where immigrant and racialized women are concerned. Their unemployment rate is higher and their employment rate lower than that of the population in general, even given the same level of education and regardless of whether they are immigrants or native-born. The situation for immigrant women raises serious concerns, insofar as they may face a variety of interacting discriminatory factors.⁶¹

Commitment of economic leaders

In order to increase participation of immigrants and ethnocultural minorities in economic life, Québec must be able to count on the main labour market stakeholders represented on the Commission des partenaires du marché du travail [labour market partners board], who play an influential role. In this regard, the commitment of chambers of commerce, unions, and businesses—particularly small and medium-sized businesses, Québec's primary employers—is already significant. Social economy enterprises are also key

⁵ Mainstreaming refers to the effort needed to meet the needs of immigrants and ethnocultural minorities through the involvement of various societal players as part of initiatives, social programs, and policies aimed at the population as a whole rather than considering them separately from the needs of the general population. This approach is becoming increasingly widespread. In this regard, see:

Elizabeth COLLETT and Milica PETROVIC, *The Future of Immigrant Integration in Europe: Mainstreaming Approaches for Inclusion*, Migration Policy Institute, 2014, 36 pages.

Meghan BENTON, Helen MCCARTHY and Elizabeth COLLETT, *Into the mainstream: Rethinking public services for diverse and mobile populations*, Migration Policy Institute, 2015, 41 pages.

actors by virtue of their ties with and involvement in their communities as well as their capacity for innovation.

A number of programs and initiatives aimed at increasing labour market participation by all Quebecers have been introduced to encourage economic leaders to take advantage of a diversified workforce. Examples include the *Programme d'aide à l'intégration des immigrants et des minorités visibles en emploi* [immigrant and visible minority employment integration assistance program], networking activities such as the Interconnexion program, which puts businesses in touch with qualified immigrants, mentorship activities such as *Québec Pluriel* for young people from ethnocultural minorities age 16 to 35, and *Alliés Montréal*, which pairs immigrants with mentors in business.

Nevertheless, the persistent difficulties with labour market integration call for even better-targeted actions. Associating key economic players more closely with government actions can help foster concrete involvement that contributes to all Quebecers' full and active participation.⁶² In addition, it is important to clearly identify the difficulties faced by certain people and not confuse the situation of immigrants with that of native-born ethnocultural and racialized minorities—hence the importance of better documentation and analysis of the situation.

Employers are therefore urged to review their diversity and inclusion practices in order to create workplaces that are free of discrimination and racism. Their commitment to substantive equality in the labour market is necessary in order to benefit from the entire workforce's full employment potential and to adapt to the changes employers face to remain competitive, particularly by means of increased productivity. This commitment is also required to ensure respect for the democratic values entrenched in the Québec Charter of Human Rights and Freedoms.

The potential of immigrant entrepreneurs

In 2010, the OECD demonstrated that immigrants contribute to host societies' economic growth by bringing new knowledge and skills. In OECD countries, entrepreneurship is slightly higher among immigrants than among those born in the host countries, although the survival rate for those businesses is often lower than that for businesses established by native-born entrepreneurs.⁶³ In addition, Canadian small businesses that export to countries other than the United States and whose majority owners are recent immigrants are among those with the highest growth rates (annual average growth in profits of 21% from 2007 to 2011, compared with 2% for small businesses whose primary owners are not immigrants).⁶⁴

Nonetheless, such entrepreneurs face unique challenges that can delay business success. These barriers can take the form of indirect discrimination, for example, which can translate into greater difficulty establishing trust with investors, suppliers, and clients of different origins.⁶⁵ Services for potential entrepreneurs from ethnocultural minorities have expanded considerably, but better promotion would allow people to better benefit from the services available, including financing programs.

Building more inclusive communities in partnership with municipalities and local community partners

Immigration is increasingly contributing to the vitality of municipalities outside Montréal. Over the past few years, there has been an increase in the proportion of immigrants settling outside the Greater Montréal Area.

Thus, 16.9% of immigrants admitted to Québec between 1994 and 2003 lived outside Montréal as of January 2005, whereas 22% of those admitted from 2004 to 2013 lived outside Montréal as of January 2015.

Municipalities, including both local and regional county municipalities (MRC), metropolitan areas, and local communities and community partners, are central to the development of inclusive communities because of their ability to act locally, where Quebecers live side by side, meet, and interact.⁶⁶ Certain conditions must be met in order for people of all origins to participate in community life. Some of the things that make communities welcoming and inclusive are fair access to institutions, facilities and services; a dynamic local job market in which skills are recognized and there is no discrimination; opportunities to learn and use French in public; an attitude of recognition and acknowledgment of diversity; and opportunities for intercultural exchange and networking.

We need to call on municipalities' first-hand knowledge of their communities' realities as reflected in municipal policies and action plans. Québec cities' involvement in the Council of Europe's Intercultural Cities and the Canadian Coalition of Municipalities Against Racism and Discrimination underscores the important role that cities play in intercultural relations, particularly through their involvement in the areas of housing, recreation, culture, and security.⁶⁷

Ethnocultural diversity can trigger reservations when people are interacting in local community settings such as schools, workplaces, parks,⁶⁸ or residential buildings.⁶⁹ The involvement of community groups and associations is crucial to ensure that public services are adapted to the realities of regions and cities.⁷⁰ Their engagement is necessary in order to implement initiatives that unite Quebecers around common interests that can resolve insecurities.

Coordination with municipalities is a means of encouraging consideration for the differentiated needs of immigrants and ethnocultural minorities and of increasing immigration's contribution to the vitality of Québec's regions. Incorporating needs associated with immigration and ethnocultural diversity into municipal policies ensures coherent action. Commitment from departments and agencies in their dealings with Montréal, Québec City, and other municipalities is also important in order to broaden the consideration of differentiated needs. Thus, improving and strengthening reception, inclusion, and mobilization are factors in attracting greater numbers of immigrants and encouraging their long term settlement, thus meeting labour needs and contributing to the vitality and prosperity of Québec's communities.

Fair representation of diversity

Fair representation of diversity is not only a critical mark of recognition, it is also a condition for full and active participation of ethnocultural minorities in economic, community, civic, cultural, and political life in Québec. In terms of employment, it is a right, i.e., the right to equal recognition set out in articles 10 and 16 of the *Québec Charter of Human Rights and Freedoms*, which seek to achieve the ideal of inclusion, and articles 86 to 92 regarding equal access employment programs.

Cultural life is a powerful expression of how a society feels about and views the world, thus contributing to its collective representations and its ability to plan a common future. The impact of the arts, culture, and communications industry on perceptions is even greater for people who mainly come into contact with ethnocultural diversity through mass media, culture, and the Internet. The too-frequent association of ethnocultural diversity with integration problems⁷¹ hampers recognition of diversity's and immigration's contributions to Québec's development. Fairer representation in the arts and culture, specifically on

television, can play a major role in building an inclusive society in which the cultural participation of Quebecers of all origins is fostered, recognized, and valued.

The Government of Québec has adopted legislation to ensure that public sector employees reflect Québec's diversity, in particular through amendments to the *Public Service Act* (CQLR, chapter F-3.1.1) in 1983 in order to introduce equal access employment programs. Also notable are the 2001 *Act respecting equal access to employment in public bodies* (CQLR, chapter A-2.01), which requires public bodies with more than 100 employees to implement an equal access employment program, and the 2006 *Act respecting the governance of state-owned enterprises* (CQLR, chapter G-1.02), which, among other things, requires boards of directors to reflect the various segments of society and include an equal number of women and men. In 1987, the Government of Québec also adopted an order in council implementing the *Programme d'obligation contractuelle* [contractual obligation program] for businesses with over 100 employees having obtained government contracts or grants worth over \$100,000.

Fair representation of diversity in the public sector is an aid to integration and a way for the government to lead by example. It also allows the government to fully benefit from innovation with diverse work teams that are better able to grasp the population's differentiated needs.

From 2003 to 2014, the representation rate of visible and ethnic minorities within Québec's regular public service staff increased from 2.2% to 8%, but it is still lower than both the target of 9%⁷² and the proportion of visible minorities in the Québec population (11%). Further, the rate of representation in senior management jobs is only 2.3%. Achieving representation targets in the public service is hindered, among other things, by the high concentration of jobs in Québec City, as the percentage of visible minorities in the Québec City Census Metropolitan Area remains low—3.1% as of 2011.

Equal access to employment

Equal access to employment programs (EAPs) aim to correct situations of inequality faced by certain groups of people in the workforce. They are designed to ensure greater representation of women, Aboriginal people, visible minorities, ethnic minorities, and people with disabilities. EAPs are implemented in government departments and agencies and fall under the responsibility of the Secrétariat du Conseil du trésor.

For its part, the Commission des droits de la personne et des droits de la jeunesse is responsible for monitoring EAPs in certain public agencies and private educational and health institutions with 100 or more employees.

Starting June 30, 2015, 464 public agencies were subject to the requirement to implement EAPs in the municipalities, educational institutions (school boards, cégeps, universities), the healthcare system, state-owned companies, and the Sûreté du Québec with respect to police staffing. The Commission is also responsible for monitoring programs implemented as part of the *Programme d'obligation contractuelle* [contractual obligation program].

This underrepresentation can also be seen in the corridors of power, such as government corporations' boards of directors, which since 2011 have been subject to the *Politique favorisant la constitution de conseils d'administration des sociétés d'état dont l'identité culturelle des membres reflète les différentes composantes de la société québécoise* [policy promoting establishment of boards of directors of government corporations whose members' cultural identities reflect the various segments of Québec society], among senior civil servants, and on private-sector and community boards, even in the Montréal area.⁷³ A similar observation can be made for democratic institutions, such as the municipalities of Île-de-Montréal, Brossard, Laval, and Longueuil.⁷⁴

Despite some significant advances, particularly in Québec's public service, but also in various public agencies and private businesses that have shown strong leadership with respect to diversity and inclusion, including in their hiring practices, work remains to be done. While the legal and administrative tools seem adequate, notably equal access to employment programs, the complexity of program implementation and follow-up appears to discourage employers and limit their impact.⁷⁶ As for participation on boards of directors, particularly in the public and municipal sectors, current initiatives must be better enforced so that more members of ethnocultural and racialized minorities are represented and active in the structures of power, including elected bodies.

Racial profiling

Racial profiling refers to any action taken by one or more people in a position of authority over a person or group of persons for reasons of safety, security, or public protection. This action is based on factors of real or alleged racial, ethnic, national, or religious affiliation, with no real motive or reasonable suspicion, and results in the person or group being exposed to scrutiny or differential treatment. Racial profiling also includes any action by persons in positions of authority who disproportionately apply a measure to segments of the population because of their real or alleged racial, ethnic, national, or religious affiliation, among other things.⁷⁵

Profiling draws on presumptions stemming from prejudice, myths, and stereotypes. It manifests as particular scrutiny and more frequent inspections of people from ethnocultural or racialized minorities, particularly young members of racialized minorities living in underprivileged neighbourhoods, and generates a feeling of harassment when the profiling occurs repeatedly.

An important factor in preventing racial profiling lies in improving relations between local communities and stakeholders in various sectors, raising awareness among members of ethnocultural minorities of their rights in the event they are stopped or questioned, reviewing methods of police intervention, and securing a commitment from authorities.

Other ways of preventing racial profiling include ensuring that the personnel of institutions at risk of racial profiling reflect the ethnocultural diversity of the population they serve and implementing mechanisms to collect and analyze data to eliminate bias.

Considering the needs of a diverse population in public programs and services

The implementation of a mainstreaming approach to inclusion is reflected in public policies in all areas of government intervention. For the past several years, a variety of networks have adapted their practices or taken steps to respond more effectively to the needs of Quebecers of all origins. The labour market, discussed earlier, is a good example because attempts are being made to strengthen methods of ensuring equal access to jobs.

Educational integration and intercultural education

Consideration for ethnocultural, linguistic, and religious diversity in the education sector is particularly important, given the growing percentage of students from immigrant families since the late 1990s.⁷⁷ Among other things, the sector must prioritize actions to address new realities in all of Québec's regions⁷⁸ and to address students' needs, in particular with regard to academic success and student retention. In that respect the Policy Statement on Educational Integration and Intercultural Education (1998), whose implementation conditions have been reviewed, provides a framework for ensuring the integration of students from immigrant backgrounds and for intercultural education in preschool and primary, secondary, and postsecondary institutions.

Adapted health and social services

In the health and social services system, it is important to adopt a comprehensive intervention approach that takes into account individuals' overall health, considering not only their general health and particular problems they experience, but also the environments, including their living conditions and their level of social support. This approach would allow services to more appropriately address difficulties faced by ethnocultural minority youth, problems associated with the health⁷⁹ and lifestyles of recent immigrants,⁸⁰ as well as young families' needs. Making cultural and linguistic interpreters available is a good example of the kind of adaptation that should be undertaken. This type of holistic approach makes it easier to prevent health and psychosocial problems and detect situations that require early intervention.

Public safety

In the past few years, numerous initiatives have been implemented in the public safety sector, including introductory and ongoing intercultural skills training for police officers, as well as the inclusion of a statement regarding prevention of harassment and racism in the *Guide de pratiques policières* published by the Ministère de la Sécurité publique. Such efforts must continue, given the importance of strengthening trust between law enforcement and an increasingly diverse population.

The justice system

Fostering access to information and adapted services is a critical prerequisite for the protection of rights and freedoms. The legal community and organizations working to defend rights are key partners in the provision of appropriate services for people in vulnerable situations, and in particular members of racialized minorities. People from these minorities are more likely to be low income earners, to have incomplete knowledge of their rights, and to have limited access to existing recourse avenues, in part due to language barriers. In addition to interpretation services, adapted information tools and coaching may be necessary for certain people to learn about and fully exercise their rights.

Furthermore, the legal community interacts daily with people of diverse origins whose multiple cultural realities can raise questions throughout the course of legal proceedings. Raising awareness within the justice system, particularly among government prosecutors, judicial officials, and court staff, is an important means of ensuring fair treatment for all.

The Government of Québec is also concerned about protecting the rights of temporary workers, particularly those in low-skilled jobs. With this in mind, a variety of initiatives have been introduced over the past few years to inform employers and workers of their rights and responsibilities. These ongoing initiatives aim to ensure that temporary workers in low-skilled positions can fully contribute to Québec's prosperity, while having their rights and freedoms respected.



RESPONSIBLE, COHERENT, AND
EFFECTIVE GOVERNANCE

immigration *inclusion*
participation

Responsible, coherent, and effective governance

Strong and efficient participative governance requires a commitment from all departments, organizations, and partners to work together to achieve objectives and conduct ongoing monitoring and assessment. In order to ensure that our partners consider ethnocultural diversity in all of their actions, dealings with them must take their autonomy and specific needs into account. It is the Ministère de l'Immigration, de la Diversité et de l'Inclusion's role to provide dynamic leadership in this regard.

A governance framework must also ensure relevant, effective, and efficient action. Only by properly understanding the needs of individuals, institutions, and communities and implementing coherent, complementary actions can effective, efficient government leadership be achieved. Developing indicators to measure progress can also increase efficiency by bringing initiatives into closer alignment with real needs.



Advancing Knowledge on Participation and Inclusion

To build on immigration's contributions to Québec's prosperity and foster full and active participation through welcoming, inclusive, and engaged communities, we must first develop a better understanding of the current context and its evolution through proper analysis and description. A more refined understanding of the context will provide for more accurate and detailed explanations, and will counter prejudice, thus building the population's trust in government policy and public actions.

Observation data and reliable indicators are key to properly assessing the current situation and making informed decisions regarding actions that foster full and active participation among immigrants and ethnocultural minorities, combat prejudices, and encourage harmonious intercultural relations. Directly linking context descriptions with prospective action makes for more effective and coherent governance.

To ensure that governance is based on an accurate understanding, several tools will be used. They are part of a rigorous and multifaceted methodological approach involving diversification of the data sources and information used in analysis, development of new measures, concerted research, ongoing monitoring, and precise evaluation. Making knowledge more accessible to the general public, decisionmakers, and actors in the field is a prerequisite for more meaningful public action.

First of all, a process of data collection and analysis will be implemented, notably through the *Stratégie de mesure de la participation des Québécoises et Québécois des minorités ethnoculturelles aux différentes sphères de la vie collective* [strategy to measure ethnocultural minority participation in society]. The government also plans to monitor immigrant integration to better understand the stages and difficulties involved in the process, so that it can accurately determine the best services to implement.

Access to evidence is crucial for making informed decisions; it is equally crucial for raising public awareness. Publicizing the policy's positive outcomes is another important dimension that will contribute to a better understanding of the situation.

Research partnerships are a means to share and discuss data and analyses with a view to advancing knowledge regarding participation and inclusion. Partnerships between government departments and agencies facilitate better data source sharing and better coordination of current and future indicators. Concerted research in partnership with the educational community and research chairs can provide access to data that is often hard to obtain. Such initiatives can also enhance research impacts, help identify best practices, present research results for the general population, and consolidate different approaches. In a context where demand for calibrated indicators and measures (used for statistical monitoring and in research) is increasing, such partnerships can also be used for comparative assessments.

The problem of intersectional discrimination must be addressed as part of this process, in order to offset the lack of observation data and indicators. To assess the situation and act effectively requires more in-depth analysis of the factors that create social inequality, as well as the obstacles facing Quebecers of all origins. Men and women have different needs with respect to equality and participation; these must be taken into consideration, along with other factors of inequality and discrimination and the interplay between them.

Increased access to information on diversity and immigration in Québec will facilitate the mainstreaming of diversity by government departments and agencies and community partners. Public access to information will provide ongoing updates on the current issues, and collate data that would otherwise remain scattered. More readily available information will help make diversity part of mainstream decision-making processes. Best practices will also be promoted to encourage emulation. In keeping with the “open government” concept, making information available will also lead to greater transparency concerning government actions.



Taking Thorough and Responsible Action

A policy expresses a government's intention to act in an area of public interest (e.g., health, education, employment, gender equality) by presenting the strategic choices it deems important and by delineating the general division of responsibilities between the various actors involved. Given that such issues often involve a variety of departments and partners, it is critical that public policies establish a management framework providing effective leverage to reach its objectives.

Monitoring and evaluation tools have been created in conjunction with the present policy and its accompanying action strategy. The monitoring and evaluation framework will ensure that coordination, monitoring, and evaluation mechanisms are ongoing and that statistics and research data are used to monitor progress and assess the benefits and relevance of the implemented measures.

Through rigorous monitoring and evaluation, measures can be adjusted as needed to ensure that they are appropriate, effective, and efficient—i.e., that they align with needs, meet objectives, and achieve results in a manner that is both cost-effective and makes responsible use of collective resources. The evaluation will also assess the impact of measures on vulnerable individuals, whose protection is part of the government's mission.

The efficiency of certain measures depends largely on the use of information and communication technology, which has consistently proven useful for both information and knowledge-sharing, and for facilitating service transactions. In the ongoing review of practices, it is critical to maximize technology use. Efficient electronic information, transaction, promotion, and public relations tools can help provide a more personalized and participative response to people's many needs. In turn, more efficient service delivery allows for the reallocation of resources to better serve individuals who have greater needs.

Coordination increases the coherence and effectiveness of actions by permitting information-sharing between government departments and agencies and sends a clear message that the government is serious about policy implementation. Fostering exchange and synergy between initiatives helps strengthen partners' capacity for analysis, innovation, and action, better equipping them to translate priorities into long-term solutions.

APPENDIX



Immigration, a Shared Responsibility

The Canadian Constitution

Under Canada's Constitution, jurisdiction over immigration is shared between the federal government and the provinces. However, all legislation adopted by Québec must be compatible with all acts of the Canadian Parliament, which take precedence over provincial laws.

Canada–Quebec Accord Relating to Immigration and Temporary Admission of Aliens

The Canada–Quebec Accord Relating to Immigration and Temporary Admission of Aliens was signed in February 1991 by Québec's Minister of Cultural Communities and Immigration, Monique Gagnon-Tremblay, and her federal counterpart, Barbara McDougall. The Accord sets out Québec's and Canada's rights and responsibilities with respect to immigration. When it took effect April 1, 1991, it replaced the Couture-Cullen Agreement, which had been in effect since 1978.

The new Accord strengthened and expanded Québec's rights and responsibilities in three major areas: the planning of immigration levels, immigrant selection, and the reception, integration, and francization of immigrants. Specifically, the Accord guarantees Québec immigration levels equal to its demographic weight within Canada and allows the possibility of exceeding it by 5%, at its discretion. The Accord grants Québec exclusive responsibility for selecting immigrants to the province, except for family class immigrants, who are not subject to selection per se, and refugee claimants who request asylum from within Québec.

The Accord also recognizes the importance of integrating immigrants to Québec in a manner that is respectful of Québec's distinct identity. Québec thus gained control over services for the reception of immigrants and for the linguistic, cultural, and economic integration of permanent residents in Québec. The Canadian government withdrew from these services, providing compensation to Québec for the services it provided so long as they "correspond to the services offered by Canada in the rest of the country" and "are offered without discrimination to any permanent resident of Québec, whether or not that permanent resident has been selected by Québec."

Québec's *Act respecting immigration to Québec*, (CQLR, chapter I-0.2), and Canada's *Immigration and Refugee Protection Act*, (SC 2001, chapter 27), as well as all regulations and administrative directives governing their enforcement, reflect this power-sharing arrangement between the federal government and Québec.

Powers Shared Under the Canada–Québec Accord

Québec's responsibilities	Canada's responsibilities
Immigration levels	
- Determine the number of immigrants to settle in Québec Québec's objectives - Policy on immigration levels that enables it to receive a proportion of immigrants equal to its demographic weight within Canada - Receive a proportion of refugees and persons in similar circumstances equal to its demographic weight within Canada	- Determine national immigration levels, taking Québec's advice into consideration - Immigration levels must enable Québec to receive a percentage of Canadian immigration equal to its demographic weight within Canada, and can be exceeded by 5%
Selection and admission	
- Select foreign nationals wishing to settle in Québec (all migratory movement, with the exception of family reunification and persons who are granted refugee status in-land) - Issue the <i>Certificat de sélection du Québec</i>	- Define general immigration classes - Define statutory requirements (health, safety, national security) - Admit immigrants - Obligation to admit immigrants selected by Québec, as long as they meet statutory requirements - Obligation to reject immigrants who do not meet Québec selection criteria - Determine the eligibility of in-land applications for permanent immigration - Issue permanent residency - Exercise control over health, criminal matters, and national security - Execute removal measures
Family reunification	
- Set financial criteria, when required by the federal government, and sponsorship conditions - Receive and monitor undertakings	- Determine eligible individuals - Determine applicability of financial criteria
Right of asylum	
Manage collective sponsorship agreements for refugees and other individuals in distressful situations	- Recognize those seeking refugee status abroad in accordance with the Geneva Convention - Administer the asylum system within Canada
Temporary stays	
- Grant consent for admission - Foreign students (except individuals admitted through federal assistance programs for developing countries) - Temporary workers who are admitted in accordance with federal requirements relating to the availability of Canadian workers - Visitors wishing to receive medical treatment - Issue the <i>Certificat d'acceptation du Québec</i>	Issue temporary resident, study, and work permits
Reception and integration	
- Assume responsibility for reception as well as linguistic, cultural, and economic integration services for permanent residents, so long as these services: - Correspond to the services offered by Canada in the rest of the country - Are offered without discrimination to any permanent resident of Québec	- Financial compensation is calculated based on the following: - Federal expenditures (minus payments to service debt) - The proportion of francophones selected by Québec
Citizenship and naturalization	
	Attribution of Canadian citizenship

This list is not exhaustive, and does not fully represent all distinctions set out in the Canada–Quebec Accord Relating to Immigration and Temporary Admission of Aliens.

Notes

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